

Sarah B. Bick

THE

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE REVEREND AND PIOUS

JAMES M'GREADY,

LATE

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, IN HENDERSON, KENTUCKY.



EDITED BY THE REVEREND JAMES SMITH.



"By it, he being dead, yet speaketh."



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LOUISVILLE, Ky.

PRINTED BY W. W. WORSLEY:

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1831.

BX 8217

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PREFACE.

It happens, too frequently, that the benefit of the intellectual labors of great and good men is almost lost to the world, either from too great diffidence of the individuals themselves or from the carelessness of those into whose hands their productions fall after their decease. And such had nearly been the fate of the discourses comprising this volume, with many others of equal value by the same author. The Editor, therefore, trusts that he renders good service to the great cause in which their author labored, by rescuing from oblivion a part of the sermons of the venerated M'Gready; and, he confidently hopes, that this belief will be fully sanctioned by the Christian community.

To a large number of persons, now resident in the valley of the Mississippi, where the author principally labored in the ministry, it is expected that these sermons will be peculiarly acceptable, inasmuch as it will be recollected by thousands now living, that he was one of the most efficient instruments, in the hands of the great Head of the church, in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom through the vast western wilderness. He was an eminent revivalist, and particularly identified in what has been termed the great revival of 1800, which began and was, in a great measure, carried on through his instrumentality. It is not improbable, therefore, that many of the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ will recognize in one or another of these discourses the very arrow which

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pierced their hearts, and to which, under heaven, they are indebted for their salvation.

Most of the sermons, in this volume, were preached by the Author during the revival mentioned, although some of them were slightly altered by him, at a subsequent period, as may be observed from an allusion to natural events of a later date in that one entitled "The Character, History, and End of the Fool." As none of them were designed for publication, but simply for the Author's own use, it will be remarked that little attention has been paid by him to the mere ornament of expression. Yet the intelligent Christian reader will readily perceive that all his discourses are well calculated to convince the unregenerate of the evil nature of sin, and the awful consequences of living and dying under its dominion; to lead the heavy laden to the blood of sprinkling, and to administer encouragement and consolation to the hearts of God's people, the Lord Jesus Christ being the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the soul and substance of the whole.

Many of the sermons, even to the ordinary reader, will seem to close abruptly, owing to an omission of the author in writing out the applications—that being a part he almost uniformly delivered extemporaneously, and according to the circumstances of his audience. This omission is the more to be lamented as in his applications he is said to have been particularly interesting, forcing the truth home upon the consciences of his hearers with almost irresistible efficacy. The reader may infer something of his powers in this way, from the sermon "On the superabounding Grace of God."

The biography of such a man as Mr. M'Gready could not but be interesting to the religious commu-

nity; and it was much desired (with this volume) to have presented a general account of his life and labors. But, not having the advantage of a personal acquaintance, the Editor has to regret that, hitherto, he has been unable to procure the proper materials. However, he has lately been referred to persons in possession of the necessary information; and if the public should deem a second volume of these sermons worthy of patronage, he hopes to present a satisfactory memoir of their author. In the meanwhile, there are prefixed to the present volume some brief remarks on his character by the Rev. John Andrews, of Chilliscothe; also some account of the revival of 1800, by Mr. M'Gready himself.

That these sermons may prove edifying and encouraging to the Christian reader—that they may be instrumental in bringing many souls to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that, thereby, much fruit may abound to the author at the great day of the Lord—such are the sincere prayers of the reader's obedient servant,

THE EDITOR.

SKETCH OF THE CHARACTER

OF THE

REV. JAMES M'GREADY,

BY THE REV. JOHN ANDREWS.

FROM the conduct and conversation of Mr. M'Gready, there is abundant evidence to believe that he was not only a subject of divine grace and unfeigned piety, but that he was favored with great nearness to God and intimate communion with him. Like Enoch, he walked with God; like Jacob, he wrestled with God, by fervent persevering supplications, for a blessing on himself and others, and prevailed; like Elijah, he was very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, and regarded his glory and the advancement of his kingdom as the great end of his existence on earth, to which all other designs ought to be subordinate; like Job, he deeply abhorred himself, repenting, as it were, in dust and ashes, when he was enabled to behold the purity of God and his own disconformity to his holy nature; like the apostle Paul, he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, his Lord; and, like him, he felt great delight in preaching to his fellow men the unsearchable riches of Christ. He was remarkably plain in his dress and manners; but very familiar, communicative, and interesting in his conversation. He possessed sound un-

derstanding, and a moderate share of human learning. The style of his sermons was not polished, but perspicuous and pointed; and his manner of address was unusually solemn and impressive. As a preacher, he was highly esteemed by the humble followers of the Lamb, who relished the precious truths which he clearly exhibited to their view; but he was hated, and sometimes bitterly reproached and persecuted, not only by the openly vicious and profane, but by many nominal Christians, or formal professors, who could not bear his heart-searching and penetrating addresses, and the indignation of the Almighty against the ungodly, which, as a son of thunder, he clearly presented to the view of their guilty minds from the awful denunciations of the Word of Truth. Although he did not fail to preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified, to laboring and heaven laden sinners, and to administer consolation which the gospel speaks to humble believers; yet he was more distinguished by a talent for depicting the guilty and deplorable situation of impenitent sinners, and the awful consequences of their rebellion against God, without speedy repentance unto life and a living faith in the blood of sprinkling. There is reason to believe that his faithful and indefatigable labors in the gospel of Christ were crowned with a great degree of success, and that he was honored as an instrument in the conviction and conversion of many sinners, and more especially in the commencement and progress of several powerful revivals of religion, in different places, during which he labored with distinguished zeal and activity.

We shall conclude our remarks by observing, that some of the traits in Mr. McGready's character as a private Christian, which are worthy of our imitation,

were his fervent piety, his unaffected humility, his earnest, persevering supplications at the Throne of Grace, his resignation to the will of God under the afflictions, bereavements and poverty, with which he was tried in this world, his cheerful reliance on God's kind and watchful providence and confidence in his great and precious promises, and his contempt of the pomp and vanities of this world, to which he seemed to be, in a great degree, crucified. And, as a minister of the gospel, he ought to be imitated in his regard to the honor of God and the salvation of souls, his vigorous and zealous exertions to promote these grand objects, his fidelity in declaring the whole counsel of God, and his patience in bearing the revilings of the ungodly.

NARRATIVE

OF THE COMMENCEMENT AND PROGRESS OF THE
REVIVAL OF 1800.

BY THE LATE REV. JAMES M'GREADY.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND....DATED

“LOGAN COUNTY, KENTUCKY,
October 23, 1801.

“But I promised to give you a short statement of our blessed revival; on which you will at once say, the Lord has done great things for us in the wilderness, and the solitary place has been made glad: the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.

“In the month of May, 1797, which was the spring after I came to this country, the Lord graciously visited Gasper River Congregation (an infant church then under my charge). The doctrines of *Regeneration*, Faith and Repentance, which I uniformly preached, seemed to call the attention of the people to a serious inquiry. During the winter the question was often proposed to me, Is *Religion* a sensible thing? If I were converted would I feel it, and know it? In May, as I said before, the work began.

“A woman, who had been a professor, in full communion with the church, found her old hope false and delusive—she was struck with deep conviction, and in a few days was filled with joy and peace in believing. She immediately visited her friends and relatives, from house to house, and warned them of their danger in a most solemn, faithful manner, and plead with them to repent and seek religion. This, as a mean, was accompanied with the divine blessing to the awakening of many. About this time the ears of all in that congregation seemed to be open to receive the word preached,

and almost every sermon was accompanied with the power of God, to the awakening of sinners. During the summer about ten persons in the congregation were brought to Christ. In the fall of the year a general deadness seemed to creep on apace. Conviction and conversion work, in a great measure, ceased; and no visible alteration for the better took place, until the summer of 1798, at the administration of the sacrament of the supper, which was in July. On Monday the Lord graciously poured out his *Spirit*; a very general awakening took place—perhaps but few families in the congregation could be found who, less or more, were not struck with an awful sense of their lost estate. During the week following but few persons attended to worldly business, their attention to the business of their souls was so great. ¶ On the first Sabbath of September, the sacrament was administered at Muddy River (one of my congregations). At this meeting the Lord graciously poured forth his spirit, to the awakening of many careless sinners. Through these two congregations already mentioned, and through Red River, my other congregation, awakening work went on with power under every sermon. The people seemed to hear, as for eternity. In every house, and almost in every company, the whole conversation with people, was about the state of their souls. About this time the Rev. J. B. came here, and found a Mr. R. to join him. In a little time he involved our infant churches in confusion, disputation, &c. opposed the doctrines preached here; ridiculed the whole work of the revival; formed a considerable party, &c. &c. In a few weeks this seemed to have put a final stop to the whole work, and our infant congregation remained in a state of deadness and

darkness from the fall, through the winter, and until the month of July, 1799, at the administration of the sacrament at Red River. This was a very solemn time throughout. On Monday the power of God seemed to fill the congregation; the boldest, daring sinners in the country covered their faces and wept bitterly. After the congregation was dismissed, a large number of people stayed about the doors, unwilling to go away. Some of the ministers proposed to me to collect the people in the meeting-house again, and perform prayer with them; accordingly we went in, and joined in prayer and exhortation. The mighty power of God came amongst us like a shower from the everlasting hills—God's people were quickened and comforted; yea, some of them were filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Sinners were powerfully alarmed, and some precious souls were brought to feel the pardoning love of Jesus

“At Gasper River (at this time under the care of Mr. Rankin, a precious instrument in the hand of God) the sacrament was administered in August. This was one of the days of the Son of Man, indeed, especially on Monday. I preached a plain gospel sermon on Heb. 11 and 16: The better country. A great solemnity continued during the sermon. After sermon Mr. Rankin gave a solemn exhortation—the congregation was then dismissed; but the people all kept their seats for a considerable space, whilst awful solemnity appeared in the countenances of a large majority. Presently several persons under deep convictions broke forth into a loud outcry—many fell to the ground, lay powerless, groaning, praying and crying for mercy. As I passed through the multitude, a woman, lying in awful distress, called me to her. Said

she, "I lived in your congregation in Carolina; I was a professor, and often went to the communion; but I was deceived; I have no religion; I am going to hell." In another place an old, gray-headed man lay in an agony of distress, addressing his weeping wife and children in such language as this: "We are all going to hell together; we have lived prayerless, ungodly lives; the work of our souls is yet to begin; we must get religion, or we will all be damned." But time would fail me to mention every instance of this kind.

"At Muddy River the sacrament was administered in September. The power of God was gloriously present on this occasion. The circumstances of it are equal, if not superior to those of Gasper River. Many souls were solemnly awakened; a number, we hope, converted—whilst the people of God feasted on the hidden manna, and, with propriety, might be said to sing the new song. But the year 1800 exceeds all that my eyes ever beheld upon earth. All that I have related is only, as it were, an introduction. Although many souls in these congregations, during the three preceding years, have been savingly converted, and now give living evidences of their union to Christ; yet all that work is only like a few drops before a mighty rain, when compared with the wonders of Almighty Grace, that took place in the year 1800.

"In June the sacrament was administered at Red River. This was the greatest time we had ever seen before. On Monday multitudes were struck down under awful conviction; the cries of the distressed filled the whole house. There you might see profane swearers, and sabbath-breakers pricked to the heart, and crying out, "what shall we do to be saved?" There frolickers and dancers crying for mercy. There

you might see little children of 10, 11 and 12 years of age, praying and crying for redemption, in the blood of Jesus, in agonies of distress. During this sacrament, and until the Tuesday following, ten persons, we believe, were savingly brought home to Christ.

“In July the sacrament was administered in Gasper River Congregation. Here multitudes crowded from all parts of the country to see a strange work, from the distance of forty, fifty, and even a hundred miles; whole families came in their wagons; between twenty and thirty wagons were brought to the place, loaded with people, and their provisions, in order to encamp at the meeting-house. On Friday nothing more appeared, during the day, than a decent solemnity. On Saturday matters continued in the same way, until in the evening. Two pious women were sitting together, conversing about their exercises; which conversation seemed to affect some of the by-standers; instantly the divine flame spread through the whole multitude. Presently you might have seen sinners lying powerless in every part of the house, praying and crying for mercy. Ministers and private Christians were kept busy during the night conversing with the distressed. This night a goodly number of awakened souls were delivered by sweet believing views of the glory, fullness, and sufficiency of Christ, to save to the uttermost. Amongst these were some little children—a striking proof of the religion of Jesus. Of many instances to which I have been an eye-witness, I shall only mention one, viz. a little girl. I stood by her whilst she lay across her mother’s lap almost in despair. I was conversing with her when the first gleam of light broke in upon her mind—She started to her feet, and in an ecstasy of joy, she cried

out, "O he is willing, he is willing—he is come, he is come—O what a sweet Christ he is—O what a precious Christ he is—O what a fulness I see in him—O what a beauty I see in him—O why was it that I never could believe! that I never could come to Christ before, when Christ was so willing to save me?" Then turning round, she addressed sinners, and told them of the glory, willingness and preciousness of Christ, and plead with them to repent; and all this in language so heavenly, and, at the same time, so rational and scriptural, that I was filled with astonishment. But were I to write you every particular of this kind that I have been an eye and ear witness to, during the two past years, it would fill many sheets of paper.

"At this sacrament a great many people from Cumberland, particularly from *Shiloh* Congregation, came with great curiosity to see the work, yet prepossessed with strong prejudices against it; about five of whom, I trust, were savingly and powerfully converted before they left the place. A circumstance worthy of observation, they were sober professors in full communion. It was truly affecting to see them lying powerless, crying for mercy, and speaking to their friends and relations, in such language as this: "O, we despised the work that we heard of in *Logan*; but, O, we were deceived—I have no religion; I know now there is a reality in these things: three days ago I would have despised any person that would have behaved as I am doing now; but, O, I feel the very pains of hell in my soul." This was the language of a precious soul, just before the hour of deliverance came. When they went home, their conversation to their friends and neighbors, was the means of commencing a glorious

work that has overspread all the Cumberland settlements to the conversion of hundreds of precious souls. The work continued night and day at this sacrament, whilst the vast multitude continued upon the ground until Tuesday morning. According to the best computation, we believe that forty-five souls were brought to Christ on this occasion.

“Muddy River Sacrament, in all its circumstances, was equal, and in some respects superior, to that at Gasper River. This sacrament was in August. We believe about fifty persons, at this time, obtained religion.

“At Ridge Sacrament, in Cumberland, the second Sabbath in September, about forty-five souls, we believe, obtained religion. At Shiloh Sacrament, the third Sabbath in September, about seventy persons. At Mr. Craighead’s Sacrament, in October, about forty persons. At the Clay-Lick Sacrament, *congregation*, in Logan County, in October, eight persons. At Little Muddy-Creek Sacrament, in November, about twelve. At Montgomery’s Meeting-house, in Cumberland, about forty. At Hopewell Sacrament, in Cumberland, in November, about twenty persons. To mention the circumstances of more private occasions, common-days preaching, and societies, would swell a letter to a volume.

“The present year has been a blessed season likewise; yet not equal to last year in conversion work. I shall just give you a list of our Sacraments, and the number, we believe, experienced religion at each, during the present year, 1801.”

[My correspondent here mentions several different Sacraments, held at different places, and the number that he hopes obtained true religion; at these several

solemnities, amounts in all to 144 persons.] He then proceeds:—

“I would just remark that, among the great numbers in our country that professed to obtain religion, I scarcely know an instance of any that gave a comfortable ground of hope to the people of God, that they had religion, and have been admitted to the privileges of the church, that have, in any degree, disgraced their profession, or given us any ground to doubt their religion.

“Were I to mention to you the rapid progress of this work, in vacant congregations, carried on by the means of a few supplies, and by praying societies—such as at Stone’s-River, Cedar-Creek, Goose-Creek, the Red-Banks, the Forentain-Head, and many other places—it would be more than time, or the bounds of a letter would admit of. Mr. M’G. and myself administered the sacrament at the Red-Banks, on the Ohio, about a month ago—a vacant congregation, nearly a hundred miles distant from any regular organized society, formerly a place famed for wickedness, and a perfect synagogue of Satan. I visited them twice at an early period; Mr. R. twice, and Mr. H. once. These supplies the Lord blessed, as a means to start his work; and their praying societies were attended with the power of God, to the conversion of almost whole families. When we administered the sacrament amongst them, they appeared to be the most blessed little society I ever saw. I ordained ten elders among them, all precious Christians; three of which, two years ago, were professed deists, now living monuments of Almighty Grace.”

The original is signed,

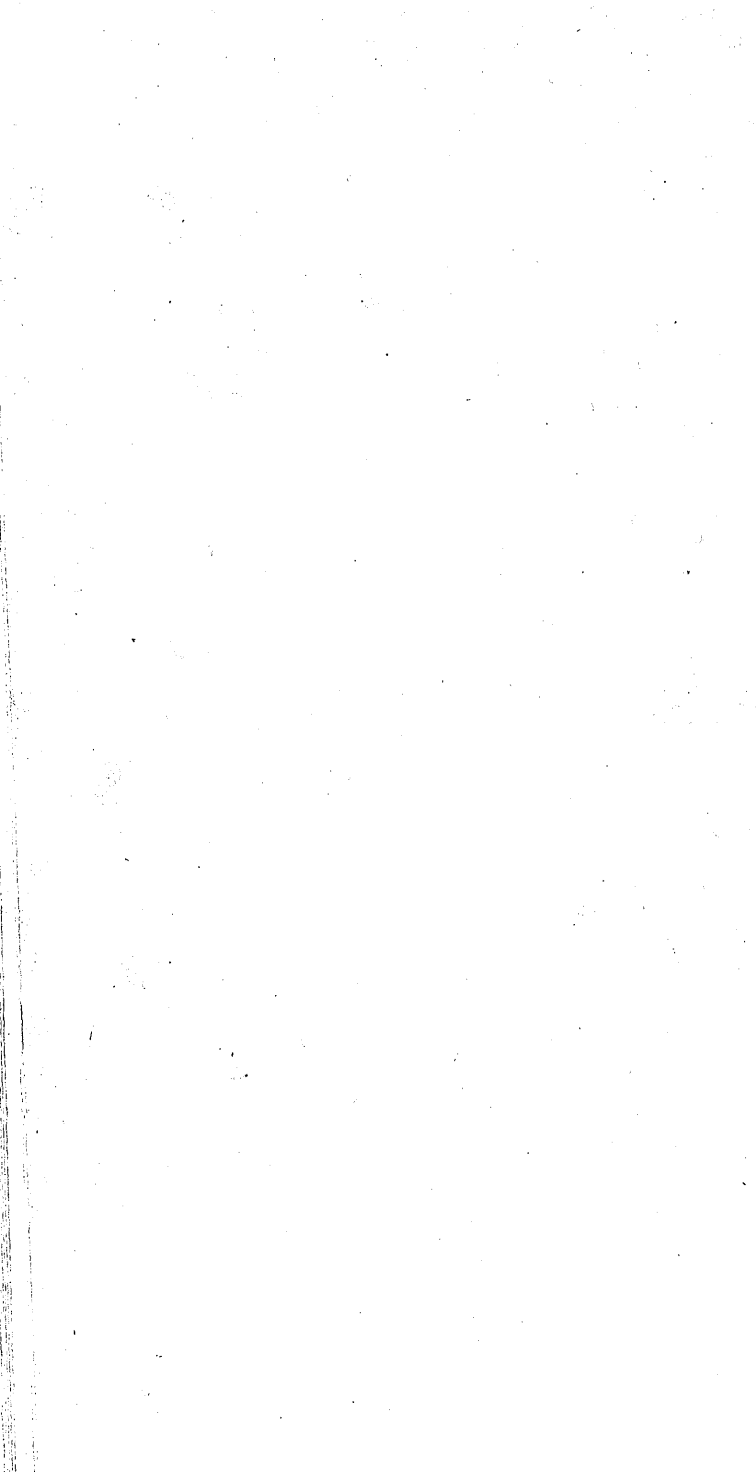
JAMES M’GREADY.

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SERMON I.

ON THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.



This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.—2 TIMOTHY i. 15.

THE great boast of the Deist is that the Book of Creation is the unerring word of God, that it contains all things necessary to teach us our duty to God and man, and that reason and the light of nature constitute a sufficient guide to lead us to true happiness. But let us bring the matter to the test, and plain matters of fact prove the contrary; if we consult the history of all ages of the world, we will find that this has never been the case.

The Egyptians were among the first civilized nations; they were a respectable empire for more than two thousand years; among them the mathematics, philosophy, and other scientific branches had their first origin.—I would now inquire what great discoveries did they make from the book of creation, or what did reason and the light of nature teach them, with regard to the being and perfections of Deity, when they worshipped a plurality of gods, and had their Osiris, their Apis and Serapis, and did homage to oxen, dogs, cats, plants and vegetables? What discoveries did the Assyrians and Chaldeans make upon this subject, when they worshipped their gods of wood, stone, gold and silver, and believed in the existence of two infinite and almighty beings, the one good and the other evil—the one the author of all natural and moral good,

the other the author of all natural and moral evil?—The Greeks and Romans were wise and eloquent. Among them, political, military and scientific knowledge rose to the highest pitch, and many of their men of genius immortalized their names by their philosophic researches. Did the book of nature teach them that there was one true, eternal God, and that he was a being of all possible goodness and perfection? To them the book of nature made no such discovery, for they had thousands of Gods to whom they attributed the basest acts of immorality. Witness the obscene debaucheries of their Jupiter, Apollo and Venus, the tricks and deceptions of Mercury, and the swinish intemperance of Bacchus and his worshippers. Again, view all the nations of the earth in the present day, where the Bible is unknown, and where the Christian religion does not exist, and you will find them in nearly a state of savage barbarity, not only grossly ignorant of the nature and perfections of God, but also of their duty to men, and of the first principles of civil government. This is evident from the state of the Chinese and Turkish empires, the numerous tribes of Tartars, the inhabitants of the vast continent of Africa, and the savage nations of America. Now let reason, the light of nature and common sense, point out any nation or people, who, without any knowledge of the Bible, have acquired from the book of nature any just ideas of the being and perfections of God, or the nature of their duty to God and man. But the Deist replies, there is one true and eternal God, the almighty first cause of all things, and this God is a being of all possible goodness and perfection, possessed of every amiable and moral excellency. I say the same—the Bible says the same—and all Deists have learned this important

truth, either directly or indirectly, from the Bible. Their fathers and grandfathers believed in the Bible, and held it in high veneration, and from education they retain some of the truths of the Bible, while they would reject it altogether.

But there is one true and eternal God, who possesses all possible goodness and perfection; in this the Deist and the Christian agree. This God made man a rational creature, capable of distinguishing between good and evil; in this also the Deist and the Christian agree. It must be the will of such a God, that his rational creature, man, should do right, that he should perform certain duties to his God, and certain duties to his fellow-men, and the neglect or non-performance of these duties, must be criminal in the judgment of an all-wise, pure and holy God; this, reason and the light of nature plainly acknowledge, and here also, the Deist and the Christian agree.

If the Supreme, Eternal God be a being of all possible goodness and perfection, and possessed of every amiable moral excellency, delighting in the happiness of his creatures, then he must originally have created man in his own image, a pure, holy being, free from any propensity to vice and wickedness, and also free from all the natural evils that now encircle him on every side, and render him miserable in every situation of life. Reason and the light of nature suggest that such a God would originally create man in such a condition; and here the Deist and the Christian are agreed.

Again, if a pure and holy God made man such a being as we must rationally suppose such a God would have made him, then man, by some means, has lost his original rectitude and purity; he has become a fal-

len, depraved creature, prone to vice and wickedness; he has also become a miserable creature, exposed to losses and disappointments, to pains, sorrows, diseases and death. This is a fact so plain and self-evident to the view of reason and the light of nature, that no sensible Deist, who admits the difference between vice and virtue, can possibly deny it; therefore, I conclude, that here the Deist and the Christian are agreed.

Again, if the Sovereign of the Universe be a being of all possible goodness and perfection—if he have made man a rational creature, and placed him under a law—if it be his will that man should do right—and if every evil act be a violation of this law, then every sinful act renders man liable to punishment. To say that God sees no difference between vice and virtue, or that he considers it a matter of indifference whether his creatures did right or wrong, would be to represent the Deity as the most odious of beings; this is so plain to the view of reason and the light of nature, that I conclude here the Deist and the Christian are agreed.

Then if man is guilty of violating the law of God, he stands obnoxious to punishment; for should the Supreme Law Giver of the Universe suffer every act of sin to pass unpunished, his law must sink into contempt, and forever cease to be a law. All difference between vice and virtue, right and wrong, moral good and evil, must eternally cease: the character of the Law Giver must also sink into contempt, and the moral government of the Universe must be plunged into the most horrible confusion, and disorder; this, reason and the light of nature must acknowledge, therefore I conclude that so far the Deist and the Christian are agreed.

These things being established, I will now propose a few questions to the Deist, and I would expect him to bring forward the unerring book of creation, and strain his enlightened reason to its highest stretch, and answer them if he can:—When did time commence, or when did this world begin to exist? How did the human family first come into being? How did sin, death, and every species of natural and moral evil enter the world? You laugh at the Bible account of these things, but laughter is not evidence; prove from nnanswerable arguments that the Bible account is wrong, and shew the honest inquirer after truth how these things came to pass.

But the principal questions I wish to ask, are:—How shall the guilty, offending sinner atone for his crimes, and how is he to obtain pardon, and reconciliation to his God? How shall the Sovereign of the Universe, a God of spotless purity and immaculate holiness, extend his mercy and pardon and save the sinner, and at the same time support the honor and dignity of his law, and vindicate the rights of his government? Or how shall the guilty culprit be so effectually cured of the malignant moral pollution of sin as to become the object of love and favor of his God, so as to enjoy fellowship and communion with him in the present world, and be admitted to the full and eternal enjoyment of him in the heavenly state? Can reason tell? Can the light of nature prescribe the way? Can the unerring book of creation suggest any plan? No--reason fails—the light of nature and the book of creation, must stand in silence. The most wise, learned and enlightened Deist must acknowledge the necessity of a revelation from heaven to unfold the mystery—or he must represent the Deity an unholy being, like himself, who sees little

or no evil in sin, who pays no more regard to the honor and dignity of his law, than the sinner does who tramples it under his feet.

But we assert it as an unquestionable truth, that candid and unprejudiced reason sees and acknowledges the necessity of a revelation from heaven to point out the way to peace, pardon, and reconciliation to God. The conscience of every sinner, even the conscience of every Deist, under solemn, realizing views of death and eternity, whispers in his breast that something like the Christian religion is necessary to his happiness beyond the grave. The LIGHT OF NATURE teaches the honest, candid pagan the propriety and possibility of a revelation from God. He infers it from his natural goodness. If God has provided a remedy suited to every temporal calamity, a medicine suited to every disease of the human body, will not he that is all goodness provide some remedy to cure the moral distempers of the mind? Will he not discover some way, by which depraved man may be delivered from the guilt and pollution of sin, and restored to his favor?

Upon such principles as these Socrates reasoned, and inferred the necessity and probability of the revelation of some divine remedy, and gave it as his opinion that such a remedy would be revealed, and that he thought most probably the Deity would send some extraordinary person into the world, to teach the will of God, and the way to happiness. I would add the example of a poor savage, a native of Greenland, quoted by the author of the "Age of Infidelity." Conversing with a missionary who was the instrument of his conversion,—"It is true, (said he) we ~~poor~~ poor heathens, ~~we~~ knew nothing of God and a Saviour,

but you are not to imagine that no Greenlander thinks about these things. I often thought that a fishing boat does not grow into existence of itself, it must be made by the labour of some man. Now the meanest bone has more skill displayed in its structure than a fishing boat; and there is still more skill displayed in the formation of man. Who made him? I often thought he proceeded from his parents, and they from theirs; but still there must be first parents, and from whence did they come? Common report informs me they grew out of the earth; but if so, why do not men grow out of the earth now? But from whence did the earth, the sea, the sun, moon and stars come into existence? Some being made all these things—a being that always was, and can never cease to be. He must be wise and good. O that I did but know him, how would I love and honor him!—but so soon as I heard you speak of this Great Being, I directly believed with all my heart, because I had so long desired it.”

Well, this despised book, the Bible, unveils the mystery and opens a door of hope to a lost world. In the words of our text, we have the blessed remedy exhibited—we have this divine revelation with all the unspeakable blessings contained in it: *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”* In these words we have,

1st. The most joyful tidings that ever sounded in the ears of guilty sinners. An Almighty Saviour has come into our world for the most benevolent purposes—*“to seek and save them that were lost, to save sinners, even the chief of them.”*

2d. We have a strong convincing proof of the

Godhead and Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. "*He came into the world to save sinners.*" "He came into the world"—this plainly implies that he existed before his incarnation; he could not be said to come into the world, unless he had a being before he came into it; this agrees with the idea of the Evangelist John: "*the word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, was made flesh and dwelt with us;*" and again with that of the apostle: "*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.*"

3d. We have a declaration of the unquestionable certainty of this precious truth: "*It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.*" It is an infallible truth, its evidences are so clear and self-evident, that it is worthy of the highest credit.

In further treating on this subject, we shall simply prove that this Jesus who came into the world to save sinners, is a Divine Saviour sent of God for that purpose.

I. We shall prove that Jesus is the Christ, from the testimony of scripture prophecies that expressly received their accomplishment in him.

But, says the Deist, I do not believe the Bible; therefore I will not admit its prophecies as testimony. To this I would answer, no rational Deist can refuse it. If a witness be brought into court to prove an important fact, and he is a person of unquestionable veracity, the court must receive him as a good witness. Such a witness is the Bible. The most daring infidel cannot produce a single instance where the veracity of its prophecies has failed; at the same time

a variety of plain matters of fact stand, from age to age, as lasting monuments (more durable than brass) of the truth of these predictions.

The prophecy concerning Ishmael was, "*that he should be a wild man,*" that he should "*live in the desert,*" and that he should " *dwell in the presence of his brethren;*" i. e. that he and his posterity should never be conquered. Nothing can be more evident than the accomplishment of this prophecy. The Ishmaelites, or Arabs, have been wild men, inhabitants of the desert, for nearly three thousand years. They have robbed and plundered the neighboring nations from age to age, yet they have never been conquered nor brought under subjection to any people. This is one standing monument of the truth of scripture prophecy.

The prophecy of Moses concerning the Jews, is another standing monument of the truth of the Bible as a divine revelation; this subject is so copious, that to demonstrate it in all its parts, would take up the bounds of a long discourse; all we can do at present, is only to hint at the subject. It was foretold that they should be "*rooted up out of their own land;*" that their country should "*become a desolation;*" that "*strangers should devour it;*" that they should "*be driven to the four winds, scattered and dispersed among the nations of the earth.*" Every candid person who is acquainted with ancient and modern history, must be convinced of the certainty of the accomplishment of these things, as he is of his own existence. This is plain from the testimony of modern history, and of all the travellers who have passed through their country, which lies in a state of ruin and desolation, almost a barren desert. Again; it is an incontestible fact, that they are dispersed over the whole habitable globe,

scattered among all the nations of the earth, and at the same time they remain a distinct and separate people.

When Babylon was mistress of the world, the metropolis of an universal empire, and in the meridian splendor of her glory, it was foretold that she "*should be conquered,*" and "*so completely overthrown and destroyed*" that "*it should be no more inhabited forever;*" that "*the very place where it stood should be unknown.*" This prophecy was exactly fulfilled, as is evident from the testimony of history and geography.

When Egypt was one of the most opulent and powerful nations on the earth, it was foretold that it should be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, and be totally subjugated to the yoke of the Chaldean Empire; that it should never again be an independent nation; that it should be the basest of all kingdoms, and never more be governed by a prince of its own nation. Now, every person acquainted with the history of the nations of the earth, must be convinced that this prediction has been exactly fulfilled. More than two thousand years ago Egypt was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, and made a province of the Chaldean Empire; after that empire, it was under the yoke of the Persian Emperors; it was next subdued by Alexander, and remained under the government of Grecian princes until it was conquered by the Romans; it was next under the government of the Emperors of Constantinople; next to that, of the Mamelukes; and at present it is a contemptible province of Turkey.

Again; when Tyre was mistress of the seas, the emporium of the world, and commanded the commerce of the whole earth, it was foretold that she should be conquered, and finally destroyed; that it

should be reduced to such a state of degradation, "that it should contain only fishermen's huts," that "it should become a naked rock, where fishermen should dry their nets." History informs us that this prediction has been exactly fulfilled. Volney, a Deist, who was at Tyre a few years ago, states in his travels through Egypt and Syria, "that the present state of Tyre exactly agrees with what the prophets foretold."

We might mention the predictions of the Lord Jesus Christ, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Compare these predictions with the history of that melancholy event given by Flavius Josephus, an unbelieving Jew, and nothing can more exactly agree, than the prediction does with the event. But I would earnestly entreat the honest inquirer after truth to read, with attention, Bishop Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, a book perhaps not equalled in the English language, where every particular is stated with such clearness and precision, that every candid mind must be convinced of the accomplishment of the prophecies and of the truth of divine revelation.

I now bring forward the Bible prophecies, to prove the divine mission of Jesus, that he is the Saviour of the world, and that God sent him to save even the chief of sinners.

From the fall of Adam until the incarnation of Christ, many predictions were delivered concerning the Messiah, the Saviour that was to come. The first prediction of Messiah was delivered by God himself, immediately after the fall, viz; "*The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*" It was revealed to Abraham that the Saviour should be of his offspring, and that "IN ISAAC all the nations of the earth should be blessed." Moses informed the church while in the

wilderness, that "*the Lord their God should raise up a great prophet to them, like unto him, and him they should hear.*" The prophet Isaiah foretold his incarnation, and yet spake of him as a divine person: "*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,*" &c. He represents him as a "*branch springing from the root of Jesse,*" and as "*a great light that should spring up in the dark region of the shadow of death.*" The prophet Jeremiah foretold him as a "*king that should reign on the throne of David,*" who should execute "*judgment and justice on the earth,*" and that *his* name should be called "*the Lord our righteousness.*" The prophet Zachariah spake of him as "*the man, God's fellow, who should be smitten by the sword of divine justice.*"—But to be more particular:

1st. It was foretold that "*he should be of the seed of Abraham;*" that "*he should spring from the royal family of David.*" In the Scriptures we are informed that "*he was made of the seed of Abraham,*" according to the flesh, and that he "*was born of the house and lineage of David.*" St. Matthew gives us the genealogy of his supposed father, descending from Solomon the son of David; and Luke gives us that of his mother, from Nathan the son of David.

2d. It was foretold by Micah, that "*Bethlehem in the land of Judea should be the place of his birth;*" and the Evangelists inform us he was born there.

3d. It was foretold that the time of his appearance in the world would be when the sceptre departed from Judah, that is, when the family of Judah should finally lose the government or civil power over the Jews; and just at this period he did come. Though the Jews had been conquered many ages before by the Chaldeans, and afterwards were subject to the Persians,

to the Greeks and Romans, yet they permitted them to be governed by a chief magistrate of their own nation, and he was of the tribe of Judah and of the family of David, till just before the incarnation of Christ, when Herod, an Idumean, was made king, or viceroy of Judea.

4th. It was foretold that *“he should be despised and rejected of men,”* that he should *“be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”* The Evangelists inform us that he was despised, reproached and persecuted, from the cradle to the grave. When he was but a few days old, Herod thirsted for his blood, and inhumanly butchered all the infants of Bethlehem, in hopes of depriving him of his life. His character was maliciously slandered by the Scribes and Pharisees, because they could not bear his pointed reproofs, and plain, soul-searching doctrine; they termed him a drunkard, a devil, and a winebibber, and attributed all his miracles to a diabolical agency. His own countrymen according to the flesh, laid every possible snare to entangle him, and at last they inhumanly put him to the most painful and ignominious death.

5th. His sufferings and death were foretold by the prophet Isaiah, *“he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him.”* The prophet Daniel foretold that *“in seventy weeks from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, the Messiah should be put to death;”* and according to calculations of the most exact chronologers, this prediction was fulfilled precisely at the time foretold. Many of the most minute circumstances of his sufferings were predicted by the prophets; saith Isaiah: *“He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep*

before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." David foretold *"that his hand and foot should be pained and pierced; that they would mock his thirst with gall and vinegar; that they would cast lots for his vesture: and yet not a bone of him would be broken."* An examination of the history of his last sufferings will show, that these circumstances were minutely accomplished. Isaiah foretold that he would make *"his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death;"* and the sacred historian informs us that he was crucified between two thieves, and was buried by Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, in a new tomb he designed for himself.

II. This Jesus, who came into the world to save sinners, is a divine Saviour, sent of God for that very purpose. This is evident from the miracles he performed: he healed the sick; he cast out devils; he opened the eyes of the blind; he raised the dead; he fed five thousand persons upon five loaves and two fishes; he walked upon the waves of the sea; he commanded the winds and storms and they obeyed him. The design of these miracles was to prove that he was the Saviour of the world, that he came upon a divine mission, and that his Gospel is a revelation from heaven; hence he says to the unbelieving Jews: *"The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me; if I do not the works of my Father, believe me not."*

But, says the Deist, it is easy to account for these miracles; Jesus wrought them by what is called sleight of hand, by an imposition on the senses of mankind, therefore they were not miracles. I answer, this is a most unfair and unjust assertion. If we consider the nature of all the miracles upon record that Jesus wrought, it is impossible in the very nature

of things, that there could be any imposition in the case; they were wrought openly, and in the presence of thousands of spectators; in the presence of his most malignant enemies, who viewed every part of his conduct with the most critical eye. Again, certain circumstances attending the subjects of his miracles, rendered all deception impossible. On the Sabbath day, and in the Jewish synagogue, he publicly cured a woman of a distressing infirmity, under which she had laboured for eighteen years, and by which she was bowed together. Could there be any sleight of hand or deception here? Did not this woman's family, her relations, neighbors, and acquaintances, all know that during this long period she had been affected with this disease, that she had suffered much and was bowed together? When she was publicly healed before a large congregation, when they saw her relieved from her complaint, her body straightened and restored to its proper attitude, could there be a deception?

But again, suppose a child was born in Henderson County, stone blind, and lived till he was twenty or twenty-five years of age totally destitute of sight, would not his parents, his relations, and all the neighborhood know that he was blind? and if, at the age of twenty or twenty-five, some extraordinary person would anoint his eyes with clay, and tell him to wash in a certain pool and he should see, and upon obeying these directions, his eyes were opened so that he could clearly discern every visible object; could this be a deception? The same illustration might be given of the case of the lame man, who was healed by Jesus Christ at the pool of Bethesda; of his raising Lazarus from the dead, after he had been in a state of

putrefaction. But even the most malignant of his enemies who were eye witnesses of his miracles, never disputed their reality; but in order to evade the force of their evidence, they reproached him for working them on the Sabbath day, and ascribed the power of working them to Belzebub. When he raised Lazarus from the dead, the Pharisees did not question the reality of the miracle; for say they, "*If we let this man alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will take away our place and nation.*"

But, says the Deist, I do not believe he ever wrought one of these miracles; I think the history that records them is a deception. I answer, the history that records them is genuine—it is impossible for it to be an imposition upon the world; for the history that records these miracles was written by the Evangelists, who were eye witnesses of the facts. As these historians state that the miracles were wrought publicly, and in the presence of vast multitudes of spectators, if such miracles had never been performed, the populace at large would have resisted such a glaring falsehood with contempt, and the Jews and Pagans, who were inveterate enemies of Christianity, would have detected and exposed the falsehood; and, doubtless, this would have put a final check to the progress of Christianity.

But the objecter replies: Perhaps the writings ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were written many ages after their deaths, and their names were falsely affixed to them. This never has been, nor can be proven; but the contrary can be easily proven. But admitting it to be true, it would just be as impossible, then, to impose upon the world. The matter would then have appeared such a barefaced falsehood, that

it would have been immediately rejected; for every person of reason and consideration, would at once have recollected, that such astonishing events had never been heard of before. The question would be asked, how did it come to pass that persons who lived in those times, did not record such extraordinary events?—For example, we will suppose that a person, at the present time, would write a history of the late revolutionary war; that in this history he would assert that General Washington, in the year 17—marched his army across the Delaware, on the surface of the water, in a miraculous manner, without bridge, boat, or any other medium of passage; would not every officer and soldier now living, who had fought under Washington's command, detect the falsehood and reject it with disdain? Would it not be impossible to impose such a falsehood upon the present age?

But suppose that such a history, stating such a circumstance, should appear one hundred years hereafter; would it not be as impossible to impose such a falsehood upon the public then, as it would be at the present time? For every man in his senses would at once inquire how it came to pass, that such an extraordinary circumstance was never heard of before, and how it could have been omitted by the historians who lived at the time when such an event is represented to have transpired? It is contrary to reason and common sense that falsehoods of such magnitude could be imposed upon the world, and be believed and received as unquestionable truths, from age to age. Therefore, as the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ were wrought openly, before vast multitudes of spectators, and many of them his malicious enemies, as these miracles were of such a nature as to admit of no deception or

imposition upon the senses of mankind, and as they were recorded by men who were eye-witnesses of the facts, and as the Jews and Pagans, their contemporaries, never presumed to deny that such miracles were wrought, we assert, UPON UNQUESTIONABLE EVIDENCE, that such miracles were wrought by JESUS CHRIST, and consequently, they are an incontrovertible proof of his divine mission, and of the absolute certainty of divine revelation.

III. JESUS CHRIST IS A DIVINE SAVIOUR, sent of God to redeem lost sinners. This will appear if we consider the immaculate holiness and spotless purity of his life and doctrine. Thomas Paine asks the question: "What reason have I to believe in Jesus speaking in the Gospel, more than I have to believe in Mahomet speaking in the Alcoran? Both of them pretend to have a divine commission."—A great many reasons might be assigned; but here is one at hand: Mahomet came like a murderer; he propagated his doctrines by the sword, and spread bloodshed and slaughter wherever he went. But Jesus came upon the most kind, gracious and benevolent errand. "*He came to seek and to save them that were lost.*" He came to save sinners, even the chief of them. When his disciples, through human weakness and infirmity, pray him to bring fire from heaven to destroy his malicious persecutors, he severely rebuked them, and told that "*he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*" Search the history of all ages and generations of the world, and you will not find so amiable a character, a person of such untainted holiness and purity, nor such an example of piety and virtue. His whole life was spent in acts of benevolence—healing the sick, relieving the distressed, giving speech to the dumb,

hearing to the deaf, and opening the eyes of the blind; teaching men, both by example and precept, their duty to God and to each other.

His object was not the applause of men; for when he performed the most gracious and miraculous cures on the diseased, he charged them to tell no man what he had done. When he was reviled he reviled not again. He pitied and wept over his most malicious enemies. He prayed for the forgiveness of his blood-thirsty persecutors, even when they were mocking at his agonies, and sporting with his dying groans. Read the history of his life, as recorded by the evangelists, and his character appears without the smallest stain; indeed, even the most inveterate enemies of Christianity acknowledge, that he was a person of the most unblemished piety and virtue. Porphyry, though a malicious infidel, speaks of him as a man of the most extraordinary wisdom, approved of by the Gods, and taken up to heaven for his virtue. Severus, the Roman Emperor, was so enamoured both with the excellency of his character and with the purity of his life, that he would have adopted him into the number of his gods, and would have built him a temple, had not the opposition of his pagan subjects prevented it. And every sensible Deist of the present day, speaks of him as the most upright, virtuous man that ever lived. Look at his doctrine in its purity and spirituality, and in its nature and tendency, and every candid Deist must acknowledge that it becomes a God, and is calculated to promote the happiness of mankind.

When treating on our duty to God, he tells us that the divine law requires us "*to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.*" And can any thing be more fit and proper in the very rea-

son and nature of things, than to love infinite excellence, beauty and perfection? What can be more proper than that we love our creator, preserver and benefactor, who is the very essence of all loveliness?

When he teaches the nature of our worship and obedience to God, he requires the most genuine, unfeigned sincerity of heart. *“Not every one that says unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they that do the will of my father who is in heaven.”* He every where tells us that the reality of our love to God, and the sincerity of our profession, must be evinced by a life of holiness and virtue. *“Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.”* *“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”* *“Let your light shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your father who is in heaven.”* And again, *“Be ye perfect, as your father who is in heaven is perfect.”*

When he teaches our duty to man, he commands us *“to do unto all men as we would that they should do unto us.”* *“Render unto every man his due.”* *“Love your enemies: bless them that curse you; pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.”* Examine his doctrine as it is illustrated in his sermon on the mount, and the parable of the good Samaritan; view all his doctrines and precepts in their nature and tendency, and reason and the light of nature must confess, that he was a teacher sent from God.

IV. The efficacy of the gospel on the lives and conduct of men, is an incontestible proof that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, and that his gospel IS A REVELATION FROM HEAVEN. When we consider the apparent insufficiency of the means, and the astonishing effects produced by them, every candid mind must acknowledge that no-

thing less than the power of God, by such means, could have produced such effects. For twelve illiterate men to proclaim to the world that a man, who died upon a cross at Jerusalem, was the son of God and the Saviour of the world—for these men to go on, in opposition to the wisdom, superstition, pride and prejudices of mankind, persuading them to forsake the religion of their fathers, and the imaginary gods of their ancestors, to deny themselves of all their beloved vices, to forsake the love and practice of every sin; to do all this at the risk of suffering reproach, persecution, and death in its most tremendous forms, with no other means of compulsion than the force of argument, no other encouragement but the hopes of happiness after death—a blessedness of which mankind were ignorant;—this, the apostle Paul tells us, was a “*stumbling block to the Jews, and to the learned Greeks foolishness;*” while “*it was the wisdom of God to them that believe.*” What was the effect? The conversion and salvation of many millions. Under one sermon, on the day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were converted. In a few days we find the number of Christians increased to five thousand, and in a few years the power of the gospel overspread Egypt, Syria, and Arabia. It went like a rapid flame over all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, as far as Greece and Italy, and in a very short time it overspread Europe and Asia, and extended even to the distant parts of the then known world. Tacitus asserts, that in the reign of Nero, about twenty years after the death of Christ, there were multitudes of Christians at Rome against whom the Emperor raised a persecution, attended with such circumstances of ignominy and cruelty, as raised the compassion even of their enemies. Pliny writes to the emperor Trajan,

that many persons of both sexes, and of every age and rank, were infected with this superstition, as he calls it; that it had got into the villages as well as the cities; that the temples of the heathen deities were almost deserted, and hardly any could be found who would buy victims for them. Again, when we consider that it not only overspread the world with an irresistible power, but at the same time triumphed over every public opposition, and the most cruel and bloody persecutions that the combined powers of earth and hell could possibly exert, every candid, reflecting mind must acknowledge that God was its author, and that it is a revelation from heaven. The idolatrous superstitions of the pagan world, which had prevailed for many centuries, stood in direct opposition to it—the civil power exerted itself for its destruction—the Roman empire for ages strained every nerve for its extermination—death in its most tremendous forms was resorted to; but the more the Christians were persecuted, tortured and butchered, the more their numbers increased, till their persecutors were constrained to confess, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. What an unquestionable accomplishment of Christ's prediction, "*That its beginning was like a grain of mustard-seed, the least of all seeds, yet became a mighty tree, and extended its branches over the whole earth.*"

V. But, lastly, Jesus Christ is a Saviour sent from God, and his gospel is a revelation from heaven. This is evident to all true Christians, who have experienced the power and efficacy of his pardoning and peace-speaking blood. They have a knowledge of him of which the wisest philosopher, and the most accomplished scholar is ignorant, while in an unre-

generate state; for they have seen his glory by the eye of faith; they have felt the witness of a sealed pardon through his merits; they have peace with God, and joy unspeakable and full of glory, by faith in his all-sufficient satisfaction to the law and justice of God; and God's spirit bears witness with theirs, that they are interested in it. Their natures are changed from the love of sin to the love of holiness; "*old things are passed away, and all things are become new.*" They can draw near to God as to a reconciled father. They can meet death with undaunted bravery, and rejoice in the prospect of eternal felicity.

Ah, says the Deist, this is all enthusiasm. I ask, what is enthusiasm? Enthusiasm has neither Christ for its object, nor the Bible for its guide. But that joy and peace in believing, that has Christ for its object and foundation, the love of God for its guide, and manifests itself by love to God and man, and by a universal obedience to all the commands of God, is not enthusiasm: it is a divine reality. With such a religion as this, the Christian can be certain of his interest in the love and favor of his God, and of eternal happiness after death; and, therefore, he possesses such unerring testimony of the divinity of Christ, and of the certainty of divine revelation, that it is impossible to shake his belief or move his confidence.

But what is the import of the soul-reviving declaration, "*He came into the world to save sinners?*" From what does he save them?

1st. He saves them from the curse and condemning sentence of God's righteous law: and what a salvation is this! Created wisdom and eloquence cannot describe it. Angels desire to look into it. JESUS, the brightness of the Father's glory—he that was in the camp

of God—the Eternal Word, came into the world to save sinners; “*he was made flesh, became of no reputation,*” and stood in the sinner’s law room and place. He endured in his own soul and body what was equivalent to all the pains of hell, and he paid down to the justice of God the whole infinite sum of the Elect’s ransom. In a word, by his holy life, bloody sufferings, and painful death, he has wrought out an all-sufficient salvation for the chief of sinners, the worst of men and women.

Again, he saves sinners from the very being of sin; from its dominion and enslaving power, and from all its malignant consequences. The angel told his supposed father, before his birth, that “*he should be called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins.*” The prophet Daniel tells us, “*that the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself;*” “*that he should finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness.*” He saves both by price and power. He paid the price of their ransom to the justice of God, in scarlet streams of divine blood, that flowed from his breaking heart till a holy God declared himself well satisfied for his righteousness’ sake. He saves them by power, for he plucks them as brands from the burning, in the day of their conversion to God; he snatches them out of the jaws of the roaring Lion of hell. By the influences of his spirit, and by his word and ordinances, and by the dispensations of his providence, he purges them from sin; he sanctifies and prepares them as vessels of mercy, to be filled and overflow with eternal and indescribable glory, in the blissful regions of the heavenly paradise.

He saves them from the power of the Devil, from the sting and curse of death and the grave, and from

the last and least remains of sin. This great salvation contains in it, not only a complete deliverance from sin and hell, but an exaltation to the highest heaven. It contains sealed pardon and peace with God—joy in the Holy Ghost—the witness of the spirit—and a sense of Jehovah's love shed abroad in the heart. It contains eternal life, and the most exalted blessedness in the immediate presence and full fruition of an infinite God. It contains an "*inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; joys that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*"

How precious, then, is Jesus to them that believe. When a pardoned sinner beholds the glory, beauty and preciousness of Jesus, does not this sight communicate the very foretastes of heaven—

“While sweetly, humbly he beholds at length,
Christ as his only righteousness and strength?”

How do you suppose the dying thief, who was crucified by his side, felt when Jesus said to him: "*This day thou shalt be with me in paradise?*" How do you think that poor blood-thirsty murderer, who pierced his side with his spear, felt when the rich tide of blood and water which burst from his heart, washed him whiter than the snow? For it appears evident to me, that he was converted and saved, as this is the literal fulfilment of Zachariah's prophecy: "*They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn,*" &c.

SERMON II.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST A MIGHTY CONQUEROR.



Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. ISAIAH lxiii. 1.

THE promise which the Eternal Father made to the Son in the covenant of redemption, was, that “*he should have a numerous seed;*” that “*he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;*” that “*he should have a name above every name;*” that “*every knee in heaven, earth and hell should bow to him.*”

When we consider the infinite glory and dignity of his person—when we view the triumphant victories of his cross, and the greatness, the glory, the fulness and sufficiency of that salvation which he has wrought out by his bloody sufferings and dying agonies, we must acknowledge that the united wisdom of angels, arch-angels, and spirits of just men made perfect, cannot express the ten-thousandth part of his glory. Join all the glorious names of wisdom, love and power, that mortals ever knew, or angels ever bore—all are too mean to speak his truth, or to set forth his glory.

All nature has been racked to produce metaphors. Figures the most bold and significant that the material world can afford, have been brought forward to illustrate the inexpressible glories of Immanuel; and when all is done, we must say, a greater than Solomon is here; we must confess, with the Queen of Sheba, that the half cannot be told.

In our text he is represented as a mighty conqueror, returning from the field of battle with garments rolled in blood, carrying in triumph the trophies of final victory. "*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*" It was a practice among the eastern nations, when a commander returned victorious from final conquest, he entered the metropolis of his own country in triumph. Hundreds and thousands crowded from every part to see the amazing exhibition. The conqueror was initiated with the highest possible pomp and grandeur, his attendants bearing the rich trophies of his victories—the arms, standards, and valuable prizes he had taken from the enemy; the nobility, princes, and commanders of the conquered led in chains, or bound to his chariot wheels. To this custom it is evident the prophet alludes when he introduces the almighty, all-conquering Jesus, coming from Edom in triumph from Bozrah, with garments dipped in blood, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength.

Edom was that part of Arabia which lay adjacent to Judea. It was inhabited by the descendants of Esau, who in every age and generation were inveterate enemies to the church and people of God. Therefore Edom is here taken metaphorically for the principalities and powers of hell, the spiritual dominion of the Devil. Bozrah was the metropolis of Edom, therefore when the Almighty takes his departure from Bozrah, it expresses complete victory and final conquest.

When a general carries his arms into an enemy's country, he commonly destroys the military force, the

very vitals of the enemy. When he takes the metropolis, every other post must fall an easy prey. Therefore, coming in triumph from Bozrah, doubtless, signifies the glorious victory of Calvary. It was there that the all-conquering Jesus subdued the powers of Hell, bruised the serpent's head, and gave the fatal blow to the vitals of the Devil's power. By this decisive victory the way was prepared for all the glorious conquests which he shall obtain, until all things are put under his feet, until every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess his name in heaven and earth.

He is represented as coming from Bozrah with dyed garments. He bears the marks of a triumphant conqueror, for he is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood. In the following verse he says, "*I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*"

The prophet also describes him as "*glorious in his apparel.*" Although he entered the bloody field in disguise, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a servant, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised and rejected by the people; as the psalmist expresses it, "*a worm, and no man;*" yet now he appears in all the pomp and grandeur of the Godhead; he comes off victorious; he is "*glorious in his apparel,*" dressed in all the brilliant robes of Deity, clothed in all the essential glories, perfections and attributes of the Godhead. Thus he is described by St. John, in the Revelation. And I saw "*in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were*

white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword; and his countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength."

Again, he is represented as "*travelling in the greatness of his strength.*" This sets forth his omnipotence. He is the self-existent Sovereign of the universe, possessed of almighty power. He will conquer until all things are put under his feet. He comes "*from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah,*" like a mighty conqueror travelling in the greatness of his strength, going on from conquering to conquer, achieving one victory after another, until all his ransomed millions are rescued from the jaws of the Devil, and put in possession of the heavenly inheritance, "*which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*"

We may inquire who asks the question, "*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?*" I answer, that it is the church, or the prophet in the name of the church; or every pardoned sinner, who, by the eye of faith, beholds his glory and the infinite beauty and loveliness of his person. The happy soul who views the glory of God in the face of Jesus, who sees his almighty sufficiency and willingness to save, who contemplates all the attributes and perfections of the divine nature, all the infinite glory and beauty of the Godhead manifested in the triumphant victories he has gained over sin, death and hell; he is so filled with praise, gratitude and love, so lost in wonder and adoration, that he is ready to cry out with the prophet, "*Who is this*

that cometh from Edom with dyed garments?" Oh, what an infinite beauty I see in him! What a glory! Oh, how fair! how sweet! how precious! how lovely! What a Christ! What a salvation!

Who can describe his worth, his glory or his grace, equal to the views of the soul thus lost in wonder? The tongue of an arch-angel falters, Gabriel sinks beneath the weighty task. And, therefore, the prophet represents the almighty conqueror resolving the question. "*The Lion of the tribe of Judah alone is worthy to take the book and loose the seals.*" He answers the question in a style expressive of the complete sufficiency of that salvation which he procured—expressive of his almighty power to save to the uttermost the poor, guilty, wretched sinner. "I, THAT SPEAK IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, MIGHTY TO SAVE." I present to ruined, naked sinners, a glorious robe of sanctifying righteousness; I speak peace to the troubled conscience; I offer pardon and reconciliation to God; to the soul of the disconsolate sinner I whisper joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. Therefore, I am mighty to save; for my almighty arm, my omnipotent grace, can extricate the sinner from the lowest abyss of misery and wo.

In the farther prosecution of this subject we shall,

I. Take a view of the glorious conquest achieved by the death and sufferings of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

II. Conclude by passing a few brief observations upon the words "MIGHTY TO SAVE."

I. Take a view of the glorious conquests achieved by the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then let us for a moment consider the state of the world, at large, previous to that glorious revolution effected by the victories of the cross.

It is scarcely necessary to inform you how the old Serpent deceived our first parents, and robbed them of their native innocence; how Adam and all his race became infected with sin, as a malignant poison, and sunk into a state of condemnation. All mankind revolted from their God—became the willing slaves of the Devil—partook of his image, his temper, and disposition so entirely, that as the Divine Spirit expresses it, “*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; yea, he is prone to do evil, as the sparks are to fly upward.*” He is filled with enmity to the laws and the government of his Creator, and at the same time delighted with the service, the mean drudging and vassalage of the Devil. Hence Satan became, by his own consent, his Lord and Sovereign. He erected the world into a kind of universal empire, and held the whole human race under his tyrannical power and dominion; possessed the same place in their affections that God occupies in the bosoms of holy and happy beings;—and hence it is that the Devil is styled “*the prince of this world, the ruler of the darkness of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the God of this world,*” &c. Thus mankind having become the subjects of the Devil, were righteously condemned to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire with him, as the just reward of their rebellion against God.

Time would fail to inform you of the scenes of wickedness, the dissipation, the debauchery, the falsehood, the deceit, the injustice and bloodshed, that have filled the earth in every age and generation of the world; how that the whole of the habitable globe, except the small spot of Judea, was in a state of the most horrible ignorance of God; how that the Devil

was truly their God, worshipped and obeyed as such by them; that the Eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, became flesh and dwelt amongst us. He, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, the great, uncreated I AM, took upon himself the likeness of a servant, made himself of no reputation, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, and subdue the empire of hell, and establish an everlasting kingdom of righteousness in the world.

To effect this glorious revolution, two great objects must be accomplished: first, he must dethrone the usurper and destroy his kingdom; secondly, he must redeem the guilty sinner from the curse of the law and the demands of offended justice: therefore, he must be a Saviour, both by price and power. Hence says the apostle, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*"

But no sooner does he make his appearance in the world, than all hell is alarmed. Herod, like a bloodhound, endeavors to destroy him, while yet an infant only a few days old. No sooner does he enter upon his public ministry, than the old Serpent attacks him with his fiery temptations, hoping to ensnare the second Adam as he had done the first. But the Almighty Conqueror is proof against every assault. The tempter is obliged to retreat with shame and disgrace.

We might tell you how he stirred up the Scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees, and all the Jewish Sanhedrim, to persecute him, to revile him, to slander his character; ascribing his Godlike miracles to the Devil, endeavoring to ensnare him in his speech, and laying in wait to murder him. But we shall pass to

the bloody conflict on Mount Calvary, which crowned him with victory. And here let us inquire what were the sufferings of the Son of God? how dreadful his tortures? how excruciating his pains? The tongue of an arch-angel cannot tell, nothing less than the infinite mind of God can comprehend them. See him in the garden of Gethsemane, though the band of soldiers had not seized him; the thorns and scourges, the nails and spear were unfelt; yet he had the most perfect knowledge of the dreadfulness of the wrath of an infinite God due to sin. He could comprehend the full extent of the curse of the divine law, which would have crushed ten thousand worlds of angels to the lowest hell. Therefore, under the dreadful apprehensions of his approaching sufferings, his humanity is so shocked that he is filled with the most woeful consternation. Hear him crying out, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Oh, my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.*" Behold the Saviour's agony, see him falling upon the ground, the blood gushing from every pore of his body. If his sufferings were so intolerable in anticipation, how dreadful must they have been when all the fury of heaven, earth and hell was poured upon him. Betrayed by one of his professed friends, he is sold to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver. A band of soldiers seize and lead him away. The hands which uphold the universe are bound with cords. See him arraigned before Pilate's bar, and found innocent, but yet condemned. Now behold the harmless Lamb of God, as the Psalmist expresses it, surrounded by the bulls of Bashan, fierce and strong: i. e. by Herod, Pilate and the Chief Priests. Insulted by the Roman soldiery, abused by

the low, mean and contemptible rabble. See that face so lovely spat upon, black and mangled, swelled by strokes, and red with gore. Behold him who came to work a spotless robe to cover naked souls, himself stripped and scourged with knotty whips till his bones might be counted. See the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, covered with a purple robe of mock royalty. ~~which pierced him." Says Daniel: "I behold with the~~ See him who crowns with glory millions of pardoned rebels, himself crowned with thorns, piercing his temples with streaming wounds. After all this, he is made to bear his cross through the streets of Jerusalem, and up Mount Calvary to the place of execution. Behold, he is laid upon the cross—his measure taken—his feet nailed by iron spikes to the upright pillar—his arms are extended upon the transverse beam, and his hands made fast—the bloody tree erected and jolted with violence into the pit prepared for its reception, which racks his body and tears his wounds with an unutterable torture. Now behold the Lamb of God, the bleeding, dying Jesus, suspended between heaven and earth by his tender hands and feet, as a mark for the justice of God, the malice of devils, and the rage of wicked men. But these torments of the body are small, when compared to the excruciating pains, the agonizing tortures of the soul. The vengeance of God incensed against sin, falls upon him with infinite weight. The sins of the whole elect world seize upon him like so many deadly vipers. The curse of the divine law, which hurled legions of Angels, excelling in strength, from the heaven of heavens, to the bottomless pit of Hell, was laid upon him in its full extent. He endured in his soul and body all the pains which his blood-bought millions would have suffered to all eternity in Hell.

