



# DISCOURSES

PREACHED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS,

IN THE COURSE OF MINISTERIAL DUTY.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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SERMONS are addresses delivered in an assembly of Christian worshippers to explain and enforce the great principles of truth and duty. When once spoken in their proper time and place, they have answered their end, and the fruit is to be sought in the lives of the hearers, though both the preacher and his discourse be forgotten.

Yet the candid will be disposed to accept an apology if, now and then, a preacher should present through the press the substance of his reflections and admonitions, on subjects that may be deemed important. To those who have heard his discourses in the sanctuary, it may serve to revive fading impressions; and to others who may favour it with a serious perusal in the printed form, it may awaken trains of reflection and feeling that shall fall in with other means and assist in forming the Christian character.

The author knows enough of the labours of Christian teachers, to prevent his entertaining the idea that these discourses contain any thing that may not have been frequently said before. Written solely for the enforcement of doctrine, duty, and sentiment, among his own flock, he was content to seize that course of illustration which at the moment presented itself vividly to his own mind, without any concern whatever, whether he himself, or others, had previously expressed the same thoughts. Divine truth is the common inheritance of the Church of God. It loses nought of its intrinsic virtue by frequency of repetition. Its saving effects from age to age is an abiding demonstration of its heavenly original. The sunlight around us is the same in its source and

qualities, as that which brightened the dawn of man's existence on earth ; it guides and cheers man still as it did then—so is it with the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Its antiquity and reiteration does not impair its value and efficacy. The consolation which it has always imparted to the humble believer does not diminish, it enhances the consolation it imparts to—ME.

The first four discourses, suggested by local and temporary emergencies, were printed and published at the time they were delivered. They might, it may be said, have been permitted to pass away with the events which called them forth. And so they would, had it not been that they contain some sentiments which the author would willingly perpetuate in the memory of the reader.

Montreal, 2d May, 1853.

THE  
LOVE OF COUNTRY,  
A  
DISCOURSE  
PREACHED IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,  
NIAGARA,

ON TUESDAY, THE 6TH FEBRUARY, 1838.

(A DAY APPOINTED FOR PUBLIC THANKSGIVING, ON ACCOUNT  
OF OUR DELIVERANCE FROM THE MISERIES OF THE LATE  
INSURRECTION.)

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Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain—  
Psalm cxxvii.

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We everywhere find in the writings of inspired men a constant acknowledgement of the providence of God, as exerting its watchful care, not only over individuals, but nations. To its gracious dispensation the pious and good have always attributed the peculiar blessings of their own condition, the prosperity of kingdoms, the security of empires, and the fate of battles. And surely it is consistent with all that reason can discover, and all that Revelation teaches of the character and agency of God, that He continues to watch with paternal care over the creatures whom He has so graciously distinguished by His choicest gifts—reason and immortality; for whom He sent His Son to suffer and to die; from among whom He is selecting a chosen generation, a royal priest-

hood, to celebrate His glory in time, and to be unutterably blessed in His presence throughout eternity. How conformable to reason and the Sacred Scriptures, that such beings, in all their interests and connections, should be the objects of God's providential care !

To fix your attention on this consolatory doctrine, consider that the whole fabric of human society has been ordained and regulated by Divine wisdom, and is consequently a legitimate object of Divine superintendence and government. The Creator, who knew that it was not good for man to be alone, has implanted in every bosom the social principle ; and its influence is felt throughout every period and in every condition of our existence. This powerful and universal principle is among mankind what attraction is in the material world. It conjoins them into the intimacies of neighbourhood, the associations of friendship, and the ties of love ; and out of it arises the fabric of society, based upon the family relation, and rising up into communities, provinces, states, empires—the largest family division among the inhabitants of the World ; and over all the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth as Governor among the nations,—the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords.

Wherever God reigns, He reigns by established and equitable laws ; wherever He has prescribed duty, He has ordained a rule of duty. If He has rendered us accountable to His own tribu-

nal for our private, personal and relative conduct, He has also made known to us the rule by which we shall be judged ; and it ought to be our chief concern to ascertain what the Lord our God requires of us in these several relations. On this day set apart by our chief provincial Magistrate for solemn thanksgiving to Almighty God for His gracious deliverance from the miseries of conspiracy and rebellion, it may not be inappropriate for us to consider one of the principal affections of a Christian citizen, viz. the love he owes his country, that a brief consideration of this affection may prepare us for a few observations on the peculiar evils by which we have been threatened, and the gracious providence of God by which they have been averted from us.

The Christian citizen should love his country because *it is his*. God has created us with a tendency to form particular and local attachments. We love the homestead of our fathers, “where our young footsteps in infancy wandered ;” we love the village where we enjoyed our earliest friendships ; we cherish a particular regard to the country or district in which it lies ; and this regard extends itself to the whole realm of which our native village may form only a very insignificant part. We are conscious to ourselves that we indulge such preferences, and we feel that they are among the most agreeable of our sentiments. It is a matter wholly unimportant to us that men of other countries describe ours as sterile in its

soil, or changeable in its climate, or rude in its speech and in the manners of its people. We may in part, perhaps, admit the truth of the foreigner's description, and, yet after all, the heart's feeling may be—I love my own sterile land better than any other in the world, however luxuriant their fields or sunny their sky. How strong and deep are those local attachments in the millions of every land whom it would be impossible to allure from their native soil by any promises of gain that might be held out to them in distant climes; who prefer to live and die within their native valleys, humble and obscure, rather than pursue the most flattering dreams of fortune upon a foreign shore! How pathetically have we witnessed the strength of these local attachments exhibited in many of our own countrymen whom a stern necessity compelled to seek a home in this New World!

“ Good heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day  
 That called them from their native walks away :  
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,  
 Hung round the bowers and fondly looked their last,  
 And took a long farewell, and wished in vain  
 For seats like these beyond the western main ;  
 And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,  
 Returned and wept, and still returned to weep !”

How often does the wish prevail in the bosom of the exile, after long years of successful toil, to return to the scenes of his youth, that he may enjoy a happiness that he never enjoyed in all the period of his expatriation, and at length resign life where he first drew its breath, and be buried

in the sepulchre of his fathers! These sentiments of local attachment are natural to the human heart; it requires violence to eradicate them; and, when to all appearance they seem dead, it is not in general difficult to fan them anew into life. God has so formed us, my fellow-countrymen, that this natural sentiment is not easily destroyed, because He has implanted it in the soul for a beneficial and necessary purpose. It is the source of that deeper interest which we feel in our neighbourhood and our country; it prompts us, with the strong arm of patriotic love, to guard it from lawless invasion. We rally around our national banner, and contend *pro aris et focis* with emotions that rise in strength as danger threatens; and, when blessed with peace, this natural sentiment of regard for our country makes us rejoice in its prosperity and honour. We delight to see it surpass all other lands in the career of improvement; and one of our most fervent aspirations is, O bless my country, Heaven! and make it truly great. These sentiments which nature inspires and which are sanctioned by the purest dictates of religion, are implanted and approved by God, as the means of exciting and concentrating our energy for the improvement of our fellow-creatures within that limited sphere where it may be most beneficially felt. Our influence cannot extend throughout the World; although a few vain men have styled themselves "citizens of the world," the sphere is too wide for intense affec-

tion and practical beneficence. But we can make our affection bear practically upon our own little neighbourhood—combined with others we may perhaps make it bear even upon a province—nay, when God has endued any one with the requisite gifts, he may stand up before the gaze of an empire as a sage, as a statesman, as a warrior; and the benefits of his genius and deeds may awaken gratitude and joy in its every cottage and its every palace. Thus the local attachments formed in early life give birth to the most elevated sentiments and the noblest virtues. In the most eminent men it becomes a *passion*, and under its dominion what enterprises, pregnant with good to future ages, hath not the patriot achieved!

It is not to be denied, however, that this passion for one's country has, when not governed by wise and Christian principles, been productive of very pernicious consequences, especially when allied with commanding talent and eminent rank. It has inspired the lust of conquest—as if the groans of the conquered, and extended territory, were capable of augmenting national happiness. It has often fostered in a people ignorant prejudices and vain boasting—as if the disparagement of other countries enhanced the merits of their own. It has sometimes led one nation to adopt restrictive laws, which, while they were little profitable to itself, were injurious to neighbouring states. But, because love of country has been thus misdirected, let us not forget that it is

entitled to an high place among the incitements of virtue. Imagine not that it must necessarily be associated with a dislike of other countries. This indeed would be a melancholy perversion of the sentiment. What!—can I not love my own child with all that is tender and holy in parental regard, and yet love the child of my neighbour too? Can I not care and toil for the interests of my own family with a diligence that never wearies, and at the same time be free from envy—nay, rejoice, in the prosperity of my neighbour? And can I not hear my country's name resounded in the plaudits of contiguous empires without wishing that these empires may be crushed that she may rise higher upon their ruins? Far away be the barbarous and unchristian thought! For, as my own family will prosper best when the families around are prospering, so will my country prosper best when the countries around are prospering. The bounty of indulgent Heaven is enough for all; and the prayer that I offer to the King of Kings for “my own, my native land,” must not be accompanied with one feeling of envy, or one imprecation of judgment on any part of His wide dominions.

Although local attachment or love to country is a strong natural affection implanted by God for beneficial ends, and is distinctly sanctioned by the genius of Christianity, we sometimes meet with persons in whom this natural affection is nearly extinct. Beware, I entreat you, of draw-

ing the conclusion from such instances, that the affection is artificial, not natural! Do we not occasionally meet with persons in whom the strongest natural affections are nearly, or perhaps altogether eradicated? Have we not heard of fathers who had ceased to love or care for their family?—of mothers who felt no compassion for the infant they bore?—of children who poured contempt on their parents?—of husband and wife who cherished towards each other a mutually embittered hate?—persons in whom the well-spring of parental and filial and conjugal love had been dried up, as brooks with the drought of summer! And is it to be deemed strange, contrary to what we observe in respect to other natural affections, that love to our countrymen and our country should sometimes in like manner be destroyed? Oh no! the fact is melancholy, but not strange; for the affection with which we regard our country may unhappily be extinguished, as well as the affection with which we regard a parent. If a child permit himself habitually to look only at the defects of his father's character—only at the instances of severity he has shown—if week after week these are magnified in his eye, and made the subject of invidious comparisons and insulting language—if he accustom himself to go round the neighbourhood loquaciously holding up to censure his father's failings and vices—say, would it be strange that filial reverence and love should be destroyed in

the bosom of such a son? Would not even a natural affection, although implanted by God and commanded by God, utterly perish from the heart by such means? And may the same not happen in regard to our love of country? If we look only at what is unfavourable in its physical aspect, on its barren heaths, on its rocky and snow-clad hills, on its unequal and ungenial climate, on its long and dreary winters—would it be strange that the local attachment should be diminished or destroyed? Or if, turning to its political institutions, we should regard only the friction and jarring of their imperfect machinery; if week after week we should fix our attention only on what is faulty in its legislation, or defective in the framework of its constitution, or corrupt and selfish in the conduct of its rulers; and, if these should be the subject of a constant newspaper reading, and the theme of endless talk in the family, and of exciting harangues when we assemble with village groups, in which mind imparts to mind a more embittered dissatisfaction—tell me, would it be at all wonderful that those who act in this way should destroy within their hearts all love to country; should be ready at any hazard to attempt its subversion; or, if hopelessness or fear should prevent their attempts at insurrection, that they should go out exiles to other lands, soured and discontented with, or even detesting, the land of their birth? And tell me, even admitting that such persons were correct in some of their judge-

ments, would this blight of disaffection that hath come over their heart, withering some of its best sentiments, render them more amiable, more happy, more virtuous beings, as they left the home of their fathers in pursuit of utopian excellence on foreign shores? Ah me! it is impossible; for, if our earliest and dearest local attachments are thus rudely crushed and uprooted from the heart in despite of nature and the command of God, it will always, wherever be the place of our sojourn, feel the unsettledness of a stranger and a wanderer as soon as new scenes are bereft of the charms of novelty, and new political institutions have disclosed those imperfections which are inseparable from all that man has framed, and all that man administers.

You will not conclude, my fellow-countrymen, from any thing that I have now said, that the love which an enlightened and Christian citizen bears towards his country should render him blind to its faults, or careless of its reformation. Nay, he may search them out with the most laborious investigation; he may labour to obtain their removal by the most strenuous efforts; if he have devoted himself to public life, his whole heart and soul may be absorbed in this work; and in defiance of obloquy and opposition he may consume himself in the toils and struggles of patriotic virtue. Such a course the illustrious Wilberforce pursued. He saw that his country was involved in the guilt of trading in human

beings ; the groans of innumerable captives reached him from innumerable slave-ships ; the crack of the slave-driver's whip, as it fell on its writhing victims, was carried over the waves to his ear ; his hand was stretched out to receive every record of the slave's miseries ; and year after year did he rise up in the senate of his country, and thunder his denouncements against this detestable traffic carried on in the British dominions under the sanction of law. Undismayed by the opposition of those in power, unswayed by the sophistries of those who pocketed the unholy gains, he persevered in his career of philanthropy. Long frustrated, he never fainted ; and age had whitened on his head, and infirmities had wasted his strength, while exposing amidst continued disappointments the iniquity of his country. But did he cease to love that country ? Did his abhorrence of that enormous crime, at which Britain long connived, render him incapable of exclaiming, " Britain, with all thy faults I love thee still ?" Far from it ; for, though he knew the errors and sins of his country, he had studied well her excellencies too ; and these had impressed him with so deep an admiration that he could give no slumber to his eye-lids until he had wiped away the spots on his country's name. Imagine not, Christian citizens, that love of country can ever render its possessor indifferent to its improvement ; will ever make us connive at wickedness, however high the power be that com-

mits it. Love always desires the perfection and happiness of its object.

It cannot be denied that the affection of which we now speak has passed, during the last few years, as severe an ordeal in Canada as ever it passed through, perhaps, in any land. The causes which tend to its destruction have here operated almost unrestrained. Political controversy and factious strife have long raged throughout the Province with unusual acrimony. Partizans on either side have not generally been guided by nice rules in the conduct of their warfare. We say nothing whatever at present on the merits of the questions agitated. My design is rather to show that the manner in which they have been agitated has had a great tendency to destroy that love of country which is essential to popular contentment. With what persevering industry, for example, have particular subjects of complaint been kept before the public eye! How insidiously have they been magnified! The most active portion of the daily press was constantly employed in their dissemination. In many populous townships nothing was circulated but newspapers of the most pernicious description, vehicles of groundless censure and disaffection; and recent events may lead us to infer that not a few have been led into the belief, that the whole of the administration of our public affairs was so incurably corrupted that nothing but the entire subversion of the whole frame-work of our constitution

could bring a remedy! Hearing nothing, reading nothing, talking nothing, save what went to criminate the officers of the state, and to expose the rottenness of its whole machinery—overlooking every thing in their lot which calm and sober minds would approve and be thankful for, can we be surprised that they were wrought up to the frenzy of revolution, and that conflagration, and massacre and robbery were deemed very trivial sacrifices for its accomplishment! This state of mind was the necessary result of the means employed to produce it; nor is there a government under heaven that might not be subverted by an effective use of the same means. Let its public writers tell only of its faults—let its public speakers always declaim on these—let the luxury and avarice of its officers be coloured, exaggerated, held up incessantly as objects of popular reprobation; and such arts, plied for a few years without any correctives, would array opinion and physical force against any government, even the most perfect that the human imagination can conceive. We must surely, therefore, deem it the heaviest public calamity when those who are capable of directing public opinion direct it into a wrong channel; when they fan the embers of discontent, so natural to the human heart; when they labour to involve law, and property, and personal safety in one common ruin. Alas! there have been those among us, capable of better things, who have implicated

themselves in this heavy guilt ; and, had not God graciously interposed, the misguided, along with us who lamented their error, might have painfully suffered by the consequences.

May I not take occasion from these remarks to remind you that a true and enlightened regard to our country should manifest itself very much in the same way as we manifest regard for a friend. No man loves to hear the faults of his friend often and maliciously referred to ; no one can patiently hear his friend's character misrepresented or set forth only on the dark side. Granting that he has his faults, why should they always be held up to view while his excellencies are all concealed ? Is not this manifest injustice, and would we not be guilty of conniving at it by listening to it in silence ? But it is an equal injustice to our country, and equally inconsistent with the love we owe it, to listen with patience or favour to such factious and evil-designing men as speak of nothing but its faults ; who are never warmed into pathos with any thing but some instance of mal-administration, and that for no other purpose but, by fomenting discontent, to make us the tools of their ambition ! Alas, there are not a few who yield to such men, and are gratified with their conduct. Deluded by their glozing lies, they are now disposed to treat the government of their country, not as a friend set to promote their well-being, but as an enemy, whose every motion is to be jealously watched ! Let it

be acknowledged that it is the duty of the citizens of every free state, if they would preserve the inheritance of their freedom, carefully to watch the conduct of those to whom they have entrusted the management of public affairs: yet surely it ought not to be with the suspicion and jealousy with which we regard an enemy, but with the confidence and affection with which we regard a friend. While we reserve to ourselves the privilege of condemning what is wrong, let us cheerfully yield our confidence in doubtful and difficult measures, and our approbation for the faithful services which the officers of the state may have rendered it. This conduct is manifestly just; no Christian can recede from it. Had those who have renounced their allegiance to their country acted on such principles, they had saved themselves from disgrace and ruin, and the government from a shock which has made it totter to its very base.

Animated, as I trust we all are, with the desire of being guided by such principles, we shall be disposed, on this day of thanksgiving, gratefully to acknowledge the providence of God in those events which have favoured the preservation of order and constitutional government among us. It is not possible for us, believing as we do, in the declaration of the psalmist, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain," to overlook those very remarkable events by which the hand of the Lord hath wrought out

our deliverance from all the horrors of rebellion and civil war. Can we doubt that He smote to the earth the fierce and blaspheming\* leader of the rebel band, and spread indecision and fear throughout their ranks? Can we doubt that He paralyzed all their subsequent opposition, and scattered them as chaff before the wind? By what power hath the breath of winter been rendered mild as the morning of autumn, so that our lake has not been sealed up with ice, nor intercourse between distant places impeded?—Have we not reason to see the hand of God in the harmonious assembling of the loyal and well affected throughout every part of the Province for the preservation of life and property, and constitutional authority? And are we too sanguine in our interpretation of the ways of God in these recent events, when we hope that the storm hath purified our political atmosphere, and that hereafter we shall enjoy a freedom, at least from intestine political strife, which for some

\* We have it on the authority of an eye-witness, that the rebel leader, whose name we have no wish to perpetuate, met his death a moment after his utterance of a volley of profane oaths. A gentleman of Toronto, who had been taken prisoner on Yonge Street by the above leader, discharged his pistol at him, while in the act of making his escape. The shot missed the object at which it was aimed; but, his horse being frightened, the rider, a corpulent man, lost his balance, fell to the ground, and broke his neck. This singular event disconcerted the plans of the insurgents, and prevented the attack from being made on Toronto on Monday evening, when the diabolical design could scarcely have failed, as the inhabitants of the city were wholly unprepared to resist the assailants. On the following day the city was prepared. Thus by the gracious interposition of God were conflagration, massacre, and rapine averted from the metropolis.

years we have not known. Would to God that the experience of the last few weeks, presenting, as they have done, a near prospect of civil convulsion with its alarms and dangers, may lead every inhabitant of this colony to maintain the laws as the guardian of right, and the constitution as the ark of our security and the bulwark of our freedom. Then will our thankfulness to God manifest itself in appropriate fruits.

Recognising God in His providence as the averter of these calamities, the bestower of these benefits, I ought not to conclude these remarks without making some allusion to the laws by which this providence is conducted, in reference to the well-being of nations—that these may serve as a guide to that love of country which, I trust, we all feel. Let it not be forgotten, then, that if we would wisely hope that God shall keep our city, shall preserve our country, it must be our care by every right means to propitiate the Divine favour. Oh, what title can an ungodly and profligate people have to trust in the protection of God?—Is it not with nations, as it is with individuals, evil shall be to them that do evil?—If throughout our land there shall continue to prevail that reckless indifference to the word and the ordinances of Christ's Gospel which so unhappily marks our provincial population; if the religious education of the young shall continue to be neglected as it has been; if Sabbath desecration, if intemperance, if the low and be-

sotted pursuit of temporal things, if the contempt of intellectual pursuits shall continue to characterise our people ;—how can we hope that we shall be a people blessed of God? God has taught us in His Word, and in all the history of the past, that national greatness cannot be attained apart from national virtue ; that freedom can never be long enjoyed by a people devoid of intelligence ; that sin is the curse and reproach of any people, and by righteousness alone can a nation be exalted. Thus taught, have we not reason to dread the heavy judgements of God, when we consider what as a people we are ; and may we not tremble lest the evils which have lately befallen us should only be the beginning of sorrows !

In the humble sphere allotted to us in the dispensation of God—we may have but little in our power to promote our country's well-being. Our voice, our influence, is confined within a very narrow circle ; but we discharge the duties we owe to God and our country if we make that influence felt for good within our own sphere, narrow thought it be. By the grace of God each of us may REFORM HIMSELF ; by care we may rectify our own opinions and amend our own life. Our example may be a guiding light within the circle of our friendship ; we may educate our children to be consistent Christians and useful subjects ; combined with a few kindred spirits, we may be the means of preserving our own vi-

cinage from him who goeth about to devour ; and, were the numerous hamlets throughout the land to become so many centres of a reforming influence, wisdom and the fear of God would yet become our glory as a people. Abundant reason have we to thank God for our connection with an empire whose history, reaching from very remote ages, is as bright as aught presented to us in the annals of nations ; whose present position is most honourably conspicuous among the kingdoms of the world. We are the subjects of a monarch whose only wish is our prosperity and happiness, and who wields a power capable of promoting them, so far as mere human power can promote them. Our Queen's Councillors can have no wish but that our dependence on the parent state may be for our advantage as her colonial subjects. We have received a constitution conferring almost an excess of liberty on the governed ; and if, in these circumstances, aught of evil should remain, the remedy rests with ourselves. And we doubt not that this remedy will be applied. But let it be applied, my fellow-subjects, under the influence of that love of country of which we have now spoken, and in the fear of the King of kings, to whom high and low among us are equally accountable. We shall thus always be saved from the wicked designs of ambitious and discontented men ; and our path in the ascent of empire may be worthy of the lineage from which it is our boast that we have sprung.



**THE AUTHORITY OF LAW :**

**A DISCOURSE**

**DELIVERED IN**

**ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, MONTREAL,**

**ON SABBATH, 26TH AUGUST, 1849,**

**(THE CITY AUTHORITIES HAVING A FEW DAYS BEFORE CALLED FOR AN  
ENROLMENT OF SPECIAL CONSTABLES TO PROTECT THE PEACE OF THE  
CITY.)**



## DISCOURSE.

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“The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient.”—1 *Tim.* i. 9

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The term “law” in Sacred Scripture is used in various senses. Sometimes it is employed to signify the entire system of Revealed Truth; sometimes it denotes the entire system of moral duty, of which the decalogue is a summary; not unfrequently it signifies the Mosaic economy both in its civil and ceremonial regulations. In the text it is obviously used in a sense more restricted than any of the preceding, and denotes the criminal law of nations as it forms part of and is based upon the universal Moral Law—or the whole rule of duty which God requires of man.

It is evident that the term law in the text must be used in this restricted sense, else the proposition expressed in it would not be tenable. For of the Moral Law, in its wide and comprehensive import, we cannot affirm that it *is not made for a righteous man*. On the contrary, it was made for him; it is his rule of duty. Obedience to it is an expression of his homage to God. His happiness depends on his conformity to it. It is, in short, the rule and measure of that righteous-

ness which is the distinctive attribute of his character. "Where there is no law, there is no transgression." With equal propriety it might be affirmed, where there is no law, there is no righteousness. The Moral Law, therefore, as it is an expression of the Divine image, a declaration of the Divine will in reference to human conduct, is made for all men. In it, as the prophet testifies, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good and what the Lord thy God doth require of thee ; that thou shouldst do justly, and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God." "Of this law there can no less be acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world ; all things in heaven and earth do her homage ; the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power :— but angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sorts and manners, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy." \*

But, without presuming to soar into the region of superhuman ethics, and confining our illustration of this subject to what is revealed and applicable to man's condition, we may observe a distinction in the nature of *law* as it is addressed to "a righteous man" on the one hand, and to "a disobedient man" on the other. The former is *preceptive*, and presupposes the moral character of

\* Hooker.

the subject to be in harmony with the law ; the latter is *prohibitory*, and presupposes the moral character of the subject to be adverse to the prohibition, and prone to disregard it notwithstanding the threatened penalty. Were the nature of man perfectly and immutably righteous, inclined in all things to do the will of God as expressed in law, there would be no need either of *prohibition* or *penalty* : it would be enough that the Divine will should be declared in the form of positive precept, and the loyal and the loving heart would delight to obey it. But, because the nature of man is inclined to evil, the Moral Law, adapted to his fallen condition, often assumes the prohibitory and threatening form ; and in this respect it is addressed not to the righteous, but to the lawless and disobedient. “Thou *shalt not* take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; thou *shalt not* kill ; thou *shalt not* steal ; thou *shalt not* bear false witness against thy neighbour.” Thus the Law runs in the prohibitory style, because human nature, in its corrupt and lawless condition, is prone to treat the Divine titles and attributes with irreverence ; is prone to violence in the moment of passion, to cupidity when the opportunity of gratifying it is presented, to bear false witness against a neighbour when spite and malignity have taken possession of the heart.

But, that we may reach the practical lessons we have more immediately in view, we shall consider the affirmation of the text with an espe-

cial reference to human laws—to the laws of one's own country—and especially to that part of them designed to prevent the perpetration of crime. Every one should be aware that this is one of the chief designs for which mankind are united into a political community ; that every man's person, and property, and rights, may in their perfect integrity be secured to him ; that the evil-disposed and powerful, whether individuals or parties, shall not be permitted to wrong or oppress the weak ; that, if any wrong shall be done, the sufferer shall be entitled to appeal to the law, and the judge, and the magistrate, for the certain procurement of redress ; that the whole power of the commonwealth shall be brought into play for the protection even of the humblest individual ; and that for the vindication of its own well-being, for the fulfilment of its own duties, the commonwealth shall do its utmost, first to train all its citizens to know the law and to revere lawful authority, and, secondly, shall upon the lawless and disobedient inflict the merited penalty. All governments, whatever be their distinctive name or peculiar framework, are constituted for this end. They are worthy of praise and preservation just in the degree in which they attain it. If every man can sit without fear under his own vine and fig-tree—if none may presume to despoil him either of the shade or of the fruit—if none may come within the circle of his kindred to pollute, to betray, to injure—or if the lawless

wrong-doer who may have intruded upon his sanctuary, is made quickly to feel that the state will resent the wrong as done to itself and avenge it,—then one grand end for which civil government is instituted is attained, though mingled in many other respects with the imperfections which are inseparable from all human institutions.

But the actual condition of society often presents us with a very different picture—a picture such as that which our own city has for some time exhibited. Our citizens by the deeds, and still more by the threatenings, of the lawless and disobedient, have been kept in a state of feverish excitement and undefined fear. Riotous, or at least menacing, assemblages have been pretty much the order of the day, or rather of the *night*,—for they most delight in darkness; brutal assaults on the persons of the citizens have not been uncommon; and the burning of property has of late come with such a frequency, and in such circumstances, as scarce any man can persuade himself to be accidental. To such a degree, indeed, had this proceeded that peaceable and well-disposed men were beginning to fear that the bonds of society were well nigh loosed; that the foundations on which order is laid were well nigh broken up; that the law had no vindicator and the magistrate no sword; and every one looked with distrust and perplexity on the dark portentous cloud that had settled over our city—

“ a place without order, in which even the light was as darkness.”

Now, it is not needful at all that we examine, in this connexion, the various causes and pretexts that have been assigned for such a state of affairs. On this point various opinions, variously coloured by prejudices and passions, will be entertained ; and every man is at liberty to form his own, responsible only to God for the care and integrity of his investigation. But in this judgement (appertaining to the duty of the subject, and not to that of the magistrate, the latter not being at present before us) we shall have the concurrence of all *good men*, that nothing can excuse or justify, or even palliate, the lawlessness which we have to deplore ;—that, if we suffer in any degree from the commercial policy of the Mother Country, or from unwise legislation in our own, tumult, riot, assault, incendiarism, can only prove an aggravation of the calamity—a bitter aggravation, not only in its immediate, but in its remoter consequences. For who can shut his eyes on the fact, that up to the measure of its prevalence it tends to the disorganization of society, and to the utter demoralization of the parties who perpetrate or who abet these crimes ? These parties, at *first few*—some dozen, perhaps, or more, combine to strengthen each other’s hands in the course that may be resolved upon—led on by the most reckless, as dictator—not scrupulous at all about the

characters of their accomplices, because they have paid little regard to the formation of their own,—not fearing God, for no one fearing God could be thus guilty, not caring much for the real welfare of their fellow-citizens, for no one having this care would wantonly scatter among them “firebrands, arrows and death.” Has not every true Christian—every reflecting man among us—a deep conviction, that the perpetrators of such crimes do not come out from the bosom of Christian families, trained in a reverence for God’s Word, and uniting to offer up before Him the daily prayer; that they are not the members of our churches, known and recognised in that relation, and labouring to maintain a good conscience both towards God and towards man.

And here it may be proper, for the confirmation of this sentiment, to observe that the term “*righteous*” in the text is applied by the Apostle, as we think, with a reference to human governments and laws, more especially to that branch of law which ordains the prohibition and penalty of crime.<sup>1</sup> In every Christian and civilized community the great majority are “*righteous*,” that is, they have an inward controlling sense of their own obligation to obey the law, and a strong inward aversion to any breach of it in the perpetration of flagrant crime. Were this not the case, society would speedily become disorganized—crime and anarchy would dissolve it as certainly as corruption does the animal frame bereft of

life, and almost within as short a time. It is not the fear of the magistrate, nor the parade of a mounted police, nor the more formidable array of a disciplined soldiery, that could preserve the fabric of society from self-destruction; these are not prepared for the righteous man—he needs them not—they are no terror to him,—they are his protection against the lawless and disobedient, comparatively few in free, enlightened, and well ordered communities. No, brethren, the fabric of society, being the institution of God, and defended by His overruling providence, is far better secured than by any apparatus of force and compulsion that the civil ruler may employ. There is implanted in the bosom of every “righteous man,” using this term in the sense we have defined, a deep reverence for law and lawful authority; it grows up in his nature like an instinct; it is strong even in multitudes, upon whose spirits there hath never come forth the more beautiful efflorescence of a higher morality. It is to this “*law in the mind*” we owe the multitude of towns and villages in every land, that have never been disturbed with a tumult—never polluted with a crime. It is to this interior law, strengthened by the higher principles of Christianity, that we owe the peace and order prevailing, unbroken sometimes for years and years, amidst the dense population of our larger cities, of whom, perhaps, it might be affirmed, (an affirmation not resting on mere conjecture, but on the statistics

of city crime,) that not fifty could be found in fifty thousand, in ordinary times, recklessly disposed to combine in such atrocities, as even the best ordered communities are compelled, occasionally, to lament and deplore. And even in times of public excitement, from whatever cause arising, we are inclined to ascribe the enormities committed, not to any change that hath come over the spirits of the righteous, who constitute the great body of the people, but to the bolder daring of the lawless and disobedient, who imagine that they can perpetrate their crimes with greater impunity, when the public mind is discontented, and magisterial authority weakened. This is the selected hour, when by the daring of a few, who are disposed to set at defiance "all rule and authority and power," it would seem that every man's life was in danger, every man's property unprotected, and freedom of speech and action lay at the mercy of an unprincipled antagonist. To speak or act in the defence of law and order is then held to be an offence against those, who for the time imagine themselves free to work their own will with impunity, and to employ the obscure circulation of threatened outrage, and its actual commission, as the instruments of their tyranny and power. Though few in number, they may be active in mischief, and followed by a crowd of the idle and curious, who wish to be spectators of the fray, they flatter themselves that their conduct is applauded, when injury is done to some one, against

whom the tide of popularity has turned ; and the odium thus raised in the track of the lawless and disobedient, is scattered on the bystanders, who may have an utter aversion to all fellowship with their unrighteous deeds.

And on this peculiar feature of a riotous assemblage, occurring amidst a population of which the great majority are peaceably disposed, I found my first practical admonition.

The "righteous" have nothing to do there ; neither they, nor their children, nor their servants. If they go there to see the *run*, as it is sometimes called, such a gratification is paltry, and in many cases pernicious and culpable. Their presence, even as passive spectators, is often taken as an encouragement by those who are active in mischief. A laugh or a hurra from the crowd is a stimulant to their lawless propensities ; it makes the timid daring, and the ruffian a hero ; and the *crowd*, all passive and innocent as it may think itself, is too often a *cloud* under which the evil-doer may effect a secure retreat. Thus, without reflecting on the fact, an amused and gaping multitude, who may be inwardly disapproving of the violence and outrage which they see committed, may yet practically be the abettors of that violence and outrage, both by the encouragement which the perpetrators draw from their presence, and the obstacle presented by their presence to the quick and effective discharge of magisterial duty.

But besides these evils there is another consideration, which, if duly weighed, would go far to regulate the conduct of "righteous" men in such matters. It is not consistent with the duties, which they owe to the community, to stand by as idle, passive, and amused spectators when the person or the property of any citizen is assailed by the lawless and disobedient. In all free governments every freeman is a conservator of the peace ; and is, to the extent of his ability, the protector of the person and property of his fellow-citizens. The man, who would look quietly on, and see the incendiary apply his torch to a neighbour's house, or the ruffian maltreat his neighbour's person, who would give no alarm and offer no aid,—that man would be acting as much at variance with the laws of his country as with the law of God. If mere indifference restrained him, it were an indifference of which no good citizen could be chargeable ; if it were timidity or cowardice, it were an indication of a weak and dastardly spirit ; if it were done from sympathy with the perpetrator, or for the gratification of revenge against him who suffered the wrong,—morals, if not law, would hold him an accomplice in the guilt. Nor will this judgement be in any degree affected by the circumstance, that the assaults, whether on person or property, were committed, not by one but by twenty ; not solitarily but in a public tumult. The claim of the injured party is rather enhanced than diminished

by this circumstance ; he is more entitled to the sympathy of the righteous ; he needs more the protection of the magistrate ; his right is the stronger to compensation from the community at large, because of the failure of that protection which it has guaranteed to all its members on the ground of reciprocal duties and obligations.

These principles of civil obligations and justice are in conformity with the municipal laws of Scotland, and, I believe, of England, in reference to loss or damage done to property in popular tumults and insurrection. The municipality, be it country, or city, or town, is bound to make good the damage done to property, on the ground that it had engaged by its proper officers and by the common integrity of its people, to afford sufficient protection and had failed. And, though only a lawless and disobedient few may have occasioned the damage, the social contract implies that the righteous many should keep in check the lawless few, and compensate as far as possible such injuries as may have been inflicted on the peaceable. And, if it be a righteous law, that a community should thus be held bound to compensate for the loss of property destroyed in popular tumult, I can discover no reason why it should not be equally bound to compensate for injuries done to persons, and for the destruction of life. Justice and humanity alike plead, that she, who has been made a widow by the hand of popular violence, shall be maintained out of

the property of that community who owed her protection ; that children, made fatherless and destitute by popular insurrection, shall be supported and educated at the public charge, as the only practicable mitigation of the grievous injury they have sustained. Or, to state this principle in still more explicit terms : the very design of civil government is to protect the life and property of the subject by the condign punishment of the individual aggressor, when the wrong is individual,—without compensation in this case, because it is the duty of every individual to protect his own life and property against individual aggression ; but, where the aggression is on the part of a vicious multitude, setting authority and law at defiance, too numerous to be repelled by individual force, or to be involved in a legal prosecution and penalty for the procurement of redress, then should the entire community, involved, as it were, in the common guilt of failing to afford the stipulated protection, be involved also in the common fine by which the damage is to be repaired. By such principles both of ethics and of jurisprudence every individual is bound to lend his aid for the maintenance of public order, not only because it is right in itself, but because he himself is involved in the consequences. This is nothing more than an application of the old principle to a personal and public duty, “Do unto others as you wish they should do unto you.”