Let us suppose a burning glass so constructed as to collect all the rays of heat emanating from the sun into one focal point. It would in a moment consume a mountain of flint, and make it flow a stream of liquid fire. But this would bear no comparison to the tremendous blaze of divine vengeance, which shot from the burning throne of justice, and concentrated upon the person of Christ.

But what rendered his sufferings most intolerable of all, was the hiding of his father's face. The sweet smiles of Jehovah, which he had enjoyed from the earliest period of eternity, are now withdrawn. The sun of righteousness is eclipsed in midnight darkness. Every drop of comfort from heaven and earth is gone. Now hear the incarnate God, with groans that shake the Universe, crying out in the most intolerable anguish: "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani.*" The rocks are rent—the mountains shake—all nature is convulsed. "*The veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.*" The graves give up their dead—the heavens are clad in sackcloth—the sun is wrapped in darkness. Now behold the rose of Sharon, the lily of Paradise, dipped in streams of divine blood.

The eternal I AM, the essence of being, the fountain of life, sinks in the agonies of death a pale and lifeless corpse, and with a loud "IT IS FINISHED," gives up the ghost.

Jesus drinks the bitter cup,
The wine-press treads alone.

But human reason asks, Is this the mighty conqueror, the heroic Jesus, you have been describing? This man, thus crucified in weakness, hanging dead upon the cross, whom Joseph of Arimathea wraps in linen and lays in a grave; is this the invincible hero?

Why does he not act the God? Why not make his lightnings flash, his thunders roll, his vengeance burst in storms upon his bloody persecutors?

His disciples are brought to a dreadful stand. They see their master dead and laid in the grave. They know not what to make of it. "*We trusted,*" say they, "*that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.*" We may suppose the Angelic armies are struck with astonishment, when they behold their mighty Maker die; the creator of all worlds a mangled, bloody corpse.

Around the bloody tree,
They pressed with strong desire,
That wondrous sight to see—
The Lord of Life expire.
And could these eyes have known a tear,
Had dropt it there,
In sad surprise.

But Jehovah's paths are in the deep, his footsteps in the mighty waters. *Christ crucified is, indeed, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to every one that believes, the wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation.*

However pagans may scoff, and infidels sneer at the crucifixion and death of the Son of God, it was the most memorable and the most glorious transaction that heaven and earth, God, angels, or men ever witnessed.

The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus—the overturning of the great Persian Empire by Alexander—the victories of Hannibal, Scipio and Bonaparte, which have crowned the little heroes of this world with immortal honor, and raised their fame to the stars, are all but like the frantic projects of Bedlamites, or the unmeaning manœuvres of insects, when compared with the victory gained by the Almighty Jesus over the powers of Darkness, upon Mount Calvary. Here

he destroyed the empire of hell; he went down into the dark territory of Death, defeated him in his own dominions, and deprived him of his poisonous sting. It was, indeed, a spectacle worthy the admiration of the Universe, to see the despised Gallilean, one in the likeness of the son of man, wresting the keys of death and hell from the devil; to see him entangling the rulers of darkness in their own nets, and defeating them by their own stratagems. They made one of his disciples betray, and another deny him; they made the Jews accuse, and the Romans crucify him;—but after all this, the wonderful counsellor out-generalled the old Serpent. Here the Lion of the tribe of Judah was too powerful for the roaring Lion of Hell. The unparalleled cruelty of men and devils is overruled by the wisdom of God, to effect the pardon of millions of rebellious sinners; in short, to make an end of all sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness.

Though he was crucified in weakness, yet, says M'Laurin, "with one hand he grasped multitudes of poor lost sinners, just ready to plunge into hell; and with the other he grasped a heavenly inheritance, unspeakable joys, and an eternal weight of glory. to give them—and died with the shout of victory in his mouth, crying, 'IT IS FINISHED.'"

But come to his resurrection, and does he not appear a mighty conqueror indeed! Behold, he breaks the bars of death, and rises like a God, proclaiming his victory—that he has fulfilled the law, satisfied divine justice, and purchased eternal blessedness for his followers.

Uprising from the darksome tomb,
See the triumphant Jesus come,
The Lord of Glory leaves the prison,
And Angels tell that he is risen.

Yes, they tell the weeping women at the sepulchre, "*Fear not, ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen as he said. Come, see where the Lord lay.*" He remains forty days upon earth; organizes his new empire, established upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom; and though his church was then like a grain of mustard seed, yet it has grown and increased, and will continue to expand til it fills the whole habitable globe—until the knowledge of God covers the earth, as the waters the face of the great deep.

In the mean time he condescends to visit his poor persecuted followers. He meets Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, and tenderly accosts her: "*Woman, why weepest thou?*" "*Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.*" On the eve of the Sabbath, when his poor mourning disciples were met together, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, the blessed Jesus, their glorious risen Lord, appears in the midst of them, surprises them with his sweet presence, and says: "*Peace be unto you.*" He shows them his hands and feet. As the two disciples were going to Emmaus, he draws nigh and travels with them. He opens their minds to understand the Scriptures, then makes himself known to them in the breaking of bread. Overjoyed, they return to Jerusalem—run to their brethren—and while telling them the blessed news, Jesus is in the midst of them again, saying, "*Peace be unto you;*" and while they are terrified and affrighted at his presence, with all the tenderness of a God, he addresses them: "*Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?*"

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” “*And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, that he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*” Like a mighty conqueror, he ascends far above the visible heavens to his native glory, and sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Now all heaven wonders and adores, while angels and archangels cry in the language of the text: “*Who is this that cometh from Ed~~ra~~ with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?*”

But again, this Jesus, the friend of sinners, he that is mighty to save, is a glorious conqueror. The dreadful battle on Mount Calvary, though decisive, was the prelude to innumerable God-like victories, which he has since achieved, over the arch fiend of hell.—The apostle John thus describes him in his victorious military career: “*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*”

The next glorious victory recorded of him was won upon the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down like the rushing of a mighty wind, when the glory of God filled the place. On this day, under one sermon, three thousand souls were brought, like humble penitents, to the feet of Jesus; and amongst them some of the most bloodthirsty monsters, who had imbrued their hands in the blood of the Son of God. And in a few days after, we find his conquests rapidly increasing. When the apostles and their new con-

verts were met together with one accord, and engaged in importunate prayer, the Holy Spirit descends from Heaven with mighty power, and shakes the place in which they were assembled.

[Soon after the triumphant Lord spreads his conquests over all Syria, Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt; along the Mediterranean throughout Asia Minor, Greece and Italy; thence to the most distant parts of the habitable earth, until millions are rescued from the jaws of the roaring Lion of hell. And many have been the glorious days of the outpouring of the Spirit of God, bestowed upon our wretched world, to the salvation of millions. Three of these great days of the Son of Man I have witnessed. One, on the Monongahela, where I first felt the all-conquering power of the love of Jesus, which to all eternity I shall never forget, was at a Sacrament on the morning of a Sabbath in 1786. The second in North Carolina, in 1789. The third in Kentucky, from 1797 until 1802. And may I ever lie the lowest, humblest creature in the dust, when I reflect that the Lord made use of me, mean and unworthy, to begin the glorious work in both these blessed seasons. I rejoice at the prospect. I expect to meet with many souls in heaven, who were my spiritual children in both these revivals.

But, glory to God, the all-conquering Jesus will ride on the chariot of his gospel, gaining victory after victory, until his empire shall spread from pole to pole; till it includes all Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.] Soon the time shall come when a nation will be born in a day; when the small stone cut out of the mountain without hands will become an exceeding great mountain and fill the whole world; when the light of the moon shall be as the light of

the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days; when the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters do the face of the great deep.

Another trait in the character and conduct of this conqueror, is, that, after having subdued the veteran soldiers and commanders of the camp of hell, he converts them into the most bold and undaunted heroes of the Cross.

See Saul, the bloody persecutor, bound for Damascus, commanding a troop for the tyrant of hell, intending death and destruction to all that named the name of Christ. Jesus arrests him in his course, strikes conviction so deep into his soul, that he falls prostrate to the ground, and cries in bitter anguish: "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" See him pardoned, justified, and sent as a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ to Kings and Gentiles;—and behold him one of the unconquerable champions in the cause of Jesus, fighting under the banner of the Cross, and bringing whole nations to bow to the royal sceptre of Immanuel.

During the three first centuries, the Devil struggled hard, by the instrumentality of the Roman emperors, to recover his kingdom. By ten successive persecutions they endeavored to extirpate Christianity from the earth. But, as the persecutors themselves acknowledged, the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church; for the more they tortured the Christians, the more they butchered them by death in its most aggravated forms, the more the work of God prevailed and their number increased. But it was under the emperor Dioclesian, that the Devil made his most vigorous exertion to destroy the church. The Christians were put to death with such slaughter, that the empire was measurably depopulated. On public days

they were collected and butchered by thousands, until the streets ran in blood. Every Christian known in the world was put to death. Now hell triumphed. The devil boasted final victory. A coin was struck by the Roman Emperor, with this inscription: "Christianity abolished, and the worship of the Gods restored." But Jesus, the mighty to save, reserves his victory till the most desperate, hopeless period. When it seems that all is lost, Dioclesian dies, and Constantine is proclaimed Emperor. While on his march to Rome, the victorious Lord displays his almighty power, converts Constantine, and brings him as an humble penitent to his feet. He ascends the throne as a Christian, demolishes the pagan temples, and destroys their idols.

Now the religion of Jesus rises, like the phoenix from its ashes, *"bright as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."*

Many examples might be enumerated of the triumphing law of Christ; but it were useless to dwell upon particulars. View the countless millions of the redeemed out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people upon the earth; every individual of whom is an astonishing wonder of mercy to himself and to the angelic hosts.

Again, let us compare the mighty heroes, the bloody conquerors of this world, with our Lord Jesus Christ; those who have overturned thrones and empires, and drenched the world in blood. When thus compared, Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, Tamerlane, Frederic of Prussia, and Napoleon, dwindle into insignificant pigmies. All their plans, victories, conquests and revolutions fall as far beneath the glory of the triumphs of the Cross and their attendant consequences, as the cob-houses of children are inferior to the solar system.

Cyrus, indeed, drained the great river Euphrates into the artificial Lake, entered the City through its dry passage, and thus subdued the metropolis of the world, and ruined the Chaldean empire. Thrice he carried his victorious army into Lydia, and led the celebrated Cræsus in chains.

But Jesus drank dry the infinite ocean of God's burning wrath, demolished the strong holds of the devil, overturned the dark empire of hell, and led the monster Death in chains.

Alexander, at the head of his Grecian lions, swam the Granicus, charged an army six times as numerous as his own, and cut them to pieces. With the rapidity of the leopard he pursues his victory, annihilates a mighty host at the straits of Issus, takes Gaza, Tyre, and Lydon, and at the decisive battle upon the plains of Arbela, subdues the great Persian empire.

But Jesus comes, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, flying upon the wings of everlasting love; he swims through floods of divine wrath, to rescue sinners from destruction; "*bruises the head of the serpent,*" wrests the keys of hell from the hands of the devil, and liberates millions of captive souls from his galling servitude.

These mighty butchers of mankind spread death and destruction wherever they go. But Jesus came upon the most benevolent mission—not to destroy, but to save them. The object of his victories is not to enslave poor rebels, but to redeem them from worse than Egyptian bondage, and bring them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God—to make them kings and priests unto God—to put them in possession of a heavenly inheritance—of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory—of joys such as "*eye hath not seen,*

nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

The mighty men of this world, with all their power, can only subdue the body; with all their troops and artillery they can never conquer the heart: the mind will be free. But Jesus subdues both soul and body; he changes the disposition of the savage into the meekness and innocence of the lamb.

Let an Austrian or a Spaniard contemplate Bonaparte in all his imperial pomp and grandeur, or in the height of his military power, would this subdue his heart or conquer his enmity? No. It would only incense his hatred and influence his resentment.

The potent monarch may chain their bodies, and force them to submission, but their souls are still unconquerable. But let the most hardened veteran in the devil's camp, whether Pagan, Mahometan, or Atheist, once view the unspeakable glory and beauty of Jesus, and the enmity of his heart is slain; he grounds the arms of his rebellion, and falls an humble penitent at his feet. Yea, could an army numerous as that which Xerxes led across the Hellespont, behold the infinite beauty of the lovely Jesus displayed as one man, they would turn their backs upon their old master, the devil, and fly to the banner of prince Immanuel.—And now let us bring forward heroes of a more amiable character: and when compared with our Lord Jesus Christ, they sink into insignificance.

Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden, the hero and the Christian, the terror of Europe, yet the friend of mankind;—he fought and conquered, but it was for the religion and the liberties of his people. The Duke of Marlboro' slew his thousands and tens of thousands, won battle after battle; but it was in defence

of the Protestant cause against the persecuting house of Bourbon. William III. of England, also fought and conquered, but it was to free a nation from the yoke of a popish tyrant.

We may add the immortal Washington, the patriot and sage, who, aided by the justness of his cause, succeeded in rescuing an infant nation from the yoke of oppression, and in establishing its freedom and independence. But all these great men were obliged to triumph at the expense of the blood of multitudes. Jesus conquers by his own death—though blood must be spilt, it flows from his own streaming wounds—his own bleeding heart. They fought for temporal blessings, for an earthly portion;—he, to procure freedom from sin and hell—to purchase eternal glory and blessedness in Heaven.

Before we dismiss this part of the subject, let us contemplate the last glorious victory, when he treads all his enemies under his feet—when he casts the devil and all his subjects into the bottomless pit of hell—and lifts all his ransomed followers to the highest summit of glory;—when he will come in the clouds of heaven, in all the pomp and grandeur of the godhead, to judge the world in righteousness. His appearance then will be awfully grand and majestic. He will come surrounded by all his holy angels, with power and great glory. He will descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. He will ascend the great white throne in full view of heaven, earth and hell. Saith John: "*Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.*" Says Daniel: "*I beheld till the thrones were cast down, 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 the fiery flame, and his wheels of burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."

How is he changed! Is this the babe of Bethlehem? the man of sorrow?—the criminal condemned at Pilate's bar, who expired on the cross all covered with wounds and blood?

Now the Deist, who denied his divinity and sneered at his word; lukewarm professors who served him with the forms, without the power of religion; with Pilate, who passed the unjust sentence upon him; and persecuting Jews, who shouted "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*" tremble before him, and, with shrieks that pierce the Heavens, they call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne. The clangor of the last trump is heard throughout heaven, earth and hell.

The Lord of Glory sends his summons forth,
Calls the South nations, and awakes the North.
From East to West his sovereign orders spread,
Through distant worlds and regions of the dead.

The sleeping nations awake. Death and hell give up their dead. The Almighty Conqueror sends his angels to the four winds of heaven, to gather his elect. Not the poorest beggar, or the meanest slave that ever felt the love of Jesus, shall be left. Now Adam and all his posterity, an innumerable multitude, stand at once upon the earth. The righteous are separated from the wicked. The former with marks of the highest love, are placed on the right hand; while the ungodly and impenitent stand on the left, covered with horror and dismay, awaiting their final doom. And

now the victorious Lord, with a voice sweeter than the music of heaven, welcomes his ransomed followers into the celestial Paradise: "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" Then, with a frown which communicates the hell of hells, with a voice which shakes the universe, and makes the bottomless abyss of damnation tremble to its centre, he passes sentence on the wicked: "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.*"

II. Conclude by passing a few brief observations upon the words "MIGHTY TO SAVE."

The many names by which Christ is called in Scripture, are designed to set forth his excellency, and recommend him to the choice of every guilty sinner. Such as, "*Jehovah*"—"*Jesus*"—"*Immanuel*"—"*Christ*"—"*The friend of sinners*"—"*The rock of ages*"—"*The fountain opened*"—"*The tree of life*"—"*The true light*"—"*The day star*"—"*The morning star*"—"*The sun of righteousness*"—"*The hiding place*"—"*The strong hold*"—"*The good shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep.*" But the name used in the text, "*Mighty to save,*" seems to be the aggregate of them all. In it is contained every idea of the being, essence, and attributes of God. It includes Christ in all his mediatorial offices, all the rich provisions of the everlasting covenant; in a word, all that is necessary for the salvation of sinners.

First. "*Mighty to save*" implies that redemption is purchased; that the ransom is paid, and that all things upon God's part are ready. It also implies that no case is too desperate, too hopeless, for the almighty power, the unbounded goodness of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Harlots, publicans, and thieves, yea, even the murderers of the Son of God—those who spat upon him, scourged, crowned him with thorns, and nailed him to the cross, found pardon for their sins in his blood. Are there any in a more hopeless situation, such need not despair. Jesus is mighty to save. Though your crimes were more numerous, and infinitely more provoking than all the sins that have been pardoned from the beginning of the world to the present day, yet Jesus bids you welcome. He tells you: "*Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.*" His blood, like an infinite ocean, is all-sufficient to cleanse you from all the impurities of sin. But, says the distressed sinner, I feel myself ruined and undone, and that there is no hope for me. Then you are the character his mercy calls. He came to seek and save them that were lost. "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*" But, says the condemned rebel, I have spent my whole life in rebellion against God. I have sinned against light. I have stifled conscience, have murdered many convictions, and quenched the holy spirit of God. Had I attended to the calls of mercy many years ago, it might have been well with me; but I fear that is now too late. Hear the Lord by his prophet: "*Though your sins be as crimson, they shall be as wool; though they be red like scarlet, they shall be white as snow.*"

Though your sins were ten thousand times more aggravating, though you have long provoked the Lord, and have trampled his blood under your feet, yet his pains, his groans, and dying agonies, his streaming wounds, all invite you to come unto him.

The sinner says, I have waited long, have been crying for mercy; but I seem only to grow worse. Others

have been released; but no deliverance comes to me. But, friend, Christ has waited much longer upon you; then do not despair. The lame man lay at the pool of Bethesda thirty-eight years, and at last was healed. If you return to sin, you must be lost eternally. Then continue to plead for mercy, and salvation and eternal life shall be given you. Though you are on the brink of ruin, helpless and undone, Jesus is the "*resurrection and the life.*" Though dead, you shall be made alive. Strive not to make yourself better; come just as you are, though blind as Bartemius and dead as Lazarus. Remember Christ is the great physician. He can heal all the maladies of the soul. His encouraging invitation is: "*Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else.*"

SERMON III.

ON THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.



For the wages of sin is death.—ROM. vi. 23.

THE design of the Apostle, in the preceding chapter, is to prove the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. This being established by the most forcible arguments, he proceeds in this chapter to show, that this doctrine, so far from giving toleration to sin and licentiousness, lays the surest foundation for a life of obedience, and could only be evinced by the fruits of holiness in heart and life; and, therefore, through the whole chapter, he exhorts the people of God to the exercise of self-denial, and mortification, and to a growing progress in the life of sanctification: all of which exercises being the genuine fruits of a justified state, are the only convincing proofs of it, both to the world and to their own consciences.

The Apostle concludes the chapter with two powerful motives, taken from the different consequences resulting from a life of sin and a life of holiness. "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*"

In the words of the text we may observe an inseparable connexion between sin and death, such as exists between the cause and the effect. Death is here termed the wages of sin, in allusion to the custom of soldiers or servants, who at the close of their service, receive their reward or full pay. So death, natural

and eternal, follows a life spent in sin, as its just desert. The subject naturally divides itself into two ideas, viz. sin and death; therefore we shall,

I. Define SIN in its nature and tendency.

II. Describe DEATH, which is the consequence of sin.

I. [SIN in its nature is a negative. It is not the essence of any being, nor yet essentially the act of any being; but a mode or quality of an action or actions; therefore, the best way to define it is, a violation of the law of God, or a want of conformity to that law.] It is a voluntary refusing to obey the commands of God, or a refusing to choose, love and delight in his law and government; or it is the performing of the commands of God from wrong principles and motives, and to wrong ends; therefore, it must stand in direct opposition to the nature and will of God. [So that, with great propriety, it is termed in Scripture, "*The abominable thing that God hates.*"]

That there is an infinite evil in sin will appear if we consider the nature of the divine law which it violates. The law of God is a transcript of his perfections, or it is a mirror that reflects the image of his moral attributes to the view of all intelligent beings. It is the law of the Creator and Upholder of the Universe, who has an unquestionable right to rule his creatures, and to give them laws for that purpose; and he being infinite in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, is qualified to rule the universe. To transgress this law, is to cast a reflection upon it as being unreasonable and impracticable; that it is not adapted to the creature's happiness, therefore it must either be foolish or tyrannical. To cast such a reflection upon the law of God, is to insult the Lawgiver him-

self; as if he were not sufficiently wise to make a law adapted to the best interests of his creatures, or if he knew what was best for them, he had not sufficient goodness to grant it: which last seems evidently contained in the first temptation to sin which man ever embraced; and so far as any man prefers his own choice to the law of God, so far he practically says, that his own will is more fit to direct him than an infinitely wise God; and so far as he complies with the temptations of Satan, so far he declares that the will of a filthy devil is more fit to be the rule of his conduct, than the will of the glorious, good and all-wise Governor of the Universe.

Again, viewing the law as a transcript of the moral perfections of God, and conformity to it enforced with a penalty. The language of every sin is, that it is better to forfeit all the good which God can bestow, and risk all the evil which his wrath can inflict, than to be confined to such a being. When we consider that the glory of God, which is thus dishonored, is infinite, then there must be an infinite evil in sin. For although no act of a finite creature can have infinite dignity, ~~the~~ demerit arising from the agent considered separately, and the obedience of a finite creature, though perfect, cannot receive infinite worth from the infinitude of the being obeyed, so even a perfect creature cannot be said to love or delight in more glory than he can in some degree apprehend; consequently, as he cannot apprehend God, his love and delight must fall short of being adequate to his infinite glory. But sin being a despising and rejecting of the whole Deity, both what is apprehended of him, and what is not, therefore it casts the highest possible dishonor upon infinite glory, and there must be an infinite evil in sin.

But again, as there is an infinite evil in sin, so also in its tendency it is calculated to destroy the whole creation of God. [Yea, such is its infinite malignity, that it naturally tends to unhinge the divine law, to destroy the moral government of the universe, and to introduce disorder and ruin through all the works of God. In short, sin aims at nothing less than to extinguish the divine glory, to undeify the deity, to deprive him of his being, and, finally, to annihilate the source and essence of all happiness.]

Jehovah, who is the author and fountain of all being, is infinitely and essentially glorious, lovely and excellent in all his perfections, which render him worthy of the love, esteem and adoration of all his intelligent creatures; and his happiness consists in the contemplation of his own infinite glory.

Now, if the happiness of God consists in contemplating his infinite glory, and in the enjoyment of his adorable attributes, it plainly follows, that the true happiness of all his creatures must consist in a knowledge of his perfections, and in a perfect conformity to his nature; and the divine law, which sin despises and rejects, is a complete and perfect copy of all his moral perfections, which, like a mirror, reflects his glory to the view of all his rational creatures. But sin aims at nothing less than the destruction and annihilation of this law; and if the true happiness of intelligent creatures consists in a perfect conformity to it, then sin naturally tends to destroy and annihilate their happiness, and its infernal purpose is their ruin and perdition.

But plain matters of fact, the most^o convincing of all proofs, illustrate this truth. What hurled arch-angels and bright shining seraphs from the heaven of

heavens to the bottomless burning lake of hell? It was sin. Their happiness consisted in perfect holiness and conformity to the divine law. But sin stripped them of all their primeval beauty and blessedness, and changed them into filthy devils; it changed their shouts and loud hallelujahs into shrieks and groans and yells, and horrid, hellish blasphemies. What debased and sullied the beauty of this world? It was sin;—as Dr. Watts expresses it, “Sin, that cursed name, in one hour spoiled six days’ labor of a God.” What stripped Adam of his primeval rectitude and purity? What robbed him of his happiness, and drew the image of the Devil upon his heart? It was sin. One fatal act of sin ruined him, and all his unborn race, and deluged the whole habitable globe with mischief, misery and ruin. [What transformed the beloved creature man, the darling of his Maker, and the governor of the lower world, into a child of wrath, a slave to his lusts, and a drudge to the devil? It was sin, that, like a deadly plague, or malignant and mortal contagion, has filled the earth with deceit and wickedness, bloodshed and violence, misery and wo, destruction and death, and has turned an earthly Paradise into an emblem of hell.]

But let us notice the infernal malignity, or as the Apostle Paul expresses it, “*the exceeding sinfulness of sin.*”

1st. Sin. Every sin contains in it the most glaring injustice, robbery and villany. Mankind, in a Christless state, seem to have no idea of sin but what affects civil society, or injures their fellow men; hence they admit that falsehood, slander, defrauding and murder is sin. But sins against God, or a violation of the first table of the divine law, such as profaning the

Sabbath, taking the name of God in vain, living without prayer, or loving the world and the things of it more than God;—these they consider innocent and harmless. They suppose that the Eternal God is some foolish, simple, easy being, who will suffer his law and government to be insulted and treated with contempt, without even resenting it; or else they suppose he is filthy, depraved, like themselves, and will connive at their sin and take no notice of their wickedness. Hence they pride themselves on their morality, their equity and uprightness; they imagine that they are honest men and good citizens, when in reality they are more guilty of villany and injustice, in the sight of God, than the most flagrant horse-thief or house robber, in the view of the respectable members of the community. Justice, according to its strictest definition, is a rendering to every one his due. With respect to our fellow men it requires us to render to superiors that honor and obedience which is due to their dignity and station;—with respect to our inferiors, it requires us to fulfil every duty we owe to them, in the relation they stand towards us;—with respect to our equals, that we do to them, in all things, as we would have them do unto us. But if justice is a rendering to every one his due, what are we bound to render to God, the sovereign of the universe, our creator, preserver, and kind benefactor? The divine law lays in its claim, and tells you, that it demands our whole hearts, affections, life and being. *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.”* But sin, in the most base, unjust and villanous manner, robs God of all this; for,

1st. He claims as his due the whole heart, the supreme love and the warmest affections of the soul:

but of this sin robs him. The sinner loves himself infinitely more than he does his Maker. He loves the world and its sinful pleasures infinitely more than he does the God of heaven; these things engross his whole time and attention, while the thought of God seldom, if ever, enters into his mind:—and is not this unjust in the highest degree?

2d. He created man; he gave him his being; and he preserves him in being; he loads him with the bounties of his kind providence;—therefore he claims his obedience, praise and adoration. But the sinner wickedly and obstinately refuses to obey his commands; he serves himself, the world and the Devil, and he rejects the law of God as the most tyrannical yoke. Is not this robbery, to all intents and purposes?

3d. He demands one day in seven as his unquestionable right; he claims every moment of it as his own;—he commands his rational creatures to sanctify it and keep it holy, for the purpose of his worship and service; he requires them to spend it in such a manner as not to do their own works, speak their own words, think their own thoughts, nor seek their own pleasure. But the sinner obstinately refuses to render to God his right. He spends the Sabbath doing his own works, speaking his own words, thinking his own thoughts, and seeking his own pleasure; in a word, he spends it as a day of feasting, visiting, vain amusements, and carnal conversation.

Again, sin contains the highest species of treason against the sovereign of the universe. The sinner usurps the throne of God, instead of loving him with his whole heart. Instead of making the will of God the rule of his happiness, he is ruled by his own will. Instead of making the glory of God the object of all

his actions, he makes his own interest, profit or pleasure, the chief end of his conduct. It contains the highest species of whoredom. A jealous God requires the whole heart, soul, body and spirit, to be kept pure for himself; but the sinner rejects his God, banishes him from his heart, and places his affections on the world and the cares of it, and on the gratification of his filthy lusts and appetites; hence the Lord complains of sinners as of a wife who has treacherously departed from her husband, "*so have ye dealt treacherously with me.*"

Sin also contains the most base ingratitude; hence God himself declares, that the conduct of sinners is more ungenerous than that of the irrational brute; and he calls upon the inanimate creation to stand amazed, and be struck with horror at their actions: "*Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know me; my people doth not consider.*" The man who would abuse the unmerited favors of a kind benefactor, turn his enemy, and treat him with contempt, would be esteemed by society as meaner than the brute. The child who would basely spit in the face of his father, who had tenderly raised him from infancy; who would disobey all his commands, and on all occasions treat his person and character with contempt, would be considered a monster in human shape. But this bears no comparison to the baseness and infernal malignity of that ingratitude to God, which is contained in the smallest sin. He is the fountain of every perfection, and the author of our existence; he created us intelligent beings, capable of knowing him and of contemplating his glory;

he provides for, protects and preserves us, and loads us with the kind blessings of his providence; he pitied us in our fallen state; he gave his son, his only and well beloved son, to spill the last drop of his blood, that the price of our ransom might be paid. The heart of man cannot conceive, nor the tongue of an archangel express, the infinite obligations we are under to love and serve him. But sin, in its nature, spits the venom, malice and contempt of a devil in the very face of God. It does what it can to sink the character and dignity of the MOST HIGH into reproach and ridicule. It tramples upon his government; and had it strength equal to its malignity, it would dethrone the ALMIGHTY and deprive him of existence.

Sin contains the highest degree of unbelief. This reflects the highest dishonor upon God. It gives the lie to all his promises and threatenings. God declares that "*sin is an infinite evil;*" "*the abominable thing he hates;*" "*that he is of purer eyes than to behold it;*" and that "*he cannot look upon iniquity.*" But the sinner, by his conduct, says, God is a liar; sin is a pleasant, harmless thing; there is no harm in profaning the Sabbath in a civil frolic, nor in a genteel ball; none in a horse race, a civil game at cards, dice, or billiards; none in blaspheming the name of God, especially if I am in a passion, nor in taking a hearty drink of grog in a tavern, and in being lively in wicked company.

God declares that the sinner out of Christ is his enemy by wicked works; that "*the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;*" that "*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil, only evil continually;*" that "*out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye,*

blasphemy, pride, foolishness." But the sinner says, God lies; I have a good heart, much better than many who pray and pretend to a great deal of religion; I bear malice against none; I am always willing to relieve the distressed;—it is true, I swear an oath occasionally, particularly when I am insulted; I sometimes take a drink of grog, but I never get more than gentlemanly drunk; I attend balls, and sometimes take a hand at cards; I love the best end of a bargain, and so does every man; if I cheat my neighbor in the swap of a horse, he had the half of the bargain to make, and he would have cheated me had he been as smart as I—and there is no harm in these practices, the best characters in our country do such things.

God declares that we must be converted, or be forever damned; that we must be born again, or never enter the kingdom of heaven. But the sinner by his conduct says, God is a liar; I expect to be happy after death, but I do not wish to be saved in that way; I believe the bible too—at least, I suppose that some of it is true; but I cannot bear the idea of conversion and sensible experience; I cannot put up with the notion of feeling the love of God shed abroad in the heart, or of being happy in Christ—this looks so much like enthusiasm and weakness of mind; I despise the method of obtaining religion which God points out in the bible; I expect to be saved in a better way, I am for a rational religion, altogether upon philosophical principles, with very little praying and no feeling, one that will take along with it the sinful pleasures of the world, at least upon a polite scale, and that will not expose me to contempt, reproach and persecution, but which will be popular among the polite and respectable members of society.

God declares that "*the wages of sin is death,*" and that all who live in sin and die out of Christ, shall have their portion in the lake "*that burneth with fire and brimstone.*" But the sinner joins with that old serpent, the Devil, and says, God is a liar. Says one, I don't believe there is a hell; God would be a tyrant indeed, were he to punish me to all eternity for the few foibles, blunders and innocent amusements of my life. Says another, I do not know certainly that there is a hell—this is a matter on which I have not much reflected; but I have done nothing worthy of eternal punishment: I have never committed murder. Says another, I acknowledge that I am not a Christian, yet I do not believe that I will go to hell; I have committed some bad actions, but I have also performed many good ones. Says another, God is very merciful, therefore he will not send me to hell. Now all these persons give the God of truth the lie to his face.

But sin, death and hell are as inseparably connected as the cause and effect; and this brings us,

2d. To describe death, which is the consequence of sin.

God, as the sovereign of the universe, possesses the right of governing his creatures; for he is infinitely fit to rule and direct them agreeably to his will and pleasure; and he has given them a law for that purpose, designed by his wisdom and goodness, to promote the happiness of his creatures, to manifest the glory of his attributes, and preserve the order and harmony of the universe. Then it must naturally follow, that the law must have a penalty annexed to it, in order to prevent disobedience, disorder and confusion among those who are governed; and this penalty must be such as will be in proportion to the nature of

the offence, and to the greatness and glory of the person offended.

We have already proven that sin is an infinite evil; then it follows that it merits nothing less than infinite punishment, which can only be inflicted upon a finite creature by pain of an eternal duration. In the text, the penalty of sin is summed up in the word *death*: "*The wages of sin is death.*" This was the penalty annexed to the law, when it was given to our first parents, in their state of innocence: "*In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" Now this death comprehends,

1. Natural death which is a penal evil, and consists in the separation of the soul from the body.

2. Spiritual death, which is the separation of the soul from God.

3. Eternal death, or as it is emphatically termed, the second death; which is the everlasting separation of both soul and body from God, and from the glory of his presence. Death, in this complex sense, is the death expressed in the text, and which is inseparably connected with sin; and this death includes an everlasting exclusion from all possible good, and the infliction of all possible evil.

1st. It contains the loss of God, the source of all happiness, the loss of heaven, of the society of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; of all means of salvation, and of all hope.

2d. It implies that the malignant enmity of the sinner's heart against God, with every infernal temper of the soul, shall be ripened into horrid, hellish perfection, so that their natures will be as perfectly unlike to God and contrary to him, as it is possible for the hellish wickedness of a devil to be, to the pure immaculate holiness of God.

3d. It includes the horrible society of devils and damned ghosts, where all the moral filth and pollution of the world are collected together, and where guilty sinners, who die out of Christ, through all eternity shall enjoy no better society than that of filthy and despairing fiends.

4th. This death includes in it all the pains of hell. Do you ask what is hell? Without attempting to gratify a vain curiosity, I will refer you to what God has said concerning it in his holy word, and there it is termed, "*The second death*"—"The blackness of darkness"—"*The place of torment*"—"Hell fire"—"*Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*"—"The bottomless pit"—"*A lake of fire*"—"The vengeance of eternal fire"—"*A lake of fire burning with brimstone*"—"Tophet ordained of old, the pile whereof is much wood, and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

The word of God expressly declares, that "*sinners are cast into this lake of fire; that they endure the vengeance of eternal fire, where they have not a drop of water to cool their parched tongues; that they see the people of God afar off, enjoying the happiness of heaven, while they are separated from them by an impassible gulf; that they drink the wine of the wrath of God, poured into the cup of his indignation, without mixture; that the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever, and they have no rest, day nor night.*" All these are only figurative terms; therefore they afford but a faint view of the torments of hell, for the strongest figure bears no proportion to the thing represented by it. The types and sacrifices under the Jewish dispensation, were expressive figures of Christ and his salvation. A city, with walls of precious stone, gates of pearl, and

streets of gold, is a figure of the glory of the heavenly state; so a "*bottomless pit,*" or a "*lake of fire, burning with brimstone,*" is but a figure of hell. Therefore we conclude, that as far as the salvation purchased by the blood of Christ excels the dark types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation; as far as the infinite glories of heaven excel a material city, with walls of precious stones and streets of gold, so far do the pains of hell exceed the torments of a deathless human soul and body, confined in a lake of fire burning with brimstone. As "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love him;*" so it is equally impossible in the present state, to form just conceptions of the torments of hell, which are prepared by a holy God for impenitent sinners. We shall suppose that all the pains and torments that ever were endured, by all the human bodies which ever existed upon the earth, were inflicted on one person; add to this ten thousand times the horror endured by Spira, yet all this would not bear the same comparison to the torments of the damned in hell, that the scratch of a pin will do to a sword run through a man's vitals.

Again. View, if you please. the structure of the universe; examine the globe we inhabit, with her continents, islands, rock and mountains; her oceans, seas, lakes and rivers, and the innumerable variety of her inhabitants and vegetable productions; view the fixed stars, and planetary systems, their magnitude, the order and harmony of their motions;—and then say how boundless that wisdom, how omnipotent that power, which gave being to all these mighty systems. Then, I would ask, what must that hell be, which is brought into existence by the same infinitely wise and power-

ful creator? How dreadful, beyond the comprehension of even angelic minds, must the torments of hell be, when the omnipotent and omniscient Jehovah makes his power known upon the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.

But what is still more dreadful, that which constitutes the essence of hell, the very emphasis of damnation, is, its eternal duration. They go away into everlasting punishment, where the worm dieth not, where the fire is not quenched, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever, and where they have no rest, day nor night. When they have spent ten thousand times ten thousand ages sinking in bottomless hell, their torments will be but begun.

Suppose that a small bird, at the end of every century, were to take from our globe a particle of dust, until the whole were carried off, and then that the damned were to be released from the torments of hell; this would afford some relief: but the pains of hell shall never end. To use the striking words of the pious Erskine, the language of the damned sinner will be:

“Infinite years in torment must I spend,
And never, never, never at an end!
O, must I lie in torturing despair,
As many years as atoms in the air!”

But there is an ingredient in this death, which is the consequence of sin, that renders it, if possible, still more dreadful than all that has been mentioned. It is this,—their torment will be a growing torment; their misery will be an increasing misery. As vessels of wrath, they will be forever growing more capacious, and forever full of the pure and unmixed wrath of a sin-avenging God. Though in the infernal regions they will still be rational creatures, as such they will con-

time under the law of God, and as justly liable to punishment for violating that law in hell, as for a breach of it while upon the earth; and as their enmity against God will be ripened to the most horrid perfection in hell, they will be eternally sinning, gnawing their tongues with infernal pain, and uttering the most dreadful blasphemies against God; therefore their bonds will be forever strengthening, and their misery forever increasing.

SERMON IV.

PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES.



He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.—Ezekiel xxxvii. 3.

IN this chapter we have a very tragical description of human misery, in its most hopeless and helpless condition, illustrated by one of the most strikingly significant figures, viz. the state of the dry bones lying in heaps, or scattered abroad upon the open field, drying and wasting away by the influence of the sun, rains and wind.

Here we have also a most sublime exhibition of the almighty power and grace of God, in quickening the dry bones and changing them into an exceeding great army of living men.

The scene is in the Valley of Dry Bones, where the prophet had been carried in vision by the Spirit of God.

The bloody fields where Alexander, Cæsar, Tamerlane, and other heroes fought; where thousands, or perhaps hundreds of thousands, lay dead, may remind us of this Valley of Dry Bones. Suppose the dead bodies of these slaughtered multitudes to have remained unburied, their flesh devoured by the fowls of the air and by the wild beasts of the forest, lying for many years upon the surface of the earth, mouldering and wasting away; how affecting would this sight be to the feelings of humanity, and how impossible, upon the principles of reason, for them ever again to appear an army of living men.

This affecting parabolical description, literally applies to the state of the Jews, probably in their deplorable condition since their dispersion, which took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, when they were driven from their own country by the Roman army commanded by Titus Vespasian; since that period they have been scattered to the four winds, and dispersed among all nations of the earth.

With great propriety, the subject may be accommodated to the condition of unconverted sinners, comprising many millions of the human race who are spiritually dead, and on the brink of hell. In this view the Valley of Dry Bones represents the world at large, which every where abounds with spiritually dead souls; hence it is almost impossible to find a family, in this land of gospel light, where there is not a spiritually dead soul. Alas! we often find whole families, and neighborhoods in an unconverted state.

When we consider the nature of sin and the influence and extent of spiritual death, natural death, or even the state of the dry bones, in the Valley of Vision, affords but a faint emblem of the miserable and helpless condition of spiritually dead sinners. Consequently, the preaching of the word, and the highest exertions of mortals, can no more awaken a sinner from a state of spiritual death, than a human voice by its own energy can call a dead corpse from the grave, or quicken the dry bones in the Valley of Vision, and change them into an exceeding great army of living men. Nothing less than the breath of the Lord can quicken the dry bones; and nothing short of that Almighty voice, which spake worlds into being, can convert the sinner, changing the temper and disposition of hell into the spirit of Christ.

In the prosecution of the subject we shall pass some reflections on each particular in the parable.

Saith the prophet: "*The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about, and, behold! there were very many in the open valley, and, lo! they were very dry.*"

As has been observed, the dry bones constitute a very significant figure of spiritually dead souls. The valley was full of dry bones—"there were very many;" so the world is full of spiritually dead souls. The prophet Micah compares the righteous to "*the grape gleanings of the vintage;*" that is, to the few scattering grapes left behind after the frugal and industrious husbandman has carefully gathered in his crop. The Lord Jesus Christ declares, that "*strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" And this melancholy truth is clearly proved by plain matters of fact. Were the inhabitants of the earth divided into thirty parts, we would have nineteen parts Pagan, six Jewish and Mahomedan, and five professing Christianity, including papists, protestants, and the members of the Greek church; the professed Christians being in proportion to the rest of the world as five to twenty-five. View even the small county of Henderson, and how few, comparatively, can tell what God has done for their souls; how very few can feel the witness of the word and spirit of God, that they have a right to a seat at the communion table. The bones were very dry—what a clear evidence of the certainty of natural death; and these dry bones are but a faint representation of that spiritual death, of which unconverted souls are the subjects.

1st. The privation of action in a natural sense, is a negative evidence of death, and this evidence the unconverted sinner hath in a spiritual sense: for he is destitute of all motion towards God; he has no disposition to obey his holy commands; he has no desire to pray in secret, nor in his family; he hates the Bible above all other books, and to read and study it, he esteems a most intolerable task; he has no disposition to commune with his own heart, nor to think and converse about the eternal state, and the great business of his soul's salvation.

2d. The want of breath is a plain evidence of the privation of life. The Christless sinner has this evidence of spiritual death: for he has no breathings after a transformation into the image of God; he has no longings of soul after communion with him, and no sweet believing views of his glory as it shines in the face of Jesus; he is ignorant of God, and he can form no just conceptions of the nature of spiritual life.

3d. The want of animal heat is an evidence of the privation of animal life; and the sinner has no warmth of affection after God, and things spiritual; he tastes no sweetness in perusing the scriptures, and in conversing with God by prayer; he is a total stranger to communion with him, and he has no zeal for his glory and the advancement of his kingdom on the earth.

4th. The want of sensation is also an evidence of natural death; and the unconverted sinner has this evidence of spiritual death. You may beat a dead man; you may cut his flesh from his bones, but he will not feel it; it will afflict him no more than it would a rock. Just so it is with the unconverted sinner; he is destitute of spiritual sensation, and his heart is as hard as the nether millstone. Talk to him of the pro-

priety and necessity of embracing religion, and of leading a life of holiness, and he hears you with as much indifference as if you were conversing of the affairs of some foreign country, in which he is not at all concerned. He may assent to the truth of what you say, but he treats it as a matter of no moment, and in which he is not interested. Preach to sinners the most solemn soul-searching sermons; describe to them the state of their souls; point out the eternal misery that awaits them without repentance; and they will adopt the language of the men of Sodom to saying: "*It is the voice of one mocking.*" When the minister of Jesus, with bleeding heart, lays before them their danger, and with vehemence and importunity urges them to flee the wrath to come,—O, say they, this is too much! He is offended—he is trying to frighten us. Does he think we are fools?

In a word, could you uncover the bottomless pit of hell; could you show them the fiery billows of God's wrath, rolling in impetuous floods and falling in eternal storms; display to them the shrieks, groans and yells of devils, and damned ghosts sinking beneath the fury of God; and, alas! they sleep on. All these dreadful realities affect them no more than the whistling of the wind, or the rattling of a drum. As Rutherford says, "Were Dives to come up from the infernal gulf, flaming and blazing with the fire of hell; were he to show to sinners the marks and scars he had received from the lashes of the devil's scorpions;—yea, were he to bring up the red coals of God's wrath, as large as mountains, yet all this would not move or awaken one soul, unless the mighty power of God were exerted." Indeed, could a rueful ghost come reeking out of hell, with the fire visible upon him, the

stench of brimstone about him, and exhibit the flames in his bosom, and then with all the anguish which becomes his state, and with all the earnestness to which a sense of the pains of hell can raise him, let him tell all his wretched experience, and, if possible, speak all he felt; let him bewail himself in their presence, tearing his hair and gnashing his teeth; let him weep and wail and beseech them in tears and passion; and when he has ended his amazing mission, as he descends into the divided earth, let them view the flames of the pit flashing through the dreadful chasm; yet all this would not cause one sinner to repent.

Hitherto we have stated only the negative evidences of a state of death, viz. want of motion, breath, heat and sensation. In the Valley of Vision, the bones were scattered over the plain, stript of flesh, and wasting away; the marrow dried up, and all moisture gone; the bones of different persons mixed together; the skulls frequently handled by curious observers; the legs and arms lifted up by eagles, or dragged off and devoured by beasts of prey. All these are clear evidences of a state of death.

So Christless sinners have not only the evidences of the privation of spiritual life, but they have, also, the most dreadful symptoms of spiritual death, in its fullest extent. This death contains not only the want of original righteousness, and of holy principles and dispositions, but it also includes positive wickedness, and enmity against God and his ways; hence they are said to be "*enemies to God by wicked works.*" The psalmist, speaking of the total depravity of the human race, says: "*They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good; no, not one.*"

The soul, in Scripture, is called the heart, because the soul is to the whole man what the heart is to the body: the heart is the spring of all the motions of animal life, and the soul is the source of all spiritual action. From it proceed all depravity and wickedness, hence it is termed an *"uncircumcised heart"*—*"a stony heart"*—*"a heart set to evil"*—*"a froward heart"*—*"a perverse heart"*—*"a whorish, idolatrous heart"*—*"a heart departing from God"*—*"a rebellious heart"*—*"a heart full of iniquity."* The Lord Jesus Christ says: *"Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness."* This is the description given, by the God of heaven, of the heart of every unregenerate sinner; therefore all their thoughts, words and actions, must be sin. *"For a polluted fountain cannot send forth pure water; figs cannot grow upon thorns, nor grapes upon thistles."* Hence, in Proverbs it is said, *"the ploughing of the wicked is sin;"* that is, as every action they perform proceeds from a deceitful and wicked heart, which is enmity against God, must be an act of rebellion against him, and if this be the case, it follows, that the spiritually dead sinner can no more change his heart, than the dry bones in the valley can reanimate themselves and rise from the dead. Jeremiah confirms this important doctrine. *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots; then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."* Hence the propriety of our God's declaration, *"No man can come to me except the Father, who sent me, draw him;"* and that of the apostle Paul, *"What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ*

when he raised him from the dead." Therefore, we conclude that the work of regeneration is a new creation or resurrection from the dead; for the breath of the Lord alone can reanimate souls in a state of spiritual death.

But here a question arises, viz. If this be the condition of the unconverted sinner, what must he do? Is it his duty to sit still and wait God's time? I answer, No. To do this is just to go on in sin, and persist in hostile rebellion against God. It is the will of God that the sinner should try to forsake his sins, and as a guilty, condemned criminal, fall at the footstool of sovereign mercy, crying for pardon.

Here we have another dreadful evidence of the second death; for the sinner will rather risk eternal death and damnation, than use the smallest exertions to flee the wrath to come. He will confess that he is a sinner, and destitute of an interest in Christ; but he will rather risk the torments of hell than attend to the work of his soul's salvation.

The prophet having passed round the bones in the valley and carefully examined them, the Lord asks him the question; "*Son of man, can these bones live?*" According to the laws of nature, the prophet views their reanimation as impossible; his only hope was founded on the omnipotence of God; therefore he answers: "*O Lord God, thou knowest;*" as if he should say, all created power is insufficient, but thou canst do it. The Lord said to the prophet: "*Prophesy unto these dry bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and*

will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

God works by means, therefore the prophet must prophesy to the dry bones, before he will exert his almighty power. In just such circumstances the ministers of the gospel must preach to spiritually dead sinners, and beseech them to be reconciled to God; and without the exertion of God's almighty power, we might as well stand in a common grave yard, and call upon the dead corpses, rotting in the earth, to come forth and act like living men.

Saith the prophet: "*I prophesied as I was commanded.*" And, poor Christless sinners! in the same solemn manner I address you to-day. O YE DRY BONES, hear the word of the Lord! Ye spiritually dead souls, hear the word of God! The arms of an infinite God are stretched out; his mercy cries after you; his bowels yearn with compassion over you; the tender heart of Jesus pities you; and every drop of blood that flowed from his veins, invite you. "*The spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come.*"

The prophet proceeds to give us a very pleasing relation. "*As I prophesied there was a noise, and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and when I beheld, lo! the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.*"

When the mighty power of God came upon the dry bones, there was a noise and a shaking; and when the spirit of God accompanies the preaching of the word, there is a mighty shaking among unconverted sinners. We are told that when Christ came into the house,

"*he could not be hid;*" and when he comes into an unconverted family, congregation or neighborhood, he cannot *be hid*; a strange and uncommon work takes place, which excites the wonder and astonishment of all who witness it: poor, careless and prayerless sinners, become serious and deeply impressed with a sense of eternity and eternal things. Now they are to be seen weeping over their wretched condition, crying for mercy, and inquiring of ministers and experienced Christians, what they must do to be saved. Now they forsake their former companions in sin, their beloved lusts and wicked practices. When they are under the sound of the gospel, they hear as for the life of their souls, and wrestle for eternal life. They warn their unconverted companions and relations of their fearful condition, while in a Christless state; and they plead with them to flee the wrath to come. Their conduct excites the astonishment of unthinking men, many of whom style them fools or hypocrites, and every stratagem is used to entice them into their former sinful ways.

When sinners are savingly converted, and taste the sweetness of the love of Christ, O how they love, wonder and adore! They feel as though they were in a new world. They tell their Christian friends what a precious Christ, and sweet salvation they have found. With tears in their eyes they tell their unconverted friends, in the language of heaven, what a beauty and fulness they see in the fair and lovely face of Jesus, and how willing he is to save all that come unto God by him. Such language often alarms the wicked, and strikes more pungent conviction into their hearts, than all the preaching they have ever heard.

But here it should be observed, there is a work preparatory to regeneration, which must necessarily pre-

cede it, yet is no part of its essence. As in Elijah's vision, "*a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice;*" and the Lord was there. So in the parable, we are told, "*there was a noise, and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them;*" therefore they were still in a state of death. And, in a spiritual sense, when the mighty power of God begins to move upon the dry bones, the sinner is awakened, and alarmed at his situation; he forsakes his sins and wicked companions; he associates with the people of God; prays in secret and in his family; regularly attends the preaching of the gospel; and a visible change takes place in all his conduct. Still, however, he is in a state of spiritual death. The spirit of God discovers to him the hidden wickedness of his heart, and his total inability to think a good thought, or command a holy desire. Now the sinner weeps and mourns over his miserable condition; with vigor he opposes the horrid current of sin and inbred corruption. When he prays, he tries to do it with his whole heart; when he hears the gospel preached, he labors to be affected with the importance of divine truth; but still he is destitute of spiritual breath. The spirit of God discovers to him that his whole nature is sin, and that his best performances and desires are but dross and dung; and now he struggles for eternal life, as a drowning man for relief, and cries for mercy as a condemned criminal for a

pardon: but still he is in a state of death. But the Holy Spirit sinks the dart of conviction deeper into his heart, and convinces him of his unbelief and utter helplessness; and now he feels himself as unable to believe, or come to Christ, as a dead body rotting in the grave is incapable of quickening itself. At times all hopes of mercy seem to be gone; again he has a peradventure the Lord may be gracious. At one time a small ray of hope breaks into his mind, and again dismal clouds of midnight darkness surround him on every side. The arrows of the Almighty stick fast in his heart, and their poison drinks up his spirits. The pains of hell take hold of him with a fearful looking for of judgment. In a word, the distress of his soul is such, that none but those who have felt it can describe. See him falling at the feet of sovereign mercy, dead to all hope in himself, and stripped of all self dependence; making his last resolve, that, if he should be damned, it will be trying to look to Jesus.

Now, like the dry bones when "*the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them,*" all that is necessary, is, the breath of spiritual life: and in this condition neither men nor angels can help him. All that ministers or Christians can do for him, is, to address him in the language of Moses to the Israelites, when at the Red Sea, they were pursued by Pharaoh's mighty army: "*Stand still, and see the salvation of God.*"

"*Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.*" This prophesying to the four winds, seems expressive of the travailing pangs of Zion, when every praying soul is wrestling with God, by faith laying hold of his

word and promise, vehemently groaning and agonizing in the spirit.

The prophet proceeds: "*So I prophesied as I was commanded, and the breath came unto them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*" When Jesus Christ, by whom the worlds were made, and at whose voice the raging billows of the sea were stilled, speaks the word of life to the spiritually dead sinner; when he unveils to him his beauty, fulness and all-sufficiency; then the dawn of eternal life springs up in his soul, and his dreadful load of sin and guilt is washed away, and lost in the Red Sea of redeeming blood;—then his heart is filled with the peace of God, and he experiences "*joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" But what language can express, or what figures illustrate the wonders of this astonishing change? Suppose that the earth were surrounded with the most impenetrable darkness, and in a moment the sun, in meridian brightness, darts his rays from pole to pole, and deluges the world with light; this would be but a faint shadow of that light which darts into the soul of the pardoned sinner. Now, the language of his heart, and also often of his lips, is, Wonder! wonder! wonder! Glory! glory! glory! Hallelujah! O what a beauty, what an excellency I see in Jesus. The tongue of an Archangel cannot describe his loveliness. O what an infinite fulness I see in Jesus, for every guilty sinner who will come to God by him. Had I ten thousand souls, I would give them all to Jesus. Had I ten thousand lives, they would all be devoted to him. I feel as if I were in a new world. All nature shines forth the glory of God. His precious word, how sweet it is; yea, it is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb. O that I could love him more, that I was more like him. O

that I could fly to heaven and dwell forever with him there.

Sweet was the hour, the minutes sweet
When my beloved me did meet,
His love to evidence:
My heart, that wounded was before,
Kindly he bound, therein he did pour
Love's healing quintessence.

Sweet was the feast my heart enjoyed,
I ate—I drank—nor was I cloyed,
For more I thirsted still.
Here let me stay, I longing prayed,
Sure this is Achor's Vale, I said,
Or Holy Tabor Hill.

The Red Sea then he did divide,
And quelled the mighty tyrant's pride,
And broke his chariot strong.
Thinking he would assail no more,
I thought I now was safe on shore,
I sung the Hebrews' song.

I sung assured of Jesus's love,
Refreshed with manna from above,
For flesh no more I cried;
Warmed by the sun's enlivening beams,
I laid me down by Shiloh's streams,
Content and satisfied,

SERMON V.
THE SURE FOUNDATION.



Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.—ZACHARIAH iii. 9.

THE book of Zachariah was written shortly after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; perhaps about the time when Zerubbabel and Joshua were authorized to begin the building of the temple. At this period the church of God was emerging from a state of desolation and distress. Although God had hid his face from his people for a moment, yet, in great mercy he was now returning for their deliverance. In this chapter the distressed state of the church or Jewish nation, and their gracious deliverance, are represented under the type of Joshua, the high priest. As the administration of the rites and ceremonies of that church were committed to him, therefore he is taken for its typical representative. In the first and second verses it is said: *“And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?”* This, no doubt, points out the believing Jews undertaking to build the second temple, and earnestly seeking the blessing of God, while Satan appears as their adversary and accuser, uses malicious endeavors to discourage them from their work, and opposes them by Sanballat, and other instruments of the same kind.

In the third, fourth, and fifth verses it is said: "*Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments, and stood before the angel, and he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre on his head; so they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments.*"

The filthy garments are emblematical of the sinfulness of Joshua and his people, and the miseries they endured; but these are all removed, by causing their iniquities to pass from them, and by restoring them to the favor of God. The fair mitre, set upon the head of Joshua, may signify that the Jews should again enjoy the privileges peculiar to their church, and that the ordinances of God's house should be administered in their former purity. In the eighth verse it is said: "*Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, these and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at; for behold, I will bring forth my servant The Branch;*" that is, they are called upon to view the sure foundation on which the hopes of their temporal and eternal salvation are built, viz. Christ, who is here called God's servant. As God, he is the Father's equal; but as mediator, he is the servant whom God hath sent into the world, to finish the work he gave him to do. He is termed **THE BRANCH**, in reference to his incarnation, as he was born of a woman and sprung from the root of Jesse; for although he is David's Creator and Lord, yet he is his son according to the flesh. This is the rock of ages, the precious corner-stone upon which God has laid the everlasting salvation of his people. "*Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua. Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.*" In these words,

1st. We have a figure by which the stability of the merits and mediation of Christ is pointed out; he is the foundation of his people's faith, and is justly compared to a stone, which, of all other materials, is most durable.

2d. We have something extraordinary predicated of this metaphor: "*Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.*" This points out the omniscience of Jesus, his continual care of his people, or the wonders of his person, incarnation, and mediation, which attract the attention and admiration of angels and men.

In further attending to the words, we shall,

I. Shew in what respects Christ may be compared to a stone.

II. What is said of this stone.

I. Shew in what respects Christ may be compared to a stone.

1st. A stone is always chosen as the most permanent foundation of every building; so Christ, the second person of the adorable Trinity, is the sure foundation upon which God has laid the eternal concerns of his glory.

When Adam and all his race fell into a state of sin and misery, had the question been proposed, How can fallen man be redeemed from his ruined condition and the perfections of Jehovah glorified in his salvation? the question would have silenced all the heavenly host. Had Gabriel been chosen as the corner-stone of this new building, its infinite weight would have sunk him to the bottom of hell. No created being could have endured the wrath of God due to the sins of the whole elect world, or have borne the stroke of the sword of divine justice. But the wisdom of God found out a way of escape for poor lost sinners,

and lays help upon one "*mighty to save.*" "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

This is the corner-stone on which God has laid all the concerns of his glory, as it respects the salvation of an elect world. "*Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone—a tried stone—a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.*" Peter styles him, "*a chief corner-stone, elect precious.*"

He is a tried stone. He was tried to the utmost, and he stood the test. This stone was cast into the burning fiery furnace of God's wrath, which would have consumed innumerable worlds, but behold! it comes out unhurt, bright and glorious. It is then translated into the paradise of God, and placed on the eternal throne, where it shines with a beauty and splendor that would eclipse ten thousand suns. It is a precious stone, for it is the very essence of Deity; therefore it is a sure foundation, sufficient to bear the whole infinite weight of divine glory, and the salvation of the whole elect world, who, by faith, found their hopes of everlasting happiness on this sure basis; and for this purpose it was chosen and set apart by infinite wisdom, millions of ages before men or angels were brought into being. It was, indeed, set at naught by the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, and it is daily despised by formal professors and unregenerate sinners; but God has chosen it, and he has laid it in Zion, as the foundation of his declarative glory and of his people's faith and hope. And upon this precious stone all the inferior ones, that are dug out of the black quarry of nature's darkness, are laid, when they are hewed and fitly framed by the Holy Spirit. And

when all God's chosen followers are brought home, the heavenly building will be completed, and the angels of heaven shall rejoice over it, saying, "*Grace, grace unto it.*"

2d. This metaphor will appear proper, when we consider that it was common for the patriarchs to put up a pillar, or stone, as a lasting memorial of some extraordinary event. Hence Jacob set up a pillar at Bethel, in token of the manifestation of the divine glory, he had at that place; and Joshua set up a pillar of twelve stones at Jordan, in memory of the dividing of the waters before the ark of the covenant. So Jesus Christ is a precious stone, laid in Zion as an everlasting memorial of the love of God. He stands before the eternal throne as an intercessor for believing sinners, presents his bleeding wounds to his Father, and declares that it is his will to have all the blessings of his purchase applied to his people. There he pleads for them continually; and when God, the Father, looks upon Jesus, he remembers his everlasting purpose of mercy to guilty sinners. When God delivered Noah and his family from the waters of the deluge, he placed the rainbow in the clouds as a lasting memorial of his covenant, that he will no more destroy the earth by the waters of a deluge. So when he looks upon Jesus Christ, who may be styled the rainbow of the new covenant, he views him as the everlasting memorial of his sovereign, free and unmerited love to believing sinners.

3d. That Christ with propriety may be compared to a stone, will appear when we consider that kings in former times, often engraved their laws on tables of stone, thereby intimating their durability; hence the moral law was engraven by the finger of God upon

two tables of stone; and the will of God concerning lost sinners, is engraven in legible characters upon Jesus Christ, the tried stone. Here you may read the wisdom, love and mercy of Jehovah, and the purity and strictness of the divine law. On this stone you may read how mercy and truth met together, how righteousness and peace kissed each other. Here you may read the promises of God to believers, suited to every age and condition. And here you may see the way to heaven written in the red lines of Immanuel's blood.

4th. The propriety of the metaphor will further appear, when we consider that the rock which followed Israel in the wilderness, was a type of Christ, the rock of ages. At the command of God, Moses smote the rock, and a stream of water burst out which supplied the whole congregation, and followed them during their pilgrimage. So God, the Father, smote the rock of ages with the flaming sword of justice, and the streams of salvation burst forth like a mighty river. Here thirsty souls are invited to drink, and diseased souls to wash and be made whole;—here pardon, peace and eternal life flow in mighty torrents, and every man and woman is invited to drink without money and without price. This is the *“pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the lamb,”* and follows the Christian pilgrims through the journey of life, from which they often obtain a refreshing draught, and grow from strength to strength, until they arrive in heaven.

II. What is said of this stone. It is said there shall be seven eyes upon it. Here we have a definite for an indefinite number. The number seven in scripture sometimes signifies many; thus in the Revelation it is

said: "*These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God.*" By the seven spirits we are to understand the diversified operations of the spirit of God; so the seven eyes upon one stone signify many. Divines are not agreed whether the seven eyes upon one stone are to be taken as many eyes engraven upon it, or whether the stone attracts the attention of many. We think that both opinions are correct. If we take it in the first sense, then the metaphor points out the tender care and watchfulness of Jesus Christ over his church. He possesses the boundless wisdom of God,—and this is a necessary qualification for his office of head of the church. By his omniscience he views all things, from everlasting to everlasting. At one glance he can behold the state of every creature in the universe, and in a moment he can deliver his people from difficulties and dangers. He is compassionate; the weakest believers are as dear to him as the apple of his eye; he knows all their sorrows, and he shelters them under the wings of his love.

But if we take the metaphor in the last sense, as attracting the attention of many, then with propriety it may be said, there are many eyes upon this stone.

1st. The eye of the Eternal Father is upon it. He views it with ineffable delight, because it is the foundation upon which he has built the eternal weight of his glory, as it is manifested in the redemption of lost sinners. He sees all his perfections glorified in the obedience and death of his son. He is pleased with Jesus for his righteousness' sake; he is pleased with the whole scheme of salvation; and he is pleased with the sinner who has fled to Christ for pardon; and who builds his hope of heaven on this tried corner stone, because this brings a full tribute of glory to all the

perfections of God; therefore Jehovah can look with approbation upon the sinner who is clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

2d. The eyes of believers are upon this stone; and they view it with delight, because it is the sure foundation upon which they have built their hopes of eternal life. Their "*life is hid with Christ in God.*" He is the dearest object of their love; in him they can meet and hold sweet communion with God, the Father; and of his fulness they all receive grace for grace; in a word, they are well pleased with Christ, for he is their portion and their all.

3d. The eyes of angels are upon this stone. The union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, his incarnation, life, sufferings, death and resurrection, and his complete atonement, are the subjects of their wonder and admiration; hence, saith the apostle Peter, "*which things the angels desire to look into.*"

4th. The eyes of devils are upon this stone. Satan looks upon it with horror; for this stone fell upon him and bruised him, and will shortly destroy his kingdom and overthrow his power.

5th. The eyes of damned sinners in hell shall be upon this stone. They shall behold it with eternal shame and confusion; like Balaam, they shall see it, but not nigh; they shall look upon it through the flames of hell; they shall see this precious cornerstone laid in Zion, bearing an infinite weight of glory, and all the saints of God living stones built upon this sure foundation; from the deep pit of Tophet, they shall see Jesus in heaven, seated on a throne of glory, surrounded by all the redeemed of God, shining brighter than the sun when he shineth in his strength; but they shall be forever shut out.

SERMON VI.

CHRIST THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF THE LIFE OF GRACE.



I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.—REV. XXII. 13.

THE God man Christ Jesus is all in all to every believer. What Micah absurdly said when the Danites took away his idols,—“*They have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?*” may be justly said of Jesus Christ by every believer. Take away Christ from him, and you deprive him of his all; for he is the “*Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*” of his whole salvation. [View the plan of redemption, from its first origin in the eternal councils of God, until its accomplishment in the glorification of all the ransomed church;—examine the experience of every new-born soul, his election, justification, sanctification and complete glorification,—and Jesus Christ “*is the beginning and the end of the whole.*”]

[Christ, as their surety, paid the whole of their debt to the law and justice of God, and with his blood and dying groans he purchased their salvation. He is their ark of safety, where the storms of God’s wrath can never reach them.] He is the rock that supports them—the fountain that cleanses them from the pollution of sin—and the food by which their new natures are fed. He is their prophet, who teaches them those lessons by which they are qualified for the enjoyment of heaven. He is their priest, who has atoned for all

their sins. He is their advocate, who continually intercedes in their behalf; and he is their king, who subdues them to himself, and gives them the victory over all their enemies. "*He is made of God unto them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*" The pardon of sin, peace with God, joy in the Holy Ghost, all the healing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and their everlasting glorification, flow to them through the red streams of the blood of Christ. Indeed, every morsel of bread they eat, and every cup of water they drink, were purchased by the death of Christ, who is the boundless ocean from whence all their temporal, spiritual and eternal blessings flow. How precious, then, must Christ be to all true believers. Take Christ out of the Bible, and it ceases to interest them. Let Christ withdraw from their souls the light of his countenance, and they are miserable. Take Christ out of heaven, and it would be no heaven to them; for he is the "*Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*"

By the life of grace, we are to understand that principle which is implanted in the soul, in the work of regeneration, by the Holy Spirit; and those who are subjects of it are said to be "*born again,*" or to become "*a new creature.*" This principle in scripture is often styled, "*The new nature*"—"*The new man*"—"*Christ in the soul,*" &c.

This gracious principle can be implanted by nothing less than that "*almighty power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead.*"

This principle of spiritual life is like the morning light, that increases more and more until the perfect day, and the believer in whose soul it is implanted, grows from strength to strength, until "*he arrives unto*

a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And the Lord Jesus Christ is "the beginning and the end," the author and finisher of this life of grace, because,

I. He purchased it.

II. He is the author of it.

III. He is its essence.

IV. He supports it.

V. He finishes it.

I. He purchased it, because, by his mediation, an offended God and offending sinners may be reconciled, and sin may be pardoned consistently with the glory of the divine attributes, and the honor and dignity of the divine law. Hence he is said "*to have made peace through the blood of his cross, and to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.*" Again: "*When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son.*" [By the fall of Adam, all the human race fell under the curse of the law; they became enemies to God, bond slaves to the Devil, and obnoxious to all the fiery torments of hell forever. Justice cried for their blood and demanded a full satisfaction, and the truth of God stood engaged for the infliction of the threatened penalty. How sin could be punished, and the sinner saved, was a question which would have puzzled all the angels of heaven, and struck the universe with eternal silence. But, lo, to the wonder of all adoring worlds, Jesus steps into the sinner's place—he opens his breast to the flaming sword of justice—and it is cooled in his heart's blood. He endures in his own person the hell of the whole elect world, and at one draught he drinks that cup of wrath which must have been their portion forever. Hence those who are saved by his blood are styled

his "seed," and the "travail of his soul;" because his blood is the fountain from whence their eternal redemption flows. This is evident from his own words: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*" If the Lord Jesus Christ had not died, none of the sons and daughters of Adam would have entered the kingdom of heaven. But by his dying, and lying entombed in the earth, he has produced a large increase. ONE DYING CHRIST has brought forth many millions of living Christians. His blood is the seed of the Church, which, in every age of the world has generated a plentiful crop, and will continue to do so from age to age, until time shall be no more. Search after the roots of the tender plants of righteousness, and you will find them in the blood of Christ. It is this which gives being to the heavenly principle in believers' souls, and nourishes and strengthens it until, like full ears of corn, they are ripened for immortal glory.

II. He is the author of the life of grace; hence he is styled, "*The author and finisher of faith*"—"The resurrection and the life"—"*The way, the truth and the life*"—and "*The author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*"

It is true, that, in the economy of redemption, the application of Christ's purchase to guilty souls, is attributed to the Holy Ghost, the third person of the adorable trinity; yet the Lord Jesus Christ may, with propriety, be termed the author and finisher of the life of grace, which will appear from these considerations.

1st. By his blood and merits he purchased all the operations of the Holy Spirit, by which believing sin-

ners are effectually called, justified and sanctified; and since his ascension into heaven he has sent the Holy Spirit, to apply his purchased redemption; hence he is styled, "*the Spirit of Christ.*"

2d. He is the cause of all the awakening and convicting influences of the spirit of God, and he is the fountain to which these influences lead guilty sinners for pardon and reconciliation to God. The design of all the awakening operations of the Holy Spirit is to lead sinners to Christ.

[When the Holy Spirit convinces the sinner of his guilt and misery, shews him the horrible and damnable condition he is in, and fills his mind with anguish and distress, the design is to make him feel his desperate need of Christ.] [When he convinces him of the dreadful wickedness of his heart, raging with the malice of hell and filled with pride, hypocrisy, unbelief, and atheism, it is to prepare his soul for the reception of Christ.] [When the poor convicted sinner is bowed down to the gates of death, made to feel the sparks of hell in his conscience, and brought to the brink of despair, it is to influence him to be willing to fly to Christ.] [When he is relieved from all the horrors of an unconverted state, Christ is the author and efficient cause of his deliverance; he is the lovely object that delights his heart, the source of all his joy, and the subject-matter of all his songs of praise.]

The same almighty voice which called worlds and systems of worlds, into being, and called dead Lazarus from his grave, also calls the condemned and despairing sinner from death unto life. Christ is the almighty Saviour, who snatches the sinner as a brand from the burning. He is the almighty conqueror, who breaks the bonds of death, and rescues the captive soul from the jaws of the roaring lion of hell.

He who said, "*Let there be light, and there was light,*" speaks peace to the troubled conscience, removes the horrible cloud of midnight darkness from the mind, and fills the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He, who, in the days of his flesh, cast out devils, opened the eyes of the blind, and raised the dead, now cures all the murdering diseases of the soul; he binds up the broken heart, and effectually removes the deadly poison infused into the heart of man by that old serpent the Devil. And he is the author of all those precious graces implanted in the believer by the Holy Spirit.

A view of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus, begets the new nature, forms the image of Christ in the soul, and impresses all the moral attributes of God upon the heart. "*But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.*"

A spiritual and experimental knowledge of the personal glory, suitableness, and boundless sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his divine and human natures, his offices and endearing characters and relations, is the cause of a saving, justifying faith; hence it is said: "*By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.*" To the believer he appears in all the amiable excellencies that the divine and human natures possess. The first faith's view of his lovely face, wins all the affections of the heart; he appears to the believing sinner exactly suited to his wretched and helpless condition, and able to save to the very uttermost degree of guilt and misery; therefore the language of his heart is, He is such a Saviour as I need. None but Christ. Had I ten thousand souls, he should have them all.

A view of Christ effectually humbles the soul, lays it in the dust, and fills it with shame and self-loathing. *"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* Again saith the prophet Isaiah: *"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims. Each one had six wings. With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly; and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! The whole earth is full of his glory!—And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then I said, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts."* Give the soul one view of the glory of the divine attributes, as they shine in the face of Jesus Christ, and that moment it sinks into nothing before the Eternal All; for it is so surrounded with the transcendent brightness of the divine glory, that it feels lost in the shoreless and fathomless ocean.

A view of the love of God manifested in Christ, gives the believing sinner a most affecting sense of the evil of sin, and melts his heart into floods of penitential sorrow. *"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born."* When the penitent sinner has a faith's view of that Jesus, whom he has so often pierced and trampled under foot, then his heart is wrung with anguish, and he cries out with penitent Ephraim: *"What have I to do*

any more with idols!" Now, the thought of ever committing another sin, is worse than death itself.

A view of the infinite perfections of God, manifested in Christ, is the cause of all true love to God. The reason why sinners, in an unconverted state, do not love God, is, because they are blind; for Satan, who is *"the God of this world, has blinded their minds, lest the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* But no sooner does the *"light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus,"* shine into their souls, than they are enraptured with his excellency, and their hearts are filled with his love. Now the greatest earthly splendors, jewels, crowns, thrones and sceptres, appear mean and contemptible as the toys of children, when compared with the resplendent glories of Immanuel. Let the most malignant infidel, or the most profane sinner on the earth, have but one faith's view of the lovely face of Jesus,—that moment his heart is captivated, and all the devils in hell cannot keep him from Christ. He is the *"Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last"* of the whole life of grace; for,

III. He is the essence of it. In many passages of scripture he is denominated *"Life,"* or *"The Life."* These expressions refer both to the life of grace, and to the life of glory, which he communicates to the souls of his people; hence he says: *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."* Again it is said: *"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory;"* and *"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."*

That Christ is the very essence of that principle of spiritual life, which is implanted in the souls of all

true believers, is evident from the consideration that their whole salvation is derived from him, as their mediator, surety and covenant head; for,

THE DEATH OF CHRIST is the foundation of their reconciliation to God. *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”*

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST is the foundation of their justification before God. *“Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;—to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”*

THE MERITS OF CHRIST constitute the foundation of their peace with God. *“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

CHRIST FORMED IN THEM, is the foundation of their hope of heaven. *“Christ in you the hope of glory.”*

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST procures their sanctification. *“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.”* *“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb.”*

THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST is the foundation of their communion with God. *“Jesus said, If any man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”*

THEIR RELATION TO CHRIST is the foundation of their title to the heavenly inheritance. *The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of*

God; and if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Christ is their Boaz or blood relation, who redeemed their inheritance for them, and bought it with his own blood.

THE WORTHINESS OF CHRIST is the foundation of their acceptance with God. *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests.”*

CHRIST'S UNCHANGEABLE LOVE is the ground of their final perseverance and eternal glorification. In a word, he is *all in all* to his heaven-born children. He *“is made unto them wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.”* He is their wisdom. He is styled *“the essential wisdom of God;”* and it said that *“in him dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;”* and that *“he is the wisdom of God and the power of God to them that believe.”* He is their righteousness; for *“he is made of God unto them righteousness.”* He is styled *“the Lord their righteousness,”* and *“The end of the law for righteousness.”* He is their sanctification; for he is made unto them *“redemption.”* He is their life, their strength and their all; for,

IV. He supports the life of grace, and upholds it until it arrives at full perfection in glory. Hence he says: *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”* The question may be asked, How is the life of grace supported in the believing soul? I answer, By that union which subsists

between Christ and all his spiritual children, whereby they are said to be in Christ, and he in them. "*At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*" Again, "*I am the vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.*" And we are told that there is "*no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*" But it may be asked, in what respects are they in Christ Jesus?

1. They are in him as their COVENANT HEAD, as is obvious from the tenor of the fifth chapter of Romans, in which the Apostle runs the parallel between the imputation of Adam's sin to his natural seed, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to his spiritual seed. As believers are in Christ as their covenant head, they are inseparably united to the infinite fountain of life; for it has pleased the Father, that as head of the church, "*in him should all fulness dwell.*" Hence the life of the believer is safely hid with Christ in God, for he is the life of God, and because he lives, his people must live also.

2. They are in him as the LORD THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS, for they are clothed with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is large and wide as the law of God, and which has received the full approbation of heaven. Therefore, they are one with Christ, in the view of the law and justice of God.

As the bride, by virtue of her marriage covenant, becomes legally one with the bridegroom, and stands legally entitled, in a joint right, to all the riches he possesses;—so, believing sinners, by virtue of their marriage union with Christ as the Lord their righteousness, stand legally entitled, in the view of the law of God, in a joint right, to all the boundless riches of

Christ. His person, mediation, merits, and purchase, are theirs; in a word, *“all things are theirs, whether Paul or Apollus or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are theirs, and, therefore, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”*

3. They are in Christ as the fountain of all divine influences. In this respect, they are mystically one with him; they are united to him as the members to the head, or as the branches to the vine; therefore the life of grace is supported and strengthened by constant supplies, communicated from the boundless sufficiency of Christ; and these supplies will be continued until they are ripened for, and arrived at, the heavenly state, as is evident from the words of the Apostle: *“And he gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”* Divine influences are communicated to their souls by the Holy Spirit. *“When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth.”* And the means by which they are communicated, are the reading and preaching of the word of God, meditation, prayer, self-examination, &c.; all these are so many channels by which light, life and strength are conveyed to the people of God. Through the word and ordinances, Christ and his people meet and hold communion, and thus his children are strengthened in the inner man, and thereby grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth. Sometimes he opens their understanding (as in the case of the two disciples on

the way to Emmaus), and shews them the spiritual meaning of his word, which is concealed from the carnal world. Sometimes his promises are sweeter than honey and the honey-comb, and on such occasions he often shews them their title to heaven, written in the red lines of Immanuel's blood. Sometimes, when they are ready to sink under gloomy doubts and dismal fears, to question the reality of their conversion to God, and are about to raze the foundation of their hopes—to their sweet surprise, he unveils to them his lovely face, speaks peace to their souls, appears in the galleries of his grace, gives them sweet views of his glory, and blesses them with clear evidences of their interest in all the privileges of the sons of God.

With the dyed garments of salvation, he sometimes meets his people at his holy table. There he shews them his vesture dipped in blood; he describes the thorns he wore, and tells o'er his bloody passion; he shews them his pierced hands and feet, the wide wound of the spear in his side, and all the scarlet streams of his shed blood. These views fill their hearts with deep repentance, and Godly sorrow for sin, and excite in them a holy resentment against it. He often meets them in secret, and when no human eye beholds them. He listens to their complaints, and suffers them to lay before him all their trials and sorrows. Often when they are reflecting upon him, he breaks into their souls, and gives them a taste of heaven, or a faith's view of their everlasting home. By afflictive dispensations he qualifies them for heaven. These have an excellent tendency to strengthen the life of grace; hence it is very common for the children of God to be exercised with them. Says Christ: "*In the world ye shall have tribulation.*" And their design

is to wean the child of God from this world, to discover to him the bitterness of sin, and qualify him for the enjoyment of his everlasting rest. "*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" Christ often permits the Devil and ungodly men to persecute and afflict his children, and thus he uses them to brighten the vessels of mercy for the kingdom of heaven, when they will shine brighter than the sun in his strength.

V. He finishes the life of grace; for he completes the work of sanctification, and thus the life of grace ripens into the life of glory. "*Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified;*" hence he is styled the "*Author and finisher of faith.*" Whenever the work of sanctification is completed, the believer is ripe for heaven; and then he encounters this last and most painful conflict, at the close of which his warfare is ended, and his weary soul brought to rest forever in the bosom of Jesus. But in this trying hour, the Lord Jesus Christ attends the child of God, and affords him every necessary support. Now he gives him such clear views of his power, and the efficacy of his blood and merits, that he can look death in the face with confidence; without fear he can reflect on the stern and inflexible justice of God, and welcome the day of his complete redemption. Jesus, dying, conquered the monster, deprived him of his sting, and converted him from the king of terrors to a kind friend, commissioned to call the humble believer to his Father's house. And as he passes through the dark valley, he raises his Ebenezer, saying; "*O death, where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory! Thanks*

be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now his body falls into the dust, and there it rests in union with Christ, until the morning of the resurrection. But his soul, escorted by angels, mounts to heaven, where grace is ripened into glory, faith into vision, and hope into eternal fruition.

SERMON VII.

THE EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST AS DISPLAYED IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION.



Come and see.—JOHN i. 46.

In this chapter, we have an account of the first dawn of the gospel day, when Christ, the glorious source of righteousness, made his first appearance on the confines of our lost and ruined world. The important period had now arrived when the sceptre had departed from Judah—when all the Old Testament prophecies respecting the incarnation of the Son of God were to be accomplished—and when all the types and bloody sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation were to receive their complete fulfilment in Jesus Christ, their glorious antitype.

In the beginning of this chapter, the evangelist informs us, that the Eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God and was God, and by whom the heavens and the earth were created, was made flesh and dwelt with us; that he came unto his own, but his own received him not. After asserting the great fundamental doctrines of the Godhead, and incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, he gives us some information of him in his public character, and the commencement of his mediatorial work; he tells us that the Eternal Father gave a plain and visible demonstration of the divinity of his person, and of the truth and authority of his mission, by the Holy Ghost descending upon him in a bodily shape, and by an audible voice from heaven proclaiming him to be his beloved son, in whom he is well pleased, as the other evangelists testify.

In consequence of this, his forerunner, John, openly proclaimed him to the world as the great propitiatory sacrifice to the law and justice of God: "*Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*"

The epithet Lamb represents, first, the spotless innocence and purity of his soul and body, by which, as the Apostle expresses it, he was "*holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.*" Again, it represents him as the all-sufficient, efficacious, atoning sacrifice, to the justice of God for sin. In this view, he is termed in Scripture, "*The lamb that was slain,*" and "*The lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world;*" and he was typified under the Mosaic dispensation by the paschal lamb, and by the other bloody sacrifices. He is also called the Lamb of God, because he was chosen and ordained of God, in the councils of eternity, as the great sacrifice for sin; and who should take away all sin. He is called "*The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,*" because his mediation and atonement are complete, almighty and all-sufficient to remove the guilt, power and pollution of sin wherever it is applied.

The next important circumstance mentioned by the Evangelist is, the Godlike power and energy that attended the ministry of our divine Lord. Thus, for instance, as he goes into Galilee, he meets Philip—like a God he speaks to his heart with converting light and power. He just says, Follow me, and the consequence is, that he is a willing subject of king Jesus in the day of his power—his heart opens like the heart of Lydia and receives Christ—he forsakes all and follows him.

The soul that meets with Christ, sees his glory by the eye of faith, and feels his love shed abroad in his

heart—possesses a blessed secret he cannot keep—he sees much beauty, glory, and precious sweetness in Christ—he sees him fairer than the sons of men, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. In a word, he sees him to be such a willing and all sufficient Saviour, that he must tell the blessed news—he must tell what a precious Christ and sweet salvation he has found. This we find was the case with Philip, when he meets with Jesus, sees his glory and tastes his love—he runs to Nathaniel with the blessed tidings, saying, “*I have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*” Nathaniel, though a good man, seems to answer like the sinner, “*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*” Philip replies in the words of the text, “*Come and see.*”

When a poor lost sinner meets with Jesus Christ, and feels the sweetness of his pardoning love, tells the unconverted what a pardoning Christ, and what a sweet salvation he has found—when in the very bowels of Jesus he entreats them to flee the wrath to come, his language appears dark and strange, they reply as Nathaniel did, can there be any good thing in religion? Says the sinner, this is a dark mystery to me; it looks like foolishness, can there be any reality in it? But the heaven-born soul always replies in the language of Philip, “*Come and see.*” Once I was blind and dead; then the things of God and the blessed realities of religion appeared as foolish to me as they now do to you; but were the Lord to open our eyes; did you know what is to be felt and known of Christ and religion, you would part with all things for this pearl of great price. But “*come and see,*” taste, feel and know for yourself.

In the prosecution of this subject, I shall observe the following method:—

I. Point out some precious things that the believer sees in Christ;

II. Shew what it is, to come and see;

III. Answer some of the sinners' objections against trying to come and see.

I. Point out some things that the believer sees in Christ. And 1st. You are called to come and see the infinite and indescribable glories of his person, as Immanuel, God with us, or God in our nature. Saith Isaiah, "*To us a child is born; to us a son is given; his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*" Saith Zech, "*Awake, O sword, against the shepherd, and smite the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.*" Saith John, "*In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.*" All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Again he saith, "*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*" The Apostle tells us, "*That he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God—yet he made himself of no reputation, but took upon himself the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the death of the cross.*" All the infinite glories, perfections and excellencies of the Godhead are essentially in him; all the graces of the Divine Spirit are in him in the highest possible degree; every beauty, amiable excellence, and comely proportion, that the infinite wisdom of God could devise, are in him.

In the Songs of Solomon, the daughters of Jerusalem, who represent the unconverted world, or formal professors, ask the spouse or true believer, "*What is thy beloved, more than another beloved?*" The spouse, or living Christian, replies to this question, "*My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand; his head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven; his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set; his cheeks are as a bed of spices, like sweet flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh; his hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; his belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires; his legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet.*" Thus she describes her beloved till created language fails to express her ideas, and at last, she sums up the whole: "*Yea, he is altogether lovely.*" Says John, "*I saw in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*" But why do we dwell upon particulars, when angels and arch-angels, seraphim and cherubim, with all the ransomed millions round the throne, will have spent ten thousand times ten thousand ages, dwelling upon the glories and beauties of Jesus, they must acknowledge with the queen of Sheba, that the half, yea, that the ten thousandth part can never be told, for he is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. He is the Al-

mighty Jehovah, the Everlasting God, the Eternal Uncreated I AM. Infinity, eternity, incomprehensibility, self-existence, and immutability, are the essential properties of his nature. He is the Creator of all worlds. By one word of his almighty power, suns, moons, stars, worlds and systems of worlds, came rolling out of non-existence into being. By his boundless unerring wisdom and almighty power, the mysterious wheels of his adorable providence are rolled on from age to age, and all the affairs of the natural and moral world moved along in the most exact order and harmony, so as to terminate in the great purposes of his glory. He is almighty in power—he performs his whole will and pleasure in the armies of heaven above, and among the inhabitants of the earth beneath. He comprehends the ocean in the hollow of his hand: he weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, and takes up the isles as a very little thing. He is the essential wisdom of God: he planned the universe; he formed the established laws of nature, by which the order and harmony of all worlds and systems of worlds are supported. He is the author and finisher of the heaven astonishing scheme of redemption, that strikes all the adoring worlds with wonder, that the astonished angels with praise and adoration desire to look into. He beholds all things from everlasting to everlasting: he looks from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell, at one immediate view; yea, what is infinitely more, with one view he sees, knows and comprehends all the shoreless, fathomless glories of the Godhead. He is infinitely and immaculately holy—he is infinite amiable excellence itself, the perfect beauty of every perfection. In a word, he is the “*Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty,*” who humbles him-

self to behold the things that are done in heaven—before whom bright shining seraphim veil their faces and the purest ranks of glorified spirits are justly chargeable with comparative folly.

Justice and judgment are the habitations of his throne. To maintain the glory of his law, the honor and dignity of his government, and to manifest his infinite abhorrence and displeasure against sin, a bottomless hell was kindled, and its tremendous blaze perpetually kept up: his breath, like a stream of brimstone, blows the flames of Tophet, and displays the power of his just vengeance in the punishment of finally impenitent sinners. He is love itself—his very essence is love.—His love passeth all created understanding: it is an infinite ocean without shore or bottom; it is everlasting, unsolicited love, sovereign, free and unmerited love. It is almighty, all-powerful, all-conquering love: in a word, his love, mercy and goodness and grace, stoop from the heaven of heavens to the very suburbs of hell, and raises crawling worms—rebels that deserve the lowest hell, from the deep and miry clay, from all the dreadful horrors of an unconverted state, to the very summit of glory, and to the perfection of blessedness.

2. You are called to come and see what a precious, suitable Saviour Jesus is, when viewed in his person, in his two natures and three offices, as Prophet, Priest and King. He is man in our nature, our friend, our kinsman and elder brother. He is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, as he possessed a true body, and a reasonable soul, he was capacitated to yield a perfect sinless obedience to the precepts of the divine law, in the room and place of all his ransomed blood-bought millions.—He was thereby quali-

fied to endure the curse—to suffer and die, the just for the unjust—to pay down the infinite price of his people's ransom to the justice of God in divine blood, till justice could demand no more, till he could say to the whole work of their salvation and redemption, **IT IS FINISHED!** In our nature he has wrought out a complete law, fulfilling righteousness—a righteousness commensurate to the highest claims of the law and justice of God; a righteousness so pure, excellent and glorious, that the all-seeing eye of the stern, inflexible justice of God, can find neither flaw nor blemish in it. In this righteousness, a God of consummate holiness and purity, can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly sinner, that believeth in Jesus.

But as he is man in our nature, so he is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, possessed of all the infinite glories, perfections and excellencies of the Godhead. His divine and human natures are so wonderfully and mysteriously united, as to constitute but one individual personage; hence, the Apostle terms his blood that was shed for the remission of sins, "*the blood of God,*" as it was the blood of Him who was truly and essentially God, as well as man. Now say, is he not a most suitable Saviour, just such a one as such poor lost sinners as we, need? He is exactly qualified to be a mediator between God and man; for he possesses the nature of both the offended and the offending parties; therefore, he is a most suitable day's man to lay his hands upon both of their heads.

Therefore, come and see what a suitable Saviour Jesus is, when viewed in his prophetic office. The Evangelist John, tells us "*that he was the only begotten son, that was in the bosom of the Father.*" The child that lies in the Father's bosom, knows the Father's

heart; he can form the most correct idea of his mind and intentions: so Christ, the friend of sinners, from eternity, lay in his Father's bosom. He knows his mind and intentions; he knows all the gracious designs of his infinitely compassionate heart. Therefore, with propriety he may be termed the eternal Word, that reveals the mind of God to a lost world, that brings all the gracious designs of his love and mercy to the view of poor sinners: hence, he is termed "*the true light*"—"the great light that sprang up in the dark region and shadow of death"—"*the day star*"—"the morning star"—"*the son of righteousness*" that dispels the darkness of the moral world.

As prophet, he reveals the living way, in which God is reconcileable—sin pardonable—and heaven attainable. By his word and spirit he speaks to the hearts of spiritually dead sinners, and shews them the extent, purity and spirituality of God's law; he discovers to them the God provoking and soul damning nature of sin, and the baseness, filthiness and utter insufficiency of their own righteousness. He speaks peace to the troubled conscience, binds up the broken heart, and unveils the glory, fulness and suitableness, of that great salvation he has wrought out by his active and passive obedience. As a prophet, like a shepherd, he leads his flock into the green pastures of the Gospel; he leads them from strength to strength, along the narrow way of holiness, self-denial and communion with God; he leads them in his own footsteps, and often in a way that they know not, as he directs all things by the mysterious movements of his Providence, to fit and prepare them as vessels of mercy, for the reception of an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

Again you are called to come and see what a precious, suitable Saviour Jesus is, when viewed in his

priestly office. The Divine Spirit tells us that *"he is a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedeck;"* *"that he is a merciful and faithful high priest;"* a *"High priest that can be touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, as in all points he was tempted, as we are yet without sin;"* *"that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession."* View him in his priestly office, and by faith you may see that glorious, precious, sweet smelling sacrifice, which was the antitype of all the bloody sacrifices for thousands of years. The sacrifice that made a competent atonement to the law and justice of God for all the sins of many millions of lost sinners; for the sins of that exceeding great multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, kindreds, tongues and people upon the earth, that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Do you ask, what was this sacrifice? I answer, it was the immaculate human nature of the son of God—his spotless, holy soul and body—which was so intimately united to the second person of the ever blessed Trinity, as to constitute but one identical person. The altar upon which this was offered, (and which sanctified the gift and gave an infinite dignity and value to the sacrifice), was the divine nature, and the priest that offered it up was Immanuel, God in human flesh. Here faith may come and see the Lamb of God, slain by the sword of divine justice, hanging upon the accursed tree, and suffering from four bleeding wounds! A God of holy and inflexible justice laying upon him the iniquities of us all, taking a holy, Godlike pleasure in bruising and putting him to grief, while mercy, pardon, salvation and eternal life, flow in scarlet streams from his bleeding

veins and breaking heart, like an infinite ocean without shore or bottom! Here you may come and see the immeasurable ocean of the love of God, that moved from all Eternity in the infinitely gracious and compassionate heart of Jehovah, to lost sinners of Adam's race, finding vent through the bleeding veins of the son of God! Yea, faith may come and see the bloody sufferings, the dying agonies and the expiring groans of the incarnate God, giving life, eternal life, to innumerable millions—to an exceeding great number, like sand by the sea shore!

Again you are called, to come and see what a precious and suitable saviour Jesus is, when viewed in his kingly office. The Father declares, that "*he is the King, that he has set upon his holy hill of Zion;*" and in Matthew, he himself tells us, "*that all power in heaven and in earth, is committed to him.*" As a king, like an Almighty conqueror, he has demolished the strong holds of the Devil; he has overturned the dark empire of hell; he has rescued millions of lost sinners from the devouring lion of the infernal pit; and he has led the monster, Death, in chains! In the day of his power, he subdues the hearts and wills of the most stubborn, hell-hardened rebels: he lays them like humble penitents in the dust, and makes them the obedient and willing subjects of his cross: he bruises the Old Serpent under their feet, and makes them conquerors and more than conquerors at last, over sin, Satan, death and hell!

3. You are called to come and see Mercy and Truth meeting together, and righteousness and peace kissing each other in the person of Christ; and the attributes of the Godhead meeting, uniting and harmonizing in that great salvation which Christ has wrought

out for poor lost sinners by his obedience and sufferings.

Here you may see everlasting love exhausting the very funds of heaven,—laying out the boundless riches of the Godhead, and presenting to perishing sinners the richest, the greatest, and the most precious gift that God could bestow: “*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” Here you may see the holy, strict and inflexible justice of God, receiving the most complete and ample satisfaction in the streaming blood and dying agonies of the incarnate God; a satisfaction commensurate to its highest demands—ininitely more glorious than it could have received in the damnation of the whole human race. Here you may see rich redeeming mercy, flowing in scarlet streams from the bleeding heart of a dying Jesus: Here you may see the burning throne of justice sprinkled, and the flaming sword of divine wrath cooled in the blood of the incarnate God, and the living way laid open by which God can be just and the justifier of the worst of sinners.

4. You are called to come and see the rich provision of the everlasting covenant of peace, treasured up in Christ. Here you may see the hiding place from the storms of God’s wrath, in which the most polluted sinners may rest in complete and eternal safety: Here you may see the strong hold opened for the reception of guilty law-condemned sinners: Here you may see “*the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness,*” flowing from the wounds made by the thorns, nails and spear: Here you may see blood-bought pardons freely offered to the chief of sinners: Here you may see the white robe of a perfect law fulfilling righteousness, that co-

vers millions of naked souls, and delivers them from the curse and condemning sentence of God's holy law. In a word, you may come and see pardon for the guilty, strength for the weak, eyes for the blind, feet for the lame, food for the hungry, and all things necessary for sanctification and complete eternal glorification.

5. You are called to come and see the gracious willingness of Jesus to receive the chief and worst of sinners. Who can doubt the veracity of Christ, the Amen, the faithful and true witness? The calls, offers and invitations, that every where abound in the Bible, speak the very language of his heart—*“Ho! every one that thirsteth, come to the waters!”* *“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest.”*

But if the word, promise, and oath of God, will not convince you of Christ's willingness to save, you are called to come and see plain matters of fact that silence every objection. View his incarnation, humiliation, bitter sufferings and dying agonies. All these proclaim his gracious willingness to save the chief of sinners. See him leaving his eternal throne of glory, veiling his Godhead in clay, born in a stable, and laid in a manger; and what is the cause of this amazing abasement and humiliation? Why, to save poor lost sinners! View Gethsemane's groans and bloody sweat! see him buffeted, spit upon, and scourged, till one might tell all his bones. See him crowned with thorns, carrying the cross on his bleeding, mangled shoulders, through the streets of Jerusalem, and up Mount Calvary to the place of execution! See him there hanging on the cursed tree, suspended by four bleeding wounds. Hear him crying in the most extreme anguish, *“My God! my God! why hast thou*

forsaken me?" See him sinking in the agonies of death, and falling a pale, lifeless and ghastly corpse!

Now, sinner, had Christ been unwilling to save you, would he have endured all this to prevent you from sinking into hell? When he died justice cried, I am satisfied! and the language of every drop of blood which flowed from his veins is, "*Come and see.*"

Again, consider the tears he shed over obstinate sinners in the days of his flesh; his melting and moving lamentations over the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the very persons he knew in a few days would imbrue their hands in his blood—and none can doubt his willingness to save the chief of sinners. When he beheld Jerusalem, he wept over it, saying, "*if thou hadst known at least, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace;*" and after his resurrection, he commanded his apostles to make the first offers of mercy to the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the very persons who had imbrued their hands in his blood. His command was, "*Go preach my gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem.*" A certain author paraphrasing on this passage, expresses it thus—"Go to that bloody city; as they are the chief of sinners, so their case is the most desperate—give them the first offers of mercy—though they have blasphemed my divinity, and cruelly imbrued their hands in my blood—though they have despised the tears that I have shed over them, and imprecated my blood to be upon them—tell them it was for them I shed both,—my tears to soften their hearts towards God, and my blood, that I might reconcile God to them. Tell them that you have seen the print of the nails in my hands and feet, and the print of the spear in my side, and all the marks of their murdering cruelty; tell them that all these, so far from giving me vindic-

tive thoughts, concerning them, that every wound and every scar pleads in their behalf, and cries for their pardon and redemption before God—and enables me to bestow it; yea, if you see that poor unhappy wretch who ran the spear into my side, tell him there is a nearer and better way to come to my heart—even to my heart's love! If he will look upon me, whom he has pierced, and mourn, I will cherish him in the same bosom he has wounded; and he shall find the blood he has shed, a sufficient remedy against the sin of shedding it. Tell him he will put me to more pain in rejecting this offer of my blood, than he did when he drew it forth!"

6. Come and see the wonders that the redeeming blood and all conquering love of Jesus has performed in every age of the world. Here you may see spiritually dead souls awakened, converted and raised up to newness of life; hearts of stone harder than the adamant broken and melted into floods of penitential sorrow; eyes that were blinded by the God of this world, opened and enlightened to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus—to behold the ravishing beauty of Immanuel—to see the height, depth, length and breadth, of the unmeasurable ocean of the love of God in Christ Jesus—which passes all created understanding. Here you may see the enemies of God, the veterans of the camp of hell, ministers of wickedness, lying at the feet of Jesus, weeping, pardoned penitents! In a word, you may come and see debauchees, thieves, murderers and hell-hardened deists, transformed from glory to glory in the image of Christ—an exceeding great multitude, which no man can number, redeemed out of all nations and kindred, and tongues, and people, who were once dead in sin, and children of wrath even as others, but

their robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

7. Come and see how sweet the love of Jesus is, and how ravishing the glories and beauties of his face appear to the pardoned believer in his sweet seasons of communion with God. We are creatures who are naturally curious; we are solicitous to know secrets and find out mysteries. Well, here is the secret of the Lord, that is, with them that fear him; here are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which none know but the heaven born soul; here is the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name, that no man knows but him that receives it; here is Christ's banqueting house—heaven upon earth—the apples of Paradise—the grapes of Eschol, the wine, milk and honey of Canaan: Here is the peace of God that passeth all understanding—the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Here the pardoned believer sits down under the shadow of Christ with great delight, and finds his fruit pleasant to the taste. Like Moses from the top of Pisgah, he views the land of promise; by faith he views his everlasting inheritance, and reads his title to that inheritance, in the red lines of the blood of Christ. These views fill the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Now the believer sinks into the dust before God, and cries with Job, *“before I heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”*

8. You are called to come and see how soul refreshing the smiles of Jesus are to the dying believer, when he is parting with time, when he is about to take a long farewell of all earthly things, when the light of glory begins to dawn, and the angelic guards begin to appear. See the believer in the last agonies of death,

leaning his fainting head on the living bosom of Jesus—
—heaven dawning—the sun of righteousness shining
into his departing soul—with what joy can he then
take a last adieu of this wretched and ensnaring world
and wing his flight to climes of glory!

II. Show what it is to “*Come and see.*” The mean-
ing of the expression is, to believe on the Lord Jesus
Christ. Thus in Isaiah, “*Look unto me and be ye saved;*”
that is, believe in me. To come and see, signifies that
we part with the love and practice of every sin, and
accept of salvation on God’s terms. Christ is offer-
ed in the gospel to guilty sinners as God’s unspeak-
able gift; therefore, to come and see is to accept of
Christ in all ^{his} offices as a free gift. h

Would you come and see the suitableness, fulness
and all-sufficiency of Christ, then like blind Bartimeus,
you must lie by the way-side; when Jesus of Naza-
reth passeth by, you must cry for mercy as the con-
demned criminal cries for a pardon, and take no deni-
al, till the almighty voice of the Son of God speak
peace and pardon to your soul.

But to be more particular, would you attempt to
come and see—

You must attend to the business of your salvation,
as a work of the last importance, and which must be
done. You must listen to carnal excuses no longer;
you must now begin that important work—put it off no
longer—for the present is God’s time. Therefore, like
Lot, “*arise, flee for your life—look not behind you—
tarry not in all the plain,*” for eternal life is to be forev-
er lost or won.

2. You must forsake your vain companions, vain
conversation, and every known sin; you must diligent-
ly attend to the performance of every known duty;

and seek the Lord in all the means of his appointment. Thus you must pray in your family and in secret; you must frequently reflect on your dreadful condition while destitute of an interest in Christ, for you are now in the plains of Sodom under the curse of God; therefore reflect on the danger of turning back, and take care that you do not sit down on a false, delusive hope.

3. Attend to the voice of conscience, cherish every motion of the Holy Spirit, and like the importunate widow, give the Lord no rest until he speak peace and pardon to your soul.

4. Resolve in the strength of God never to rest in your reformations, duties, prayers, tears or melting frames, till the Lord himself speaks peace to your heart.

5. Lie at the feet of Jesus, and like an humble penitent, plead his gracious free offers of mercy to the chief of sinners; plead the infinite, all-sufficiency of that atoning blood which has washed away the guilt of millions. Meditate on the fulness and freeness of the great salvation which is provided for miserable, lost, perishing sinners of every description. Attempt to stretch forth the withered hand and to throw your helpless, perishing, dying soul into the outstretched arms of sovereign mercy---crying, Lord give me faith! help me to believe! Lord open my understanding! let the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shine into my benighted soul!

III. Answer some objections, and—

1. Says some poor Christless sinner, I am called to come and see the beauties and glories of Jesus; but this is a dark mystery---Jesus is an unknown Christ to me.

Answer---Go to Jesus with your complaint---tell him you are blind and cannot see. He came into our world on the kind, gracious errand, to seek and save the lost---to seek and save just such as you. He came *“to open the eyes of the blind---to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound.”*

2. Do you know and feel that you are blind; the spirit of God taught you this truth. While you are out of Christ your case is so dreadful that no language can describe it; but dreadful as it is, while the spirit of God strives with you there is hope; therefore plead with vehemence---you have the word and promise of God, that *“him that cometh to Jesus, he will in no wise cast out.”* But do you say, I am not only blind but dead; dead in trespasses and sins; I do not sensibly feel my case; my heart is as hard as a rock; I have no disposition to come to Christ; why then should I attempt to come till God gives me the disposition?

Answer---Wretched sinner, you are the very person above all others who should be storming heaven with your cries, for there is no case on this side of hell more desperate, with this exception, that we hope your day of grace is not eternally past, but that the spirit is still striving with you. A want of heart, will and disposition to fly to Christ is a death spot---a hell spot---not only a symptom of spiritual death, but a woful token that the second death is taking hold of you. It is a proof of the most daring enmity and rebellion against God. Your great excuse is that you are in such a dead sleep, that you cannot see nor feel your danger. This excuse is your crime. Spiritual blindness and hardness of heart are soul damning sins. As well might the robber plead his insatiable

covetousness, as an excuse for his crime, or the murderer plead his unconquerable malice. Are you blind to your danger:—And what says the word of God to your case?—*“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.”* Is your heart hard and unfeeling:—What does Jehovah himself say of this excuse? *“Thy hard and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”* Poor, spiritually dead soul, stop—suspend the laughter of fools for a moment, while I deliver to you the sweetest news that ever reached the ears of sinners out of hell. *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came to save sinners,”* sinners of the worst kind—sinners even of your character and description. *“He is the resurrection and the life;”* and if you believe on him, though you were dead, yet you shall live: he has an almighty voice that can raise the dead from their graves at his command. Lazarus, though four days dead and in a state of putrefaction, sprung into life, when he said, Lazarus come forth. And would you but come and see, had you but one faith’s view of his lovely face, this would subdue your heart, conquer your will, and make you willing to part with all things for this pearl of great price.

3. But, says some Christless soul, I have had many calls by the word and spirit of God—I have often resolved that I would try to come and see, but owing to the cares of the world, and snares of the wicked, I have quenched my convictions and again turned back to sin; and although I wish to come to Christ, before I die, yet this is not a convenient time. I pray you have me excused until I become satisfied with the

pleasures of this world, or until I am in such circumstances that I can obtain religion without being exposed to reproach. Is this your character, your case is desperate—your day of grace is drawing near the eleventh hour—the judge of quick and dead, who carries the keys of hell and death, who shuts and no man opens, has declared his spirit shall not always strive with you; and that *“he that is often reprov’d and stiffeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”* Then let every conviction-stifler here be persuaded to come to Jesus, and thereby take shelter in the strong hold appointed for the prisoners of hope before it is eternally too late.

4. But, says some heavy laden sinner, I have been long trying to come and see. Were I in possession of ten thousand worlds, and could Christ be bought, I would freely give them all for an interest in him; but the more I try to come and see, the more clearly do I discover my own misery, and the more darkly does the plan of salvation appear. Alas! what shall I do?

The vengeance of God pursues you—the flaming sword of divine justice is unsheathed. There is no hope, help nor safety for you but in Christ: therefore, escape for your life, storm the heavens with your cries. Jesus stands with open arms ready to receive you—his bleeding wounds and dying groans invite you—all that he did for your salvation bids you welcome; therefore venture upon him and you shall see the glory of God,

SERMON VIII.

THE BELIEVER EMBRACING CHRIST.



Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God.—LUKE ii. 28.

THIS is a pleasing truth, “*Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious.*” No sooner does a sinner obtain a faith’s view of Jesus Christ, than his heart is filled with “*joy unspeakable and full of glory.*” The psalmist, speaking of Christ, says, that “*he is fairer than the sons of men, and his loving kindness is better than life.*” What comfort and holy joy must good old Simeon have felt when he held the lovely Jesus in his arms! As Dr. Watts beautifully expresses it:

“With what divine and vast delight
The good old man was fill’d,
When fondly in his withered arms
He clasped the Holy Child.”

In the context it is said, that “*Simeon was just and devout;*” that is, he lived in the love and practice of all the duties of the first and second table of the law of God; and all true believers are careful to maintain good works. Simeon “*was waiting for the consolation of Israel;*” that is, he anxiously looked, and fervently prayed, for the coming of the promised Messiah, who is “*the consolation of Israel.*” “*It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ;*” therefore he saw him by the eye of faith before he beheld him with his bodily eye; so faith in the promises always precedes and prepares the soul for the sensible enjoyment of Christ in time, and for the immediate enjoyment of him in the

heavenly state. The Evangelist proceeds: "*And he came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms and blessed God.*" From these words we may observe,

1st. As aged Simeon took the blessed Jesus in his arms, so it is the privilege of every true Christian to embrace Christ in the arms of faith.

2d. Simeon met with the infant Saviour in the temple; so the followers of Jesus often meet with, and by faith embrace Christ in the house of God. There are the chambers of his love, where they are permitted to see his glory, and sit under his shadow with great delight; for this privilege David earnestly longed: "*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*"

3d. Simeon had a promise, "*that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ;*" the accomplishment of which we have in the words of the text. The fulfilment of God's promises is certain, therefore all the followers of Christ may confidently trust in the word of the God of truth, for he is always as good as his promise. He promised Simeon that he should see the Lord's Christ, and he had not merely a sight of him, but he had him in his arms, and near his heart.

4th. Simeon took the infant Saviour in his arms, and pressed him as near his heart as he possibly could. And the soul that meets with Christ in the ordinances of God's house, takes him in the arms of his faith; presses him to his heart, and gives him the highest place in his affections.

In the discussion of the subject, we shall—

I. Speak of the faith which embraces Christ.

II. When the believer takes Christ in his arms of faith.

III. Some of the effects of this meeting.

I. The faith that embraces Christ. And here we would observe, that nature cannot produce it, but it is implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit of God; hence in Scripture it is styled "*precious faith*"—"The *faith of God's elect*"—"Faith that works by love"—"*Faith that purifies the heart,*" &c.

This faith the sinner cannot exercise by the operation of his natural powers upon the truth of God's word and promise, for such a faith devils and damned reprobates may possess. The unconverted sinner is as incapable of acting faith or laying hold of Christ, as a man born blind is of opening his eyes and beholding the natural light, or as a dead corpse is of performing the works of a living man.

The faith that unites the soul to Christ presupposes a thorough conviction of sin, which breaks up the fountains of the great deep of the heart, lays open the secret dens of hidden wickedness, and renders a Christless state intolerable. It implies a despair of help from any created arm, and that the sinner is dead to all hope in himself. Faith implies a knowledge of Christ—"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It implies a view of the divine glory, manifested in Christ—"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Christ, by his spirit, opens the understanding of the sinner to discover the spirituality of God's word, and to see the fulness, suitable-

ness and preciousness of Christ in his two natures, person and offices of prophet, priest and king. Therefore,

It implies the full and cheerful consent of the heart to receive Christ in all his offices, to accept of salvation on God's terms, and to part with all things for this pearl of great price, and the soul's living and depending on Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

But, to render the subject as plain as possible, we shall mention a number of scriptural expressions by which the nature and operations of faith are illustrated: thus, John styles it a *receiving* of Christ. "*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*" From this passage it is evident that Christ is the free gift of the Father, presented to us in the gospel, and he is ours, when we accept of him. It is called a flying for refuge to the hope set before us: "*Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*" This expression has a particular allusion to the man slayer, under the law, who fled from the avenger of blood. The pursued person was not to turn aside to any of the cities of Israel; he was not to flee to his own house, nor to the temple, but to the city of refuge. So, the awakened sinner must fly to Christ, the only hiding place from the storm and covert from the tempest of God's wrath. The curse of the law and the flaming sword of divine justice pursue the sinner, and there is no hiding place in earth or heaven but in Jesus Christ, who stands with outstretched arms and yearning bowels, while Gethsemane's agonies and Calvary's dying groans proclaim his willingness to receive and shelter even the chief of sinners. As the man slayer, when

he entered the city of refuge, was secure, so the sinner who has fled to Christ is in perfect safety, for justice is satisfied, and all the attributes of God are glorified by the death of Jesus. It is called a submitting to the righteousness of God: they "*have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.*" What a condescending expression! Shall it be termed submission for a condemned criminal to accept of a pardon, or for a person destitute of clothes to accept of a garment? The expression plainly points out the arrogant pride of the heart of man. While we are in a state of nature we imagine ourselves completely covered with a perfect robe of righteousness of our own manufacture; like the Laodiceans, we think that we are "*rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing;*" and we disdain to be obliged to another for his righteousness; but when the sinner, by faith, lays hold of Christ, all these towering imaginations are levelled with the dust, and he counts "*all things but dung that he may win Christ:*" "*Not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness of God by faith;*" and the language of his heart is, "*In the Lord have I righteousness.*"

It is called a taking hold of God's covenant: "*Take hold of my covenant.*" The gospel may be compared to a rope cast among a number of drowning men;—God, by his ministers, cries to perishing sinners, who are sinking into the gulf of hell, "**TAKE HOLD OF MY COVENANT,**" and I will deliver you from going down into the pit. When a sinner believes in Christ he takes hold of this rope of salvation, the covenant of grace, like Jeremiah, who took hold of the cords let down to him in the pit; on this he lays his whole weight, saying, "*this is all my salvation and all my desire;*" on this I trust my perishing soul.

It is called the opening of the heart to Christ: "*Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me.*" When Lydia believed on Christ, it is said, "*The Lord opened her heart*" This expression implies that the heart of the sinner is barred and bolted against Christ, but no sooner does he by faith view his beauty and excellency than the doors of the understanding and affections fly open, and the king of glory enters in with all his heavenly train. It is termed a feeding on Christ: "*Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*" This expression implies that the believer takes hold of Christ and applies him to his own particular case, as a starving man takes food and eats it.

It is termed "*the substance of things hoped for, the ~~vision~~ ^{substance} of things not seen.*" It is to the believer what bonds, deeds and charters are to the man of business, which, although only so many pieces of paper, are the substance and certain evidence of wealth and riches; so the word and promise of God are the believer's bonds, or the evidence of his right to "*a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*" It is called a looking unto Christ: "*They shall look upon me whom they pierced;*" and in the text it is represented as an embracing of Christ: "*Then took he him up in his arms.*" Simeon took Christ in his bodily arms, but it was his embracing him in the arms of faith which caused him to bless God; and of the arms of faith, we would notice the following particulars:—

1st. They are leaning arms; they hold by Christ in his word and promises: they rest upon him as upon an immovable rock. As a sickly female clasps her arms around her beloved husband, and leans upon him

while his strength is sufficient to support and bear her along, so faith leans upon Christ, and depends upon his all-sufficiency for all things necessary for time and eternity. And this is the meaning of these words, *"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"* *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusteth in thee."*

2d. They are *winning* arms; hence saith the Apostle, *"I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may win Christ."* Saith Christ, *"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."* This evidently alludes to the believer's parting with all the pleasures of this world that he may win Christ. Faith is such a winning grace that it is always receiving from Christ's fulness *"grace for grace."* It digs into the rock of ages and finds unsearchable treasure; it sometimes views the heavenly Canaan and fills the heart with *"joy unspeakable, and full of glory."*

3d. They are *capacious* arms. The world, with all its pomp and splendor, cannot fill them. Nothing short of God in Christ can do this. Saith the apostle, *"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord."* Indeed all the glories of heaven, without Christ, could not satisfy the believing soul. Saith the psalmist, *"whom have I in heaven but thee?"*

They are *grasping* arms; they not only stretch wide and embrace much, but they hold fast what they get. Saith the spouse, *"I held him fast, and would not let him go."* They take hold of the omnipotent God and will not let him go, even when he seems to shake

himself loose; a plain example of this we have in the case of Jacob, who took hold of the angel of the covenant; and what is truly wonderful, the Creator becomes a suppliant to his creature, saying, "*Let me go;*" but the faith of Jacob replies, "*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;*" as if he should say—The day may break, the night may come, and the day may break again, yet "*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*" And thus poor, helpless Jacob, and the all-sufficient and compassionate God, will not part until the blessing come. By the strength of the prayer of faith, "*he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him.*" In like manner, the faith of Moses holds back the sin avenging arm of Jehovah: "*Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.*" "*And Moses besought the Lord, his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people? Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against thy people. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.*" By faith Joshua inverted the laws of nature and stopped the sun and moon in their courses; by faith Elijah shut and opened the heavens; by faith the prison door opened to Peter, and the chains fell from his hands and feet; in a word, the arms of faith embrace Christ, and they never let go their hold—the first hold that faith takes of Christ, unites the soul to him forever. Saith the apostle, "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*" "*I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

5th. The arms of faith are active. True, they do not work for reward on the footing of the old covenant; all their exertions are like those of the beggar when he receives alms without money and without price. Faith manifests its heavenly origin by a cheerful and unreserved obedience to all the commands of God. It delights in the law of God, and takes the sweetest pleasure in the paths of duty; in a word, *“as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.”*

6th. The arms of faith are fighting and victorious; therefore, the apostle, speaking of the Old Testament worthies, says that, *“through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”* By the arms of faith, the feeble Christian leans upon omnipotence, and thereby gains a complete victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. Faith gains all its victories through the blood of the Lamb. Saith the apostle Paul, *“I can do all through Christ, who strengtheneth me.”* Hence, as Rutherford says, “a poor milk-maid in the chimney-corner, by the prayer of faith, can do more for the church of Christ, than a general with a hundred thousand men; for by one act of faith she sets all the wheels of omnipotence to work.”

II. [When the believer takes Christ in his arms of faith he embraces him in his conversion; when the almighty arm of Jesus snatches him as a brand from the burning, draws him from the horrible pit and the miry clay, and sets his feet upon the rock of ages, view him upon the brink of a burning hell, the hopes of mercy almost gone, scarce a peradventure left; the ar-

rows of the Almighty sticking fast in his heart, poisoning and drinking up his spirits, the burning beams of the wrath of God falling upon his soul, and the forebodings of hell racking his conscience; see him lost to all hope in himself, making this last resolve, I will go to Jesus, and if I perish, I will perish at his feet; when all appears dark, gloomy and hopeless; the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus breaks into his soul; the glorious plan of salvation is laid open to his view; by faith he beholds the precious loving Jesus arrayed in all the boundless glories and excellencies of the Godhead, able to save unto the uttermost, a Saviour suited exactly to his desperate case, and with joy he accepts of him on the terms upon which he is offered in the gospel, viz. freely, fully, cordially, and affectionately, without money and without price, that is, without any recommending qualifications.] Says the sinner, this Christ just suits me, and that moment his heart yields, and when by faith he views this precious Saviour, all his burden of sin and guilt is carried away and lost in the red sea of divine blood, and joy and peace flow like a stream from the Eternal Throne into his soul. When faith views Christ as truly God and truly man, possessed of all the perfections of the Godhead and of every excellency of which human nature is capable then his language is, he is precious. None but Christ will do for me. *"Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon the earth I desire beside thee."* When faith views the effects of the mediation of Jesus Christ, viz. justification, sanctification, glorification and eternal life, and the believer feels the spirit of God bearing witness with his spirit that his sins are pardoned, that God, is his father reconciled in Christ,

and he can cry "*Abba Father, my Lord and my God,*" then created language cannot describe the feelings of his heart, then like aged Simeon he embraces Christ, he presses him to his heart and he blesses God.

2d. The believer sometimes takes Christ in the arms of faith and embraces him, when, like aged Simeon, he comes to the house of God, and the word being faithfully preached is carried with power to his soul, enlightening his understanding, giving him a Pisgah view of the promised land, and clear evidences of his interest in that glorious inheritance purchased by the blood of Christ.

3d. The believer takes Christ in his arms, when exercised in the furnace of affliction, he is visited by Christ, as in the case of Jacob, when to the view of sense and reason all things are against him. O how sweet is a smile from Christ at such a time! and what a heaven upon earth is it then to embrace him in the arms of faith! thus Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego had Christ in their arms when they were thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. When Daniel was cast into the lion's den, by faith he embraced Christ; when Paul and Silas were confined in the dungeon, they had Christ in their arms and sung psalms at midnight; when John was in the isle of Patmos, and Christ appeared to him in his glory, he embraced him in the arms of faith; and when the blessed martyrs were dying with the most excruciating pains, they had Christ in their arms of faith, and thereby were enabled to triumph over death in its most terrific form, and declared to the spectators that in the midst of flames and faggots they experienced no more pain than if they were lying on a bed of roses.

4th. The believer sometimes meets Christ and embraces him in the arms of faith when he is seated at a

communion table, then by faith, he sees a mangled, bleeding, dying, rising, triumphant Jesus, heading his own table, and feasting his blood-bought children with the bread of life and the milk and honey of Canaan. Then faith views him in ineffable glory with a crown upon his head, arrayed in the dyed garments of salvation, with his vesture dipped in blood, and *that name written upon his robe and upon his thigh*, "THE KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS."

The believer embraces Christ in the arms of faith in the hour of death, when his body is about to return to the dust, and his soul to wing its flight to his Father's house. O believer, how sweet will it be to die with Christ in your arms! then death will have no terror for you, then like Moses you will die in the embraces of God, and like Stephen you will behold "*The heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;*" and you will be enabled to sing the victor's song, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

III. The effects of the believer's meeting with and embracing Christ. When Simeon met with Christ at the temple, he took him in his arms and blessed God, and the moment the believer embraces Christ he praises God.—No sooner was David drawn from the horrible pit and miry clay, and his feet placed on the rock of ages, than a new song was in his mouth, "praises to our God." When the Ethiopian Eunuch found Christ he went on his way rejoicing, and many are the songs of praise uttered by the believer when he embraces Christ in the arms of faith, thus he sings the everlasting and unmerited love of God;—when the soul is enlightened to behold the transcendent beauty of Deity, when he sees his sin, his word, his law, and

the plan of salvation in all their excellency, then he is in love and wonder; when he beholds the horrid depravity and misery of the human race, and considers the wonderful condescension of Jehovah, displayed in the plan of their salvation, then the language of his heart is, "O how infinite is that love which influenced the Eternal Jehovah to look upon such a worthless wretch as I, weltering in my blood." And did he look with an eye of compassion upon me among the many millions of Adam's ruined race, upon me, who, if possible, was more guilty, abominable and deserving of hell than all the rest:—Did Jesus undertake my cause infinite ages before I had an existence? O amazing and unutterable grace! Let me sink into nothing before the Eternal All, for I am lost in wonder, love and praise!