Growing out of these principles, we have the duty of the "righteous" citizen to come forward to the support of the Civil Magistrate in the repression of "the lawless and disobedient;" and on this we found a second admonition.

The nature of every free government is, that the people themselves, by their representatives, are the framers of the law; and the people themselves, by their magistrates, are the guardians and administrators of the law; and the force, which our constitution in ordinary circumstances provides for the support of magisterial authority, is that of the citizens themselves. It is their duty, if not to offer the magistrate aid, to obey his summons in difficult emergencies. Better far that this should be done by the peaceable and well disposed—better far that *they* should become the guardians of law and order, than that this work should be confided to unknown and mercenary men, having no stake in the community, and perhaps little distinguished by those qualities of intelligence and persuasion which may render the employment of deadly weapons unnecessary. The true doctrine of political freedom is, that the preservation of order in the community is committed to its own members under the guidance of its own magistrates; and, if a people be prepared for freedom and worthy to enjoy it, this will be sufficient and effectual. The presence of the assembled "righteous" will drive back the lawless and disobedient into their lurking places;

for crime, either in premeditation or commission, always makes the guilty cowards. They know that all good men are against them; that the law of God as well as the law of the land, is against them; and, believing, as we do, that respect for law and lawful authority is a strong instinct in the bosom of the enlightened and civilized, who know what freedom is, and how to preserve it, we can hardly suppose an emergency—not even in that anarchy which usually precedes revolution—in which it shall not be possible for such men, by the influence of their character and position, to preserve life and property from tumultuary violation. Our only hope of the progress of enlightened freedom and good government among the nations of the world depends upon this possibility, that the righteous among them shall come so largely into the ascendant as that by the influence of their example alone, and the regenerating power of a Christian education, they shall, without the sharp edge of the sword, eradicate “the lawless and disobedient” from the midst of them. For this purpose, brethren, fulfil your own duty in your own sphere.

Permit me to conclude these remarks by a third admonition—abstain from animadverting, even upon blamable proceedings, in acrimonious and vituperative language. A good cause can never gain by this. It may excite the passions of an antagonist, but it will never reclaim him from his errors. It is sinful and injurious in

him who employs it, and, in times of confusion and turbulent excitement, will always aggravate the common calamity. Perhaps you will all concur with me in assigning no small portion of the evil, which has been mingled with recent events, to this cause. The speech and the writing, even of those whom we have been accustomed to esteem for their dispassionate reasonings, for their respect to the courtesies of political opposition, for their loyal veneration not only of the person of rulers and magistrates but of their office, have been of late so filled with fierce invective, with bitter personalities, with uncandid and reckless imputation of base and dishonourable motives against opponents, with glozing-over with faint condemnation the disorders and crimes which appeared to add to their perplexity, that it will require much time and much pains on the part of all who are competent to influence and reform public opinion, to bring it down from that state of distempered and feverish irritability into which it has been wrought. It cannot be the intention of any "righteous man" to do evil to his country. Righteous men may differ as to the method of doing "the greatest possible good to the greatest possible number," and may with perfect honesty protest against whatever seems to be inimical to the general well-being, and by all constitutional and honourable means endeavour to counteract it. But this end, we are assured, will be rarely

attained by low party intrigue, by personal defamation, by lawless violence, or disregard of those courtesies which are so much needed to soften the asperities of political opposition. Let this style of speech and writing, therefore, be repudiated. It perverts the public taste ; it corrupts the public morals. The lawless will ever be prompt to plead violence of speech as a sufficient reason for their grosser outrages. These distressing and unprosperous times require the union of all "righteous men" to mitigate their pressure, and to devise a remedy. Only let such in patriotic confederation be employed in maturing the counsels of experience, and in carrying them out with energy ;—and, by the blessing of Heaven, we shall not despair of the peace, and the progress, the virtue and the happiness of our country.

1 CRITICAL REMARKS ON 1 TIM. 1, 9.

ὅτι δικαιονομος ὁυ κειται.

The translators of our English Bible have rendered these words with their characteristic accuracy and precision. Other renderings have been proposed, but they differ little from that which our translators have adopted, and add nothing to the force and clearness of the passage. Thus Schleusner's rendering,—*insonti legem non scriptam esse*,—"law is not written for the innocent," is not really a change, for *to make, to write, to promulgate* a law may be taken as synonymous. The general signification of κεισθαι is, *positum esse, to be placed*, as the public laws among the Greeks and Romans were placed, or set up in conspicuous places, where they might be seen and read by the people.

If any objection were to be made to our common translation, it would lie against the translation of (νομος), *the law*, with an article which is not found in the original. The nature of this objection will appear, by comparing a clause in the preceding verse, (v. 8.) with the clause under consideration. "But we know that *the law is good, ὅτι καλος ὁ νομος*—that the entire body of the Mosaic law,—for the article and the scope of the writer evidently denote a special reference to that law which the Judaizing teachers (νομοδιδασκαλοι) were perverting. . . . "Knowing this, that law (νομος, without the article,) is not made for a righteous man—the negation is respecting law in general, and not with any special reference to the Mosaic. If it should be said, that, though the omission of the article, by the usual rule of Greek construction points to this generality, yet the scope of the passage restricts it to the special reference, the meaning of the writer will not be materially affected—for the Mosaic code embodies in itself the general principles of moral and political law as they affect the conduct of individuals, so that what is affirmed of it specially may be affirmed of law in general.

The real difficulty, however, lies not in the particular terms, but in the proposition. How is it that the law, taking the word, either with the special reference, or in general, is not *made, writ-*

ten, or *promulgated*, for the righteous? The law of Moses, in its moral, ceremonial, and civil aspects, was given to regulate the conduct of the whole Jewish people: so of the law of God generally; all admit that it is the rule of life to every subject of the divine government.

To obviate the difficulty, a very common ellipse of the particle of limitation may be supposed. Thus, "the law is not made (*only*) for the righteous." As in that passage—"Labour not for the meat that perisheth,"—*i. e.* labour not *only* or *exclusively* for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.\*

Critics have supplied the ellipse in other ways, and offered various glosses; thus:

"The law is not made for *justifying* a righteous man, but for condemning and punishing the lawless."—"The law of Moses being given as a rule of life to the good as well as to the bad, the Apostle's meaning, doubtless, is, that it was given, not for the purpose of justifying the most righteous man that ever lived, but for restraining the wicked by its threatenings and punishments."—*Macknight*.

Again: "The law is not made to condemn the just, for against such there is no law condemning them; but it lies against the lawless to condemn them."—*Whitby*.

Again: "A law established, as we know this in question to be, with penal sanctions, is not made in a direct and immediate reference to a righteous man, who will indeed be a law to himself; but in order to restrain the irregularities and enormities of the lawless and ungovernable, and to preserve society from their assaults."—"Law in general is chiefly intended to restrain men from actions injurious to the public."—*Doddridge*.

Again: "Laws in general were not made to coerce the well disposed subject, but the ill-affected; and the case was the same in respect of the divine law. Its design (as far as it is penal) is to restrain and condemn the wicked, not to hold the humble in

\* *Scimus autem bonam esse legem, si quis eam legitime utatur, hoc sciens, nempe legem justo positam non esse, sed legis contemptoribus, et iis qui subijci nolunt.*—*Beza*.

Pasor has this note: *justo lex non incumbit; lex, hoc est, legis maledictio:—cit. Rom. 6. 14.*

servile bondage by its curse : though its precepts will of course be the rule of their conduct, and the standard of their duty.—*Scott.*

Among these glosses upon the passage, there is a substantial harmony in the doctrines involved, and in their practical application. All of them agree in this, that law in the sense here used, is to be viewed in its more immediate bearing upon "*the lawless and disobedient,*"—as "it is intended to restrain them from actions injurious to the public." Looking at the enumeration of transgressors in the verses following, it will be evident that this is the correct view. Under the denomination of "the disregarders of law," (*ἀνομοί*)—and "the disorderly," (*ἀνυποτακτοί*)—we have, "atheists, idolaters, persons polluted with vice, persons excluded from things sacred, murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers, those who slay others unjustly, fornicators, sodomites, manstealers, liars, those who perjure themselves ; and, if any other practice be opposed to the doctrine which preserves the soul in health, the law was made to restrain and punish it."—*Macknight.*

Our attention therefore is here mainly directed to law in its prohibitory and penal character ; and of the transgressors specially enumerated, all would be condemned by the moral law, and nearly all, under the criminal jurisprudence of enlightened and Christian nations.

# **GOD'S CHASTISEMENT OF CITIES:**

## **A SERMON**

**Preached in St. Paul's Church, Montreal, on the occasion of the  
Fire which desolated a large part of the City on July 9th  
and 10th, 1852.**



## GOD'S CHASTISEMENT OF CITIES.

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"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"  
*Amos iii. ch. 6th v.*

EVERY good man—every sincere Christian believes in the universal providence of God, and is ready to acknowledge that the various events of his own life have been under the direction of that Divine power which created and upholds the universe. In reviewing that part of our life which is past, from the earliest period of which we have a distinct recollection, until now, we all, especially those who have lived many years, and past through a variety of scenes, are constrained to acknowledge the guidance of an unseen hand, insensibly leading us away, often it may be, from the path that we had chosen, into a course that we had never thought of; effecting changes in our ideas, and feelings, and plans, by very trivial incidents; conducting us into new lines of business, new circles of friendship, new religious affinities, which have materially affected our character and prospects. Some gleam of

good fortune came and left prosperity behind it ; some stroke of temporal adversity came, and the effect has never been fully retrieved ; some bereavement desolated our home, which still saddens memory ; we have suffered some personal affliction, of which the consequence remains : or, more important still, divine grace, in the various methods of its working, may have wrought in us some very distinguishable moral change, by which we may know that we have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness, and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son. True faith enables us to discover the hand of God in these events of our personal history. Solitary and insignificant though we be, we feel that we have been the special objects of the Divine care. We may not always be able to explain by what complication of agencies the benignant purposes of God in reference to us have been accomplished ; but we are, nevertheless, assured His hand hath directed them. Looking at the trials, for instance, through which we have passed, we may be quite unable to tell the true cause of them, yet faith may have the surest evidence that a Divine hand mingled the cup ; and, though the train of physical agencies by which they were inflicted may be to us obscure, the moral intention and effect may be as clear as noon-day. God speaks thus in His Word to us, " Behold the rod and Him that hath appointed it."

While the benevolent design and the immediate agency of God are recognised by Christians in the afflictions with which they are personally visited, the text presents another aspect of the providence of God, and of His dealings with man. It suggests the idea that God deals with man not only individually, but in masses ; and, overlooking the particulars, (as it might seem, though not really, for the Supreme Ruler can overlook nothing,) He deals with the mass according to its prevailing character, and to advance the general purposes of His moral administration. Thus, restricting our view to cities, God deals with them in their aggregate character. In the particular city there may be a mixture of good and evil. The evil may predominate—it may be universal, as in the case of the cities of the plain, where ten righteous could not be found ; or the general depravity may be alleviated by the intermixture and influence of many good men, as was probably the case in Nineveh, which was spared upon its repentance, and even in Babylon, and at a later period Jerusalem, on which the judgement of the sword and desolation was executed. When a city has been doomed to punishment in any form, it may fairly be inferred that punishment was merited ; that the Supreme Governor had a controversy with it ; that, if it were given up to the sword, or to famine, or to pestilence, or to earthquake, some purpose was to be accomplished under the

moral administration of God. It is not necessary to suppose that the devoted city was wicked, above all other cities in the world, any more than that the eighteen persons, on whom the tower of Siloam fell, were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem. It is enough to account for the judgement that it contained sinners, that the calamity did not befall the innocent, that God had some gracious design in permitting the calamity. It might be to cut short incorrigible offenders in their career of depravity, to give striking warning to others, or to clear the way for a better order of things. When evil is done in a city by the Lord, Religion leads us to view it chiefly in its moral designs. Various incidental advantages may accrue ; but the moral are entitled to the first place in the considerations of an immortal being. A temporal calamity may thus be well compensated by a moral benefit ; and the fires of the furnace may be patiently endured by the man who believes, even in the hour of his agony, that he will come forth purified as gold.

Enlightened with such views drawn from the Oracles of God, we may proceed with diffidence and humility to enquire what lessons of a moral or religious nature may be suggested by the terrible calamity with which the Hand, that directs all events, hath recently visited this city. Who could witness, without some fearful apprehension that the wrath of Heaven had fallen

upon us, the progress of the devouring element, sweeping along with a might that set at defiance the puny efforts of those who would fain have arrested it, driven by the wind, God's messenger, kindling up unexpectedly at new points, aided, as some think, by the indescribable atrocity of a human hand, until street after street was laid in ashes, and thousands were left without the shelter of a home. And what thoughtful, compassionate man can now, after the lapse of a month, traverse this scene of ruin and devastation without sad reflections on the numerous poor whose poverty has been aggravated by this terrible catastrophe; on the multitude who enjoyed a competence and contentment in their own little dwelling, which they may never more find; on the smaller number who have been driven back from an affluence which long years of successful industry will scarce enable them to regain. We know that in many minds hope will come in to cheer the gloom, and religion in others will soothe grief into submission; but in spite of these mitigations the disaster is most calamitous, and its effects by many will long be felt with a melancholy sadness. But it is their duty—it is the duty of all to enquire, both in the case of personal and collective correction, why the hand of the Lord hath chastised us, and what beneficence of design may be discovered in the calamity?<sup>2</sup>

Before proceeding to the moral lessons which

this visitation of the providence of God may suggest to us, we may advert for a moment to some of the more immediate and palpable causes of this calamity—the causes on which the minds of multitudes will principally rest, and which, as being connected chiefly with the physical laws, require a set of remedies adapted to their nature. There are laws founded in nature, according to which a city ought to be constructed and governed, and which cannot be disregarded without entailing their peculiar penalty. If built of very perishable materials, it must soon perish, and the very site of it may in the progress of ages be undiscoverable. This fate has happened to many a once celebrated city in the valley of the Euphrates and the Nile. If placed on the crater of a volcano, it need not be thought strange if it were swallowed up. If constructed of combustible materials, what wonder if an act of carelessness, or the torch of an incendiary, should consume it in a night! Nature, (and nature speaks with the voice of God) nature, did we only listen with the ear of science to her voice, teaches us how cities should be planned and reared; and those who disregard her counsel expose themselves to the penalty. The providence of God interposes to punish the violation of physical laws just as certainly as it interposes to punish the violation of the moral, though in the former case the probabilities of escape may seem to be numerous, while in the latter escape is impos-

sible. When viewing the recent calamity, there is a sense in which we may view it as an accident. It was accident, perhaps, that dropped the first spark into the combustibles which it set on fire. It was an accident, as we are accustomed to speak, for we do not often advert to the far-seeing agency by which these things are directed, that the wind blew and spread the flame. But it was no accident that the part of the city, which this fire has laid in ashes, presented in abundance everywhere the materials to feed it, and that its narrow streets and lanes acted as so many flues to attract the destroyer. While, if there was aught deficient in precautionary arrangements, or in sagacity and decision in the hour of danger, (the means by which man in many cases is able to control nature), these deficiencies gave freer play to the physical laws, and brought their penalty with a sterner severity. In all these events conscience may not blame, for conscience blames only for the transgression of a moral law ; but wisdom may denounce, and humanity may express her regret, that the voice of nature, teaching men how to construct cities, had been so little regarded. And, if poverty and the necessities of a ruder age be pleaded in extenuation, we need only repeat what every one knows, that no necessity of impoverished man can countervail a law of nature, or prevent a combustible from burning when the fire is applied. And, viewing the recent calamity irrespectively alto-

gether of the moral demerit of the parties more immediately affected by it, viewing it as arising out of a combination of circumstances which had a beginning a century back or more, and involving no moral blame on the existing generation, we may yet see at every point a disregard of the provisions of nature, and, as we look on the result, we may exclaim in the words of the prophet: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

But, without dwelling on this view of the recent calamity, let us turn to what seems to be mainly intended in the text, the transgression of the moral law as the cause of Divine judgements on cities.

That all the evils and sufferings of human life originate in sin, is an admitted point among Christians. That the mode in which the penalty is connected with the transgression is infinitely varied, is a fact manifest to all enlightened observation. But, while this general doctrine and this evident fact may be readily admitted, it is not so easy to show that any particular judgement, occurring in the providence of God, has been sent upon a community because of some particular sins that may prevail in it, or on account of the general enormity of its wickedness. It would be rash and hazardous, for instance, for any one to affirm that the terrible calamity which has recently befallen this city, was sent on account of any one of the sins that

might be justly charged upon some portions of the community, or on account of the general aggravation of our wickedness. But it would be neither rash nor hazardous to say that each and all of these sins provoke the displeasure of God, and merit His righteous judgement; and it would be profitable for each of us to consider, and for every Minister of Religion to point out, what he may deem the sins prevailing among us, with which the tokens of the Divine displeasure may be connected. This is the proper use of such visitations. In receiving them as judgements from God, we are not presuming to lift up the veil that envelops the secret purposes of the Sovereign Ruler; we are only attempting to discover the particulars of our own guilt, the guilt to be found in the community of which we form a part, that we may be moved penitently to confess our sins, our individual and collective sins, and to employ the means by which a general reformation of morals and religion may be effected.

To proceed then, let us calmly and candidly present the truth, as we view it, in reference to the religious condition and character of this city, and to point out first in the Protestant division, and secondly in the Romanistic, what appears to be at variance with the will of God, inconsistent with the duties and detrimental to the highest interests of the community, and, as such, justly deserving any judgement the Sovereign Ruler may be pleased to send upon us.

First, then, look at the condition of Protestantism in this city.

It comprehends, in its various branches, about one-third of the entire population.<sup>3</sup> It will not be deemed, in this assembly, extravagant if we claim for them the highest place on account of their intelligence, worth, enterprise, and influence. We may claim also for the several churches into which they are distributed, (we name not the exception), that they maintain the symbols of the orthodox and evangelical faith founded on the Oracles of God. Of these five churches belong to the Church of England, and six are Presbyterian in their order and doctrine ; besides these there are two Congregational Churches, three Methodist Chapels, and one Baptist ; and these, inclusive of the Unitarians, represent a population that may be estimated at 20,000 souls. Supposing that the number of churches may be taken as a fair exponent of the average number of members adhering to each denomination, it will not be denied, that, as far as churches go, and the services of the able and faithful ministers who officiate in them, an ample provision is made for the spiritual edification of their respective adherents. Our sanctuaries are open on the sabbath, and the true doctrines of the Gospel are, with some lesser diversities, proclaimed in them all. What fruit have we then from these things ? As Protestants, we proclaim that we are in possession of the pure Truth, drawn fresh from the fountains of Inspi-

ration ; we are not spiritually enslaved or priest-ridden ; our freedom of inquiry is not fettered ; the education of our children is not counteracted ; our press is not manacled by a censorship ; and the great body of our people preserve an outward reverence for the sabbath and the sanctuary. These are some of our advantages as Protestants, which increase our responsibility in the sight of Heaven. But will it be affirmed that these advantages have been rightly improved ? Is it manifest among our people that a purer life has resulted from a purer faith ? Is it at all obvious in the conduct of the Protestants of this city, that they are as devotedly attached to the Truth as the Romanist is to his hereditary prejudices ; and do they in point of fact make as great and ready sacrifices for its support and promulgation ? Do they observe their sacred ordinances with an equal devotion and assiduity ? Would not every well informed Protestant hesitate to reply in the affirmative ?—And to what else save the religious indifference, and the spurious liberality that prevails among us, must be attributed the slow progress of Evangelical Truth in the subversion of ancient corruption ? I proceed upon the assumption which you will grant, that Scriptural Truth is upon our side, and that there is a Divine power in Truth Revealed, when it is earnestly confessed with holiness of life. Why then has this Divine power not been manifested in the more rapid decline and overthrow of ancient cor-

ruption? Can a better reason be assigned than that the Truth has been held in unrighteousness, in indifference, as if it were not a precious treasure worth a man's while to purchase at any cost, and to disseminate at any sacrifice? Why this evident apathy among the confessors of a pure faith? Shall we say that it arises from a latent scepticism as to its real purity—its Divine origin? Or shall we rather say that its proper influence is counteracted by the urgencies of business, and the fascinations of pleasure? Whatever be the cause, that cause must involve guilt—the guilt of unfaithfulness to Him who has revealed the truths of the everlasting Gospel to the world; and it involves also the guilt of unfaithfulness to those around for whose salvation it has been revealed. If the spread of Divine Truth, the influence of a pure faith is in any way retarded by the doubtful testimony, the unholy example of those who profess it, must they not be held accountable for the result? In speaking of a doubtful testimony, I allude not to the avoidance of religious controversies by which this community is happily characterized, nor to the absence of the strong anti-popish antipathies for which our father-land is distinguished, nor to the banishment of that railing phraseology with which all Romanistic peculiarities were wont to be assailed. No one should regret that these things are by us laid aside. They were not destructive to the fortress of error against which they were

directed, while they aroused the animosity of those within it, and too often impaired in the bosoms of the assailants that divine charity, without which, though we speak with the tongues of angels, we are nothing. But here we may be allowed to express our fear lest, with the polishing away of these blemishes, the Protestant community may have become in some degree reconciled even to the most pernicious of the prevailing errors. We are not grieved as we ought to be by those defacements of the divine beauties of Christianity which deprive it of its power to regenerate society. We do not contend with earnest, fearless zeal for the faith once delivered to the saints; and the wide-spread inconsistencies between our profession and our creed sadly mar the efficacy of both over the minds of those who know not the Truth. In so far as these charges may be established against us, do we not deserve the righteous judgements of Him, who by the Gospel hath sent salvation to the world?

In the preceding survey we have regarded the Protestant Churches mainly in the light of the depositaries of a pure and Scriptural faith. But we ought farther to look upon them as organized societies of Christian men, to whom the duty has been committed of promulgating the faith, and all its blessed influences, each especially in his own vicinity. But, alas! how many things in the condition of the Protestant Churches in this

city are, by our own confession, at variance with the design of the Christian institute ! They are organized indeed separately and for sectarian objects ; but they exist in a state of disunion, perhaps antagonism, based sometimes on minute and unimportant points, which mars or greatly impedes their efficiency in all Catholic movements. A substantial unity in the common faith can be discovered in their respective creeds ; but on the less important questions of order and of ritual they are broken up into different sections, each gazing intently on the dividing lines, and too little on the canopy of the One Cross which overshadows them all. The consequence is, that in respect to all matters, for which organization is valuable, we, Protestants, are utterly impotent. Our voice is never united ; the rods of our power are never bound up into one bundle. Both the State and the Romish Church look upon our separate Churches in the light of rival factions, which are not likely ever to become formidable by their unity. Meanwhile it is scarcely possible to speak of them as one whole. Without combination of ministerial agency ; without a centre of authority to regulate the general expenditure ; without concert to expose error or to repel wrong ; without co-operation in promoting or sustaining any system of education either in schools or colleges ; is it strange that we should fail to reap the advantages of union where there is no unity, and of combined effort

where there is no organization? Freedom of inquiry, we are aware, must always give rise to some diversity of opinion; and diversity of tastes and classes will give birth to particular associations; but these may and ought to be harmonized by an essential unity, and by a presiding power, and by a heaven-born charity: and much of the guilt, with which, as a body, we are chargeable, arises from the absence of these bonds, and the penalty is connected with the sin of Protestantism.

Look next at Romanism in this city in its relation to the moral government of God.

It prevails among two-thirds of the population. It possesses large accumulated wealth, derived from the liberality of a former age.<sup>4</sup> Its power is concentrated in the priesthood, united into a perfect organization in its several orders. The jarring of its machinery is never heard, so deep it lies, and so remote from the ear of the world. That portion of the Papal system, by which we in this city are more directly affected, is the same in its agents and in its objects as it has been everywhere since the age of Hildebrand.<sup>5</sup> To centralize all spiritual power in the priesthood, to make religion consist in the observance of the ritualism of the Church, to discountenance personal investigation in all matters of doctrine, to prevent the reading of the Bible by the people, to circumscribe common education within the very narrowest limits, are demonstrably the ob-

jects of that policy which the Church of Rome here and everywhere pursues; and the effects are strikingly visible wherever it is pursued free from counteraction. Even under our own eye, where the counteractions are numerous and powerful, we may witness these effects in the absence of enterprize, in a resistance to improvements, in a sluggish contentment with ancestral customs and old modes of thought and action. Society around the French Canadians is advancing, but they are stationary; no power can infuse into them the living energy of the age to which they belong. These are the true and necessary consequences, they are the immediate penalties, resulting under the government of God from the religious system. It is unfavourable to mental energy because it forbids freedom of thought on the great questions which first awaken it in the popular mind; it plants faith in the imagination, and not in the intellect; it tries to win the heart by the eye and the ear, rather than by the vivid representation of the Truth. This is an essential characteristic of the system. Of itself it cannot raise to high intelligence, or to pure pre-eminent virtue. It counteracts in many important points the purposes of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and in so far it must entail the penalty of His displeasure.

Did we only view the Papal system in its true light, we could not fail to be struck with the enormity of its perversions. Our religion is re-

vealed from Heaven. It is contained in a volume, of which the inspiration is admitted, and the meaning is level to every capacity. The Romish Church shuts up this volume in prison, suppresses some of its most important doctrines, and transforms the divine simplicity of its ordinances by so many additions that with difficulty the original can be recognized beneath the superincumbent load. The question arises, Who gave man, any body of men, authority to do this? Is a power, delegated for this purpose, so much as hinted at in the Written Word? If not hinted at there, where are the evidences of its delegation? If, as the Romanist alleges, evidence be found in the Gospel that such power was given to Peter and his successors, is there no limit to its exercise? no rule for its guidance? What is that limit? Where is that rule? Has the liberty been given to any church, to any age, so to change the whole face of the primitive faith as that Peter and the primitive martyrs, were they to rise from the dead, could scarce recognize it. With the light that we have, we feel no hesitation in replying in the negative. We are free to declare that every change in the religion of Christ by a human hand is an invasion of His Sovereign Power, and the highest dishonour that can be done to His name. He will not own such a corrupted Gospel as His; and, however wide its reception be in a degenerate world, and even though it should bring upon it some incidental good, it will fail in the accom-

plishment of those higher objects which the pure Gospel achieves. Prophecy assures us that this mystery of iniquity will be consumed in the brightness of the Saviour's coming. What wonder if in the progress of its history it should occasionally receive some precursory admonitions of its impending doom!

We may now advert for a moment to one or two of those evils which cannot fail to arise in a community like ours from the condition of the Christian Church among us, as we have briefly, and it may be darkly, presented it.

No truth is more certain than that the morality of a city will grow out of its religion; and whatever impairs the efficacy of religion, its doctrines, its ordinances, its organization, will in the same degree be injurious to morality; while the moral worth which it diffuses will prove an important element of social order and material prosperity. If we do not advance in religion, (and with this we connect advancement in intelligence and morality,) we will continue to be exposed to the following among many other evils.

Our city will be liable to frequent violations of law, and interruptions of public order. The law and the magistrate are powerful in this land to restrain crime, and to punish the offender. But after all the surest guarantee of social order is conscience, not fear. Conscience is both the law and the magistrate in the bosom of a good

citizen, and its functions are performed without expense to the community. Unless its power be felt in the great body of the citizens, what security have we for the preservation of life, and property, and justice, in times of general excitement and commotion ; in the conflict of parties ; in the collision of rival interests ? The disorder which rises up, like the troubled and restless sea, in a demoralized community, is quickly followed with condign punishment. When civil government, which is a Divine ordinance, is despised and resisted, the Supreme Governor avenges the wrong by the miseries which are sent upon the lawless and disobedient.

In the actual condition of society among us we might apprehend another evil,—the disunion of our citizens, as manifested in the disunion of our representative functionaries. Of different national origins, speaking different languages, adhering to different modes of religious faith, not mingling freely in the ordinary affairs of life, is there no reason to fear discordant counsels, and efforts after public improvement frustrated ? Is there no danger that this discordancy of opinion and sentiment be carried into an arena devoted to the discussion of mundane interests, and that the material advancement of the community be hindered by an antagonism which has its source in an adverse nationality or a diversity of religious creed ? And where can the cure of the evil be found save in that diffusion of knowledge, and

that unanimity of sentiment which True Religion so effectually promotes? Until this healthier state of the public mind be attained, the evils which result from the existing elements of discord will continue to inflict the merited penalty.

To one other evil we may point as strongly indicating that the foundation of our security must be laid in religion and conscience. Science among other results has furnished facilities for the commission of crime; and one of the most enormous crimes, that can be committed against life and property, may now be committed so as almost to elude the possibility of detection; I refer to the crime of arson or incendiarism, a crime which, there is too much reason to fear, is now of frequent occurrence. For the purpose of sporting with the fears of the timid, or of gratifying secret revenge, or of acquiring plunder in the confusion, some men, in whom all the checks of conscience are over-borne, do not scruple to cast the match where they know it will do its work, and watch its progress in recklessness and impunity. Let it be granted that there are few persons in any community capable of such an atrocity, yet the property of a city, and many of its lives, may be very much at the disposal of these few. Ten such ruffians, single or organized, might in the course of ten years bring ruin on ten thousand families; and against them there might be no appeal save to the judgement-seat of God; for human tribunals are impotent where there are no

witnesses and no accusers. Yet such extreme cases of rare and aggravated criminality, which cannot be controlled by that fear which so frequently prevents easily detected crimes, can be met and restrained only by its appropriate antidote—an antidote which must be applied to the conscience of the individual, but which cannot reach the unknown individual unless by its general circulation through that community of which he is a member. The new forms of crime, to which improved science is giving birth, can be met and counteracted not so much by improved systems of criminal police as by a more faithful application of the moral influences which mould and fashion the characters of men. If cities are to be safe, they must be made safe by the controlling power of an enlightened conscience. There must be no waste places left, no neglected spots in the moral domain, in which villains may be nurtured to avenge the neglect by crimes against the community that neglected them. For the effects of the law of moral retribution are often painfully felt even in the present world both by individuals and communities; and, were we competent to trace out in every instance the sources of crime, and the miseries which it produces, we might see them stand universally in the relation of cause and effect, surely established for holy and beneficent purposes by the decree of the Sovereign Ruler; and, acknowledging His righteous dominion, we might humbly exclaim in

the language of the prophet: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

It is not my intention that the general and discursive illustration we have now pursued should be connected with the recent calamity beyond what the doctrine in the text warrants—that the evils which are done in a city are under the direction of Heaven, are the signs of God's displeasure, and the means by which He punishes or rectifies what is wrong. The immediate practical lesson, addressed to us individually, is that we should stand in awe of the Divine judgements, which may at any moment, and by a thousand agencies, be sent upon the sinner. Everywhere in every city the Moral Governor is present, and every material, and every human agent, may become the minister of His pleasure. The stroke of lightning will accomplish it as effectually as the torch of the incendiary, and the breath of pestilence may in a day make sadder havoc than a conflagration. It may be well occasionally to look on the moral condition of the city of our habitation, for our principal duties lie within it, and, according to the social arrangements ordained of God, our own well-being, both for time and for eternity, is complicated with the moral well-being of all who are more immediately related to us.

But in the final judgement of God, and in the issues of eternity, we shall each stand alone. Our own character, our own deeds, will be the ground of our doom. Every human being will

at the last audit be viewed apart from the accidental relations of the world through which he has passed, and the character he himself possesses will give complexion to his destiny. In the present world the good and the bad are often plunged in the same calamity; though there be still a wide difference between them amidst the common distress. Their substance may be consumed in the same fire. The one, whose only portion was an earthly one, has lost his all. The other has lost his earthly substance too, but he has in Heaven a better and an enduring substance which no fires can consume. Seek, brethren, for a title to this inheritance, more precious far than the fairest of the earthly. It belongs to all the faithful in Christ Jesus, and no accident will ever deprive them of it. The growth of a sanctified nature will give strength to the evidence that it is yours; and in due time you will be raised to the possession of the purchased and unfading inheritance. Amen.

## NOTES.

<sup>2</sup> "Devout attention to the dealings of Providence is equally consonant to the dictates of reason and Scripture. He, who believes in the superintendence of an Eternal Mind over the affairs of the Universe, is equally irrational and indevout in neglecting to make the course of events the subject of frequent meditation; since the knowledge of God is incomparably more important than the most intimate acquaintance with our fellow-creatures; and, as the latter is chiefly acquired by an attentive observation of their conduct, so must the former be obtained in the same way. The operations of Providence are marked with a character as expressive of their Great Author as the productions of human agency; and the same Being, who speaks like Himself in His Word, acts like Himself in the moral economy of the Universe." \* \* "The obscurities of Providence are elucidated by Scripture; the declarations of Scripture are verified by Providence. One unfolds, as far as is suitable to our state, the character and designs of the mysterious Agent; the other displays His works; and the admirable harmony, which is found to subsist between them, strengthens and invigorates our confidence in both." \* \* "Providence conveys its most impressive lessons in facts and events; and by clothing the abstractions of Religion in the realities of life renders them in a manner palpable."—*Robert Hall*.

<sup>3</sup> The Census of the Religious Denominations in the City of Montreal, 1852, as published, presents the following results:—

|                                        |        |
|----------------------------------------|--------|
| Church of Rome,.....                   | 41,464 |
| Church of England,.....                | 3,993  |
| Presbyterians, (of all classes ?)..... | 2,832  |
| Methodists,.....                       | 1,213  |
| Baptists,.....                         | 272    |
| Other Denominations, .....             | 7,760  |
| Jews,.....                             | 181    |

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57,715

Little confidence can be placed on the accuracy of the returns on which these calculations are based. We deem the assumed

proportion of one-third Protestant to two-thirds Roman Catholic as sufficiently accurate for a general illustration. It is in this proportion the School funds of the City are divided. The number comprehended under the head "Other Denominations" ought probably to be distributed among the Protestant Churches named, and the Unitarians who are not named, including a portion (we know not how large), who are usually designated in Canada West as belonging to "No Religion." The six Presbyterian Churches must be entitled to claim largely upon the unappropriated column.

4 "The genius of the papal government was better adapted to the exercise of spiritual dominion, than of temporal power. With respect to the former, all its maxims were steady and invariable. Every new pontiff adopted the plan of his predecessor. By education and habit, ecclesiastics were so formed, that the character of the individual was sunk in that of the profession; and the passions of the man were sacrificed to the interest and honour of the orders. The hands which held the reigns of administration might change; but the spirit which conducted them was always the same. While the measures of other governments fluctuated, and the objects at which they aimed varied, the church kept one end in view; and to this unrelaxing constancy of pursuit, it was indebted for its success in the boldest attempts ever made by human ambition."—*Dr. Robertson's View of the State of Europe.*

5 The Roman Catholic Church in Lower Canada obtained from the Crown of France the fief and Seigniorship of Montreal, the fief and Seigniorship of Two Mountains, and the fief and Seigniorship of St. Sulpice. These lands *lapsed* to the Crown of England at the conquest, but the ecclesiastic orders were permitted to retain the occupancy. Conscious of the invalidity of a title by mere sufferance, they solicited a valid title from Lord Sydenham, and they obtained a Special ordinance (3d Vict., 1840, ch. 30,) confirming them in the possession. In addition to these Seigniorial lands the Roman Catholic Church has a vast amount of property, accumulated from their revenues, and enlarged by the various methods so successfully practised by its priesthood both with the living and the dying. The curés, moreover, are entitled by law to claim, in lieu of tythes, one twenty-sixth of the produce of all the lands belonging to the members of their

own communion. The revenues derived from these various sources, increased by the customary dues exacted for spiritual services, make the Roman Catholic Church of Lower Canada probably one of the best endowed Churches in the World. Will the parties now labouring so diligently to weaken Protestantism in Canada by demanding the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, if they should succeed in their object, have consistency and virtue enough to deal with an equal hand with the property now in possession of the Church of Rome? An ordinance of Lord Sydenham and his Council must surely be an obstacle as easily surmountable as an Act of the Imperial Parliament? The political leaders of Popery in this land may perhaps be induced, by the clamour of Protestant sects, made louder by alien auxiliaries, to consent to secularize the lands granted for the support of a Protestant Clergy, if they foresee no danger in it to their own possessions, but not otherwise. And some politicians who profess to be Protestants are wheedling the Roman Catholics with this argument that, whatever may befall the Clergy Reserves, the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church is secure. But, if, as will be most agreeable to them and the priesthood, the course proposed be not secularization but a new distribution of the Clergy Reserve Fund among all sects, in the ratio of their respective numbers, then the Church of Rome in Canada will carry off one half of the spoil and add it to her already enormous wealth. Of this we may be assured that the French and Roman party in our Legislature will not, at least during the lives of the existing generation, consent to any Act that will diminish the wealth and power of their Church, though they will probably not hesitate to take advantage of division and rivalry to weaken and humble an adversary. If they should succeed, neither the revolutionary politician nor the voluntary religionist will in the end have much cause to rejoice.

**RESPECT FOR THE BURYING PLACE  
OF THE DEAD.**

A SERMON

**Preached in St. Paul's Church in 1848, with the view of arousing  
attention to the propriety of establishing a public Cemetery  
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And the field of Ephron, which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field, and the cave which *was* therein, and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the borders round about were made sure. Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.—Gen. xxiii. 17, 18.

All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel: and this *is it* that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite; In the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.—Gen. xlix. 28—31.

Read Matt. xxvii. 50—66, and Matt. xxviii. 1—6.

There are not a few in every unfeeling and utilitarian community, who might be disposed to treat with levity, the tender sentiment which actuated the patriarch in his anxiety to secure an indisputable title to the burying place in the cave of Machpelah. The language held by such is, what matter, where, or in what form, the decom-

posing relics of mortality are laid? What signifies it to them, who can have no feeling of the dishonour, and can suffer nothing in the event, whether they are consigned to some hole in an obscure corner of a stranger's field, where not even a hillock shall denote their resting place, or on the highway, or within the sea mark, or in the bosom of the ocean itself, or still more revolting, be left exposed to the roving beasts of prey. The deserted relic of mortality can suffer nothing by any such fate. It cannot witness the aversion of the sensitive, nor be conscious of the rudeness that defaces its form. In any contingency, it is speedily dissolved, and the elements receiving what the elements had given, "dust to dust, concludes the noblest name."

But this coarse disregard of the dead, which some have mistaken for an enlargement from popular prejudices, is after all not only at variance with our natural sentiments, and a correct taste, but is not even superficially plausible. Nature has formed us with a love for **RELICS**—whatever they may be,—when they appertain to objects which have strongly excited our personal affections, or when profoundly interesting associations are connected with them. Why that eagerness that has displayed itself in so many forms, of which the results are found in so many private and public repositories, to collect memorials of the past, and to put upon them a value which bears no proportion to their intrinsic worth? And

why the deeper interest excited in the mind of every correct thinking observer as he contemplates some authentic memorials of remarkable events and persons? Is it not an evidence that our bosom has a chord within it, fitted to receive exquisite impressions from such objects? The relic, however intrinsically contemptible, has a history in it, and that history is a fountain of emotion.

Why that deep interest which man feels in visiting the scenes of those wonderful events which stand prominently forth in the annals of the past? Is it not, that the scene is the memento of the action, and has its history graven upon it, "as with an iron pen and lead on the rock?"—And if the traveller bring away from the scene any objects that shall keep it in his remembrance, or that shall excite in those to whom he may give it, on his return to his native country, a livelier remembrance of that scene and its history, some benefit results from the indulgence of a natural sentiment, even though fancy be a busy prompter,—provided always fancy be chaste and enlightened and religious in her sketchings. Has he brought me a stone from Ararat? It may be that on it the Ark rested, while yet the deluge rolled darkly and sadly over the desolated world.—Has he brought me a worn fragment of gopher wood from one of its peaks? It may be (why should it not be?) a portion of the ark in which God shut up with his own hand the stock of a

re-peopled world, of which as concerning the flesh Christ came?—Has he brought me a sun-dried brick, or the skeleton of a cormorant, or a stuffed satyr from the ruins of Babylon? It has inscribed on it the record of prophetic fulfilment. And what are the ruins of Nineveh, or Thebes, or Persepolis, but so many huge relics, consisting of mounds, and excavated chambers, and broken columns, and fallen temples, which no one can look upon without brighter illuminations of the past, and sadder reflections on the mutability of all human grandeur. These are the sepulchral monuments of nations, and we are summoned by nature and history, taste and religion, to read their inscriptions and to moralize on their fate.

But parting from those grander memorials of nations and great events, there is something still more touching in some of the humbler monuments which love and friendship have raised to perpetuate the memory of the departed, at least to redeem that memory for a time, from an all devouring oblivion. The Egyptians and the Hebrews were remarkable for the care with which they protected their dead. They ever parted from the body with a sorrowing reluctance, and were unwilling that it should lose a place in their remembrance. They kept it long in the death chamber, ere they carried it away to the sepulchre; and the more opulent tried by the most ingenious arts to arrest the process of dissolution, and to preserve upon the lifeless frame all that

could be preserved of the lineaments of the being that they loved. They chose for their burying-places situations most fitly adapted to give free play to these tender sentiments. Their sepulchres were placed in the most retired and beautiful spots amidst groves of oak and terebinth ; or they cut them out often with exquisite sculpture in the face of a mountain rock, where, to this day they are seen in thousands ; or they built over them temples, whose magnificent ruins still excite the wonder of the traveller ; or far up in some inaccessible ravine, like Petra, they consecrated a city of the dead, and repaired at intervals to contemplate amidst its silent majesty and its slumbering tenants the destiny that awaited themselves. Time has spared many of these monuments, but history contains few records of their moral influence. Yet from the congeniality of such funeral customs to the nature of man we may conclude that they were salutary.

And we are not without remarkable illustrations of this care for the dead, founded in that propensity of our nature to which we have adverted, even amidst heathen and barbarous nations. The Indians chose some favoured spot in the solitude of their forest, or on some beautiful promontory, or bay, for the sepulchre of their tribe. They raised a mound over their dust and would not permit it to be violated. They deem it a sore calamity to be driven from the region where it lies ; and when that sore calamity has happened, they have been

known to disinter the dead and carry their relics along with them. And wherever we find a conduct the reverse of this, and the dead uncared for, we find the savage sunk to the lowest point of debasement. When he can leave, as some tribes do, the sick or the aged to expire of hunger, or to become a prey to wild beasts ;—and when he leaves the corpse of a kinsman unburied to be torn to pieces by the wolves and vultures,—there we find every human sentiment extinct, and the brutal in possession of the man. A tribe without a burying place is always a tribe without the consciousness of man's dignity, without the hope of immortality, without the idea of a God. Such degraded creatures have no relics, no anticipations ; all that they seek for is the enjoyment of the present hour. They employ the Epicurean's maxim, without knowing his philosophy, "let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die"—die like the beasts that perish.

Among the customs of the ancient Greek and Romans, funeral rites and the burial of the dead occupied a very conspicuous place. "To defraud the dead of any due respect, was a greater and more unpardonable sacrilege, than to spoil the temples of the gods." "Their mythology led them to believe that the souls of the departed could not be admitted into the Elysian shades but were forced to wander desolate and without company, till their bodies were committed to the earth ; and if they never had the good

fortune to obtain human burial, they were excluded from the receptacle of ghosts for an hundred years:—and hence the severest of all imprecations was that a person might die unburied.” And if any relative was backward in paying his dead friends due respect, or even sparing in his expenses upon their obsequies and monuments, he was looked upon as void of humanity and natural affection, and was excluded from all offices of trust and honor. Hence one special enquiry concerning the lives and behaviour of such as appeared candidates for the magistracy at Athens, was, whether they had taken due care in celebrating the funerals and adorning the monuments of their relatives. Such was the idea of the polished Greek, incorporated into the system of his Government, in the best days of the republic. It was pervaded no doubt with superstition : but it was a refined superstition, peculiar to the people who had sunk the doctrine of the soul’s immortality and of future rewards and punishments into poetical fictions. Even in this deteriorated form these momentous truths had some moralizing influence. They shed a phosphorescent light upon the sepulchre which mitigated the gloom it was too feeble to dispel.

But, if by the dim light which was shed upon their immortality, they were led to regard with a scrupulous and reverent affection the relics of the dead, how much stronger should that affection

be in us, to whom immortality is clearly brought to light. To this as christians we should be moved both by memory and by faith. Let memory hold in unfading remembrance all the tender and endearing passages of our by-gone intercourse with the departed—of whom we may have scarcely any earthly memento except their grave. Is it a child who lies there? Make a chaplet of his smiles, and his childish pastimes, and the dawn of his reason, and the lispings of his piety, and go often to place it on his tomb.—Is it a friend, no matter of what name or relation? Remember the tokens of his affection, his contributions to your enjoyment; the evidences of his piety, the deeds of his beneficence that still sweetly scent his name; and live conformably to the hope of a reunion in heaven. Yes, every grave may have its history; and with a few solitary exceptions, every grave will have some survivors to read and love that history, and to protect its monuments. Neglecting this, we permit to fall into abeyance an important principle of our nature, that which prompts us to associate, even with the frailest memorials, both the past and the future; which can build up the fairest visions of love and friendship, even upon the pairing of a nail; which once led a patriarch, and many in a long line of his descendants, to value the cave of Machpelah, where the dust of beloved ones lay, as one of the dearest portions of their earthly inheritance. “Bury me, said one of them, with

my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite. In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephraim the Hittite for a possession of a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife ; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife ; and there I buried Leah :” and there also Jacob “ was gathered unto his people.”

Nor let this desire be classed with the puling and sickly sentimentalism of which this fiction-loving age presents so many specimens. It existed long antecedent to these pampering productions, in simple and primitive times, when faith was more powerful than fancy, and before the manly in man had been emasculated. It gained strength in the purest times of the Christian church, for Christianity has this boast, that it teaches the proper dignity of man. Our Redeemer was laid in the grave, and sanctified it, and rose from it, and hath given the world assurance, not only of the immortality of the soul, but also of the resurrection of the body ; and ever since the grave hath had in it a peculiar sacredness. It is still a prison indeed ; but the prisoners are prisoners of hope. It is a bed ; but out of it the slumberers shall awake. It is a night ; but after it shall come the dawn of an endless day The mortality that we commit to it shall put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. Does it not become the Christian then,

to look upon the graves of the departed with interest, with watchfulness, with affection. It contains a treasure. True that treasure is for a time dishonored. We have buried it out of our sight and death feeds upon it. In its dark abode it says to corruption, "thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my brother and my sister." It crumbles away until no vestige of its form and symmetry is discoverable. But he who gave that dust mortal life, can quicken it, will quicken it, into the life immortal. To us, therefore, because of the destiny that awaits him, the grave of the believer must always be a hallowed spot. Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, hath His eye upon it, however much it be neglected among men. By true Christians strong in faith and refined in sentiment, the church-yard should never be neglected. If devout men carry Stephen to his burial, is it too much to hope that devout men should protect his grave?

And here, in remembrance of the customs of our native land, still deeply imbued with the sentiments I am endeavouring to awaken, would I pay a tribute to its country church-yards. It seems most natural to wish that our last resting-place should be near that sanctuary, where we are taught to live well and to die in hope. It must contribute, one should think, to the deeper solemnity of the Sabbath, and to its sanctified use, to moralize for a moment ere we enter the house of God, over the graves of our departed acquaint-

ances and kindred ; to read the simple memorials that affection hath inscribed upon their tombstones ; to observe how many of our co-evals are slumbering below ; to forecast the hour when the grass shall be above our dust, as above theirs. Scenes like these in our devout frames give wideness to our conceptions, and tenderness to our heart. Eternity is there brought near ; a freer intercourse with the invisible world is enjoyed. We feel as if the spirits of the departed were hovering around us, and the place where their body sleeps—occasional visitants to that sacred house where they once worshipped and received the blessing which Christ dispenses to his people ; and where some still assemble to whom they are commissioned as ministering angels. The graveyard around, and the church within it, is to our thoughts a connecting link between death and immortality. And it is worthy of the legislature of a Christian and united people to see it, that this union shall always be maintained. In rural and thinly peopled districts it cannot be prejudicial to the public health, while it is congenial to our natural sentiments, and conducive to solemn and devout contemplation.

But in cities generally, and in our own city, the Protestant places of interment present a very different condition. They lack order, continuance, retirement, and sacredness. Already has one Protestant burying ground been given up to the encroachments of a growing city, and once

more its successor is menaced with a change. Again the frail monuments are to be demolished; again the ashes of the departed are to be disturbed or left behind; again the noise and bustle of the living world is to be let in upon the spot selected for their long repose. Already its crowded repositories cannot suffice to receive the dead, and the unprotected, unclaimed grave, is consigned for a price to new claimants. And such is the closeness and confusion that prevails there, that the visitor can with difficulty find the narrow house where the remains of his friend have been laid,—and when found, there is nothing about it to soothe the eye of taste or of affection. And yet, break up even this, as expedience or necessity may constrain to be done, the link is again broken that connects us with a former generation; names are effaced which the hearts of multitudes desire to be preserved, at least during their own day, and the lessons are obliterated which the tombstones of the past might present to the existing generation. All this, if it be a necessity, is a necessity to be deplored. It offers violence to our natural feelings. It prevents our necropolis from obtaining an antiquity, a circumstance which invests such places with a solemn and impressive charm. It is revolting to our associations, which leads us to attach a sacred value to the dust of the saints. It prevents any one from uttering the words which have in them a touching pathos—“all my nearest kindred are

buried there, and there I wish to be gathered to my people.”

It may be taken as one of the evidences of advancement in the present age—for which, however, we are indebted to the example of a very remote antiquity, and to nations whom we are very much disposed to treat as less advanced than our own in the progress of civilization,—that in most of the larger cities of Europe, better arrangements for the burial of the dead have been adopted, and more agreeable to the sentiments which Christianity fosters. Cemeteries of sufficient extent, combining where it can be attained, a variety pleasing to the eye, and such decorations as are congenial with the design, are projected and laid out, to which the population of the district, or the casual visitor may freely repair to spend an hour in those solemn meditations upon the fate of man by which the heart may be made better. In these, several important subsidiary objects are sought to be attained. They are located beyond the centre of population, but at some convenient distance from it; areas are laid out, far larger than can ever be required for actual interment. Localities are selected, where practicable, that admit by their inequalities something of the picturesque. The art of the landscape designer is called in to create ornaments suitable to the scene, and the tasteful disposition of its paths and seclusions. Designed for this special object in perpetuity, all guarantees are secured

for the purpose. It is made attractive to the friend and visitor : for why should not the sepulchre of the Christian, containing as it does relics so precious, be placed in the fairest spot of earth, where nature is clothed in her most beautiful forms, where everything around may remind however faintly, of the renovated world, where “ the storm of wintry time shall all be past, and one unbounded spring encompass all.” Abraham bought the fairest field in the plain of Mamre for a burying place ; he sought it because *a cave* was there to protect the dust he had not ceased to love ; he preferred it because the oak and the evergreen grew there, to soothe by their shade those whose affection might prompt to visit their tomb. And when the humanity of Christendom shall become hallowed and refined like that of the old Hebrews, places shall be selected for the repose of the dead, which will allure, and not repel, the reminiscent and contemplative visits of those who loved them while alive, and who cannot forget them in their temporary separation.

And were the population of this city, who are united in the fundamentals of a common faith, and who profess to be actuated by the lively hope of the same blessed resurrection, only possessed of the patriach’s affection for the dust of their departed kindred, they could easily find in its environs a spot as lovely as the field of Ephron the Hittite ; and the tenderness of the old Hebrew, and the sumptuous taste of the ancient Egyptians

would conspire with the purifying hopes of the Christian in stirring them without reluctance, "to weigh out the price, four hundred shekels of silver, current money, with the merchant." On some spot of the neighbouring mountain, from which the spectator could look down on the busy world below, and meditate on the brevity of its cares and disappointments, its sorrows and joys; where the eastern sun sheds its earliest beams—emblem of that morn when all who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; where nature with the helping hand of taste, could easily be persuaded to give every variety of walk and terrace, of prospect and seclusion; where trees as branching and verdant as the oaks and terebinths of Palestine, could soon be made to spread their shade; whither the thoughtful one who courted solitude and the aid of affecting mementoes, might within an hour transport himself; whither parents might within an hour lead their children to see how green the turf is upon the grave of their slumbering play-mate, and to inculcate upon them the solemn soothing lesson that to the good "death is gain;" whither the wronged and the care-worn might repair and obtain solace, by the contemplation of the scene where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest; which being within the view of all classes of the citizens might often give energy to the principles of rectitude, assuage the animosities of rivalry, and invigorate the pulsations of benevolence.

And a period might arrive, after this mountain necropolis had received the tenants of a century or more, when among its many monuments some would be found, inscribed with names still cherished in hallowed recollection, and a simple and unboastful memorial of their excellence, "strewed with many a holy text, which teach the rustic moralist to die." From all which the then existing generation might derive impressive lessons of wisdom and virtue; and strong incitements to follow in the path of those who have left behind them an honorable name. The obelisk of the patriot might be erected there, which multitudes might gaze on with grateful homage, when Canada shall have reached its higher political destiny. The tablet of the philanthropist might be erected there, to mark the spot where his ashes repose whose large and munificent liberality continues to sustain the institutions that with him originated. The humbler grave-stone of the Christian minister may be there, to remind a race that knew him not, that their forefathers were profited by his teaching and his prayers. And there, upon all allotted points, would be found the family-burying-place, a spot of solemn interest to the surviving lineage, as shortly to become that, where they also, shall rest with their fathers.—It might thus become not only the place of secure protection to the mortal remains of the dead, whom we love and reverence, but of impressive admonition to the living whose moral

well-being we are required to promote by all the means adapted to our nature.

The theme on which I have now allowed myself to expatiate, would be deemed by you neither trivial or unimportant, did you set yourself to realize the certainty, that within no distant period, the dearest of those that are now entwined in your affections, and are the delight of your homes, will die; and that, a day or two after, you will be constrained to say to some one in the language of the Father of the faithful, "give me a possession of a burying place with you that I may bury my dead out of my sight." And sure I am, if nature in that hour of sorrow were allowed its fair scope, and if the heartless negligence of the community did not trammel you, you would bear out your dead, not to the cramped and slovenly and ill-adorned receptacle into which this city's dead are now cast and forgotten; a place which you could not revisit without the laceration of every feeling;—where you could not plant and tend the flower above their dust. Ah! yon is not the place of flowers, though the turf that covers the Christian might well and properly be garnished with them;—where you could guide a friend in the hour of your tender remembrance to commemorate the virtues that never perish. No—this is not the place which in the hour of your grief you would select;—but you would choose one like that which Abraham selected for his Sarah in

another clime, in which the oak and ever-green spread the solemnity of their shade, where the flowers springs up on the sward, and the balmy air breathes freely around ; whither you could be allured in your thoughtful moods ; —and where full security was given to you and to your children, that their last resting place would never be violated. These sentiments are sanctioned alike by nature and religion ; and the man who in the hour of a sore bereavement can freely indulge them, is blessed with that which will mitigate his sorrow, and assist his preparation for our common fate.\*

\* Since the first publication of this discourse, the Protestant inhabitants of Montreal have purchased in the rear of the Mountain, 75 acres, for a public cemetery, possessing all the qualities which could be desired—the seclusion, the declivities, the shelter of woods, and a wide prospect from the summit elevation. One might wish, and as respects the locality it is the only wish which remains ungratified, that the present purchase were extended to the ridge beyond Mount Hope, commanding a full view of the city ; and that there were a shorter and easier access. This, it is said, will yet be attained. The grounds are already laid out with skill. Taste and time will accomplish the rest.

# ON GRAVES:

A SERMON

Preached in St. Paul's Church, after the general selection of  
burying places in the Mount Royal Cemetery, October 24,  
1852.



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She goeth unto the Grave to weep there.—*John xi. 31.*

When we have watched by the bed-side of a dying friend, and witnessed his last breath, felt his last pulse, and seen the extinction of every sign of life and thought and feeling, we experience very great difficulty in realizing the completeness of the change. Death is so like sleep—so like a faint, only deeper, stiller, colder, longer, the impression will hold us even when we know it is to be vain, that the sleeper may yet awake, that the invalid may yet recover from his swoon, that the soul still resides in the motionless frame or hovers near; that only some slight influence is needed to stir up a new sensibility and thought. We have no more than a vague conception of the fact that the soul is forever fled. We never saw the soul and can form no idea of its essence; we never had any direct communication with it. It beamed in these eyes now closed; it was lined on that countenance now rigid as marble; it spoke through those lips

now silent and compressed ; it animated that entire frame with intelligence and character.—These indications of its presence are now all gone, yet the frame that it animated, and which had become to us the symbol of its being and presence, is still apparently entire. To our eye it has suffered no great injury—no fatal disorganization. Pale, and wasted perhaps, by long or sharp disease, yet wanting nothing save the presence and power of mind to make it what it was only an hour ago,—a being of activity and animation, of intelligence and love.

This feeling of the smallness of the visible change between the state of life and the state of death which occupies us when we gaze upon a body which has just ceased to breathe, becomes materially modified, when after a day or two, we enter the chamber, where it is laid out and confined, and clothed in its winding-sheet. When we approach and lift up the covering from the face, we perceive that the change is now great indeed.—These eyes sunk and glassy are sealed up in a slumber that shall never be broken. No sound will ever come forth from these lips. No sigh will ever be heaved from that bosom. That heart will never throb again either with joy or sorrow. That tabernacle deserted of its tenant is now an inanimate and corruptible thing, dissolving into its original elements, and fit only to be borne away in the silence of sorrow, to the receptacle which has been consecrated for its re-

pose. While we affectionately reverence these mortal remains, we feel that our friend is no longer there ; that this unsightly ruin is only the instrument by which he once held communication with us, and we honour and care for it in its desertion as still belonging to him. Called away by the Giver of life into another mode of existence he has left it for a while behind him. However humiliating the change now passing on the mortal and corruptible part, the immortal and incorruptible has sustained no dishonour, has fallen into no ruin, but has returned into the hands of a merciful Creator to inherit with enlarged faculties a completer felicity. But eye hath not seen this happier world. We cannot follow the departed within its precincts. In the sad hour of our bereavement, we think only of our own loss, and we turn to the mouldering relics which most impressively remind us of it. And when these are buried from our sight, filled with tender recollections of one whom we shall see no more, until the grave shall give up its dead, we may go to that grave to weep there. How various the cause of those tears ! How diversified the source of these regrets ! That we may indulge some profitable reflections, let us pause for a moment near the graves which may suggest them.

Some generation or two hence the field which we have purchased where we may bury our dead will have many occupants. Every slope will have its monuments ; every path its lowly memo-

rials. Of the living in that generation, some allured by the beauties of the spot will repair thither to admire them; others perhaps for the better purpose of moralizing on the fate of man, and their own latter end. The laughter of the young and the light-hearted will there be checked by the mementoes of our mortality which shall everywhere meet the eye. The fortunate passing through its avenues, and reading its epitaphs, will learn the precariousness and instability of all earthly good. The happy family in their drive through it may not pass unheeded the numerous graves that speak of the disseverments which death hath wrought in families once as secure and smiling as their own. The man of anxious, restless enterprize, musing for a while near the tomb of one who, not long ago, was his fellow, or his competitor, may return to the pursuit of his enterprizes in a temper befitting a being who feels that his earthly career is bounded by very narrow limits. The aged, passing with tottering steps the spot where a coeval has long been interred, may turn with brightened hope to the immortality to which he himself is drawing near. Often led into such reflections, pious and thoughtful men will be more reconciled to their approaching dissolution, since to depart and to be with Christ is far better:—and they will go to the grave, not so much to weep there, as to cherish the hope which shines soothingly even amidst its darkness and tears.

We have spoken now of the dust and of the dead ; yet there is connected with every grave what is of much greater importance, the history of an actual life,—the life of that immortal being whose dust it contains. This history may be viewed in two parts, the one passed in the present world, the other beginning at death and continuing for ever. Of the future immortal part, as it respects any individual, we can know little with certainty, and only so far as his earthly career may cast its light upon it. But even of this what poor and partial interpreters we are, especially when the subject of it is our friend, lately passed away from our circle into the world of retribution. Of the life of most individuals we know little more than a few passages, some good, some bad, some flagrantly bad, it may be, and some nobly good ; and these, form their ostensible character, their palpable history. But we know little or nothing of the profounder workings of their moral nature,—of their true interior life, of their deep-rooted principles, occasionally overborne in action,—of their prevailing sentiments, occasionally submerged by an opposite current,—of the compunction with which they reviewed their errors, and the better purposes which rose up from the penitence that successful temptation had embittered. All this the world can neither know or judge ; and whatever may be its judgment on the palpable life of an individual, it is very much disposed in its charity to take for granted the existence

of the unknown favorable symptoms, and to hope well of the everlasting condition of the dead.— Does it not seem to be the judgment of the world, the little world that clusters around every individual, and which assembles at his funeral, that the departed one has either lived the life of a good man, or, at least, that in the last stage, he has repented and been forgiven, and has consequently been admitted into the felicities of the heavenly paradise? The prevailing sentiment in the grave-yard would seem to be, that few or none die the death of the wicked; that in point of fact no souls, or very few are lost; that somehow nearly all, whatever, their past life may have been, are at the hour of death forgiven and sanctified and saved; and to feel a fear, or to express a doubt of the eternal well-being of any one, would be deemed an evidence of uncharitableness or superstition. As if there were no exceptions and no doubt, the funeral assemblage, sometimes openly in its religious service, or more privately to one another, expresses a hope that the departed has been raised to the joys of a better life, although few evidences may be discoverable on which to found such a hope. It cannot be that all who die are true believers in Christ Jesus and within the range and privilege of Christian brotherhood. It cannot be under the government of a holy and righteous God, that however diversified with good and evil the characters of men may be during their life, they shall all have at its

close one character and one doom,—the character and doom of the righteous. Yet how many influences combine to foster this delusion. The Church fosters it by her indiscriminate expressions of a charitable hope ; men involved in the same guilt with the departed, and exposed to the same condemnation, readily fall in with the strain as a solace to their own fears ; the affectionate partiality of friends disposes them in the same way, and they express their hopes and eulogiums on the tablet and the tombstone. The horror which every Christian feels in contemplating the loss of a soul makes him recoil all the more sensitively when it happens to be the possible loss of one whom he knew, and to whom he was tenderly endeared. With all these influences combining to foster delusive partialities both as to the former life of the departed and their future fate, what wonder if many false judgments should be pronounced on both. And yet, where would a thoughtful man more earnestly wish the truth to be spoken of him than at his funeral, when his soul is done with the world and in the presence of God ; and where, were it only possible that he could be a listener, would any thoughtful man have a greater aversion to unmerited praise than at his grave ? Let truth prevail every where ; and most of all let nothing contrary to it be said near the dust of accountable man, at the very moment his soul is reaping in eternity exactly as it had sown in time, whatever that may be.

But in every Christian land, in every age, men will arise and live and die, whose memories will be a fragrant perfume, and whose burial place will be held in veneration. One naturally wishes the graves of such to be selected in some retired and beautiful spot, to which one might repair in serious moments to muse and strengthen one's holy resolutions. Who has not felt the deep fountains of feeling stirred within him, standing beside the martyr's grave, designated by the rude headstone in the remote and solitary glen, where his body fell by the hand of the persecutor, and his soul triumphed amidst the last of human agonies. What a crowd of histories are imbedded in the uncouth rhymes incised on this moss-covered memorial! The persecuting tyranny that wasted the church; the persevering constancy with which the faithful endured it; the small company of worshippers on the hill-side, tuning unharmoniously the psalm expressive of the Church's confidence in God; watching with high principled decision the approach of the enemy; experiencing the sublime consolation which God vouchsafes to his people in the seasons of severe trials; bearing without resentment the soldier's gibe, and gazing without fear at his deadly weapon already levelled at their life; having lived devotedly for their master, they calmly died for his crown and covenant. What man in moments of deep and serious thought can yield himself up to associations like these, without

feeling how good and grand it is to devote oneself to the maintenance of a righteous cause, and if need be to die for it ; and how miserable must their conduct appear who set themselves in opposition to it, though kings and nobles approve their doings, and clothe them for the purpose with rank and power. At that moment we strongly feel how much Christianity is indebted to these faithful witnesses for the truth through whom it hath come down to our day with undimmed lustre. We may not weep at their grave, for the martyred dead are beyond the sympathy of tears ;—but we must admire their heroic example and draw inspiration from their virtues.

It will be matter for congratulation not for regret, if the place to be consecrated for the burial of our dead shall remain unhallowed by the martyr's grave—the offering presented to the church militant by intolerant and persecuting times. But the time will no doubt arrive, when it will be hallowed by the dust of multitudes who manifested in their life the genuine spirit of Christian confessors, and left behind them enduring monuments of utility and beneficence, suggested, it may be, by a single word in their epitaph, or by nothing more than the doer's name. The name of some who honored official station by the faithful discharge of its duties ; of some who drew from the resources of opulence a wisely-dealt and munificent liberality ; of some who main-

tained the cause of the orphan and the stranger ; of some who were always the leaders in every Christian enterprize ; of some who patiently bore the shock of adverse fortune ; of some who reposed with hope in God and submission to his will amidst the decay and darkness of approaching dissolution. In this city of the dead, when it shall have become peopled, the men of another generation, retiring for an hour from the busy world, to ruminare on the lot of humanity, may find, as they pass along its avenues and read its monuments, brief mementos that shall bring human life up in all its phases : and in the multitude of their thoughts within them the conviction may be deepened, that goodness is the noblest distinction of man, whatever his condition be ; and they may be moved to utter the prayer with an appropriate fervency, “let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

With these general reflections, permit me to connect one or two special admonitions, which by the blessing of God, may persuade us into the course of life that will leave cheering memories behind it to comfort our surviving friends when like Mary, they go out to the grave, not to weep over the dead, but to cherish the purposes of a godly life, and the hope of a blessed resurrection.

Never forget that true reflection suggested by the grave of one who has lived a careless and irreligious life cannot fail to be shaded with sor-

row ; and if you would not have surviving friends go to your grave to weep there, your! proper course and duty is to avoid the occasion.

At the grave of a departed friend, the Christian survivor will contrast the eternal retribution of that friend, with the history of the life that he has led. If he has manifestly lived without God in the world, in the neglect of those sacred ordinances, by which the soul is nurtured to holiness, is there not much cause for sorrow ? Nor will this sorrow be materially alleviated by any recollection of amiable dispositions, and acts of personal kindness. With the judgment seat of God before us, the issue does not lie between our departed friend and us, nor between Him and the world, but between Him as an accountable being and the Judge of all. True, we cannot certainly discover how He may stand in this respect. Yet what rational being who has the law before him, and the life of a moral probationer, can refrain from passing some judgment on the palpable manifestations of that life as compared with the positive requirements of that law. At the very moment that we shrink from the conjecture of what His fate may be in eternity, we may be irresistibly led to review what His character was in time, and in the degree in which that review is unfavorable to Him will be the sadness of our recollections and the bewilderment of our hopes. Observe, too, that in these affecting circumstances with the grave of our departed friend at our feet

and with faith resting on His immortality, our thoughts will turn almost exclusively to His *religious* character since it is this which will give complexion to his immortal destiny. Our thoughts will then turn not to His diligence and probity in the ordinary transaction of the world, nor to His pleasing and kindly bearing in social intercourse, nor to the estimation in which He was held by the community for His many excellent qualities, for all these may consist with the entire absence of every religious element; but when we seek for ground, on which we may rest our hope of the eternal well being of our departed friend, we turn in search of those qualities which more immediately connect the soul with God and immortality—to the manifestation of the religious sentiments, nurtured in the appointed manner, and giving distinct evidence of their existence in a suitable deportment. Where these are not found, or found only in a feeble and doubtful degree, in the life of a departed friend, would it be possible for an enlightened Christian to go to his grave for another purpose than to weep there; and that, too, even though a late repentance may afford some hope that he passed at his last hour into the better world. Gratitude for that mercy which snatched him as a brand from the burning will in such a case be mingled with regrets that this mercy had been repelled and dishonoured in the whole course of his antecedent life. Reflections of this kind, irresistibly suggested at the

grave of one who has lived a careless and irreligious life, should awaken in our own bosom some solicitude about the train of reflections which our own grave may suggest to the minds of endeared survivors. It should prompt us so to live as that the hope of our future well-being may have a sure foundation. This will dry up the tears of the mourner; for the memory of the just is blessed.

Never forget that the reflections suggested at the graves of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus should be bright with hope.

The tears of the Christian may dim the eye of hope during the first paroxysm of grief and the first days of bereavement. The survivor is then prone to think only on what he has lost, and for a time he cannot forget his sorrow. But better thoughts come apace, embued with gratitude and radiant with hope, on account of the happy transition which the departed one has made into a sinless and deathless world. Nor is this hope a vague, dreamy, baseless thing, that would perish before the searching investigations of reason. Founded on the immutable and beneficent arrangements of a merciful Creator, which connect our mortal history with our immortal doom, and ensure the gift of everlasting life to all who believe in the Son of God, we feel assured, from the clear evidences of this faith presented in the lifetime of the true Christian, that for him to die was gain, and beside the resting-place of his dust

this assurance that he has passed from death unto life—oh, how full of consolation! To be assured that the friend, whom, a few days ago, we lost in the valley of the shadow of death, has traversed it safely into the world of spirits beyond, with all the entireness of his spiritual nature; that, though now invisible, he is not far away; that, after a brief interval of separation, we shall follow him by the same path, and become his associate again in the immediate presence of our Redeemer,—is there not enough, in this deep and sure conviction, to soothe the sadness of bereavement, and to allure the soul onward in its immortal career? There may be seasons when even beside the grave of a friend, or the spot that is designated for our own, sense shall carry it against faith, and the attractions of the scene, or the pleasures of a living companionship, shall arrest every thought upon the present and the earthly; when the heart, yielding to immediate impressions, feels no union or sympathy with those whom death has removed from us; but reviving faith will, at other seasons, control the influence of sense, and, conducting us within the veil into the presence of immortal natures, will refine our sentiments with the prospect of their pure fellowship. This vivid state of spiritual apprehension is not dependent on locality, but on the energetic exercise of our faculties, and the quickening inspiration of divine grace. Yet impressive associations, connected with the

graves of pious kindred, have a powerful influence over the soul in its tender, contemplative moods, and wisdom admonishes us to improve these moments for enlivening our apprehensions of the invisible world, and enlarging our sympathies with the spirits of the just who have entered it. Aim after this, ye children of immortality, when ye visit the sepulchres of the dead.\* You will then return to the scenes of the busy world with a firmer resolution to fulfil faithfully your allotted task, animated and cheered with the hope that, after it is finished, you will obtain a place among those who have entered into their Master's joy.

When in the burying-place of the dead we contemplate with sorrow and humiliation the end of the Christian as an inhabitant of the present world, never forget to connect with it his destiny in the next with consolation and hope.

To soothe one of the sorrowing sisters at the grave of Lazarus, Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life, said to her, "Thy brother shall rise again." Her creed was in unison with the doctrine, and she replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." In the belief of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting, now encircled with brighter evidence, we also from our childhood are trained. Hence we guard their dust with a holier reverence, and

\* The churchyard darken'd by the yew-tree's shade,  
And rich with many a rudely-sculptured tale  
Of friends beneath its turf sepulchral laid,  
Of human tears that flow, of earthly hopes that fade.

associate with their sepulchres the most consolatory of our hopes. Believing, as we do, in the distinct nature and immortality of the soul, it might seem a thing of less moment that its corporeal casement should be permitted to sink into irretrievable ruin; that, born of the earth and earthy, it should mingle with its native elements, and be as water spilt upon the ground to be gathered no more. To our unassisted eye this might seem its natural and unavoidable fate. It moulders into the surrounding soil; its elements enter into new combinations, giving substance to the flower which affection has planted, and expanding the leaf of the tree that overshadows it. But faith does not perplex itself with the question, how the mighty power, that subdueth all things, shall collect the scattered elements of the vile body, and fashion them anew into a glorious one. True science, always humble, confesses that within the compass of natural laws there are many processes too remote and too complicated to come within the range of its limited vision; while humble faith reposes in the power and veracity of the Creator, assured that what He hath spoken will come to pass. In every grave there lies in His safe keeping a deposit, the essential constituents of a frame which, in the morning of the resurrection, will be raised "a spiritual body," clothed with immortality, and prepared for an everlasting union with the mind to which it belongs. Faith thus invests the grave with a

peculiar sanctity by declaring the indestructible identity and the future resurrection of those who are slumbering within it. Amidst the perpetual mutations of surrounding nature, immutability, in one point at least, is certain in the region of the dead. The indestructible elements of the slumbering occupant, safe in the hand of its Eternal Guardian, will hear, in the morning of the resurrection, the trumpet of the archangel, and spring into the combination of a new life,—the deathless inheritor of a nobler being. Elevated and soothed by such sentiments, the visitor of the burying-place of the dead will return to the toils and pursuits of the busy world with the feelings and habits of one who knows that he shortly must leave them to meet the retributions of eternity.