When Christ is in the believer's arms, he possesses his highest affections, then he is on his lips, and is the subject matter of all his songs of praise; and it is not wonderful that Christ should possess the affections, and that his name should be upon the lips of the believer, when we reflect that he became his surety, assumed his nature, wept in Bethlehem, sweat blood in agony in Gethsemane, and groaned and died on Calvary, shedding the last drop of his precious blood as the price of his ransom. No wonder that Christ should be the subject matter of the believer's songs of praise, when he burst the bars of death, rose triumphant, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, and has gone to heaven to prepare a place for all his blood bought purchase. The burning throne of justice has been sprinkled with his blood, and Jehovah now appears clothed in love. The enlightening, convicting, and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit now flow

like "a pure river of water, clear as crystal, from the throne of God and the Lamb." Jesus Christ purchased all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings for his people; he is infinitely amiable and excellent in his person, nature, and offices; therefore it is not wonderful that he should be the subject matter of the believer's songs of praise; when by faith they embrace him in this world, and when they arrive at their Father's house, heaven will ring with their loud and everlasting acclamations of praise and glory to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever. Amen.

SERMON IX.

THE EXPERIENCE AND PRIVILEGES OF THE TRUE BELIEVER.



There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.—Rom. viii. 1.

tar As one ^{*star*} ~~state~~ differs from another in magnitude, so the epistle to the Romans has a greater lustre and beauty than many other parts of the sacred volume; and the eighth chapter seems to possess a beauty and dignity transcending every other part of the epistle. This chapter contains a short synopsis of all the leading doctrines of the cross. Here, the whole eternal scheme of redemption is marked out from its origin in the eternal counsels of the Deity, until its termination in the glorification and eternal blessedness of all who are purchased by the blood of Christ. The eternal electing love of God, effectual calling, justification, and glorification, are here represented as being inseparably connected, like the links of a chain; therefore the chapter begins with *“no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,”* and concludes with *no separation from the love of God.*

In this chapter we have the most plain and decisive characteristics of the heaven-born Christian; by which all the followers of Christ may prove their union to him, and read their title to their blood-bought inheritance in the heavenly paradise. Here you may find the rich clusters of the sweet promises of God, hanging on Christ Jesus, the living vine, fraught with the new wine of Canaan. Here Christ's sufferings

and death, his triumphant resurrection and ascension to the mediatorial throne, and his all prevailing intercession with the Father, are laid down as the grand basis of the believer's hope, and the inexhaustible source of his happiness, in time and through eternity. Here we are informed that all the persons in the Trinity, all the attributes of the Deity, with all his eternal councils, and all the unsearchable providences of God, are engaged in behalf of true believers, a view of which causes the apostle to cry out, "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*" "*It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?*" "*It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*" "*I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

In the preceding chapter, the apostle gives us a brief narrative of his spiritual exercises. He begins with his first awakenings, and relates not only the work of conversion, but also states his conflicts with the remaining corruptions of his fallen nature, in the progressive work of sanctification; and although he had many hard struggles, with a body of sin and death, yet upon an impartial self-examination, he declares, that he did not wilfully sin, but that he delighted in the law of God after the inner man; that with his mind he served the law of God, and that he felt the remains of sin in his soul as a filthy and loathsome

distemper which he hated, and longed to be delivered from, as from a dead, putrid, and rotten carcase, crawling with filthy vermin. From these considerations he proves his gracious state, and having glorified God that he was united to Christ, in the words of the text, he shews the unspeakable privileges, and indescribable blessings to which he was entitled by virtue of that union.

In the text three things are asserted of all genuine Christians; 1st, their blessed condition: "*They are in Christ Jesus; they have fled to the city of refuge; they are in the strong hold, appointed for the prisoners of hope.*" Says the Holy Spirit, "*The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous run into it, and are safe.*" Again, "*They shall dwell on high; their place of defence shall be the munition of rocks*"—"the strong impregnable rocks of the divine attributes."

2d. The blessed consequence of being in Christ: They are freed from condemnation; they are under the covert of Christ's blood and righteousness; Christ has magnified the law and made it honorable; justice has received complete satisfaction in the streaming blood, and dying agonies of the incarnate God; God, the Father, is well pleased with the believing sinner, for the sake of the righteousness of his son Jesus; therefore they are freed from condemnation, "*for who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*"

3d. The evidence of their being in Christ expressed in a twofold manner.

1st. Negatively. "*They walk not after the flesh;*" sin is the object of their abhorrence. The depraved appetites of the fallen nature, are so contrary to the heaven-born principles implanted in their souls, that they flee from them as from the dagger of a murderer;

therefore, they do not choose them, delight in them, or go after their gratification; hence, it is said, with propriety, "*they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"

2d. But positively, they walk after the spirit, that is, they are bound for the better country; they are travelling home to God, on the narrow way that leads to life; they walk in the footsteps of Jesus; their path is hedged in by the law and gospel, and the Holy Spirit is their guide; therefore, they "*walk after the spirit.*"

In further attending to the subject I will,

I. Explain the phrase, "*In Christ Jesus.*"

II. Speak of the progressive life of sanctification, which is here expressed by not walking "*after the flesh.*"

III. Mention some of the consequences attending those, who walk "*not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*"

I. The phrase "*In Christ.*" This phrase is frequently used in the New Testament as one of the most distinguishing peculiarities of the people of God; and particularly expressive of their heaven-born nature:

"*If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*" "*Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*" "Yea," saith the Spirit,

"*they ~~do not~~ rest from their labors, and their works ~~may~~ do follow them.*" "*Them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*"

The phrase "*In Christ Jesus,*" is expressive

1st. Of that strict, inseparable union, which subsists between Jesus Christ and his spiritual children; hence, they are said to be in him, or united to him, as the branch is to the vine. Christ is frequently represented in scripture as the head, and they, the members of his mystical body. This union is so intimate,

wonderful and endearing, that they are said to be "*one with him,*" as he is "*one with the Father.*"

2d. To be in Christ Jesus is expressive of their entire dependence on him for pardon, justification, sanctification, and eternal life: Christ is the Lord, their righteousness. Says the prophet Jeremiah, "*This is the name whereby he shall be called; The Lord, our righteousness.*" And says the Apostle Paul, "*But of him, ye are in Christ, who of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*" Says Isaiah, "*Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength?*" The psalmist tells us, "*That in his righteousness they shall be exalted;*" and saith the apostle, "*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*"

But to sum up the whole in one word; to be in Christ Jesus signifies the relation in which his people stand to him, as their covenant head. When first created, God entered into a covenant with Adam, as representative of all his posterity. The condition of this covenant, on Adam's part, was perfect obedience; the promise on God's part, was eternal life. Now, had Adam kept that covenant, and perfectly performed the conditions thereof, he would have secured eternal life, for himself and all his posterity, as effectually as he deprived himself and them of it, by the breach of that covenant; and as he was their covenant head, they are said to be in Adam: First, all mankind were seminally in him, as their root or natural cause of exist-

ence. Again, they were in him, as their public representative; for their eternal life, or eternal death, depended on his performing, or not performing the conditions of that covenant.

Jesus Christ, the second Adam, undertook the redemption of fallen man, in the early counsels of eternity; he engaged to assume our fallen and degraded nature, and thus to fulfil the law, and satisfy divine justice, in the room of his elect: To work out a perfect righteousness, for their pardon and justification; that God might be *“just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”* In this respect, all believers are in Christ, as their covenant head; for as the first Adam, represented all his natural seed, so the second Adam, represented all his spiritual seed. This seems to be the very idea of the apostle, when he says *“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”* And again, *“so by the obedience of one many are made righteous.”*

As Adam's natural seed were seminally in him in the first covenant, as their natural root, and federally in him, as their public head, so in the second covenant, all Christ's spiritual seed, are virtually in him, as their spiritual root, and actually in him, as their *“City of refuge—their hiding place, and strong tower.”*

That they were virtually in Christ, as their new covenant head, before they had an existence, is evident, from the words of eternal truth: *“As he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame, before him in love.”*

That they were in Christ, as the wheat is in the grain, that was buried in the earth, is evident from the words of Christ himself; *“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth*

forth much fruit." If Christ had never died, none of the sons and daughters of Adam could have entered heaven. But Jesus died to give life; eternal life, to many millions. Christ died, and was laid in the grave, as the corn of wheat is buried in the earth. And O, what an increase! what an astonishing crop springs up from our dying Christ! innumerable millions of living Christians; an exceeding great multitude, that no man can number; a multitude like the sand by the sea shore—redeemed out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues and people upon the earth.

But, when they receive Christ, by faith, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, they are actually in him as their great covenant head; their infinite, inexhaustible, and eternal fountain of life, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; and, therefore, Christ is all in all to his children; by his merits they are pardoned and accepted with God; by his righteousness they stand justified before God; by his spirit they are sanctified and prepared for their heavenly inheritance. Christ's word and spirit, like a cloud and pillar of fire, guide their feet in the narrow way, and almighty grace gives them the victory, over sin, death and hell, and at last, puts them in possession of their everlasting rest.

But, to illustrate the subject more plainly, we shall offer a few observations: and,

1. All mankind by nature are in the first Adam; and involved with him, in the ruins of the first covenant. It is evident, that the first Adam entailed two dreadful evils on all his unhappy offspring, viz.

1st. The curse and penalty, of the broken covenant.

2d. A disposition to seek eternal life, on the footing of that covenant.

That all mankind by nature are fallen creatures, spiritually dead, and obnoxious both to temporal and eternal death, is a truth which no one can deny, who knows his own heart, and views the depravity and wickedness of mankind in every age and generation of the world, or who consults God's written word.

Again: It is very evident, that every individual of Adam's race (while in a state of nature) tries to seek salvation, and expects happiness on the principles of the old covenant, from his own good works. One says, "I am a good member of civil society, therefore, I expect to be happy after death." Says a second, "It is true, that I do many wrong things, but I also do many good ones; and I am certain my good actions are far more numerous than my evil ones: I have a very large balance in my favor; consequently, I expect to be saved." Says a third, "I am just and upright. I defy the world, to lay any thing to my charge; therefore, I am certain of heaven." And says a fourth, "I am sensible that I am a sinner. It is true, I have led a wicked life, but then I do as well as I can; moreover, I expect to reform, and become a good Christian before I die." These and fifty other classes might be mentioned, who are all trusting in their own righteousness, and depending on the law, as a covenant of works for their salvation, while the God-exalting and creature-humbling plan of redemption, through the merits of Christ, appears in their view both mean and contemptible.

Before any of the sons or daughters of Adam will renounce their own righteousness, and submit to the terms of sovereign mercy, they must be cut off and totally divorced from the old covenant, by the Almighty Power and agency of the Divine Spirit.

In order to accomplish this important purpose, the sinner's eyes must be opened to see his lost, guilty condition; and this is done by the Holy Spirit, in a day of power. Now the sinner sees that he is guilty, condemned, and exposed to the torments of hell;—immediately he works for life, on the principles of the old covenant. First, he reforms his life; he breaks off from swearing, drinking, sabbath breaking, gaming, dancing, &c. and now he imagines all is well with him. But the Divine Spirit brings the law, with greater light and power to his conscience, and shews him that this negative righteousness is a bed too short to stretch himself on, and a covering too narrow to wrap himself in. Still cleaving to the old covenant, the sinner now betakes himself to a diligent and punctual attendance on all the external duties of religion; he prays in secret and in his family; he reads the Scriptures, and attends the preaching of the word upon every occasion. Now his conscience begins to take ease and he makes a Christ of his duties. But the Holy Spirit lays open to his view, the secret evil and hidden wickedness of his heart, and convinces him that his state is unclean, polluted and vile, still cleaving to the old covenant. The sinner now tries to amend his amendments, and to reform his reformations; he endeavors to patch the ragged garment of his own righteousness; he tries to have his heart deeply affected in every duty; when he prays he is quite dissatisfied, unless he feels some more than common enlargement; when he hears a sermon, he is quite uneasy, unless he can shed tears; and his heart is deeply affected. Here his conscience takes ease, and he makes a Christ of his tears, enlargements, and melting frames. But the Holy Spirit of God redoubles the light of con-

viction; breaks up the fountain of the great deep of his depraved heart; shews him his pride, hypocrisy, atheism, legality and unbelief, his vile affections and filthy imaginations, with ten thousand other abominations he never discovered before. Now he weeps and prays, and cries for mercy; he strives as for life, to cleanse this Augean stable, and like a man using every possible exertion, to build a dam across a rapid current, he piles up an immense bank of duties, prayers, tears, resolutions and desires, to stop the impetuous flood of in-dwelling sin and in-bred corruption; till at length he meets with some surprising enlargement. Now his heart is melted; he is all tenderness; he is filled with a lively flow of affections; and he can pour out his soul in the sweetest enlargement in prayer; all his burden and distress appear to be quite gone, and still cleaving to the old covenant, he takes ease to his conscience, and makes a Christ of the peace, joy, and satisfaction he feels; but when these have measurably subsided, at the root of his false hope there is a secret sentiment of condemnation; conscience secretly tells him, there is something in religion of which he is ignorant; every practical, experimental and searching sermon condemns him; when he hears the new birth described, and the believer's first views of Christ, with their subsequent effects and consequences, he finds a dark spot in his experience, that blasts his hope. In order to dislodge him from his refuge of lies, the Holy Spirit now sends the light of conviction, with redoubled vigor, into his soul; he shews him that he has no foundation in the whole word of God, for a hope of religion; that all his joys and hopes are wild delusions; that his whole nature is sin; his heart filled with enmity and hatred against God; that he has no more power

to think a good thought, or do a good action, or to command one holy desire, or pious affection, than he has to create a world, or raise the dead from their graves. Now he beholds the flaming sword of divine justice, unsheathed and pointed at his guilty heart; now vengeance frowns, and hell gapes to receive him to her burning centre; now he asks from the heart, What shall I do to be saved? The ministers of the gospel, God's word, and his Holy Spirit say to him, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*"

He tries to obey the commands of the gospel, but still, upon the principles of the old covenant, he endeavours to spin a faith out of his own bowels; but faith, in its very nature, appears to be a dark mystery. Christ, the glorious object of faith, is entirely an unknown object; all is dark as midnight. He can no more keep the law, than he can create a world; and he can no more believe or act faith, than he can raise the dead. And what shall he do? When he is dead to all hope in himself; stripped of his own righteousness, as naked as the new-born infant; when he feels a Christless state intolerable; when he can live no longer without Christ; when he can do nothing, but, like the poor publican, cry, "*Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;*" like sinking Peter, "*Lord, save or I perish;*" like blind Bartimeus, "*Jesus of Nazareth, thou son of David, have mercy on me;*" or like the poor Leper, "*Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*" Often in the most dismal, hopeless, helpless, desperate time, the glorious, rich provision of the New Testament is unveiled; God, who at first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, now shines into his heart; and gives him "*the light of the knowledge, of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus.*" Now he discovers

the glory, beauty, preciousness, suitableness, and sufficiency of Christ Jesus, the blessed new covenant head.

When Christ opens the eyes of the blind, it is easy to see things as God sees them; faith now views Christ in his person and two natures, and in all his mediatorial offices; a precious, glorious, able, suitable, willing Saviour; just such a Saviour as he needs; such a one as suits his hopeless, helpless, desperate case. By faith he views the city of refuge;—the hiding place from the storm of divine vengeance; “*The strong tower;*” “*the strong hold for the prisoners of hope.*” He feels himself under the covert of Christ’s blood and righteousness. Now he can say with the apostle, “*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God*”—“*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*” Now the soul is divorced from the old covenant, and married to Christ, the heavenly bridegroom. He is totally stripped of his filthy garments, the rags and tatters of his own righteousness; and is clothed in linen, white and clean; the white robes of Christ’s perfect law, fulfilling righteousness. Now he is in Christ Jesus—“*He is a new creature, old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new;*” “*and now, therefore, there is no condemnation, to them that are in Christ Jesus.*”

II. Speak of the progressive life of sanctification; which is here expressed, by not walking after the flesh, which is the effect of the soul’s being in Christ.

A living fountain will always send forth a vital stream. The existence of the sun implies constant emission of light. The existence of animal life will unavoidably manifest itself by breathing, action, appetite and sensation. So spiritual life, union to Christ, or being in Christ, will manifest itself by the motions, actions, and operations of the heaven born nature. Regeneration and sanctification are as inseparably connected, as the cause and effect; the one is the incontestible proof of the other. Therefore, alluding to the statement in our text, the believing soul's being in Christ, is manifested by two evidences; first negatively; "*he walks not after the flesh.*" Second, positively; "*he walks after the spirit.*"

Flesh and spirit, according to the language of the New Testament, signify nature and grace; or the old nature and the new.

Flesh is universally taken to express the depravity of man's nature, its total enmity and contrariety to the nature of God; because, the filthy, depraved appetites, passions and propensities of fallen nature, which rule, govern and tyrannize over the rational powers and faculties of man, have their existence in the flesh or bodily part. Hence the highest end of the unconverted sinner, like the brute, is to indulge and gratify his base propensities; and this is what is meant by "*walking after the flesh.*" But one of the distinguishing peculiarities of the people of God is, that they do not "*walk after the flesh.*"

Those who are in Christ Jesus do not go after strong drink, or the gratification of a filthy appetite for spirituous liquors, as the swine goes after the swill trough. We are told, "*That they have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;*" "*whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they do all to the glory of God.*" They

that are in Christ Jesus, do not indulge themselves in filthy obscene conversation, or impure thoughts, words or actions; but their aim is, to keep their bodies pure, as fit temples for the Holy Ghost.

They do not pursue the world and the perishing things of time, as their portion, regardless of God and a future state, like the swine that labors late and early, to fill himself with the acorns that fall from the trees, without ever lifting his eyes towards the God that bestows them. They that are in Christ Jesus have set their affections on things above. Like the old patriarchs, they are seeking "*a better country,*" that is, a heavenly one; and while in this world, they feel themselves as pilgrims and strangers, in a dreary wilderness.

They that are in Christ do not indulge themselves in anger, wrath, hatred, revenge, or a disposition to bite and devour, like the wolf or the tiger. No, they love their enemies; they bless those that curse them; and they pray for them that despitefully use them, and persecute them.

But positively, they walk "*after the spirit.*" By the spirit here, we understand the Holy Ghost, the third person of the ever blessed Trinity, the richest boon God ever bestowed upon the unworthy sons and daughters of Adam. Hence, says the blessed Jesus, "*I will pray the father, and he will send you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.*"

Walking after the spirit implies that the spirit goes before, and the soul that is in Christ, follows after; therefore, the idea is, that the renewed soul is led by the spirit; "*For as many as are led by the spirit of God,*

they are the sons of God." Here an important question arises, viz. what is the path in which the spirit leads those that are in Christ Jesus? I answer, it is the narrow way, that leads to eternal life; the path which begins at the strait gate of conversion, and ends at the pearly gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. Saith Christ, "*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" It is the way of holiness and self denial, the sure way mentioned by Isaiah; "*And an high way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*" It is the way that Abel the first martyr, travelled home to God; it is the way that Enoch walked with God three hundred years; the way that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, together with all the prophets, apostles and martyrs, travelled home to the heavenly country; hence it is called "THE GOOD OLD WAY." "*Thus saith the Lord, stand in the ways and see; ask for the good old paths: the good old way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls.*"

It is the way of deep humility. Our Lord tells us, that all who travel this way must humble themselves, and become as little children.

It is a way of close watching and fervent praying; dangers stand thick on every side; the lions and dragons of hell infest every part of it; a subtle and malicious devil, with unwearied diligence, is engaged day and night, to accomplish the ruin of them that travel there; the world, with all its ensnaring temptations, is engaged to entangle and lead them from God; and what is worse than all, the remains of corruption (a dreadful body of sin and death) infests them;

through all these dangerous enemies have the followers of Christ to bend their course. Hence Jesus admonishes all who travel this way, to "WATCH AND PRAY," lest they enter into temptation. It is the way of self-denial and mortification. They that travel this way must part with all for Christ; they must cut off their right hand, and pluck out their right eye; they must part with the love and practice of every sin, and boldly encounter all the oppositions that earth and hell, men and devils, can put in their way. Hence says Christ, "*If any man come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.*"

It is a way of hard, laborious exertions, in the use of all the means and ordinances God has appointed, and humble obedience to all his commands. The soul that travels this way must spend his life in watching and praying, repenting and believing, doing the will of God, seeking Christ's presence, travelling by faith, between his own emptiness and Christ's unwasted fullness. Hence the apostle exhorts all who travel this way, *to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; while, at the same time, it is God that works in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure;* that is, the person who walks in this way, strives and labors in the use of means with as much diligence, industry and perseverance, as if he were working for eternal life; and when he does all he can, he views it but as dross, dung, and filthy rags, in point of justification or acceptance with God. He keeps the law and obeys the commands of God, as if he expected eternal life as his reward; and yet he views himself as an unprofitable servant; he depends no more upon duty than he does upon sin.

Here another question arises; viz. To what does the Spirit of God lead his people? I answer—

1st. The Spirit leads them to the true knowledge of God, of Christ, and of the divine law. He also shows them the spiritual beauty, and imparts to their souls the precious sweetness of God's word. This Christ promised to his disciples, in the gift of the Spirit, and told them that, as a part of his work, "*He shall guide you into all truth*"—"He shall take of mine, and show it to you." He sometimes causes the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus, to shine into their hearts, and enables them to see the intrinsic beauty and excellency of the attributes of God, till their souls are attracted and enraptured with the glory of the divine character. He reveals to them the beauty of Christ until their souls rejoice, with "*joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" He sometimes opens their understandings (as in the case of the two disciples travelling to Emmaus) to understand the Scriptures, to see Christ in his word and promises, to see the evidences, exercises and experiences of God's people, as they are laid down in his holy word; sometimes he leads them to the top of Mount Pisgah, and gives them a faith's view of the promised land; he gives them a taste of heaven upon earth, and enables them by faith to pluck the sweet fruits of Canaan, which grow upon the tree of life, in the midst of the Paradise of God.

2d. The spirit leads the people of God into the valley of humility; where in both the glass of the law and in that of the gospel, by the light of God's holiness, he shews them their vileness and polluted loathsomeness; he discovers to them their secret dens of sin, their accursed things, their horrid back-

slidings and base ingratitude; and when they compare these soul-mortifying views with their former joys and comforts, they are often filled with gloomy fears, and feel an aching void, which none but Christ can fill. Now they adopt the language of Job, "*O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon my tabernacle. O that I knew where I would find him.*"

3d. The Holy Spirit often leads his people into the furnace of affliction. Sometimes the angry powers of hell are let loose upon them, and, for a time, they fall a prey to the rage and malice of devils and wicked men: Again, he suffers their sweetest earthly comforts to be snatched from them; often they are encircled by losses and bitter afflictions, until, like Jacob, they think all these things are against them. But, however bitter the cup may be to the taste, and however gloomy these dispensations may appear, still God's eternal purposes of love and mercy are going exactly straight; though he leads them in a way they know not, yet he takes this method to brighten the vessels of mercy, preparing for glory, so that they will soon be fitted to furnish out their Father's house, in the heavenly Canaan; and even in the midst of their sorest afflictions, some of the leaves of the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, and are for the healing of the nations, are thrown into the bitter waters of Marah; and then they taste as sweet as the milk and honey of Canaan. Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego in the fiery furnace—Daniel in the lion's den—Paul and Silas in the dungeon—John in the Isle of Patmos—and thousands more, could tell you what a heaven upon earth affliction is, when the soul feels the love of Christ, his smiles and life-giving presence.

4th. The Holy Spirit leads the children of God into the exercise of deep repentance and contrition. Occasionally he gives them a faith's view of a crucified Christ; and when the Divine Spirit discovers to them the pardoning love of God, through the painful agonies and bloody sufferings of a crucified Jesus; and shews sin in its filthy, loathsome and abominable nature; all this breaks and melts their hearts into penitential sorrow; they weep, and mourn, and sink into the dust before God; they loathe and hate themselves; and, like Job, they repent and abhor themselves in dust and ashes, while they are filled with wonder that such polluted worms should ever find mercy; and each views himself as the chief debtor to free grace, and the greatest wonder of redeeming love.

5th. The Holy Spirit leads his people into the exercise of spiritual prayer. They daily carry to the throne of grace, the state of their own wretched backsliding hearts, that of their Christless children, friends and neighbors, and the afflictions and distresses of the church of God. The Spirit often leads them to be restless and importunate, like the widow who came to the unjust judge; to hold fast by the promises of God, and take no denial; like Moses, to turn every repulse into an argument; and in this sweet employment, they often experience many blessed answers of prayer, and many precious love-tokens from Christ.

6th. The Spirit leads the people of God to a holy contempt of the honors, profits and pleasures of this fading world; he leads them to feel a heavenly content in whatever lot the eternal God has placed them; to a blessed covenant, sweetness in every earthly comfort; to view every drop of water and every morsel of bread as the purchase of the dying agonies of Christ.

He leads them to a daily warfare with in-dwelling sin; like faithful soldiers, to fight with principalities, and powers; and thus he leads them on to final victory, and makes them more than conquerors through the blood of the Lamb.

He leads them through the dark valley and shadow of death, and he often causes them to sing the song of triumph, in the midst of the swellings of Jordan. When he lets the light of his glory shine upon their souls, their dying is sweet. Death is only going home, a pleasant passage from a dreary wilderness to a celestial Paradise; from a noisome dungeon to an eternal, never-fading crown; to an inheritance "*incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*" But as they walk after the Spirit, so he leads them, at last, to their Father's house, the place to which Jesus went nearly eighteen hundred years ago, to prepare a place for them. He brings them to the full possession of that kingdom which was prepared for them "*from the foundation of the world,*" where they shall wear eternal, never fading crowns; where through all eternity they shall walk the pavements of the New Jerusalem, in the immediate vision and full fruition of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

III. Mention some of the consequences attending those who walk after the Spirit.

1st. Their situation is happy beyond expression; for they are in the strong hold; their dwelling is the munition of rocks. As the apostle says, "*God is for them, and who can be against them?*" All the adorable persons of the Godhead are on their side. Christ, in his two natures, and all his mediatorial offices, with all his merits, righteousness and atonement, is engaged in their behalf. All the attributes of God; all the

promises of the Eternal Court of Heaven; all the wise, unsearchable providences of God; and all the operations of the Holy Spirit, are engaged for their complete salvation and glorification.

2d. They are advanced to the highest possible dignity. They are sons of God; and as they are sons they are heirs, "*heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*" What is their inheritance? All things; "*all things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*"

3d. They are safe; for they are in the glorious hiding place. The second Adam can never fall. As the head stands eternally, the members can never be separated from his body. Satan can never drag his spouse from his arms. The truth of God is pledged for their salvation: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and no-one is able to pluck them out of my hands.*" Christ has prayed for their complete, eternal glorification: "*Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.*" And he tells us, that his Father always hears him when he prays; and if the Father heard that prayer, then he may say with the apostle, "*I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.*" They that are led by the Spirit can rejoice in tribulation. They taste a sweetness in affliction, of which the world is ignorant. Faith in Christ can pull down the branches of the tree of life into the bitter waters of Marah, and turn them into the sweetness of heaven; and, like Sampson, it can suck honey out of the carcase of the lion. When faith

views Christ on his mediatorial throne, and all things in heaven and earth committed to him, its language always is, "*Lord, thy will be done.*" It changes a dungeon into a palace, and a bed of affliction into a Paradise. It views the sorest trials as the purchase of Christ, and the very means by which Eternal and Unerring Wisdom prepares the soul for that blessed country, the inhabitants of which no more say, "*I am sick,*" for there is neither death, nor sorrow, nor crying there.

Death is sweet, and even delightful to those who walk after the Spirit; for Christ, by dying, conquered death; he deprived it of its sting and curse, and he sweetened the grave for all his followers.

SERMON X.

NO ROOM FOR CHRIST IN THE HEARTS OF SINNERS.



Because there was no room for them in the inn.—LUKE ii. 7.

THE SON of God came to our world upon a message of mercy; to seek and to save them that were lost; to redeem sinners from under the heavy yoke of the devil, and reconcile them to their offended Lord. But, although his mission was so kind and benevolent, yet was the treatment he received, upon his appearance in the flesh, extremely shameful and degrading. His reception was indeed humiliating. Although he was the Eternal Son of God, the first night he tarried in our world, there was no room for him in the inn. He had no better accommodations than a stable for his shelter, and a manger for his bed. And at the present day, his reception is similar. There is no room for Christ in the inn. There is room for profane oaths, imprecations and hellish blasphemies; there is room for balls, rioting and dancing; for cards and dice; for drunkenness and every species of dissipation: but none for Christ. His name and religion are rarely mentioned, but to be blasphemed or ridiculed.

An inn is a place of accommodation for strangers and travellers; and, in a certain sense, every man's house may be called an inn. For there every worthy and respectable character, every beloved friend, meets with a kind reception and hospitable treatment. Again, the heart may be said to be a house

of entertainment, in a certain sense. It is in the heart and affections particularly, that your friend is entertained; for, give him evidence that he no longer possesses your confidence, and all the dainties of the table become insipid. For your table and lodging room are only signs of your friendship; and, according to this view of the subject, it may be said of all the inhabitants of this world, there is no room for Christ in the inn.

In discoursing upon this subject, we shall

I. Describe this heavenly stranger, for whom there is no room in the inn.

II. Speak of those horrid guests that occupy the houses and hearts of the children of men.

III. Say something of the consequences of rejecting Christ and shutting him out of the heart.

I. Describe this heavenly stranger.

He is the most illustrious, glorious and dignified personage that ever heaven or earth beheld. The Son of God—the brightness of his Father's glory—and the express image of his person—possessed of all the attributes and perfections of the Godhead. He is the king of kings and lord of lords, who sways the sceptre of the universe, and administers justice throughout heaven, earth and hell.

He is the woman's promised seed that bruised the serpent's head, made of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, yet Abraham's God, existing eternally before he had a being—the root and offspring of David—his son, and yet his Creator and Lord. He is the Son born, and the child given, prophesied of by Isaiah, whose name should be called "*Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.*" It is he whom Isaiah saw sitting on

his throne, high and lifted up, his train filling the temple, and the winged cherubims celebrating his praise, crying one to another, "*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.*" He is the essential wisdom of God. He beholds all things from everlasting to everlasting, from the heights of heaven to the lowest depths of hell, at one view. He planned the order of the universe, and formed the established laws of nature, by which night and day, heat and cold, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, observe his fixed commands. By his direction the planets move in perfect harmony, and all the systems of worlds preserve the utmost order. It is he whom Jehovah terms his "*ELECT, whom he hath chosen, his well beloved Son, in whom his soul delighteth.*" It is he who was chosen in the Eternal Councils of the Godhead to accomplish the redemption of poor, lost sinners of Adam's race.

He is the most amiable, excellent, and respectable character that God, angels or men, ever saw. View him in his divine nature as God, and he is JEHOVAH, the infinite, eternal, unchangeable and independent sovereign of the universe—the uncreated I AM; being itself pure, underived existence. View him as man, in his human nature, he is spotless and innocent, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. View him as Immanuel, God with us, and how glorious is his beauty! how excellent his perfections! He is fairer than the sons of men, the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely. In him meet and harmonize all the attributes of the Godhead. Mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. Strict justice and unparalleled love unite in him, and agree with each other in

the pardon, salvation and eternal blessedness of repenting sinners. One view of his lovely face communicates to the soul of the penitent a heaven upon earth, joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, a blissful satisfaction far superior to all that crowns and thrones, wealth and treasures can bestow. This, my friends, is the heavenly stranger who left the highest glories, and came down into our base and ungrateful world, upon the most benevolent of missions, and who now courts and pleads for a lodging in the hearts of poor, lost sinners. But to describe fully this dignified character, is a task beyond the power of mortal tongue."

Join all the names of love and pow'r
That ever men or angels bore;
All are too mean to speak his worth,
Or set ~~the~~ Immanuel's glory forth."

But why did this glorious personage appear in our world? What was his design? The prophet Isaiah tells us, he came to "*preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*" He came "*to seek and save that which was lost.*" And, says the apostle Paul, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,*" even the chief of sinners.

He came to destroy the works of the devil. He came to save his people from sin and all its dreadful consequences. He took upon him our nature, to deliver them who have been all their life time subject to bondage, from death. He came to save sinners from hell, and raise them to glory and everlasting blessedness.

And now let me ask the question which Pilate once proposed to his bloody persecutors: "*What evil hath*

he done," that you should treat him with such contempt and inattention; that you should reject and despise him, and exclude him from your houses, your families and your hearts?

II. Speak of the guests that occupy the houses and hearts of the children of men.

From the loveliness and beauty of the character of Jesus Christ, it might be supposed that all men would be anxious to entertain him in their families, and give him the highest place in their affections. But it is not so. In the courts of kings and palaces of the great there is no room for Christ. But few of the middle classes can afford room for Christ. An excessive thirst for riches, worldly cares, trades and speculations, vice and wickedness, fill their whole hearts.

And in very few of the little cabins and cottages of the poor is Christ entertained. Shameful ignorance and horrid inattention to God and religion, ten thousand low vices have taken complete possession of their souls.

In the hearts of the old there is no room for Christ. Excessive worldly cares, strong prejudices against Christ, and experimental, heartfelt religion, deep rooted habits of vice, fill every corner of their hearts. Nor is Christ much more likely to find a place in the hearts of the middle-aged; for they too are engrossed with the cares of this world—plans and projects for gaining wealth, anxiety of mind about their property, and such things.

Young sinners have no room in their hearts for Christ and his salvation. They are full of vanity and foolishness—sporting, laughing, giddy conversation, merry meetings, frolics and dancing.

And all classes of men seem to have agreed to entertain any and every thing which will keep them from God and holiness.

1st. The fashions and customs of the world are guests which must be attended to. These occupy the whole time and attention of multitudes; and, in attending to these, they are kept so busy, that they have no time or disposition to attend to the preaching of the word. The world is in all their thoughts by day and night. All their conversation is of corn and tobacco, of land and stock. The price of merchandise and negroes are inexhaustible themes of conversation. But for them the name of Jesus has no charms; and it is rarely mentioned unless to be profaned. Introduce a conversation of heaven and divine things, speak of the glories of Immanuel, the beauty of the divine attributes, the spirituality of God's word, the sufferings of Jesus, and the sweetness of the pardoning love of God—and they are dumb. Conversations upon these subjects are uninteresting—they are intolerable. And it is evident that they have no room for Christ in their hearts; but only speak of the world, of its fashions and customs—the subject is grasped with eagerness, the tongue is loosed to speak volumes upon a trifle. And, my friends, does not mankind, in the general, live and act as if they neither wished nor desired any other portion; as if they did not believe one syllable of the Bible; as if there was no hell to shun, no heaven to obtain. What an awful demonstration of the truth that there are but few saved.

2d. Pride and selfishness are two favorite guests, and operate to the exclusion of Christ from the heart. Sinners often think it too humbling and too degrading

to become the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. To own Christ publicly before the world, many would esteem it an indelible disgrace. To forfeit their respectability for contumely and reproach, to be considered men of weak minds, to be separated from the fashionable vices of the world, appear too mean and contemptible. Christ cannot be admitted upon such terms. To be popular, they must conform to all the fashions and polite amusements of this world. They must act as if they had never had a serious thought of death, judgment or eternity, of God, Christ, or his holy religion.

3d. There is an army of vain thoughts lodged in the heart of every unregenerate sinner. With such guests as these Christ cannot be accommodated.

The human mind possesses active powers and principles, and is constantly employed thinking of, and contemplating the objects that are most pleasing and desirable. Therefore, says our Lord, "*where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.*" Therefore, as the sinner's mind is blind and ignorant of spiritual things, his thoughts must be such as the God of truth declares them to be: "*Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart are only evil, and that continually.*" The minds of some are taken up by politics; and others think so much of their farms, their stock or merchandise, that they have no room for Christ. Again, some are wholly employed in reflections upon trifling, obscene, and filthy subjects; upon vanity, folly and nonsense. And these guests are esteemed more worthy than the Redeemer of Mankind!

4th. A large number of flesh pleasing idols are worshipped by many sinners, to the exclusion of Christ. Do you ask, What is an idol? I answer: Any thing,

be it what it may, that we love more than we love our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the world, money and property, are often idols; fine clothing and beautiful ornaments, because they are more highly esteemed than God. A husband or wife is an idol, if you choose rather to go with such a one to hell than to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus. Filthy appetites and propensities, beloved sins that are as hard to part with as a right eye or a right hand; the BOTTLE, or a fondness for strong drink is an idol, which excludes Christ from the hearts of thousands and millions. The BOTTLE may, with propriety, be termed the drunkard's Christ. For as the true Christian forsakes all for Christ, so the drunkard leaves all things for the BOTTLE. He parts with his reputation, his money, his property, with the welfare and respectability of his offspring, for his BOTTLE; he parts with the peace and happiness of his family; he parts with reason and with health for the BOTTLE. He parts with his soul, with his God, with Christ and eternal blessedness for his BOTTLE.

5th. A great many little, innocent, *no-harm* sins, as they are called, fill the heart, and bar Christ out of it. But to mention all these *little, beloved, darling, soul-damning* sins, would be impossible. Let *some few* of them suffice. Now, whatever sin is indulged, is thought by him who indulges it to be no harm.

The *gentleman* drunkard takes a hearty drink at the tavern, and sees nothing improper in doing so, because he does not lie like a beast in the streets.

The *swinish* drunkard is beastly drunk on an occasion, but he sees no harm in such conduct. He injures no man.

The man who cheats his neighbor, justifies himself by saying, He would have cheated me if in his power;

and it is every man for himself now-a-days. And so the general sentiment of the world goes. Sabbath-breaking, cursing, balls, parties, horse-racing, gambling, are all no harm; and it is now obvious that thousands of hearts are barred by such sins against Jesus Christ.

6th. A sixth class of those horrid guests which fill the heart, are such as anger, malice and revenge, a bitter, rancorous, unforgiving temper.

Says the sinner, I cursed and swore profanely, but it was no wonder, I was insulted and provoked beyond measure. I was so ill treated that I got into a tremendous rage; but it was no wonder; I took full satisfaction; I wont be run over; the best man would have done just as I did; I can forgive no such man; I will not be reconciled to him; I have been so badly treated, that I cannot get over it.

7th. There is an host of vain, trifling amusements, such as balls, parties, merry-meetings, vain songs, frothy, unprofitable discourse, Sunday visits and diversions. Such as these fill the whole soul, and leave no room for holy things, for Godly conversations, or for Jesus Christ.

With such guests as we have here spoken of, and a thousand others, which cannot now be enumerated, all mankind are filled by nature. With such sins, such propensities and dispositions as these, the hearts and houses of much the greater part of the present generation are filled; and, consequently, there is no room for Christ. He is rejected and despised, as though he were beneath the notice and attention of the world.

But, as the human heart is filled as a crowded inn or tavern, wherein there is no place for Christ, so also it is strongly barred to prevent his admittance.

We will mention some of the bolts which are employed to keep out the Saviour.

1st. Spiritual blindness, gross darkness and ignorance of God, Christ and all heavenly things. Says Paul, *"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

2d. Unbelief is an entire disbelief, a stupid inattention to the promises and threatenings of God; and all the important realities exhibited in his word.

3d. Hardness of heart, which is the natural consequence of spiritual blindness and unbelief. The sinner, as he is blind to danger, and disbelieves all God's word, his heart is thought proof against all the terrors of Jehovah and the alluring invitations of the gospel.

4th. Strong prejudices against the Lord's way of saving sinners. Regeneration, conversion, heartfelt religion, feeling the love of God shed abroad in the heart, are doctrines which cannot be endured; to receive these things is called delusion, enthusiasm, or the effects of a weak mind. The world chooses rather to live in sin, and go to hell, than to be saved in such a way.

5th. Old habits of sin, deep-rooted propensities, are strong barriers against Christ and the exertions of his word and spirit. Nothing but the power of an Almighty God can remove them; and hence it is a miracle, indeed, for an old sinner to be converted. *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil."*

6th. Self-righteousness. This closes and bars the heart of every sinner against Christ; and, what is

wonderful indeed, not only the strict, sober formalist, and the upright moralist, deceive themselves and go to hell, trusting to their own righteousness, but even the most swinish drunkard, the most heaven-daring blasphemer expects to be saved in the same way. Their good hearts, their benevolent actions, and some amiable conduct, will overbalance all their wickedness, and purchase heaven at last.

III. Say something of the consequences of rejecting Christ, and shutting him out of the heart.

Christ is frequently represented in scripture as calling to sinners, stretching out his hands and weeping over them, coming as a suppliant to their doors, praying, pleading and beseeching them, reasoning and expostulating with them. He is represented as being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, complaining of their ingratitude, unwilling to give them up to destruction. He is represented as pleading with his Father to spare them, as holding back the stroke of divine justice, praying that God would try them one year longer. He is represented as knocking at their hearts for admittance: "*Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.*"

Christ stands at the door and knocks—which may teach us, that, unless the door is soon opened, he will withdraw. When a person of respectability taps at a door, and taps frequently, and it is not opened, he will possibly be affronted and go away displeased; he will conceive himself insulted, and will never return.

And such will be the consequence, sinners, if, after Christ has frequently called and invited you by his

providences, his spirit, conscience, and the preaching of the word, you resist and refuse him admittance into your hearts. He will depart, to return no more. They will be accomplished upon you that awful declaration of the God of Truth, "*My spirit shall not always strive with man*"—"Let him alone"—"*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.*" Then the sinner is just as sure of damnation as if he were in hell. Afterwards he may live many years in peace and plenty, may sit under the most powerful awakening preaching of the gospel; but all the effect it will have, will be to harden his heart, and sear his conscience, and ripen him for a more aggravated damnation.

The same fire that melts and dissolves wax will dry and harden clay. The rain and sun, which enlivens all nature, causes a green tree to grow and flourish, will consume and waste away a dead tree. The same gospel that is the wisdom of God and the power of God to the salvation of all them that believe, which prepares the people of God as vessels of mercy for immortal glory and blessedness in the heavenly state, will prove a saviour of death unto death to the finally impenitent, and be the means of hardening them and fitting them for hell. Another consequence of rejecting the calls and entreaties of Christ, and thrusting him from the heart, while the Devil, the world, and sin, are cherished in full possession, is, that the heart will be hardened. The sinner wears out his day of grace; the things that belong to his peace are forever hidden from his eyes; and, with rapacity, he fills up the measure of his iniquity, and fits himself a vessel of wrath for destruction. The sure and final consequence of thus dealing with Christ, neglecting his calls

and shutting the heart against him, will be certain ruin and hopeless misery. Sinners, in this world, are sometimes visited by tremendous judgments, which are only the beginnings of sorrows—only a prelibation of fiercer pains and keener torments which they shall endure in hell.

We might here introduce the instance of the antediluvians, who slighted and treated with contempt the warnings of Noah, until their day of grace was past, and the flood came and destroyed them; and the example of the Sodomites, who treated with scorn, Lot's admonitions, until in a moment when they imagined all was safe, the storm of fire and brimstone came upon them and consumed them. We might tell you of the fearful end of Pharaoh, of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, of Herod and Antiochus Epiphanes, and other impenitent sinners, that were made dreadful monuments of divine wrath in this world. But we will pass to the unbelieving Jews, who rejected the promised Messiah—shut their eyes against the light—refused offered mercy—to whom prophet after prophet was sent to call them to repentance, and warn them to flee the wrath to come. But these were stoned and put to death. And last, God sent them his son. He spake as never man spake; he performed works, such as man never performed; he warned and entreated them; he wept over them; and, as a hen spreads her wings over her brood to preserve them from the bird of prey, he stretched out his love and compassion to preserve them from danger. But, Oh lamentable! they refused his protection, and put him to death, crying, "*His blood be on us and on our children.*" And what were the consequences? Woe, wretchedness, and desolation came upon them; their nation was de-

stroyed, and the few individuals who were left, were scattered to the four winds of heaven, and are, to this day, despised of all men. But all the woes and misery which came upon them were not to be compared to the horrid torments which they were doomed to experience in the flames of hell. And, sinners, the keenest anguish that can be felt in this life bears no comparison to that unutterable torment which awaits you beneath the weight of God's wrath in hell.

SERMON XI.

ON THE BLINDING POLICIES OF SATAN.



But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.—II. Cor. iv. 3 and 4.

THE gospel is defined, glad tidings, or a bundle of good news. Indeed, it is the sweetest sound that ever reached the ears of sinners of Adam's race, for it conveys to them the blessed tidings of a door of mercy being opened for poor, guilty, condemned criminals—of pardon and reconciliation to God, and of a full and eternal salvation through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, alas! sinners treat it as the Jews did its divine author: "*He came to his own, but his own received him not.*" And they hear the gospel as the antedelvians heard the preaching of Noah: "*The light shines in darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not; Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*" And the cause of all this we have in the text: "*Our gospel is hid to them that are lost.*" But how is the "*gospel hid from them that are lost?*" We are informed that "*the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.*" The Devil, in Scripture, is styled "*The prince of the power of the air; the spirit that works in the children of disobedience.*" These expressions have an allusion to his dwelling or reigning in the hearts of sinners, and to his leading them from one degree of sin to another, until they are ripe for hell,

and to their yielding themselves his willing slaves, and being well pleased with his cruel government. He is termed "*a strong man armed,*" because he keeps the ~~the~~ in the sinner's heart, and fortifies it against ~~the~~ the attacks of the word and spirit of God. He is termed "*the God of this world,*" because he is the God of sinners; for they bear his image; they possess his nature and disposition; they do his will and promote his interests in the world. In order to maintain his tyrannical dominion over them, he blinds their minds, hardens their hearts, sears their consciences, and shuts the avenues of their souls against the light of God's word and spirit; and his design in thus blinding them, we are informed, in the words of the text, is, "*lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*" As long as he can keep the sinner blind to his danger, and to the excellencies of Jesus Christ, so long may he rule him and keep him his willing captive; and thus the "*gospel is hid to them that are lost.*"

In the prosecution of the subject, I will

I. Point out the persons from whom the gospel is hid.

II. Speak of the methods by which Satan blinds the minds of sinners.

I. Point out the persons from whom the gospel is hid; and,

1st. The gospel is hid to all deists or infidels, who reject it as a fable, and who treat Jesus Christ as an impostor. These persons wilfully shut the door of mercy against themselves, and make their own damnation sure. "*Light is come into the world, but they choose darkness rather than light;*" they condemn the Bible, but they have never seriously investigated the subject, and weighed the evidences and arguments on both sides of

the question; they will not come to the light, for they fear conviction, and wish to be deceived. If they can persuade themselves that religion is a delusion, and that God is a filthy, depraved being like themselves, who will connive at sin, then they can run into every excess without dreading the consequences.

2d. The unthinking, who take no interest in religion, and cannot tell whether the Bible is true or false; for they have never read it—perhaps they never possessed it—they cannot tell whether there be a hell: On this matter they have never reflected. They are ignorant of the use of prayer; therefore, they never attend to it. They spend the Sabbath in visiting and various frivolous amusements; but they think there is no harm in all this; for they have never seriously reflected on the impropriety of their conduct. They indulge in all manner of sinful pleasures, and yet they think themselves innocent, harmless creatures, who injure none but themselves. To all such, the gospel is hid; their eyes are blinded by the God of this world, and they wilfully make their own damnation sure.

3d. All who slight the means of grace. These persons never attend the public preaching of God's word; or if they are occasionally present, they do not listen to a solitary sentence during the sermon; or they seat themselves out of doors, and are employed in laughing, jesting, or conversing on trifling subjects; when they profess to be worshipping God, their thoughts, like the fool's eye, wander to the end of the earth, and their minds are employed about their speculations or some other temporal business. When they return home they cannot tell a sentence that was uttered by the preacher; but with great exactness they can describe the color and fashion of every dress, coat and bonnet in the congregation. To all such persons the gospel is hid.

4th. All who live in the love and practice of sin; all drunkards, swearers, debauchees, liars and openly profane sinners; to all such the gospel is hid; they boldly and openly work out their own damnation; they glory in their shame; the language of their conduct is, I make no pretensions to religion—the world sees me sinner as I am; I wish it to be known that I am of my father, the Devil, and that his works I will do; that I acknowledge no allegiance to the Sovereign of the Universe; that I never bow my knee to the God that made me, and that I do not feel myself bound to obey any of his commands.

5th. All prayerless persons, who never pray in secret nor in their families, have a convincing proof, in their own breasts, that to them the gospel is hid, and that the God of this world has blinded their minds. Although they are under the curse of the law, and hang over the gulf of hell by the brittle thread of life; although God is angry with them every day, and they know not how soon death, like a thief in the night, will surprise them, and plunge them into the flames of the pit; yet, they are blind to their danger; careless and prayerless, they press on, indulging their sinful propensities, despising religion, and mocking at things eternal, till in an unexpected moment, they are seized by the grim monster, placed beyond the reach of mercy, and confined in the prison of hell.

6th. All stiflers of conviction, who resist the operations of the spirit, and wear off the impressions he has made on their minds; to them the gospel is hid. And, alas! how many of this description are to be found in this enlightened land! Sinners, when seated under the preaching of the word, has not your condition been frequently so plainly pointed out, that conscience whis-

pered in the words of Nathan to David, "*Thou art the man?*" You have often been convinced, that without repentance, hell must be your portion; but you no sooner left the house of God than you betook yourselves to your ungodly companions—laughed away your convictions, and returned to your sin and folly; or, perhaps, you have been for a time deeply convicted; you then abandoned your sinful practices—you prayed in secret, and made many solemn vows to God that you would never again return to sin; but the world and its pleasures gradually overcame your resolutions, and your last state is worst than the first: "*When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and, finding none, he saith, I will return to my house whence I came out; and when he cometh, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*"

Our congregations abound with those who were once deeply convicted, who forsook the pleasures of the world, and who "*heard the word with joy, and received it gladly,*" and professed to feel great pleasure in drawing near to God in secret and family prayer, who regularly attended the preaching of the gospel, who often sat down at a communion table, and who have frequently exhorted their friends and relations to flee the wrath to come; but how is it with them now the gospel is hid to them? they are blinded by the God of this world: "*It has happened unto them according to the true proverb: The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*" And now they live as careless and prayerless as those

who never seriously thought of God and religion; they rarely attend the preaching of the gospel; their consciences are "*seared as with an hot iron;*" and of all descriptions of sinners, their condition is the most hopeless.

7th. All worldly minded persons; whose highest object is the wealth or pleasure of this world; their great employment is to amass wealth and enjoy sinful pleasure; but they are not at all concerned about the salvation of their souls. They can sit from Sabbath to Sabbath under the most awful and alarming sermons, and be as unfeeling as the seats on which they sit; instead of listening to the word of God, you may see them gazing over the assembly, or repeatedly trudging out and into the house, to the great annoyance of the congregation. To all such, "*the gospel is hid, for the God of this world hath blinded their minds lest the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*"

II. Speak of the methods by which Satan blinds the minds of sinners. When we consider unconverted sinners as being blind to the danger to which they are exposed, and incapable of viewing the beauty and excellency of Christ and his salvation, and when we are informed that "*the God of this world has thus blinded their minds,*" the expression must refer to the methods by which he excludes spiritual light from them.

1st. He persuades sinners to live prayerless, and make no exertions for salvation. When a sinner hears an awakening sermon, or when he is privately warned by the ministers or people of God to flee the wrath to come, then Satan says, sit still; if you are a sinner, you do not feel yourself such; if you are in danger, you do not see it; it would be very absurd in

you to cry for mercy when you are blind to your danger; it would be very foolish for you to pray when you do not feel the burden of guilt; and for you to be striving for salvation, when you are not convinced of sin, would be to mock God; sit still, and wait God's time; strive to get rich, drink, swear and profane the Sabbath; attend all places of merriment; absent yourself from the ministrations of all alarming, awakening preachers, and never think of religion, death, heaven or hell; until God gives you a call you cannot withstand; and then it will be time for you to seek your soul's salvation.

2d. In order to blind the sinner's heart against the light of God's word and spirit, Satan fills his mind with prejudice against experimental religion. O, says that old serpent, the Devil, conversion and a sensible experience of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, communion with God, and Christ in the soul, the hope of glory, are only wild delusions, peculiar to weak minds; such a religion will sink you into contempt; the gay and respectable members of society will esteem you a fanatic; pay no attention to these whining, bawling, conversion preachers, who instead of pleasing and improving your taste with geography, philosophy, and astronomy, are forever talking about a crucified Christ, and the pardoning love of God, and are constantly terrifying you with the curses of the law and the terrors of the second death. Instead of following such, take for your guides those wise persons who have found out and written about a better way of religion than that pointed out by the Holy Spirit in the word of God. These men profess Christianity, and they are its warm and able advocates; but they despise conversion and experimental religion; true, they

are not very strict in their lives, but they can shew you a pleasant way to heaven without any thing experimental or self-denying, and which will not expose you to contempt for Christ's sake.

3d. To blind the minds of sinners, Satan persuades them to put off the work of their soul's salvation until a more convenient season; hence it is very difficult to persuade young sinners to pray, repent, and seek interest in Christ, for when they have thoughts of turning to God, Satan says, You are too young, gay, and beautiful, to engage in such a gloomy thing as religion—it better suits gray heads and wrinkled faces; they have lost all taste for the pleasures of this world; moreover, if you repent and seek the Lord, you must part with all your innocent amusements, balls, and such like; and you know this will be intolerable as death; moreover, your young companions will despise and deride you; indeed, you will be objects of ridicule to all who are acquainted with you; were all the young people of the country to become religious, then you might try to obtain it; but your seeking religion now, will only render you ridiculous and objects of contempt. Therefore, they resolve that, until middle age, they will risk eternal damnation; but that at that period they will be associating with a more solid class of men, and then they will change their manner of life; but when middle age arrives, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches extinguish every serious thought and useful impression. Their great aim now is, to have a good farm, an elegant house, and an independent fortune. To accomplish all this, ten thousand projects and speculations occupy their thoughts and affections, and they have no time to attend to their soul's salvation; therefore they put off re-

pentance and conversion until old age. At last, old age arrives; but, alas! their hearts are so hard, and their consciences so seared, that they find it impossible to attend to the work of repentance and faith; perhaps their damnation is sealed, and their hearts, like that of Pharaoh, judicially hardened. Indeed, you will generally find that the gray-headed sinner is an infidel, a profane swearer, a confirmed drunkard, or a malignant scoffer at religion; and his case is nearly as hopeless as if he were already in hell.

4th. To blind the hearts of sinners and ensure their damnation, Satan strives to make them ashamed of serious thoughts about religion, death, and a future state; hence nothing mortifies them more than to think that others know they entertain serious thoughts about seeking the salvation of their souls, and were they found on their knees before God, they would be as much ashamed of it as if they had been engaged in some base, scandalous act. When under the preaching of the word, their hearts are pierced with conviction, and their minds are filled with distress, from a sense of their exposure to hell, they quake with fear, lest their unconverted companions should discover their feeling; hence they assume the appearance of heroic boldness; they try to look around upon the congregation and force themselves to appear careless and inattentive. When the arrow of conviction pierces their hearts, for a moment they appear gloomy and sad; but the next moment a forced smile plays upon their lips. If they are compelled to shed tears, they quickly wipe them away, and are as much ashamed to be seen in this situation by their unconverted companions as to be found stealing; hence the sinner will lie rather than discover the real feelings of his heart; he will

say, I don't know what ailed me, but I had no serious thoughts about the salvation of my soul, nor of death, judgment, nor eternity; and, in order to avoid disgrace, he will turn religion into ridicule and laugh vehemently at conviction, conversion and damnation. Surely the sinner has often hard work to get to hell. But when the arrow of conviction sticks fast in his conscience, and he is brought to serious consideration, O, says the Devil, shake it off, drink, laugh or dance it away; you must not pray in secret or your companions will detect you. If you attempt to seek religion, a thousand to one, but you will fall back into sin, and then your case will be much worse than before; therefore you had better abandon all thoughts of it, live in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world and risk the future state.

But perhaps conviction has sunk so deep into the sinner's heart, that he is afraid to turn back, and, like Agrippa, he is almost persuaded to be a Christian. Says Satan, stop and count the cost. If you set out to seek religion you will disgrace yourself; you know you are apt to drink a glass of liquor too much occasionally; perhaps your disposition will lead you into a passion; perhaps when you are insulted, you may slip out an oath, or engage in a fight; perhaps you may be persuaded to go to a ball and dance, or perhaps you may become lively in jovial company; then every one will think of your religion, and laugh and sneer and hiss at the hypocrite; and then you will be destitute of all associates, for the Christians will despise you because you have no religion, and the wicked will treat you as an impostor; therefore banish from your mind all thoughts of religion, and live in the enjoyment of sin.

5th. When the sinner's mind is distressed about his condition, and he is about to start for eternal life, Satan will strive to prejudice him against some things attending the operations of the Holy Spirit. Says the Tempter, If you could slip into religion, and no person know it until you made a profession, this would be quite decent; but, before you can obtain it, you must be a spectacle to all around you, and how unmanly and weak minded will you appear, to be weeping and bowing your head like a willow, under every sermon you hear; your gloomy, monkish and melancholy aspect, will render you ridiculous; but should you be seized with bodily agitation, should you be constrained to fall to the earth like Paul and the jailor, should you be brought to cry for mercy in the public congregation, like many under the preaching of the apostles, or should you be seized with the jerks, as many are in the present day, could you support under such disgrace? Would it not be much better to live in sin, even if you should be damned at last, than to obtain religion on such humiliating terms?

But if, notwithstanding all the efforts of Satan, the sinner will cry to God for mercy, his next stratagem is to send the fowls of hell to gather up the good seed the Spirit of God has sown in his heart, and now his wicked companions approach him with all the craft and subtlety of their father, the Devil; for the purpose of alluring him into sin, they persuade him to visit the tavern, or put the inebriating bowl to his mouth, or visit the race-ground, or ball-room, and it too often happens that the awakened sinner yields to temptation, grieves the spirit of God, and sinks into perdition.

But if this stratagem fails, he tries more violent measures; he stirs up his wicked companion to tor-

ment, reproach and persecute him, and to do their utmost to laugh him out of his soul's salvation; sometimes the Devil stirs up the rage of his ungodly relatives, if possible to force him to give up all attempts to flee the wrath to come; and thus unconverted parents, wives and husbands, become instrumental in the damnation of their own relations.

If these efforts fail, and the Devil cannot thereby draw the sinner into his former wicked practices and hardness of heart, he tries him upon new ground, viz. to deceive him and influence him to settle down on a false hope, and rest short of Christ; and by this means, thousands fall back to sin, and lose their souls. Some go no farther than an external reformation; on this they depend; some mistake certain enlargements and meltings of the passions for religion, while others embrace some phantom or chimera furnished to their imagination by the Devil (thus, for instance, they imagine that they see Christ smiling upon them or hanging upon the cross); this they embrace for religion, and thereby lose their souls. But, lastly, the Devil blinds the minds of sinners by filling them with prejudice against the ministers of the gospel; and, when this is accomplished, did the minister speak with the zeal of Paul or the eloquence of Apollos, all his labors would prove in vain; sinners would sleep on in carnal security, unmoved by his most alarming discourses. But what is still more fatal, is for the minds of the people of God to be filled with this prejudice; perhaps because he is not of their party, or because they think he holds certain doctrines contrary to their creed, or on some other account, he is not the object of their esteem; therefore they seldom carry his case to God by prayer; they are not interested in the

success of his ministry. In a word, they would be as well satisfied to see all the sinners of the congregation forever damned as that they should be converted by his ministry.

Application:

Have I not a witness in the breasts of my hearers that this doctrine is true? Have I not preached the experience of many who hear me, and does not conscience tell you that your minds are blinded by the God of this world?

I have preached nearly two years in this place, and I know not that my ministry has been to the smallest purpose. I have reason to conclude that no soul has been converted by my instrumentality. I can appeal to God that I have desired your salvation as I have desired my own; I have endeavored to find out the most profitable subjects, and to improve them in such a way as would have the most probable tendency to touch the heart and awaken the conscience—but all in vain. I have longed, and hoped against hope until all hope seems to be gone, and still there is not one soul awakened. The awful conclusion comes out at last: *“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

SERMON XII.

THE DANGER OF REJECTING THE MEANS OF SALVATION.



He, that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.—PROVERBS XXIX. 1.