**ON GRAVES:**

**II. SERMON.**

**Death—How came it!**



# ON GRAVES:

## II. SERMON.

### Death—How came it ?

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Sin entered into the world, and death by sin.—*Rom. v. 12.*

Faith delights to expatiate over a world in which there is no death. We have but to transport ourselves into regions, peopled by the unsinning orders of creation, and we discover no trace of this desolating destroyer. The inhabitants enjoy the freshness of immortal youth. Ages roll on, and no perfection, no joy is impaired. Tears and pains, bereavements and trials, sepulchres and tombs, are things unknown in the regions of immortality.

Nor are we left to the vagueness of conjecture as to the cause of this immortal blessedness of the celestial orders. They are like God in their immortality, because they are like God in their holiness. God regards them with complacency, delights in them as His children, and from Him they inherit everlasting life. However different the scenes of earth *now* be from those of the upper world, we make no unwarranted assertion, when we affirm that in all the essential characteristics of his nature, man, the inhabitant of earth, like the inhabitant of heaven, was made

after the similitude of God, and that immortality was an original attribute of his nature. It cannot be denied, indeed, that our actual observation of humanity gives little countenance to this idea. We can discover no trace of immortality in the present constitution of man, nor in that of any being around us. Decay and reproduction is the law of all terrestrial existence. Nor can we discover any latent quality in our corporeal nature that should exempt it from this law; and during nearly 6000 years death has been mowing down successive generations as surely as autumn scatters the foliage of the forest. Dust to dust is the existing law of our being.

In explanation of this remarkable fact, it is sometimes stated, that all animal forms are naturally corruptible; that in them there is an inherent principle of decay; that the vital powers are not competent to resist for any length of time the wear and tear to which they are subjected; in short, that decay and dissolution result *necessarily* from the gross material elements of which our bodies are framed. But this opinion has arisen from a narrow, short-sighted observation. We know that the human frame is now frail and mortal; but to ascribe this to any inherent essential imperfection of the elements out of which it is constructed is to affirm that which philosophy cannot demonstrate. Matter and immortality is not an impossible combination. Angelic beings, for aught we know, are clothed in material forms :

and it is expressly declared, that flesh and blood after the resurrection, when refined and purified, shall inherit the heavenly world, into which Christ, our forerunner, has entered with all His material humanity around Him. It is therefore unwarrantable to affirm that dissolution is an unavoidable *quality* of our material frame ; and that because of this death is an original law of our being. Man, as he came from the hands of the Creator, was naturally immortal. In this respect, also, he was created in the image of God. The Tree of Life, which, in his state of innocence, he was permitted to eat, was less the nutriment of immortality, than the sacramental emblem of the Divine favour. Had man continued in his condition of innocence, death would no more have been known on earth than in heaven. The pure spirit would never have been rudely dislodged by death from its pure body : created one being, they would have continued one being for ever. It might have passed through transformations in its onward progress, like that of which the Apostle speaks, when he says, " We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ;" but in the original and holy nature of man there was no cause of pain, no elements of decay, no necessity for his tasting death, in order that the purpose of God might be accomplished in him. Nor could anything reverse this law of immortality but sin, and the sentence of God upon it. "*By sin came death.*" According to the immu-

table law of God's holy government, "the soul that sinneth *it* shall die."

By those who pay little deference to what Sacred Scripture teaches on this subject, the punitive nature of death is overlooked, and the melancholy change, with all its painful accompaniments, is talked of as a necessary condition of life. It is affirmed that with a frame like ours, produced in weakness, liable to mistreatment, obnoxious to external injury, to the war and insalubrity of the elements, to poisonous substances in every kingdom of nature, and above all to the irregular and destructive action of its own powers,—pain and disease, and dissolution, are the necessary and unavoidable concomitants of life : and it cannot well be denied that the conclusion is legitimately drawn from the actually existing arrangements both in the animate and inanimate world. The causes of pain and death are now so numerous within and around us that we can scarcely help regarding them as *natural* causes, or in other words the results of laws ordained by the Creator. Excess of heat, or of cold ; the stroke of a hurricane, or the heaving of an earthquake ; a sirocco from the desert, or an exhalation from the marsh ; the fang of a serpent, or the poison of a weed,—may each in their effects upon the human frame destroy it. And apart from these it is not in our power to avert the ravages of time and of decay. To decline is as much the present order of nature as

to grow : and, had we nought to enlighten us on the subject but the history of human observation, we might conclude that the grave was the original destiny of man. Human knowledge, in so far as the light of nature is concerned, is built on observation ; and all observation inclines to establish the natural mortality of man. But, appealing to Scripture, we obtain views of the Divine purposes which place the subject in a very different light : here we are informed that death came upon all men, for that all have sinned ; that, when man became a sinner, God began to deal with him as a culprit ; that, the earth was cursed for his sins' sake ; that originating in his guilt, various disorders entered into his physical frame, which have been developed in every form of suffering, and in that sweeping mortality which hath brought all preceding generations to the dust. The sting of death is sin, and its cause is in the displeasure of God. No human power can arrest its progress. Medical skill can mitigate the pains of disease : but it has not yet succeeded in adding a single month to the average duration of human life. The boasted march of science has not blunted the scythe of this ruthless conqueror ; and helpless infancy, and smiling beauty, and vigorous manhood, and hoary hairs, are still as much his victims as in all preceding time. An offended Deity has given the destroyer his commission, and none can disannul it.

Nor can we shut our eyes upon the fact, that

death is accompanied with many circumstances, as it affects man, which strikingly indicate its *punitive* character. Even where the pains of disease and the bitterness of death have not been aggravated by the grossly sinful life of the sufferer, we see enough to demonstrate the displeasure of Heaven. Enter into the chamber of the mildest and most virtuous of human beings upon whom incurable disease has laid its hand, and we discover enough in the languor, the restlessness, the pain, the anxious anticipation for self, the tender solicitude about others, to remind us of its origin. If death were simply a natural transition and not a curse, one should believe that under the arrangements of a benevolent Creator it had come over man like the gentle falling of soft sleep, and without any humiliating accompaniments ; that without painful regret or anxious fear the dying one had quietly composed himself for the long slumber that his destiny had prepared for him ; that surrounding friends would have accompanied the departing spirit with a grateful hymn, as for one who had finished well his course and was passing away into some happier sphere. But we rarely witness a scene like this in the chamber of death. It is the scene in which are taught the severest lessons of human frailty. As we look on the feeble and emaciated form, the shrunk features, the lustreless eye, the parched lips, the laborious breathing, the tide of life ebbing away from its extreme channels, the

faculties of the mind oppressed or manifested in irregular and delirious exercise, the lividness of corruption already breaking out on the sinking frame, we ask, why is the passage to the tomb so gloomy? Why so humiliating? Why so full of weariness and pain? Why a thing to shrink from with such aversion and fear? Is it not an indication that the sufferer is not in favour with his God?—that he departs from life, as he enters it, under the effects of a curse? All the circumstances are framed to remind us of the melancholy fact that “by sin came death;” and the penalty is inflicted upon every child of Adam, “for that all have sinned.”

But, while we are thus instructed to view death as the penalty of sin, we are not warranted to draw any conclusions, from the time and manner of it, respecting the degree of guilt of any individual in the judgement of God. A painful or an untimely death is no certain evidence of His heavy displeasure, any more than a protracted life is a certain evidence of His approbation. The issues of life are with Him and He accounts to none for the duration of their flow or the suddenness of their cessation. How often have we seen the meek; the gentle, the devout, burdened during the whole of their brief life with all the infirmities of a sickly constitution, while the vicious and ungodly have lived to hoary hairs without experiencing an ache! How often have we seen the man of exemplary life, sink under one

of those distressing maladies in which human patience is tried to the utmost, and closing the scene in sad and mournful darkness, while his neighbour, who scarcely ever acknowledged God in any act of piety, sinks gently into the arms of death without suffering or concern. In all such cases the procedure of God is doubtless regulated according to fixed laws; but the operation of these laws is not altogether dependent on the conduct of the individual. The peculiar constitution of our body is an inheritance. Whatever be its qualities, it descends to us without our choice. The seeds of pain and weakness and mortality are indeed in every frame—this is the universal curse connected with its sinfulness: but in various degrees in different individuals. In some they lie long dormant; in others they ripen speedily. The ripening process may depend upon circumstances over which the individual has no controul: upon the care that watches over his early years; upon the salubrious locality of his home; or upon the occupation in which he is engaged. In other cases the ripening of the latent seeds of disease depends more upon the individual himself. His affections and habits are virtuous and orderly, and his constitution exposed to no outrage, is preserved in health: or otherwise, he yields himself to the indulgence of unbridled appetite, and hereditary weakness is early developed. Between those causes and the time and manner of death there is probably a determinate relation, so

that the event is a result naturally flowing from them; but, except in a few cases, that result cannot afford any *data* for determining the personal guilt of the individual. Mortality, and all that leads to it, is an evidence of the curse; but the accidents of time and chance afford no clue to the degree of their guilt upon whom the curse has fallen. "There is one event to the righteous and the wicked; to him that feareth God, and to him that feareth Him not."

The law of mortality, then, of which the text speaks, is a consequence of sin, and must be viewed in the light of a penalty and curse: yet, viewing it in its general effects upon the world, we may discover in it, nevertheless, numerous mitigations and a large measure of benignity. To illustrate this point, let us suppose that it had not been superinduced upon our sinful condition; that the offended Law-giver had doomed the sinner to expiate in this world without a remedy the full measure of the penalty annexed to the violation of His law, of which temporal death is only a small part. Then this earth had become the scene of an immortal guilt and punishment. And, oh, what would that scene have been, both as it respects the moral and physical condition of our race! History furnishes us with an approximate solution to the former query—the effect of the longevity of fallen creatures upon the moral condition of the world. Within a few centuries the earth was filled with violence and blood: all flesh had

corrupted their way, until it repented the LORD that he had made man ! But on the supposition, that the doom of mortality had not been inflicted on man, and that the human race had been left to spend their deathless existence on earth, their wickedness having free scope in its guilt and in its consequences, what then had been the condition of our world ? Crowded with offenders whose hardihood in sin had increased for ages ! Cain and his godless descendants had yet been sojourners upon it, covered with the aggravated ungodliness of 6000 years : the antediluvian nations, on account of whose wickedness, it is said, "God was grieved at His heart," had been advanced in the career of crime 6000 years, for crime in the soul of man knows no stay, and rolls not backward ; the cities of the plain whose wickedness had reached up to the heavens had still survived in the ever deepening sea of their abominations ; the Canaanites had been still filling up the measure of their iniquities, and reaping their reward. In short, depravity would have been immortal like its subjects, darkening still with advancing time and increasing still with increased perpetrators. Imagination is quite powerless in figuring to itself what had been the depth of human wickedness long ere the world had reached half its present age ! But let us connect with this aggravated guilt, not only its natural consequences, but the punishment due to it under the administration of the holy Lawgiver,

and what then had been the condition of our sinful race? Hateful and malignant passions embittered for ages,—appetites fierce and lawless in their demands, strengthened by indulgence for ages,—the perpetual war of contending passions and deeds among nations who could not destroy each other in battle,—fancy sickens and is confounded at the consequences necessarily flowing from its own supposition. Nor, in conformity with it, can any mitigating element be admitted. For apart from the grace of God, (which must be excluded on the supposition that no economy of salvation had been introduced, and that the sinner should suffer the penalty of sin upon earth,) conscience would have tormented but it would have imposed no restraints upon human wickedness; amidst such unmitigated moral disorders, the intellectual nature of man could make no advancement; science could not be cultivated, literature could diffuse no refinement, art could have carried out no useful inventions; these benefits are concomitants of that remedial dispensation established under the Son of God. But apart from this, and under the supposed condition that earth had been ordained the sphere wherein man's depravity would be left to work out its full measure of guilt and punishment, none of these advantages could have existed. We should have witnessed only man enduring the wrath of God, mind embruted, passion and appetite reigning uncontrolled, univer-

sal anarchy, our physical form exempted, indeed, from death, but marred by violence and loaded with accumulated maladies; and pain, as an undying worm, preying upon that which it could not destroy. Earth then had been as hell, and men as demons. But God had other designs, and among the rest, that man's guilt *should not* meet with a full retribution in the present world; and therefore the law of mortality was super-induced. By it the sinner is cut short in his career upon earth, and removed to another state, to abide the sentence of his judge there. The effect of this arrangement, upon the general condition of man upon the earth, is beneficent. The corruption of individuals is restrained from its full developement. The wicked can exhibit their pestilent example at most only for a few years. They have scarce exceeded the natural infancy of crime before they are removed, and by their removal sin is checked. The noxious plant is cut down before it has fully cast its seed. The new generation forgets the wickedness of the past and is busied with its own; and thus death, which forms part of the penalty of sin, tends to counteract its evil upon succeeding generations.

This peculiar effect of the law of mortality, which, though a portion of the curse and punishment of sin, is, nevertheless, under the mediatorial government of the Son of God, converted into a benefit, is continually being forced upon the observation of mankind. How often have nations

witnessed the usurper and tyrant cruelly exercise his lawless power, and entrench himself securely even by the arms of the oppressed ; liberty had expired, and patriotism had hid itself in secret places to sigh and weep ; despair had settled on the nation's heart, and there was no help in man. But death came, to whom the most powerful must yield, struck the iron rod from the hand of tyranny, and set the oppressed free. How often have combinations of men, directing the affairs of state, actuated by unholy ambition, delighting in what is called the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, consuming on its pile the wealth and happiness of an empire, and carrying far the destructive brand for the desolation of other countries, entrenched themselves in office, held the military force at their disposal, won over even the suffrage of the multitude, and no end appeared to the fatal game, when, at the very moment that the enlightened and merciful were sighing most deeply in secret over the public misery, a bolt from heaven struck the key stone out of the inhuman confederacy ; with the death of the guiding spirit, the cabinet was dissolved, a new and happier order of things commenced, and the peaceful arts of humanity were once more permitted to reign. Death is daily working similar revolutions in every condition of society : he is removing stumbling-blocks out of the way which nought else could have touched. And thus in the present condition of the world, the law of

morality, though resulting from the displeasure of God, mitigates, in many ways, the curse pronounced against sin. True, it is sometimes an aggravation of that curse. It sweeps away also the enlightened, the wise, the patriotic, the prop of a policy that blesses millions, the holy examples that inspire with new life a nation's piety, the patriarch of good report who sustained the cause of godliness in the village of his habitation; all these aggravations often happen, for death in his commission to destroy makes no exceptions, and whatever be the nature of concomitant circumstances, the punitive characters of the evil is sufficiently manifest. The wages of sin is death.

But even those partial views which we have now presented, lead obviously to the conclusion, that death cannot exhaust the whole of the judicial curse; that it is only a part, and a very small part of the foredoomed penalty. Death is a change in the sinner's state, but not a change in the sinner's nature. It consigns to dust the material instrument with which the embodied soul wrought; but it cannot effect any change upon the soul itself. It breaks off its relation to earth, but has no power to reconcile it to God. When the soul stands disembodied at the judgment seat, even though the deeds done in the body, and the habits formed were not revived there, it carries with it an inherent depravity, sufficient to require its exclusion from heaven. The penalty, therefore,

must still follow it unmitigated in its demands. It has carried into its new condition of being a nature at enmity with God, and what then can be its fate but everlasting banishment from the presence of God, and the beatitude of heaven? This view of the case is apt to be forgotten. Many seem to entertain the vague idea that all pollution is connected with the body; that it shall be laid with it in the grave, and have no resurrection. Forgetting that the soul is the *moral* being; that all sin has its seat within it; that the body is rather the instrument than the cause of sin; that the soul is chargeable with the excess and irregularity of every appetite; and so far from it being the fact, that it is the sinful part which sinks under the law of morality, it cannot be touched by it, but returns, entire and just as it is, unto God that gave it. Were the soul defiled, only because of its connection with a distempered body, there might be some reason to hope that the whole amount of the penalty might be exhausted in the inflicted doom of its dissolution, and that the spirit set free from its sinful incumbrance, might rise pure and spotless up to the inheritance of the saints in light. But alas, we can indulge no dream like this either in reference to the sinner's death, or the sinner's eternity. The seat of moral defilement is in the soul; upon it we charge enmity to God: it has been the moving power in the whole career of disobedience: and the dropping its material investment

can produce no change in its essential nature. Whatever that be, it shall be arraigned before the tribunal of eternal justice, and receive from the Holy One accordingly.

Without farther dilating on this point, we close with the remark, that death—that portion of the curse which affects the body alone, is only of temporary duration, and will be annulled at the resurrection. “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive”—a scripture that manifestly refers to the resurrection of the body. As one essential constituent of man’s nature, it will be redeemed from the power of the grave, and be reunited to the soul, to prepare it for the full possession of its immortality. In reference to the dead in Christ, the saints of God, it is declared, “that God shall, in the resurrection, change their vile bodies and fashion them like after Christ’s glorious body.” With respect to those who die in unbelief, we know also that their bodies shall be raised from the dust to become the incorruptible tenements of souls that shall never die. But we have no reason to conclude that the bodies of the wicked, though raised incorruptible, shall be set free from all the infirmities of time. No intimation is given on which we might found the conjecture that they will be raised in a state different from that in which they spent and finished life, except that they shall be set free from the law of mortality.





**ON GRAVES:**

**III. SERMON.**

**Death—What is it?**



# ON GRAVES :

## III SERMON.

Death—What is it!

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Death shall feed on them ; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.—*Psalm* xlix. v. 14.

Few subjects are more familiar to the reflecting, than that presented in the words we have read, and yet it remains as closely involved as ever in its own peculiar darkness and mystery—for who has fully comprehended or can fully explain what death denotes and carries with it? In the first language which admitted the term—it signifies the failure of all the powers and functions of life ; in another, it signifies corruption or putrefaction ; in our own, the mortal change is variously expressed, as to expire, to give up the ghost, to depart—by dissolution, and sometimes by the word *sleep*, with which the state of death has some points of resemblance.

But in this case, as in many others, the origin of terms assists us only a little way in the knowledge of the thing. By them our attention is generally directed only to some striking feature of the change, such as the cessation of some of the remarkable functions of life, as of voluntary motion, breathing, circulation, sensation, and the consequent effects

of extinct vitality, dissolution, or putrescence and to nothing more. These, indeed are striking changes! Who has not witnessed them with sad and melancholy interest? As we stand by the couch of the dying one, even when he passes through the valley of the shadow of death without any very painful accompaniments, how impressive the changes that are successively observed! Behold the sharpening of the shrunk and pale countenance, the clay-coldness of the hand, the laborious or interrupted respiration, the throbbing is scarcely perceptible in the great channels of life, the ear distinguishes no soothing accent, the filmy eye receives no impression; and, in the last moment, the tremulous quivering of the lips, the drawing up of the feet, the final heave of the bosom, after which all is rest and stillness; and that form lately so fair and vigorous has become a cold and motionless ruin, on which death feeds, whose beauty shall consume in the grave from its dwelling. And is this death? Yes. And is it all? No,—not all.

Yet we can see no more : nothing farther strikes our sense in regard to the departed one. We perceive that a change has taken place which has removed him from our fellowship. The spirit with which we held intercourse, is gone whither no sense can follow it; and when, after the lapse of a day or two, we enter the chamber where the lifeless body is laid out, we are admonished by every sense, that it is no longer fit for a place

there ; we touch it with reluctance, death feeds upon it—we feel that it must be borne away to the grave, the dust to return to the dust whence it was taken.

There have been a few men—not many—a few scattered here and there, over the surface of successive generations, who have entertained the opinion that death *really* is, what it *seems* to be, the utter extinction of man ; that thought and feeling and consciousness perish with the material form with which they were connected ; and that the desire of immortality to which the human being clings so fondly, is only a peculiar manifestation of the love of life—a mere instinct of the living being, cherished in opposition to every demonstration of the negative, presented in the coffin and the sepulchre of every one on whom death feeds.<sup>1</sup>

It must be confessed that, had we nothing more than the eye to guide us, we might be constrained, however reluctantly, to the conclusion, that death is the entire destruction of man ; that, in reference to the consciousness and identity of the individual it is utter and complete annihilation ; that “ like sheep we are laid in the grave,” there to be dissolved, and to mingle again with the elementary atoms of the universe, forever undistinguished and forgotten. But such a sentiment is dark, gloomy, very repugnant to the human heart. It has never prevailed widely among men. In proportion as men become enlightened, the desire

of immortality grows, until it is strengthened into a settled conviction that the soul cannot perish,—that the dissolution of the body cannot affect its essence—that death cannot feed upon it,—and that none of its beauties shall ever consume away in the grave. This natural sentiment derives support from a variety of considerations, which ought frequently to be reviewed, that our belief of immortality may become habitual, purifying and joyous. Permit me to suggest some of these.

With a few exceptions, the belief that the soul cannot die, has universally prevailed, arising, it is probable, not merely from the instinctive love of life,—a principle native to the constitution of man, but from some primitive divine revelation vouchsafed to him of his immortal destiny. Accordingly, though the hope of continued existence has varied with the knowledge and characters of nations and families, yet its universal prevalence is proof that it is founded in nature. The differences, indeed, are not about the substance of the thing, but the form: not about the fact of the soul's immortality, but about the place and manner in which it shall be enjoyed. The Greek and Roman fiction of Elysium and Tartarus; the captive African's hope of return after death to the land of his kindred; the practice followed by some of the aboriginal tribes in the Southern division of this continent, of sacrificing upon the death of their kings, multitudes of their subjects to form their retinue in another world;

the custom which, to this day, prevails among some tribes of the North American Indians, of burying the instruments of hunting and other necessary utensils with the dead body; the custom of the tribes on the banks of the Niger of sacrificing whole hecatombs of human beings on the grave of a person of distinction, clearly demonstrate the hope and belief, that death does not feed upon the soul, that it shall continue to live and feel and act after its separation from the body.

This natural sentiment is confirmed by the strong presumption,—a presumption sustained by the clearest demonstrations of science, that the soul is a being or substance distinct from the body, although in the present state joined with it in the closest union. In every language they are designated by different names, as if they constituted distinct parts of the same compound being, each possessed of its own properties and subject to its own laws. *Body* or *matter* is that which resists compression and is divisible: *mind* or *spirit*, is that which feels, remembers, compares, desires, qualities essentially different from the preceding. When we think or feel, judge or remember, we never attribute these states to the body, but to the mind. In like manner, fear, hope, grief, joy, and such like emotions, are never referred to the material part, but to the sentient and thinking principle, resident within the body but distinct from it. We know that this thinking and sentient principle—*the soul*, is somehow dependent on the

*brain* ; for, when this organ is injured or diseased, the capacities of reason and sensibility are also perverted or destroyed. But though there is this connexion and dependence, it may be proved, that the material organ is not *that* which thinks and feels. It is a large mass, consisting of various parts, of which some may be removed without impairing or destroying the power of thought or sensibility, and the whole is every day undergoing change, and perhaps within the period of a few years is entirely changed, without at all affecting the thinking principle. Let it be conjectured that there is some one little point or organ in the brain, the soundness of which is essential to thought and feeling and personal identity, shall we say that this little point is *the mind*, not merely the central residence, but *itself* the originator of thought and feeling? Let it be conjectured that mind is a product of the brain, and that thought and feeling are manifestations of the brain in action, as heat and light are of fire, then have we a little bit of matter, a little portion of pulpy substance capable of the sublimest discoveries in science and the purest emotions of religion, of the loftiest flights of genius, and the noblest efforts that have ever distinguished man! And taking up this small portion of matter, you may say of it—*this is* Plato or Socrates, Newton or St. Paul—or whoever it may chance to be. But this portion of the brain, supposed to be the centre of mind,

the originator of thought and feeling,—may also be supposed to be divided, that is, the soul may be divided, with all its thoughts and recollections, and thus death feeding upon it, might separate its material atoms, and what would then become of the specific properties with which, as a whole, it was endued? Would these specific properties remain in each atom apart? Then the effect of death would be to resolve one individual thinking substance into a number of individual thinking substances; and the various remembrances, habits, and feelings, which formerly belonged to one being, would then be divided among several. But, on the other hand, if the specific properties of thought and feeling do not reside in each particle, but in the united whole of this supposed centre, then there must be a quality superadded to this whole,—namely the power of thought and feeling. Now it is this superadded quality, whether its essence be material or immaterial, which we call *soul* or *mind*,—and the question is, whether death feeds on this *property* or *being*,—and destroys it.

Consider for a moment, then, the effect which death produces on the body, and it will serve to illustrate the effect which it cannot produce on such a substance or being as the mind. Death separates the component parts of a body, but does not destroy one of them, or change its essential properties. When a body undergoes putrefaction in the grave or elsewhere, it is

resolved into its original elements ; but it is no more conceivable that one of these should perish, than that the sun should perish from the firmament without the command of the Creator. Though, therefore, the body perishes, yet every atom survives, retaining all its essential properties. What reason, then, can be given, why the ultimate indivisible being called the soul, should perish with the dissolution of the body, or lose any of its essential properties? It may survive in a different mode, it may be removed into a different place in the universe ; but how absurd to imagine that so noble a creature, formed in the similitude of the Deity, should perish, or lose any of its intellectual characteristics, when not a single atom of its material envelope has perished, or lost any of its physical characteristics !

The mind can make  
Substance, and people planets of its own  
With beings brighter than have been, and give  
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.

Is it then mortal—a mere material machine that shall be broken in pieces and dissolved? The supposition is in the highest degree improbable. Death cannot even feed upon the spiritual and indivisible mind,—far less reduce it to NOTHING. <sup>2</sup>

These views deduced from the known properties of mind and matter, clear and satisfactory, as we deem them to be, are entirely consistent with the uniform declarations of inspired truth

which everywhere indicate that the soul of man is distinct from the body and is altogether of a different nature. This is intimated in the language in which the creation of man is recorded—"let us make man in our image, after our likeness"—that is, with a spiritual, intelligent, and immortal nature like the Deity. Into his body God by special creation breathed a living soul, (differing in its essence, from those animal souls, which by the creative energy, result from the peculiar organizations to which they belong)—a spiritual being, endued with the higher powers of reason and the capacities of moral feeling. Had nothing more been intended by the inspired historian of the creation, than that the Creator formed man out of finer clay, with a more perfect structure, with a larger and more delicate brain, from which might result nicer perceptions, and a wider compass of thought, he surely would not have employed expressions which plainly lead us to conceive, that to the bodily frame of man, the Creator superadded an emanation from his own essence,—a breath of the divine life,—a distinct, spiritual, immortal principle, impressed with some of the communicable attributes of the divine nature. Nor is this view without ample confirmation in the whole tenor of holy Scripture.\* Numerous authorities might easily be adduced to demonstrate the separate and indestructable na-

\* Gen. i. 26-27; Mat. xxii. 32; Luke xvi. 19; Luke xxiii. 43; Acts vii. 60; Rom. xiv. 8; 2nd Cor. xii. 4; Rev. vi. 9.

ture of the human spirit ; and that though dust returns to dust whence it came, the spirit returns unto God that gave it. Death does not feed upon it.

These considerations may assist us in the settlement of a question closely connected with that solemn transition we are now contemplating. Whether the soul, when it has escaped from the body, survives in a state of unimpaired consciousness, with intellectual and spiritual energies entire and active, or whether it continues until the morning of the resurrection, that is, during the whole period of its separate or disembodied existence, in a state of sleep and inactivity, with all its powers dormant for the want of those bodily organs which, in the present mode of its being, are necessary to their operation? The state of the dead is frequently spoken of as a land of darkness and absolute rest,—as a sleep—and by other images which convey the impression of dreamy if not unconscious existence. But these images are evidently borrowed from what strikes the eye concerning the body, not from what reason and faith apprehend concerning the soul.—The body indeed sleeps and is at rest. In some sequestered spot far from the noise and turbulence of the living world, it is laid to moulder in peace ; and few tread the lonely path, save when on the hallowed morning of the Sabbath, the pious villagers pass over it in musing silence to the house of prayer, in which the ten-

ants of the surrounding graves formerly worshipped. And hence poetry has usually associated with mortality absolute repose and melancholy loneliness—the knell, the shroud, the deep damp vault, the darkness and the worm. But these things have no relation to the disembodied spirit. It dwells not among them. Even on the supposition of its dwelling in a land of forgetfulness, that land cannot be the place of skulls and sepulchres. The soul returns to that eternal source and fountain of which it is an emanation. Its ethereal essence has nought to do with clods and coffins, with darkness and inactivity. And since from its essential nature the soul must exist, though the body be consumed in the grave, what should hinder it from exerting all the powers which it formerly exerted, and with which it is naturally endowed? Why should its consciousness or its memory sleep? Why should it cease to reason, or be moved with the desires and passions of an intelligent being? If death does not feed upon its spiritual and indivisible essence, why should that essence lose aught of its former properties of thought, feeling, and activity? Is it not more consentaneous to known and revealed analogies, that the disembodied spirit may rather possess larger powers than it possessed while encumbered with matter and mortality? It is our experience, now, that as we become spiritualized and abstracted from the body, our mental vision grows clearer and more penetrat-

ing ; and we know that angelic beings, who are not habited in gross material forms, enjoy a higher and more palmy condition of spiritual and intellectual existence than is attainable by man on earth. Why then, may not the disembodied soul be rather a gainer than a loser by the transition of death ? Why may not its entrance on the world of spirits be an entrance on a state more exalted far than it hath entered into the heart to conceive,—a state of wider observation of created things,—a state of nobler employments and purer companionships,—a state in which the Father of lights will be contemplated with a more unclouded vision and with intenser regards ?

These views are in perfect accordance with the representations given in holy scripture, respecting the consequences of death to good men. For them “to die is gain.” Could this with propriety be said, if the period between death and the resurrection were passed in a state of insensibility ? Had this been the case, Paul would never have said, <sup>8</sup> “I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better”—for it was not better to slumber in Hades, than to endure and labor for the evangelization of the world. Had the Apostle viewed death as a state of absolute repose and insensibility, he would rather have said, let me toil on for my master a little longer ; let me enjoy with him a little longer on earth, the fellowship of a living worshipper ; let me

snatch from the long night of the grave as many years as may be for the benevolent and happy activities of the christian life and the apostolic vocation. But such were not his desires, for such were not his views of the state of the dead. To die was to be with Christ; to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord. When time closed, eternity was to open upon his disembodied soul, in all the vigor of spiritual existence, and in all the glory and beatitude of the heavenly world. In its passage through the dark valley, in its shaking off the incumbrance of mortality, it may for a moment be disturbed,—for a moment its faculties may be deranged or eclipsed, but once freed, it returns with all the entireness of its spiritual and intellectual nature, into the bosom of a merciful Creator.

And oh, how vast the change, how vastly great  
 To mingle interests, converse, amities,  
 With all the sons of Reason, scattered wide  
 Through habitable space, wherever born,  
 Howe're endowed! To live free citizens  
 Of universal nature! To lay hold  
 By more than feeble FAITH on the Supreme.  
 To call Heaven's rich unfathomable mines  
 Our own! to rise in science as in bliss,  
 Initiate in the secret of the skies!  
 What exquisite vicissitude of fate!  
 Blessed absolution of our *blackest* hour!

Let these reflections encourage and console us in the prospect of an event which must happen to us all at no very distant period, and which the wise will always look forward to with deep solicitude. To the enlightened christian, strong in the faith,

death has nothing in it terrific. On the contrary, it leads to much that is desirable, and which would become more desirable, were we more conversant with unseen realities. Our affections are entangled with time and the world because our faith rests too little on eternity and heaven,—like thoughtless travellers in a foreign land, who forget themselves, their home and kindred, amidst idle shews and amusements, or even amidst the toils and weariness of the journey. Let us keep in remembrance that this world is not our permanent abode. It is only the first brief stage of our endless existence. Our neighbours are dropping away from it like leaves in autumn. Like sheep they are laid in the grave and death feeds on what is laid there. But we hear a voice from Heaven saying “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

## NOTES.

<sup>1</sup> Some indications might lead one to fear that the notion is gaining ground among that class who make the material organism of man their sole study, "that mind is the product of the brain," and "the brain nothing more than a galvanic battery," which, when the explosion is over, and its structure dissolved is nothing. The dark and cheerless creed of the sceptical materialist, respecting the nature and destiny of our species is thus expressed :

The pilgrim of a day  
 Spouse of the worm and brother of the clay !  
 Frail as the leaf in autumn's yellow bower,  
 Dust in the wind, or dew upon the flower ;  
 A friendless slave, a child without a sire,  
 Whose mortal life and momentary fire  
 Lights to the grave his chance-created form,  
 As ocean wrecks illuminate the storm ;  
 And when the gun's tremendous flash is o'er  
 To-night, and silence sink for evermore.

*Pleasures of Hope.*

<sup>2</sup> **THE SOUL NOT MATERIAL.** "The immortal Shakespeare was born in this house." I shall first go and see the little corner, his birth place, I said, and then the little corner, his burial place ; they are scarcely half a mile apart ; nor after the lapse of more than two centuries, does the intervening modicum of time between the two events, his birth and his burial, bulk much larger than the modicum of space that separates the respective scenes of them ; but how marvelously is the world filled with the cogitations which employed that one brain in that brief period ! Could it have been some four pounds of convoluted matter, divided into two hemispheres, that after originating these buoyant immortalities, projected them upon the broad current of time, and bade them sail onwards and downwards for ever ? I cannot believe it : the sparks of a sky rocket survive the rocket itself but for a few seconds. I cannot believe that these thoughts of Shakespeare, "that wander through eternity," are the mere sparks

of an exploded rocket, the mere scintillations of a galvanic battery made of fibre and albumen, like that of the torpedo, and whose ashes would now lie in the corner of a snuff-box.

*Hugh Millar's First Impressions.*

° In the enthanasia of Paul is implied his immortality. Paul, (and this is worth noticing,) in common with all the apostles, does not constantly assert that he is immortal. It was and is the indisputable fact. Every expression that they use, implies that that the soul is immortal. Give up this, and the new testament is unmeaning. Christianity is like an arch; you cannot take out a stone without the whole arch falling. Take away the immortality of the soul, and the gospel is an inexplicable mystery. Take away the Deity of Christ, and the whole idea of the atonement is absurd, and the whole language of the apostles is that of fools and fanatics. The immortality of the soul is scarcely ever set forth as a dogma which the apostle proceeds to demonstrate; it is never made the conclusion of a problem, the result of a syllogism; it is not what he doubts; he assumes it; it lies at the root of all. A recent traveller saw a fragment of an arch among the ruins of Jerusalem, and by calculating on the principles of mathematical or architectural science, he concluded and proved that that arch, if complete, must have rested upon the other side. What we see of the soul is very much like the fragment of that arch. There is enough of it displayed to show that, by that soul of ours, the great gulph, in which rolls the dreary sea of death, is spanned, and that its other limb, if I may so speak, finds no resting place, until it touches the opposite shore, on which is the throne and the presence of the Most High. Happy is that soul that, in the consciousness of its immortality, fights the good fight, keeps the faith, finishes its course, and feels its safety to be in this, that Jesus died and rose again."

*Dr. Cumming.*

# ON GRAVES:

## IV. SERMON.

The dead—where are they ?



# ON GRAVES :

## IV SERMON.

The dead—where are they ?

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Absent from the body—present with the Lord.—2 *Cor.* v. 8.

The doctrine that the soul is an essence distinct from the body and immortal, is found among all nations who have reached any high point in the scale of civilization ; and vestiges of it are discoverable though variously disguised, even among rude and savage tribes. This universality of belief, for the exceptions are scarce worth notice as invalidating the universal fact, must be traced to a common origin—either a primitive revelation, from the Creator to our first progenitors, of the immortal destiny of their race, handed down among them by a common tradition, or an instinctive presentiment in the soul itself. By the Gospel it is now fully brought to light, and established among the undeniable verities of the Christian religion. Receiving the fact, we may be allowed to inquire what light is shed in Holy Scripture on the condition of the soul after death and during its separation from the body, and what may be known of the fate reserved for it in the progress of its being.

Now it must be evident that unless we are guided by revelation in this inquiry we cannot advance surely a single step. Plausible conjectures, supported by many probable analogies, might be adduced ; but even while disposed to assign them their amplest value, we still feel that they are little better than conjectures, too fluctuating for either reason or faith to repose on in regard to a question so momentous. With equal truth it may be affirmed of the soul, as of Him who formed it, "no man hath seen it at any time." It cannot be caught in the last breath that the departing one heaves. The anatomist has never detected it in the pineal gland, or in the convolutions of the brain, or in the subtle fluid of which that organ is supposed to be the centre. Nothing can be told of the essence of this actual, though undetectible being. Whether it be wholly distinct from matter, or matter in some finer and more ethereal modification ; whether it have any substance and figure peculiar to itself, occupying space and capable of locality, and possessing an identity distinguishable by other beings of the same order, are points on which no very specific information has been conveyed to us. The human soul and the world of spirits is to us in the fullest sense invisible. No power of man can lift the veil which in the divine arrangements has been hung to intercept it from our view. We must await the result of our own individual experience to know it fully. Meanwhile let us

gratefully receive those scattered rays which the author of our salvation has made to penetrate through the veil which hangs " 'twixt mortal and immortal things," that we may be assured of the existence of a world within it, and be incited to prepare for our transition thither.

The grand object at which as Christians we ought to aim is, to bring our life into conformity with our creed—to walk by faith not by sight. To attain this must be the result of a continual effort, for the things of sense immediately surrounding us are apt to engross our whole attention; while the more important realities connected with our spiritual nature, and a world of which sense takes no cognizance, are continually driven from our remembrance; and things unseen are too often things forgotten. Our creed is, that we are standing continually on the margin of the world unseen, into which the soul passes immediately after death, disembodied indeed, but yet into a fuller and more perfect life;—that the moment death dislodges the soul from the body it enters the world invisible, and is in company with the departed of former generations. Yet though this is our acknowledged belief, we are conscious of a state of habitual feeling little in accordance with it, and that too, even when we are placed in circumstances where these feelings ought to be powerfully stirred, as, for instance, when we look on the dead body of a departed friend. How rarely do we attempt to fol-

low the soul into that state on which it has entered! How dimly do we realize the fact that it is still living, and in the perfect exercise of all its faculties! Is not the very language which we are wont to employ on such occasions delusive,—adapted rather to the appearances that strike the sense than to the facts embodied in our creed. We lift up the covering from the face of the corpse, all is silent and motionless—not a vestige of that thought and sensibility which a few hours ago were manifest—signs not to be mistaken testify that life and intelligence are gone, and that the thing which lies before us is a broken instrument on which the musician no longer plays—a mansion which the occupant hath deserted. Yet how prone are we to gaze on this broken instrument, this ruined house, as if it were all that existed of the friend we loved. We weep over it as if the dead were there; and when we return from the burial place where we have laid it, the current language among the mourners would seem to imply that they have committed their friend to the grave to slumber henceforth in silence and forgetfulness.

And although this strain of converse be at variance with our acknowledged creed, and if brought into question, would call forth many orthodox explanations and apologies, yet it will unhappily be found too accordant with our habitual feelings in reference to the dead. We feel as if death had effected an entire separation be-

tween them and us—as if they were swept away into a sea which swallows up all, and in which it were in vain to search even for a fragment of the wreck. Hence they soon perish from the remembrance of the living, and the faithless heart feels as if they were not—a breath that passeth away and returneth not again. This obliviousness in regard to our departed friends, is as palpably at variance with the Christian belief as it is inimical to our moral improvement; and we should employ all suitable means to counteract it.

The question, then, should often be reviewed as one of profoundest interest, what is the state of the believer's soul between death and the resurrection? In what mode does it subsist, and in what locality?—A presumptuous fancy may not intrude here. None can disclose the mystery except him who has the keys of Hades and death. Let us listen then to hear what he hath spoken by the Spirit unto the churches.

And here it may be remarked, that the state of the dead, during the interval between death and the resurrection, would sometimes seem to be represented in scripture, as if it were a period of absolute unconsciousness and repose—a state in which the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. The faithful are represented as fallen asleep after their day of conflict and toil and sorrow, a sleep, as one might conclude from the imagery, deep and long, and not to be broken

until the trumpet of the archangel shall arouse the sleeper. All our sensible associations too combine to strengthen this impression. The eye is closed in perpetual darkness. The most impassioned lamentations do not enter the ear. The restless one is now at rest; the sleepless one is now asleep—a sleep so peculiar that something akin to fear comes over us as we gaze upon it. And this is all that we can behold of the departed one, now by us called *dead*, whose lifeless and deserted frame is shortly to be consigned to the darkness and decomposition of the grave.

At this point a so-called philosophy may step in with an attempt to assure us that the unconsciousness of the slumberer is as real as it seems; and it may employ a great many words that sound like learning to demonstrate that the mind, or thinking principle, is so constituted that it cannot act apart from the living and healthy condition of the brain; that the exercise of all its faculties is dependant on this material organ; that when it is diseased the mental powers, one and all of them, are impaired or deranged; that when it dies, thought and consciousness must die too, not to be revived until they that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; and, consequently, as they argue, the state of the dead must be a state of absolute repose and oblivion, “a long and dreamless night” preceding the everlasting day.

But this view, although it might seem to receive

some countenance from the palpable phenomena and the metaphorical language of scripture, is nevertheless at variance with its entire spirit. Before proceeding to establish this averment, however, let us glance at the pretensions of philosophy in the matter. It presumes to decide, in the first place, that all the phenomena of mind are the result of corporeal organization, and, consequently, when the organization is broken up the result must cease ; or, secondly, that the soul, though a distinct essence, is yet so dependant on corporeal organs for the exercise of its several faculties, that apart from these, and during their separation, the exercise of these faculties must be suspended. It matters nothing which of these suppositions be chosen ; the evidence of both alike lie beyond the legitimate province of philosophic enquiry, and both alike are opposed to the highest probabilities. It can never be demonstrated, from our imperfect knowledge of matter, that the phenomena of thought, reason, sentiment, conscience, can result from any of its combinations. Philosophy, trying its skill on mind, reaches the far higher probability, that these phenomena are the products of a distinct and superadded being—THE SOUL. So far as philosophy can appear in evidence, her evidence, making all allowance for the trumpet which often giveth an uncertain sound, is against the materialist, and in favour of the doctrine that the soul being distinct from the body, may survive its

dissolution, and possessed withal of such nobility of nature, is destined for a nobler existence than the present. Again, it is a mere assumption quite incapable of valid proof, that the soul thus distinct in its essence, requires the aid of material organs to carry on its operations. All that can be fairly said is, that in the present mode of our being, body and soul are very intimately connected, and exert over each other a mutual and very powerful influence. But when philosophy presumes to assert that the soul existing apart cannot have any consciousness of its own existence, and cannot exercise independently its own powers, it clearly asserts what it cannot prove, and pushes its speculations into a domain not opened up to it. It has not discovered what mind is, nor the manner of its connexion with the body, nor whether it can subsist apart, or how. These points seem to lie beyond the investigations of natural science. In regard to them we must listen to revelation. A little light, and only a little, is shed by holy scripture on the intermediate state or the disembodied condition of the soul—quite enough, however, to sustain the confidence of faith and to brighten the assurance of hope.

We are separated in the present world, by the mode of our being, from all actual knowledge of many existences around us, both material and spiritual. The condition of the soul in the body, in reference to many other beings, is evidently

one of isolation. Our senses, by which we hold intercourse with the external world, are exceedingly limited in their range, and there are, doubtless, beings and qualities around us, of which these senses, even were their range greater, could take no cognizance. Our power of vision, for instance, is very limited, both in respect to minuteness and magnitude. We cannot see the atoms that dance in the sun-beams any more than the orbs revolving in boundless space; the one is too minute for the eye to take in, the other too vast. The organ of sight in man is evidently adapted to a creature destined to occupy a very narrow sphere, and to take cognizance only of such classes of objects and qualities within that sphere as more immediately affect its actual well-being. All other objects and qualities, in respect of us, lie within the world invisible, and our eye cannot traverse the bounding line. Every leaf is peopled with myriads as exquisitely formed as we are, though undiscoverable by our unassisted eye. From analogy also we infer that every star has its own tenants, though both the tenants and the stars alike lie beyond the little sphere of our isolation; and unless reason or faith should somehow discover and apprehend them, they will be to us as non-existing things. But suppose that he who created the eye, were pleased to enlarge its microscopic capacity, up to, or far beyond, that range to which art, by its best instruments can extend it, then a new

world of animated existence in the descending scale would be exposed to our contemplation—creatures, indefinitely minute and of unimaginable forms, would be seen in the air, in the water, in the forest, all teeming with diversified and joyous life : or suppose, on the other hand, that our power of telescopic vision were so enlarged, as to take in the distant and the vast ; that it could penetrate “the solar path and milky way ;” that distant planetary abodes, with all their variety of hill and dale, were brought as distinctly within our view as the nearest one of our own terrestrial landscapes, so that even their inhabitants were visible,—their forms, their employments, their moral characters, their social intercourse ; and farther, that through the eye we could hold with them an intellectual and religious fellowship, then by such a change in the capacity and function of a single organ, the sphere of our existence would be vastly enlarged, intercourse with regions of creation now invisible would be opened up to us ; and that which is now virtually absent, because we have no capacity for holding communication with it, would then be brought within the reach of our actual observation and social fellowship.

The supposition now made, embraces only material and visible objects, and the external eye that sees them ; but it may be extended farther to spiritual existences. Let it be granted that the atmosphere which surrounds our world is occasionally filled with spiritual creatures, as the

mountain of Samaria was to the illumined eye of the prophet, or the sky over the plains of Bethlehem, on the night of the Saviour's advent. In the present mode of our being we have no faculty for discerning the presence of such spiritual and angelic creatures. They are separated from us, and we from them, by boundaries that we cannot pass. There are no avenues known to us by which they might come into contact and converse with our embodied minds. They may be hovering all around, and we, as entirely unconscious of the fact as we are of the living atoms too minute for our vision, or the revolving orbs that are too distant. Having no capacity to discern them, they are to us, though actually present as non-existing things. But were the Creator pleased to remove the law of isolation which now separates us from them; were we endued with a faculty which might render us cognizant of their presence, (as in the case of the prophet and the prophet's servant on Mount Dothan) by which their intelligence might come into contact with ours,—their thought and feeling responding to our thought and feeling, then, without any other change in us, save the implantation of this new faculty, communication with the spiritual world would be opened up to us; our acquaintanceship would be extended to a new order of existence; we should then be able personally to greet angelic messengers, and converse with the disembodied souls who might

come within our sphere. Such a supposition does not appear to involve anything incredible. It is not improbable that man, in his condition of innocence was endued with such a faculty ; and that sin which impaired the intellect and brought grossness upon sense, cut off entirely man's communication with the invisible world ; so that whatever communication any of its orders may still have with us, we have, in ordinary cases, none with them.

These illustrations may aid us in conceiving the nature of that change which death may produce in the state and mode of our being, and in virtue of which the soul, when absent from the body, shall be present with the Lord. The mode of the souls communication with external nature will be changed. The corporeal organs of sense and thought will be abandoned, and the soul will go forth free. But what should hinder that its mode of apprehending even physical qualities, may, in its separation from limited and imperfect organs, become more enlarged and perfect ? What should hinder its entire nature from becoming percipient—all eye, all ear, all touch—so that it shall come more closely even than now into contact with the qualities of matter, and range over the widest spaces with more than the speed of lightening ? But revelation speaks little on this point, and leads us rather to the effects of the change on the disembodied soul in relation to the world of mind, and the other orders of spiritual existence.

Let us, therefore, inquire, what light holy scripture reflects upon this subject, and how it may illustrate the phrase, "present with the Lord."

The souls of believers, between death and the resurrection, dwell in the immediate and visible presence of their glorified Redeemer. When the work of redemption was finished on earth, Christ ascended into heaven, clothed with the human form which he had assumed, and in which he suffered. No fact in the Bible is more clearly attested than this. It has never been denied by any bearing the Christian name. Every creed declares that our Mediator ascended into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor should it constitute any difficulty whatever, either to faith or reason, that we know nothing of the locality of that world into which Christ has entered, or of the mode of existence there enjoyed; that we cannot tell the space that must be traversed ere the soul reaches it, or to what planetary system it belongs. To us it is literally a world invisible and unknown. It is presented to us in the colours of terrestrial imagery, and in the style of negation; and we are not always able to distinguish, in the brief delineation, what belongs to the believer during his disembodied condition, and the happiness to which he shall be raised after the resurrection, when the purchased redemption shall be complete.

But it may be stated that the soul, when absent

from the body, needs no bodily sense to enjoy the presence of Christ and the vision of the divine glory. Mind alone can apprehend the glories of the Eternal mind: and even should this glory be manifested to the celestial orders under some visible symbol—some shekinah of which that in the earthly temple was a type, yet the highest glory of the Infinite cannot be represented by it. Hence it is said of the heavenly state—“the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it”—“the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Our Redeemer’s ascension into heaven, and all the representations given of it, are evidently designed to *humanize* our ideas of these blessed regions. Every glimpse of them vouchsafed to us conveys the impression that the heaven to which glorified saints shall be raised will differ from earth in degree rather than in kind. Humanity will be sanctified, spiritualized, glorified, but will still retain its essential characteristics. It will not take upon itself the nature of angels. There will be not only the human nature though refined and exalted, but the human form also though divested of such peculiarities as were adapted only to the incipient stage of its being. The earthly shall then, in all the perfections of its proper nature, bear the image of the heavenly; but this will only be a perfect restoration of its divine original, for in the birthday of his existence man was created in the similitude of God.

The change, therefore, which divine grace produces on the soul of the believer is the fitting preparation for that which is destined to take place on the mode of his being, when he is absent from the body and present with the Lord. It is described as being born of the spirit—transformed into the image of God—made partaker of a divine nature—as having the Spirit of Christ dwelling in it. In the immediate presence of Christ, the spirits of the just made perfect, enjoy a perfect illumination and a perfect sanctity. Present with the Lord, they see him as he is and are made like to him.

For the enjoyment of this precursory beatitude between death and the resurrection, in the presence of Christ, the souls of believers must exist in the full exercise of all their faculties. In this world we are separated from that presence not so much by the veil of mortality as by the veil of sin. The embodied soul is as much in the essential presence of Christ as the disembodied; and were our moral nature in a right state, unclouded by sin, and endued with clear spiritual discernment, Christ would be to our ever-living consciousness, Immanuel—God with us. The removal of the veil of unbelief—the quickened energy of the spiritual life, restores the soul to habitual fellowship with the Great Invisible, and even amidst earthly scenes, the believer in the exercise of a living faith “walks with God.”

And if, amidst all the imperfections of earth, such a fellowship be attainable by the spiritual mind, how much more perfect must it be, in the immediate presence of our glorified Redeemer. Admitting that every faculty of the disembodied soul will there be in a state of activity, we need not perplex ourselves by speculating on the mode of its perceptions while denuded of those bodily organs by which we are here connected with the material world. There may be other and superior modes of communication than by the organs of sense, of which the activity of the mind in dreams, and under the influence of powerful excitants, may afford us some idea. What should hinder the qualities both of mind and matter from impressing mind directly without any intervention of nerve or brain? Why, in the presence of the Father of lights, may not all knowledge be intuitive, according to the capacity of the recipient, and the intenser and more perfect action of his powers? Why, may not all the stores of memory, in the more perfect freedom and perfection of the mind, lie continually exposed to the mental eye? If in hell, the judgments of an upbraiding conscience be a worm that never dies, why in heaven may not all the apprehensions of moral excellence, whether of the Eternal Godhead or of the several orders of moral beings, be immediate, comprehensive, bright—the light and glory and felicity enjoyed before the throne of God? If a single ray of this beatific light, reach-

ing the soul in its corporeal prison-house, exalts and gladdens it; what shall be the ecstasy of its bliss, when it enters upon the inheritance of the saints in light? The spirits of the just, present with the Lord, behold him with unveiled face. All things are seen in him and he in all. Surrounding myriads do not distract from the individual the Saviour's regard. He has perfect knowledge of each, immediate intercourse with each, divine affection for each. And reciprocally their enlarged faculties are in him satisfied with enlarged—with infinite objects. When present with the Lord they shall behold the infinite glory of his attributes. The love that died for the world, and the mercy that redeemed it; the cross on which redemption was purchased, and the trophies with which it is crowned, shall be the themes of their converse and adoration. Then shall the declaration respecting our present poor conceptions of the glories of the invisible world be verified—"eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard; nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath laid up for them that love him."

Present with the Lord—the attainments and past history of every individual will be perfectly known and graciously rewarded. Known to Christ they will be, and perhaps to the whole general assembly and church of the first born. An intimate mutual knowledge seems to be one of the peculiarities of the spiritual world—"they

shall know even as they are known." Does it mean that the past history, and the interior moral nature of each shall be there transparent and visible,—the impure purged away and the sanctified alone remaining? One cannot help imagining that some portion of the felicity of the ransomed will arise out of their fellowship with each other, because that fellowship is itself a reflection of the glory of Christ. It shall be reflected in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the patriarchs of a former dispensation; in the martyrs and confessors, who, amidst bonds, imprisonment, and death, held fast the profession of their faith without wavering; in the multitudes, who, though unknown to the world, illumined their own little sphere with all the graces of the Christian character; in the multitudes who died in infancy, leaving earth ere they had felt its curse, were borne to paradise ere they had learned its name. All shall occupy their own sphere, for heaven is a place of righteous gradation, each perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God, and devoted to the employments for which the intermediate state is designed. They serve God day and night in his temple; and as faculties in exercise are faculties in progress, time as it rolls on to its consummation will be maturing their perfections and augmenting their felicity.

One word may here be allowed on the subject of personal recognition in the disembodied state. The general promise given to the faithful

departed, would seem to imply an intuitive personal recognition: they shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. The rich man in the parable is represented as knowing Lazarus, though afar off, in Abraham's bosom. The disciples on the mount of transfiguration, admitted, as would seem, for a moment within the veil of spirituality, knew Moses and Elias. The apparent necessity of social intercourse to the happiness of the redeemed would seem to require a personal recognition and recollection of the past. To remove some difficulties that may embarrass our conceptions of such an intercourse, among the spirits of the just, it may be suggested that even in the present world, our knowledge and recollections of an individual, are not always, nor ever perhaps mainly, associated with his visible peculiarities. Our friends are known and remembered, not so much by their size or their complexion, or their lineaments, as by other qualities of which external senses take no cognizance. Friendship and the qualities which cement it; love and all the amiabilities that warm it into life; moral excellence with the admiration it excites; mental power and the higher endowments that constitute talent or genius—these are truly invisible qualities, not seen by the outward eye, *felt* only by the mind. And what

should hinder the thinking and truly percipient being, when delivered from the burden of the flesh, from obtaining a perfect and more direct knowledge of qualities akin to its own nature? If the soul in its disembodied state be possessed of perception, of memory, of conscience, of moral feeling, we need not, we ought not, to damp the pleasure with which the belief of personal recognition inspires us, by starting inexplicable mysteries connected with the mode of its manifestation. The Creator who formed these bodies to be our instruments of communication with the material world, and with each other, in our present condition of existence, has no doubt endued the soul with faculties that shall qualify it for its proper activities and intercourse when it shall be united to the just made perfect in that intermediate state which shall precede the resurrection.

The conclusion to which we are led by this course of illustration, is that the death of the body and separation of the soul creates no pause in the progress of our conscious existence; that after the temporary eclipse and confusion in its dislodgement, it quickly accommodates itself to its new mode of existence, and all its powers expand into freer and more energetic operation; that in the case of the believer a meetness for his destiny arises from the sanctified exercise of his powers in those hallowed employments in which on earth He delighted. The knowledge of divine

things which here he acquired, is not lost, but freshened and extended there ; the emotions and habits of piety, no more impeded by the flesh, are quickened into a more perfect life in the heavenly vision ; the course of benevolent activity which He followed on earth, written in the book of God, is written also on the tablet of His own memory, and the review of it enhances His joy. Absent from the body He is present with the Lord ; and the truth so touchingly revealed on the cross to the penitent malefactor, is verified to Him in the very hour of his release—"this day shall thou be with me in paradise."

Since, then, your whole career on earth is preparatory to your entrance upon that world where you shall be present with the Lord, let this your final destination be your chief care. Let all things else be subordinate to it. Study to live and feel now as you shall live and feel then ; and bring the life on earth, in all its moral characteristics, as near as possible to the life in heaven. When faith is in lively exercise, your condition here will be felt to have many points of resemblance to your condition hereafter. You contemplate the same objects though differently seen ; you pursue the course appointed by God, though in an earthly sphere ; your aims and pursuits in their effects upon the character, do not die ; your Judge remembers them all and they will form part of your own imperishable recollections. Watch, therefore, with prayerful solicitude over

these buddings of immortality. Sow the seeds, and nourish the plants that shall bloom forever in the heavenly paradise. Time will then be encircled with the halo of eternity; and the life you live in the flesh will be a life of faith in the Son of God.

Meditate often on the nearness of the invisible world, that it may abide in your remembrance. In a moment you may be within it. The soul is easily dislodged from its present tabernacle: one rude shock to the tenement and the tenant quits it to mingle with the departed. Wherever their locality be, it needs only the flight of an instant to reach it. Invisible it is to sense—but how limited the range of sense! The circumference of a few miles bounds it. Who would be contented with so narrow a sphere, save the grossest and most unreflecting of our species. In our better moments we all aspire beyond it. The land of our birth, now distant from our sight, lives in our remembrance. Imagination, working upon the narratives of travellers, pictures the landscapes of countries we have never visited. Active fancy, which “travels beyond sense and pictures things unseen,” rises beyond the actual into the ideal, and enlarges the sphere of our enjoyment. But why stop here? Why, not enter upon the regions opened up to faith—regions in which we are destined to perpetuate our existence, and to reach our highest perfection and felicity! Were our faith vigorous and

enlightened, it would not be possible long to forget them. The pilgrim to the Jerusalem which is above, would then be ever straining his eye through the dull, cloudy atmosphere around him to catch a ray of its glory-bright battlements; and keeping it in faithful remembrance he would live under the powers of the world to come.

**FORGET NOT THE DEAD**, who die in the Lord. You are not forgotten by them. Death does not obliterate the recollections of the past. Death does not extinguish in the soul one kind or holy affection that ever warmed it. The tender, the lovely, the beneficent, are not stripped of their spiritual ornaments when they leave mortality behind them. Even among the lost some human sympathies survive. The rich man in hell did not forget that he had five brethren, for whom he felt the anxious desire that they should not come to the same place of torment. And there is nothing improbable in the conjecture that multitudes who have themselves rejected the gospel offer—a rejection which constitutes the chief element of their remorse and wretchedness, may nevertheless continue to wish that their surviving kindred shall be directed to a happier choice. But, however this be with the lost in whom there must exist a tendency to aggravated depravity, we may be assured that this benevolent sympathy continues to prevail in the bosom of the redeemed; that, as to the angels, so to them the repentance of a sinner is matter of joyful in-

terest ; and that in particular, those whose religious well-being was an object of their solicitude and prayer on earth, may still in heaven awaken their tenderest sympathies. Oh, why should we repel the sentiment that the spirits of the just made perfect, may still bend a compassionate regard from their high mansions of security and rest upon those whom they have left behind amidst the perils of the warfare ; that, though earthly relationships be dissolved, the holy and tender affections which grew out of them, may not have perished ; and, that though the perfect bliss of paradise cannot be impaired with sorrow and disappointment, on account of a kindred neglecting their eternal interests, this bliss may be augmented by beholding their growing piety and their useful lives, and by stretching forth to them the hand of welcome, when “ the warfare’s o’er, the combat’s won.” Suffer not the dead to pass away from your memory. The cherished recollection may incite you to prepare for that world on which they have entered.

**FORGET NOT THE DEAD,**—you shall soon meet them again. That tide which carried them towards invisible shores is bearing you onward and the next rising surge may cast you within the veil. The frequent contemplation of this fact in your coming destiny is the dictate of wisdom. The law of mortality had its origin in a curse, and the devastation of death is its universal monument. But there is no sepulchre for





ON GRAVES:

V. SERMON.

Is the child dead ?



# ON GRAVES :

## V. SERMON.

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Is the child dead ? And they said he is dead. I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.—2 *Sam.* ch. xii. v. 19—23.

Affliction and sorrow, that come upon our sinful species without any distinction of rank or station, often enter into the palaces of kings. For the royal robe covers the heart of humanity, and though surrounded with all the splendour and safeguards of a throne, the keenest arrows of misfortune may reach and pierce it. Sin which put on the dispenser of crowns, a crown of thorns, has planted a thorn in every earthly diadem, to remind its possessor of the connexion of sin and pain ; and that only through the sufferings of the King of Zion we can cherish the hope of deliverance.

The scene presented in the history from which the text is taken, is in the highest degree affecting. Disease had been lying heavy for seven days on an infant in which the strong affections of fondly loving parents were bound up. Maternal affection watched over its cradle : while the father, a conscience-stricken sinner, yet humbly confiding in the mercy of God,—during the dark

period of suspense, fasted, prayed, and lay prostrate on the ground in the agony of his spirit, saying, who can tell whether God may be gracious to me that the child may live? That crisis had come in which the virulence of disease overmasters the impotence of human skill;—the hour in which the anxious bystander feels that it belongs to the giver of life alone to touch the wavering balance on the side of recovery;—the hour, in which suppressed anguish can do nothing but gaze in silence, had come within the palace of the King of Israel—within the chamber where the dying infant lay. The moment also had come which had determined the issue. Death had quenched the feeble spark of infant existence. And when David suspecting, from the whisperings of the attendants, that the child was dead, said, “is the child dead?”—And they said he is dead: and he said, “can I bring him back again? I shall go unto him; but he shall not return to me.”

Behold two topics in these words; *first*, that which causes grief in the death of friends; and *secondly*, the consideration by which this grief is soothed.

The intercourse of friendship occasionally suffers temporary separations, and the pain connected with them is not strange to us. Yet, in such cases, the shadows that come over us at the moment of parting, are brightly gilded with the hope of an early meeting;—and thus they be-

come even more pleasing than the serenity of our every day sky. As for instance, when parents send their child to a distance for his education : it is painful to part with him ; but in a few years he will return to their embrace with an improved mind :—or when they send him away to a foreign land to push his fortune, it is painful to part with him ; but he will return in a few years, so hope pictures, to his home, “ loaded with wealth and honours bravely won ;”—or when they send their child away to invigorate a delicate frame in a more genial climate, it is a painful sacrifice to endure her absence, yet in a few months she will come back again in health to be the light of their dwelling. Even our more casual and transient separations would have an element of deeper sadness in them, were it not that hope soothes the pain of parting, and the period of absence, with the promise of return.

But with respect to the dead these prospects and possibilities are wholly extinguished. They have entered upon another sphere,—unlike the earthly,—how remote from it we cannot tell,—separated from it by an abyss which the decree of their destiny does not permit them to repossess. All the visible memorials by which we were wont to recognize them, and to hold converse with them, have been left behind,—the prey of corruption and the grave. Despoiled of all that rendered them agreeable to us, life, intelligence, the warm and breathing soul, the complexion

and the symmetry—all have vanished—nought remains that we can cling to—we are glad to hurry away to the grave-yard, the forsaken and ruined tenement, to sink into a dissolution still more complete. In the separation therefore that death makes nothing speaks of a return. The babe so fondly nurtured upon the maternal bosom, and cradled there in its sickness with a care that never wearies, comes not back to that bosom when the spirit has fled ;—no hope, no promises of a return can be feigned either by fancy in its extravagance, or by friendship in its tenderness, to mitigate the anguish of bereavement. The youth, springing into the grace and power of manhood, unfolding excellences of mind and character, for which a wide admiring circle predicts a bright career,—whose amiableness communicates a charm to that select society in which he moves—a charm all the sweeter that it is scented with the heavenly perfumes of piety,—when touched with his fatal malady, he droops, and sickens, and dies,—the bitterest element in the sorrow of the mourners is, that he shall return no more to the scene which his presence gladdened ;—and when his remains are carried out by the funeral train to be consigned to the dust,—this is only the last of a series of melancholy demonstrations that the beautiful shadow is utterly dissolved, never again to be beheld on earth among its beloved and bliss-inspiring things.

This, then, is the chief element of our grief, when we mourn over the bereavement of the friend we love,—that the departed one is gone from us, and will never return. The sorrow felt is not so much on account of any loss *he* has sustained—prone as we are in moments of unbelief to regard death as the greatest of all evils,—as from the loss that we ourselves have sustained. Nay, we may even be persuaded that death to him has been unspeakable gain ;—gain, because he is delivered from the pains of a malady which no human skill could cure ;—gain, because his wearisome days and nights are at an end ;—gain, because the immortal part hath risen to that more perfect condition of existence, in which disincumbered of mortality, all its power shall expand into more perfect vigour, and shall be consecrated to happier employments. Yet with the liveliest persuasion that death is gain,—unspeakable gain to the departed, we may still be filled with the most pungent anguish under the sense of our own bereavement. He is taken away from our home and fellowship. The eyes that met ours with the glance of a reciprocal kindness, will never again beam upon us. The voice that spoke to us in tones so tender and affectionate we shall never again hear. The dear object on whom we delighted to shower our caresses is now beyond our reach. Evening comes but he comes not. Morning dawns but he is not there. Time speeds on,—years revolve

—but still he returns not—to grieve in our grief, or to rejoice in our joy—to unite in our prayers, or to worship in our sanctuary. The blank created by his departure in the circle of our friendship remains. New comers may enter it, but *his* place is never filled. The grave hath hid him from our sight, the bourne o'er which no traveller returns, divides us, and the sad soliloquy of the mourner is,—“ I shall go unto him, but he shall not return unto me.”

Consolation, therefore, under the loss of friends, is to be sought by turning away from the present memorials of our bereavement, and fixing our contemplation upon the onward prospect. And we can single out from it several elements fitted to inspire consolation.

The world beyond the grave upon which the saints departed have entered, is an onward stage in the progress and perfection of our being. The children of God are all destined to it from their birth,—and especially from their second birth, when they passed from spiritual death unto spiritual life. It follows that event, by a sequence as determinate as that infancy should grow up to manhood—as that the bud should swell out into the blossom—as that the dawn should usher in the day. This earth is the place of their sojourn, not of their permanent residence—the school where some attainments are to be made, some graces cultivated, preparatory to their transplantation into a higher sphere. The faithful dead have attained these

and are translated. To wish them back, however painful our sense of loss may be, would be to wish a reversal of the beneficent arrangements of eternal goodness. Who ever wishes that the expanding beauty of adolescence should be again reduced to the helplessness of childhood?—Who ever wishes that the intellect brightened into vigor, and the heart exalted into piety, should return again to infantile imbecillity?—Who, rising to right thought and above the infirmity of earthly affection, would wish to call back again, to be the companion of his own brief and troubled sojourn, that friend now united to the spirits of the just before the throne,—himself now become a spirit, pure as they,—their associate, their fellow worshipper,—dwelling in light,—the light of truth,—the light of purity,—the light of joy? Who would wish to recall a departed friend from such a glory and beatitude, seeing that to this high destiny, infinite mercy hath raised him, and hath called each of us to the same? Is not this fact rather fitted to kindle the aspiration that we should be permitted to go unto them? It attracts our eye away from the desolations that death hath created around us,—from the bitterness of our own sorrow,—to the brighter world and the perfect felicity, on which the departed believer has entered. The wilderness may indeed be around us,—the grave of a friend and fellow pilgrim may be at our feet,—a feeling of loneliness and bereavement may weigh down

the sensitive and affectionate heart,—yet the faith that descries in the distance before us the battlement of the heavenly Jerusalem, that beholds the power and glory of its King, and the bliss and dignity of its citizens, will not seek to revert its gaze to the melancholy scenes of time. It will rather be ready to exclaim, oh, that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest. I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

It is a sweet consolation to us, when suffering under the pains of bereavement, to be assured that in the world to come the intercourse that subsisted between the good on earth shall be renewed in some much more perfect and happy form. The King of Israel was manifestly consoled with this confident hope, when he said, “I shall go unto him,”—the dear infant of whom I am bereaved;—I shall be permitted to single him out from the countless myriad of little ones who have entered into the Kingdom of God; to embrace him in the arms of parental love, purified from every human alloy;—my child, adorned with more than an infant’s innocence, and delivered from all an infant’s weakness, and clothed with the perfect image of the heavenly, will be my companion in the mansion prepared for us by the river of life, among the trees of that paradise above which the ransomed can never lose!

Ye bereaved and sorrowful ones, we make no factitious effort to soothe you with pleasurable

fancies. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat saith the Lord?"—The imagination of the poet has sported with this theme, and unbelief may whisper to itself, that it is without discoverable evidence,—the baseless fabric of a vision,—that glitters before the gazer's eye when looking over into that gloomy abyss of mortality which has swallowed up all departed generations. But thanks be to God, it is not so. We have better foundations for our hope than the poet's fancy. Our hope reposes upon a rock, on which were the sceptic to reflect and believe and repose, he would make a happy escape from his trackless, melancholy sea. The author of our being has revealed to us in his word that the spirit on its separation from the body returns unto God that gave it;—that it returns with all the powers and faculties he gave it unimpaired, to be with him in the Kingdom of his glory and blessed in his vision; carrying with it thither all sanctified affections and remembrances;—the sweet memory of a religious home and Christian fellowship;—an undiminished sympathy with all the good left behind;—a submissive waiting for their arrival on the heavenly shore, and reunion with them in the spiritual world of light and life. Why should we imagine or fear that amidst the more extended companionship of those blessed regions, the peculiar ties of ter-

restrial companionships should be dissolved, or forgotten, or lose their charm?—It is not so on earth, and heaven, doubtless, has its analogies with the arrangements of earth. When we go forth into the great world, and mix in its societies, we meet with men renowned for talent, patriotism, usefulness;—with commanders who have successfully directed their country's arms; with statesmen, who have conducted safely their country through formidable perils; with men who have gathered around it the lustre of genius; with a multitude of humbler men who have done well their part in the establishment of a pure Christianity—by far the best benefactors of nations; and we give to each of these the sincere tribute of our homage and love. But, at the very moment when our heart glows with the most affectionate admiration for them, we return from the great world within our own narrow circle of domestic love with a more devoted regard to all its members, as forming *to us* the dearest portion of that great commonwealth which has so warmly excited our benevolence. This is human nature in its best degree. Benevolence most widely diffused is compatible with the strongest particular attachments. And why should human nature not be the same among the spirits of the just made perfect in the regions of perfect love? Why should each not gather around them there, within their own mansion, those who were related by

very tender ties at the earliest commencement of their immortal existence,—whose mutual counsel determined the choice that made Christ their portion,—whose mutual intercourse contributed to form the regenerate character,—who fought together the fight of faith and achieved the victory through which the crown of life was obtained. Though many of the accidents of our earthly relationships must needs be changed in the world of spirits,—the affections growing out of them, the remembrances connected with them, the ties resulting from them, must needs be perfected, and will form elements in the recompense of the just. The heavenly fellowship will neither be confused nor promiscuous; it will be grouped together according to predeterminate affinities; it will be in the resurrection only a more perfect development of the earthly; each individual bearing, it may be, all his characteristic peculiarities, though freed from all his characteristic infirmities,—rising higher and higher in his own degree throughout endless duration. We are lost in the vastness of this conception, though it stands on the surest ground of analogy and faith; and in the first anguish of our bereavement, we seek for consolation in assurances nearer at hand and more in unison with our actual experience. Faith then, in its plainer and more immediate revelations, thus reassures me: your departed friend is not lost, but gone before; he survives in all the entireness of his indivi-

dual being ; his memory has forgotten nothing that is pure in your former friendship, or love ; you will meet him again without any default in his recognition,—without any abatement of his regard. Be comforted then : “ you will go unto him though he will not return unto you.”