THE book of the proverbs of Solomon is a rich cabinet of jewels, an invaluable collection of the most precious divine truths. Every sentence contains a system of wisdom, and every proverb holds out the most forcible instructions, accommodated to matters both of temporal and eternal concern. Here we may find infallible rules to direct us in all the business and common affairs of life, and those instructions at the same time are as forcible, as weighty, and as important in the duties and exercises of religion. Every proverb is short and concise, contained in a very few words, and therefore more easily retained in the memory, and, for the most part, they are expressed in metaphorical language, and therefore the more pleasing and entertaining to the mind.

But of all these sayings of the wisest of men, there is none more weighty or worthy of our attention, than the proverb contained in our text: "*He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

This proverb may be fitly spoken concerning all situations; in whatever course a man blunders on, headstrong and regardless of advice or admonition, whether it be in domestic affairs, in trade, in politics, in war, or in any thing else which he pursues by wrong

measures with incorrigible obstinacy. And Solomon, no doubt, designed it to be thus applied in a remote sense, since he was a good economist, a wise politician, and a man well skilled in all the affairs of life.

But certainly in a more direct sense he designed its application for matters of religion; and, indeed, it holds good in things of spiritual and eternal concern, that, "*He that being often reprov'd, and hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

In this sense of the text we shall prosecute the subject; and, for its further illustration, we shall

I. Consider some of the reproofs by which God would reclaim sinners;

II. Some of the means by which sinners harden their necks against his reproofs;

III. The dreadful, but inevitable doom of the impenitent: They "*shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

And here a few prefatory remarks, and we would

1st. Observe, that to reprove, is just to charge a person with his faults to his face, in such a plain and pointed manner, as to make him ashamed of the baseness and impropriety of his conduct.

2d. Every reproof tends either directly or indirectly to the reformation of the person reprov'd, unless he is wilfully obstinate and incorrigible.

3d. These reproofs, which come from the word of God, the Spirit of God, and the dictates of conscience, are designed for the sinner's good, to reclaim him from sin and wrath, and would have this effect if carefully and diligently attended to. But to proceed:

How many reproofs are directed to sinners by God, through the means of a pious education. You that

have been raised by Christian parents, how often have your fathers and mothers told you with weeping eyes and heart-breaking sorrow that you were going to hell. How often have they plead with you in the tenderest concern for your souls, to turn from your sinful practices; to pray and cry for mercy; to seek salvation, and obtain an interest in Christ, while the door of mercy was open! How often have they honestly told you that hell would be your portion, unless you repented of your sins and turned to God! But do all parents make it their business to administer reproofs like these? Alas, no! and yet their children must be converted, must experience the joys of pardoned sin, or else be damned. You have not told them of your own experience, of God's work upon your own hearts. You have never pressed them to quit every sin and make sure of an interest in Christ. No. If you could learn them to work, to make bargains, and gather riches, you thought you were doing very well. If you learned them to read and get the shorter catechism, you thought that was religion enough. Yea, have not the ungodly lives and conduct of many professing parents been a stumbling block and the means of hardening their children, and ripening them for hell? Your neglect of secret prayer, of family devotions, your trifling, ungodly conduct, have hardened your families in sin. And have you not often told them, or at least said in their hearing, "There is no need for such an ado about religion; the ministers carry matters too far; people might be good enough and go to heaven without all this noise about conversion and the new birth."

2d. Have you not been often reproved by some friend, relation, or acquaintance? Impressed with an

earnest desire for your welfare, have they not informed you that your state was miserable and wretched, and exhorted you to repent and turn to God?

3d. Were you not reprov'd, time after time, during the revival a few years ago, when the Lord had graciously poured out his spirit in this backsliding and guilty land? Did not every soul-searching sermon cut you to the heart, and make you tremble, like Felix, under a sense of the dismal horrors of your state? Yea, did they not set you, like Esau, to seek your salvation sorrowfully with tears? Did not the very looks, the appearance and conversation of your friends and neighbors, under bitter awakenings and anxious concern about their souls, reprove your stupidity, pain and torment your souls, every time you saw them at meeting, or met and conversed with them?

4th. Has not conscience pained, tortured, and often reprov'd you when lying upon a sick bed, or when some valued friend has been snatched away by death? Then did not conscience alarm you with all the horrors of your situation? It whispered to your inmost soul, that all was wrong with you, that you were unprepared to die. Hell stared you in the face with all its gloomy torments. Then you prayed and cried for mercy. You promised God again and again, that if you were spared, you would repent and seek his favor. But no sooner did your disease abate, or the alarming providence was a little out of sight, than your vows were broken and your resolutions forgotten.

5th. You have been reprov'd year after year, sabbath after sabbath, by the faithful preaching of God's word. Your guilty souls have often been probed to the bottom, all the hidden recesses of the heart, the lurking places of hypocrisy and deceit have been laid

open to your view. And has not conscience, faithfully applying the word, cried in your ears, night and day, "*Thou art the man?*" And you have loathed yourself in dust and ashes. But these things were suffered to wear away.

6th. God's Holy Spirit has been your reprov-er, convincing you of sin, righteousness, and a judgment to come, showing you your need of Christ and his salvation. Many of you can look back for months and years, to times of awakening, when the spirit of God brought home conviction to your hearts with light and power; when you saw yourselves plainly in the road to ruin, and exposed to the wrath of an angry God, your soul was filled with agony and distress; you prayed and wept; like Herod, you did many things; you reformed your lives; you forsook your old companions; you left your old sins; you groaned in spirit, tormented with fears of hell; some of you gradually wore off your convictions; your consciences obtained ease; and, at last, every serious, solemn thought was banished, and you are now as careless and prayerless as the beasts that perish. With others of you, convictions continued until you met with some sweet melting frame, some enlargement in prayer, or some such empty vapor or shadow, instead of Christ. And this is your whole conversion. Now you remain dead, carnal formalists. Perhaps the spirit of God has re-proved you again, and sent home your convictions with redoubled vigor. Again you have sought and found ease; again he has alarmed you, and again you have got ease. Such of you have reason to quake and tremble; for God has said, "*My Spirit shall not always strive with man,*" and in the text, "*He that, being often reprov- ed, hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

II. We will consider some of the means by which sinners harden their necks against God's reproofs: "*He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck.*" A stiff neck is a metaphor often used in scripture to signify an unyielding spirit, resolute in disobedience in spite of all advice and reproof. Therefore, in various passages of Scripture, the rebellious Jews are termed a "*stiff-necked people.*" This metaphor is taken from a sullen, ungovernable ox, who, in spite of the lash and goad, and all other means which may be used, refuses to bend his neck and submit to the yoke. And this senseless brute, very fitly represents the conduct of the stupid and unreasonable sinner, who stiffens his neck and hardens himself in sin, notwithstanding the strongest persuasions and reproofs of God. For a person to harden his neck, is simply to continue obstinate in disobedience, persist in error, and refuse reformation.

But, to mention some of the means by which the sinner hardens his heart and stiffens his neck against the admonitions, persuasions, and reproofs of God's word and the Holy Spirit. And

1st. By a careless indifference and inattention. How many never-dying souls, who now hear me, have sat, from year to year, like hardened rocks, under the faithful preaching of the Word. Though the terrors and thunders of Jehovah have been displayed, and the furnace of hell laid open to your view, though the grace of the gospel and the beauties of Jesus, though the unspeakable glories and bliss of the heavenly world have been painted in the most striking colors, yet their hearts have remained unmoved and unaffected as the seats upon which they sat. How often have they been faithfully reprov'd from the pulpit of their danger, and in private too, of the imminent danger of

neglecting their soul's salvation. But yet they have paid no regard to these matters, and by such inattention and careless stupidity, they have hardened their necks.

2d. By an aversion and hatred of those means which God has ordained and appointed as the medium through which to communicate spiritual blessings, such as, reading the Bible, praying, self-examination, hearing with attention—which aversion and hatred proves the total depravity of human nature, and clearly evinces that the unconverted soul hates God with a perfect hatred. Now, I appeal to your consciences, if this has not been a means by which you have hardened your hearts and stiffened your necks against the reproofs of God? Do you not secretly despise to read the bible, and do you not prefer to read a play-book, a newspaper, a profane history, or any other book, while your bible lies for months together upon the shelf, without being opened, unless sometimes upon a Sabbath day; then you take it down, you open it, and read a few verses; but it is like a hard day's work to get through one chapter. You turn to another place, and if you have any satisfaction at all, it is in some curious narrative in the historical part. Something about the warlike exploits of Gideon, Sampson, David, &c. or else in finding some text that condemns some other man's opinion. The Sabbath is an intolerable burden. It is by far the longest day of the week; and you had much rather do two days' hard work than spend this day in reading, praying, and such exercises as God requires. You sleep on Sunday morning until the sun is an hour or two high. You rise and loll about till you take breakfast. You then take down a book and try to read; but the exer-

cise is disagreeable; the time passes very slow; you twist and turn upon your chair twenty ways; you cannot sit easy in any position. In order to spend the tedious hours, you must walk round your corn-field, look at your wheat and oats. Then you return to the house and entertain your family a while with the observations you have made upon your crop. At length dinner comes on—but yet there is nearly one half of the long day to be whiled away; you must lie down and take a little sleep. Perhaps your conscience pains you a little; but the devil provides you with an excuse. You were up late last night, or you did not rest well. Or may be, he persuades you that you are a little unwell. You sleep an hour or two; but the day has not gone yet. You must walk over and see one of your neighbors who is sick; you cannot spare time from the plough to-morrow. Then you spend the afternoon in talking about the world. You come home, and are abed before the daylight is out of the skies. The next morning, happy day! you are up and about your business by daylight or before. As to secret or family prayer, this is the most toilsome drudgery. The thought of praying one hour is intolerable, and you will not do it in despite of all the reproofs of your conscience, God's word, the Holy Spirit, and the ministers of the gospel. But if, at any time, you should do it, you are dragged to it as the slave is dragged to his drudgery for fear of the lash. You pray with as much reluctance as ever the criminal went to the place of punishment; and when you have prayed, how happy you are that the task is performed.

3d. By an unwillingness to examine the state of their souls, many harden their necks. The formal professor, the deceived hypocrite, and almost Chris-

tian, risk damnation rather than try the foundation of their hopes, know themselves, and come into close quarters to see the worst of their case. Thus they labor hard to stifle conscience, and murder their convictions. They strive more anxiously to hold to their false hopes than ever they did to work out their salvation.

4th. By a willingness to be deceived. The poor, almost Christian, struggles as for life to retain his false hope, notwithstanding all reproof. If he is driven from one carnal refuge, he flies to another; and thus hardens his heart and stiffens his neck, and will not look to Christ until reduced to the last extreme of painful necessity. When every other stratagem fails, he tries the formal round of duties as long as he can. In a word, he will choose any carnal refuge or false resting place, any other possible scheme or invention, rather than bow his neck to Christ's yoke or submit to God's method of salvation. Let such quake and tremble, and be horribly afraid, for God has spoken it. They "*shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

III. Consider briefly the inevitable doom of the finally impenitent. They "*shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

All their earthly pleasures, and worldly prospects, upon which their hearts are fixed, shall be blasted and eternally cut off. All their delusive hopes of heaven and salvation shall be blasted forever.

They "*shall be destroyed.*" No sooner shall their measure of iniquity be filled to the brim, and their cup of wrath to the overflowing, than the patience of God shall end. His vengeance will sleep no longer. Then shall destruction come upon the impenitent sin-

ner with rapid strides. As saith the Lord, "*Because I have called, and ye have refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.*"

"*Shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy,*" that is, without any possibility of escape. As the sinner rejects the blood and merits of the Son of God, and refuses to bow his neck to Christ, he rejects the only hope—the only remedy which has been provided to save sinners.

Then there is no more sorrow for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. He that despised Moses's law, died by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much soever punishment suppose you that he shall be counted worthy, who has trodden under foot the son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and has done despite to the Spirit of all grace. He shall be cast into hell, into the blackness of darkness, into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, but the smoke of his torment shall ascend up forever and ever.

SERMON XIII.

ON THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.



For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.—2
CORINTHIANS V. 10.

THIS world is a place of probation, in which to prepare for a future state of existence. Such as we are here, such we shall be through the ceaseless ages of eternity. All mankind are swiftly passing to eternity; Some are preparing by the wise and unerring, though gentle, hand of divine grace, as vessels fit for their "*Father's house.*" These shall be filled with pure, unbounded, and unparalleled glory in the heavenly state. Others are filling themselves as vessels of wrath for destruction, treasuring up for themselves, "*wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*"

These two classes include the whole human family—all those millions which inhabit this earth. Two awful events, death and judgment, make the final separation between them, and fix their state eternally in heaven or hell. Death and judgment—how solemn, tremendous, and dreadful! Though neglected, and kept far from the thoughts of the greater part of mankind, yet they are sure; the certain and unavoidable fate of all. The Divine Spirit informs us, that "*it is appointed unto all men, once to die; for that all have sinned*"—"Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." Saith Moses, "*The days of our years are three score and ten; and if, by reason of strength, they be fourscore years, yet is their strength*

labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Though death is, of itself, very solemn and dreadful, putting a period to man's existence, and he is no more seen until the archangel's trumpet sounds, it is what follows death that makes it so terrible to the sinner. This is judgment—the righteous judgment of God, which fixes the soul's state for all eternity.

That there is a judgment day when all men must stand before the bar of God and have their destinies unalterably fixed, is evident from the plainest scriptural testimony.

Saith the psalmist of the Lord, "*He cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness.*" Paul tells, that God "*hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.*" And Jesus says, "*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations.*" And the text declares, "*We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*"

The great object of judicial proceedings is to vindicate the just, and condemn the wicked, upon pure principles of law and equity. The grand design of the general judgment at the last day is, to show to all intelligent creatures, the holiness, justice and goodness of God's law and government in the salvation and eternal happiness of the righteous, and in the damnation and endless punishment of the ungodly and finally impenitent.

In farther attending to this subject, we shall

I. Mention some circumstances that will happen preparatory to the last judgment.

II. Speak of the nature of this judgment.

III. Show that it will be a day of joy to the righteous.

IV. That it will be a day of inexpressible anguish and torment to the wicked.

I. Mention some circumstances that will happen preparatory to the last judgment.

And 1st. We shall speak of the coming of Christ to judgment.

His appearance will be sudden and unexpected, at a time when the world least expects it. Therefore, in Scripture, it is represented as the coming of a thief in the night. This awful event will happen when carnal security, hardness of heart, and blind inattention to spiritual and eternal things prevail as they did in the days of Noah, when the flood came upon the world unexpected and at once, and swept away its inhabitants in their wickedness; or as the Sodomites, when, in the midst of ease and plenty, they were destroyed by a storm of fire and brimstone from heaven. If the coming of Christ to judgment, be an event so sudden, how dreadful must be the surprise and dismay of a slumbering world. While millions are engaged in midnight revels and debaucheries, dancing, drinking, gambling, like tenfold thunders the trumpet sounds and calls them thence to the righteous judgment of the great day. His coming will be public; he will be visible to the whole universe: "*Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.*" His appearance to judgment, shall be august and glorious beyond comprehension. No circumstance ever took place through eternity which gave so grand an exhibition of the majesty and grandeur of God: "*I beheld till the thrones were cast down, 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 the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him"—"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." Our Lord himself informs us that he will appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, with all the holy angels, and he shall sit upon the throne of his glory. What an astonishing change now takes place! Men and devils are amazed and astonished. Is this the babe of Bethlehem that lay in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes? Is this the despised Nazarine that stood condemned at Pilate's bar—that was buffeted and spat upon, and scourged until all his bones might be counted? Is this the man of sorrows, streaming with blood, who climbed the heights of Calvary, bearing his heavy cross upon his mangled, bleeding shoulders; who hung upon the bloody tree by four streaming wounds; who was pierced by the soldier's spear; who gave up the ghost, crying, "It is finished!" Now he appears in all the pomp and grandeur of his Godhead. The heavens and the earth, as if affrighted, fly away from the dreadful majesty of his face. The second circumstance preparatory to the judgment of the great day which we shall mention, is the general resurrection of the dead; of the just and unjust of Adam's numerous race. All that sleep in the dust shall awake—some to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting contempt. They that are in their graves "*shall hear the voice of the Son of God, 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." The archangel's trumpet shall sound so loud that all heaven, earth and hell shall hear. The sleeping dead in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, shall awake and spring into life.

The God of Glory sends his summons forth:
 Calls the south nations, and awakes the north;
 From east to west the sovereign orders spread,
 Through distant worlds and regions of the dead.
 No more shall Atheists mock his long delay;
 His vengeance sleeps no more; behold the day!
 Behold the Judge descends; his guards are nigh—
 Tempests and fire attend him through the sky;
 Heaven, earth and hell draw near—let all things come,
 To hear my justice, and the sinner's doom.

Oh, what amazement must seize the affrighted millions of Adam's race! To the earth's remotest bound all is commotion—the graves are opening—the slumbering nations starting into life and rising above the ground, where once stood Nineveh, Babylon, Persepolis, Jerusalem, Constantinople, Rome, London and Paris; what multitudes in a moment spring from the grave, to the astonishment of affrighted beholders. Crowds rise at once from the bloody fields where Alexander, Cæsar, Pompey, Tamerlane, and Bonaparte, once triumphed. What multitudes come to view! All the myriads of Adam's race, who have lived in time, are all collected before the judgment seat of Christ. Oh, the solemnity of the scene! In all this immense company, there is not one idle or unconcerned spectator; no one is to be seen laughing, jesting, or strutting about as we frequently see them now. An awfully solemn and dread solemnity seizes upon every soul, and in dismal silence await their everlasting doom.

II. Speak of the nature of this judgment. It will be a general judgment. All men shall be judged,

both small and great. *“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats.”* Oh! the solemn—the affecting, and astonishing separation! Parents and children, and the nearest and most tender ties will then be torn in sunder. Fallen angels will be judged also. So saith the apostle Jude: *“And 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.”* And it was in reference to the dread events of this tremendous day, that the devils cried out to our Lord, in the days of his flesh, *“Hast thou come to torment us before the time.”*

In that day will be judged all the words, thoughts, and actions of the children of men: *“And the dead were judged out of those things written in the books, and according to their works.”* In our text, we are told that *“we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”* Every conversation and every word that has been spoken, shall then be examined. Says our Lord, *“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.”* The secret thoughts of all hearts shall then pass in public review before the impartial bar of God: *“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”* A solemn and awful day this, when judgment shall be given upon all the deeds, words, and thoughts of mankind; where every secret act, idle word, and every vain imagination, will be laid open to the public view of an assembled universe.

III. Show that it will be a day of joy to the righteous.

The seeds of this joy are sown in this life. As they are pardoned and justified by the word and atonement of Christ, the sting of death is removed. When they have lively views of the glory of God in Christ Jesus, and feel the witness of God's word and spirit, that their sins are pardoned, when by faith they can behold the land of promise, oh, how pleasant the thought of the last judgment. And as they die in Christ, a foundation is laid for a glorious and happy resurrection. So soon as the heart strings are broken, and nature expires, as soon as the soul and body are separated, the immortal spirit enters a state of positive blessedness. But the lifeless body is laid in the grave, and sleeps until the morning of their resurrection. Christ died, and lay in the grave; he conquered it; he made it a pleasant bed of rest to his followers. Hence the scriptures speak of falling asleep in Jesus, sleeping in Christ, &c. Says the apostle, "*Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;*" that is, their souls from heaven, and their bodies from the tombs; and, though parted awhile by death, they shall now be reunited. The resurrection will be to them a pleasing prelude to the judgment of the last day. For, says the Spirit, they shall rise first. Their corruptible bodies will be raised spiritual and incorruptible; they shall be raised in unfading beauty—beautiful and immortal in the likeness of Christ. As their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and engraved upon the palms of both his hands, not one of them will be overlooked or forgotten. The poorest beggar, or the meanest slave, shall not be passed by. When the Son of God comes in the clouds

of heaven with power and great glory, "*He shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to another.*"

The Lord Jesus Christ, who purchased them with his blood and ransomed them by his death, will own them before the assembled universe. He will separate them from the wicked as the shepherd doth his sheep from the goats. He will place them on his right hand as a mark of high honor and dignity, as a token of his love for them.

But what will consummate their happiness, and raise them to the summit of glory, will be the joyful sentence, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"

Last of all, they shall go away into everlasting life. They shall go home with Christ to his Father's house, and there, as vessels meet for the master's use, they will be possessed of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. They shall be with Christ where he is, and shall forever behold his glory; and, through all eternity, they shall taste joys such as "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man*" to conceive.

IV. It will be a day of inexpressible anguish and torment to the wicked.

The ungodly and finally impenitent will now be ripe for destruction. Having spent all their lives in sowing to the flesh, they shall now reap a harvest of immortal woe; having spent their lives in sin, they will now receive the wages thereof—eternal death. How intolerable their loss! Their day of grace and all hope of mercy are gone forever. They lose their

souls, worth more than ten thousand worlds; they lose God, the source of all happiness; they lose Christ and his salvation—heaven with all its unspeakable joys; and, to consummate their anguish and make them vessels capable of enduring all the wrath of God, their souls and bodies are reunited, and the dreadful sentence of “*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels,*” now fixes their awful doom. This is, indeed, the solemn, dreadful harvest day; the tares are separated from the wheat, and, bound in bundles, are cast into everlasting fire. Oh, how deep, and large, and wide, must Tophet be—how dreadfully immense the pile of fire and much wood!

SERMON XIV.

THE CHARACTER, HISTORY, AND END OF THE FOOL.



The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.—PSALM XIV. 1

Two things in the text demand our attention.

1st. The character mentioned—THE FOOL—that is the man who is destitute of true wisdom, or the knowledge of God, and who acts an irrational part in matters of the greatest importance.

2d. Something predicated of the fool, very expressive of his character. He "*hath said in his heart there is no God.*" This expresses the highest grade of unbelief, which is the root of all sin, blinds the mind, hardens the heart, and sinks the soul beneath the damning weight of sin. It is probable the fool would disclaim the character of an atheist; perhaps he would tell you, that reason and the light of nature prove that there is a God. Yet "*he says in his heart There is no God*"—"The heart, or spiritual part of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, so much so that every imagination is only evil continually." As every thought, word and action of the fool proceeds from this desperately wicked heart, the consequence is, that the whole of his conversation and conduct is sin. Therefore, his heart says, "*There is no God,*" by the words and actions that proceed from it for these constitute the image of his mind and speak the language of his heart.

In the further prosecution of this subject, we shall

I. Delineate the character of the fool.

II. Relate his history and end.

I. Delineate the character of the fool.

Perhaps there is no character more contemptible than that of a fool. Hence it is considered an insufferable insult to call a man a fool. Were I to say that I now address a congregation of fools, or that I believed a majority of my hearers are fools, I expect I would give a general offence to my audience. To be as modest on the subject as possible, we will suppose there is one fool in this assembly; and, if there be, he is an object of pity; his condition is so wretched, that human language cannot describe it. My present business, then, is to delineate the character of the fool so plainly that he may see himself, be influenced to apply to Christ, who is the essential wisdom of God, and learn from him the things that belong to his eternal ~~place~~ *place* *rea*

A fool, then, is a person destitute of wisdom, and who, in all his conduct, acts like one void of reason. In Scripture, the fool and the sinner are synonymous, and no term is more expressive of the character of a Christless sinner, than that of fool; for, never was simpleton more destitute of common sense than the Christless sinner is of the knowledge of God, and of that wisdom which leads to true happiness in time and through eternity. As the idiot or natural fool is destitute of all useful knowledge, and of that information which beautifies the mind and dignifies man, so the unconverted sinner is totally ignorant of the moral beauty and excellency of the attributes of God, and blind to the immaculate purity of his holy law, to the spiritual meaning of his word and the infinite evil of sin. Never was idiot greater stranger to the

knowledge of geometry, astronomy, and the higher grades of scientific learning, than the unconverted sinner is to the knowledge of God, the joys of pardoned sin, the consolations of the Holy Ghost, and the believer's hopes of heaven. Another peculiarity in the character of the idiot, is, he is void of wisdom; so every part of his conduct is vain, foolish, and irrational; but this bears no comparison to the brutish irrationality of the Christless sinner. Did you see a man bartering away an immense earthly inheritance for an embroidered cap, a gay feather, or a fine go-cart; or did you see him selling a crown, a throne, and a kingdom, for a ginger-cake or drink of grog, would you not be convinced that he was verily a fool? or did you see him in cool blood cutting his own throat, or driving a dagger into his own heart, would you not conclude that he was a distracted fool? but all this falls far short of the brutish and distracted conduct of the poor Christless sinner who parts with heaven and all its glories for the vain pleasures of this world, and who, in spite of all the entreaties of the ministers of the gospel, the warnings of God, and the motions of conscience, sells his soul for a trifle, and finds his way to hell. Did you see a man, in the season for preparing his ground and putting in his crop, spending his precious time in the most frivolous amusements, without striking a single stroke of work until the season was gone, would you not believe that he was a fool, and his conduct very irrational? but all this bears no comparison to the distracted conduct of the Christless sinner, who trifles away the only season of salvation. Suppose a prince were to say to a poor malefactor condemned to die, I will assign you a certain business for one hour, and if you are industriously engaged dur-

ing that hour,] and lose not one moment, I will not only pardon you, but give you the finest inheritance upon the earth. Did you see this poor wretch spending every moment of his precious hour in the most frivolous and sinful amusements, such as fiddling, dancing, building cob-houses, or catching flies, sporting with his fate, and treating this proposal with contempt—would you not conclude that he was a madman and self-murderer? but all this falls far short of the distracted madness of the Christless sinner. He is sent into this world to prepare for eternity; his life is but a dream—a bubble, or a morning tale; he knows not the moment death will fix his state for eternity; in the short and uncertain time allotted him, work of vast importance must be performed, or he must be damned forever. He has to forsake the service of that old serpent, the Devil, and enlist under the banners of Christ; he has the enmity of his heart against God and holiness to subdue; his strong corruptions, ungovernable passions and propensities must be overcome; he has temptations to resist, oppositions, persecutions and reproaches to endure; he has to obtain a new heart and spirit of Christ, and a growing qualification for heaven, without which he must sink forever beneath the wrath of God, in a lake of fire burning with brimstone, where the smoke of his torment shall ascend forever and ever. Yet he will not attend to his eternal interest; he hates the path that leads to true happiness; he voluntarily rejects eternal life, and he chooses the torments of hell as his portion forever. All the arguments of men will not induce him to begin the work of his soul's salvation. Perhaps he will acknowledge the propriety and necessity of religion, that he wishes to obtain it, and would

give the world to possess it; but bring the matter close to him—propose to him *now* to flee from the wrath to come; he raises a multitude of objections, and brings forward many absurd excuses; he tells you he has no disposition to flee the wrath to come; therefore, he must wait until God gives it to him. He is afraid to commence seeking religion, lest he draw back; for he has seen many who started to obtain it, who again returned to their former sinful condition, and it is much better never to begin, than to make a start, and then backslide. He fears that if he should commence seeking religion, he would be laughed at by all who know him. The cross is too heavy; the persecutions of the world cannot be endured. Then his dear companions, his beloved sins, and his vain pleasures, are so pleasing it would be like death to part with them. It is inconvenient at present—like the sluggard, he cries, *a little more slumber, a little more sleep—a little more folding of the hands for sleep*; he says, I will put it off till next year, or some more distant period. Thus he neglects the salvation of his soul, and treats the offers of mercy with contempt. But he hugs to his heart that poisonous viper, sin, that stings him to the inmost soul, and, with pleasure, he kisses the dagger that pierces his soul. Now, what think ye of the Christless sinner? Is he not verily a fool? But, to be more particular—

Ist. He is a *self-conceited* fool; hence saith the wise man, *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes*; that is, he is too wise in his own conceit, to be taught or set right. The opinions of his father and grandfather, or the sentiments of some old carnal formalist, or some wrong-headed enthusiast, to whom he is strongly attached, the peculiarities of his beloved par-

ty, or the notions of some old, wealthy, drunken deists, who bear the pompous titles of Majors, Colonels, Generals, Doctors, Judges, or Members of Congress; these have infinitely more weight with him, than all that is written in the Bible. Hence he boasts of his great information, his superior and mighty powers of reason, when at the same time, in the view of reason and common sense, he is an arrant fool, for he is afraid of being convinced, and he secretly wishes to be deceived; he never tries to investigate the subject, and impartially examine the evidence on both sides of the question; but, like a *confirmed* fool, he collects every thing like an argument to strengthen his delusions, harden his heart, and put out the light of conscience. The broad road to hell is so dear and pleasing to him, that to forsake it, would be intolerable. Therefore, as our Lord expresses it, "*he hates the light;*" he shuns conviction as he would death. When, by the strength of argument and the force of truth he is confounded and his mouth closed, he becomes angry; he spits out the venom of hell as he substitutes loud laughter for reason. What is still more astonishing, like the madman who thinks himself a crowned head, and that all mankind are his slaves and vassals, the poor, Christless sinner, while he rushes along the broad road to hell, tells you, that the religion of Jesus Christ is too mean and contemptible a thing for his lofty soul to embrace, and that professing to feel the love of God shed abroad in the heart, is mere hypocrisy, or the effect of enthusiasm on weak minds; but by his conduct, he tells you, that to indulge in frothy conversation, to profane the Sabbath, to frolic and dance, to drink like a beast, and swear and curse like a devil, are employments worthy of rational and

reflecting men, and that these things are always done by those who are truly wise and great.

2d. He is a *deceitful* fool. Solomon tells us, "*The wisdom of the prudent is, to understand his way, but the folly of fools is deceit,*" that is, they try to deceive the world and themselves. The fool is a base hypocrite, yet there is no man upon earth who cries out more vehemently against hypocrites; but all the time it is not hypocrisy he hates, but experimental religion and practical holiness. As the persecuting Romans of old dressed up the Christian martyrs in the skins of wild beasts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs, so the fool dresses holiness and the fear of God in the filthy garment of hypocrisy, that the dogs of hell may join with him to tear them to pieces; yet, as was observed, he is a base hypocrite, for he strives to make the world believe that he is a man of great rational powers, and possessed of a very strong mind, when at the same time, in matters of the greatest importance, that is, in the affairs of his soul's salvation, he acts with worse than brutish irrationality; he wishes men to believe that he is a person of strict honesty, truth and honor, yet he often takes advantage of the ignorance or necessity of his neighbor, and purchases property for half price, or sells his own at double its value. The fool not only deceives others, but also deceives himself, for he builds his hopes of heaven upon the supposed goodness of his heart, his pretended morality, his charitable actions, his partial reformatations, or his transient joys; but that which renders his deception most fatal, is, that the fool wishes to be deceived.

3d. Another property of the fool is, that *he makes a mock at sin*, that is, he thinks it an innocent, pleasing

thing. Tell him of its infinite evil, how filthy and abominable it appears in the sight of God; tell him that it ruins the souls of men, and brings upon them all the torments of hell—the fool will laugh you to scorn; he will mock at all you say concerning the dreadful consequences of sin, and contend there is no harm in it.

4th. Another property of the fool is, that he hates knowledge. Saith Solomon, "*Fools hate knowledge.*" Again: "*Fools despise wisdom and instruction.*" God has placed in the hands of the fool that most valuable of books, the Bible. From this precious volume men may obtain the knowledge of God and his Son Jesus Christ; here men may learn that wisdom which will lead them to endless happiness; but this book the fool detests, at least he has no desire to read it; he would be much more pleased with some silly novel or wild romance; these he delights to read; but his Bible, if he has one, lies neglected in some obscure corner of his house.

The Sovereign of the Universe has appointed one day in seven to be particularly devoted to the acquisition of the knowledge of God, but the fool hates God, he has no desire to know him, and instruction and wisdom he despises; therefore, he spends the Sabbath in slumbering, visiting his neighbors, walking round his farm, or in vain and worldly conversation; perhaps he never opens his Bible, or if he does, he is not at all interested with its contents, and when he has hastily perused a chapter, he closes the book, rejoicing that he has got rid of his irksome task; he never bows his knee before God, either in secret or in his family, and perhaps he strives to banish from his mind all serious thoughts of God, death, judgment and

eternity. As the fool hates instruction and wisdom, so he cannot bear the company and conversation of experimental and lively Christians. The conversation of such persons is intolerable; for it is contrary to his nature; it stings his conscience, and disturbs his carnal peace; therefore, he does what he can to avoid it; he hates and shuns the faithful minister or religious friend, who, with tears in his eyes, shews him his danger, and entreats him to fly to Christ. In a word, his chief happiness consists in the darkness of ignorance, and in living at the greatest possible distance from God and all that bear his image.

5th. Another property of the fool is, that he is *obstinate* and *incorrigible*. Says the wise man, "*Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.*" These words may refer to all the methods the Lord uses to awaken sinners and persuade them to flee the wrath to come; therefore, they include all the entreaties of the ministers of the gospel, and all the motions and drawings of the Holy Spirit; at the same time, they represent the obstinacy, wickedness, and incorrigible rebellion of the sinner against God. Sabbath after Sabbath, and year after year, the Lord calls the fool to repentance; Christ knocks at his heart, and salvation comes near unto him; but he refuses to submit; the world and its pleasures so possess his heart, that he will rather risk all the torments of hell than part with them; sometimes, like Ahab, he humbles himself for a time, and walks softly; but he soon resists the light, and returns to sin. Again, like Felix, he is made to tremble under the awful apprehensions of the wrath of God; but he puts off seeking the salvation of his soul till a more convenient sea-

son. Again, like Agrippa, he is almost persuaded to become a Christian, but some beloved sin keeps the Lord Jesus Christ from possessing his heart. When the more gentle calls of divine mercy prove ineffectual, the Lord bruises him in the mortar of affliction. By losses, diseases, and alarming dispensations of Providence, he is called to repent and flee the wrath to come, but still his foolishness will not depart from him. When he feels the hand of God heavy upon him; when he is confined to a sick bed, and death and eternity stare him in the face, like Pharaoh, he promises amendment, and pleads with the people of God to pray for him; but no sooner is affliction withdrawn, than Pharaoh like, his heart becomes more hardened than before, until, at last, by repeated acts of obstinacy and rebellion, the Spirit of God is provoked to withdraw; his heart grows hard like the nether millstone; his conscience is seared as with a hot iron, and his damnation is sealed.

6th. Another trait in the character of the fool is, he is a *practical atheist*. "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*" Take notice. The fool does not say with his tongue, *There is no God*. No: *he hath said in his heart*. He will tell you his unerring reason teaches him there is a God; that this is proved by the light of nature and the works of creation; yet, *he hath said in his heart, There is no God; his heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; all his actions proceed from this deceitful and wicked heart; they speak its genuine language—and that is, "There is no God,"* and this will be clearly proved by these considerations—

1st. God has revealed himself in the Bible as a holy, just and sin-hating God; he has declared that *the*

the wages of sin is death; that anger and wrath, tribulation and anguish is what attends upon every soul that doeth evil; that the eternal plagues of hell is the consequence of sin. But does the fool believe these declarations? Let his conduct testify; and its language is—*There is no such God*, for he drinks in iniquity like waters; he profanes the Sabbath; he lies, cheats, swears and drinks to excess; he indulges in obscene discourse, in revelling, rioting, dancing, and in many acts of daring wickedness. Now did the fool firmly believe that such conduct is as inseparably connected with the torments of hell as the cause is with the effect, he would not dare to indulge himself in the love and practice of them; therefore it follows that by this conduct his heart says, *There is no God*.

2d. God has declared that *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*, and that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; that *he that believeth not shall be damned*. Does the fool believe these declarations? No; for by his careless, profane, and sinful conduct, he declares that God is a liar; he makes a mock at sin; he jests at religion; he stifles his convictions and quenches the motions of the Holy Spirit; indeed, the whole tenor of his conduct declares that his heart says, *There is no God*.

But, to finish our description of the fool. His whole heart is enmity against God, and his whole nature is sin; *from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet there is no soundness, but wounds, bruises and putrifying sores*.

He is a fool, in the highest sense of the word; for he is destitute of the knowledge of the nature and attributes of God; *“his understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is*

in him because of the blindness of his heart," and *"the God of this world has blinded his mind, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto his heart."* His affections are alienated from God, and set upon inferior objects; therefore, he is said to be *"a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God."*

His memory is treacherous as a riddle that lets the precious grain run through, but easily retains the trash. In a word, his heart, which, in Scripture, signifies his soul, is a sink of wickedness, the very image of that old serpent, the Devil. *"It is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it;"* and Christ declares that out of it proceed *"evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness."* Therefore, the fool's heart is termed *an uncircumcised heart—a hard heart—a stony heart—a froward heart—a heart departing from God—a backsliding heart—a proud heart—a heart full of hypocrisy.* This is the description given in Scripture of the heart or soul of the fool. Say, does it not strongly resemble the Devil? Now, view his body or fleshy part, as it is acted upon by this totally depraved soul, and reason must acknowledge that it can act upon no higher principle than that of the brute. Its highest object, then, is the gratification of its appetites and propensities. Therefore, it follows as an unquestionable truth, that the fool is a compound being consisting of the brutal and infernal nature. In a word, he is half beast, half devil.

After having given this description of the fool, some may be disposed to conclude that he is altogether a prayerless creature. This, however, is a mistake. He is a praying fool; he prays morning and evening, day

and night. In a word, he is always praying. We will conclude our description of the fool with a SPECIMEN of his constant prayer; and the desires of his heart habitually run out in such language as this: O, Lord, give me all my portion in this life, let me have my heaven here; I ask not thy love and favor; I desire not the knowledge of thee; I do not pray to be saved from sin; but do thou grant that I may be rich, wealthy, prosperous and great; take thy Holy Spirit altogether from me, keep death and eternity out of my view. Let my conscience be seared as with a hot iron, that I may enjoy all the pleasure sin can afford. I love sin; I love the indulgence of my carnal appetites; I am delighted with the road to hell. Oh, Lord, let me go to hell, and this is all I desire at thy hand. Amen!

II. Relate the history and end of the fool. He was born a fool; *“he was shapen in iniquity, conceived in sin, and born like a wild ass’s colt;”* he came into the world destitute of the moral image of God, which consists in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness; he was born in the very image and likeness of that old serpent, the Devil. As soon as he was capable of exercising his powers of reason, he gave clear evidence that he was a fool, for it was evident to every discerning person that he was ignorant of God and his Son Jesus Christ; therefore, he had no communion with God; he had no desire to be acquainted with him, nor to prepare for death and eternity. At a very early period he manifested an obstinate and rebellious disposition. Fretfulness, discontent, anger, revenge, self-will, disobedience, and a total inattention to religion, discovered themselves in his early life; as he grew up, with the greatest facility and in opposition to all admonitions, he learned to sing vain songs, to use obscene language,

to swear, to violate the Sabbath, and to perform many mischievous tricks. It was almost impossible to constrain him to read the Scriptures, or to pay the smallest attention to the things of God and religion. In short, the more he was entreated to attend to the affairs of his soul, the more clearly did his opposition to them appear. When he arrived at the years of maturity, his chief desire was respectability; but, like a fool, he took the wrong method to obtain it; he decked his dying body in the habiliments of gaiety and extravagance, while his soul remained black and deformed like the Devil, and polluted with the filth of sin. To add to his respectability, he selected companions; but, alas! he made a fool's choice; he associated with those who would lead him further from God and on the way to hell; the gay, the thoughtless and the profane were his bosom companions. In order to attain to as much importance as possible among his associates, he had to learn various popular, scientific branches. Thus he had to learn to drink, swear, dance, fight, and take the name of God in vain. In short, to use a phrase of his own, he had to become very much of a devil.

In order to become popular, and enjoy as much of the pleasure of sin as possible, he attended every frolic and dance within his reach; indeed, he was continually employed in passing from one scene of dissipation and extravagance to another. However, he met with many interruptions in his wild career, for conscience, like a common disturber of the peace, gave him much uneasiness, and repeatedly told him, the end *"of these things is death."* The Holy Spirit whispered, *"O do not that abominable thing."* These warnings often created uneasiness, and put him to an awful stand; then it seemed as if heaven and hell were striving

for him. Sometimes he was constrained to pray in secret, and resolve that he would repent and forsake sin. But the thought of forsaking the pleasures of sin and his companions in wickedness was too intolerable to be endured; and he was brought to his wits' end to devise means by which he might stifle conviction and lay his conscience into a dead sleep. We shall, therefore notice the manner by which this dreadful object was accomplished.

And the first thing he did, was to make out a large list of hypocrites; he strictly watched the conduct of professors of religion, that he might find out their faults and misgivings; he discovered that such a one, who prayed in his family, and whom he had frequently seen at a communion table, had been discovered somewhat intoxicated; therefore, he entered this professor on his list; a second had taken advantage of his neighbor in a bargain; a third had been seen in a passion and using unbecoming language. These, with many more of the same description, he enrols with the first. These discoveries afforded him much satisfaction, and with a smiling countenance and taunting sneer, he would relate the circumstances in every company, and often intimated that all professors were hypocrites, and that the religion of Jesus was a deception. This list served on all occasions as a plaster to his troubled conscience; and he endeavored to believe that it was unnecessary for him to seek religion, as there was no reality in it.

Still, however, in his sober moments, his conscience would annoy him, and disturb his carnal peace, by reminding him of the necessity of seeking and obtaining religion; then he would try to silence conscience by the following mode of reasoning: Why, said he, none

of the younger class of respectable persons make any profession of religion; therefore, were I to be concerned about it, I would become quite unpopular, and sink into contempt. Were I to attempt to serve God, I would be hissed at, and sneered out of all genteel society. Then he would go to the tavern, and, in company with his wicked companions, he would laugh, and drink, and sing, and swear, for the purpose of driving away his convictions, and that he might become confirmed in his determinations to go on in sin, he would go to the ball-room, and there try to drive away all serious thoughts by sporting and dancing. By such struggles as these, the fool often found the way to hell a hard and difficult way; sometimes when under a sermon, the fool has heard his case so exactly described, that he has seen plainly that death and hell would be the end of his career; then his conscience would alarm him; but as he thought it as disgraceful to be seriously engaged in making his peace with God, as to be found stealing, therefore, he would strive to look round the congregation with the countenance of a hero, and appear as careless and undaunted as possible; and when conviction would seize his heart with greater force, and no other effort would avail, he would rise up, leave the house, and get out of hearing as quickly as possible. If a faithful minister, or zealous Christian friend, would at any time persuade the fool to flee the wrath to come, he would answer with a sneer or laugh, treat all they said with contempt, and if they would repeatedly converse with him on this subject, he would become angry, and insult them with such language as the following; Give yourself no concern about me; if I go to hell it is no man's business; mind yourself; give me none of your jaw.

When the poor, unhappy fool would meet with his companions in sin, he would drink until he became basely intoxicated; then he would curse and blasphème like an infernal fiend; he would get into wild riots, quarrel and fight, and sometimes get his eyes blackened. When he came home, and began to cool off, as he called it, he would feel sick, and his body miserably disordered, then he would calculate his expenses, and bitterly regret his extravagance, for the money he had gained by his honest industry, and which should have been laid out for necessary purposes, was wasted and gone, his debts unpaid and heavy demands hanging over him; but, what was worse than all, his conscience, like the never dying worm of hell, gnawed and stung him like a poisonous viper, and his bitter reflections were intolerable. Now, he would solemnly promise to God that he would reform his life, withdraw from his wicked companions, and no more touch the intoxicating poison. For a few weeks you would suppose that he was about to alter his course, and he appeared quite another man; but upon a certain public day, he fell in with his former companions in sin. They handed to him the intoxicating cup. Said the fool secretly, I may take one dram in moderation; there can be no danger in that. He took the glass—he drank; he sat down and joined them in their vain conversation; the liquor went round, his conscience recoiled; his former resolutions stared him in the face. O, said his sinful companions, be a good fellow, dont be a whining hypocrite; if you are so reserved people will say you are going to be religious; there is no harm in drinking in moderation, if a person do not make a beast of himself. Then the fool, in spite of all the efforts of conscience, drank

again. By this time, he felt his blood warmed and his appetite inflamed, and he went at it like a confirmed fool, and swallowed it down, draught after draught.

When he cooled off again, the bitter reflection of his conscience was like a hell upon earth, and he felt miserable beyond description. When he thought of his former resolutions and the promises he made to God, which he had broken, he felt ashamed and mortified, and he determined never to make another resolution; then off he went to the tavern and bottle, and in company with his sinful associates, time after time, he tried to drink, and laugh, and dance, and swear away all solemn reflections about God and a future state. On a certain occasion, the fool took dangerously ill; he was laid upon a sick bed; his disease increased, and seemed to baffle the power of medicine; his physician despaired of curing him, and his friends expressed their fears that his case was hopeless; death stared him in the face, and conscience again awoke and placed all his sins before him; the wrath of God and the horrors of hell affrighted him. Now he acknowledged himself a fool, and with bitterness of soul lamented his ungodly life, misspent seasons of grace, and stifled convictions; he prayed and cried for mercy; then the language of his heart was, O that God would spare me for a few days or years longer. I would forsake all my wicked companions and ungodly practices; I would diligently attend to the means of grace; I would keep every Sabbath holy to the Lord; I would regularly attend the preaching of the word, and hear as for eternity; and I would give myself no rest until my peace were made with God. Then eternity and eternal things employed his mind from day to day, until relieved of his disorder; but as soon as flattering hopes of recovery took place, his

convictions began to subside; as his health and bodily strength increased, his serious attention to the work of his soul's salvation decreased; when he was restored to his health, his heart became harder than before, and he returned to his old sins as "*the dog to his vomit, or the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*"

The poor, unhappy fool, to quiet conscience, repeatedly promised that, at some future period, he would repent of his sins and seek religion, and as often left his promises unperformed. At length, he became acquainted with a profane, drunken profligate, who was a man of wealth, and bore the pompous title of Major, Colonel, Judge, or General; but he was a hater of God and religion. This contemptible sinner hinted to the fool that the religion of Jesus Christ was a mere deception; that the Bible was a cheat, the fabrication of designing men; - that there was no future state, nor general judgment, and that men had not, after death, to give an account of the deeds done in the body. He furnished him with Paine's *Age of Reason*, and the works of Volney, Voltaire, and Bolingbroke. This confirmed him a fool, for infidelity put the cap stone upon his folly. Now he shouted victory, and he viewed all the efforts of reason, conscience, and the religion of Christ, as incapable of disturbing his peace, and all the admonitions, reproofs and entreaties of religious friends, as lost when addressed to him. Then the fool could tell what wonders his unerring reason had discovered; he had found out that the bible was a deception, when he had never read it through once in the course of his life, and knew little more of its contents than a Shawnee or Choctaw. If a person asked him for the evidences of the truth of the system on which he is ven-

turing into eternity, he would reply that he had incontestible evidence. And what was it? All the half-read fops, who never made the Bible their study; Doctors, Majors, Colonels, Generals, Judges and Members of Congress, were deists. If he were asked for his unanswerable arguments, by which he supported his system, he would say that he had them at command. And what were they? *Profane witticisms, sneers, jests at sacred ~~thoughts~~, and extravagant, loud laughter.*

Things

Time would fail to dwell upon particulars. View the fool through every stage of his life, unless at some solemn seasons when the Spirit of God was powerfully striving with him, and you would see nothing but the symptoms of *extreme folly* about him. Did he happen in company with some lively experimental Christians, whose conversation was altogether of Christ, heaven, and the life of religion; he was miserable beyond description; such conversation was contrary to his vile, depraved nature; therefore, presently he was up and gone. If a faithful minister, or pious Christian conversed with him about the state of his soul, he would give no answer; but he would appear confused and look angry; urge him upon the subject, and he would be highly offended and shew the most daring impudence; if he answered what was said to him, it was with insolence and contempt. See him on the Sabbath; like the sluggard, he is stretched on his bed sleeping away the precious season of grace. Let him rise ever so early during the week, the Sabbath morning was the fool's time to sleep. Perhaps breakfast is nearly ready to go on the table before he is disposed to rise. See him during the course of the day; if he is reading, it is not the bible, nor a religious

book, but a history, a novel, or newspaper; notice his conversation on this holy day, he has not a word to say about the great concerns of his soul. No, he speaks of the world, and the things of it. See him at the place of worship; he is like a fish out of water; every thing is contrary to his nature; to sit out a sermon is like Algerine bondage. Sometimes you see him in one part of the assembly; in less than ten minutes he is in another ~~place~~. Presently look about you again, and he is up and gone; he is at the spring, or conversing with some of his ungodly companions on the most sinful and profane subjects. See, during a sacramental occasion—every day, if he is about—you will see him on the outside, sitting away off at a distance on a log, or standing at the foot of a tree with some profane ruffians, with his hat on, talking and laughing. If the Spirit of God visit the assembly with a heavenly breeze, and some happy souls, filled with the love of God, are constrained to praise and glorify him; or if poor awakened sinners are constrained to cry for mercy, presently you may see the fool climbing a tree or springing upon some high log, stretching his neck, straining his eyes, and gazing with a grin of contempt, displaying the malice and enmity of a devil. The fifteenth day of December, 1811, was a Sabbath the fool profaned as much, and upon which he committed as much sin as on any Sabbath he had ever seen. The fool can remember it himself; he was remarkably hardened, vain, foolish, and wicked on that day; he lay down that night as prayerless and hardened as a devil; but about the hour of two next morning something transpired that, for the moment, brought him to his senses. The earth began to shake. It was to the fool like the mid-

night cry of Egypt; it bore some resemblance to the sounding of the archangel's trumpet. On that morning, on the twenty-third of January, and on the seventh of February, the heart of the fool was obliged to confess there was a God, and a terrible God; he was convinced it was a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God; then he saw God frowning—hell gaping, and storms of vengeance ready to burst upon his guilty soul. For a time he prayed and cried for mercy; he attended upon the preaching of the gospel every opportunity, by day and night; and, for a time, like Saul, he appeared to be quite another man. But, alas! he was never a new man; for, like Lot's wife, he looked back to Sodom; he longed after his old sins, and presently the shaking of the earth, like the preaching of the gospel, became an old thing, and he felt such a hankering anxiety after his old sins, that now and then, in spite of conscience, he complied with the temptations of Satan; his convictions died away; his heart grew harder and harder. The unclean spirit returned, "*and found his house empty, swept and garnished*" with prayers, tears, duties and reformatations. And "*he brought with him seven other devils more wicked than himself, and they entered in and dwelt there.*" So the last state of the fool was worse than the first. Perhaps this was the last call the fool ever had.

Time would fail me to pursue the history of the fool through middle life, and on to old age. I must pass over a variety of occurrences in his life; how he obtained the victory over his conscience; how the Holy Spirit gave him his last call; and, when this was resisted, how he left him forever; how the Lord Jesus Christ sealed his heart under the curse, so that all

the powers of heaven and earth could not open it; how he went on from sin to sin with horrid rapidity, till his cup of wrath was full to the brim, and he was ripe for hell. On these particulars I cannot dwell. I would, therefore, hasten to his end.

And suffice it to say, he died accursed of God when his soul was separated from his body, and the black flaming vultures of hell began to encircle him on every side; his conscience awoke from its long sleep, and roared like ten thousand peals of thunder; then all the horrid crimes of his past life stared in his face in all their glaring colors; then the remembrance of mis-improved sermons and sacramental occasions, flashed like streams of forked lightning through his tortured soul; then the reflection that he had slighted the mercy and blood of the Son of God; that he had despised and rejected him, was like a poisoned arrow piercing his heart; when the fiends of hell dragged him into the infernal gulf he roared and screamed and yelled like a devil; when while Indians, Pagans, and Mahometans, stood amazed, and upbraided him, falling, like Lucifer, from the meridian blaze of the gospel and the threshold of heaven, sinking into the liquid boiling waves of hell, and accursed sinners of Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom, and Gomorrah, sprang to the right and left, and made way for him to pass them, and fall lower down even to the deepest cavern in the flaming abyss—here his conscience, like a never-dying worm, stings him and forever gnaws his soul, and the slighted blood of the Son of God communicates ten thousand hells in one. Now, through the blazing flames of hell he sees that heaven he has lost; that exceeding great and eternal weight of glory he has sold for the Devil's pottage. In those pure

regions he sees his father or mother, his sisters or brothers, and those persons who sat under the same means of grace with him, and whom he derided as fools, fanatics and hypocrites. They are far beyond the impassable gulf; they shine brighter than the sun when he shineth in his strength, and walk the golden streets of the new Jerusalem; but he is lost and damned forever.

The last thing we shall mention in the history of the fool is, when he lifted up his eyes in hell, he found a dictionary explaining the meaning of all the profane language he used during his life. Now he perfectly understands the meaning of those words he was in the habit of using in this world without ever reflecting on their signification. Such expressions as the following were very common with the fool in this life: I'll be damned—God damn his soul if it was not so and so. Now the fool perfectly understands the meaning of these terms in all their horrid emphasis, for God has heard and answered his prayer; he has damned his soul in hell. He could now tell you that the dreadful meaning of these words frightened the stoutest devils and fills all the flaming vaults of hell with the most hideous shrieks and yells. In this life, when the fool was offended at any one, his common phrase was, such a one is a damned fool. Now he perfectly understands the meaning of the phrase. When he surveys his life and reflects on the many offers of salvation he refused; the manner in which he misspent his precious time, and misimproved all the means of grace, he is constrained to confess that he is emphatically a FOOL—a damned fool—for he is damned in hell forever and ever.

SERMON XV.

THE SINNER'S GUIDE TO HELL:



Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.—MATHEW vii. 13.

ALL the inhabitants of this world are swiftly passing to eternity. Two places, heaven and hell, are ordained as the final abodes of the children of men.

In this and the following verse is presented the great contrast between the two roads leading to these different places: "*Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*"

Our design is to speak of the broad way, the wide, beaten path in which have travelled numberless millions of Adam's race.

The broad way is simply a life of sin and rebellion against God, and is called a way because it leads to hell and ends in eternal destruction. As the traveller who pursues perseveringly a journey is sure to arrive at its end; so he who persists in a life of sin is sure to land in hell.

The road to hell is here called a broad way, because a majority of the human race in every generation has travelled it; and by far the greater part of the numberless inhabitants of the earth at present are upon this broad road, rushing to hell with awful rapidity.

If we suppose one hundred thousand men drawn up in solid column on a highway, it must be very broad in-

deed to contain them; but this would bear no comparison to that broad way upon which are travelling continually hundreds of millions. Oh, how broad is the road to hell! Oh, what a crowded country must hell be! The great design of the incarnation, sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, of the mission of the Holy Spirit, with all his operations upon the heart, and of the preaching of the gospel, together with the promises, calls and threatenings of God himself, is to bring sinners from this broad road which leads to ruin, and persuade them to pursue the narrow way that leads to life and immortal glory.

Well, if sinners are determined to go to hell, we will endeavor to show them the way; and that we may do this, we will try to lay the path so plain before you that you cannot miss it, provided you follow our directions with diligence.

In discussing this subject further, we shall

I. Give some plain directions, by following which sinners will be sure to find the way.

II. Point out some of the difficulties of the way, and how they may be overcome.

III. Make some observations upon the end of the way.

I. Then, in order to direct you the road to hell, we shall

1st. Make some remarks upon the road itself. It has been said above that the road was broad, crowded with an innumerable multitude of passengers.

Some declare that there are many paths leading to hell, but methinks that all these paths are included in, and constitute the broad road. Like the street in a city, there are the paved walks for footmen and the broader part for horsemen and carriages. The ortho-

dox hypocrite has a smooth, nice path, paved with convictions, plausible experiences, Christian duties, tears, enlargements and melting frames of mind.

The moral formalist has a rough, hard pavement, consisting of his religious education, his standing in the church, speculative knowledge, orthodox principles and good desires.

The deist or infidel has his passage snugly causewayed with reason, natural religion, and many false pretensions of respect for the God of Nature.

The genteel, polite sensualist travels along a graded, pleasant pavement, on which he goes sporting, singing, skipping and dancing.

The profane sinner, the swinish drunkard, the filthy debauchee, the scoffer at God and religion, all these travel the rough and filthy part of this broad road, wading to their knees in mud and mire, and besmeared with the filth of sin.

2d. If you are resolved to pursue the downward road to hell, you should be prepared for the journey. A wise man with a journey before him makes all the necessary preparation before he starts. The Christian who travels the narrow way to the heavenly country must be clad in the gospel armour, that he may withstand the attacks of all the enemies he may meet. So also the sinner must be armed at every point, well harnessed for the way, else he will have hard work to get along.

He must be surrounded by the darkness of ignorance; his mind be blind to all spiritual objects; ignorant of God, Christ and the plan of salvation; ignorant of the extent and purity of the divine law. And thus prepared you may sustain a heavy attack; you may sport with the terrors of a God, and, Leviathan-

like, laugh at the shaking of Jehovah's spear. You should have also a conscience seared as it were with an hot iron; then you may ward off the heaviest blows of God's word and spirit. You must also have a hard heart—a heart that will bid defiance to God himself, that will refuse to tremble at all his threatenings, terrors and tremendous curses—a heart that will remain senseless as a rock under all the dreadful thunders of his wrath, as unfeeling as the nether mill-stone to all the calls and entreaties of a dying Saviour; cherish the utmost enmity to God; be ashamed of the religion of Jesus Christ; never be found praying or shedding a tear.

In performing this journey it is necessary that you should provide yourself with provisions. Store your minds with strong prejudices against the life and power of religion. Supply yourself with excuses for sin; such as this: This sin and the other are small sins. This thing is no harm. Surely there is nothing sinful in a genteel dance, no harm in taking a drink of grog, if a man pays for it himself and does not make a beast of himself. If you curse and swear, excuse yourself because you were angry and insulted, and since you don't profess religion, it makes no odds.

Always have at hand a good store of the faults and blunders, the coldness and carnality of Christians. All these will serve to ease your conscience and make your way to hell more easy.

But we will give you some more particular directions:

Live as prayerless as a beast. If you feel any impressions to pray, resist them; use every excuse to avoid prayer and to silence conscience; make a jest of it, laugh at it, and make fun of all those who per-

form this duty. Go to every frolic, frequent vain company, sing, fiddle and dance, and obtain for yourselves all the Devil, the world and sin can give you. Get drunk, boast that you are a clever fellow, curse and swear, and be as profane as your hellish nature will admit of, and there is no danger that you will fail of attaining to destruction. Give a loose rein to mirth and jesting; ridicule divine and eternal things; and if you find it necessary to raise the laugh, tell a few ingenious lies. Use every effort to acquire riches upon any terms. In horse-swapping, land-jobbing, and all other kinds of trade, take every advantage in your power; deviate from the truth; extol any property you may wish to sell to fifty times beyond its value; tell what extravagant prices you have been offered for it, by such and such respectable and intelligent men, and never miss a good bargain for want of a solid, substantial lie. When you meet a poor man in distress, who is simple and ignorant, cheat him; and if conscience checks you, remember your bundle of excuses for sin: This man had the making of one-half of the bargain; his eyes were open, and he would have cheated me if he had been as smart a fellow; and now-a-days it is every man for himself. Such reasoning as this will ease the qualms of conscience, and give you essential assistance in the road to hell. Indulge in pride and vanity; look down with disdain upon all around you; treat all as your inferiors, and esteem yourself some great and good body; leave religion to the vulgar—your mind is too noble to be taken up with such trivial matters. Indulge anger, malice and revenge upon all occasions. Be cross and contrary as possible; delight to keep up disturbance in your neighborhood; make your family unhappy. If

you receive the smallest affront, resent it—rage like a devil, curse and blaspheme, seize the fellow by the throat, and knock him down. Cherish all manner of deceit; make every man believe you love and respect him, when in his company; but when behind his back, laugh at his weaknesses, expose his faults, and tell a thousand lies to exaggerate them; backbite him, and endeavor secretly to ruin his character; and if he be without fault, throw out some dark, suspicious hints, that may make men suppose that you have found him guilty of some horrible act of wickedness; when in his company, make every profession of friendship towards him until you have possessed yourself of all his mind, and slyly let his secrets out into the world; and when he places full confidence in you, and suffers you to get his property into your power, swindle him of his whole fortune. But to curse and blaspheme the name of God is, of all exercises on the broad road, the most rational that the sinner can be engaged in. This declaration may surprise you. Can it be rational to blaspheme God's holy name? If you intended to remove to a strange country, it would be very proper to learn the language of its inhabitants; and so, as you intend to spend an eternity in hell, it is fit and necessary that you should learn the dialect of the damned; for there is nothing so like the disposition of the Devil, that betrays so much of the temper of the fiends of the infernal pit, as this. In a word, if you intend to choose the broad road to hell, live in sin, commit it with greediness, go into all manner of evil, follow every imagination of your wicked heart, despise reproof, stifle your convictions, murder conscience, resist every motion of God's Holy Spirit, made through the red tide of a Redeemer's blood, and press onward, regardless of God or man.