And these ties that connect the believer with the world to come are already strong.

Not to go beyond the circle of our immediate kindred,—how many of these have already entered upon it. The grey-haired sires who caressed your infancy in their trembling arms, and stood in prayer over you at your baptism, have long been inhabitants of that world into which a few days ago they welcomed the kinsman at whose death-bed you wept. Of the children nursed at the same bosom, some were embosomed in the grave before your birth,—and others were carried there ere you could form any other idea of the change, save that brother, or sister had gone away and had not returned. When we come to riper years, and to advancing age we miss the more. Our father’s home is deserted—our parents are laid in the grave with their children that went before them ; the father with his son ; the mother with her daughter. And unusual must your lot be,—if you have not oftener than once followed to the grave some of the best beloved of your co-evals, struck down in prime, and health, and busy enterprise, and domestic joy. But all who have thus departed in

the faith to the heavenly Jerusalem strengthen the attractive force that draws the affections of the believer to things that are above. In youth and during the mid-time of our days we are anchored to the earth by many ties. But in the arrangements of heaven, strand after strand is cut,—until we feel the hope that is anchored within the veil drawing us upward with resistless power,—disposing us to say,—“*to die is gain,*”—earth is not to be compared to paradise,—the companions that remain are dear, but more and dearer far are the friends who are gone. Without regret, therefore, nay with joy, the summons may be received that unites us to them.

It is well to cherish these memorials of the departed. The Roman noble placed in the hall of his palace the statues of his celebrated ancestors to stimulate him to an imitation of their heroic deeds. In this we would have the Christian do as the patrician did, though in a manner conformable to the Christian faith and a spiritual life. Engrave upon the tablet of your memory the images of your departed; on some conspicuous place there, let them be engraven, that your eye may be occasionally cast upon them in the busiest moments to inspire you with that tranquility which they have now gained; to moderate the ardour of that pursuit by which you are endangered; to incite you to close imitation of those who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises; to remind you that even the ties of

personal friendship which bind you to the world of spirits are stronger and dearer than those that would detain you here ; and to dispose you to say in joyful anticipation, " I shall go unto them ; but they shall not return unto me."

And once more, we may remark that the ties that bind us to the world invisible, already strong, are always increasing in number and strength, for all around us upon whom our affections now rest, will very shortly be summoned thither.

It is the law of human existence. Time loses—eternity absorbs it. Generation after generation disappears. The population of empires and cities melt away. The swarm of to-day is not the swarm of yesterday. The stock is maintained ;—the individuals perish. Look at your own family : it is a type of society in all its combinations. How many of your nearest kindred have already fallen—vanished forever from your home. A few years more,—for few at best are the days of the years of our life—and the youngest among them will become aged and return to the common garner of mortality, even as a shock of corn cometh in in its season. These sires, already whitened unto the harvest shall be gathered in before long. These olive plants around your table, short-lived, for more than half our race are short-lived,—and fair too, for the short-lived are often fair—a few winters will handle them rudely, and they will steal away to

a more genial home. The men of energy and enterprise, who keep the great wheels of the social machine in motion, who come out spring after spring with a force not visibly abated, as if they were to never be touched with that scythe which cuts the feebler down,—*they too*, when their hour is come, droop and wither like the green herb, and though longer spared, their dust is mingled at length with the dust of their forefathers. And were we permitted to return to the city of our habitation, after the lapse of some thirty years or so, how strikingly would old scenes demonstrate the course of our observations. The house, once ours, is filled with unknown occupants; the scenes of industry on which in our day we plied our skill, are held by a new race of toilers; we know not one of the busy buyers and sellers that crowd the market place; the house of God where we worshipped hath in it none of the well-known faces whom we were wont to greet there. In short, we would feel ourselves to be strangers. A new generation has sprung up. The old is gone,—gone to the world to come of which we speak, on which we wish you now to concentrate your affections. For why should you set your affections on earth?—All your friends are leaving it. Why should you mourn *excessively* at their departure?—Weep as though you wept not. You will soon follow them.

And this is the last consideration that I would

suggest as full of consolation to the believer weeping at the grave of a friend that has fallen asleep in Jesus.

We cannot say unto you, weep not; there is a time to weep. We cannot call these throbbings of emotion, a weakness—they are not inconsistent even with perfect humanity. Remember that its divinely tranquil and perfect type, standing by the grave where one whom he loved lay, “*groaned in spirit, was troubled, and wept.*” Christianity disowns the Stoic’s pride; it rejects the Stoic’s apathy; it extinguishes no natural affection, but regulates, exalts, refines, enobles all. It shines forth like the sun upon the dark and billowy deep, gilding the waves in the tempest and bringing on the calm. It does not counsel the bereaved to repair to scenes of gayety for the oblivion of their grief;—it says not to the dull selfishness of our nature, time will bring an antidote;—it advises not the formation of new friendships as a solace for those that have been dissevered;—it recommends no lethean cup to obliterate the memory of past endearments;—ah no, *faith* teaches far purer lessons,—inspires far nobler sentiments. It unites time with immortality and leads the soul forward to its heavenly home. It assuages our sorrow for the departed, on the ground that we are hasting to join them. It stands thoughtful on the brink of Jordan, which the friend has crossed, waiting for the royal messenger who shall conduct the bereaved one to

the same repose ; and though for a time he may be oppressed with all the loneliness of a heart bereaved, he knows that the day of his redemption draweth nigh. That day is borne onward with the speed of time. Every breath drawn brings the racer to the goal. Guided by truth up the ascent heavenward, the glory of the celestial city becomes more distinctly unfolded ;—its anthems fall at length upon the pilgrim's ear, its peace pervades the atmosphere around him,—and he is less sad for the ravages of death among his kindred in the degree that he feels himself verging upon the region where mortality is swallowed up of life.

Such sentiments, we think, consoled the heart of the pious king of Israel, as he bent in sadness over the lifeless body of his son, and exclaimed in the certain hope of an immortal life, “ I shall go unto him but he shall not return unto me ” ;—and such may bring consolation to you in a similar season of sadness and bereavement.



## DEATH:

The fear of it a bondage.



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The fear of it a bondage. -

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And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.—*Hebrews*, chap. ii. v. 15.

Why, it may be asked, should death be an object of fear—of such fear as may hold a man in bondage all his life long?—The question admits of several answers.

The fear of death, or, in other words, the love of life, is in man, a strong, instinctive, original, sentiment. The Creator has implanted it in the human bosom as the safeguard of life—a thing never to be touched or shortened save by his own hand. Hence the fact so emphatically expressed by an ancient patriarch—“skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life.” The highest honours, the richest possessions would willingly be sacrificed for its preservation; and the perpetual gloom of a dungeon, the sadness of perpetual banishment, a sentence to ceaseless, unmitigated toil, would in most instances be preferred to its sudden and violent extinction. The dread of death operates, whenever our life is threatened, with all the controlling power of a

natural instinct, that is, of a sentiment planted in the human bosom by the finger of God.

What melancholy and disastrous scenes would be daily witnessed were it not for this natural defence set around the citadel of life! In spite of its natural strength, however, it is sometimes rashly thrown down. In a fit of bitter disappointment, in the phrensy of passion, the suicide will, with unutterable rashness, assume that power over his own being which belongs only to God. And were it not that the author of our being has so fenced it round by his own authority, how much oftener would the awful limits be rashly and unwarrantably passed! The man weary of the world,—the man sunk under the pressure of some bitter adversity,—the man tortured with some painful and incurable malady,—the man whose advanced years have left him nothing to look for save increasing infirmities and uncheered decay—how often might such be induced to seek some potion to compose them for a long sleep, were it not for the instinctive dread of the mere transition, and the still more terrible apprehension of the condition in which the soul may find itself after its separation from the body.

The particular fear of death, however, of which the text speaks, is essentially different from the instinctive, and is far from being a very common sentiment. The latter operates only in the actual presence of some cause which seems to threaten

the destruction of life. The reflective fear, on the other hand, may contemplate death at a distance, and yet be appalled with the object. Yet how small the number, at any given moment, who are occupied with such a thought! Of the multitudes whom one meets in the crowded streets of the city, nay, even of the multitudes assembled in the sanctuary on the Lord's day, how small a number are at the same moment, occupied with any vivid apprehension of their latter end. It cannot truly be said of them that they are under any conscious bondage to this fear. Death is one of the unavoidable facts in their future history which they find it most difficult to realize. You cannot awaken the apprehension of it by argument. It is not to be kindled up by any display of the statistics of mortality. The most appalling devastations of pestilence often fail to produce it. So long, indeed, as an individual is himself in the enjoyment of perfect health, he experiences great difficulty in realizing the nearness of his approaching dissolution, or of forming any very vivid conception of the awful retributions that shall follow it.

In conformity with these views and the widest observation, it is evident that death is surrounded with awful solemnity only in the degree in which the proper nature and dignity of man is clearly apprehended and felt. Viewing man as he stands at the lowest point in the scale of intelligence—the rude savage whose mental powers

are wholly undeveloped, whose conscience has nothing more than the very feeblest conceptions of right and wrong, with scarce an idea of God or of his own immortality, whose past life has consisted, in various proportions, only of indolent repose, or of precarious pursuit and fitful enjoyment,—men, in such a condition, seldom think of death, for they think little of the future. Their cares, hopes, fears, are limited to the present hour. Even when death is imminent, as by the upsetting of a canoe, or the rage of a wild beast, or the fury of a fellow savage, they are probably strangers to all fear save the momentary and instinctive. They shrink from the mortal blow more from the animal propensity which shrinks from pain than from any gloomy dread of mortality. For with what ideas can death be associated in the mind of such a one, who in all the days of his life has never permitted his thoughts to range beyond the pursuits and pleasures of the passing hour? What, but that if he should be felled by the club of an enemy, or devoured by wolves, he shall no more need to endure the toils of the chase, or enjoy the feast upon his captured prey; that he shall mingle no more with the families of his tribe, or go to war with their enemies. Such, as we learn from all observation of the customs and feelings of savage tribes, is the apathy with which they look on death. They are not distressingly in bondage to the fear even when the fatal stroke is impending.

Eternity, judgment, the immortality of the soul have no distinct or vivid place among their ideas. As the brutes they perish without regrets for the past—without fear for the future.

But when we contemplate the human being raised one or two steps higher in the scale of improvement, at that point when the distinct nature of the soul, and its separate existence after death is received, then the transition becomes invested with new attributes. Now it is associated with hopes and fears, according as he looks upon his fate in the regions into which the disembodied soul shall be ushered. The North American Indian who fancies that his soul will migrate to a better hunting territory will not regard with any painful apprehension the chance to which he may fall a victim. The Celtic warrior who imagined that in the hall of Odin, among the souls of glorified heroes, he would drink wine from the skulls of the vanquished;—the soldiers of Mahomet, who believed that the sacrifice of their lives in his proselyting wars would ensure immediate admission to the bowers of their sensual paradise—such hopes as these in the Indian, in the Celt, or in the Mussulman, though resting on mere presumption and excited fancy, exerted, as we well know, a mighty influence on the conduct of those who cherished them. By them the darkness and gloom, associated with the idea of death were dispelled; the instinctive dread of the struggles of dissolution

were overcome ; each, under the hallucination of his own creed, regarded death not as a thing to be dreaded, but as a thing to be braved. With reckless daring they rushed into the forefront of the battle, happy alike whether they cut down their adversary, or met death at his hand ; in the one case their victory was rewarded in this life, in the other self-sacrifice received its meet recompense hereafter. In whatever form they met death, it was not to them an object of fear. Faith, or fancy, shed its light upon the scene, and in despite of all its concomitants, the issue was a thing to be chosen, and was chosen by multitudes, with an undoubting and triumphant presumption.

The same observations may be made respecting all heathen nations of ancient or modern times, of which we have any knowledge. If the doctrine of the soul's immortality did not prevail among them ; if they regarded death as a perpetual sleep, or thought little or nothing about the matter, then was there nothing in the prospect to inspire fear ; they met it in calmness or in stupor, unsolicitous about the issue. If that doctrine were admitted as a probability, on the mere light of nature, then the tendency was to assimilate the future to the present, and to call in the soothing anticipations of hope. Accordingly we do not find anywhere in the history of heathen nations, nor does the traveller ever meet with, among such in the present day, an instance

where the fear of death in any of its ordinary forms, is reckoned an event of unmingled terror, fitted to cast a dark shadow over the whole life—an event standing up in gloomy perspective, and holding in the chains of fear, the pilgrim, as he journeys onward to meet his fate, in entire ignorance of what must be endured in the transition, and of the good or evil that lies beyond. Wherever the divine revelation has not shed its light, there must be darkness and uncertainty, but not necessarily foreboding and fear. These arise from the sense of guilt and the consequences of a coming retribution—sentiments rarely awakened with much vividness, except in connexion with the faith which has brought life and immortality to light.

We come, then, to the remarkable fact, that the particular sentiment of which the apostle speaks in the text, is peculiar to Christians—and is in them a sequence of that purer light which their creed throws upon their destiny. The doctrine of the soul's immortality, is received among the indubitable articles of our faith; we believe that the soul, at the moment of our dissolution, shall enter upon a state of retribution to receive according to the deeds done in the body; that the doom which shall be pronounced upon it by the eternal judge shall be irreversible, and that should it be the doom of condemnation, no tongue can describe the bitterness of the penalty. Such a prospect cannot be contemplated without

the deepest solicitude, and should the contemplator have a lively apprehension of his own sinfulness,—of his exposedness to condemnation,—of his unfitness to appear at the tribunal of God,—then there does exist in his mind abundant cause why death should be regarded as the most terrible of all events; and why, in every thoughtful moment, he should be held in bondage by the fear of it. Now this is the actual condition of a very large number of those who bear the Christian name. They feel that they are not prepared to die; they have a lively apprehension of the terrible consequences of dying unprepared; they feel that consignment to the regions of misery would not be more than their iniquities deserve; they know that mercy is freely offered to all who believe in Christ, but they are not sure that *they* truly believe, because their faith has not produced any very remarkable sanctifying effect upon them; they have some hope, indeed, but their hope is darkly mingled with fear; and so much uncertainty rests upon their eternal prospects, that the idea of being shortly summoned to enter upon them, awakens a fear of death through which they are all their life time subject to bondage.

It must be obvious that in the degree in which this is a faithful delineation of any man's spiritual condition, there exist the most valid grounds of fear. For what other sentiment could be appropriate to the state of an accountable being, liable

at any moment to be summoned to render his account, and yet conscious to himself that he is all unprepared to render it? What other feeling than that of fear, should fill the bosom of an immortal being contemplating his immortality, when he is conscious that his character is such, if justice were to be dealt out to him, as might render that immortality wretched? Upon a question of so much moment to doubt is to be miserable; and if conscience be tender and the temperament gloomy, the ideas associated with dissolution, will be full of dark forebodings, and through fear of death, such will be all their lifetime subject to bondage. But there is a way of deliverance. For the illustration of this grand fact in the economy of redemption, and of the mediatorial power of Christ, it is necessary to consider the principal circumstances from which the fear of death arises, and in what manner the plan of our redemption has provided for their removal.

The first element in the fear of death is a guilty conscience. "*The sting of death is sin.*" The sinner trembles to meet God whom he has offended, and to be judged according to that law which he has broken. *Death—death eternal* is the penalty, and unless somehow cancelled, natural death introduces the period of its infliction. This is the close of his probationary life;—the sinner must then appear at the judgment seat of Christ to receive his doom. Now the gospel meets

this peculiar element in the sinners fears. It teaches that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus"—to them who truly believe in him; who embrace his gospel; who confide in him as their mediator. This faith in Christ is a simple act of the mind confiding in the testimony which God hath given concerning his Son. We stay not now to speak of the evidence on which it rests. We have at present to do only with the act itself, and the antidote which it brings to the sinners fears. And most manifest it is that this antidote to the fear which guilt inspires must be complete in all who unfeignedly believe that through the death of Christ the penalty has been cancelled in their particular case, and because they believe in his name. The God of Mercy hath in the gospel propounded this as the condition of mercy, and the believing penitent accepts the condition, relies on the faithfulness of the promiser, and experiences peace in believing:—and if at that moment he were summoned to the tribunal of heaven, he would pass through the iron gate without fear, because the Saviour in whom he confides hath "*abolished* death"—every thing in that transition which has in it the nature of curse or penalty:—"the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, we pray you to consider attentively, the peculiar ground of this peace, the free nature of this gift—for dim, unsteady, apprehensions on this point often perpe-

tuate the bondage of which the text speaks both in the healthful and the dying. To dispel the fear, we do not call the attention of the anxious mind to any nice analysis of the character of their faith;—to the minute evidences of reformation that may be discoverable in their life;—to the signs of penitential sorrow which they may have exhibited; to the purposes of new obedience by which they are actuated: all these are proper subjects of frequent, solemn examination on the part of every Christian, both in the season of health and on a death-bed. But deliverance from the fear of death will never result from such an examination, however favorable may be the signs:—and when numerous deficiencies are discoverable in all the graces of the Christian temper, hope and peace cannot repose on it: we need something else than these imperfect and infant excellencies to rest on; they could not bear the scrutiny of him, in whose sight the heavens are impure and the angels are charged with folly: and so strong would be the fears even of the Christian of highest attainments, had he nothing else than his own attainments to trust in, that the near approach of eternal realities would utterly overwhelm him. But the Christian well instructed in the faith, turns not to these imperfect qualities at all when in search of an antidote to his fears. He turns to the great facts which the gospel proclaims,—that in the plan of mercy, an atonement has been

made for the sins of the world ;—that all who cordially embrace Christ as their mediator obtain peace and everlasting life ; that the blessings of redemption are proffered to every one “ without money and without price ;” and that faith itself, by which the soul is enabled to embrace Christ, is the gift of God, so that salvation in its origin, progress and end is all of grace—a grace rich, generous, inexhaustible as the infinite from which it flows. Enlightened with these truths, conscious of his own guilt and impotence, the true believer seeks nothing else to rely on but Christ—the all-sufficient Saviour. By him sin is atoned for ; the offended majesty of heaven is reconciled ; sanctifying grace is secured ; death is conquered ; heavenly mansions are prepared, and a safe conduct thither guaranteed. What more is needed to dispel that fear of death by which some are all their life time subject to bondage ?

We may note a second element in the fear of death, the consciousness of a want of preparation for the eternal world, and the method by which the Christian obtains deliverance.

Every man who has derived his knowledge of the invisible state from the Bible, must, when he realizes his entrance upon it as near, look upon his unpreparedness for so solemn a transition with profound solicitude. The stains which man contracts in his pilgrimage through the world, are engrained in all ; we each carry about

with us a body of sin and death—tendencies to evil from which we are not purified, and gracious dispositions which have scarcely proceeded beyond the blade or ear. What Christian, even though firmly trusting that he has passed from a state of condemnation to a state of peace, would not be filled with a solemn dread at the thought of passing, within a short period, to the general assembly and church of the first born, and into the presence of an innumerable company of angels, and of the spirits of the just made perfect; to appear before God, the judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant? Even though delivered from the fear which guilt inspires, he would yet be filled with the fear which holiness inspires, and that to a degree which would make him tremble with convulsive apprehension, were it announced to him that he stood upon the near margin of these eternal scenes, and would shortly be summoned to enter upon them. This sense of unfitness—of unpreparedness—of the pollution of indwelling sin, will always be cause of humiliation to the Christian, and, in the circumstances we have supposed, it might even be cause of distressing fear. But faith provides for this a remedy, as in the preceding instance. The sanctification of the believer follows his justification in sure sequence. Sin will not have the dominion over him. Grace will triumph in its eradication. The body of sin and death will not pass with him into the world

of spirits. Whatever defilement the soul receives through its connexion with the body will cease with dissolution, and the soul itself—sanctified in all its affections and powers—will be presented by him who hath redeemed it, without spot or wrinkle before God. Faith, therefore, speaks to the dying believer not of a battle that may be lost, but of a victory that shall be won; won through that very transition in which the soul becomes disembodied—separated from the impurities of sense and matter, and made like unto the angels. With this deliverance in sure prospect there is much to reconcile the Christian to his last change, though pain and darkness and mystery should overshadow the path that conducts to it. Some nights of pain and restlessness,—then pain and restlessness shall cease for ever. A few more contests with sinful propensities, and the enemy will cease to harass. A few more clouds floating over his prospects through a feeble faith, or a distempered brain, and then he shall be borne away to regions where his sky shall be always cloudless and serene. Is there not enough in this assurance to quiet every fear, and move the tempted and dying believer to wait in hope the hour of his deliverance.

Shall the Moslem's fancy exert a greater influence in subduing the fear of death than the Christian's faith? Can it be possible that the visions of enthusiasm, based on imposture, and anticipating only the gratification of the lower

appetites, shall be more potent to extinguish the fear of death than the faith of the Christian based on truth revealed, and anticipating a state of existence in which the soul shall be continually advancing in knowledge and holiness to the similitude of God?\* It cannot be.

We shall notice only one other element in the fear of death—the natural dread with which we contemplate the severance of those ties which bind us to our kindred ; and the antidote which our heavenly Father has provided for this fear.

The severance of these ties cannot be contemplated in the season of health and strength without anguish ; nor does it seem to be the duty of any one to forecast the hour of separation, and to speculate upon the temper with which he may possibly meet this his last trial upon earth. This can rarely be done with a just apprehension of circumstances, and therefore can rarely be attended with any practical advantage. It is enough for us to cultivate the habit of grateful submission to the will of God under emergent events, and to trust that in all coming trials divine grace will sustain the habit, according to the promise—“ as thy day is so shall thy strength be.” But let us note the gracious arrangements by which the way is generally smoothed for the disruption of those ties which bind the children of God to the world. How often has it been observed, months and even years before, that they had been repining for the change as it drew near.

\* See note page 224.

Their affection for their kindred was not less, but it gradually assumed a more heavenly complexion—dwelt more upon the excellences and endearments that were spiritual, and indicated by unmistakable signs, an inward longing for those regions where only the spiritual and the durable will be loved. They felt, and after they are gone, we may be able distinctly to remember how the feeling was manifested—a deeper solemnity in spiritual exercises; they were more frequent and fervent in prayer; they evinced greater interest in the word read, or in the word preached; a holier tenderness in commemorating the Saviour's passion; a greater activity of benevolence; a sweeter gentleness, meekness, patience; a readiness to forgive, or to ask forgiveness; a something in the whole demeanor which, if slightly noted at the time, may be vividly recollected after the friend is gone—indicated as distinctly the ripening process for a higher condition of existence, as the whitening of the field indicates the approach of harvest; and while this is going on, there may often be noted, that progress in the moral affections which prepares for the approaching severance of all the ties of kindred and friendship. Those who are to be left behind are committed without distrust to the care of the Father who is in heaven, and with a lively apprehension that the period of separation will be short. Thus the process for the Christian's willing and gentle disseverment from earth

is matured. But often other means are employed by him who hath made in man the love of life a strong instinct—often a physical as well as a moral discipline is employed to overcome it. The tabernacle is shaken—terribly rent and shaken—that the occupant may be made willing to leave it: and when not thus dealt with by severe disease, age comes with its manifold infirmities and desolations, evoking the prayer:—“Lord now let thy servant depart in peace.” Thus the benignant power which presides over the destiny of man, prepares his children to meet it, not only by the dispensations of grace, but by the arrangements of nature. Grace raises the affections to heavenly scenes;—nature changing all things around, reconciles us to our last change; and both conspire to teach us acquiescence in the purposes of heaven, and to strengthen the hope that in a higher state of existence our redemption shall be complete, and our felicity unmingled and perpetual.

Permit me now to offer a word of admonition to those who may be total strangers to that bondage to the fear of death of which the text speaks.

It is quite possible that some of you may never have experienced it. Multitudes within the pale of the Christian Church, professing its creed, and looking forward at times to the world of retribution, have never felt any fear lest their unforgiven sins should entail con-

demnation and death everlasting. Yet whether you fear or not, a sincere belief in the articles of your creed must constrain you to acknowledge that every impenitent sinner has cause to fear. To appear before your judge to whom you have never sought to be reconciled ; to hazard the fate of eternity on any moral excellence that you may fancy yourself to possess ;—this is an infatuation without a parallel ! Your unconsciousness of danger is no evidence whatever that your case is free from danger : on the contrary it is one of the saddest symptoms of your case—the delusive dream, the stupifying torpor which precludes hope because it precludes effort. It is possible that this dream may not be dissolved until you enter upon eternal scenes. Often the wicked have no bands in their death : they do not fear as other men ; their strength is firm. The delusion that lasts through life is sometimes strong enough to last through the dark valley. But it is also true that painful sickness, and the near approach of eternity, often endue the soul with a keener spiritual perception, and bring into a clearer light the character and perilous position of the sinner. The true nature and demerit of sin is then more fully apprehended ; its burden crushes with an oppressive weight ; the method of relief, is not discerned, because the soul, filled with this hitherto unknown wretchedness, cannot look, beyond itself. How sad this wretchedness when it comes upon a man in his season of infirmity

and decay to aggravate the sufferings of the sick bed by the forebodings of an eternity unprepared for. This may be your condition if the consideration of your case and duty, as a sinner, is deferred to your last hour. Better far that the fear of death should now hold you in galling bondage than that you should go onward to the last stage wrapped up in a fatal delusion. Fear may prompt you to seek deliverance; delusive security never. We would try to awaken these fears—the fear of God whom you have offended—of death, for which you are unprepared,—of eternity, which holds out only the prospect of perdition to the unsanctified soul—meditate, O sinner on these things, until fear constrain you to flee from the wrath to come.

Be entreated then in conclusion, to exercise that forethought, which is one of the characteristics of your rational nature—exercise it upon the common doom. Death, in our creed is dissolution, not destruction, transition, or annihilation. It is an event in the progress of our being lying on the confines which divide time from eternity. That event passed, time ceases and eternity begins. To reassert the nearness of its approach, is no more than the repetition of a common-place, and yet the solemn consideration of the common-place—this fact of your mortality—this certainty of its near approach, is of highest moment to you. If your strong attachment to the objects by which you are now surrounded renders every conside-

ration of the hour of disseverment melancholy—and in your judgment, better to be waited for blindfold than through fear of it to be all your life time subject to bondage ; if the consciousness of guilt render all thought of eternity an object of your aversion ; if yielding to these sentiments, the one binding you more closely to earth as the period of your connection with it hastens to a close, the other rendering the world of retribution more dreadful as you approach its confines,—what can the issue be, but a shock in the day of your extremity, terrible beyond conception, when the dreadful truth will be forced upon you, that all which you value on earth must be left behind, while all that is of value in eternity has been by you cast away through thoughtlessness and unbelief. Thousands act thus, and thus perish, every day : from their fate, there comes to you the solemn warning—“ What is a man profited though he should gain the whole world, and lose his soul ; or what will a man give in exchange for his soul ? ” Give heed to these admonitory words. Ponder well the consequences of a false choice. The whole world cannot be gained. In the sense of a permanent possession none of it whatever can be gained ;—all its attractions will fade from your glassy eye and every atom will drop from your stiffened fingers ; and the few feet of earth in which your body is laid to moulder will soon become the abode of another tenant. You cannot gain any part of the

world as a permanent possession. But you may lose the soul : its training for the next stage of its existence may be wholly neglected : the impurities contracted in time may not be washed away in the laver of regeneration : the guilt on which divine justice frowns may not be pardoned—because pardon was not sought in penitence and prayer : eternal life offered in the gospel as a free gift—not deemed worthy of acceptance—may be lost ; and this lost, the soul is lost—sunk for ever in the abyss of its impurities, consigned by inflexible justice to the prison-house where God has forgotten to be gracious, to endure unmitigated the righteous penalty of its transgressions. Upon the gloom of such a possibility the gospel shed the rays of hope—a hope which brightens in the bosom of the believers until every streak of darkness has vanished. To him the contemplation of his latter end, is not a theme of sadness : it is the close of a perilous warfare : the last stage in the valley of sin and tears : it is the commencement of a new period of being,—covered as yet with a thick veil,—yet stretching onward in perpetual beatitude, since the ransomed shall pass it in the favor of God, and be satisfied with his likeness. Amen.

## NOTE.

A late eminent philosopher has well and beautifully said:—  
“ I envy no quality of mind, or intellect in others—not genius, power, wit, or fancy ; but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and, I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing, for it makes life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over the decay, the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights ; awakens life even in death ; and from corruption and decay, calls up beauty and divinity ; makes an instrument of torture and of shame the ladder of ascent to paradise ; and far above all combination of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions—(palms and amaranth,)—the gardens of the blessed, the security of everlasting love, where the sensualist and sceptic view only gloom, decay, and annihilation.”

SIR HUMPHREY DAVY,





## PEACE IN CHRIST.

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These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.—*John xvi. 33*

These words of the Saviour are very remarkable when viewed in connexion with the actual circumstances in which they were spoken.

His brief sojourn among men was near its close. Thirty years of it had been passed in an obscurity which the evangelical historians have not penetrated or relieved, except by a very few incidents. During the three years of his public life, though he had attracted the attention of his countrymen, yet the fact predicted by the evangelical prophet was undeniably manifest—"he came unto his own, and his own received him not." Christ had acquired no political power. By his personal ministry he had not even effected any great or extensive moral reform. The people generally displayed no very remarkable, or constant eagerness to attach themselves to his ministry, or to submit to his prophetic authority. The high priests, the grand council of the nation, watched his every movement with a hostile jealousy. A plot formed by them, for his des-

truction, in which one of the disciples of Christ, faithless to his master, was to be a chief agent, was on the eve of what appeared to them a successful accomplishment. The bargain had been struck with the betrayer; the emissaries of the Sanhedrim were already on the alert; and within a few hours, as they hoped, their hostility would be gratified, and the pseudo-prophet of Galilee would be crushed by the hand of power.

Within the upper room where Christ was assembled with his disciples to eat the passover, no external circumstances seemed in keeping with the calm serenity of the speaker, with the dignity of his demeanor and his assertions of authority and dominion. For the use of the place in which they were assembled they were indebted to a stranger. The men who surrounded him were without wealth, without learning, without note,—selected from the humblest condition. At times, under the influence of their own hopes, they appeared to be animated with a bold and courageous spirit; fear and perplexity, however, on this evening were manifestly their prevailing sentiments. And though their master's discourse was in the main consolatory and encouraging, yet it contained several allusions which must have tended, in the sadness of their circumstances, to darken their melancholy thoughts. He speaks of his own near departure from them; that the world would hate them; that in the world they should have tribulation.

“ They shall put you out of the synagogues : yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” Yet amidst all these sad concomitants and prospects, the divine teacher is calm, unmoved, dignified ; speaking to the little band around him with inexpressible tenderness, the words of warning and encouragement. “ These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

What then, we are entitled to ask, inspired Christ with this high magnanimity and warranted this largeness of promise to his followers ?

Magnanimity is inseparable from true greatness. History sets before us many noble displays of it in great men. In such the virtue rises with the surrounding peril. It looks calmly on its terrors, and meets, and endures, and conquers. Men of the right mould will face danger, will endure suffering with a fortitude unshaken, with a tranquility undisturbed, under the influence of some master principle, and when the soul is aroused to its best condition. But our Lord's display of this virtue, on the evening of his passion, is full of superhuman, divine peculiarities,—all nourished by the heavenly and the future. He speaks of returning to his father ; of going to his father's house to prepare mansions for his followers ; of coming again to put them in possession ; of sending, meanwhile, the comforter, the

spirit of truth, to guide them into all truth. Nothing more remarkably exhibits his character and claims than the style of that prayer which on this paschal evening he offered up unto God. "Glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee. Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." In every part of this, the most remarkable of prayers ever offered up unto God, it is manifest that the offerer, notwithstanding the humiliation that surrounded him, claimed a relationship with the Godhead that only the first begotten of the Father is entitled to claim—a participation of the divine glory—identity of nature—unity of counsel, the prerogatives of sovereignty in the bestowment of eternal life and all the blessings that conduct to it. Uniting these claims so clearly set forth in this solemn hour that preceded his passion, and in his latest discourse to his disciples, with the facts contained in his antecedent and subsequent history, the true believer feels himself able to repose on the supreme divinity which they demonstrate. The being who gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf; who satisfied the

hunger of thousands with the bread that was not more than sufficient for a few ; who raised the dead to life ; who controuled the elements of nature by his word,—the being exerting a power like this, could not invade unwarrantably the prerogatives of God. He said truly, “I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do ;” and when aught appears in his discourse that intimates a relationship to the Godhead closer than that which even the most exalted creature may claim, we are constrained humbly to embrace the mystery ;—to believe his word, when he says : “My Father is greater than I,” not less than when he says : “I and my Father are one.” The union of the divine with the human in the person of Christ, is one of the clearest points in the Book which unfolds to us the attributes and plans of God. We adore our Redeemer as “God manifest in the flesh ;” and when he promises “peace” to his disciples, we can affectionately repose on the fidelity and power of the promiser. “For he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature : For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him : And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church : who is the beginning, the firstborn from

the dead ; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell ; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself ; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven." " These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."

The whole history of God's people, and their position in the midst of this present evil world forbid us to interpret this promise in the sense of an external tranquility. The apostles, to whom the words were originally addressed, never enjoyed this. That very evening they were scattered in perplexity and fear : and when after the day of pentecost they entered upon their apostolical career, they encountered at every point toils, privation, hostility, suffering, and some of them finished their course by martyrdom. The same to a great extent has been the lot of the people of God in every age of the church. When free from persecution on account of their Christian profession, they had yet to endure, in common with their fellow man, all the evils incident to human life. For the most part they have been found among the poor of this world ; their lot has been a lot of toil with all the incident hardships and privations. For although Christianity, when left to its own free and natural operation, always improves the temporal condition of society, yet, in a mixed and irreligious

community, its gracious influence will often be counteracted, and its adherents will be affected by the common calamities.

We must turn, therefore, in our interpretation of the promise in the text to an internal peace of which all who are in Christ Jesus are the possessors. And this flows as a river, clear, quiet, deep from its fountain in the heavens. Everything in the Christian's privileges and prospects is fitted to promote it, and to give it stability. It reposes on the gospel of reconciliation which assures us of the mercy and love of our heavenly Father. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is a fruit of that divine comforter, promised to be with the church, by whose illumination the believer discerns more clearly the foundation of his hope; by whom he is inspired with filial confidence towards God; and every power of his soul is brought into holy accordance with the divine will. We may observe its sources and effects in a few particulars.

1. When we are oppressed with a painful sense of guilt, we look to the cross of Christ and experience peace in believing. In a soul morally sensitive, the consciousness of guilt, and the apprehension of the displeasure of God, must be a source of the liveliest disquietude. It presses at every point, and at every moment. We cannot tell when, or in what manner judgment may strike. If not averted, we know it must strike

soon—for the state of retribution is at hand. Nothing, apart from the mediation of Christ, can take away this fearful apprehension. But in him we have peace—reconciliation with God. The cross dissolves the thick clouds with which the apostacy of our race had enveloped the throne of God. It discloses the attribute of mercy operating in harmony with righteousness and truth. We receive its doctrines on the best of all evidence, in the simplicity of an humble faith, and, in despite of the mysteries by which they are encompassed, we are filled with peace and joy in believing. We not only apprehend the possibility of mercy, through faith we feel it to be ours :—being justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we have peace with God.