II. Point out some of the difficulties of the way, and show how they may be overcome.

The way to hell is, indeed, difficult; for as the Christian is scarcely saved, and that through great tribulation and hardships, so the sinner is damned through much trouble; he works out his damnation with fear and trembling. The difficulty of the way might be demonstrated by a variety of examples; but one is sufficient—that of the drunkard. He has, indeed, a painful task of it to get to hell. He must part with the peace and happiness of his family, and live at variance with the companion of his bosom. He must forfeit respectability of character, his dignity and importance in society, and sink into contempt. He must try his health, destroy his constitution, and bring upon himself malignant diseases; he must expose himself to horrid accidents—even to death itself—by falling from his horse, lying out all night in the inclemency of the weather, liable to be frozen, or torn to pieces by wild beasts. Add to these the bitter reflections of his own mind when sober. What an awful sense of shame and disgrace seizes his mind—conscience, with all its horrors, distracts his soul, and dark forebodings of hell thrust themselves upon him.

But let us point out some of the difficulties of the broad road which impede the progress of the sinner, and show you how to overcome them.

1st. The light of conscience is an intolerable obstacle, and often gives the traveller on this road hard work. It mars his peace, deprives him of the satisfaction which he would experience in his sinful amusements. To get quit of this troublesome difficulty, whenever it makes you uneasy, fly to the bottle, and drown it with whiskey; or go to the tavern or still-

house, drink till you are intoxicated; and when you come to your senses, if conscience again torments you try the same remedy, and often repeat it, and you will effectually drown conscience. Another method to overcome the light of conscience is, to gather all the blunders and faults of professors of religion; collect the crimes of all the rotten-hearted hypocrites, and if there are a few Christians of pious and blameless conduct, believe that they are fools, fanatics or enthusiasts; and, when you have put all these things together, persuade yourself that there is no reality in religion. Go into every kind of vain company, and laugh, jest, and endeavor to sing away every serious thought; but, if possible, get up a frolic and dance, for this is the most likely means by which to lull conscience to sleep. But of all others, the most effectual way to stifle conscience, is to oppose it; do all those things which it forbids; when it stares you in the face, and tells you any thing is wicked, go and do that very thing; if it dictates to pray or perform any other duty, be sure to neglect and refuse to do it. Conscience thus repulsed a few times, will leave you to sleep until you are waked by the torments of hell.

2d. Another difficulty is the effect of the gospel, which you hear again and again. When in the day of his power the Lord pours out his Spirit, when you see the omnipotence of Jehovah displayed in the conviction and conversion of your parents or children, your neighbors or friends—this will torment you, and give you trouble by the way. But I will tell you how you may get over this. When you go to meeting, sit at the outside of the assembly; go off as often as possible; in the meantime, whisper, laugh a little; when a stir begins, stay among the wicked, or go out

of the house, walk about, ridicule the exercises of the Christians; and if one come to talk to you, tell him you dont believe it is right; that it is hypocrisy, the Devil's work; that people could help it if they would; that it is only women and ignorant people that keep such an ado; that such a praying, exhorting and hallooing only scares folks and raises their passions above their reason. Should conviction begin to seize you, and your conscience torment you, then run for life, clear out as fast as you can. If you should be so much affected as to shed tears and fall down, strait go to your wicked companions, and tell them of it; laugh with all your might; tell them that the screaming, hallooing people had like to have had you down; tell them how such a one fell, and rolled, and tumbled—how another yelled and screamed; and, to help the business, be sure to tell a number of lies. But to avoid such difficulties, is, to keep away from all preaching, praying, and religious meetings; sleep every Sabbath away at home, or spend it in strolling about from place to place among the wicked.

3d. In your way to hell stands a solid column of praying Christians. Through this opposition force your way. When you come in contact with them look as hardened as a beast; let your countenance indicate contempt and disdain. If this will not do, raise a dispute with them; grow angry, insult them, and give them all the abuseful language imaginable. By doing so, they will be discouraged by your hardness of heart, and will conclude that your day of grace is past, and let you alone.

4th The Eternal Spirit of God will oppose you in your way to hell; his powerful calls upon your consciences, his strivings with your hearts, and earnest

entreaties and expostulations will make it troublesome to get along. But if you will be relieved of this visitant, oppose him with all your power; put off repentance to some future period; resist all his operations, and at length he will leave you; for he draws rationally and powerfully. This Almighty agent will not force you to heaven; but if he still hangs about your conscience, disobey all his warnings, refuse to give heed to all his invitations. Enter more deeply into sin; be much more wicked than ever you have been, and he will leave you in ease to indulge in folly and iniquity, that you may become a fit subject for the wrath and fiery vengeance of Jehovah.

5th. The gracious, compassionate Jesus will oppose your course in the broad road. And here is the hardest task. You must trample under foot his bruised and mangled body, and wade through the red sea of his divine blood; you must set your face, like adamant toward hell, determined to force your way down to destruction, in despite of all opposition.

III. Make some observations upon the end of the way. The end of the broad road is death: "*The wages of sin is death.*" Here, poor sinner, you will at once come to your senses, and reflect like a rational creature. Now, awful consternation, keen horror, and a fearful looking for of judgment will tear your soul with bitter agony.

My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
 Damnation and the dead;
 What horrors seize a guilty soul
 Upon a dying bed!

And now, sinner, you must part with all your mirth. Your vain jests and merry songs, your entertainments, your balls, frolics and dances are eternally

over. Conscience awakes like a giant refreshed with wine, and gnaws like a greedy vulture. All the sins of your past life stare you in the face, the guilt of all your slighted opportunities, the convictions you have murdered, the offers of mercy you have despised. The abused blood of the Son of God, now form the foretaste of hell—the forebodings of damnation.

But when the fatal moment comes, when body and soul must part—Oh, dismal thought!—the flaming fiends appear, a solid column of devils fill the room, they approach to the bedside like raging lions, they seize ~~the~~ departing soul—what will your feelings then be? As it is said of the glorified saints in heaven, *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”* The heart of man cannot conceive of the inexpressible torments of the damned in hell.

The next thing after the end of the way is hell, the sinner's own place, his final abode, his everlasting home—in Scripture, called *“The bottomless pit—The burning lake”*—*“The lake that burns with fire and brimstone”*—*“Tophet ordained of old the pile whereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it”*—*The second death—“The blackness of darkness—The wrath to come—The vengeance of eternal fire—Everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”*

In this gloomy region your company, sinner, will be the horrible fiends of hell, together with all the accursed spirits, forever banished from the peaceful presence of the Lord, all the damned ghosts of Adam's race that ever have, or shall sink down to eternal death: yea, all the rubbish and off-scouring, the filth

and refuse of the moral world, which a holy God deems unfit for any other place.

Were you shut up alone one night in a dark room with the Devil, how dreadful would you feel! But then you will be with him forever more. In hell, you will feel all the punishment of loss—loss of heaven, loss of God and Christ, hope and all possibility of mercy. You shall feel, too, the punishment of sense. The eternal, uninterrupted communications of Jehovah's pure, unmixed wrath will forever prey upon the soul, inflicting keener pain and torture than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, seven times heated, could inflict upon a natural body. While the one hand of enraged Omnipotence supports the sinner in being and enlarges his capacity for suffering, with the other he tortures him with all the miseries and pains which infinite wisdom can invent or Almighty Power inflict. Oh, how dreadful must be the torments of HELL!

SERMON XVI.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY PIETY.



Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.—ECCLESIASTES, xii. 1.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS:

I may address you with propriety in the language of Ehud, the Jewish commander, to Eglon, king of Moab, "*I have a message from God unto thee.*" Things of everlasting importance demand your attention.

The high and lofty One who inhabits Eternity, who spake worlds and systems of worlds into being, who orders the rising and setting of the sun, who counts the stars, and claims the universe as his own, addresses himself to you to-day, and commands you particularly to remember your Creator in the days of your youth.

Dare you refuse your attention? You are his creatures; he called you from nothing into being, gave you an existence which shall outlive the wreck of worlds, which shall endure when suns shall rise and set no more.

Look back one century, and tell me where were you then, and where ten thousand ages previous. You existed no where; no such beings were known throughout Jehovah's vast dominions. And where will you be one hundred years from this time? Gone forever from this globe—swallowed up in boundless eternity. You will be walking the golden streets of the heavenly Jerusalem, joining the songs of adoring angels, the

shouts and hallelujahs of the blood-bought millions; or you will be roaring in the dark regions of hell, shrieking and yelling with devils and despairing fiends. Oh, my young friends, how precious are your souls!—how important those things big with your everlasting fate! As, says the celebrated Daviess, each one of you is

An embryo angel, or an infant fiend,
 You are beings now begun, but ne'er to end;
 From glory, then, to glory you must rise,
 Or sink from deep to deeper miseries,
 Ascend perfection's everlasting scale,
 Or still descend from gulf to gulf in hell.

In the relation in which you stand to God—as creatures to a creator—self-love and your best interests call loudly upon you to attend to the solemn and awful voice of the eternal God, “*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*”

In these words there are two things which especially demand our attention. First, an important command: “*Remember now thy Creator.*” To forget God, in Scripture, is expressive of a life spent in sin and wickedness. Therefore, to remember God, includes the very essence of religion. It is to keep in mind the infinite obligations of love, gratitude and obedience, we are under to him as our creator, preserver and kind benefactor. It implies a particular attention to all the commands given in his word, an implicit obedience to all the precepts of the gospel—a harkening to his voice when he calls by prosperous and adverse providences, by the dictates of conscience, and the influences of his Holy Spirit.

That religion which consists in change of nature and in conformity to the likeness of God—which prepares the soul for death, judgment and eternity—is

sometimes called the *fear* of God. "*Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man*"—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Sometimes it is defined *love* to God. "*We love him because he first loved us*"—"Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." The sum of the first table of the divine law is, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*" And, again, it is termed the *knowledge* of God. "*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.*" St. Paul speaks of it as *holiness*. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* But in our text, it is included in the idea of *remembering* our Creator.

Secondly. The command is particularly addressed to persons in your season of life: "*Remember now thy Creator IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.*" To remember our Creator is enjoined upon all ranks, classes and descriptions of mankind. But here more particularly upon those in the bloom and vigor of youth. The almighty Jehovah demands, as his unquestionable right, your hearts—your whole hearts—your souls, bodies and spirits. He requires your love and obedience to all his commands.

In the farther prosecution of this subject, we shall consider—

- I. The propriety of the command.
- II. What it is to obey it.
- III. Enforce that obedience.

I. The propriety of the command.

Then, my young friends, permit me to ask you a serious and important question. Is it not right to love good and hate evil? to choose happiness and avoid misery? to seek your temporal and eternal interests,

and shun everlasting destruction? to take God—Christ—and everlasting blessedness for your portion; and forsake sin that you may escape a dreadful hell of indescribable torment? Would it not be rational for an intelligent creature, who must spend a long eternity in heaven or hell, to make such a choice? Then, it is right also to remember your Creator in the days of your youth. He is infinitely deserving of your highest love, your strongest affection, your praise and obedience. He is the essence of being—the source of every perfection. *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work”—“Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.”* The works of nature and the dealings of his providence proclaim his infinite wisdom, his almighty power and unbounded goodness. The apostle tells us, *that his eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things which he has made.*

But it is in the volume of divine revelation that the ineffable glories of God and the excellency of his attributes, shine in noon-day splendor. There he is described as the great *“I AM THAT I AM,”* the Almighty, self-existent and eternal cause of all things. The Sovereign of the Universe, by whose power worlds are upheld, and by whose wisdom they are governed. Before him all the nations of the earth vanish into nothing. *“Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a space, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance! Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing”*—*“Oh, the depth of the*

riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" He is the holy Lord God, worshipped and adored by angels, archangels, and all his ransomed followers, who surround his lofty throne. How extraordinary his love; how boundless his goodness, which extends to all his creatures. "*God is love*"—pure, unmixed, unparalleled, unbounded love. In a word, "*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*" But in the plan of salvation, in the redemption of a lost world by the obedience and death of his Son, consists the most overwhelming display of the glory of God. Though his attributes shine with astonishing beauty in the works of Creation and Providence, yet no where are they exhibited with such amazing grandeur as in the face of Jesus. This was truly the greatest work of the Omnipotent.

God, in the person of his Son,
Hath all his mightiest works outdone.

Stern justice, immaculate holiness, unsearchable wisdom, everlasting love, and unparalleled mercy unite in a dying Saviour, while salvation from sin and hell flows in crimson torrents from his bleeding heart.

My young friends, I have endeavored to impress you with the dignity, the glory, excellency and beauty of Him who addresses you in our text: "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*" And does not your reason at once reply that you should remember him while in the bloom of youth; that you should live, serve, praise and adore him with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. You should yield obedience to this command, because you are his crea-

tures. He brought you from nothing into being—made you rational creatures, capable of contemplating the glory of his attributes, and enjoying everlasting happiness; he has fed, clothed, and preserved you from the earliest period of your existence; he has bestowed upon you innumerable mercies and blessings; he has delivered you from numberless dangers; he has supported you under the most alarming circumstances; he has snatched you from the grasp of death when all hopes of life were extinct; he pitied your ruined state—opened a door of divine mercy—gave his Son to die for you, to purchase your salvation from sin and hell; he has given you his Word—his Gospel—and the internal operations of his Holy Spirit. Then, I ask, can any thing be more reasonable than that you should *remember your Creator, even now, in the days of your youth?*

Your best *interest* calls loudly upon you to attend to this command; to hearken to the voice of his Word and Spirit. Your temporal and eternal happiness depends upon the attention you give to this earnest invitation. Your judgment teaches you the propriety of loving and serving him. All he requires of you, is, to forsake sin, your worst enemy—the abominable thing which he hates, and which will render you miserable throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. He asks you only to walk in the narrow way that leadeth unto life; to escape misery and ruin, and accept of true happiness, unspeakable glory, and eternal life. Can any thing be so reasonable as these requisitions? Can any demands be more strictly in accordance with propriety and justice?

But many young people tell us that sin is an innocent thing, and there is no danger attached to it.

They tell us that it is no harm to forget God; to live months and years without praying to him; to neglect the Bible, and pay no attention to its precepts; to spend the Sabbath in giddy company, with vain mirth and foolish conversation, and in romps and plays. There is no harm in the ball room, in cards, racing, or in taking a glass of grog. But remember, my friends, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*" Reflect one moment; view sin closely; consider its nature and tendency. It separates the soul from God, your Creator and wise preserver, the source of all happiness, and the spring of every perfection, and tends to the destruction of all order, beauty, harmony and bliss throughout the creation of God. Its consequences are anarchy and eternal death. It aims at nothing less than the annihilation of Deity, and the ruin of his vast empire. What has this monster done? It hurled angels from the throne of God to the bottomless pit of hell, and transformed them into devils—robbed Adam of the image of God, and stamped upon his heart in livid colors, the likeness of the arch fiend of hell—converted our world, once a Paradise, into a dreary waste, bringing forth thorns, breeding disease and death. Whence originated those disorders and miseries to which mankind has so long been subjected? Whence arise cruelty, injustice and bloodshed? Whence that variety of suffering, and those innumerable calamities which have spread wretchedness throughout the earth? Whence spring oppression, contention and all possible evil? Sin has produced all these dismal effects.

Descend to the regions of the damned. View the innumerable multitudes of devils and fiendlike ghosts rolling in liquid flames of fire and brimstone. Hear

their dismal shrieks, their horrid groans, and despairing yells. Inquire of them why they are there—and what causes their unutterable anguish? They will answer you, in language big with infernal horror, SIN.

And now say, is it an innocent, inoffensive thing? Would you escape this abominable monster and all its dreadful consequences? Then obey the command given in the text: "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*"

II. What it is to obey this command.

To remember the Creator, signifies solemn and serious reflection upon his character and attributes; a strict attention to his Word and the calls of his Holy Spirit. "Men," says Brown, "remember God when they think of him, believe on him, and trust him for salvation."

It also implies that we be sensible of the infinite obligations we are under to him; that we love him with all our hearts, soul, mind and strength; that we obey all the injunctions of the divine law; that we serve God with a perfect mind; that we deal justly toward all men, and that we discharge, with an eye to the glory of God, all the Christian and moral duties.

We must repent of all our sins, fly to Christ, receive him by faith, and live a life of holy obedience.

But poor, unconverted sinners consider themselves a kind of free and independent beings, under no obligations to obey the commands of God. Say they, We make no pretensions to religion, therefore, we may do as we please; we may swear, get drunk and fight; we may dance, break the Sabbath and gamble, without being guilty of any crime. Alas! you err; you are under a fatal mistake. By such conduct, you spit venom in the face of the Almighty, and set Jehovah

at defiance. Have you forgotten his omnipotence? that he is the rightful Sovereign of the Universe? He gave you being; he preserves you; he has purchased you with his own blood; therefore, his right to your services—to your implicit obedience of all his commands, is unquestionable.

But whence the great necessity of attending to this command *now, in the days of youth?* Would it not answer just as well when married and settled, or when grown old and incapable of enjoying the pleasures of this world? No, my friends. In youth the heart is tender—the operations of the Spirit are felt most powerfully; and then to take up the cross and follow Jesus, is not so difficult a task, as when you have come to manhood, and business crowds upon you; when the affairs of this life engage your whole attention; when your heart has become *hard through the deceitfulness of sin*; when your conscience has grown callous to the calls of the Spirit; when you no longer hear with interest the invitations of the gospel. In old age, men are commonly so buried in iniquity, that there is little hope of repentance.

III. Enforce obedience to the command.

To remember your Creator, is an all important matter, and upon your obedience to the divine injunction depends your soul's salvation from everlasting torment in the flames of hell.

By God you were created. He made you intelligent and reasonable, capable of enjoying happiness in time and throughout eternity. His goodness unto you has been manifested by his continual preservation of you. When in helpless infancy he provided you a protector, he watched over you for good, though perhaps deprived of all earthly friends, all comfort

from those around, his Spirit has visited and comforted you.

By transgression of the law all mankind were involved in misery and ruin. They rebelled against their righteous Lord; refused to serve him; yielded themselves willing subjects to the dominion of his enemy, the Devil; wrought his will and did all his pleasure. But the Lord, notwithstanding the wickedness of man, though his thoughts were evil and that continually, did not forget the workmanship of his hands. He pitied our world, and devised means whereby he might retrieve man from his lost estate. Salvation was purchased by the humiliation of his Son. Though Lord of Glory, such was his love to man, that he became flesh and dwelt among us; made himself a servant; was reviled, persecuted and rejected of those whose salvation he came to effect. Yea, he suffered himself to be scourged, mocked and treated with all manner of indignities, and, at length, he was nailed to the cross, pierced with wounds, and expired in unutterable agony. Has he done all this? and will you not remember your Creator? Will you not devote to him the strength and vigor of your youth?

But, my young friends, this is not all. You feast daily upon his bounty; you wallow in the fatness of his creatures; you live in the enjoyment of all the means of grace; you have his word; you have been taught to peruse it, and follow its precepts; you hear his gospel; you have warnings of your danger without number; you are blessed with health, and, indeed, with all that heart could wish. But yet you forget God; continue in disobedience to his commandments; roll sin, like a sweet morsel, under your tongues; and postpone your reformation till a more advanced pe-

riod of life. Know you not that it is declared in his word, "*Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.*"

Youth is the time of life which seems to be particularly favored by the Almighty. Many are the promises that he has made to young persons. "*They that seek me early shall find me*"—"I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant." Has God thus particularly regarded you? Has he offered you so many inducements? Has he done so much for you? Has he manifested so great an interest in your welfare? Has he bestowed so many inestimable blessings upon you? Has he blessed you with a goodly inheritance in this highly favored land, where you live protected by wholesome laws, in the full enjoyment of the rights of man? Then will you not, in token of gratitude for these manifold favors, be induced to "*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth?*"

Consider that, while you are thus blessed, millions of the earth are oppressed, subjected to the tyranny of capricious monarchs; while you enjoy the sunshine of the gospel, and have the Will of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe made known unto you—so many nations of the earth are blinded by the thick mists of ignorance, and know not God. When you violate the divine commandments, mark how the monitor within your breasts reproves you. Tutored by the precepts of God, your conscience warns you of your danger. But the poor heathen goes headlong in the dark, impenetrable gloom, with naught to guide him but the dim light of nature. And now, my friends, can you, after all that God has done for you, still continue in rebellion against him? Will you put him from you?

Will you despise his warnings? Will you resist his calls? Will you forget him? Or, will you not rather remember your Creator? Confide in your Redeemer; repent speedily of your sins; reform your lives, and walk in all the commands of God blameless; "*Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth;*" defer it not; put not off the time of your return to your duty; delay not, I charge you, when God says "*Now.*" Dare you thus treat the Omnipotent, whose vengeance is swift to pursue those who mock him? Beware, lest you harden your hearts; lest you provoke the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. "*My Spirit,*" says God, "*shall not always strive with man*"—"Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." Be wise, and act decisively in this important matter; your happiness in life and throughout eternity depends upon your conduct? Do not rashly postpone your decision; make the prudent and judicious choice. If you disregard these things; if you refuse Christ, and reject the invitations of the Lord, he will surely punish you. In time, you shall suffer misery, and throughout eternity you must bear the unmixed wrath of God; you shall enjoy no peace; horror and the dread of punishment shall torment you; life shall afford you no solid comfort, and death shall come upon you unexpectedly, and find you unprepared to stand before the Judge of all the Earth.

Remember, that the sinner, who believeth not in Christ, shall be damned. "*He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" The hottest hell, the heaviest damnation await the gospel-slighter, who tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God, who rejects the overtures of mercy.

Do you feel prepared to die—to leave this world and go to an unknown region beyond the grave? Do

you feel that bliss eternal would be yours were you called hence? Or, rather, are there not apprehensions of danger—forebodings of destruction? Would you escape the fear of death—would you fly from ruin and hell—would you shun the wrath of an offended God? Obey the command: "*Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.*"

Promise not yourselves long life; think not that you will attain to great age, and that you have plenty of time, and it is not worth while to be in a hurry about this matter. But, friends, life is short and very uncertain. In a moment, when you suspect no harm, death will come upon you. Beware, lest *this night your souls be required of you*. Boast not, yourselves, of to-morrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth. Now is the accepted time—delay is dangerous. "*Procrastination is the thief of time.*" Before you are again called upon to give this all important matter your serious and solemn attention, death may come upon you. Then, alas! it will be too late for repentance—your soul will be hurried into eternity, and be enveloped forever in the flames of hell; then will the storms of Jehovah's vengeance beat upon your naked soul; then will you know the pains and miseries of eternal punishment; and you will lament, in bitter anguish, your neglect of the invitations of mercy. But would you escape the groans of the damned, the unutterable torments of hell, "*Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.*"

Young people fancy, that when they obtain religion they enter upon a miserable existence; that they would be ruined and lost. What a sad mistake! There is no happiness, no pleasure, no satisfaction, to be found any where but in the religion of Jesus:

Dear young friends, remember your Creator in the days of your youth; then you will declare that there is no happiness to be compared to a view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus; then you will feel a Saviour's love shed abroad in your hearts; you shall enjoy the dawn of heaven, the first fruits of the blessedness of the celestial Paradise. Here you shall feed upon peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost. And when death shall unloose the heavy shackles of the body and liberate the soul, you shall fly home to glory; you shall receive the inheritance prepared for you from the foundation of the world; you shall dwell in the presence of your heavenly Father; sorrow shall forever flee from you, and all tears shall be wiped from your eyes; you shall enjoy perfect and unalloyed bliss throughout the never-ending ages of Eternity.

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST HAS DONE ALL THINGS WELL.



And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well.—MARK vii. 37.

IN this chapter, we have an account of two miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ. The most remarkable of which, the perfect cure of a deaf and dumb man, demands our particular attention.

“And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue”—From which we may learn that the Lord condescends to use means in healing the diseases of the soul. Although in working this miracle there is clearly no natural connexion between the means used and the end to be produced, yet this is the ordinary method by which he works; and, therefore, in obedience to the divine command, we must wait for his blessing in the use of means. In fasting and prayer there is nothing which can convert the soul, or engage the favor of God, any more than spitting and touching the tongue of the dumb could remove the impediment without the exercise of Almighty Power.

After having performed this miracle, Jesus gives his followers convincing proof of his humility and lowliness of mind. Though he had wrought a work which proved him to be God, yet, so far from wishing his fame to be sounded abroad, *“he charged them that they should tell no man.”* But they could not conceal what had been done. Wherever the healing grace of God is felt, the tongue is loosed to proclaim the wonders

of redeeming love—to tell others what the Lord has done for their souls. On this occasion, so filled were their souls with a sense of the love and goodness of Jesus, that they published him abroad; and this is always the effect of a revelation of the divine glory to the soul.

Christ no sooner discovers himself to Andrew, than he runs to his brother Simon with the joyful news: "*We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*" No sooner does Christ say unto Philip, "*Follow me,*" than he "*findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, we have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth.*" When he manifests himself to the two disciples, going to Emmaus, in the breaking of bread, immediately they rise and return in haste to Jerusalem, that they may carry the glad tidings to their brethren. Why is it that converted sinners must talk of Christ, like David, tell those who love the Lord, what he has done for their souls? Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. They have such clear views of his personal glory; they see such an excellency and beauty in the whole plan of redemption; they are so full of the love of God, that they are "*astonished beyond measure,*" and cry, "*He hath done all things well.*"

In the illustration of this subject, we shall—
Show that Christ hath done all things well.

And here we shall consider what it is that determines the quality of the act of a moral agent. To be right, every action must be exactly agreeable to the will of God. As Jesus was essentially holy and good, all his actions must have been pure and undefiled. It was his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father.

The motive to every action must be just. Every act of God himself, and, indeed, of all holy beings, originates in the same design. God acts from a supreme love to himself, and since he is the essence of all perfection and excellence, in all his conduct he only designs the advancement of his own infinite glory.

All holy beings act from a principle of supreme love to God, and consequently desire the advancement of his glory. In this respect, all the mediatorial conduct of Jesus was right. The law of God was his delight. "*Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*" All his actions proceeded from pure love to God, and were designed to glorify the divine perfections. This is evident from his deportment throughout life. A proof of the fact we have in the context and in many other places. He performs miracles which demonstrate the divinity and glory of his person; and such is his humility and self-denial, that he charges the witnesses of his works to tell no man. When the people would have taken him by force and made him King, he escapes from them privately and hides himself; and, for this reason, his kingdom was not of this world, but spiritual; he sought not his own glory, but the infinite glory of God.

All good actions tend to manifest the perfections of the Deity. In this respect, the blessed Jesus did all things well. In the redemption of man, the divine glory shines with unrivalled splendor. The works of creation and Providence declare the being and power of God; but his goodness and wisdom are most gloriously displayed in the salvation of lost and ruined man.

But we will come more closely to the subject, and show in a few particulars that Jesus hath done all things well. In the creation of the world he did all things well. In this great event, the wisdom, power and goodness of God are clearly exhibited. He brings into being various ranks of intelligent creatures, capable of knowing and enjoying him. He upholds them and provides for their comfort and support; and he also gives them a holy law for their direction and government, which, in all respects, shows forth the holiness and justice, the dignity and sovereignty of the great Creator.

But we designed to observe the divine conduct in the ~~place~~ of redemption most particularly—and here we shall begin:

1st. With his gracious interposition in the covenant of redemption, infinite ages before the existence of the world—when he undertook to pay the price of sinner's ransom and glorify the divine attributes in their complete and eternal salvation. From all eternity, Jehovah beheld the family of Adam in the ruins of their fallen state, weltering in their blood and gore, exposed, in the open field of depravity, to the wrath of God and the torments of hell. And here, for once, the attributes of Deity seemed to clash. Infinite love and mercy plead for the sinner's deliverance. Holiness, truth and justice demand full satisfaction for every sin, and cry for the blood of the guilty; and they will not be appeased, unless a plan is devised by which the law may be magnified and made honorable, the sovereignty of the lawgiver vindicated. All the perfections of God must be reconciled and glorified in the redemption of lost sinners. But in what manner this could be effected, none but Jehovah could decide.

All the wisdom of the shining hosts above combined could not have formed a plan adequate to the grand design, nor was their love for man and their compassion for his sufferings sufficient for so great an undertaking; for, surely, they would not voluntarily submit to endure the infinite wrath of an angry God due to the sins of the whole elect world. But omnipotent power and almighty strength were necessary to bear the weight of divine vengeance, which would have sunk all the angels and archangels in glory down to eternal darkness and despair. Therefore, none but a divine person, infinite in love and of almighty power was adequate to the task. Help is laid upon one that is mighty to save. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Jesus, the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the image of his person, takes upon him to stand surety and substitute for the sinner, engages to assume our nature, to pay man’s ransom with his own precious blood, and satisfy every claim of divine justice. Now, O, believer, you have felt the pardon of sin; the blood of Jesus has been savingly applied to your soul. Look back to the early counsels of eternity; view the stability of the everlasting covenant of peace; behold the beauty and sufficiency of the great plan of salvation, and will not your heart, filled with wonder and astonishment, cry out, *“He hath done all things well.”*

2dly. It will appear that Christ *“hath done all things well,”* if we consider the glorious, everlasting righteousness which he has wrought out for sinners, by his active and passive obedience. Mankind, standing in the relation of creatures to God, their Creator and Lawgiver, were bound to render unto him the most perfect

obedience—to submit implicitly to all the laws of the divine government, and, as fallen sinners, they should have suffered the just penalty incurred by the infraction of the divine law. But, as man is dead in trespasses and in sin, he is utterly disqualified, to render perfect obedience, or to free himself from the penalty of the law; for, as sin is an infinite evil, and, consequently merits infinite punishment, it follows that finite beings could not satisfy justice otherwise than by suffering infinite and eternal punishment. Therefore, not one of Adam's race could have been saved, unless a perfect, law-fulfilling righteousness was provided, including an obedience commensurate with the demands of God's holy law, and a complete atonement for every sin. Such a righteousness the Lord Jesus Christ has wrought out; for though he was, from all eternity, *"in the form of God,"* and *"thought it not robbery to be equal with God;"* yet he *"made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* Yea, he hath procured a righteousness equal to the claims of the law; in which the attributes of Deity are glorified; with which God the Father is well pleased; through which he can be just, and save the ungodly sinner who believes on Jesus; and as it has stood the inspection of inflexible justice, and has received Jehovah's eternal approbation, upon it the sinner may venture his salvation, and be justified in the sight of a holy God.

When the believer reflects upon this atoning righteousness, its glory and suitableness, and perceives his salvation through it, firm and secure as the pillars of heaven, his soul leaps for joy, and, with wonder and

astonishment, he proclaims that Jesus "*hath done all things well.*"

3dly. Christ does all things well, when he makes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. When by his Word and Spirit he reaches the hardened heart of the sinner; when he awakens him out of the dead sleep of sin and carnal security; drives him from all his refuges of lies; strips him of his own righteousness, and finally shuts him up to the necessity of believing; when he strikes off the iron bolts of unbelief, opens the heart, and reveals his ineffable glory to the soul, whereby he wins the affections, and bows the will in sweet subjection to his law and government; and when the believing sinner feels the blood of Jesus applied to his conscience, communicating a sense of pardon, attended with peace and joy unspeakable; when he has within his breast the witness of the Spirit, and reads his title to a heavenly inheritance—then, indeed, is he astonished beyond measure, saying, "*He hath done all things well.*" The whole plan of salvation appears so excellent, so worthy of a God, and yet so suitable to his condition, that he prefers it above any other possible plan, and rejoices to be nothing, though Christ may be all and in all.

The Divine Mediator displays the power and glory of his grace in conversion, by changing the temper and disposition of the heart. Alexander, Cæsar and Marlborough conquered nations and forced thousands into obedience; but they could not subdue the will, firm and untrammelled, she reigned the unrivalled queen of the soul. But the proudest sinners, the most stubborn rebels, who are overcome by the power and grace of the Redeemer, are sweetly drawn by their own free and hearty consent. No sooner do they obtain a

saving view of Christ, than they leave all and follow him. Those who are represented in Scripture as Serpents, become innocent as the lamb and harmless as the dove; and that infernal disposition of the Devil, which possessed the soul is rooted out, and a holy principle implanted, which works by love, purifies the heart and overcomes the world. *

4thly. That he hath done all things well is manifested in the trials, difficulties and afflictions of the children of God, who are very apt to prescribe for the Lord, to lay out for themselves an easy, pleasant passage to the kingdom of heaven. But infinite wisdom knows what is best calculated to prepare them for their inheritance. Therefore, when tribulations are sent, they are designed to refine and fit them to become vessels of mercy for that *"house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."* By this means, their affections are weaned from the world; they are convinced more and more of the emptiness of all earthly enjoyments; they are led to seek a better country, and their hearts incline to submit to the sovereignty of God and acquiesce in his will. Although, for the present, all things appear dark and gloomy as midnight, and they cannot comprehend the mysterious conduct of Jehovah, whose ways are in the deep and whose paths are in the mighty waters; yet when the designs of infinite wisdom are accomplished, the event ever proves that *"He hath done all things well;"* that in all his conduct towards them he consulted their true interest.

So Jacob, when his beloved son Joseph is snatched from him and sold into a foreign country, very readily believes him to be dead, denies himself all comfort, and declares *"I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning."* Yet when the deep mystery of Providence

is unrivalled by Joseph's promotion to honor in Egypt; when, as governor of the land, he saves his father's household from the miseries of famine, Jacob acknowledges that his God had done all things well.

In like manner, the beloved disciples of Christ, when their Lord was crucified and laid in the grave, not rightly understanding the deep designs of Omniscience were much distressed by this dispensation. "*We trusted,*" said they, "*that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.*" But when he meets with them after his resurrection, and opens their understandings by explaining the spiritual meaning of the scriptures, then, with astonishment, they see that *Jesus hath done all things well.*

To this we may add—That the hiding of God's reconciled countenance from his people, their painful struggle with the inbred corruptions of the heart, together with the many dreadful attacks of their arch enemy, the Devil, are so overruled by the divine wisdom and goodness, as to result in the eternal welfare of their souls. By these means, the pride of their heart is subdued, their legality and self-confidence destroyed, their souls are brought to rely continually by faith upon Christ, and they experience the fulfilment of the promise "*That all things shall work together for good to them that love God.*" The light of afflictions of the people of God in this world, which are but for a moment, work out for them a more exceeding and eternal ~~light~~ ^{weight} of glory.

Lastly. In the general judgment, when Christ shall come in the clouds, arrayed in all the pomp and grandeur of the Deity, to judge the quick and dead, it shall appear to all rational intelligences that "*He hath done all things well.*" Then heaven, earth and hell shall

witness the justice of his conduct in dooming the ungodly to eternal damnation. Then every sin of thought and deed, with every conviction they have slighted, every motion of God's Spirit they have quenched, and every offer of mercy they have rejected, shall be exposed to the view of the assembled universe. And angels, men and devils, when the Eternal pronounces the dreadful and irrevocable sentence, "*Depart ye accursed into everlasting fire,*" shall testify that "*He hath done all things well.*" On the other hand, the equity and justice of God shall appear in the justification of the elect world. Then the followers of Jesus, the dear-bought travail of his soul, who cost him the groans and bloody sweat of Gethsemane, the dying agonies of Calvary, shall be clad with a robe of righteousness. When the law and justice present their claims and demand satisfaction, the Redeemer shall produce his atoning, law-fulfilling righteousness which covers the law of God, and shall vindicate the divine glory in the redemption of man. Then all the revilings and reproaches, and false charges of the wicked shall be wiped away, whilst Christ, their beloved friend and elder brother, will ascend to heaven with the ransomed, who shall proclaim throughout eternity, "*He hath done all things well.*"

SERMON XVIII.

A SACRAMENTAL MEDITATION.



How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.—GENESIS, xxviii. 17.

IN this chapter we have an account of a remarkable event in the history of the patriarch Jacob, when, after having obtained the blessing, he fled from the rage of his brother Esau. From the first ages of the world to the present day, the seed of the serpent has persecuted the seed of the woman. The patriarch, driven from his father's house, deprived of the presence of his affectionate parents, was compelled to seek refuge in a foreign land, while upon his journey he is overtaken by the night, destitute of a house to shelter him from the weather, and his bed the cold ground, his pillow a stone, and his covering the starry skies. But when the children of God are in the most forlorn situation, destitute of a home, and deprived of the society of their dearest friends, they often experience sweet comforts, of which the unconverted are ignorant, and, although they may be stripped of all earthly possessions, yet nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus, for his promise is, "*He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee*"—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." When Jacob, far removed from the haunts

of men, lay on the cold ground, God was pleased to bless him with a visit, and, in a vision of the night, he saw heaven opened: "*And behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it; and, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*" When the humble believer views the glory of God as it shines in the face of Christ, he sinks into the dust with shame and self-loathing, and his language is, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself in dust and ashes. How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the context is the similitude of the ladder, which, according to the opinions of the most approved divines, was a representation of the incarnation of the Son of God, or of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Emanuel; and this agrees with the declaration of our Lord himself, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter, ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*" The ladder reached from heaven to the earth, and opened a communication from the one to the other. So, by the incarnation of the Son of God, time and eternity are joined together; the omnipotence of God and the weakness of man are united in one; and, thereby, a door of hope is opened to lost sinners in

the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the medium of communion between God and man. God addressed Jacob in words of peace from the top of the ladder; and God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, through whom he offers guilty sinners pardon and eternal life. When Jacob awoke from sleep, he had lively impressions of this glorious vision; and, no doubt, his soul was sweetly agitated with a sense of the love and goodness of God; and, at the same time, he had clear views of his own unworthiness; and the thought of what he had seen and felt, fills his mind with fear and awe: *“And he said, surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not; and he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”*

Every place where God and the believing soul hold communion, is solemn and dreadful; but as the sacrament of the supper is one of the most affecting institutions of heaven, and one of the nearest approaches to God that can be made on this side of eternity, and in which believers are permitted to hold intimate conversation with their blessed Jesus, we will particularly accommodate the subject to that occasion; and when we behold the table of Christ spread and the memorials of his broken body and shed blood upon it, with propriety we may adopt the language of the text: *How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

In further attending to this subject, we will consider the different particulars in the text.

1st. A sacramental table is a dreadful place; for God is there. When the angel of the covenant appeared to Moses in a flame of fire, in the midst of the bush, God commanded him, with reverence to stand at a distance, saying, *“Draw not nigh hither: put off thy*

shoes from off thy feet, for the place whercon thou standest is holy ground. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." When, on Mount Sinai, in the dreadful glories of his Godhead, he appeared to the children of Israel, "*with thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled,*" how dreadful was that place! Bounds were set, and the people had to stay at a distance; none dared to come forward to gaze or give an unhallowed touch to the mount, on the pain of being thrust through with a dart.

When the Judge of all shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; when he shall be seated on the great white throne of glory, and all the inhabitants of earth and hell are arraigned at his bar, how dreadful will that place be! Well, God is as really present at a sacramental table as he was in the burning bush at Horeb, or on Mount Sinai, or as he will be at the judgment of the great day. Then, as Moses did at the burning bush, turn aside and see this great sight; here you may behold all the perfections of God, shining with amiable brightness in the face of Jesus Christ; here you may view the infinite love of God towards our guilty race finding vent through the breaking heart and bleeding veins of the dying Jesus, and flowing to the chief of sinners. Here you may see mercy and truth meeting each other, righteousness and peace kissing each other in the salvation of guilty sinners of Adam's race.

2d. A sacramental table is a dreadful place, because it is a striking exhibition of the most important transaction ever witnessed by men or angels, viz. the redemption of guilty sinners by the bitter agonies,

bloody sufferings and dying groans of the incarnate God. Here you may see the Everlasting God, in the likeness of sinful flesh; the antient of days become an infant of days; the Eternal God, who sways the sceptre of the universe, born in a stable and laid in a manger; here you may see God, who is the source of all consolation, become *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*; here you may see the adorable Being, to whom angels and archangels are indebted for their existence, *despised and rejected of men*; here you may see Emanuel, God in our nature, standing in our place, and receiving the stroke of justice in his own person which was due to the guilty sinner. View him in the garden of Gethsemane, sweating blood, in an agony; see him prostrate on the cold ground, pressed beneath the load of our guilt; the wrath of God falling upon him until he sweats *great drops of blood falling upon the ground*; hear him crying in extreme agony, "*Now is my soul troubled*"—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death;" listen to that heart-rending prayer, "*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*" See him betrayed by one of his disciples—denied by another, and forsaken by all; seized by a band of soldiers; bound like a thief, and dragged before the bar of a mortal worm. Although innocent, yet he is condemned. See him buffeted; spat upon; scourged with knotty whips, till one might tell all his bones; his lovely face black with blows; his tender temples pierced with thorns; see them array him in an old purple robe—a crown of thorns upon his head, and a reed in his hand—while the insolent rabble bow before him, and, in derision, cry, Hail, King of the Jews; see him carrying his heavy cross through the streets of Jerusalem, forth at the gates of the city

and up Mount Calvary to the place of execution. Now see him stretched on the cross, nailed to the fatal wood by the tender hands and feet; see him raised upon the accursed cross, suspended between the earth and heavens, a spectacle for angels, men and devils; he is denied the privilege of common malefactors, who were executed with their faces towards the temple; but he is placed with his back towards it, and his face to the west. But even here the rage of men and devils defeats their own designs; for while his back is turned towards the temple, his face looks far away to the western world—even to these ends of the earth—and he casts a look of pity towards many millions of lost sinners weltering in their blood in these dark regions of the shadow of death, and a gleam of joy fills his breaking heart, when upon the cross he looks even towards Gasper River;* see him struggling in the agonies of death; the sins of all the Elect world, both before and after conversion, fixing upon him like so many deadly vipers; the poisoned arrows of the wrath of God, sticking fast in his heart, and the burning beams of Jehovah's indignation against sin falling upon him; listen to his bitter outcry when his father withdrew from him the light of his countenance: *Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani*, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me;*" see the soldier's spear pierces his side and reaches his heart; but the flaming sword of God's justice pierces both body and soul. Now, see a rich fountain of divine blood flowing in scarlet streams from his bleeding veins, until every drop is spilt; behold him sinking in the agonies of death, and, with a loud **IT IS FINISHED**, he gives up the ghost, and becomes

* This sermon was preached at Gasper Meeting House.

a pallid, lifeless corpse. O, believer, look into his pierced side and view his broken heart, the fountain of life, from which precious streams of love and mercy flow to guilty sinners.

3d. A sacramental table is a dreadful place; for the Holy One of Israel here confers and sups with pardoned rebels; and how must the inhabitants of heaven be astonished to see the omnipotent Jehovah seated at his table and holding communion with the worthless sons and daughters of Adam, embracing them in his arms and *kissing them with the kisses of his mouth*. O, pardoned sinner, while you view the smiles of his lovely face and feel his love shed abroad in your heart; you who have so often pierced him with your sins—are you not ready to sink into nothing in his presence, saying, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes?*

4th. A sacramental table is a dreadful place; for here heaven is brought down to earth. The richest branches of the tree of life, that grows in the midst of the paradise of God, overhang this table, and believer's may stretch forth the hand of faith and pluck the sweet fruits of the heavenly Canaan. The table of God is spread with the dainties of Paradise; the bread of life, the hidden manna, and the grapes of Eshcol, with all the rich blessings purchased by the death of Jesus Christ.

Certainly every communicant who views *the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, is ready to cry out with the patriarch, *The Lord is here*. *How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven*. When a king makes a banquet it is in his palace, and Jehovah entertains his children in his own house. Hence, says the spouse, *He took me into his banqueting house, and his banner*

over me was love." When children are seated with their father at his table, they see his face; they enjoy his smiles; and they converse familiarly with him. So, when the Children of Christ are seated with him at his table, however worthless they are in themselves, although *black as the tents of Kedar*, yet he embraces them in his arms, holds them in his bosom, and presses them to his heart. Then they can tell him all their wants, afflictions and temptations; by the key of faith they can unlock his cabinet and handle his rich jewels; they take hold of his covenant and obtain every thing the prayer of faith can ask. Hence saith the psalmist, "*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*" And saith Christ, "*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.*" When children are in their father's house, and seated at his table, they sometimes receive presents from him, and occasionally he shews them the patents which secure their interest in his estate. So, when the children of Christ are seated at a sacramental table, they often receive gracious tokens of his love, and are permitted to read their Father's testament, which will shortly put them in possession of their heavenly inheritance.

Jacob, in his vision, saw a ladder connecting heaven and earth, *and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.* And when Christians are seated at a communion table, and are near Christ, they are at the gate of heaven, for Christ is that gate. Time and eternity, heaven and earth, meet in him, and he is the medium of communication between the eternal I AM

and worthless sinners. In his face they behold the glory of God, and through him they obtain a Pisgah's view of the promised land, and are blessed with foretastes of heaven. By faith, they take hold of the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, and drink sweet draughts of his everlasting love. Now Jesus appears to ~~him~~^{them} with his vesture dipped in blood, with a crown of glory upon his head, and when he smiles upon them they adopt the language of the patriarch, saying, "*How dreadful is this place; this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*"

SERMON XIX.

THE DEVICES OF SATAN.



And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.—LUKE, xxii. 31.

THESE words were a part of our blessed Lord's last conversation with his disciples on that solemn and dreadful night in which he was betrayed. His hour was just at hand. Heaven, earth and hell were now drawn out in battle array against him. And yet, amidst all these difficulties, his love and compassion moved his heart towards his dear disciples; and, therefore, he institutes the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to be kept as an everlasting memorial of his dying love.

During the celebration of this solemn ordinance, he enters into sweet conversation with his disciples. He comforts their sinking hearts with the prospect of their meeting him in the celestial paradise: "*Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" Then, in the words of our text, he warns them all in general, and Peter in particular, that Satan was preparing a dreadful attack upon them: "*Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.*" As a man, winnowing, sifts out the wheat, and leaves nothing but the chaff, so Satan will endeavor, by strong temptations, to sift away all your lively, spiritual exercise, your comforts and the graces

of the Holy Spirit; to deprive you of the life and power of religion, and leave naught but dry formality and a cold, lifeless profession.

The words may be applied to the awakened sinner. Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat; that he may sift away every conviction, every serious impression, and every sincere desire after God and religion. Satan knows that the present time is, in a spiritual manner, the sinner's day of grace, and if he can only succeed in destroying conviction from the soul, he is, in all probability, sure of his prey.

But, with great propriety, this subject may be applied to the people of God, who have tasted his pardoning love, the sweetness of redeeming grace. Satan desires to have them, that he may sift them as wheat. The Devil knows, Christians, that, when you live near God, when you enjoy the life and power of religion in your souls, you are terrible as an army with banners. His subjects tremble, and his kingdom shakes to the centre. Therefore, he wishes to sift you. If he can only rob you of the sweet comforts of religion, and lead you into darkness far from God, his kingdom is safe; the cause of Christ sinks into ruin and the damnation of sinners becomes sure.

In discussing this subject we shall—

- I. Consider the nature of Satan's temptations.
- II. Point out some of his subtle stratagems.

I. Consider the nature of Satan's temptations.

As the Devil is an intelligent spirit, retaining his angelic powers and faculties, more crafty than all the human race collectively, doubtless he is thoroughly acquainted with every disposition, and adapts his temptations to the weaknesses of the children of God.

Is one man of a proud and ostentatious disposition? The Devil tempts him to display his attainments in re-

ligion. He is often more anxious to acquire a great name than to advance the divine glory. When he feels happy in religion, the Devil whispers in his ear, all the Christians are noticing you; they love and esteem you; they will talk of you as a lively Christian. When he prays or exhorts with power and liberty, the Devil whispers, well done, you are the greatest Christian of the day. Hence spiritual pride arises and kills every spark of divine comfort in his soul. Is another disposed to be close and industrious? The Devil keeps him at work late and early—driving and pursuing the world—often to the neglect of his private devotions or family prayer. At the end of the day he is so tired, that he cannot go to prayer meeting. If a sacrament comes on, he fears he will lose his crop, his servants will trifle and do nothing until he comes home; and, if he overcomes all these difficulties, the Devil suggests that new clothes are necessary, and he dreads the expense.

Is another of a peevish, fretful disposition? The Devil brings about a thousand little provoking circumstances, which torment his soul and keep him grumbling and complaining until he loses the spirit of prayer and every sense of religion.

If there is any one of a resentful temper, the cunning enemy of souls instigates some of his gadding neighbors to poison his mind with tales of what others have been saying of him. Attempts have been made to injure his character; to take low and mean advantages of him. Thus his passions are excited; malice rages; his mind is miserable, and he loses the enjoyment of religion.

Many are easily persuaded by the Devil into sin, because they fear giving offence to their friends. If in-

vited, they drink, engage in foolish conversation; and, if persuaded, they dance and frolic; and, at length, they become fond of all wordly amusements.

Is an innate propensity to nicety discovered, it is increased into an extraordinary fondness for dress; and much more time and trouble is taken to adorn the body, to arrange every trinket and ornament on the Sabbath morning, than to acquire a praying frame of mind, to prepare the heart for the reception of divine impressions. Those of a contrary disposition, who are disposed to be odd or clownish in dress, place much of their religion in plain, old fashioned clothes, and are more disturbed with the pride of their neighbors apparel, than with the pride of their own hearts. They often feel themselves ill treated if people do not make them the standard by which to regulate their conduct. Thus, while quarrelling with the sins of others, vice creeps into their souls and they lose the life of religion.

Is any one in the habit of using spirituous liquors? The Devil uses all his art to decoy him into drunkenness, that he may expose himself and injure the cause of God. To men of warm passions, prone to lust, are presented the most alluring objects. The eyes and imagination are besieged continually by the most seductive devices of Satan. In short, such is the cunning of that old serpent, the Devil, that he well knows how to take advantage of the foibles and peculiarities of every character. To the avaricious, he presents wealth; to the ambitious, honor and fame. He tempts the lazy and slothful to neglect their business, to postpone the performance of all their duties until a more convenient time. The bold and rash are driven into conceit and self-applause; reproving sin

in a bad spirit, conducting themselves in such a manner as to disgust the wicked with religion. The timid and bashful he tries to shame out of the performance of duty, and keeps them afraid to pray in their families, or publicly to acknowledge Christ. The prudent are just suited to the Devil's purpose. For fear of running into extremes, they are so cautious as scarce to distinguish themselves from the wicked; and, for fear of doing something wrong they scarce do any thing right. But if Satan be wise in the choice of his temptations, he is also exceedingly diligent in their application. In general, he commences by presenting some small sin as it is called. In an innocent form, he offers to the heart some poisonous bait. It is often presented as a duty—as a matter of necessity—and if he succeeds in his first attempt, a second will be made, and a third, until his attacks will become so frequent and powerful as scarce to be resisted. Thus David beholds Uriah's beautiful wife, while walking upon the roof of the house. The first temptation succeeds. Lust conceived brings forth sin. Then follows the temptation to adultery; and, finally, he is drawn into the commission of murder. Peter is first tempted to fear and cowardice, and soon he denies his Lord, and is then guilty of cursing and downright perjury. Judas is tempted to covetousness. This leads him to betray the son of God, and, in the end, to commit suicide. As we said before, some small sin is presented. If the point is gained, the heart is hardened and prepared for some more gross offence; and thus it is that he gains upon the creature until he is betrayed into the most atrocious crimes.

II. Point out some of his subtle stratagems.

We have, heretofore, spoken of the admirable adaptation of the Devil's devices to the dispositions of

men. We will now proceed to point out the various means by which he endeavors to sift from the soul all divine comforts and impressions. As the skilful farmer provides himself with sieves and riddles suited to his purpose, so the Devil is well provided with sifters fitted to every time and circumstance—to every situation of individuals, church or commonwealth. He sifts them in the sieve of vanity, by leading them into vain conversation and idle mirth.

When professing neighbors meet together, the Devil often holds up to their view pleasing worldly prospects. Then *out of the abundance of their hearts their mouths speak*. They converse about their lands, houses and all their worldly affairs. They tell of the various plans they are laying to obtain money, to amass wealth. These things are lawful in their proper place; and, therefore, they conceive themselves to be in no danger, and they are driven away into the wide field of carnality. Conscience falls asleep. Then comes fondness for mirth and levity. A love of jesting, of vain and foolish conversation possesses the whole soul; and as iron sharpens iron, so they become tools in the hand of the Devil to harden each other. One has a diverting story to tell; another some laughable jest or some curious remarks upon the ignorance or awkwardness of a neighbor. One strange remark, one foolish jest brings about another, until they are overwhelmed in merriment and laughter.

Thus the Spirit is grieved, and all sense of divine obligation, all thoughts of eternal things are driven from the mind. In this way, professing Christians taint the morals of their children and domestics. It happens frequently, that young professors of religion, who formerly prayed and held sweet converse with

each other about Christ, heaven and what the Lord had done for their souls. When they meet now, it is only as instruments of the Devil, to harden each other's hearts, to banish religion from their souls.

The Devil has another sieve by which he tries the faith of the people of God, and relieves the convicted sinner of disagreeable, but useful impressions. This is an angry, resentful spirit, which has dreadful influence in neighborhoods and families. This often leads the Christian to speak ill of his neighbor; to ridicule his person, his family, or may be, to satarize his religious exercises. Immediately the Devil sends off a runner to tell what remarks have been made by such a one about him, and he never fails to hear an exaggerated story. Whilst listening, Satan tempts him to grow angry, and resent such treatment. O, says the Devil, he has used you as a rascal; he surely has no religion; he is a hypocrite; all his holy exercises are pretended, and, since he has treated you so shamefully, demand full satisfaction. If you are a Christian, act like a man of honor, and don't suffer yourself to be abused; if you do, you will be insulted upon all occasions.

The Devil brings about innumerable petty difficulties in business to perplex the husband; then tempts him to speak harshly to his wife—to whom suspicions of his attachment are suggested; he loves you not as man should love his wife. She retaliates—answers him with tartness and severity. Provoked by such conduct in his wife, the man becomes enraged, and abuses her, sometimes in the most shocking, barbarous manner. And thus it is that the peace and harmony of families are destroyed; and through the instrumen-

tality of those who profess religion, Satan manages to effect his purposes.

Children, servants, or hirelings, are tempted to disobedience, slothfulness or a neglect of business; to unfaithfulness in the discharge of their duty, and sometimes are prevailed upon to steal, waste or destroy things of value. These crimes are highly irritating to heads of families. Their resentment is kindled and vented in anger upon the transgressors, who conclude that religion is folly, and that prayer and all other Christian duties are hypocrisy and deceit.

The punishment, instead of producing reform, only leads the offender to devise every means by which he may irritate and perplex his master or parents.

Pride and worldly-mindedness form another riddle; by which the arch fiend sifts from the soul the comforts of divine grace; and mark with what ingenuity he lays his snares. All his hellish craft and cunning are used to conceal them. He covers them under the fair pretext of public utility, decency or industry; he suggests to the Christian that it is necessary for him to have as good a house and farm as any of his neighbors; he must be as well dressed; his children must be clothed neatly; and, unless he attains to these things, his family will be considered as mean and contemptible. A thousand schemes are devised to acquire honor and amass wealth; he rises early, and sets up late; all is hurry and bustle; business presses; all must be given up to facilitate the acquisition of the empty trifles of the world. There is no time to attend the preaching of the Word; family worship and private prayer must be neglected; and they must conform to the fashions and customs of the world. To succeed in their ambitious designs it is

necessary to court the favor of the wicked; to associate with them and adopt their habits, and ere they are aware, the deep draughts of carnality have intoxicated the brain. *Blinded by the God of this world*, they have lost all the spirituality and enjoyment of Godliness.

Another riddle is that of *discontent*, by means of which men are led to overlook all the mercies of God, become ungrateful, and suffer the most exquisite torment of mind. Hence, they feel no disposition to pray; their little worldly calamities swallow up all anxiety for the Church of Christ. Presently they fancy their lot harder than that of any other person upon earth; their wants more numerous; their difficulties greater; their circumstances more distressing. Hear the language of discontent: I have more sickness in my family, more bad luck than any other person; my horses die; my cattle don't thrive; my hogs are stolen; my crops turn out badly; I am scarce of corn, scarce of meat, and scarce of money. What am I to do? I am in debt, and know not how I shall pay. If I owe a few shillings, I am pestered and harrassed almost out of my life; but when a thousand dollars are due me, it is impossible to get a cent. While at his daily business, every thing goes wrong; he is troubled and fretted, and no man is so plagued as he is. None have such disobedient children, or such worthless servants; one is slothful—another careless and inattentive. Indeed, he is so vexed, so troubled, that neither temporal nor spiritual considerations can comfort him.

The poor mother thinks she has a worse chance for time and eternity than any one else. She has cross and mischievous children, wicked and lazy servants; she can get nothing done; her children are in rags:

how can she clothe them? She needs this necessary and the other; indeed, a thousand which she cannot obtain. Over these matters she frets and perplexes her mind until entirely disqualified for the indwelling of the graces of the Holy Spirit.

Nor are these the only means by which the Devil kills the power of religion. *Contention* is one of the most subtle and effective engines of hell. Satan cares not upon what subjects the Christian disputes, if he can tempt him to do it in an evil spirit. Some one in his great zeal for the truth contends warmly for predestination, election and final perseverance; and, unless he is very cautious, he will do it in the wrong manner; he will condemn every person holding an opposite opinion, and declare that no one who disbelieves his doctrine, or believes in falling from grace, can be a Christian.

Such declarations offend the Armenian. They are insulting; they are not justifiable. He answers the Calvinist in language equally harsh and unchristian. He abuses all opposed to his sentiments, and delivers to condemnation the believer in a particular election or final perseverance.

Another advocates baptism, and denies that there is any other baptism beside immersion. He contends earnestly that all unbaptised persons—such as have not gone under the water—are wrong; they contradict him upon this subject, and he must needs be mad about the matter.

Thus it is, brethren, that our great adversary, the Devil, divides the Church of Christ against itself, and makes the friends of Jesus the instruments to effect his own diabolical purposes. Then beware how you contend with each other, lest you injure the cause of

your Master. Be careful, lest even while you suppose yourselves doing God service, that you are not laboring faithfully for the Devil.

From what has been said concerning the nature of the stratagems of the Devil—being particularly suited to the various characters and circumstances of mankind, and from some few of those stratagems which we have pointed out—Christians should be guarded on every side, that they may not be taken by surprise and confounded. He knows the weak point in every character, and will surely take advantage of it. Though you may be strong, he will overpower you; though you may be wise, he will confound you; for, he is, indeed, a wily and powerful spirit. He will lurk in your bosoms, and you will not find him out; he will hide himself in your words, and you will not suspect him. Often in the most delicious sweets are concealed the deadliest poison. Watch and pray, that you be not deceived by appearances. Even when feasting upon the hidden manna of the love of God, you should suspect temptation nigh. In such moments, think of the text; remember that "*Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.*" Trust in the Lord; forget not your own weakness; avoid every sin—even the smallest sin; be induced by no consideration to commit the most trivial offence. Recollect that a small trespass prepares the soul for a greater breach of the divine law. But for power to resist the assaults of the enemy, rely upon the omnipotence of the great Jehovah, who will be thy strength and thy everlasting righteousness.

SERMON XX.

THE SUPERABOUNDING GRACE OF GOD.



Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.—ROMANS, v. 20.

IN this epistle, the apostle Paul, by many unanswerable arguments, proves, that all men, both Jews and Gentiles, have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and consequently cannot obtain salvation by the deeds of the law; for, *“by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* From this, he infers that the true believer is justified by faith without the deeds of the law by the righteousness of the God man Christ Jesus being imputed unto him, which righteousness is so extensive that the largest demands of law and justice can be fully satisfied, and the guilty sinner eternally freed from condemnation; for as the first Adam was the head and representative of all his ordinary posterity, and by his offence, has brought guilt and death upon them all, so Christ, the second Adam, the head and representative of all his spiritual seed, has wrought out a perfect righteousness of infinite worth, which, upon their believing, is imputed to them; and, on the account thereof, they are justified and entitled to eternal life and glory, and through his righteousness rich grace is manifested to be much more powerful to save than the sin of Adam was to damn, as is clearly proved in the verses immediately preceding

the text. But the legal Jews would object, that, according to this doctrine, the law was given in vain, if none could attain to righteousness and life by it, and would ask why God gave the law at all if this doctrine be true? To such the apostle replies, that the law was given for a different purpose—in subserviency to the gospel. The law entered to discover the abounding of sin, that so the way might be prepared for a more illustrious display of the superabounding grace of God, which pardons and saves from such abounding iniquities.

The text may be divided into two parts. In the first, we may observe—

1st. The subject spoken of—The Law—the eternal, unalterable rule of right and wrong, founded upon the holy nature and perfections of God, the declaration of his holy will to mankind, binding all his intelligent creatures to perfect, perpetual and universal obedience, threatening eternal death and damnation to every sin.