2. Again, when self-examination discloses the sins of the heart, and the sins of the life, and we are filled with fear of the divine displeasure, we confide in him who is our propitiation, and we obtain peace. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Our own hearts testify that it is not our purpose to walk

after the flesh ; that in virtue of a better purpose we are all already free from the law of sin and death, not only in its fouler debasements, but even from the toleration of its more secret impurities. We long after a clean heart—a right spirit. We exercise discipline over our thoughts and affections ; we have a strong desire to carry our religion about with us, not as the drapery of a graceful garment, but as a new nature, stamped with the image of the heavenly, actuated with its principles, hopes, and energies. We may be conscious of all this, and at the same time be conscious of innumerable sins in heart and life. Nay, the stronger “the law of the spirit of life” is within us, the more clearly we shall discover the sublimity of that pattern to which we must be conformed, the holy extent of that moral code by which our conduct must be regulated ;—the more perfect our moral vision becomes, the more deeply will we be humbled even with these lighter shades of ungodliness ; the more delicate the sensibility of our conscience, the livelier will be our apprehension of the divine displeasure. In these attributes of character the true Christian is always making progress, and were it not that in the gospel there is provided an antidote for the disquietude of a tenderer religious sensibility, his progress would not be onward to peace, but to fear and anxiety and trembling. An antidote, however, is provided to soothe these affections, and to

convert them into the instrument of farther sanctification. By virtue of our relationship to Christ, sin is not imputed to the believer ; he is not under the law, but under grace ; he will not come into condemnation, because he believeth on the only begotten Son of God ; he may be chastised for it, but he will not be destroyed ; he may be wounded in the conflict, and there may be moments when his heart will faint within him, but he will be brought off more than conqueror through him that loved him. Nor, as all Christian experience will testify, does this faith in Christ dispose the believer to relax diligence ; or to sin because grace abounds. On the contrary there is no moment when he is actuated with an intenser hatred of sin in himself, than in that moment when he humbly hopes that he is forgiven. The brighter the manifestation of redeeming mercy, the humbler will he become,—the more sin-hating,—the more disposed to crucify the old man with his affection and lust, and to put on the new man, which, after God, is created anew in righteousness and true holiness. Thus the peace which springs from the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, will be strengthened by the growth of a personal righteousness which the spirit of Christ works within him. For the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.

3. Again, the promise of Christ in the text is

fulfilled to us in another condition ;—when trembling under a sense of weakness in the presence of our enemies, we repose in the faithfulness of Christ, and obtain peace. Every one who has seriously entered upon the spiritual warfare, will feel at times depressed with a painful sense of his spiritual impotence. We feel our inability to hold by the resolutions we have formed ; old habits revive ; old temptations solicit ; the cares of the world press heavily upon our leisure and thought ; an indisposition to meditation and prayer grows upon us ; and we sometimes feel as if every sign of the Christian life had disappeared. In these seasons of depression and fear, turning to the promises of our Redeemer, faith sees him point to each and all of them, saying, “these words have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace.” “My grace is sufficient for you, my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Greater is he that is for you than all who are against you. The assurance of the real presence of one mighty to save, and as willing as mighty, revives confidence. We know that he is Immanuel, God with us ; that his agency pervades all matter and all mind ; that without any disturbance of their ordinary operations, he can give vigour to our conceptions of truth ; determination to our choice of rectitude ; and ascendancy to the principle of holy love. The assured conviction that he waits to accomplish all this for us will animate us in that course

of activity to which we are called. With fear and trembling we may enter upon the work of salvation; but with hope too, since it is God who worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Forget not, my fellow Christians, that the strength of the believer is not in himself. It lies where his peace lies, in Christ, our strength and shield. The creeper that twines around the oak, and sends its tendrils into every crevice, can bear unhurt the hurricane that lays prostrate far stronger things; for its strength is that of the trunk that supports it, over which the tempest hath no power. But let these tendrils be separated from the supporting stem, and it needs no storm to scatter the foliage of the parasite; it falls by its own weight, and regains its place never. So is it with the Christian. He grows up with Christ his living head. Faith connects him with this fountain of life and strength. The consciousness of this union is part of his nature. As this consciousness is deepened, the believer can say, in the midst of many a fear, "I know in whom I have believed; and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to his trust until that day."

4. Again, the promise presented in the text, guarantees relief to the Christian's disquietude under the pressure of temporal adversity. Affliction in one form or other, and sooner or later comes upon every child of Adam. Greatness can-

not raise any one above it. Like the flood of Noah, its waters rise above the highest mountains, and every joy that hath in it no more than the breath of an earthly life dies. Riches cannot purchase an exemption from trouble and sorrow—man is born to it. Seasons come less propitious to the industry of the husbandman; the inordinate rivalships of trade are followed by reverses; human society is always fermenting with some new disorder; pestilence rides upon the wings of the wind; disease is bred in every element around us, and in every organ within us; and death has set his mark on the door of every house, and on every brow. We need to be prepared for the sure coming consequences. Such of them as do not press upon us now, are close at hand. In the words that Christ has spoken to us we have a sure protection—not deliverance, but peace. He plays upon the key-board of nature and providence, and brings out of it the harmony of wisdom and beneficence. “All things shall work together for good to them who love God. “These light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” From this assurance springs that peace of God which shall keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ.

5. Finally, we may consider the promise in the text as given to Christians in their collective fellowship, when encompassed with discouragement and peril.

As every past age has had its own perils and discouragements so has ours. This is pre-eminently an age of disunion; of lifeless formalism; in which the intense pursuit of material well-being, overmasters concern for the spiritual, and represses it. Even religious activity, as seen in some parts of the Catholic body, more resembles the convulsive twitching of some limb in a body prostrate by disease or accident, than the action of well balanced power in a living frame, moving harmoniously under the direction of an enlightened will;—limb strikes against limb, wasting its power upon itself, the most jerking member of the whole shouting loudest paeans over its own achievements. The trumpet of sectarian success never sounded louder than in our own day; and never has there been more numerous squadrons in the field with no visible bond to unite their force in a common cause. Now and then we discover two coalescing into one, where there never had existed any good reason for their separation;—but, as a set off to this, we discover, on other parts of the ecclesiastical arena, the work of division going on as busily as ever, often with keen contention and many angry and bitter words. The heart of Christianity longs for a remedy to these evils,—yet still it comes not,—and the keenest eye of Catholic patriotism can scarcely descry it any where even in the distance. Were it not for the promises of Christ respecting the church, des-

pondency would overwhelm those who sigh in secret for the enormity of these evils. But from above the dark cloud we hear his voice saying to us, be of good cheer, "the flock is mine." "It will never perish, neither shall any pluck it out of my hand." Notwithstanding the division and strife that appear within it, and the opposition arrayed without it, it moves on in its predicted career; and the causes that now seem to be obstructing its progress, will, under the controul of a heavenly power, contribute to its advancement. Unholy rivalships, under such a power, may be converted into holy rivalships; the growing intelligence of the age may become a sanctified intelligence; the engine that speeds on commerce to its gains, may also speed on benevolence in its enterprizes; and "the spirit of the living creature may be within the wheels." This globe is preserved that the scheme of man's redemption may be completed on it. Eternal love prompted it; unerring wisdom directs it; almighty power bears it on. The circumference of its wheel is too vast for man to measure its progress—but not only is it instinct with life, it is full of eyes,—and of all that hath been written concerning the cause in which it works, not one iota shall fail. "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." These words have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace.

Review often these consolatory words. The

Christian's peace is the spring of the Christian's activity ; and that peace will most abound when we know the words of Christ, and are doing and suffering the righteous will of our heavenly Father. Seek it in the exercises of faith and prayer ; in the retirement of the closet, in the communion of saints. Having found it there, come forth with it, upon the arena of public life, where the scene of your duty lies. It will sustain your integrity, when that which has nought to support it, save a worldly prudence, will crumble away like a rotten thing. It will preserve your benevolence warm in trial, in reproach, in the winter of age, when the mere philanthropy of the worldling withers like the vegetation of a December landscape. It will prepare you to meet calmly, the last hour of life, which all reflect on with solicitude ; and it will go with you into that state of being, where the saints of God, in the immediate presence of their Redeemer, enjoy the kingdom he hath prepared for them before the foundation of the world. Amen.





# THE PRECEDENT CLAIMS

OF THE

SPIRITUAL IN RELIGION OVER THE EXTERNAL.

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O come, let us worship and bow down : let us kneel before the  
Lord our maker.—*Psalms* xciv. 6.

In the present state the soul dwells in a tabernacle of clay, and can hold communication with external things only through those organs of sense which the Creator hath placed in it. By these senses there entereth all the beauties of the surrounding material world, the amenity of the landscape and the glories of the firmament ; the music of the grove and the roaring of the thunder ; the reviving odours of the vernal year, and the balmy air which invigorates all the springs of life, and makes breathing itself enjoyment.

But while the soul is thus connected with the surrounding materialism by the corporeal organs of sense, it is equally evident that it is only through the same channel that it can hold any communication with the surrounding mind. One soul is separated from every other soul by its material envelope : each is shut up within its

own tenement, and can have no communication with another save through the organs of sense, acted upon by the external signs addressed to them. When there exists any defect in the external sense, communication by that sense is cut off—"wisdom at that entrance is quite shut out." The blind perceive not the expressions of thought and feeling which are made upon the human countenance by the workings of the soul within; or the various indications of mental and moral character of which the very form and gait of man is the symbol; nor can the deaf enjoy that intercourse with surrounding minds which we hourly enjoy, through the gift of speech—by words, the arbitrary signs of thoughts, and by tones, expressive of the sentiments of the speaker, scarcely less varied and significant than words. In the present isolated state of the human soul, it is acted on only intermediately through the external senses: by these alone, it can hold communication with man, whether in matters of intellect or of religion.

But though man's intercourse with man, in the present state be thus limited and thus conducted, it is highly probable, that the other orders of spiritual beings by whom we are surrounded, may have direct access to the soul—without any impediment from the body which isolates it from the individuals of our own species. There is much in Sacred Scripture to support the belief, that spirits, both good and bad, are permitted to act directly upon the embodied soul of man; that

they are capable of communicating ideas and awakening sentiments by direct impulse upon the soul's essential capacities ; and that man is prevented from holding a similar intercourse with them only through the present grossness of his material frame. When this is removed, which it will be at death, redeemed man will then be able to speak with the tongue of angels ; there may be a penetrating power in every spirit to discern intuitively what is passing in every other spirit ; such communications may be direct and instantaneous—not as now, by the slow and elaborate process of audible speech : all that is thought and all that is felt by pure intelligences needs no concealment, and will not be concealed, in their perfect intercourse and congenial sympathies ; “ their hearts and tongues are one ;” and in a degree greater than we can now well comprehend, will be realized the promise : “ here we see as through a glass darkly, but then face to face : here we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known.”

But we are admonished not to venture rashly or prematurely into speculation upon things unseen. After a brief space, it shall be known to us in what manner angels and the spirits of the just made perfect hold communication with each other, and how the worship of the heavenly sanctuary is conducted. Meanwhile it belongs to us to worship God in the mode that is best adapted to the present constitution of our nature,

for that we may be assured is the method of God's appointment. We may profitably enquire, therefore, first, in what manner the external may be united with the spiritual in the private religious exercises of the Christian; and secondly, how these should be combined in the public worship of the Sanctuary.

Religion, and religious worship, is the soul's intercourse with God. Strictly speaking, the external forms no part of it. There need be no words—no attitudes—no altar. Divine worship in its essential part—that on which God looks, and which alone he will accept, consists in the state of the soul, in reverence and humility; in penitence and faith; in hope and trust—affections excited by just views of the character of God, and of our own relation to Him as sinful creatures. Wherever these emotions exist, there is worship—the soul is then the temple of God, and God dwells with it. But though this silent spiritual worship independent of words, and time, and place, and ritual, and attitude—is indeed the privilege of the soul, yet, we are so constituted by nature, and so formed by habit, that words, and time, and place, and ritual, and attitude are not matters of indifference, even in the private exercises of religious worship. The soul itself not only desiderates them to give external expression to its inward emotions,—but in its present embodied state they act reflexly upon it for the quickening of these emotions, and for affording us the

means by which they may be prolonged, or revived, or communicated. The lofty conception of some divine attribute, displayed in the works, or the ways, or the word of God, will seek to be embodied in suitable language ; and in its low, deep-toned utterance, even in the inner chamber where it is heard by none save God, it will give permanence and depth to the emotion that prompted it. And let that utterance be made in the words which the Holy Ghost hath dictated,—in the song that hath been hallowed by the piety of departed generations, and associated with some hallowed recollections of our own, then—the emotion and the utterance, will be one living thing, rising up as sweet incense before the throne of God. Nor to creatures like us will time and place be matters of indifference, even in the private exercises of religion. The customary hour, to a well constituted mind, contributes not a little in awakening the customary train of thought and feeling : the seasons of morning and evening prayers—those solemn pauses in the great tide of human affairs on which we are all borne, will bring the frame that fits for it, and especially, when we retire to the domestic sanctuary, where prayer is wont to be made, and fall down in that lowly attitude, significant of the lowliness and reverence which became the sinful suppliant. Observe, it is not that we attach any value to these externals in themselves. Apart from the temper and habit of the mind they are without mean-

ing—without utility. When they are made the substitute, as they too often are, for that spirituality of which they are no more than the outward expressions, they serve only to foster a very ruinous delusion. It is a drawing near to God with the lips, while the heart is far from Him—a kind of sacrifice that is an abomination in His sight. “For God is a spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Beware of thus offering unto the Holy One, the sacrifice of fools.

And we may in this place be allowed, while insisting on the absolute necessity of a right spiritual frame in the private duties of religion, to offer a word of counsel to the young on some of the means by which it may be promoted. Have your hour which you will permit no trivial matter to disturb: have your place of sacred retreat, in which, habit will revive wonted associations: have the same Bible, of which the very pages will be familiar to your eye: read in course, that you may derive the full benefit of that revelation which God hath given to man. The sacred volume contains all theology delivered in the best style: it contains all morality delivered in the form most applicable to our condition: it presents such views of human nature and society as will best qualify you to deal fairly with the one, and to pass securely through the other: and it alone contains true notification of that invisible world upon which we shall shortly enter and for which it

teaches us to prepare. It is indeed the Word of God; and when you retire to worship and commune with God, His Word revealed, must take the precedence of every other book. Much has been written by godly and learned men that may contribute to the edification of the Christian; the field of sacred literature is ample and productive, and in this reading age, no intelligent Christian will neglect it; but sinful suppliants coming into the immediate presence of the Eternal one should bring with them there nothing save his own book; their fingers, should be upon its promises; their prayers should be offered in its words; their hopes should be brightened with its visions; the fire upon their altar should be borrowed thence; and their soul rising to the throne will then, in the assurance of being heard say: "O send forth thy light and thy truth: let them lead me: let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God."

And if this union of the external with the spiritual be essential in the private exercises of religion; it is not less necessary in the public.

But here again let me remind you, that the

worship of the sanctuary—that homage which we here present unto God, must be spiritual,—and that, time, place, attitude, and ritual are no more than its external expressions, and owe their whole truth and significancy to their harmony with the inward frames. Hence in entering within the sanctuary, to present homage unto God, our affections must be in unison with the duty. The presiding Deity must fill the soul—as he fills the temple: a vagrant thought—a sinful, even a languid affection, is inconsistent with the sinner’s position, and is a desecration of the holy place. How is it that this statement should seem overstrained and impracticable—as if it were beyond the power of man thus to bring his whole soul, and mind, and strength into the exercises of his religion—into the worship of his God? Just because, we have too seldom experienced what it is to have the heart engaged in it, for the heart will assuredly control the thoughts. Let an office-seeker be admitted into the presence of royalty to sue only for bread; far more, let a culprit be admitted into the presence of royalty to sue for life, and all the splendours of royalty would be unheeded; the attendants however gorgeously arrayed would not attract even a momentary regard; the more solemn regalia of the throne, or the shoutings of the out-door crowd, would not draw for a moment the eye of the suppliant from the eye of the monarch on whose nod so much depended:—the heart filled with its own fears

and hopes, would hang on the power that could dispel its fears and gratify its hopes. And why should it be otherwise in the presence of the Majesty of Heaven?—Are not His glories, though discoverable only by faith, enough to entrance our faculties? Are not our own wants—repairing to him for redress—enough to arrest every thought upon him who can supply them? Are not the blessings we ask of value sufficient to absorb the whole attention of him that asks in the presence of Him that can confer them?—Oh, be assured, whenever the intellect apprehends and the heart feels the glories of the Creator, and its own undone and miserable condition, it can not but possess the affections out of which a true spiritual worship will spring: it will be able then to worship God in spirit and in truth.

But the worship of the sanctuary is not only spiritual, it is social, united and public, and, therefore, requires more distinctly an outward expression adapted to this character. When we enter into the house of God we do not worship solitary and apart; we do not appear individually, but as a company of worshippers—filled with the same thoughts, actuated with the same sentiments, involved in the same ruin, praying for the same grace. It becomes us, therefore, if we would act consistently with the design of public worship, to keep this in view; we must not only bring to the sanctuary the spiritual frame, but that frame must be maintained in suitable

accordance with a similar frame in the bosom of those who are met together to worship God.

Now this is cherished and maintained in the sanctuary by means of those external expressions in which, by Divine appointment, the inward, frames and feelings are represented.

The sanctuary in which we assemble is the holy place, and if we are indeed animated with suitable sentiments, every thing in our carriage and attitude will bespeak our veneration, as we enter upon holy ground. Of the outward signs of religious veneration in the sacred place, it has been remarked, and perhaps justly, that Presbyterians are much less regardful than the members of the Roman or the Anglican Churches. We have doubtless done right in laying aside all superstitious formalities—all will worship at variance with the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. We have no kneelings in the vestibule: no genuflections before altars and images, for altars and images we have none. But we have a “real presence” in the most spiritual and sublime sense in which the human mind can conceive of it—for God dwelleth in the holy place—the place where His name is recorded; where He has promised to meet his people, and where that promise is daily fulfilled. May we not ask, then, for this place a humble, reverent, grateful, suppliant mind, and every thing in the external deportment that may suitably express these affections? In the degree in which they are felt, we shall witness the grave

and serious demeanor ; and all those conventional observances by which we are wont to denote the profoundest homage and reverence. Now we may note as at variance with the thoughtfulness and decorum which should ever be the companions of true piety, the bold march and the mirth-like entrance into the house of prayer ; the very obvious occupation of the mind with surrounding objects, instead of its concentration upon the unseen and spiritual ; a regarding of the religious exercises as spectators and listeners, and not as fellow-worshippers of the same omnipresent Being ; the manifestation of a weariness which the unconcerned will ever feel, however successfully good manners may enable them to conceal it, and where good manners are wanting it is not at all concealed ; the hasty rush to depart so soon as the moment of release has arrived, and then the quick and entire dismissal of every hallowed thought from the remembrance. All these, indeed, are manifest symptoms of a mind not prepared to worship God in spirit and in truth, and instead of dealing with the offender as if he were chargeable only with a breach of decorum, we should rather deal with him as one that had incurred the deep guilt of profaning the sanctuary of God, treating with irreverence the solemnities of His house, and despising the only means by which the sinner may obtain salvation. The surest rectification of his outward indecency will be the rectification of his inward impiety. Let him learn

to worship in spirit and in truth, and all things will be done decently and in order.

But we may particularly invite our attention to the union of the external with the spiritual, in two of the chief exercises of the sanctuary—praise and prayer.

By the positive command of God, praise is to be presented to him in the holy place in song and harmony ;—this is the outward expression of reverence, gratitude and love in the bosom of the worshipper. These emotions may exist where they are not expressed by the individual himself ; but in public worship which is also social and united, it is the manifest intention of the author of our religion that there should be a general and audible union in this sacred exercise. Nature has given to man the gift of harmony, and by proper culture all, with only a few exceptions, may be instructed to bear a part in the chorus of our common hymn. For music is a natural expression of the deepest and tenderest, and holiest of our emotions ; and he who hath adapted his worship to our frame hath embraced it in the service of the sanctuary for giving utterance to an united homage and adoration. It belongs to us, therefore, to cultivate and employ the faculty in this its noblest use ; to rise above vulgar prejudices and bring in science for the assistance of nature, even as we seek grace to sanctify it : and although our sacred music, like the souls that pour it forth, may still be marred by discor-

dant notes, it may yet be the hand-maid of piety, and aid the preparation of the worshipper for a loftier and more perfect song.

And as to the union of the external with the internal in prayer, which in the sanctuary is also a social and united exercise, it becomes us to yield an earnest and undivided sympathy and desire with him who offers our common supplication unto God in behalf of all our fellow-suppliants. The advocates of strict liturgical forms in public worship object that this cannot be done in our methods of extemporary prayer. But while we may freely admit that prescribed forms of public prayer have some advantages, and that some combination of the liturgical with the free might greatly improve the order of our public service, especially by promoting a more entire unity of spirit in the devotional services of the sanctuary, yet, we also on our part claim the admission, that the devout spirit can easily blend with another in offering its supplications at a throne of grace ; that the matter of prayer however diversified, must be pervaded so much with the same sentiments, that a person well read in holy scripture will rarely need to pause in giving an immediate and hearty response, for so rapid are the aspirations of a truly devout spirit, that in an instant, and without intermitting an entire devotional sympathy with his fellow suppliants, he can imbue the audible prayer, with the complexion of his own state and wants, so that the common prayer

will also be peculiarly his own. The spirit of grace and supplication that descends from God has one origin, one character, and essentially the same end ; and whatever may be the diversities of individual mind in the family of God, they are identical in their feelings, wants and desires at the foot-stool of his Throne.

And in connexion with this subject, we may be permitted to remark, that the Christian religion from its pure, spiritual character has not enjoined and cannot admit many externals in the celebration of its worship. On this point, while all scripture abounds with the delineations of the Christian temper, very little has been delivered concerning the mere ritualism of Christian worship. No order of service is clearly and positively prescribed—no forms of prayer—no compilations of music—no ceremonial. In all these matters the Church would seem to be left free to frame such an order, in harmony with its sacred design, as shall tend most for edification according to the manner and spirit of the age. On this ground the Church of Rome, and also the Church of England, have exercised the right of prescribing a liturgy and ordaining ceremonies, that is, external forms which are supposed to be, either the expressions of an inward spiritual frame, or calculated to awaken and sustain it. Hence the images and paintings ; the processions and prostrations ; the wax candles and holy

water ; the clerical vestments and scenic representations in which the Romish worship abounds, and which some adhering to the Anglican, would wish to imitate. Now, let it be admitted that the Church is left in freedom to frame its ritual, and that the matters to which we have adverted are indifferent in themselves, that is, provided only the temper of the worshipper be sincere and spiritual, it matters little whether there be images and pictures in the Church ; whether there be candles burning upon the altar ; what may be the cut and colour of the priest's vestments, or the turnings and flexions in which he may indulge ; and provided also the fundamentals of sacred truth, with humility, love and contrition, be in the soul,—the mere externals to which we have adverted might be deemed matters of indifference, or might even, as some think, by habit and association, assist that spirituality of which they are alleged to be the emblems. Yet is it, nevertheless, an undoubted fact in regard to all the operations of the soul, that every thing which is addressed to the mere outward sense has a tendency to disturb them ; and that the multiplication of rites and ceremonies in religion has always tended to the extinguishment of its vitality. Even within the Romish Church which spares no pains to make them gorgeous and attractive, the enlightened renounce them as insipid puerilities ; and the vulgar frequent them as a species of holy-day recreations. Thus the grand design of the worship

of the Christian Church, as an institution for conducting the soul to communion with God, and preparation for its own destiny, is lost sight of, under an over-burdened ritualism, which veils alike from intellect and faith the realities which are invisible and eternal.

And if it be objected that the austere churches of the reformation have run into the other and opposite extreme—that we have treated religion too much as a thing of pure intellect, cold, shadowy, and unapproachable by ordinary men; that in rejecting magnificent edifices we have rejected that which tends naturally to fill the mind with solemnity and awe; that in banishing painting and sculpture from our churches, we have cast aside the symbols with which imagination might associate the recollections of historic truth and memorable personages; that in the discountenancing of instrumental and choral music, we have ceased to avail ourselves of that which has a powerful influence in soothing and composing the soul to a frame congenial with religious exercises; that in limiting the services to a very simple order, and to one officiating minister, who cares little about the vestments in which he is arrayed, we do not avail ourselves as we might of man's natural love of sensuous ornament and variety—we admit all these consequences, and without asserting that we have not erred in the extreme opposite to Romanism, or that we have duly adapted our ritual to man as a being endued

with sensuous tastes as well as intellect and moral emotion, yet we claim for the simple ritual of the church to which we belong, that it is not unmeet for the sublimity of its spiritual design ; that if we have little to attract the outward sense, we have nought to distract the soul from the contemplation of things unseen, and that in so far as we aim at combining scriptural instruction with spiritual emotion, we act conformably to the Word of God, and the moral constitution of our species. In our retirement from the ancient communion, we have indeed discarded its sensuous and pompous ritual : the old casket with the childish ornaments that superstition had enchased upon it, we have left behind with many other corruptions of the true worship and faith ; but we claim to have brought out before the eyes of men, the heavenly jewel which it concealed, and in the use of its songs and prayers, and in the reading and exposition of its doctrines, we hope to be made partakers of a divine nature, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue.

Be entreated then to remember that this is the true end of all that is external or ritual in religion—to give expression to an existing piety, or to awaken and kindle it. If this end be not attained, we may have the form of godliness, but we are destitute of the power of that inward life which comes from and connects us with its eternal author. It must spring from reflection,

and be watered with prayer. It must shed its light on faith, and its purity on hope. It must give power and reality, even to the imperfect services of the lower sanctuary, while it conducts the believer onward to the heavenly.





## THE RELIGION OF FEELING.

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My son give me thy heart.—*Proverbs* xxiii. 26.

It is sometimes alleged against Protestantism in general, and against our own division of it in particular, that, in matters of religion, it is without feeling, sentiment, and taste ; that it is too much occupied with the contemplation, and investigation of dogmatic mysteries ; and relies too little upon the simple and implicit faith of its adherents ; that in its futile and misdirected endeavours to present before the multitude a reason for every thing, the faculties of knowledge are exercised at the expense of the faculties of feeling, and that the result is a cold and dry orthodoxy—destitute of those purer and more elevated emotions, which can never be separated from the religion of the heart.

It must be admitted, we fear, that the charge is not quite groundless in reference to our own community—for aiming as we do at a practical correction, we need not at present extend our view beyond our own community. We have quite enough every where, at least within established and well-ordered Churches, of the means of

varied instruction in Christian doctrine ; the press, too, in later times has become a powerful auxiliary of the pulpit ; and among the thoughtful and well-educated, there is diffused a full and accurate knowledge of scriptural truth. Within our own Church in the present day, evangelical doctrine is not only faithfully expounded, but is held in favour. Its well compacted demonstrations, level to the apprehensions of all who will attentively listen to them, have gained for them a firm hold upon the convictions of our people ; and any very palpable divergence from our established standards on the part of a public teacher, would call forth a very general and speedy rebuke. Our Church retains her standards, our people know them, and are little disposed to tolerate the deviations of rash and undisciplined minds. Even the language in which it has been usually expressed is endeared by hallowed associations, and the serious among us desire not only the sound doctrine, but the sound speech that cannot be condemned. So far this may be admitted, and so far it is well.

But all this may be, and yet there may also be solid ground for the charge that the intellectual apprehension constitutes nearly the whole amount of our religion, and that the affections of the heart enter into it only in a small and imperfect degree. Of this we may become fully conscious by examining the effect of a few of the fundamental articles of our creed upon our own hearts,

within the few last hours. Thus, in reference to the worship of God in his House, on this hallowed day, we profess to believe, that the Divine Majesty is really present to receive our homage; that God is as certainly in this assembly as He is in heaven; that He knows the spiritual preparation of every worshipper with unerring precision; that our meeting here is worse than vain, it is sinful, if we come not up hither with sincerity and humility; we profess to come up hither, not only that we may present our homage unto God, but that we may obtain from Him blessings of inestimable value—the grace of penitence, the forgiveness of our sins, those sacred influences that will make us partakers of a divine nature. This is our belief, and this is our professed object when we come up to the house of God. Now our creed is undeniably right. But we need only review the history of these few last hours that we may discover how little our feeling has been in accordance with our creed in regard to the design of public worship as a solemn and social approach to the mercy-seat of our Heavenly Father. Be it, that in solitary prayer, we have for some moments sought to bring ourselves into a right frame for the duties of the day; be it, that in so far as we had power to direct social converse we made it bear upon the spiritual wants and necessities of man, and of our own; be it, that as we passed along the streets, we endeavoured to hold our attention fast upon the object

of the sacred duties in which we were to be engaged when we crossed the threshold of the sanctuary ; yet, without adverting to interruptions and unsuccessfulness without, may we not discover in the state of our heart since we entered within these walls, enough to substantiate the charge against ourselves that the state of our feeling has been in two little accordance with the duties which we come hither to discharge. We came hither to adore the eternal Jehovah, but have our souls been prostrate and absorbed with reverence ? we came hither to confess our sins, but have our souls been filled with penitential sadness ? we came hither to ask mercy to pardon, and grace to help us, but have we sought these blessings with a vehemence of desire proportionate to their value ? Ah no ! our own hearts condemn us. We readily acknowledge, perhaps we feel, that our hearts have not been right before God ; that truth, though understood and confessed by us, has not been accompanied in any suitable degree with the affections which it should awaken. In terms of the charge against us, our religion is more a thing of the understanding than of the heart.

Now in the face of that general orthodoxy to which we have laid claim, it must be obvious that there is an utter and radical deficiency in such a religious condition. To know the truth, to believe the truth, is in scripture phrase to *feel* it ; and every where throughout the sacred oracles

the religious affections are made to occupy the foreground in the delineation of that new life to which the gospel is designed to raise us. The spiritual disease with which our species is affected is constantly represented to be in the heart, that is, in our moral powers and affections, and that sad truth is held forth under the clearest and most impressive imagery. Thus, "the thoughts of the imagination of men's hearts are evil from their youth up, and that continually." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked who can know it?" It is described, as a stony heart, callous and insensible; alienated from the life of God through its hardness, an evil heart of unbelief prone to depart from God; it is the temple of God, but now defiled and deserted, dead in trespasses and in sins. Accordingly the whole economy of redemption is framed with the view of regenerating the heart, the seat of that moral distemper with which our species is afflicted. Under a variety of expressions, its declared design is "to take the stony heart out of our flesh, and to give us hearts of flesh"—"to create within us clean hearts, and to renew within us right spirits"—"to prepare the soul for an everlasting habitation of God." In conformity with this design, the tenor of its admonitions are, my son, give me thine heart;—believe, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;—thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, for love is the fulfilling of the

law. It is evident, therefore, that resting in the mere knowledge of religion, however sound and scriptural that knowledge may be, is to stop short of religion itself. For all knowledge of things divine and spiritual, communicated in the revelation by Jesus Christ, is intended to act not only upon the understanding, but upon the heart. Failing in this last point, it comes short of its main design. It is still light, but light shining upon the dead, communicating no excellence, guiding to no activity, inspiring no joy. The kingdom of God may have come in word, but not in power, nor in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

This is that state of very defective religious attainment so prevalent among us which is properly called formality. It is a very different thing from hypocrisy, and may exist in one who is possessed with an utter abhorrence of that vice. Hypocrisy leads a man to pretend to be what he is not. Formality makes no such pretention. It is nothing more than the conviction of truth somehow counteracted in its proper influence upon the moral affections; it is the observance of religious duties, without any proper degree of religious feeling, it is a drawing near to God with the lip, while the heart is far from Him. The person in this state of spiritual apathy knows it, may be very ready to confess it,—nay, he may be greatly distressed on account of it. Reflecting upon the odiousness of

such insensibility in the sight of God, who requireth all who worship Him to worship Him in spirit and in truth, the formalist may often retire from the sanctuary with bitter self reproach, not because he is hypocritical, for he is not, but because in an atmosphere of light and of spirituality his affections have been little moved with those views of God, and of Christ, and of himself, which were clear enough though to him unimpressive. Describing his own state, he may say, I understood the truth presented to me, but I did not feel it; I wished to feel, but my paralysied affections would not obey the wish; and I retired from the ordinances which I deemed it dutiful to observe, with a very serious conviction that I ought to have observed them in a very different frame from that which I had attained.

Such, we fear, is the too frequent experience of multitudes to whom the state of their affections in religious duties is matter of frequent and serious consideration. They are conscious that the spiriual distemper with which they are oppressed is seated, where the scriptures have revealed it, in the heart. And every new effort and every new examination, serves to convince them that there is no part of our nature less under our own controul. We cannot hate, or love, or mourn, or rejoice, either at the bidding of another, or by an act of our own will. These states of mind, and indeed all states into which emotion enters, are not dependant upon mere

volition, but upon our vivid apprehension of those circumstances or objects which are fitted to produce them, acting upon a sensibility prepared for the impression. The union of these two conditions must obtain, in every instance, where a religious emotion is excited. Thus, is it sorrow for sin? In order to it, there must not only be a just apprehension of its nature, as a transgression of the law of God, but that peculiar tenderness of heart, which will cause such an apprehension to melt the soul into contrition and sorrow. Is it love to Christ? In order to it, there must not only be an apprehension of Him as the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely--but there must also be that state of the heart, that holy sensibility to excellence which shall prepare it to be affected by the contemplation. Between this intellectual apprehension and this spiritual sensibility there exists the same sort of relation as that observed in the recent and curious discovery by which we are enabled, to render permanent the image of an object brightly reflected upon a prepared surface. In vain we cast the shadow of the object upon the plate if it be not prepared; though it falls upon it in perfect outline, it vanishes the moment the reflection is withdrawn. While on the prepared plate the image is not only formed, but fixed; it is no longer dependant upon the art that produced it, it becomes itself a separately existing and permanent reality, which in all future time will bring up to our remem-

brance the beloved countenance or object from which it was borrowed. So is it with every intellectual apprehension of truth that falls upon the unprepared and the prepared heart. In the former case it makes little or no impression—it produces no deep or permanent feeling. The idea of truth—of truth revealed—may be clear and distinct enough, it may be framed into a very harmonious and orthodox creed, it may be embellished by fancy and taste, supported by erudition and philosophy, and yet, after all it may be nothing more than an idea—a mere shadow of divine realities, implanting no moral principle, sustaining no moral affection, vanishing even as a dream when one awaketh. This is the true cause of formality—of religious observance without religious feeling—so prevalent among Christians. Truth is apprehended with sufficient clearness, it is confessed with sufficient honesty. When standing in its light we are constrained to acknowledge that it streams from heaven, but the unprepared heart, hardened by sin, engrossed with worldly care, allured by worldly pleasure, filled with foolish lusts and passions, receives from it no permanent impression—as the morning cloud and as the early dew it passeth away. But on the other hand when the heart is prepared by divine grace, when the spiritual sensibility is awakened which sin has well nigh extinguished, when it has become like that of Lydia, “ whose heart the Lord opened,

that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul," or like that of Peter, whom a single look of his master, in an hour of saddest backsliding, melted into penitence and tears; or like that of the disciples walking with their risen Lord on the road to Emmaus, when they exclaimed with wonder and joy, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while He walked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" or as on the day of Pentecost, when the thousands, who heard the gospel, "being pricked in their hearts, cried, men and brethren, what shall we do?"—then, on hearts thus prepared by a sacred influence from heaven, divine truth produces a permanent impression; it communicates a new life; it awakens and it sustains a new set of affections—the moral, the spiritual, the heavenly; and though in this present evil world, they may be subject to many fluctuations in their intensity, they are preserved and nourished by the power that produced them until in death the believer has obtained the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have ascribed, you will observe, the feeble impression which divine truth makes, even upon those who are persuaded of its heavenly origin, to that insensibility which sin has brought upon our moral powers—and, to expose our own impotence in the correction of the evil, we have asserted that the heart is just that part of our nature which is least under our own controul, and

therefore, least under the influence of culture by our own unaided efforts. We cannot reason it into sensibility—we cannot make a man feel by an argumentative demonstration, though we may carry his convictions. The seat of feeling must be reached by a finer process, by a weapon of keener edge, if it be reached at all. In regard to natural objects, sensibility is the gift of nature ; in regard to spiritual objects—it is the gift of grace. Thus, one will gaze upon the grand and beautiful in creation without the slightest emotion, while another standing by his side and gazing on the same scenery, will be wrapt in an ecstasy of wonder and admiration. It will be vain to point out to the former the peculiar objects by which the other is moved, in the hope that he also will be moved, for he is destitute of that peculiar susceptibility out of which these emotions spring. Employing in reference to taste, words that in scripture are used only in reference to a change in our spiritual nature, we may say of the dull and unmoved spectator of natural scenery that “ a new heart ” must be given,

“ Ere the sun, the stars, the earth, the skies,  
To him be opening paradise.”