2d. What is predicated of this law. It entered in together with sin, say some, in order to condemn where it is; say others, together with the gospel promise, in order to be subservient to it in carrying on the great designs of grace. This last sense seems to be favored by the apostle, when he says of the law, "*It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*" And, again: "*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*"

3d. The end or design of the law thus entering. *That the offence might abound.* Either that first offence of Adam, of which the apostle had been speaking as the cause of death and condemnation to all men; or

else sin in general, which the law does not make to abound by any proper efficiency in producing it; for the law is holy, just and good, but by its discovering the abounding of sin; for it was observed by some that the Hebrews usually say such a thing is, when it appears to be. So it may be said, that sin abounds by the entering of the law, because the law discovers the abounding of sin, as light let into a dark room manifests the abounding of the day, which was not discerned before; and this accords with the language of the apostle: *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For, without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”*

In the second part of the text, we may observe—

1st. The subject spoken of—Grace—the free favor of God, in pardoning and saving sinners through the righteousness of Christ, which clearly appears from the verse immediately following the text, *“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

2d. What is predicated of grace. It abounded much more than sin—that is, [the free grace of God which reigns through the righteousness of Christ unto eternal life, is much more powerful to pardon and save, than sin is to deform and damp, and in its works of salva-

tion does far exceed any thing that sin has done in its works of damnation.]

From this view of the text, it appears natural, in its farther consideration,

I. To shew some things in which the abounding of sin is discovered by the law.

II. Mention some things in which the saving grace of God in Christ does much more abound.

III. Improve the subject.

I. Shew some things in which the abounding of sin is discovered by the law.

1st. The law entering, discovers the abounding evil that is in the very nature of sin. This law which enters is a declaration of the will of God, founded in his infinitely holy perfections; an eternal rule to all intelligent creatures. It is the law of Him who is the great Creator and Upholder of the Universe; who, consequently, has the most unquestionable right to rule his own creatures, and to give them laws for that purpose. It is the law of Him who is infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and independent—boundless in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, and who, therefore, is infinitely fit to rule.

Reason and revelation both tell us that sin is the transgression of the law of God, either by omission or commission, and the very language of a transgression of the law is a reflection upon it either as impracticable, and, therefore, unreasonable, or else not adapted to the true happiness of the creature; therefore, it must be either foolish or tyrannical. By casting such a reflection upon the law, the infinitely glorious Lawgiver is dishonored, as if he were not sufficiently wise to make a law adapted to the true happiness of his creatures, or if he did know what was best for them,

he has not sufficient goodness to grant it; which last seems plainly held forth in the first temptation to sin in the *cause* of our first parents; for, so far as man prefers his own choice to the law of God, so far he practically says, that his own will is fitter to prescribe a happifying rule than the will of Jehovah; and, so far as man complies with the temptations of Satan to sin, so far he declares that the will of the Devil is more fit for the rule of his happiness than the will of God; and considering the law as a transcript of the moral perfections of Jehovah, and conformity to it enforced by a penalty, the language of sin then is, that it is better to forfeit all the good God can confer, and risk all the evil his wrath can inflict, than be conformed to such a Being. Now, considering that the glory of God, thus dishonored, is infinite, there must be an infinite evil in sin; for, though no act of a finite being, can have infinite dignity or demerit attached to it, arising from the agent separately considered, and although the obedience of a finite being cannot receive an infinite worth from the infinitude of the object obeyed, because the act is not adequate to the object, for even a perfect creature cannot be said to love and delight in any more glory than he can have some apprehensions of, and consequently as his apprehensions so his love and delight must fall infinitely short of being adequate to the infinite glory of God. But sin, being a rejecting and denying of the Deity entirely, both what is apprehended of him and what is not, there is a dishonor cast upon infinite glory, therefore there must be an infinite evil in sin, and as these things are not peculiar to some kinds or degrees of sin, but included in its nature, so we may conclude that the law discovers an abundant, yea an infinite evil in sin.

2d. The law also discovers the venomous and infectious nature of sin. The first drop of the venomous contagion presented by that old serpent, the Devil, and tasted by curious Eve, shed its deadly venom through the whole human nature, and mortally poisoned every faculty of the soul and every member, nerve and muscle of the body, every thought, word and action of all the numberless millions of mankind in every age of the world; hence the understanding is dark; the heart is enmity against God; the conscience defiled with dead works; the memory prone to forget God; the affections polluted; *every imagination of the thoughts of the heart evil continually*, and the actions conformable thereto. What an abundance of sin does the law discover, seeing that *by the offence of one many were made sinners*.

3d. The law discovers an abundant strength in sin. When that venomous evil, sin, entered, and by man's consent, God, who might justly have left the whole human race as he did the fallen angels, to be eternal monuments of his wrath, of his sovereign mercy, pitied them, and when he saw them weltering in their blood, he revealed a way of recovery which his infinite wisdom had devised and his infinite love consented to from all eternity. This revelation of a method of salvation continued to prove clearer by new discoveries in different ages, till at last the glorious Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings, and shone with noon-day brightness on our benighted world. But all the manifestations of divine love sin despises, all the overtures of divine mercy sin tramples beneath its feet. In the midst of this contest the law steps in to the assistance of grace, and declares to man his need of salvation, by telling him what extensive obe-

dience God requires, and tells him also how dreadfully the infinite God threatens the least disobedience. But sin, Leviathan-like, treats all this brass and iron like straw and rotten wood. Then the Almighty Spirit steps in, and by his operations, discovers the law precept, and opens the sinner's eyes to see it, and makes its penalty thunder so amazingly loud and as it were flash the vengeance of God in the sinner's face, until he feels the foretastes of hell within him. But, as if all that sin had done before had been only the faint notions of a sleeping man, it never shewed its strength till now. Atheism, hardness of heart, legality and enmity against God, rush in with their ten thousands at their heels, and clearly prove that nothing short of the omnipotent arm and soul-sanctifying spirit of God can conquer them, as is evident, was the case with Paul and his sins while the law kept at a distance. He was, in his own apprehension alive, and sin appeared dead; but when the commandment came with light and power to his conscience, being sent home by the enlightening and convincing influences of the Holy Spirit, then sin revived and took occasion from the commandment to work in him all manner of concupiscence. As water, when opposed by a dam, rages and foams with greater strength, so his corruptions, enraged by such oppositions, threatened to carry law, gospel and enlightening influences all before them. Now, since this is the case, what abundant strength does the law discover in sin.

4th. The law also discovers an abundance of damning weight in sin. One offence of Adam sunk him and all the numberless thousands of his ordinary posterity into condemnation, and had all the myriads of mighty angels who surrounded the throne of God above, come

to man's assistance, and helped him to bear the weight of sin, it would have sunk him and them together into the burning pit of Tophet, where they should have groaned forever beneath the flaming wrath of God. Then what a dreadful damnation must all the aggravated sins of one poor gospel-rejecting sinner deserve. No being, whose power is less than infinite, could bear up under the load. When the co-equal Son of God himself assumed humanity, and stepped in as a substitute under the weight of sin, his innocent humanity, supported by his omnipotence, was so crushed that he sweat great drops of blood falling down to the ground, and to expiate the guilt of sin he yielded up the Ghost. O how dreadful is the damning weight of sin! How did it bruise the innocent Lamb of God, until it brought him to the grave. Think then, O sinners, how it will sink you into the lowest regions of hell, when through all eternity you will writhe beneath the burning wrath of God, if you live and die in a Christless state. But, some may say, if sin so abound as to produce all these dreadful consequences, how can grace so much more abound as to prevent them? To such I answer, God, by his Spirit, in the words of the text, informs us that *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*, which brings us—

II. To mention some things in which the saving grace of God in Christ does much more abound.

1st. It appears that grace is more abundant than sin, because in a just and holy manner it completely conquers it, and removes all its dreadful effects from pardoned sinners. A weak man may put to death, but none, save God, can restore to life. [Although one sin conquered and killed mankind, yet Almighty grace can subdue millions of sins, and deliver all true be-

lievers completely from them, for it restores the spiritually dead to life, it sanctifies all their powers and faculties, and, in due time, will bring them to greater abundance of glory and bliss than Adam lost, and will confirm them in the full enjoyment of heaven through the boundless ages of eternity, which clearly proves that *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

2d. Though sin abounded, yet grace much more abounded in carrying on its glorious designs in the recovery of fallen sinners. Had sin accomplished all to which it tended, what would have been the loss? All mankind. But all nations, before God, are but as the drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance; to Him, they are as nothing, and less than nothing and vanity. One act of the Almighty can as easily create a host of angels as an atom. How small, then, to the Deity would the expense have been had all the human race been lost. But what did grace expend for man's recovery? Heaven's richest treasure: "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" The second person of the Holy Trinity, took our nature, a true body and a reasonable soul, and connected it so strictly with his own, that in the sight of the law and justice of God, these two natures, so infinitely different, constitute but one person; and this infinitely glorious Being was given to obey, bleed and die for the redemption of poor, fallen, guilty sinners, whom grace chose to redeem. May we not then cry out with the apostle, "*Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*"

3d. If we consider the righteousness which sin destroyed and that which grace restores, it will appear,

“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” What was the righteousness of innocent Adam, and what would it have been if continued in for thousands of years? Only the righteousness of a mere creature, which, however long continued in, is only of finite worth; consequently the righteousness of myriads of such would be as light as a feather when laid in the balance against one sin committed against an infinite God. But the righteousness which grace has provided for believers, is a righteousness wrought out by Jesus Christ, who is not only man in our nature, to obey and suffer, but also the Infinite God, in the same person; and as his sufferings were those of an Infinite Being, they have an infinite worth sufficient to be laid in the balance with the demerit of sin, and as the obedience and satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ, possessed a dignity in proportion to that of his person; therefore, they were of infinite value, and were sufficient to atone for the sins of all true believers, or the sins of the whole world, or of ten thousand worlds. This infinite righteousness grace has provided, and imputes it to believers for their justification. How clearly then does it appear that *“where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”*

4th. It will appear that grace does much more abound than sin, if we compare the covenant head sin has ruined with the covenant head grace has provided. The first Adam, as a covenant head, was made a living soul, and, had he continued in his state of innocence, he might have kept life for all—himself and all his posterity; *but he was of the earth—earthly*—a fallible creature, and one sin might and did throw him and all his offspring into eterna! ruin, from which he could by no means recover himself and them. But

the second Adam, provided by grace, is a *quickening spirit*. The Lord from heaven, who can communicate life to the dead, so that believers having a real vital union with this covenant head, are not only interested in that infinite righteousness which he wrought out, but they are also inseparably united to the Infinite Eternal Fountain of Life, in whom as Mediator and Covenant Head, it hath pleased the Father, that all fulness of grace and life should dwell, yea, in him dwells all *the fulness of the Godhead bodily*; therefore, it is said *their life is hid with Christ in God*, secured by the life of the everlasting God, so that while Jesus, who is very God, exists, they will be saved from eternal death; therefore, *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*.

5th. This will further appear, if we consider that grace has restored believers to a much nearer relation to God than that from which man fell by reason of sin. Innocent man sustained towards God the relation of a creature to his Creator, and the meanest insect sustains the same relation. Innocent man also sustained a covenant relation to God, and, while he kept that covenant, God sustained to him the relation of a friend and protector; but sin might, yea, it did change this relation into that of a sin-avenging Judge. *l* But grace effects such a vital union with Christ, that believers are so joined to the Lord as to be *one spirit—members of his body—of his flesh and of his bones*; they, with him, constitute one mystical body; they are one with him, who is essentially one with the Father and Holy Spirit. This union the Lord Jesus Christ seems to have in view when he says, "*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe*

that thou hast sent me; and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

When believers are made one with Jesus Christ, God the Father, by a judicial act acknowledges them as his children: "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God;*" being the children of God they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; they are heirs of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them; yea, all things are theirs, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs, for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Now, does not this relation far exceed that which sin destroyed? therefore, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

6th. The glory of God is more clearly manifested, and the happiness of the redeemed in heaven more exalted than if sin had never entered into the world. If perfect innocence had constantly reigned through all the creation, intelligent beings might have known something of the perfections of Jehovah, which would then have been manifested; but how little would his creation and dealings of his common providence towards innocent creatures, have preached of that glorious name of God. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, shewing mercy unto thousands, and forgiving iniquities, transgressions and sins."* How little would the works of creation and Providence have shewn of the justice and righteousness of Jehovah,

who set forth his Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Thus grace hath brought about a glorious method of salvation, in which mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other, and into which adoring angels desire to look, and through all eternity sinners redeemed from wrath will contemplate the wisdom, love and grace therein displayed, with wonder, joy and praise, and they will forever dwell in the presence, and enjoy the smiles of Jesus, who swam through a sea of blood, yea, through the burning ocean of God's wrath, to save them from the lowest abyss of misery, and bring them to the highest summit of glory of which their natures are capable. This wonderful plan of salvation, which astonishes the angels of heaven and confounds the devils of hell, in which the divine perfections shine with an infinite lustre, never would have been manifested had not sin entered the world. But, when we speak of manifesting the divine glory, we mean to the creature—not to God himself; for as his glory, in itself, is unchangeably the same, so his knowledge of it is unchangeable, and the more sinless beings see of God, the more they love him; for if they saw any thing in the Deity they did not love, they would be sinfully imperfect; and delight will always be in proportion to enjoyment of the beloved object; therefore, the creature's happiness is necessarily in proportion to their enjoyment of God. And as God loves his own infinite glory supremely, so the more any creature loves God, the more he is like him, and the more he is like God, the more glorious he is—from all which, it appears that the glory and

happiness enjoyed by the redeemed in heaven, and also by the angels there, will be far greater than if sin had never entered; and whether it may not be greater in its sum than all the bliss and glory which would have been enjoyed by the whole universe of men and angels, if they had all stood in perfection, I shall, at present, leave to be more positively determined, either by a clearer insight into the word of God, or by the light of glory, and shall proceed.

III. To improve the subject; and,

1st. If sin have such an infinite evil in its nature; if its venom be so infectious, its strength so great, and its damning weight so heavy, then it is not wonderful that believers hate it, groan under it, and long to be delivered from it. Sinners, in their Christless state, are *dead in trespasses and sins*, and are not sensible of their miserable condition. Their eyes are so blinded by the God of this world, that they cannot see the infinite evil and intrinsic vileness of sin; but they will cherish it and indulge in it, although it should be at the expense of their eternal damnation. They will venture upon it in spite of all the restraints of education and the accusations of conscience, the faithful warnings of God, and the earnest entreaties of a beseeching Saviour, and will voluntarily join with the Devil to excuse and extenuate it, in order to pacify an uneasy conscience. But it is very different with the true believer who has had the law brought home with power to his conscience, and has thereby discovered the infinite evil and accursed nature of sin, and has been brought to such a heartfelt sense of his exposure to the everlasting wrath of a sin-hating God, and of his own inability to help himself, as hath brought him to the necessity of venturing his eternal salvation upon

Christ, then *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* shone into his dark and benighted mind, and gave him such views of the infinite glory and the supreme excellence of the Divine Perfections, that he hungers and longs to be perfectly freed from sin, and to be conformed into the image of God. Now, he sees the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and views it in its hateful, filthy, God-dishonoring nature. Now, he feels it as the habitual plague and torture of his soul. When he takes a view of his heart and sees its unfathomable depths of iniquity; when he feels inbred corruption prevailing against him, how does he cry out with the apostle, "*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" How does he mourn, lament and groan when he has a proper sense of the heavy burden and soul-polluting nature of sin; and it is no wonder that he does, for perfection in holiness is the heaven for which his soul longs; and with nothing less can he be satisfied than freedom from every sin. Well, poor, burdened souls, if this be the longing desire of your hearts, if you thirst to be freed from its soul-defiling and God-dishonoring nature, and long to arrive in heaven, because Christ, the beloved of your souls is there, then lift up your desponding heads, the day of your redemption draws nigh; shortly your beloved Jesus will send for you and take you home to your father's house, where sin and all its bitter effects are banished to an eternal distance, for *there is neither death, nor sorrow, nor crying there, and there God shall wipe all tears from your eyes.*

2d. From what has been said, we may see how astonishing the love of Christ is, who submitted to have a thing so vile and abominable as sin is imputed to him, and to have its whole condemning weight laid

upon his shoulders. So great was his desire for the salvation of sinners, that he thought no sufferings too great, no price too dear, to purchase their redemption. He knew the dreadfulness of his Father's wrath, which he must endure. He knew that inexorable justice would not spare him, but would exact the last farthing; he knew that he must endure shame, ignominy and death, before he could finish the work of their salvation; yet infinite love, stronger than death, and that could not be drowned by the floods of Almighty vengeance, brought him skipping over all these burning mountains, to prevent the blow of divine justice from falling eternally upon guilty rebels; see him leaving his Father's bosom, condescending to assume our degraded nature, and taking upon him the infinite weight of our guilt, which would have crushed ten thousand worlds of men and angels to the lowest hell and kept them there forever; see him in the form of a servant, reduced to the lowest state of poverty, *despised and rejected of men*; and, although he was the Everlasting God, the Creator and Upholder of all worlds, hear him complaining, *the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head*. Hear him under the apprehensions of the dreadful storm of God's wrath, which was about to fall upon him, crying out, *Now is my soul troubled*. See him bruised in the wine press of the wrath of God, until the blood is forced through every pore of his body; see him before Pilate's bar, buffeted, spat upon, crowned with thorns, and condemned to die. Behold him on Mount Calvary, crucified between two thieves, and crying out beneath the hidings of his Father's face, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama, Sabachthani; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" and giving up the ghost; and all this to save a perishing world from sin

and hell. Well may angels and saints wonder, adore and admire *the breadth and length, and depth and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.* O sinners, how can you dare to despise such a salvation, which none but God could devise and which could be purchased at no price short of the blood of his own son? Remember, if you continue to reject this salvation, and trample under foot the blood of the loving and compassionate Jesus, the day is coming when he will trample you in his fury, and tread you down in his sore displeasure, and stain all his raiment in the blood of your souls, and bruise you eternally in the wine press of his wrath. For the Lord's sake, and for your precious souls' sake, be persuaded to consider this in time, and fly to Christ while his bowels of compassion are yearning over you, and he is expostulating with you, as he did with Israel of old; "*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together.*"

3d. It is not wonderful that convinced sinners are so weary and heavy laden when they are struggling with the strength of sin and pressed with its damning weight. When, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, they discover its unfathomable depth, that their hearts are totally depraved and opposed to the holy nature of the law; when they feel themselves sinking beneath the enormous load, ready to fall headlong into burning Tophet, there to weep and wail through all eternity, in the society of Devils and damned ghosts, beneath the flaming billows of God's wrath—I say when they have clear views of these things they will not spend their precious time easy and unconcerned,

like the thoughtless and guilty multitude around them; they cannot satisfy an alarmed conscience with a few heartless words in form of prayer, an external round of duty, nor some faint resolutions of future amendment. All these they esteem as but hay and stubble before the flames of hell. Now, and not till now, do they begin, in good earnest, to seek salvation. Now, they cry, with the Jews under the preaching of Peter, "*Men and brethren what shall we do?*" And never was freedom sweeter to a poor captive, nor a pardon to a condemned criminal, than salvation is to an awakened sinner, struggling with the power of sin and sinking beneath its damning weight.

4th. Is there such a damning weight in sin? Then those who can live easy and contented in a Christless state, must be *dead in trespasses and sin*. Poor graceless sinners, who can live from year to year without bowing your knees before God in your families, or in secret; you who can indulge in all manner of vicious practices; you who never seriously examine the state of your souls; you who are satisfied with the mere form of religion, but are entire strangers to communion with God, in whose souls Christ has not been formed the hope of glory, you are all *dead in trespasses and sins*; and if your eyes were not blinded by the God of this world, you could not rest one day in your present condition. Did you feel the power of your sins; were you sensible of their damning weight; had you any suitable apprehensions of the misery of an unconverted state; did you see that all the perfections of Jehovah are engaged for your damnation, while you remain strange to a saving change of heart; had you a proper apprehension of what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of an offended God, how would

your hearts be wrung with anguish, and your cries for mercy pierce the heavens; but you can live as unconcerned as if all were well, without spending a serious thought about your soul's salvation. But remember, if you persist in your present course, you will soon be convinced of your folly and madness. You are already under sentence of condemnation; ere long that sentence will be executed; then down you must go to the regions of damnation, sunk beneath the damning weight of sin, crushed by the omnipotent arm of the Infinite God, where wisdom, power and justice will be eternally exerted to make you completely miserable.

5th. Is the damning weight of sin so great? Then how dreadful is that threatening of Christ, "*If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,*" i. e. they shall die under the strength and damning weight of all their sins, and so continue through all eternity. If one sin sunk Adam and all his numerous race into condemnation, how dreadful must the damnation of gospel despisers be, who are chargeable with innumerable multitudes of sins, and, what is infinitely more dreadful than all, they are chargeable with the sin of rejecting an offered Saviour, of trampling under foot the blood of the Eternal Son of God, and of rejecting the only remedy God has provided, the aggravation of which sin neither men nor angels can describe. "*He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace?*" Sinners, who are out of Christ, are all chargeable with this crime. You are chargeable with rejecting Christ

and that salvation which infinite wisdom, love and grace have provided; and that threatening of Christ already quoted, will unavoidably fall upon you, if you continue in your present state; *you shall die in your sins* and be eternally crushed beneath their damning weight; and where will you fly when the compassionate Jesus becomes your enemy? or how will you escape from the fury of the lion of the tribe of Judah, when his wrath begins to burn? or what will your feelings be when he comes to deal with you for your heaven-daring conduct in despising his grace and trampling upon his precious blood? When you see, as it were, all his perfections marching in battle array against you, and engaged for your everlasting ruin; when the poisoned arrows of the Almighty, which makes the stoutest Devils in hell to roar, come upon you, barbed with wrath, and pierce your inmost souls, O how will you endure when he will run upon you with all his fury, grasp you in his omnipotent arms, and tear you to pieces, when none can or dare attempt to deliver you? Then, in vain, will you cry to the rocks and mountains to cover you from his vengeance; then the rocks and mountains will be as deaf to your entreaties as you are now to the calls of the gospel.

6th. From what has been said, we may know how deeply believers are in debt to free grace for their deliverance from the reigning power and damning weight of sin. How should they admire and adore that Sovereign Free Grace, which has made them vessels of mercy and monuments of grace, while thousands as good by nature as they perish in their sins. How should they be filled with wonder, gratitude and praise, at the condescension of the Son of God, who

freely undertook to pay the debt they owed to divine justice, and never flinched from the work till he paid the last farthing, answered all the demands of the law in their behalf, and purchased eternal life and glory for them! How should they praise the Spirit of Grace who has convinced them of their need of Christ, who cut them off from all their refuges of lies, and, at length, bound their wills to accept of salvation on the terms of free grace, while others have quenched their convictions and returned to their former evil courses, like *the dog to his vomit, and the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.* O, believer, from the earliest period of eternity, the Lord Jesus Christ has been employed in devising and executing a plan by which all the perfections of the Godhead may be glorified in your salvation; and, in a short time, he will put you in full possession of all the bliss and glory which the grace of God designs for you; and how sweet the thought when you shall have safely arrived at your everlasting rest; then you will be far beyond the reach of Satan's temptations and completely delivered from all trouble and distress. Then, when you will view what God has bestowed upon you, and what you have deserved, when you look down upon hell and see the vast difference Free Grace has made betwixt you and the inhabitants of those dark regions; O what gratitude and delight will you feel when you reflect—Yonder lake was my deserved portion—These had been my doleful groans—these my endless pains—that dark dungeon my eternal prison, had not Free Grace interposed. Yonder death was the wages of my sin; but this eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ, my Lord.

7th. From what has been said, we may see how certain the believer's salvation is through grace. Sin

has ruined the human race, and exposes them to eternal death; but more abounding grace destroys the power of sin in their souls, and will, at last, remove its very being from them. The covenant head grace has provided is a physician of infinite skill, who cures all diseased souls that come to him to be healed. "*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*" Grace has provided for the believer every thing necessary for his justification, sanctification and complete salvation.

8th. When we view abounding sin, which reigns unto death, and much more abounding grace, which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, it is a matter of great moment for us to know under the government of which of these we are. All who hear me this day are either under the government of sin, and slaves to their lusts, or under that of grace, with Jesus Christ for the captain of their salvations and the heirs of eternal life. That you may decide to which of these you belong, I call upon you for impartial answers to these questions:

1st. Have you ever been made truly weary of the government of sin? Has the law of God been brought home to your consciences in its length, breadth and spirituality? Have you been convinced you were in a graceless state, and that, continuing in this condition, you must be damned forever? And have you been brought to cry for mercy as earnestly as a condemned criminal would for a pardon? If you are strangers to these exercises, then, as the Lord liveth, you are not under the government of grace; and, if you live and die in your present condition, you will sink forever be-

neath the damning weight of sin in that *lake which burns with fire and brimstone*. If you have not taken the first steps towards reconciliation to God, it is evident you are under the dominion of sin. But these steps you may have taken; yet, if you have gone no farther, you are strangers to the government of grace.

2d. Have you been brought to see that your own righteousness, your prayers, tears, groans, vows and good works, are but as dross and dung in the sight of the Holy God; that these things, instead of constituting a righteousness for your justification, if depended upon, will be as fuel to burn you in hell forever? Have you seen clearly that nothing short of the grace of God can save you from the government of sin and from all its bitter consequences? Therefore, as poor beggars, have you cast yourselves at the footstool of a Sovereign God?

3d. Has the Holy Spirit given you a view of the glory, beauty, and excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God Man Mediator? Have you seen his fulness, willingness and sufficiency, to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him? Have you seen such a glory and excellency in the plan of salvation by Free Grace as has gained your hearty consent to its terms, so that you have no desire to be saved in any other way?

4th. Do you habitually pant after a sense of God's love and conformity to him? Does the enjoyment of his presence, though imperfect by faith, constitute your chief happiness in this world? Is the design of your attending the means of grace that you may have communion with God? Is the withdrawing of the light of his countenance distressing to your soul; and are you uneasy until it is restored? Is perfect con-

formity to him in holiness, and the full enjoyment of him, and perfect freedom from sin, the heaven your souls earnestly desire?

5th. Are your hearts moulded for living upon that grace which is treasured up in Christ? When your consciences are polluted with guilt, do you habitually apply to Christ for relief? Do you regularly apply to him for light and strength to subdue indwelling sin, and for grace to live to the glory of God? If, upon a close and impartial examination, you can declare, in the presence of God, that these have been your exercises, and that such are the habitual frames of your minds, then you have reason to conclude that you are under the sweet government of Grace, and although you have many struggles with indwelling sin, although you sometimes fear that some day you will fall by the hand of your enemies, yet Christ, the captain of your salvation, will take you home conquerors, and more than conquerors over all your enemies. All the perfections of Jehovah are engaged for your complete and eternal salvation, and, ere long, he will put you in full possession of the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world, when you shall be fully satisfied in the immediate sight and full fruition of God through all eternity.

But if your consciences bear witnesses against you, that you are strangers to these exercises, then, as sure as there is truth in the word of God, you are under the dominion of sin, and in a state of enmity against God; and, if you continue in your present state of rebellion, sentence of condemnation will shortly be executed upon you. Then you will be convinced to your eternal sorrow, how dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the Living God; for then you will feel the iron rod of

his vengeance; then you will be bruised in the wine press of his wrath; then you will sink beneath the damning load of all your sins, and particularly beneath the soul-damning sin of slighting the blood of Christ. Poor, Christless souls, reflect on your sad condition; be willing to know the worst of your case, pray earnestly for the awakening influences of the Holy Spirit; flee to Christ while the door of mercy stands open to receive you and the willing arms of Christ are expanded to embrace you. He is now calling upon you to turn and live. But if you close your ears against his invitations and reject his offers of salvation, you must perish in your sins, and your blood will be upon your own heads.

SERMON XXI.

THE QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.



For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.
—ACTS, XX. 27.

THE subject matter of all the sermons of that most eminent apostle, Paul, was, "*Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*" He insists upon these doctrines on all occasions; and, indeed, that sermon which has not repentance, faith and regeneration for its leading topics, is scarcely worth hearing.

The conversion of sinners was the grand design of the apostle in preaching the gospel; and every faithful minister, at this day, has in view the same end. And wherever he opens his mouth for God, whether in public or private, repentance and faith are his themes.

Although Paul had the witness of the Holy Ghost that bonds and afflictions would attend him wherever he was called to exercise his ministry; and although he knew not what trials and difficulties would befall him at Jerusalem, yet such was his constancy and steadfastness in the cause of his master, that he is resolved that nothing shall move him. Life itself ceases to be dear to him, and he counts all things as nought, if he may finish his course with joy, and complete his ministry to divine acceptance. And, in his farewell, after assuring them that they should see his face no more in this world, he appeals to their consciences

that he had faithfully discharged his duty to them as an apostle, and that he was clear of the blood of souls. He held back nothing in doctrine which could be profitable to their souls. His life was blameless and exemplary. Therefore, with a clear conscience before God and man, he calls them to witness that he was pure from the blood of all men: "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*" Here is expressed, in a few words, the whole duty of the minister of the gospel, viz. *to declare the whole counsel of God*; and this duty is to be performed with faithfulness and vigilance, if he would be clear of the blood of all men.

By the counsel of God, we understand the gospel of Christ, or the revelation of his will in the gospel, which discovers to sinners their guilt and misery, their inability to rescue themselves, and unveils a glorious remedy in Christ, a plan of salvation, by the which God can be just and justify the ungodly sinner trusting in Jesus.

The Gospel is very properly called the *counsel of God*, since it originated in wisdom eternal, and is the unalterable determination of God's will towards men, and comprehends the plan by which they may be saved. Consequently it is the minister's duty to declare faithfully *all the counsel of God*.

Then let us consider—

- I. The qualifications of a minister of the gospel.
- II. His duty. He must *declare all the counsel of God*.
- III. Apply the subject.

I. The qualifications of a minister of the gospel.

And

First. It is necessary that all ministers of the gospel should be savingly converted, experimentally ac-

acquainted with the work of regeneration in their own souls. If they are ignorant of this; if they have never been born again; if they have never entered in at the strait gate of conversion, although their speculative knowledge may be great, their outward conduct and deportment spotless to the view of the world—they are still the servants of sin and bond slaves to the Devil. In heart, they are enemies to Christ and his cause. Then, how is it that they can advance the glory of God, the interest of the Redeemer, and promote the salvation of dying souls? Can they travail in birth for the redemption of the people, before Christ is formed in them the hope of glory? Can they tell poor, blinded sinners of the glories of Immanuel; the sweetness of his love; the joys of pardoned sin; of the unspeakable pleasure to be found in communion with God, when they are strangers to all this themselves, having neither known Christ nor beheld his glory? It is the business of the minister to direct inquiring souls who feel themselves lost, and know not what to do. They are the very persons to assist the penitent in the struggles of the new birth. Their ignorance or want of skill, at this critical juncture, would forever ruin the soul. Surely the unconverted preacher cannot support the sinking sinner by shewing from his own experience that his case is not singular; that all Christians have been in the same situation, when he knows nothing about it himself; or how shall he direct the unconverted in the strait or narrow way, or caution them against the dangerous resting places and legal refuges in which the Devil and his own deceitful soul would persuade him to seek safety? How shall he describe the snares and deep pits which lie upon all sides of the narrow path, into which if the sinner

should fall, he would be ruined forever, when he has never travelled in the way himself?

Secondly. As it is necessary that he should be born of God by the agency of the Holy Spirit, he should also live habitually as a scholar at the feet of Jesus, under the teachings of the Divine Spirit. This is, indeed, the common privilege of all true believers. So says the apostle: "*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;*" but it is the peculiar privilege of those that attempt to preach the gospel or declare the counsel of God. Where is his counsel revealed? In his Word. But the Word of God is a sealed book to every unconverted soul. "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" It is true the natural man may understand the doctrines of the Bible as a science; may reason subtilely upon the most important truths; may act the critic; display his abilities with great popularity upon intricate points of divinity; and yet be as blind as a mole to the spiritual meaning of scripture. An ignorant negro, who had never learned his letters, but had embraced Christ, understands it unspeakably better than the wisest man in an unregenerate state. The preacher who is not savingly converted to God must be ignorant of the spiritual meaning of the gospel, and, of course, will only preach *himself*, and not *Christ*. His aim is to shew himself the great man—the scholar, or eminent divine; not to feed the lambs of Christ; they find no spiritual food in his doctrine. He scarcely ever staggers upon their situation or touches their experience. He takes no pleasure in pointing out the Spirit's work in regeneration; he hunts not out the false resting

places of the formalist, nor seeks to drive him from his refuge of lies; he never dwells upon the feelings, the exercises, the conflicts and comforts, of the people of God. If he tries to preach experimentally, he goes round upon the outside of the matter, and never gets farther than the surface of vital Godliness—always treating of it in general terms.

Thirdly. It is necessary that the preacher should be called of God to the ministerial office especially. Says the apostle, "*And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*" God, by the mouth of Jeremiah, tells us why some ministers are not useful: "*I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore, they shall not profit this people at all.*"

If a man has the witness in his own conscience, that he has never been born again, he has every reason to believe that he was never called of God. Yet it is very evident that every good man and genuine Christian, who has the witness of the Spirit in his soul, that he is born from on high, is not qualified to declare the counsel of God. None but those that are called by God specially, as was Aaron, are qualified for the duties of the ministry. But, is it asked if this call is an audible voice from heaven? This certainly is not to be expected at this age of the church. It is not a particular impulse upon the mind to undertake this office. For this may be only a delusion of the grand deceiver of mankind. A call to the work of the ministry presupposes some clear spiritual evidences that the person is converted; that he is, in Christ Jesus, acquainted with the sweets of God's covenant. It supposes a habitual impression upon his mind of the doleful situation of sinners out of Christ, and an ear-

nest, continual desire to warn them of their danger, and convince them, by his own experience, of the comforts of religion, of the fitness and excellency of Jesus, and his willingness to save. These things, together with the providence of God and his own exercises, shutting him up to the necessity of undertaking the work—a competent degree of natural abilities, a reasonable education, and a door open for public usefulness, is what I humbly conceive to be a call to the work of the ministry.

II. Of the duties of the minister. *He must declare all the counsel of God.*

He must use every possible means to alarm and awaken Christless sinners from their security, and bring them to a sense of their danger and guilt. He must use every argument to convince them of the horrors of an unconverted state; he must tell them the worst of their case—roar the thunders of Sinai in their ears, and flash the lightnings of Jehovah's vengeance in their faces. What says God to his messengers? "*Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.*" And who, my brethren, can avoid this duty—who that sees dying souls falling into hell by thousands, can withhold his warning voice? What parent could see his house in flames, ready to fall upon his sleeping children, and not cry out with all the vehemence of affection, and use every effort to awaken and rescue them from the dreadful danger? Then, how can ministers refrain from thundering the terrors of the law? or how can they denounce its terrors in a cool, dispassionate manner, when the great majority of their congregations, and of the whole world is staggering upon the crumbling brink of hell, and daily

tumbling into the eternal flames? Let them hear or not, though the world scorn and revile us, call us ~~low~~ preachers and madmen, Methodists—do this we must, or we will be the worst of murderers; the blood of sinners will be required at our hands—their damnation will lie at our door. In Ezekiel, we are told that “*If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.*” These are the words of God to his servant Ezekiel.

2d. That he may *declare all the counsel of God*, the minister should try the foundation of his people’s hopes, labor to drive the formalist and self-deceiver from their false refuges, and surround them upon every side, with the infallible marks of the Christian, from the word of God; use the most convincing arguments to prove them still in a state of wrath. He must plant the artillery of the law against their hopes, until, like Noah’s dove, they find ~~a~~ resting place for their feet. And never was there a time which called more loudly than the present for the exercise of this duty. The church is crowded with lukewarm Laodicians, *having the form of Godliness, but destitute of the vital power; in their own apprehension rich and increased in goods—in need of nothing—when they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, destitute of Christ and eternal life*; who cannot bear sound doctrine, are afraid to come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov’d. One calls himself a weak believer, in hopes he has a *little* grace. Another does the most he can, in hopes that Christ will *do the rest*. A third is a poor, ignorant creature; he can do nothing, but must abide God’s time. A

fourth has not attained the faith of assurance, but is assured that he has the faith of adherence. A fifth is a strict observer of the law—performs every known duty. Like the young man in the gospel, he says, “*All these have I observed from my youth.*” All these call themselves Christians, and are continually gaping for a comfort—looking to ministers of Christ to prophecy smooth things, to cry, *peace, peace*. They would hear the gospel preached upon legal terms. Oh, my brethren, by comforting such weak believers, or rather hypocrites, we would make their damnation sure. Says pious Erskine—

“Much rather ought we in God’s name to place
His great artillery straight against their face,
And throw hot Sinai thunderbolts around,
To burn their tow’ring hopes down to the ground.
To make the pillars of their pride to shake,
And damn their doing to the burning lake.
To curse the doers unto endless thrall
That never did continue to do all.”

3d. [It is his duty to direct the awakened sinner to Christ. This is one of the most difficult parts of the minister’s work, and it is ten thousand to one that he will ruin many souls, if he has not passed through the strait gate himself, if he has no experimental knowledge of the narrow way.

He must convince the awakened sinner that the vengeance of God pursues him every moment while out of Christ—that there is no safety a hair’s breadth short of a sound conversion. He must shew him the great danger of losing his convictions and quenching the motions of the Spirit, lest his day of grace pass away, and he be given up to hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind. He should point out to the penitent all the wiles and intrigues of the Devil

and his own wicked heart, designed to stifle his convictions, or settle him short of a saving faith in the Lord Jesus. He must cut off all his hopes, and reduce him to despair of salvation, save through the atonement of Christ. When sinking into despondency and the gloom of melancholy, he must encourage him, by shewing him from the word of God, and from his own experience, that his case is not hopeless; that it is in this way that the Spirit leads the soul from death unto life. He must press home upon him the necessity of believing and flying to Jesus; the danger of lingering in conviction and waiting for qualifications to come to Christ. He must shew him that Jesus invites and entreats him to come just as he is—wretched, miserable, guilty and blind—that the most vile hell-deserving sinner would be welcome. He must point out the door of hope, and display the willingness and power of the blessed Jesus, to pardon, justify and save—acquaint him with all the promises of God's Word. And yet it is more than he dare do to speak comfort to him in his present condition. This is Christ's prerogative. All the ministers on earth could not impart to the soul one drop of spiritual comfort. False comfort they might give; but the joys of pardoned sin, or that peace in believing, arising from the application of Redeeming blood, are bestowed by God only. It is also necessary that we shew the awakened sinner that the benefits of the everlasting covenant are free, but that he must fly to Christ before he can enjoy them. When the penitent is released from bondage, and finds peace with God, then it is the business of the preacher to try the foundation of his hope; to distinguish between true conversion and the delusions of Satan; to undeceive him, if in an error, and if

on the right foundation, to strengthen and encourage him.

4th. Another duty of the herald of the cross, is to comfort the people of God. Thus says the commandment, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.*" But remember that none but those who are in Christ Jesus are to be comforted. There is no comfort in all the word of God for others. It speaks to the soul out of Christ no milder language than "*Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*" Then, lest we preach peace to the ungodly, let us carefully ascertain the Christian character, that none may mistake. Then may we freely venture to speak to the believer all the comfort contained in the book of God. Indeed I know not how we can better administer comfort to the children of God. When we describe the Spirit's work and the exercise of believers in regeneration; when we describe their exercises under a view of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus; when we describe their joys in communion with God; or when we picture their feelings under the hidings of their heavenly Father's face; their desires, longings and anxieties, after the beloved of their souls; when we describe the Christian's views of the attributes of Deity, his views of Christ and of sin, and that in the most scriptural manner, the Divine Spirit shines in upon the heart and enables the soul to see his own case described, and witness those very exercises and evidences thus drawn from the word of God—then, indeed, they have rational and solid foundation of comfort; then they have the witness of both the word and spirit of truth, that they are children of God, and heirs of immortal glory.

III. Apply the subject. And this we will do by showing how ministers of the gospel should declare

the counsel of God, if they would be clear of the blood of souls.

1st. We must *declare all the counsel of God*. We may preach the truth, and yet not declare the whole counsel of God. We may preach such sermons as no church judicature could condemn, and yet be as guilty of the blood of sinners, as if we preached heresy. For instance, Sabbath after Sabbath, we may tell sinners, they "*must be born again,*" or *be damned*, and what will it signify? If we do not explain what conversion is, and show the exercises of the soul in passing from death to life, no one will ever be convicted. We may lay down all the marks and evidences of grace in the gospel, and if we do this in general terms, without guarding them particularly, every hypocrite and formal professor in the congregation will apply them to himself, and strengthen his false hopes for heaven.

Love to God is a sure and undoubted mark of the new creature; yet every carnal hypocrite believes that he loves God. But, if we faithfully describe the spiritual views of the divine glory—of the beauty and excellence of the divine attributes—which precede all true love to God—this may strike some abiding conviction.

Hatred to sin is a real mark of Grace, but every formalist thinks he hates sin. But if we show from God's word, that no one has a true hatred to sin unless he has beheld the glory of God as it is in the face of Jesus—that has leaned by faith upon a crucified Redeemer—then, perhaps, the hypocrite's conscience may be touched. Then if we would be clear of the blood of all men, we must lay down in the plainest manner and in the brightest light, the evidences and

characteristics of the Christian, that the hypocrite may be convinced that he is destitute of them.

2. We must know nothing in or out of the pulpit, "*Save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*" Christ crucified must be alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of every sermon. Our design in composing, studying and preaching, must be the salvation of sinners. We are not to preach *ourselves* or shew our great abilities in a parade of learning. We are not to stuff our sermons with geography, philosophy—with new speculations and curious criticisms in divinity. We must hold by the spirit of the gospel. Repentance, faith and regeneration, placed in bold relief, should be the burden of every sermon, even though they should become an old song to the carnal ear. In private, Christ should still be our theme; the vital savour of his name should hallow every conversation.

3d. We should declare our message in the most solemn and earnest manner, as though we believed what we said. We should be deeply affected with our subject, and use all reasonable means to affect the minds of the people—strike their judgment and their passions, and gain access to the heart by every avenue. What judgment must the unthinking world form of the matter, when the ministers of Jesus speak of the glory of Immanuel—the dying love of a Redeemer—the joys of Heaven, with coolness and indifference? or, when they preach of death and hell, judgment and eternity, as dispassionately as if they believed nothing about them? Surely that minister of Christ, who travails, like Paul in birth for the souls of his people, till Christ be formed in them the hope of glory; or, like Moses, stands between the living and the dead,

pleading the ancient promises made to the church, must weep and groan with heartfelt sorrow over poor sinners, and warn them again and again of their danger.

4th. We must be instant, in season and out of season, declaring all the counsel of God, if we would be pure from the blood of all men. Improve every opportunity of warning sinners to fly to Jesus. Like Paul, we must be always teaching what is in Christ; wherever we are, wherever we meet our fellow creatures, at their houses, or on the highway, we should labor to promote their salvation, and lead them to Christ.

5th. The preacher's life should be such as to declare loudly to all men, and convince the most sceptical, that there is a living reality in his doctrine, and in the religion of Jesus Christ. His conduct and conversation should preach as loudly and as convincingly as his sermons.

The eyes of the world are upon all professors of religion, but particularly upon the ministers of the gospel. There is no vain word, no wrong step, no trifling gesture of all their lives, but is stained with the blood of souls; for, thereby, the ungodly contract a disgust for religion; the formalist and hypocrite are hardened in their security, and very readily conclude that if they act like the minister, all is well. If he is lukewarm and formal, they will be so too; if he follow the forms and fashions of the world, so will they; if he indulge in vain company and light conversation, they will do likewise. In vain might we preach with all the ability of Paul and the eloquence of Apollos, if we did not enforce the precepts of the gospel by the holy example of our lives. Indeed, so exemplary should

the minister of the gospel be in all his conduct, that he would be above the suspicions of the wicked, or the imitation of the hypocrite. The same should be said of him as was said concerning an officer in the late war: "He has so much of the life and power of religion in all his conduct, in every place and in every company, that it is impossible for the most ingenious hypocrite to imitate him."

SERMON XXII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOURNEY TO THE HEAVENLY CANAAN.



We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you.—NUMBERS, X. 29.

THESE are the words of Moses, the man of God, to Hobab, his father-in-law—who is probably the same elsewhere called Jethro.

Moses was leading the chosen tribes to Canaan, the happy land, which, ages before, had been promised by the Lord to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for their posterity; and, being deeply impressed with a sense of the glorious privileges and advantages which the people of God should enjoy in that country, is induced by a sincere desire for the welfare of his father-in-law and family to entreat them to go with him to the good land and share its peculiar blessings.

The journeying of the children of Israel to the land of Canaan, forms a beautiful representation of the church of Christ travelling to the celestial kingdom of glory. And as the followers of Jesus are bound for the land of promise, and sometimes, like Moses on Pisgah's top, obtain a distant view of their heavenly inheritance, and enjoy sweet foretastes of eternal blessedness, it is not wonderful that they should with painful anxiety entreat their unconverted relations and friends to go with them to that happy country. They behold in Jesus such beauty and all-sufficiency, and have such sublime views of the indescribable

blessedness of the heavenly Jerusalem, that, moved with pity and compassion towards those lying spiritually dead in the plains of Sodom, they court them in the language of Moses to Hobab: "*We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord has said, I will give it you,*" therefore come with us, and we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.

In the discussion of this subject, we shall—

I. Describe the goodly land unto which we are journeying.

II. Speak of the way leading thereto.

III. Improve the subject.

I. We are to describe the goodly land unto which we are journeying.

Here we undertake a task far above the united wisdom and eloquence of men and angels. Were Gabriel to leave his shining seat in Paradise, and stand in the midst of this assembly, he could not fully describe the glory and blessedness of this country. Had I a quill, plucked from the wing of a cherub, and dipped in a ray of glory emanating from the divine throne, and were I to write for millions of ages, I should fall infinitely short of having portrayed its transcendent glory.

It is termed, "*The better country*"—"The land of promise"—"*A rest that remains for the people of God*"—"A kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world"—"*An inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*"—"The Paradise of God"—"*The city of God*"—"The holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and the building of the wall of it was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass; and the foundations of the walls of

the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones; and the twelve gates were twelve pearls; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass; and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Its blessedness is called "*an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" Its joys, such as "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.*" How great, indeed, must that happiness be which is even beyond the conception of the heart! Man's lively fancy could imagine the sun to be ten thousand times more large and glorious—our earth to be a paradise, the whole atmosphere to be transparent crystal, the mountains to be solid gold, the seas and rivers to be wine, and milk, and honey, and the rocks and sand to be the most brilliant diamonds—yet all these things are but dross and dung when compared with the glories of heaven.

The goodly land is a very extensive country—sufficiently large for all its blessed inhabitants. There reside all the angels and archangels, seraphim, and cherubim, and the spirits of just men made perfect; and there shall dwell the general assembly of the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, and all the innumerable millions of the redeemed, out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, upon the earth. Small, indeed, are the greatest possessions in this world: The vast conquests of Alexander; the extensive dominions of Cæsar—sink into insignificance, when contrasted with the inheritance of the poorest inhabitant of this heavenly country, where every one is possessed of an infinite portion, even of God, with all his unbounded essence, attributes and glorious perfections.

It is a country of pure and unspotted holiness. Its air permits nothing sinful to enter there. *“And there shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*

In this dreary wilderness, the best societies even, where the greatest power and purity of religion is enjoyed, are intermixed with bad neighbors, painted hypocrites and self-deceivers. Perhaps a communion table is never spread but a Judas sits down with the disciples of Jesus. But in the heavenly country, among the countless millions which inhabit it, there is not one unregenerated sinner.

“Sin enters not this holy place—
 No tempter in this Paradise:
 The dwellers there are pure.
 Abandoned men, that live in sin,
 Nor hypocrites can enter in:
 These God cannot endure.”

But, as all sin is banished from this country, none of its deadly consequences are known; no tempting Devil can be found there; nor deceitful backsliding hearts; nor weeping eyes, nor pains because of the frowns of God; neither complaints of the hidings of the benign countenance of the Redeemer. No. The disciples are now in their Father’s house. They are with Christ where he is, and have an uninterrupted view of his glory.

“This, this, does heaven enough afford:
 They are forever with the Lord;
 They want no more—for all is given:
 Their Father’s presence makes up heaven.”

It is a country of complete safety. Adam was not secure in the earthly paradise. The old serpent entered there, and robbed him and all his unborn race

of innocence. The believer is not safe even in his most blessed seasons. When feasting upon the hidden manna of redeeming love; when his soul is enraptured with the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus, even then the old serpent stands, unseen, at his right hand, ready to mix gall and bitterness with his cup of consolation and rob him of his sweetest joys. Spiritual pride is secretly introduced into his heart; he grieves the Lord and provokes the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. Thus he is left to grovel in darkness, driven like an orphan from his father's face.

But in this goodly land, the followers of Jesus enter their Father's house, and take full possession of the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world, of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Their fallen natures; their hard hearts and sinful propensities are left behind them and are seen no more forever. They are surrounded by the Godhead—encircled by the Divine perfections, and shut up in the strong hold of Eternal love. Therefore, they weep, sigh, and sin no more. The Devil can neither mar their peace—nor disturb their joys—nor interrupt their blessedness throughout all Eternity. *There they are clothed in white—they wear crowns of gold upon their heads—and palms of victory in their hands. They sing the new song which no man can learn but the hundred and forty-four thousand redeemed from the earth, shouting Hallelujah to God and the Lamb, crying with loud voices, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, who hath redeemed us to God by his blood out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people upon earth, and hath made us kings and priests unto God. There they hunger and thirst no more—they are forever freed from pain and sickness and death—all tears are*

wiped from their eyes. They have no night, for the glory of the Lord enlightens them, and the Lamb, Christ Jesus, is the light of the place. They enjoy an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They taste joys such as "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.*"

Now, sinners, will you not go with us to this happy country? When you remove in this world you would seek a country abounding in wealth—well watered—healthy—and whose society was agreeable and respectable. Well, my friends, the heavenly Canaan *abounds in wealth*. Its poorest citizen is a crowned head, and possesses a kingdom prepared for him from before the foundation of the world. This country is the richest and most productive of all Jehovah's vast dominions; it is the garden of the universe—the paradise of God.

"There generous fruits, that never fail, on trees immortal grow,
There rocks, and hills, and brooks, and vales, with milk and honey
flow."

Every part abounds with the grapes of Eschol, the apples of Paradise, with the hidden manna, the bread of life; and, what surpasses all, there stands the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruits every month, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Oh, blessed country! Oh, happy seasons! There reigns the eternal bloom of spring, the rich, unchanging luxuriance of summer. There blustering winds, nor biting frosts, destructive rains, nor withering droughts, are ever known.

This goodly land is also *well watered*. There are the wells of salvation; the never failing springs of divine consolation; with rivers of pleasure flowing eternally at God's right hand. "*A pure river of wa-*

ter of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb."

It is a *healthy* country; its air is pure and salubrious.

"No chilling winds, nor poisonous breath,
Can reach this healthful shore;
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more."

"*The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick.*" They shall not be visited by death, nor sorrow, neither distress nor afflictions; their faces shall not wrinkle, neither shall they experience the weaknesses and infirmities of old age. But, throughout all eternity, they shall bloom with immortal youth and vigor.

The society of the goodly land is the most *respectable and agreeable* in all the universe. In every community upon earth, there are some wicked, designing men, to interrupt its harmony, and introduce disturbance. In every church are hypocrites and self-deceivers; but in the heavenly country are none, save those whose robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Would you go to this blessed country, you would there associate with angels and archangels; you should enjoy the blessed society of all the ransomed millions of the Lord. You would there see Adam and Eve, Enoch, Methuselah and Noah, and all the old patriarchs who went to Paradise before the flood; there you would meet and converse with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and Samuel, and David, with all the holy kings and prophets, and other righteous men who lived in the Mosaic dispensation. There you would see the twelve apostles and all those millions converted by them and their successors in the primitive ages of the church. The martyrs who died for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus

who suffered the most excruciating tortures, you shall behold near the throne, freed from all their troubles. *"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."* In a word, you shall see every happy soul that ever has or shall enter the pearly gates of the new Jerusalem through the blood and merits of the Son of God.

Another peculiarity of the inhabitants of the goodly land is, that they are knit together by the most pure and disinterested love. In this world, Christ's children sometimes fall out by the way; one proves a temptation to another, ungrounded suspicions arise; like Paul and Barnabas, they differ in opinions, dispute, and part to meet no more here. But in the heavenly country all disputes and suspicions are banished; the names of Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist and Baptist, shall be known no more. Luther, Calvin and Zuinglius shall agree. Toplady and Wesley shall quarrel no more; but shall adore the matchless grace and the splendid glories of Jehovah; and love divine, emanating from God, will unite all together, and continually draw them nearer and nearer to Christ, their living head.

II. Speak of the way leading to the goodly land.

If you would go to the Celestial Paradise, you must start at the proper place. The road leading to the heavenly country commences at the straight gate of conversion. Hence says Christ, *"Enter ye in at the straight gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that*

find it." None of Adam's posterity can take a step upon this road until they have passed through this narrow gate. Isaiah, speaking of the highway of holiness, says that *the murderer shall not pass over it; but that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

In order to enter this straight gate, the fathomless depths of the sin and wickedness of your hearts must be laid open to your view. You must feel, to your inmost soul, your enmity to God—that your whole nature is sin; the enmity of your heart must be slain by the law; dead to all hope in yourself, you must be stripped of all dependence upon your prayers, tears, resolutions or desires; you must lie at the footstool of Sovereign Mercy, throwing your guilty, perishing soul at the feet of Jesus, crying, "*Lord, save, or I perish.*" There you must wait, and seek, and strive, begging with unwearied diligence and importunity for mercy, until God, who first commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into your heart with the light of the knowledge of the divine glory in the face of Jesus—until the suitableness and sufficiency of his person and offices are revealed unto you by the Holy Spirit—until you become willing to part with all things for Christ, the pearl of great price—receive and trust him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption.

A faith's view of the beauty, glory and excellency of the attributes of God, meeting and harmonizing in Christ, displayed in his holy life, and suffering death: It is this, I say, that attracts the heart, bows the will, allures the affections, and induces the believing sinner to fly into the outstretched arms of the Saviour—that makes the soul thirst and pant after holiness and likeness to God, after brighter discoveries of his glory

The divine light not only reveals the loveliness of Jesus and excellencies of Deity, but also discovers the accursed nature of sin, its horrid opposition to God—shows the soul its own vileness and unworthiness; and, while he feels peace, and joy that is unspeakable, he is ashamed and confounded before God; he loathes himself, and cries, with Job, *“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”*

The soul who has witnessed these things has entered the straight gate, and has just begun to walk in the way to the heavenly country; and, now, he feels himself weak and helpless, a child in wisdom, scarce knowing the first principles of religion; and he anxiously inquires for knowledge concerning the highway of holiness.

Would you find the way, look well for the footsteps of Jesus. Christ himself is the way. He hath sprinkled the path with his blood, and left his footsteps plain upon every part of it to direct his followers in safety; and he calls again and again to them, *“Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”* And again: *“Who-soever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* Throughout the road he has placed beacons, lest any should mistake the way. Enoch's walking with God, the faith of Abraham, the wrestling, praying spirit of Jacob, the meekness of Moses, the patience and submission of Job, the uprightness, repentance and holy breathings of David, the heavenly temper of John, the fortitude of Paul, and many other examples, all of which stand like monuments, and point the inquiring sinner the way to the kingdom of heaven.

We shall mention some of the qualities of this way.

First. It is a *narrow* way. Such Christ declares it to be: "*Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.*" The road is hedged in by the law and the gospel, and is so narrow that no one can take along with him any of his beloved sins. The fashionable vices and sinful pleasures of this world must be left behind; and so narrow is the way, to the happy country, that even self-righteousness is excluded, and we must rely upon Christ alone for righteousness and acceptance with God.

Secondly. It is a *difficult* way. The apostle John, after describing the ransomed millions who had travelled in this narrow way to the happy country, tells us that they came through great tribulations, and had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The Lord Jesus Christ declares to his followers that in this world, they shall have tribulations. Says Peter, "*And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*" Intimating that the "righteous" will be "saved" with great difficulty.

No sooner has the sinner escaped the jaws of the lion of hell and commenced walking in the "narrow way," than devils and wicked men single him out as a mark for their malice and scorn. Earth and hell combine to ensnare him and lead him into sin, that he may wound and dishonor the cause of God. And if the old serpent cannot draw him back to perdition, such is his enmity, that he will endeavor to make his way as difficult as possible. And, therefore, he will attack him through the whole journey with unabated diligence; he will assume many forms, and beset him on every side. Sometimes, as an "angel of light," he

will try to delude and misguide him." He will use all the cunning of the serpent to deceive, and the rage and fury of the lion to devour him. The world presents to him a thousand bewitching allurements to captivate his affections and lead him astray from God. On every hand temptations to evil stand in thick array, ready to ensnare and prey upon his soul. But his strongest and most dangerous enemies lie deeply entrenched in his own heart—the hellish remains of indwelling sin and inbred corruption.

Against all these numerous and powerful enemies, the pilgrim bound for the heavenly Canaan must set his face like adamant; he must gird on the whole armour of God, and fight his way to his glorious inheritance. He fights the hardest upon his knees. By faithful watching and prayer, strengthened by the Lord, he is sure to triumph. Sometimes the Philistines, daily receiving recruits from hell, seem to prevail against him; his spirits sink—his strength fails, and, like David, he is ready, through unbelief, to conclude that he must fall by the hands of his enemies. When he has resisted to blood, and has fought till he can do no more than cry, "*Lord, save, or I perish,*" Jesus comes to his relief, gives new life to his soul, puts the hosts of hell to flight, and enables him to sing the conqueror's song, and rejoice in prospect of final victory.

Thirdly. It is a *pleasant* way. Saith Solomon, speaking of Wisdom, "*Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace.*" And Christ says, "*My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*" The road leading to the heavenly country is often termed a thorny way; but there is not a thorn in it, nor a briar upon the whole of it. The thorns and briars grow upon the sides of it. Snarcs, and pits, and quagmires,

lie close to it, upon the right hand and upon the left. The weary traveller finds these thorns and briars, difficulties and troubles, only when he leaves the road. The Sun of Righteousness always shines upon the narrow path and illuminates the soul of the believer who treads therein. Often, in the discharge of duty, the converted soul is lifted to the heavens, and catches sublime views of the glory of God. Sometimes he is low in the valley of humility; like Job, loathing himself and repenting in dust and ashes, imagines that he is the least of all saints, the meanest, vilest creature, that redeeming mercy ever plucked from the jaws of a dreadful hell. At another time he may be found panting for the presence of God, like the hunted hart for the cooling water brooks—thirsting for a sense of his love shed abroad in his heart, like a weary pilgrim in a parched land where there is no water; and, again, like a weeping Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning the spirit and temper of the inhabitants of the goodly land. Sometimes in the Lord's banqueting houses, feasting upon love; or, like Jacob, wrestling with God in spiritual prayer, calling the great Father of Truth to remember and perform his word and promise. Not unfrequently between the porch and the altar, or standing, like Moses, between the living and the dead, and pleading for the conversion and salvation of Christless sinners. Like Jeremiah, weeping and crying, "*Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.*" Lying at the feet of Jesus, like the Canaanitish woman pleading for the conversion of a son or daughter, a brother or sister, or some other dear relation or friend, resolving to take no denial, but rather

to change every repulse and discouraging circumstance into fresh arguments to court the mercy of heaven.

The narrow road was laid out by order of the court of heaven—planned and ordained in the early councils of eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ came into this wretched world to open the way and make it plain. He marked it with his blood and left his footsteps to be seen through every part. The patriarchs of old, the prophets, apostles and martyrs, all travelled this narrow path, and all the ransomed of the Lord who have gone to the celestial paradise, have attained it by moving straight forward in it; and, surely, no spiritually discerning eye can mistake the way.

The soul journeying to the goodly land, though he meets many obstacles to his progress, finds the road pleasant and agreeable. He enjoys the smiles of his Heavenly Father—tastes the riches of his grace, and often feels his love shed abroad in his heart. He is consoled in all his troubles by a sense of the protection of the Almighty, who has promised to be his strong tower and defence, his strength in weakness, his helper in distress, his righteousness and his everlasting all. Lest any should stray, the Lord Jesus goes before his faithful followers, in a pillar of a cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. He feasts their souls upon the rich blessings of the everlasting covenant, and takes them into sweet communion with himself. And when they have come to the end of the way, and have to encounter Death, their last enemy, they need not fear; he has been conquered; Jesus has invaded his dread territories and defeated him, and, as a trophy of victory, hath led him in chains, and robbed him of all his terrors. Now, instead of the

grim monster and terrible enemy, he appears their friend—a messenger of peace to convey poor exiles home to glory. Stop for a moment! See the dying Christian parting with time—bidding adieu to this world. Heaven opens, and immortal joy beams into his soul, and he willingly resigns himself into the keeping of his Redeemer, singing a song like this:

“When Death appears before my sight
In all his dire array,
Unequal to the dreadful fight,
My courage dies away.

But, see my glorious leader nigh—
My Lord, my Saviour lives;
Before him death’s pale terrors fly,
And my faint heart revives.

He left his dazzling throne above,
He met the tyrant’s dart,
And, oh! amazing power of love,
Received it in his heart.

No more, oh, grim destroyer, boast
Thy universal sway;
To heaven-born souls thy sting is lost,
Thy night is turned to day

Lord I commit my soul to thee;
Accept the sacred trust;
Receive this noble part of me,
And watch my sleeping dust,

Till that illustrious morning come,
When all the saints shall rise,
And, clothed in full immortal bloom,
Attend thee to the skies.”

But, oh! the joy unspeakable, the floods of glory, that deluge the soul when it parts from the body. The cage is opened, and the spirit is liberated from *this* heavy clog of clay. The angel bands draw near; bright shining seraphs surround it on every side, and, perhaps, the departed souls of their Christian friends, who were their companions, sat under the

same sermons, underwent the same difficulties and enjoyed the same pleasures; join to conduct them to their Father's House.

But who can describe the happiness of the soul when conveyed by the celestial host? He rises from the earth—soars aloft the heavens—leaves sun, moon and stars far behind, and beholds the resplendent glories of the new Jerusalem, whose pearly gates fly open wide to receive him. He enters the city of God, welcomed by all the redeemed of the Lord, and embraced in the arms of Jesus. With propriety, the lines of the seraphic poet may be accommodated to this subject:

And now by swift degrees,
 They sail aloft through azure seas;
 Now tread the milky way.
 Farewell ye planets in your spheres;
 And as the stars are lost a brighter sky appears.
 In haste for Paradise,
 They sketch the pinions of a bolder thought.
 Scarce had they willed but they were past
 Deserts of trackless light, and all the *Ethereal* waste,
 And to the sacred borders brought.
 With pleasing reverence they behold
 The pearly portals—spires of gold.
 Noon stands eternal there; and there their sight
Drink ~~Drink~~ in the rays of primogenial light.
 They breathe immortal air;
 Joy beats high in every vein;
 Pleasure through all their bosoms reigns.
 The laws forbid the stranger pain,
 And banish every care.
 They view the bubbling streams of love
 Beneath the throne arise;
 The streams in crystal channels move,
 Around the golden streets they rove,
 And bless the mansions of the upper skies.

What must be the soul's joyous surprise when he finds himself in heaven?

And is this heaven—and am I here?
 How short the road—how swift the flight!

I am all life—all eye—all ear:
 Jesus is here my soul's delight.

Is this the heavenly friend that hung
 In blood and anguish on the tree?
 Whom Paul proclaimed—whom David sung—
 Who died for them—who died for me?

How fair thou offspring of my God!
 Thou first-born image of his face,
 Thy death procured this blessed abode;
 Thy vital beams adorn the place.

Is it possible I am here? Are my doubts, and fears, and painful conflicts all over? Shall I behold this lovely precious Jesus, through all eternity, face to face, without a dimming veil between? Do I hear the shouts of the redeemed? Is it the songs of adoring angels—the loud hallelujahs of the armies of heaven that strike my ears? Oh, what glory dazzles my eyes and enraptures my heart! What floods of blessedness overwhelm my soul! I am lost in joy and wonder—in adoration, love and praise.

III. Improve the subject.

We have attempted a description of this country, and have spoken of the way leading thereto. We have seen that it is a holy and pure land abounding in every thing that is desirable; that the road though narrow and difficult, is yet pleasant and agreeable. And now, sinner, will you not go with us to this country. "*We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord has said, I will give it you.*" "*Come and go with us and we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.*" The terms upon which you shall possess an inheritance in this country are easy and very reasonable. Repent of your sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in all his statutes blameless, and you shall obtain the kingdom. Come unto the Lord just as you are—poor and vile, needy and

dependent, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and you "*shall be filled,*" you shall obtain pardon of sin, and peace and reconciliation to God.

Come with us, and we will do you good. Yes, we will do all that feeble ministers and people can do for you. We will instruct you in the paths of holiness; we will tell you what we have felt, and seen, and know; that Jesus is precious; that he is a glorious, almighty, all sufficient, and willing Saviour; we will bear your case to a throne of grace; we will plead for your conversion and complete salvation in the name of Jesus; we will entreat God on your behalf; we will take you by the hand and try to lead you in the footsteps of Jesus, and show you the dangers and snares that lie thick upon each side of the way; we will hold up to your view the offers of the gospel, and show you the willingness of Christ to receive poor, repenting, returning prodigals, and all the rich and unbounded fulness of the Eternal Covenant of Peace. "*The Lord has spoken good concerning Israel.*" These words give to poor lost sinners the greatest encouragement to enlist under Christ's royal banner and journey in haste to the glorious land. They shall become interested in all the privileges of the children of God—shall partake of all their heavenly joys and comforts; shall share in their eternal and unspeakable felicity which awaits them in the celestial paradise of God. "*The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.*" What "*good*" hath he spoken? He declared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by his word and covenant, by his solemn oath, that their offspring should possess the land of Canaan. In like manner he hath pledged himself to Jesus Christ that all his spiritual seed—all the purchase of his blood

shall inherit the heavenly Canaan with all its ineffable glories and blessedness. Jesus prayed for it—he asked it upon the principles of law and justice; upon the conditions of his mediation and atonement, viz that all those which the Father had given him should be with him and where he is, and behold his glory; and, therefore, he tells them, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.”*



THE

DANGEROUS AND DESTRUCTIVE CONSEQUENCES

ATTENDING THE

USE OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

BY THE REV. JAMES M'GREADY.



THE

DANGEROUS AND DESTRUCTIVE CONSEQUENCES

ATTENDING THE

USE OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

I WOULD introduce this subject in the language which the celebrated Dr. Rush makes use of upon another occasion, viz. If an inhabitant of our world should go to a neighboring planet, and should tell the inhabitants of that place, that there was an article in the world he left, in the highest repute among all ranks and descriptions of men; that it was manufactured with the greatest care and industry; that it was a principal article of trade and commerce among all nations; that it was to be found in almost every house, and frequently used by almost every person; that it was presented by every man to his friend and neighbor as a token of his love and regard; that it formed a very material part of all banquets, feasts, and entertainments—yet, that it was destructive to the health, to the morals, to the bodies, to the souls, to the characters, and to the estates of those that use it; that it destroyed the peace and happiness of individuals, of families, societies and neighborhoods; that it was an inlet and procuring cause of broils, discords

quarrels and mischiefs of every description; that it brings men of sense, of genius and importance to mere cyphers in the world, men of character and respectability to be objects of contempt, and men of wealth and property to be beggars and vagabonds; that it reduces whole families from the summit of wealth and affluence to poverty, rags and wretchedness;—in a word, that it degrades men of rationality below the character of the brutes:—the person bringing such tidings would be banished from society as a common liar, because such information would appear so irrational and incredible. Yet every man of reason and reflection must acknowledge, that this is a true picture of that poisonous, destructive article, which we call spirituous liquors, which has been the source of so much mischief, and so many deadly evils to the world of mankind.

It is true, the advocates for the use of ardent spirits, particularly such of them as are reputed sober, temperate men, will plead for the moderate use of them, and tell you in the language of the apostle, 1. Tim. iv. ch. 4. v. that every creature of God is good, and none to be refused when sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

I confess I do believe spirituous liquors, physically considered, to be an innocent thing; that there is no moral evil in them. The same may be said of a sword, of a bayonet, of a rifle bullet, or a cannon ball. Let them alone, and they will injure nobody; but apply them to their proper use, and they are instruments of death. So spirituous liquor, innocent as the thing may be in itself, the use of it is ruin and destruction to body and soul. I suppose if ardent spirits were never taken but when they were sanctified by the word

of God and prayer, or if no man was ever to lift the bottle or glass to his mouth, but when he felt himself in the spirit of Christ, and acting under the influence of that gospel command, 1. Cor. 10 ch. xiii. v. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," no man would ever be drunk; and it is more than probable that spirituous liquors would be seldom or never used. But, alas! how few of our sober and temperate men can appeal to God, and say, I never drank a dram, nor took a drink of grog, but when it was sanctified by the word of God and prayer! I never lifted the bottle or the glass to my lips, but when I did it to the glory of God, and with a design to glorify him. In opposition to all the arguments that can be advanced, in favor of the use of ardent spirits, the following considerations are submitted, which must have due weight upon the minds of all men of serious reflection, and especially such as are sincere Christians.

1. That spirituous liquors have been a source of mischief, destruction and misery to the human race ever since they were invented and brought into use. Do you hear of a broil, a riot, or bloody quarrel struck up in a public company, men of rationality beating and tearing one another like dogs, their eyes blackened, their noses bleeding, their limbs broken or disabled, their heads mashed, and their bodies bruised? Inquire into the spring and moving cause of it, and at once you will find it is too much whiskey. Do you hear of a man found upon the highway frozen to death? or a man having his brains beat out, or his neck broken by a fall from his horse?—and you are sure to hear that the unhappy cause was too much whiskey. Do you see a man coming home to his

family, his wife trembling with the terror of a slave, his children and servants struck with horror and consternation, or flying the plantation for fear of unmerciful abuse, as though a murdering savage or an infernal fury had made his appearance? Examine into the cause of all this confusion and disturbance, and you will find it is whiskey—the head of the family has come home drunk. Do you see a man that once possessed thousands, once a man of credit, a man of property, a man that filled offices of profit and respectability, now going in rags, an object of contempt, and a nuisance to the society of mankind? Examine into the cause of this melancholy change, and you will find it is whiskey; the intemperate use of ardent spirits was the inlet or procuring cause of his gambling, of his neglecting business, his bad trades, and foolish bargains, which all terminate in his ruin; and now when his all is gone, his only refuge and comfort is whiskey, when often he has to beg ninepence before he can get it. Do you hear of an honorable professor of Christianity blundering, falling into sin, bringing the cause of God into reproach, and thereby opening the mouths of the uncircumcised in heart to blaspheme the precious name of JESUS?—and for the most part you will find the cause of it to be whiskey. For, I think, it will be found, upon examination, that nine-tenths of the reproaches that the professors of Christianity bring upon religion is by the intemperate use of spirituous liquors.

2. Another awful consideration which should have a solemn weight, at least upon the minds of serious professors, is, that spirituous liquors are an article that the Devil has embraced and appropriated in a very great degree for his own purposes, and for his

own use, to the promotion of his kingdom in the world, to the destruction of the souls of men, and the injury and disgrace of the Christian religion.

It is impossible to point out one article or commodity in the world, that is and has been the source of so much mischief, that is an inlet to so many evils, and that so effectually lays men liable to so many temptations, and that so completely places them beyond hope, beyond recovery, and beyond every possible remedy. With the greater part of the human race, ardent spirits is the most suitable bait that the devil can present to ensnare them, and to lead them on to perpetrate the most enormous crimes.

In evidence of the truth of this, let us take a serious view of the conduct of hundreds that attend our courts, elections and general musters, and who frequent balls, horse races and other places of public concourse. Take a view of their dreadful effects on individuals, families and collected bodies of men: these mischiefs and dreadful, destructive consequences taken into view, I would ask every serious professor of religion, are ardent spirits a blessing or a curse to the world? are they a blessing or a curse to the church? Whether does the bottle and the glass, the whiskey and the grog in the drinking hall of a tavern, look most suitable before a company of the humble followers of the blessed Jesus, or before a company of profane ungodly sinners? The answer—I apprehend the answer will be easy, but my present business is to point out the dangers that attend the use of ardent spirits, and the dreadful consequences that frequently proceed from the use of them.

And here I shall pass over their ruinous effects upon the bodies and constitutions of men, as this has been

treated in a learned and masterly manner by one of the most eminent and respectable physicians in the United States* I shall only consider the effects of them as they are pernicious to the morals and destructive to the souls of men.

1. The dangers that attend the moderate and temperate use of ardent spirits, and

1. The most moderate and temperate use of them naturally leads to a habit, and this habit for the most part, terminates in drunkenness and intemperance. It has been a received principle in the world that spirituous liquors taken in bitters in the morning, are a preservative to health, and a preventive to disease, especially in sickly seasons. Hence it has become a practice in the most decent families to take a bitter dram in the morning for the purpose of health, and perhaps to repeat it again before breakfast to create an appetite; again, when a man comes in fatigued from hard labor, to take a glass of spirits or a drink of grog to refresh his body and raise his animal spirits; again, if a friend or a neighbor comes to his house, as a token of his friendship, he presents him with the bottle and the glass, and for sake of good fellowship, he must taste it with his friend. By a frequent, though a temperate use of it in this manner, a man will contract a liking to the taste of it. After some time, he will feel an anxiety for it at the particular times that he has accustomed himself to take it; presently when his bottle or his keg is empty, he will feel the same longing anxiety after it, that a smoker or chewer will feel when his tobacco runs out; and hence, he will as soon as possible, provide himself with a new supply. In such a use of ardent spirits as this, the habit grows

* Dr. Rush.

up insensibly, and it is ten thousand to one, that in the course of fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five years, and probably a great deal sooner, this habit will ripen into swinish drunkenness and intemperance. The world at present abounds with dismal examples of this kind. There are, no doubt, hundreds that pass for sober, temperate men, that are living in this moderate, but daily use of spirituous liquors. Were you to tell them that in the space of twenty years, they would be common drunkards, they would reject the idea with horror, and would be ready to reply in the language of Hazael to the prophet, 2 Kings, viii. ch. 13 v.—“Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this?”—when, perhaps, in less time, they will fall a prey to this soul-undoing habit.

2. Another danger that attends even the temperate use of spirituous liquors, is, that a man, though cautious and prudent, yet if he accustoms himself to the use of spirituous liquors, is liable at one time or another to be overtaken, and to be ensnared in the Devil's net; or, in other words, he is liable, at one time or another, to be intoxicated.

If we consider the different seasons of heat and cold—the different circumstances that a man may be in, and the different situations of the human body, in which ardent spirits may be used, we will find that their effects will be as different. A man, when he is young, in the prime and vigor of life, when his nervous system is strong and his constitution is sound, may use spirituous liquors, as he supposes with temperance, without feeling the intoxicating power.—When he is advanced in years, in the decline of life, his constitution broken and his nervous system weakened, the same quantity of spirits will produce intox-

ication. A man, in perfect health, receiving his food in proper season, and engaged in laborious bodily exercise, may drink a quantity of spirits without receiving any sensible injury; yet when his body is in an enfeebled state, weakened by sickness, the same quantity of spirits will intoxicate him, especially if taken upon an empty stomach. Again, a man, in a warm day, in the exercise of hard labor, with a lively perspiration, may drink a quantity of spirits without intoxication, when the same quantity taken in a cold day and upon an empty stomach, would be extremely injurious. From what has been said, we may plainly see that it is a dangerous matter (especially for professors of religion) to touch or concern with spirituous liquors. It is, in fact, to dabble with the Devil's bait, and to run the fatal risk, at one time or another, of swallowing his hook.

Many lamentable instances might be brought forward to illustrate this melancholy truth, but I shall mention only one at this present time, viz. the circumstance of a man, now living, who, for the space of twenty-four years, made an open and reputable profession of the religion of Jesus, without the smallest blot or stain upon his moral and religious character, and for the space of eighteen years of that time, he uniformly supported the character of a useful, zealous minister of the gospel. On a cold day, and with an empty stomach, being in a low state of health—but a short time recovered from the bilious fever—he rode in company with two wicked men, and unhappily drinking with them at different times, the liquor had a sudden effect, and the consequence was, he was shamefully intoxicated, to the great reproach of religion, to the wounding of his own soul, and to

the hardening of the wicked and ungodly. After spending some weeks in a state of anguish and distress, almost comparable to the torments of the damned, he at length obtained some small glimmering views of the glory and sufficiency of Christ's peace-speaking blood to wash away his guilt, which gave him an humble hope and trust that the Lord had not cast him off forever, but would yet return in mercy to his soul. At this time, he entered into a written covenant with the Lord—1st. That he would never taste spirituous liquors until his dying hour. 2d. That he would prepare a piece for the press, in which he would point out the pernicious consequences of spirituous liquors, and warn the professing world of the danger of touching or concerning with them. 3d. That he would, until his dying hour, observe the same day of the month, that his unhappy fall took place, every month, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer before God. 4th. That he would pray in secret three times every day, and examine his heart twice every day before God, whether he had committed any sin, or neglected any duty during the day. 5th. That he would, in the strength of God, try every day, as his daily exercise, to watch and pray, to guard against temptation, and try to maintain a close walk with God. In a few days after, as he was walking along the road, the Lord graciously shined into his soul, and filled him with joy and peace in believing. He felt all his guilt carried away and drowned in the red sea of the blood of Christ, and enjoyed the witness of a sealed pardon in his soul. For many weeks afterward, he felt a heavenly calm and serenity of soul, and experienced almost an uninterrupted communion with God. He, therefore, again solemnly covenanted with the Lord

never to taste, touch or concern with spirituous liquors, and it is his unshaken resolution, by this means, forever to disarm the devil of that source of temptation.

But before I dismiss this particular, I would take notice of a shameful practice that often prevails among men that call themselves men of sobriety and temperance, and to their shame be it spoken, it is sometimes the practice of professors of religion, viz. going into taverns to take a refreshment as they call it. This is, in reality, going upon the Devil's ground, and I apprehend while they are sitting round the grog table, they cannot with a clear conscience before God, pray the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Perhaps four or five neighbors happen to meet at a public place. Custom and friendship incline them to go into the tavern to take a drink together. They are all civil sober men; they call for a room, where they will not be interrupted by the common drinking rabble. One of them calls in his half pint. This goes round, but it is but a taste among so many. The second calls in his half pint; this goes round, but nobody is moved by the liquor. The third calls in his. By the time this goes round, some small effects of the liquor are sensibly felt. But they are a friendly company, and every one must be a good fellow. The fourth must bring in his half pint. By the time this goes round, they sensibly feel their heads affected, their tongues beginning to falter, and a secret consciousness that they have drunk too much. But the fifth will not sponge upon his friends—he will bear his part; he will be offended if they break up before his half pint comes in: accordingly it is brought in and drunk. And now, if they are professors of religion, it is a thousand to

one but the Devil and the wicked will have the pleasure of laughing at them.

But I will just suppose another case: A sober, temperate man goes to the court house or county town upon some lawful business—perhaps the merchant he trades with, presents him with a glass of spirits. Out of politeness, he takes it. He has to walk into the tavern to see some person he has business with. He finds him with others sitting round a table drinking. They present him with the glass, and, out of politeness, he receives it. Perhaps he is invited to dine with some respectable acquaintance. Here the bottle and the glass is presented once or twice before dinner. In such cases, if the utmost caution is not used, before he is aware, he will find himself in a bad situation. Again, at marriages, house raisings, log rollings, &c. the bottle is handed round again and again, perhaps not less than twenty times in a day. A sober, temperate man passes it along with the company, and tastes it every time with the greatest moderation. But perhaps the frequent repetition of it, intoxicates him, before he duly considers the consequence. A little taken at one time, and a little at another, perhaps unexpectedly produces the dreadful effect.

The safest plan, then, to avoid intoxication, is never to touch, taste, or concern with it. The man that never tastes it will never be drunk with it.

3. It is dangerous for professors of religion ever to taste or concern with spirituous liquors. As long as they taste it, or use it, they are liable to temptation, and liable to disgrace religion. Ardent spirits is a principal bait that the Devil and the wicked throw out to ensnare professors and to draw them into sin.

I have heard some wicked ungodly men, so far glorying in their own shame, and owning themselves to be the slaves of the Devil, as to boast how they had taken in such and such professors of religion, and led them on to intoxication, and how they tried such another, and with what subtilty and deceit, and with what pretensions to friendship and politeness, they tried to get him to drink, and, if possible, to make him drunk. Here you will find these little petty subalterns of the Devil (though they would wish the world to call them gentlemen) coming to a professor, with the craft and subtilty of their father, the Devil, professing every degree of friendship, and treating him with every degree of pretended politeness. They drink to him again and again, and urge it, and press it upon him. Perhaps they will bring a different kind of liquor; and here they urge and insist upon him to drink, time after time. Perhaps a more delicious kind of spirits than they have yet tasted, is brought, and this he must taste with them. If they find him off his guard, and beginning to drink it freely, then they hold it to him, and follow him up, until their hellish object is obtained, until intoxication appears visible upon him. Then they rejoice and triumph, and boast with an infernal pleasure, because they have gained a victory over the cause of God, and have brought the religion of Jesus into disgrace. Such persons are exactly described by the prophet Habakkuk, ch. ii. 15 v. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness."

During the late revival of religion in Kentucky, a certain man who had a short time before, made a profession and joined the church, happened to be at a

public gathering, perhaps a marriage: the wicked gathered round him, and persuaded him to drink again and again, until they had made him more than half drunk. Their next object was to get him to dance. In this attempt, they were likewise successful. While the poor, unhappy creature was on the floor dancing, one of the profane wretches who had led him into sin, shouted out glory to the Devil, glory to Beelzebub. A person present reprov'd the profanity of his language. The fellow replied, when these professors of Christianity can draw away one of our class of people after them, when they can get him to profess religion, and proclaim his conversion, they shout and rejoice, and give glory to their God. Now, when we can draw off one of them to join our side, should we not rejoice, and give glory to the Devil. This poor, hardened sinner (perhaps through the influence of whiskey) candidly and honestly spoke out in words, the very language of every wicked sinner's heart upon such an occasion. The carnal mind is so completely at enmity with God, and hates God with such a perfect hatred, that it secretly rejoices, and feels an infernal pleasure at every circumstance in the conduct of professors of religion, that promotes the interest of the Devil's kingdom, and weakens and disgraces the cause of Christ.

But, again, it is extremely dangerous for professors of religion to taste or concern with spirituous liquors. While ever they taste it or make use of it, their characters are in danger, their souls are in danger, and the cause of God is in danger. When the enemies of Christ and his cross present their liquor to them, they watch them with an eagle's eye; they notice exactly how much they pour into the glass, and how often

they take it, and how much they drink; and if a professing Christian be in a dead, backsliding state, he may indulge his carnal appetite too far, though no symptoms of intoxication may appear about him. And, therefore, the wicked will find some ground of reproach, and perhaps some such unfavorable insinuations will be thrown out: Such a man is a professor of religion; I like him; he is none of your stiff, hidebound Christians. He can take a good full glass of whiskey, or he can swallow a good stiff grog. He and I can take a good hearty drink together. And he will be sure to throw out such reflections in the hearing of some exemplary professor, to hurt his feelings. But if the question is proposed, did this professor drink to intemperance? Was he drunk? O no, he will answer, he behaved very soberly, but he loves whiskey very well: at any rate he drinks enough for a Christian.

Now, were all the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, forever to refrain from the use of ardent spirits, and never to touch, taste or concern with them more than they would with arsenick, they would forever deprive the Devil of one of the strongest sources of his temptations, and forever disarm the wicked of their heaviest weapons against the religion of Jesus. But, before we dismiss this particular, I shall answer some arguments adduced in our day in favor of this little pleasing indulgence.

1. Says one, I drink ardent spirits in my family, and with my friends and neighbors, when abroad. I love the taste of liquor, and feel a pleasure in the use of it; but I am a sober, temperate man; I do not drink to excess. To this I would answer, every man that drinks ardent spirits, that does not spew, nor vomit,

nor lie upon the street, nor falls from his horse, calls himself a temperate man. Many of these temperate men will consume from a pint to a quart of strong spirits in a day. Such temperate men are, in God's account, intemperate drunkards. And though their constitutions are now strong, and they can bear a large quantity of liquor, yet the habit is growing fast, and when the infirmities of old age come on, they will fall a prey to the power of their appetite.

2. But says another, I am a laboring man; my calling is painful and laborious, and the frequent use of spirits is very strengthening to me; it creates an appetite for my food, and raises my animal spirits. I find very great refreshment in it. To this I would answer, I make no doubt but your appetite finds very great gratification in it; and, perhaps, if the matter were carefully examined, the pleasure you feel in the taste of the liquor, is the highest principle from which you act in the use of it; and, here, I would request your conscience to answer a few serious questions upon the subject. 1st. Does not your conscience often tell you that your appetite frequently takes the lead of your judgment and conscience? 2d. Do you not sometimes feel a consciousness that you have drunk too much? 3d. Do you not often feel a hankering anxiety after spirituous liquors, whether you be engaged in hard labor or in a state of idleness? 4th. Are you not often secretly afraid that some person will discover that you have drunk too much? 5th. Do you not sometimes secretly resolve that you will be more cautious, and use more moderation in your drinking for the future, lest your intemperance should be discovered? 6th. After all this, does not your appetite overcome you, and bring you to break over all

your resolutions; and then are you not secretly afraid, lest some person should discover that you have drunk too much? Now, if you are conscious that these things are so, take it for granted that you have acquired that habit that is ripening fast into intemperate drunkenness. Therefore, for God's sake, take the alarm, and stop before it is too late. There is no other way to escape danger and destruction, but to quit the use of it altogether, and never taste it more than you would taste poison of the most fatal quality.

3d. Another replies, I use spirituous liquors with moderation and temperance. I am conscious before God, that I do use them with temperance. I never felt the evil effects of spirituous liquors to the present moment.

To such, I would answer, if this be the case, I am happy to hear it. It will be well if you can say the same at a dying hour. But still I would tell you that you tread upon dangerous ground. At present you apprehend no danger. This was the case once with hundreds who have since fallen victims to the intoxicating poison. Though you fear no danger now, yet the habit may grow up indiscriminately, and not be sensibly felt for seven years yet to come; and, perhaps, when the habit is formed, it may be seven years more before your appetite will gain the full mastery of your reason and conscience; and, therefore, it is the safest ground for you to quit the use of it in time—to quit it altogether. If you never taste it till your dying hour, the habit will never be formed, and you will never be guilty of intoxication.

But we come to the second thing proposed—which was, to point out *the dreadful consequences attending the use of ardent spirits.*

1. One horrible consequence attending the use of spirituous liquors, is, that the intemperate use of them degrades and destroys the dignity of human nature, and sinks a man below the character of a beast. What a mournful spectacle! what a pitiable sight is it to see a man of reason and reflection, capable of contemplating the perfections of God, capable of knowing and enjoying happiness in God, lying upon the street or upon the highway, rolling in the mud like a filthy swine, spewing and vomiting like a dog! or to see him coming home to his family, or to his lodging, his garments besmeared with mud and dirt, or torn off him through logs and brush, where he has blundered along. See him coming into the presence of decent, genteel company. * * * * *

Hear him talk, and you scarcely discover the rationality of man about him; his tongue runs without end upon the most trifling subjects—pouring out the most disgusting foolishness and fulsome nonsense. When he relates any particular passage, in a few minutes he forgets that he has told it, and tells it over again, and presently he tells it again, and perhaps he tells it twenty times over before he is done with it, until he tires and sickens every person present with it. When he comes to himself, if he have the feelings of a man, what mortification, shame and sense of disgrace does he feel! what cutting reflections and horrors of conscience! and, perhaps, when capable of examining, he finds that his money, his valuable papers, or some useful property is gone, that they are lost, and he knows not how? Perhaps some strolling vagabond found him by the way, and picked his pockets.

The intemperate use of ardent spirits has a natural tendency to sink a man's character into contempt, to

destroy his importance, and make him less than a cipher in the world. It leads him into idleness, to gambling, to debauchery, to extravagance, to the neglect of business, and bad management. It has a natural tendency to impair his reason and destroy his intellectual powers. Hence, he becomes stupid, senseless, and almost irrational. When he feels himself sinking into contempt, and, in a great measure, neglected by men of character and good conduct—this sinks him in his own estimation. Then he becomes the companion of sots and ruffians and the meaner class of mankind. And, here, he loses all sense of honor, and begins to care but little whether he has a character or not. And the fatal consequence of this is, he gives himself to brutish drunkenness and intemperance, and looks for happiness and satisfaction nowhere else but in his bottle. By this means, like a round body, whirling with rapid velocity down a deep descent, he quickly sinks upon a level with the brutes, becomes a disgrace to his friends, a nuisance to the world, and dies like a beast, unlamented.

Alas! what melancholy examples of this kind are to be found all over the continent of America! Men of sense and genius that once filled offices of importance with respectability; men that once did honor to their country in legislative and executive departments; men who fought like lions upon the field of battle, in the glorious cause of liberty, and made themselves famous in the esteem of their country; and men who, by prudence and industry for a number of years, had raised themselves to wealth and respectability: I say, of all these classes, we find painful examples of the deadly poisonous effects of the intemperate use of spirituous liquors. Men who might have

immortalized their characters while the world exists, becoming filthy sots; yea, stupid beasts in human shape, and, at last, dying like brutes—their very death a comfort to their friends, and a means of purging the world of its useless lumber.

2. Another fearful consequence that attends the intemperate use of ardent spirits, is, that it destroys the peace and happiness of families, and lays a lasting foundation for broils, discords and mischiefs. How must it wound the feelings and destroy the happiness of a woman of a tender, delicate sense of honor, to see her husband sinking his character, and destroying his importance by intoxication—bringing himself and family into disgrace and contempt? How must it distress and grieve a prudent, frugal and industrious woman, who with care and good economy, tries to promote the prosperity of her family, when she sees her husband a slave to his filthy appetite, drunk upon every occasion, and by his attachment to whiskey, neglecting his business, destroying his property, enthralling himself in debt, and bringing ruin and desolation upon himself and his family? What frowns, reflections, angry disputes, coolness of affection and unhappy quarrels must arise from such a dreadful service!

But let us pursue the unhappy subject further. Just see a poor filthy drunkard coming home from the taverns, the still-house, the court-house, or the muster field, foaming, full of whiskey, inspired with the very temper of hell, raging like an infernal fiend from the bottomless pit. See him mad with every thing, offended with every word that can be spoken to him. See him, like a bloody savage, seizing the companion of his bosom, tearing her by the hair, kicking her,

beating her, and abusing her without mercy or the feelings of humanity. When this, and such like conduct, is repeated again and again, what mischief and disturbance must inevitably take place in that family, until it becomes a proper emblem of hell.

3. Another awful consequence arising from the intemperate use of ardent spirits is, that it is destructive to the health, and often to the lives of those who live in the filthy indulgence of it.

The intemperate use of spirits is calculated to inflame the blood, to weaken the nerves, to destroy the powers of the stomach, and bring on malignant fevers and other dangerous disorders. Again: travelling at night from still-house to still-house, and riding home at night from drinking houses, lying out whole nights upon the cold ground, exposed to the night air, to dews and frosts, destroys the constitution and hastens dissolution.

But, alas, with what spectacles of horror has spirituous liquors filled the world! How many have fallen from their horses dead drunk, in the cold season of the year, and have frozen to death! How many have had their necks broken, or their brains dashed out, by falling from their horses while drunk! How many by reason of intoxication, have run into dangerous and bloody quarrels, and have been stabbed or beaten to death while drunk! In a word, what multitudes have been hurried to the eternal world by drunkenness in the most dreadful, unprepared state!

4. Another horrible consequence is, that drunkenness is an inlet to every other species of sin and wickedness. You will scarcely find a drunkard (if he be not so far depraved as to glory in his shame) but will positively lie to conceal his drunkenness. If he be

able to keep upon his feet, or to sit upon his horse, he will deny that he is drunk. He will excuse and extenuate his crime by downright lying, and state a variety of other causes upon which he tries to account for every symptom of intoxication that appears about him. Drunkenness opens a wide door for the Devil to set all hellish corruptions and evil propensities of a man's depraved fallen nature into agitation; yea, to bring forth anger, rage, malice, revenge, murder and filthy obscene lusts into operation. When a man is drunk, he is just like a machine in the Devil's hand; he is liable to do any thing that Satan prompts to; he is liable to steal, to rob, to commit acts of uncleanness, or to perpetrate the most horrid murders, rapes, or any thing that the Devil and his own desperately wicked heart inclines him to do. So the habit of drunkenness, when once it is contracted, is always an introduction to a numerous train of other habits of horrible wickedness—such as idleness, gambling, debauchery, and uncleanness of the lowest and meanest grade, quarrelling, fighting, profane swearing, horrid blasphemies, &c.

5. Another fatal consequence that attends drunkenness, is, that it ruins a man's estate, and reduces him and his family to poverty, extreme want and wretchedness. The temperate use of ardent spirits, the year round, is a high tax upon a man's fortune. A man, of strict sobriety, once told me that fifty dollars would not pay for the spirits drunk in his family in the course of a year. What, then, must be the annual expenses of a common drunkard for the spirits intemperately used in his house—his tavern expenses, and the expenses of his extravagant drunken frolics? This, no doubt, in the course of a year, will amount to

a heavy sum, equal, if not superior to his income. Again: to this add what is lost by gambling; what is lost by idleness and neglect of business; what is lost by his foolish trades and bargains when he is drunk, and the advantages that are taken of him by speculators and designing men when he is intoxicated. By such a train of expenses and losses, he becomes enthralled in immense debts; his credit sinks and his business falls altogether into disorder; his creditors begin to harrass him; one judgment is obtained against him after another; sheriffs and constables from every quarter come in with their executions; his property is seized and sold for almost nothing, and, perhaps, in a few months, he is brought to poverty and extreme want.

Now, whiskey has brought him to rags and wretchedness—yet whiskey is the source of his consolation, and, hence, he drinks on until he becomes a disgrace to humanity, and a nuisance to the society of men, and, perhaps, dies like a brute, unlamented.

6. The intemperate use of ardent spirits puts a man beyond hope, and, for the most part, beyond all possibility of recovery. Let a man once become a habitual drunkard, and his case is nearly, if not entirely, hopeless. You may convince his judgment that he is wrong, and that his present course will ruin him in time and through eternity. You may touch his conscience with a sense of his guilt, and he will candidly and honestly acknowledge the baseness of his conduct, and lament his dismal situation with floods of tears. He will make a hundred promises that he will change his conduct; that he will never do as he has done, and that he will drink no more. But let the bottle be presented to him the next hour—his

resolutions are all gone; his appetite has effectually gained the mastery over his judgment, his reason and his conscience. So we commonly find the drunkard spending his life in a reciprocal course of sinning and repenting, and repenting and sinning, often making solemn resolutions to amend his conduct, and as often breaking these resolutions as he can get whiskey.

When a man becomes a habitual drunkard, he appears to be within a step of losing his day of grace, and sealing his damnation. He may have solemn calls from God to repent and fly from the wrath to come; he may feel the motions of the divine Spirit, and be the subject of the most awful awakenings; but as soon as he comes to the tavern, to the still house, or into a company of drunkards, he begins to dabble with the temptation, and presently he is ensnared. The Devil sends some of his old companions to lead him on by degrees, until they have him drunk, and so we commonly hear no more of his convictions or serious impressions about religion, but now he turns like the dog to his vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

I have in the course of my life, seen three considerable revivals of religion, during which I have had the opportunity of conversing with a great many persons under solemn awakenings, and of knowing their exercises particularly; and I have made this observation—that I scarcely know any that came under the description of habitual drunkards, (however hopeful their convictions might appear for a time) that ever embraced true religion,—and if any of that character did profess to experience religion, they were no honor to the cause of Christ but a burden to the church; as they would be frequently dabbling with the Devil's bait, and as frequently drunk.

7. The most dreadful consequence that attends the sin of drunkenness is, that it ends in hell, and there effectually plunges the immortal soul into eternal perdition. Says the prophet, Isai. 5th chapter 11th verse, "Woe unto them that rise early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night, till wine inflame them." In the 14th verse, he describes their fearful doom: "Therefore, hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure, and therefore their glory, and their multitude and their pomp; and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it." The Spirit of God, by the Apostle, expressly declares, in 1 Cor. vi. 10, That drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God—and again, he ranks drunkenness among the works of the devil. But when we consider that drunkenness inspires the unhappy subjects of it, with the spirit, the temper and disposition of hell, it then naturally follows, in the reason and fitness of things, that hell is their most proper and suitable place.

Just observe their conduct upon a public day, at a court, an election, or a general muster. Go into a tavern and see the common hall filled with creatures in the shape and likeness of men, but inspired with the temper of devils: see them swallowing down the intoxicating poison: hear their horrid oaths and blasphemies, the very language of the infernal gulf belching from their mouths.—Hear their confused noise, their mad tumult and distraction, and their appearance much more resembles a band of devils from the bottomless pit, than a company of rational, intelligent men.

Just go to the muster field or a general review—see several hundred men upon parade—their sobriety, their attention to orders and decent conduct through every part of the military exercises of the day, seem to do

honor to their country. You would rejoice to see so large a company of rational, respectable citizens. But wait until they are dismissed and receive their public treat from their officers. Alas, what a melancholy change takes place! You will see a large majority of the same men turned into an appearance resembling perfect brutes or devils. Hear the sound of wild confusion raised, worse than a Bedlam. See the mad commotion and tumult that takes place round the whiskey barrel—the yells and shrieks, the horrid oaths and hellish blasphemies, as though a company of demons had come up from hell. Presently, when the whiskey begins to operate—when they begin to feel its intoxicating power, the very spirit and temper of hell begins to appear. Now bloody quarrels begin in every part of the vast multitude: see men tearing off their clothes—seizing each other like dogs—tearing each other by the hair—beating and abusing one another—biting each other's flesh—gouging out one another's eyes with the madness and fury of devils.

Presently, you will see a number of these poor bacchanalians reeling and staggering about, their eyes swelled and blackened, their blood streaming, bearing visible marks of inhuman abuse, others you will see hanging upon a fence, or leaning upon a wall spewing out their vomit like dogs; others again, you will find, like filthy swine, lying in corners, stretched upon the street, or wallowing in the mud and dirt; and again, when they disperse, and attempt to go home, see them in companies upon every road, and in every direction—what loud talk, distracted noise, horrid oaths, and fearful blasphemies fill the very air as they pass along? See them straining their horses to the gal-

lop, yelling and shrieking like infernal fiends—perhaps some dashed from their horses, either killed outright, or their bodies bruised and their limbs broken—some falling off, and lying all night by the high-way, liable to be trodden to death by horses, or torn to pieces by wild beasts.

Now let reason and divine revelation speak and determine what place, in all the vast extended universe, is most fit, proper and suitable for such a class or description of men—Certainly the place that is most suitable to their temper and disposition—and that is hell.

Let creatures of such a disposition be taken into the pure mansions of the blessed in heaven, they would have no more relish for the pure spiritual joys of the New Jerusalem, than a hog inured to the puddle, and raised by the pot-ail trough, would have for the grandeur and delicious accommodations of a palace. Yea, take such monsters, in fact half brutes half devils, into heaven; the company, the exercises and employments of the place, would be so contrary to the vitiated taste of their filthy natures, that it would be more intolerable to them than hell. Yea, rather than spend an eternity in a place so contrary to their temper and disposition, they would fly from the presence of God, and leap over the walls of heaven and hide themselves in the bottomless pit of hell.

From what has been said respecting the dreadful consequences attending the use of ardent spirits, we may see some of the difficulties that attend the road to hell. We may see at once how large a sacrifice the drunkard has to make in order to accomplish his own damnation.

1. He has to part with his character, his dignity and importance as a man. He must degrade himself

below the character of a beast, and sink himself into the utmost contempt and disgrace.

2. He must part with the happiness, the peace, and comfort of his family; he must live in a state of enmity, hatred and disturbance even with the companion of his bosom, and reduce his house to a perfect emblem of hell.

3. He must part with his health, and lay himself liable to all the noxious disorders and diseases arising from intemperance; yea, he must lay himself liable to be frozen to death, to be killed by a fall from his horse, and to all the fatal accidents peculiar to a habit of drunkenness.

4. He must part with his estate, his money and property, and sink himself and his family into poverty, want and extreme wretchedness.

5. He must endure the most fearful horrors of conscience, the most keen, cutting reflections of his own mind, the most mortifying sense of the shame, disgrace and contempt to which he has reduced himself, and sometimes fearful apprehensions of future misery and torment, equal to a hell upon earth.

In a word, for the gratification of this filthy appetite, he must part with all that is comfortable and desirable in this life, and the life to come. He must resist the Holy Ghost, murder conscience, fight against the light of conviction, and force his way into hell in spite of all his tender feelings of honor, interest, family comfort, reason, conscience, divine revelation, and the tears, prayers, entreaties, warnings, reproofs and admonitions of friends, relations and the ministers and people of God.

8. The last dreadful consequence we shall mention is, that the use of spirituous liquors often brings

reproach and disgrace upon the religion of Jesus, and opens the mouths of the uncircumcised in heart to blaspheme.

One principal objection which deists and men of depraved morals, raise against the religion of Jesus, is, the untender walk and ungodly conduct of its professors; and the two principal crimes that they bring forward as a reproach to professors, are, 1st. Their hardness and tightness in their dealings, and the unjust advantages that some take in bargains; and, 2d. The intemperate use of spirituous liquors. By these two things, I make no doubt but professors of religion have thrown stumbling blocks in the way of sinners, that have proved the means of prejudicing them against the ways of God, to the sealing of their damnation.

Our present business is, to consider the last of these, viz. the disgrace that intemperance brings upon Christianity. And, here, we would observe, that wicked and ungodly men suppose that God's people should be perfect creatures; and so far they are right—for the law of God requires them to be such; and the mark which the gospel of Christ requires us to aim at, is perfection; and, indeed, perfection is the very heaven the real Christian desires to obtain. Then, when the infidel or profane sinner sees the professor of religion in the tavern or at the still-house, drinking with the wicked, swallowing down one full glass of stiff grog after another; or when he discovers his tongue hobbling, his face inflamed, and his eyes red; or when he sees him catching at the wall, or holding by the door-post, when he goes out; or staggering from side to side in his walk, his course resem-

bling the worm of a fence—at once the sinner marks him down for a hypocrite. And hence, upon all occasions, such flouts as these are thrown out: Such a man is a great professor; or, perhaps, he is an elder of the church; he prays in his family, night and morning; he sits down at the communion table; he makes a great ado about religion, but he is a rotten hypocrite; he has just about as much religion as I have myself; he can take as stiff a grog as I can; yes, such a day I saw him at ——'s right drunk; at any rate he could not talk plain, nor walk straight—and I call that drunk. What! Is he an elder? In fact, if he is, he is a wet one. Was he not at the communion table such a Sabbath? O shocking! such a communicant! Alas! have not the wicked very often sufficient grounds for such cutting remarks? How does such conduct in professors stab the church of Christ to the life! How does it open the mouths of the uncircumcised in heart to blaspheme the precious name of Jesus!

When the Lord Jesus Christ had but twelve followers, one of them was a devil, a Judas, a traitor. So in every age of the church until the present day—there are tares among the wheat, wolves in sheep's clothing, that wish to mingle with Christ's sheep, Judases among the true disciples; persons that have by some means got a standing in the church, but are still stabbing and wounding the cause of God, by gratifying their filthy appetites. But still, they call themselves temperate men, and wish the world to think they are Christians. In their own apprehension, they are never drunk, inasmuch as they do not spew, nor vomit, nor fall from their horses, nor lie upon the highway. Professing Christians, such as are Christians in

reality, are often hurt by seeing them tipping in the taverns, and at public gatherings, house raisings, log rollings, &c. making too free a use of the bottle, and shewing some symptoms of having drank too much. On all such occasions, the wicked are watching them with an eagle's eye. And hence, the report is always on the wing among the ungodly. Such a professor was three sheets to the wind; such a one drinks hard for a Christian; I dont understand these drunken Christians, &c.

Now, I would appeal to the consciences of these drinking professors! If they are not conscious themselves at such times, that they have taken too much liquor? if they are not secretly afraid that some person will suspect that they have drunk too much? if they are not, at these times, at great pains to walk straight and upright, and to place their words in proper order, lest they should be suspected to have drunk too much? But if a fellow professor suspects it, and feels hurt upon the occasion, and in the spirit and temper of Christ, goes to one, and tells him in such language as this: My friend, you drink too free; your conduct is a reproach to the cause of God—you will find him pointedly denying it, and bringing forward a hundred other causes and reasons, upon which he tries to account for every symptom of intoxication that appears about him. If you complain to the church, and he be cited to appear before the church on session, what rancor, malice, and resentment does he manifest against his accuser! How often do such ideas as these flow from his heart, and in words fall from his tongue—He is a trifling little fellow—He is always taking more upon him than becomes him—It would be well that he would mind himself—If he

would look at home he would find as much in his own conduct to pick at, as he does in mine. When the business comes to trial, how will he try to conceal his guilt, by feigned excuses, equivocations and downright lies and falsehoods! If the fact is proven, and the minister and session deals honestly with him, presently he is offended with the church, disgusted with the minister, and mad with the session. It is a pity, indeed, that the conduct of such persons should be a reproach to the religion of Jesus, when the very reason and procuring cause of their conduct is the total want of religion. If the precepts of the Christian religion, or the example of Jesus Christ and his apostles, tolerated or encouraged tippling, intemperance or intoxication, or cheating and defrauding, then infidels would be more justifiable in their scoffs and reproaches at Christianity. But when we consider that the precepts of the gospel require the purest, strictest morality, and the most holy, heavenly obedience to every command of the law of God, and that the life and example of its divine author was spotless holiness, and untainted purity, then the base conduct of professors of religion, upon the principles of justice, ought to be no reproach to the religion of Jesus—but to themselves alone.

But the wounds that religion receives from persons of the foregoing description, are small, and scarcely discernible, when compared with the falls and blunders of real experimental christians, who have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus, by the eye of faith, and have felt the love of Christ that passes knowledge, shed abroad in their hearts.

To see a man that has made a shining profession before the world, that has stood like a tall cedar in

the garden of God, for a number of years, that has appeared for a long time to bring forth fruit to the glory of God—one that, as an elder of the church, has been an example of piety, a guide to the youth and inexperienced; or a minister of the gospel, who has been a burning, shining light, an instrument in the conversion of sinners, the spiritual father of many souls—to see such a one drunk with the intoxicating cup, degrading his heaven-born character to a level with the swinish sinner—alas, how deep the wound! How does Zion bleed and weep, and hang her fainting head while the wicked rejoice, devils exult, and all the dark vaults of hell resound with shouts of triumph. From such mournful considerations, let all the friends of Jesus that feel his cause as dear to them as their own souls, be entreated never to taste or concern with the intoxicating fluid. As long as they never taste it, they will never be intoxicated, nor wound nor dishonor religion by it. But we shall conclude the subject with the following exhortation.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE PROFESSED FOLLOWERS OF THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST.

My dear Christian Friends and Brethren:

You profess to have deserted the Devil's camp, and to have enlisted yourselves under the banner of King Jesus. You have often expressed in words, your blessed hopes of eternal life. You have declared, by your conduct, every time that you have sat down at the Lord's table, that you have felt the pangs of the new birth, that you have entered into Christ's family, through the straight gate of a saving conversion, that you have, by faith, beheld the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus, and that you have received

the spirit of adoption in your hearts, whereby you are enabled to cry Abba Father. You have often professed to have felt the witness of the word and spirit of a God of truth, bearing witness with your spirits that you are the children of God.

If these things be so, you are, in truth, the followers of Christ; and, if you be Christians indeed, and not formal hypocrites, then I am sure your daily exercise and employment will be to mortify the deeds of the body, to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, to deny yourselves, to take up your cross and follow Christ. It will be to cut off your right hand sins, and to pluck out your right eye sins, to lay aside every weight, and the sins that easily beset you, and to run with patience the race that is set before you.

Now, if you have these evidences of a progressive work of sanctification going on in your souls, I am sure that you are particularly attentive to that solemn admonition of your divine Lord, viz. *Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation*—Luke, xxii ch. 46 ver. That you are particularly attentive to that important direction of the Divine Spirit, 1 Thes. v. chap. 22 ver. To abstain from all appearance of evil.

My Christian friends, if these things be so, I apprehend you will attend to the advice of a friend that feels himself unworthy to be called a brother, and who, if he ever enters the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, will feel himself the greatest wonder of sovereign grace. But, as I wish the prosperity of Zion, and Christ's bleeding cause, to rise triumphant over all the bloody stabs that she has received from her professed friends, I would pray you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to pause, to reflect, and consider the wounds, the reproaches and deadly stabs that the

church of Christ has received just by the use of spirituous liquors. I would ask you, before God, would it not be an unspeakable advantage to the church of God, and a source of comfort to every individual professor of religion, that loves the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity, if Christ's professed followers would just disarm the Devil of one of his heaviest weapons against the cause of God, and deprive him of one of his principal sources of temptation, by which he destroys the souls of men, and disgraces the religion of the blessed Jesus; and that, my Christian friends, you can do, by refraining, and forever avoiding the use of ardent spirits. If you never taste, touch or concern with them in any place, in any company, or upon any occasion whatsoever, you will never be intoxicated—you will never be ensnared by that temptation. Spirituous liquors, then, will never be the cause of bringing you to dishonor God, to defile your consciences, and disgrace the religion of Jesus.

As long as the professors of religion continue to dabble with this bait of the Devil, they are ever in danger of swallowing his hook.

They may plead for the moderate, temperate use of it, and, as we have already observed, in the moderate, temperate use of it, acquire a habit that will not be easily eradicated; and, therefore, at some unguarded moment, when danger is least expected, when they are off their guard, when the Devil finds them negligent in the exercise of watching and prayer, they may fall an early prey to this infernal snare. Then how will the wicked rejoice and triumph with all the infernal pleasure of their father, the Devil! With what hellish delight and satisfaction, will they try to degrade and reproach the religion of the blessed Jesus; and, had they but power equal to the malignity

of their hearts, they would totally banish it from the world.

Again let me entreat you, as you profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and would abstain from all appearance of evil, to avoid going into taverns and still-houses, and tippling shops, as you would avoid the broad road to hell. By venturing into such places, and touching, tasting, or concerning with the intoxicating poison, is just to venture upon the Devil's ground, and to go into the way of temptation. Whenever the Devil finds you there, he has his eye upon you, and is sure to set his trap for you, and he has often his deputies and little petty demons in human shape, to present you with the bait. If ever a soldier wanders off from the camp and entrenchments of his prince or general, and is found trifling within the enemy's lines, he is sure to fall into the enemy's hands. So if the best Christian upon earth ventures upon the Devil's ground, he is sure to find the Devil too hard for him.

Again: wherever you are, in whatever company, if whiskey is in circulation, danger is near, and very often the Devil is near. Perhaps you may reply to this observation, with the boldness of a self-confident Peter, that you apprehend no danger—you are a sober, temperate man—you can take a moderate refreshment; but the Devil and the wicked cannot take you in. I would answer you in the words of the blessed Jesus—Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation; Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. Suppose you have lived in the temperate use of ardent spirits for half a century, and have never been overtaken or ensnared by it, it was the goodness of God, and nothing good in you, that has preserved you so long from falling; for

while you use it, or concern with it, you are playing with a viper, and taking fire in your bosom.

If the Devil is near, and danger near, in every company where whiskey is freely used, and we are sure that it is the Devil's bait, the subtle snare into which thousands and millions have fallen, and have been irrecoverably lost, to what danger, then, are poor, feeble, imperfect mortals exposed, as long as they taste or concern with it. The Devil's snare is laid for them in every direction. If they are called to a court of justice, at a public time, there is whiskey upon every side; and friends and neighbors, and sometimes some of Satan's deputies, inviting them and pressing upon them to drink. If they attend the duties of the musterfield, where custom has made it necessary for the commanding officers to give a treat sufficient to make every man drunk, or else they lose their popularity; and here there is danger. If they go to assist their neighbor to husk his corn, to reap down his grain, to raise his house, or to roll his logs, none of these things can be done without whiskey, and here, if they taste it, they are in danger.

Again, there are many of the men of the world so depraved and wicked, (as I have heard themselves boasting and vaunting,) that they will try to ensnare and take in a professor of religion, if they find he will drink with them. Hence they will bring their liquor to him, again and again, and entreat him to drink; and here they will try to grace every part of their conduct with kindness, friendship or politeness, when, perhaps, like the Old Serpent, their object is merely to ensnare him and draw him into sin; and, it may be, if they cannot lead him on to intoxication, yet, if he keep tasting it with them, it is a thousand to one but they will stab his character, and stab the religion of Jesus

through him, with dark hints and insinuations, that he loves whiskey too well, and that he drinks hard to be a Christian.*

Now, my dear Christian friends, if the prayer of your hearts is the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer—*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;* if it is the desire of your hearts to abstain from all appearance of evil; if you wish to glorify God with your bodies and spirits, which are his, then bid an eternal adieu to the intoxicating poison—shun it, and avoid it, as you would the poison of a serpent; then the Devil and the wicked will never be able to ensnare you by it, to reproach you, or to stab the cause of God, through you, upon that score. By so doing, you will reduce the Devil and his children to the necessity of trying some new project, in order to draw you into sin.

But are there any of the professing followers of the Lord Jesus Christ that keep distilleries, and for the gain of this present world, manufacture the rich blessings that fall from the bountiful hand of God, into spirituous liquors, to the advancement of the Devil's kingdom, the destruction of men's souls and the disgrace of Christianity? Is it not the case that the corn, the rye and the wheat, which God, in his infinite goodness, has bestowed upon the world as the staff of life,

* This observation is by no means intended as a reproach upon every man that presents spirituous liquors to his friend and neighbor that calls at his house, or comes on a friendly visit. I have known hundreds of respectable gentlemen and Christians, who, I have reason to believe, never presented their liquor to any man, at home or abroad, but from a true principle of friendship and politeness; and, therefore, I hope no gentleman, who is conscious of the purity of his principles, will feel himself hurt by the observation. But, as I have heard some persons boasting how they have ensnared professors under pretensions of friendship and politeness, it is, therefore, such as feel a consciousness of guilt upon the subject, that I wish to feel the stroke.

and the fruit of the orchard, which he has given for man's comfort and support, are taken by distillers and manufactured into a poison destructive to the souls and bodies, characters and estates of the poor human race?

The ancient Mythologists tell us about the Cyclops, beings of a monstrous description, whose business it was to forge thunderbolts for Jupiter. But how much more horrible may the description of the distillers be, when their employment is, in fact, to forge bolts of destruction, instruments of eternal death for the Devil, by which he carries thousands and millions of poor, lost sinners to the dark regions of hell! and by which he ensnares and leads astray, hundreds of professing Christians into acts of sin, to the dishonor of religion and the hardening of the wicked.

Is it possible that a lover of Jesus, that prefers the welfare of Zion above the salvation of his own soul, can be a distiller? Can he, for a little wordly gain, furnish the Devil's kingdom with snares, traps, immortal poison and daggers to stab immortal souls to the life?

But the professing distiller will reply: I keep a distillery; but I do it with a good conscience; I am a temperate man; I never get drunk; I suffer no drinking company about my house; I make whiskey for the market; I barrel it up, and carry it to the merchant. By my distillery I turn my produce into money, and by that means I can help my family.

To this I would answer, in the time of the late Indian war, a blacksmith might have kept all his hands in his shop, making rifles, tomahawks and scalping knives, and, by that means, have supplied the savages with instruments of death, to murder men and innocent

women and children. When called to an account, he could make the same reply, viz. My business is very profitable; by this means I can raise money to help my family; and, although I make instruments of death for the savages, to enable them to murder my fellow creatures, yet I murder nobody myself, neither do I suffer human blood to be shed about my house. Would such an excuse stand in the view of the government? Would not the United States punish him as a common enemy to his country? The application is easy—Christ and the Devil have been at open war for nearly six thousand years, and this war will continue till the end of the world. Then shall the soldiers of King Jesus, who have received his bounty money in the day of their conversion, when they enlisted under his royal banner, they that are clothed in his regimentals, and rejoice in his final victory over sin, Satan, death and hell—shall they furnish the common enemy with instruments of eternal death, to strengthen the Devil's interest, and weaken Christ's cause and kingdom, without acting a traitor's part? It is impossible!

Again, my Christian friends, I once more entreat you, in the bowels of Jesus, to renounce the intoxicating cup, and forever deprive the Devil of that source of temptation. To be drinking with the wicked in the taverns and still-houses, or to have the smallest marks of intoxication visible upon you, is to degrade your heavenly birth, to sink religion into contempt, and to bring back an evil report of the land of promise. By such conduct, you proclaim to the world this horrid declaration. The beauty that shines in the white and ruddy, fair and lovely face of Jesus, we have seen, but he is not that precious, altogether lovely Saviour.

that we have often proclaimed him to be. The joys of pardoned sin, and a sense of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we have felt, but the Devil and the world can give more lasting, solid pleasure. Our heavenly inheritance by faith we have seen, but it is so barren, so poor and scanty, that we must apply to the Devil and the ungodly to mix us a bowl of pleasure in order to make our happiness complete. O! consider how you dishonor God, crucify the Lord of glory, and make his wounds to bleed afresh; yea, how you fill the infernal vaults of hell with shouts of triumph. For the Lord's sake, watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Consider how strait and narrow the way to heaven is. If you are Christians indeed; if you have left all for Christ; if you have sold all to gain the pearl of unspeakable price, you must walk the narrow way. What says the Divine Spirit upon the subject? Why, let all that name the name of Jesus, depart from iniquity; and says our blessed Lord, except a man deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple. If your right hand offend you cut it off. If your right eye offend you, pluck it out. The law of God, and the gospel of Christ require you to live so near to God, and to maintain so close a walk with him, that you should keep consciences void of offence towards God and man—that whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, you should do it to the glory of God. I would then conclude in the words of the inspired apostle, 2 Pet. iii. ch. 11 ver.—If these things are so, what manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness?

A LIST OF ERRORS,

Which the reader is requested to correct, owing to the remote situation of the Editor from the press.

- Page 6, line 2, from the bottom, expunge 'were.'
- Page 6, last line, expunge 'we.'
- Page 33, line 7, for 'Gethsemain,' read 'Gethsemane.'
- Page 34, expunge the eighth line.
- Page 38, line 25, for 'Emmans,' read 'Emaus.'
- Page 39, line 12, for 'Eden,' read 'Edom.'
- Page 52, line 19, for 'confined,' read 'conformed.'
- Page 52, line 23, for 'a demer t,' read 'or demerit.'
- Page 54, line 2, for 'then,' read 'their.'
- Page 62, line 25, for 'drunk,' read 'drink.'
- Page 70, line 11, for 'God,' read 'Lot.'
- Page 97, line 23, for 'the Lord of their righteousness,' read the 'Lord their righteous-
ness.'
- Page 103, line 2, for 'son,' read 'sun.'
- Page 105, line 30, for 'our,' read 'your.'
- Page 119, line 14, before 'offices,' insert 'his.'
- Page 129, line 17, for 'wisdom,' read 'evidence.'
- Page 129, line 2, from the bottom, insert 'an' before 'immoveable.'
- Page 138, line 5, for 'state,' read 'star.'
- Page 141, line 25, for 'they do not rest,' read 'they may rest.'
- Page 162, line 12, for 'moved,' read 'move.'
- Page 163, line 17, expunge 'his.'
- Page 171, line 4, for 'there,' read 'then.'
- Page 175, line 4, for 'thorn,' read 'throne.'
- Page 182, line 23, for 'their,' read 'there.'
- Page 207, line 18, for 'place,' read 'peace.'
- Page 225, line 9, for 'thoughts,' read 'things.'
- Page 231, line 9, for 'call and threatening,' read 'calls and threatenings.'
- Page 240, line 12, for 'his,' read 'your.'
- Page 245, line 22, for 'Then,' read 'There.'
- Page 245, line 29, for 'space,' read 'span.'
- Page 259, line 14, for 'place,' read 'plan.'
- Page 264, line 1, for 'unrivalled,' read 'unravell'd.'
- Page 264, line 29, for 'might,' read 'weight.'
- Page 272, line 21, for 'overhangs,' read 'overhang.'
- Page 274, line 7, for 'him,' read 'them.'
- Page 290, line 3, for 'cause,' read 'case.'
- Page 296, line 26, for 'affects,' read 'effects.'
- Page 303, line 32, for 'strange,' read 'strangers.'
- Page 313, line 17, for 'where,' read 'when.'
- Page 317, line 2, for 'low,' read 'law.'
- Page 317, line 21, for 'a,' read 'no.'
- Page 340, line 27, for 'drunk,' read 'drink.'

ERRORS IN THE TREATISE ON INTEMPERANCE.

- Page 7, line 2, for 'soul,' read 'souls.'
 - Page 9, line 12, for 'prophets,' read 'prophet.'
- ✂ The reader is informed that the Essay on Intemperance is incorrectly paged. After page 16, it commences again at page 9. It should have been 17. By adding eight to each page after 16, the correct number will be obtained. Thus page 32 ought to have been page 40.

It will be observed that many passages which contain the *substance* of scripture, and were designed to be written in italics, have been marked as *literal* quotations. This error was discovered too late for correction; and it is hoped that the public will overlook it.