But the other is moved at once, without reasoning or by a process so rapid and delicate that it cannot be detected. Within him there is a capacity of being affected at once and deeply by the qualities contemplated, and though this capacity may be improved, it is originally the gift of nature. Now

while we say that the susceptibility of being moved by the grand and beautiful, is the gift of nature ; we say that the susceptibility of being moved, in a high and permanent degree, by things spiritual, divine, and heavenly, is the gift of grace. Man in his original was created with it ; it was lost in his apostacy, and in no case can it be recovered, except through that supernatural agency which in the scheme of our redemption has been brought into play. "Marvel not," saith Jesus, "that I said unto you, ye must be born again ;"—ye must be renewed in the spirit of your mind ; ye must have those moral capacities restored which sin has paralyzed ; ye must have that sensibility quickened which sin has extinguished ; ye must be raised again to that spiritual mindedness, in which ye will be affected by things spiritual with the clearness and rapidity of intuition. All these things are promised in that covenant of redemption which has been proclaimed to our world. "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you ; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh ; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances and do them ; and they shall be my people and I will be their God."

Here then, and by this means, we must seek the correction of that evil which so widely prevail among us—a heart too little moved with the

truths and objects presented to our faith. It is our privilege,—we are invited to come unto the throne of heavenly grace to ask a clean heart and a right spirit. It is the gift of God—it is the work of his spirit in its origin, progress and maturity. The gift is conferred upon the humble suppliant and the work is carried on in connexion with that system of means, which has been established in the kingdom of grace. All experience testifies that the liveliness of spiritual affection in the believer depends not upon himself, but upon that in-dwelling paraclete, to whom the whole work of our moral renovation has been confided. And no view of the plan of our redemption is more grand and consolatory, than that which represents this omnipresent agent, sent forth by the mediator into our sinful world, seeking to find a lodgement in every soul, to whom the words of salvation have been sent ; urging, after long resistance, his right of admission, and though long grieved unwilling to take a final departure ; and within every soul in which he hath found entertainment, plying his energy until it is brought to will and to do according to the good pleasure of God. Then will such a one be endued with that tenderness of sensibility, which results from the new life to which he is begotten ; and every emotion which the objects of his faith is fitted to awaken, will be readily awakened at all times when they are brought fully within the reach of his contemplation.

Permit me then, to exhort you to seek at a throne of grace those spiritual influences, that you may be capable of advancing to the higher attainments to which, as Christians, you are called. Here alone they are to be found, and here they will never be sought in vain. The Romanist, indeed, to whose objections against our simple forms of worship, and our doctrinal teaching, we adverted in the beginning of this discourse,—advises, if not a different course, yet various aids, of which no notice is given in Scripture, and which were unknown in primitive times. He seeks to act upon the affections through the senses, and calls in the employment of tasteful arts as the handmaid of piety. To excite the sensibilities he presents by picture or image those incidents in the life of Christ, or in the history of martyrs and confessors, which may assist the conceptions of the spectator, and awaken his sympathies. But this contrivance is not only without scriptural warrant—it jars with the very object it proposes to aid. No pictorial image can represent spiritual things—and it is the spiritual attributes of the Saviour's history to which it owes its most impressive grandeur. These are in their very nature indefinite ; no sensible image can be made of them ; they are too grand even for our loftiest conceptions ; they are objects of emotion rather than of intellect, as all the most sublime objects are, and above all the infinite. We are brought then, even by these natural prin-

principles, to the very point to which the Scriptures lead us, that all religious worship depends upon sensibility of heart, and not in any great degree upon external adjuncts, and that this right state of the heart depends upon a communicated grace, to be sought and found at that throne to which we are invited as suppliants to repair, not once or rarely, but in every time of need. The efficacy of all the means appointed to fan and cherish the religious affections will depend on our continuance and fervency in prayer, for faithful prayer never returns without its blessing. Before the throne of mercy the religious affections are called into liveliest exercise, for there we come into the closest fellowship with the Father of our spirits, attainable by man upon the earth; and there we are encouraged to hope for those divine assistances in the richest measure, which shall bring the soul into its purest and happiest frame. In the light that surrounds it we obtain the clearest and most impressive views both of time and of eternity; and we only need to walk in that light, in order to banish the complaint of an imperfect apprehension of spiritual things,—of which the blind man restored to sight was an emblem, when he said in the first moments of his recovery, “I see men as trees walking.”



CHRIST—IN HIM WAS LIFE.



## CHRIST—IN HIM WAS LIFE.

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.—*John i. 1—4.*

The beloved disciple commences his history of his master with the declaration of the eternity of his existence, his co-eternal identity with the godhead, his personal divinity, his creative power—the source of life, and in particular of that higher form of life, which is here called “the light of men”—the original and peculiar dignity of our nature, intelligence, rectitude of will, holiness, communion with God, and happiness in his favour. The divine Word was the author of these in the original creation of man. “By him, God created the world. He is before all things, and by him all things consist.” But in the opening of this gospel we may rather understand the words of the text, as expressive of the life-giving power of Christ in the new creation—the restoration of the soul from ignorance, sin and misery, to the new life of righteousness. Everywhere in sacred

scripture, Christ is represented as the author of this redemption, through that mediatorial economy, of which he himself is the Head. Man, apostate and depraved, had provoked the indignation of eternal justice ;—Christ by the sacrifice of himself satisfied its claim. Man, apostate and depraved, is without strength to resist the dominion of appetite, and to restore himself to the comprehension, choice and love of spiritual good ;—the eternal Word communicates a new energy, and “ the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes him free from the law of sin and death.” Man, apostate and depraved, had lost the inheritance of everlasting life ; Christ purchased anew the right and bestows it on the redeemed as a free gift. The salvation of man, therefore, is as much His sole and undivided work, as was his creation. And the setting forth of this fundamental truth was entitled to a preliminary place in the history of the Redeemer’s incarnate and mediatorial sojourn upon earth. “ Ye believe in God, believe also in me”—in me—“ the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person”—in me, the source of life and salvation to man. Through my mediation the eternal Divinity condescends to body forth, in a manner level to your enfeebled capacities, the infinite and the incomprehensible ; and whosoever seeketh to know the Father must behold him in “ the only begotten, full of grace and truth.” This is the true God and eternal life ; the true light

which conducteth to glory, honor, and immortality.

The illustration of that life of which the text speaks is attended with some peculiar difficulties. We cannot well explain, or comprehend anything spiritual beyond the measure of our own actual attainment. The divine life, as life in every other form, to be understood must be enjoyed. If then, we should not yet have entered upon it, or proceeded beyond its merest infancy, we cannot be prepared to comprehend fully its nature, and however appropriately illustrated, it will still to us be enveloped in obscurity.

Meditation on such a theme may, however, answer some important ends, even to those who are strangers to the life of God. It may serve to discover to them their deficiency—that they are destitute of its characteristic activities and enjoyments; it may enable them to discern, as through a glass darkly, its surpassing excellencies, and may awaken desires that shall move them to seek after it. In so far as these ends shall be answered, our meditations shall not be in vain.

That this subject may be presented to you in its simplest form—we pray you to keep in view the ideas associated with that mode of life which is most familiar to us—**THE NATURAL OR PHYSICAL**. The most striking of its phenomena, are motion, sensation, and a power resisting dissolution—or all the influences that are adverse to the living structure, or the living power.

Motion, or the power of motion, one of the characteristics of the living being, appears in that series of vital actions which man never ceases to perform until he ceases to live. They are infinitely varied, as the circumstances, pursuits, and employments of mankind—all the activities of the individual and of society result from them. When in the silence of night man seeks repose from the busy labors of the day, and when he is buried in sleep, unconscious of all that is passing around him, he still exhibits numerous symptoms of the living power. His limbs indeed are motionless, his senses are so locked up that he has no communication with surrounding objects; even the faculty of thought is quiescent, or attempts nothing more than a few struggling and irregular efforts in dreams. But amidst all this repose of the limb, this eclipse of the mind, we discover unequivocal evidences of life. The breast heaves with respiration—the blood throbs in its channels—the numerous bodily organs are fulfilling their functions in silence, and the whole frame, by this partial repose, is acquiring fresh vigor for the activities of the coming day. Awake or asleep, motion endlessly diversified, is one of the essential characteristics of life. It is a result of the living power—but who can explain where or what that power is?

Again, sensation is another essential characteristic of the living being. Whatever lives feels—consciousness, pain, pleasure, are inseparable

from life. It is true, we sometimes see them for a brief space suspended. In sleep, or in a faint, or in some peculiar diseases, a person may remain for a while utterly insensible. But this cannot continue long. In such states there is a struggle going on between the vital power and something inimical to it. One or other must soon triumph. If sensibility be not soon restored, it will soon be extinguished by death—for all observation testifies, that when it has for a length of time ceased to manifest itself, life has ceased.

One other remarkable and essential characteristic of life is resistance to decay or decomposition. So long as there is vital power in an animal body, it will not putrify. Changes of heat and cold, of moist and dry, within the limits compatible with life, do not affect it. But the moment that life depart from the body, it begins to be resolved into its constituent elements. It is corroded by its own juices. It becomes subject to the same laws which affect inanimate matter. The air that formerly nourished, corrupts it; the heat, formerly necessary to it, hasten its decay. And within a short period the entire structure is broken up, and its parts mingle with other bodies and disappear. The vital power which resisted dissolution, and held them together is gone. But who can tell what that power is, or on what it immediately depends? Is it not directly on God?

We have directed your attention to these char-

acteristics of animal life, to point out that we know nothing of its cause ; that in describing it, we only enumerate its leading phenomena ; we say that it is that power in the animal body which originates motion, sensation, and resistance to those influences which tend to destroy the corporeal structure with which it is united. These its leading phenomena, and a few others are all that we know of that mysterious thing, which we call vitality, or life, in the animal form.

When we advance from the animal to the **INTELLECTUAL LIFE**, we comprehend in our observation, a new set of phenomena, arising from an unknown cause or power which we call **MIND**, and which we infer is superadded, in the frame of man, to the cause or power from which result the merely vital phenomena. We have never seen these intellectual phenomena except in man, and, therefore, we claim for the human family the high and distinctive prerogative of reason and intelligence. The peculiar manifestations of this power which we call mind, are a more comprehensive knowledge of things ; a tracing of effects to their causes, and a reasoning from causes to their effects ; a treasuring up the accumulated observations of different ages and nations ; the application of this acquired knowledge in a thousand ways, for accommodation and comfort in food, in clothing, in shelter, in the convenience of household affairs, in commerce, in education, science and government.

Whatever superiority man has attained in these, is the achievement of mind, or of those powers which we distinguish by the names of apprehension, memory, judgment, imagination, and all others which are attributes of that unknown power, which we call intellectual life—of that unknown being, which we call mind or soul.

Now in reference to this peculiar attribute of man, we would have you remember, that it is essential to him and inseparable from his nature. A man without the intellectual life would only be a man in form ; he would be destitute of that characteristic to which the name properly belongs. The original characteristic powers of the human being are, perhaps, pretty nearly alike in all, and the differences observed are chiefly the result of cultivation. Education does not confer the powers, it only brings them out, invigorates them, and guides them in their application. It is the same to the mind, as food and exercise and training are to the body. It is the source of mental health and vigor and comprehension. Now these are very much dependant on oneself, and on the circumstances in which one is placed. The intellectual life may be permitted to slumber. A person may be so careless about the culture of his mind, that none of its faculties shall ever be properly developed. His apprehension may remain so dull that he shall never be able to conceive distinctly the simplest idea ; his memory may remain so weak that he shall

never accumulate any thing that deserves the name of knowledge; his judgement may remain so indiscriminating as to be unable to follow out the briefest process of reasoning; and he may be just as incompetent for those mental pursuits which distinguish cultivated man, as if he were entirely destitute of the inborn power which might have qualified him to enter upon them. And thus, though he be possessed of the principle of intellectual life, it may, from the neglect of its proper culture, remain in a state of infantile weakness, or of slumbering inactivity.

These facts, confirmed by daily observation, may lead us to note one remarkable difference, between the animal and intellectual life. The animal life will manifest itself, grow, and expand to perfection, quite independent of the will or choice of its possessor. Man, throughout every stage of growth, from infancy to mature age, is instinctively and irresistibly led to bodily activity. We could not even if we chose confine ourselves to one place or one posture, without intolerable uneasiness: and thus we are impelled by a physical instinct to that bodily activity which is congenial to health and growth. It is the same with every action or function essential to life. We cannot resist the cravings of hunger or thirst. When exhausted, we cannot resist the tendency to sleep. Nor can we, by any volition of ours, suspend the action of the heart or lungs. These

appetites issue them imperious mandates and we must obey : these vital organs urge on their appropriate movements, and we cannot stop them. In thus subjecting animal life to necessary laws, independent of the will of the animal itself, we have a striking evidence of creative design. Our life is thus in a great measure placed beyond our own caprice ; the safety and perfection of our frame is guarded by a physical necessity ; and the continuance and physical well-being of the species is secured.

But it is far otherwise with the life intellectual. The mind has naturally no impelling, irresistible, appetite like the body. We cannot quench the appetite for food ; but we can easily quench the appetite for knowledge. It remains, indeed, entirely with a man's self, supposing the means of cultivation to be within his reach, whether he shall be wise or ignorant, learned or unlearned. If he choose it, he may continue even to hoary hairs in a state of intellectual childhood—never known aught of that study which is a weariness to the flesh, nor be troubled with any of those aspirations which lead contemplative men to search for wisdom as for hidden treasure. He may fulfil his appointed task in the community with as much skill and diligence as the beaver ; he may feed with as fresh an appetite, and sleep as soundly as the ox ; and except in so far as his intellectual powers are necessary to these subordinate ends, he may never call them into exercise,

but permit them to languish and decay, through want of cultivation and employment. We need not say that in this case the blame is entirely his own ; that he permits the noblest powers of his nature to remain in abeyance ; that neglecting their cultivation he casts away from him the dignified enjoyments of the intellectual life, and degrades himself from the rank he was destined to hold amidst the intelligent creation.

We might expatiate on this state of the character of man, in connexion with its guilt, for assuredly that man is chargeable with the highest guilt, who does not duely improve according to his opportunity, those powers by which the Creator has distinguished him ;—but at present we advert rather to the degradation than the guilt. It is a reproach to a man to be uninformed in necessary and important knowledge, if information has been within his reach. He narrows the sphere of his enjoyment, and loses the recompense which the infinitely wise God awards to those who rise high in the attainments of true knowledge. And were we not under the influence of a strange perversion we would look with highest indignation on those, who voluntarily reject the purer enjoyments of reason, and remain all their lifetime in an ignoble contentment with the mean gratifications of animal existence. They prefer the characteristics of the animal ; they contemn those of the man.

The absolute maturity of the intellectual life,

however, cannot be reached until the faculties of man have reached the highest pitch of cultivation, and are placed in the most favorable circumstances for their exercise: and we have reason to believe that these faculties will expand without limit, as they are rightly employed and cultivated. The greater the mind's attainments the more vigorous and capable it will become for new efforts. The higher the eminence it has gained, the more extended will be its view, and the greater the advantage to push onward and upward with a bolder wing. It may skim along the earth, or it may reach the stars. It may burrow in the soil with the earth-worm, or take its rank with the seraphim before the throne of God. In these intellectual efforts, as in deeds of virtue and beneficence, "every man shall receive according to his works."

We may now proceed to the consideration of a different and higher order of life than either the animal, or intellectual, namely, the SPIRITUAL,—which is indeed the noblest characteristic of human nature, both in its original and regenerated state. Like the two former it is distinguished by its peculiar results and manifestations. It has been named the moral life, the new life, the spiritual life, the divine life, the life of God in the soul. Its chief characteristics are certain affections and sentiments, which have God for their object, and which branch out in the admiration of all moral excellence, and

incite to the pursuit of it. These affections have not only specific objects, but they have a specific origin. This will appear in the sequel.

But, to assist your discrimination, let it be observed, that though the spiritual life is nurtured in the region of feeling, or emotion, there are many FEELINGS which have no immediate connexion with the spiritual life. The feeling of pain when the body is injured, or of gratification when any appetite has received its appropriate food, are affections of our corporeal nature ; and so to a great extent, is the instinctive love of parents for their children, and of children for their parents ; and of some other affections which commonly pass under the name of SOCIAL. Man is led to the indulgence of them by a natural instinct ; and although in him, because of his reasonable and moral nature, these affections have generally a wider range, and a more refined and elevated character than the analogous affections in the inferior tribes, yet they are to be traced mainly to the instinctive or physical part of our constitution : more perfect in the human race, they are not peculiar to it, or essentially characteristic of human nature.

But the advanced Christian is conscious of the existence within himself of other affections which cannot be traced to an animal or purely intellectual origin. He loves justice and abhors injustice. He feels within him the glow of benevolence, and is happy when he can indulge it in

beneficent actions. He loves and honors in his fellow-men, goodness, veracity, devotion, charity, and he abhors and reprobates their contraries. In his thoughts, feelings, and actions, he recognizes the omniscient inspection of God and a future judgment ; he receives, studies and follows the scriptures as a divine and infallible guide ; by faith he habitually depends on the death, intercession, and protection of the Redeemer ; he reverentially observes the ordinances of Christ's appointment as the means of cherishing holy affections ; the subjects of his most frequent and delightful meditations are the revealed character of God,—the life, death, and glory of Christ,—the holiness and felicity of his spiritual kingdom ; in a word contemplation on all the varied themes, which the word and works, and ways of God present to a mind delighting to trace his character and operations—these are some of the manifestations of the spiritual life in which holy sentiments are combined with the loftiest contemplations of the understanding.

We need but a moment's reflection, to convince us of the peculiarity and elevation of this mode of life. Whatever belongs to the body must perish with the body. Its appetites will not survive when itself has returned to dust. The instinctive affections of parent and child answer an important end in the present world in which successive generation is an established law ; but in a future world, where men will not be united

in these relationships, the parental and filial affections cannot exist as they now do. In like manner, much of the knowledge useful in the present world, as connected with our present wants, circumstances, and duties, will be of no avail, when all these are entirely changed. In the world of spirits, there will be no need to cultivate the soil, to practice mechanical arts, to follow the pursuits of commerce, to apply our knowledge of matter to inventions that may render it subservient to our necessities—for every idea that we can form of that world, leads to the conclusion, that there mind will be so much elevated above matter, and so independent of it, as to need little of its instrumentality. The knowledge, therefore, that has reference only to this life may be laid with us in the grave. But things truly valuable must possess some immortal quality, something that will render them ours, and profitably ours—not only during the few years of our sojourn on earth, but during the whole period of our endless existence. Now all the results of the spiritual life possess this immortal quality. We cannot conceive man to be translated to any state, in which righteousness, benevolence, piety, devotion, will not be excellencies; in which reverence and obedience to God will not be obligatory; in which the enjoyment of God, through such affections and contemplations, will not constitute the supreme good. Whatever puts us in possession of these,

prepares us for a higher existence ; and the life spiritual is of inestimable value, because it conducts to the life everlasting, and constitutes both its perfection and beatitude. We cannot, therefore propose to mankind an object more worthy of their care than the cultivation of this spiritual life, or a nobler ambition than to secure its distinctions. If you desire a good independent of the misfortunes of time, you will find it here ; if you desire a riches that will pass current in heaven, you will find it in holy sentiments ; if you desire the ornaments of an unfading and imperishable excellence, which God will approve as the likeness of his own image, and angels will embrace as the badge of celestial kindred ; these must spring from the spiritual life, and grow up within that part of us which is endued with immortality.

**CONSIDER NOW THE SOURCE AND ORIGIN OF THE  
SPIRITUAL LIFE.**

In the verses which immediately precede the text the writer has asserted that all things were created by the **WORD**, and therefore every living thing, of every order and degree, whether worm or man ; whether throne, or dominion, or principality, or power. According to our modes of conceiving, divine power is more remarkably displayed in things that have life than in things inanimate. Their more exquisite structure mani-

feats a greater variety of contrivance ; and in contemplating even the lowest living forms we feel that they rise immeasurably above inorganic and inanimate matter. The principle of life, of sensation, of motion, reminds us more emphatically of the infinitude of the creating power. On a small scale many of the processes of material nature can be imitated by man's art. Artificial gems and flowers can be made closely to resemble those of nature. But who ever saw any successful imitation even of the lowest mode of life ? Our recognition of Deity in the production of life becomes more distinct, more solemn, when we contemplate the nature of man. His more perfect structure, his larger capacities, the powers and aspirations of his rational nature, display at once a loftier origin, and suggest that in some pre-eminent sense, " God hath breathed into him the breath of Life." Whether we contemplate the primitive pair who were formed by the immediate act of God, or the numerous generations who have descended from them, through the operation of constant physical laws, in which the power and wisdom of God are not less signally displayed than in the creation of the original pair, we are more forcibly struck with the evidences of divine power in man than in all the world beside. All creation testifies of God, but the testimony of animated nature and especially of man who stands at the head of it, is most distinct and impressive ;—and when the Apostle

affirms of the Son of God "that in him was life," he undoubtedly declares his investment with the highest attributes of creating power.

But waiving at present the illustration of the first proposition here asserted, that in him, that is in the Eternal Word *was life*, the source and origin of all life, let us confine our view to the explanatory clause, "the life was the light of man." This affirmation presents the Son of God to us as the author of that dispensation of truth and mercy which through the Church he is establishing in the world.

1. Christ the life was the light of man, as he is the author of that special revelation of the divine will which at sundry times and in diverse manners has been vouchsafed to the world.

We cannot doubt that when man came from the hands of God, and so long as he continued in a state of innocence, he had a competent knowledge of his Creator, and the purposes of God respecting him. To him the Life was the light of man,—the Power that imparted life endowed him with knowledge. The voice of Jehovah was heard amidst the trees of the garden, or converse with angelic beings was occasionally permitted; or the divine illumination of heavenly truth shone immediately upon his soul. But when sin entered, it brought disorder and debasement into the soul. The fears and apprehensions of guilt alienated it from the Creator and darkened that inward light with which it had in inno-

cence been blessed. The language of the fallen one now was—"I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid and hid myself." In this sad conjuncture the promise and hope of a Saviour was revealed, at first obscurely but with continued accessions of light as ages rolled on, until the advent of the Great Deliverer—the Sun of Righteousness, with whom came the blaze of meridian day. To Him solely mankind are indebted for whatever measure of sacred, supernatural light—light revealing God, and leading to God, hath at any time been communicated to the world. All history and experience testifies that where this light is not supernaturally communicated and supernaturally preserved, the soul will remain in, or will sink into, spiritual darkness. Into this state the world before the flood sunk, until its enormous wickedness provoked the Lord to destroy it. And if some knowledge of the true God were nevertheless preserved in the line of Seth, of Enoch, and of Noah, it must be attributed entirely to the presence and power of "the Life which was the light of men." After the flood, we discover this spiritual darkness spreading itself over the face of the world, until all remembrance of the true God was lost, except among the small isolated race which descended from faithful Abraham; and even among them also that remembrance would have perished (so inveterately averse is the natural mind to retain it) had it not been preserved by a miraculous economy and the

frequent admonitions of inspired prophets. When this knowledge of the true God is once lost, it appears to be beyond the reach of the unassisted mind ever again to recover it. No instance is on record of any nation once sunk into idolatry ever rising out of that dark abyss unless through a supernatural revelation sent unto them. Greece, polished and refined, rose to high eminence in literature and philosophy. The poet and the orator still catch fire at its poetry and eloquence ; and yet the wisest and the best of its sages could not rise to the certain discovery of the one Eternal Supreme. They had penetration enough to despise the superstitions of the vulgar, but not wisdom enough to substitute any thing better in their place. Where intellectual Greece failed, it is not to be thought that martial Rome would succeed—even had she made the attempt to enlighten the minds of men instead of enslaving their liberties. And whatever may have been the march of mind since, of which there is so much vaunting in the present age, it never has, without the communication of a supernatural light, marched back to God—never has attained to any enlightened views of His character, or to any approximate resemblance of His moral purity : it never has attained, apart from revelation, any certainty of a future life, or of the means by which a sinner may be reconciled unto God. For the attainment of these objects Christ who is the Life became the light of men.

2. But in a still more emphatic sense the Eternal Word—the Life—is the light of men because of that divine influence with which the written word is accompanied, and rendered effectual to all them that believe.

The natural mind, impaired and defiled as it is with sin, is not receptive of spiritual knowledge. “The light shineth in darkness but the darkness comprehendeth it not.” As the Jews did not discern the divine characteristics of their Messiah when he came unto them, nor see any beauty in Him that they should desire Him, so His gospel has always encountered a similar treatment from the unbelieving world. Sinners will not be persuaded,—truly and deeply persuaded,—that it is from God; or if some vague conviction should be forced upon them, they do not discern its necessity and applicability to their particular case; or misapprehending both the malady and the cure, they remain the slaves of sin, and render the word of God of none effect. Innumerable are the instances of this fatal misapprehension even within the purest Churches of Christ. Multitudes hear the Gospel preached from youth to age; they are seen with wonderful regularity in their customary places in the sanctuary; they never dissent, by the minutest shade from orthodox exposition; to their own drowsy consciousness they appear undoubted believers in every thing that the gospel declares; and yet a narrower scrutiny will make it appear that the

articles of their creed have no more influence upon their characters than so many fables or dreams. It has never penetrated into their heart—the source of feeling and action ; with favour and reverence they have regarded it, but very much in the same way that a healthy person might keep in his possession some known specific for a grievous malady that may at some future time come upon him. It is held in estimation. It is carefully preserved. At some future time it may be available. Meanwhile there is no felt need of it, no personal application of it. In short the gospel is in their possession, but it has not come to them with power. Sin reigns unsubdued ; they are dead in trespasses and sins. Nor is there any inherent power in the gospel message itself to subvert this dominion, to abolish this death. Truth revealed is nothing more than means to an end. It is light. But what is light to a sightless eyeball ? It may shed its rays on all the beauties of the landscape and paint their image on the retina ; but no impression is conveyed along the paralyzed nerve to the soul within,—to the being who amidst surrounding light continues to walk in darkness, unconscious of the varied wonders of the Creator's workmanship. So is it with the carnal mind in spiritual things : it cannot comprehend them, because they are spiritually discerned. It is not enough that they be externally revealed. The eyes of the understanding must be enlightened to perceive them. A divine in-

fluence must be shed upon the soul to awaken it from its spiritual slumbers, to quicken it with spiritual desire, to endue it with spiritual discernment, to make it hunger and thirst after the bread and water of life. In scripture this change, the result of a divine influence, is represented to us as "a quickening from death unto life,"—and the result and manifestation of this change, is a life of faith, an entrance upon the world of light. Hence true believers are called the *illuminated*—the children of light. Behold then an illustration of that attribute which, in the text, is ascribed to Christ. Every saving change produced on the soul of man through the truth is His workmanship, because the Holy Spirit, through whose agency it is mediately effected, is His gift. To Him, therefore, must be ascribed the glory of our salvation. The work cannot be accomplished by less than a Divine power,—a power capable of originating life in a soul spiritually dead. In Him is life, and the life is the light of men.

3. But further ; the maintaining of this spiritual life in the soul is not less the work of Christ than the origination of it.

This doctrine, so evidently implied in the text, is variously presented to us in the sacred oracles. "*Your life* is hid with Christ in God : when *Christ*, who is *your life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." This spiritual life indeed, coming from Christ, and continually sustained by Him, is sustained by appro-

private aliments. But these aliments are not the life, nor have they in themselves any virtue, except as it is imparted to them by the Almighty source of life. This fact, however, is very much overlooked by the multitudes who have only a name to live. They imagine that outward observances constitute religion, or the spiritual life. To read the scriptures, to repeat prayers, to observe the Sabbath, to attend the sacrament, is the sum of their religion. Now these are only the aliments of piety, not piety itself. But of what use is aliment to a being that hath not life? To be able to use aright the ordinances of religion, pre-supposes the existence of the spiritual life of which they are the nourishment. For the dead have no desire for food, and were it possible to convey it to them it could not become nourishment to them. So is it at the gospel feast. To the outward eye it may seem as if the promiscuous company in the house of God, were all sitting at His table, enjoying the same spiritual repast. But except in the case of those who are made alive in Christ Jesus, the whole scene is an illusion. The carnal mind cannot enjoy fellowship with God. It cannot breath itself out in prayer before Him. It cannot join in the melody of praise. It cannot feed on Christ by faith with thanksgiving. Nor is it nourished by grace in the ordinances of grace. Year after year it may frequent the holy place, but it cannot draw water out of the wells of salvation. That water refreshes

the living only, not the dead. Be admonished then, that sacred ordinances are appointed chiefly for the sustentation of the spiritual life ; that those alone to whom this life has been imparted can duly observe them ; and that their entire efficacy is derived from Christ, through whom they are made spirit and life to His people. By the Spirit, revealed truth is accompanied with demonstration and sanctifying power to the believer ; and dwelling in his heart it becomes within him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

And the dependence of this spiritual life upon its divine author is maintained, under the economy of grace, by a definite and beautiful arrangement. Whenever it is imparted, it moves the soul upwards to its source, and is preserved by the constant derivation of celestial influences. For the attraction between Christ and the believer is mutual and constant ; with an unchangable love he has embraced them, and he will not suffer them to perish. On the other hand theirs is a life of faith on the Son of God, and by this link they are inseparably united to Him. Faith is not the originating cause of this life ; it is an effect, just as appetite is an effect of corporeal life, and like appetite it pants after its appropriate gratification, and will not be appeased by any substitute. With restless endeavour it will seek until it find its object. Does the believer long for closer fellowship with Him whom his soul loveth ? He is to be found in His word, in the closet, in the

sanctuary : He dwells with the broken and contrite in heart. Faith is strengthened as its objects become more distinctly visible. Love burns with a purer flame as the infinite love of God discloses itself. All moral graces shoot forth more fair and perfect as our divine exemplar is discerned. Thus the life which in regeneration is imparted to the soul, is attracted towards its source, and drinks in its perfection. "Beholding with open face the glory of God we are transformed into the same image."

4. Christ is the author of *eternal life* unto all them that believe. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand."

In the soul of every believer He is the source of spiritual life. All other forms of life are destined to perish :—this alone is immortal. Every inferior order, after enjoying for a brief period the gratifications of which they are capable, return to undistinguishable dust. Mortality is the original law of their being, and by it they are swept utterly away, and become in death as if they had never been. But man was created immortal ; and although death, in consequence of sin, obtains a temporary triumph over his body, the soul can never be touched by its power. Of this fact, the knowledge of which had well nigh perished amidst that spiritual darkness which sin

had brought over the world, we have received the certain discovery in the gospel which proclaims eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. To raise man to everlasting life is the grand design of redemption ; and to raise him to spiritual life is a necessary antecedent. Christ died to purchase for his people the remission of sins, and the influence of renewing grace. Being renewed, they are raised both to the favour and the image of God. The title to eternal life is conferred on them, and the preparation for it is begun ; but not until its consummation be reached will the import of the text be fully manifest,—“the life was the light of men.”

If we regard “light” as the *knowledge* of divine things to which the redeemed shall be raised in a future world, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive its nature and extent. In the resurrection, the children of God will behold His unclouded glory. The consciousness of His presence and favour will be lively, habitual and beatific. Their immortal forms will be “full of eyes”—all blessed with the infinite manifestations of the Godhead. And if throughout the far extended circle of the universe its perfections are displayed ; if the suns and systems that people it are each reflections of divine power and benignity ; if all are peopled with intelligent orders, among whom there may be happy converse and holy sympathy, who can estimate the value of that knowledge which shall accumulate

in a sphere so wide, and, throughout an unlimited duration, of which the redeemed soul shall be the receptacle ?

If we regard "light" as *purity*,—the resemblance of the Father of lights, to what an elevation may the saints of God be raised. When we speak of their condition as *sinless*, we describe it by a negation. When we speak of it as *holy* we employ a term of which our conceptions are dim and inadequate. When we call it *happy*, here also our language fails, for we have no true type on earth of the happiness of the upper world. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is,"—*like Him*, as far as the finite can resemble the infinite, in the love and admiration of what is morally fair and true and good ; in His righteousness and holiness ; in that attribute of *love* which is the source and centre of moral perfection. Moreover, the redeemed shall possess qualities specifically their own—fervent gratitude for their redemption, connected with such recollections of the past as only the history of a ransomed sinner can furnish.

If we regard "light" as happiness, one of the elements of the everlasting life to which the redeemed shall be raised, how shall we delineate what we can only imperfectly conceive ? In the scripture delineations of heavenly

bliss, negations are employed until every ill that has embittered the present world is excluded, yet no more is given but a dim shadow of the reality.\* These children of light are supremely blessed in the perpetual enjoyment of the divine favour: in their employments, in their fellowship, in their unclouded and everlasting prospects. What more can even heaven admit? With a fulness ineffable the life shall then be the light of the redeemed.

To you who are the children of light and of the day,—to such as can humbly testify, “I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me,” we offer one affectionate counsel. “Take heed lest ye be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” Ye live in the midst of a world where every object is shedding upon you influences ungenial to the spiritual life; and so stupifying are these in the case of multitudes, even of such as have been quickened to newness of life, that they are often in doubt as to its very existence within them. They live; but theirs is a sickly, death-like life. Their piety is not strong, and beautiful, and joyous; but feeble, and withered, and melancholy. Beware of the causes which will infallibly reduce you to such a state, in which the life shall be as death,—the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of pleasure, the sin that still re-

\* Rev. xxi. 4, and xxii. 3-5.

mains in your unsanctified nature. Study to walk in constant fellowship with Him from whom the life-giving stream proceeds. Be His word your light. Be His mercy seat the place of your most frequent resort. "Go thy way by the footsteps of the flock, and feed beside the shepherds' tents." And the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep will guard you in His faithfulness, as the apple of His eye, and bring you in safety to the heavenly fold.

Suffer me, ere I dismiss this subject, to offer a word of solemen warning and admonition. The Jews rejected Christ. It is possible for you also to reject Him. Christ demonstrated His Messiahship by signs and wonders, and mighty deeds, yet when he came to His own His own received Him not. His gospel left behind Him as a legacy to the world, bears as conspicuously as its Author did, the evidences of its divinity; yet, like its Author, it may be treated with indifference, or rejected with scorn. The veil of unbelief that has long rested on the sinner's heart may have made him love darkness rather than light. He offers you life, O sinner, life spiritual and eternal; and yet the offer may never have awakened in you serious consideration for an hour. He has revealed to you the will of God; yet you may never have thought of the value of the gift, nor applied it to the purpose for which it was bestowed. Life and immortality are now clearly brought to light; and yet the busy occupa-

tions and delusive pleasures of this frail and feverish being may have well nigh excluded it from your anticipations. Oh! ruinous delusions by which the sinner is led astray from the way of peace! How insignificant and mean the objects you pursue,—objects which you may never gain, and which, if gained, would leave you as unsatisfied as ever. How inestimable the blessings which you reject, or which, by your indifference and delay to possess, may speedily be removed for ever beyond your reach. It belongs to our sacred function, O sinner, to call you to pause, to consider, to fear. The terrible judgments of God will assuredly overtake all who reject this great salvation; and we as ambassadors in Christ's stead, beseech you by the mercies of God to accept the life He waits to bestow, and to walk in the light which he sheds around you. To-day if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts. Behold now is the accepted time. He who is the Life of men waits to be light and life to you.

But remember, reader, that you may subsist without this life,—without these excellences, if you choose it. A great part of mankind hold them in little esteem. They are not qualities that can be brought to a worldly market,—they cannot be submitted to the observation of the world, or exchanged for any of its commodities. Even the results of them that appear in outward action, are not such as attract very general es-

teem. To stand aloof from multitudes whose principles and conduct you are obliged to condemn ; to cherish habitual restraint and apprehension amidst scenes which are commonly reckoned safe and innocent ; to practice self-denial with a view to ultimate security ; to bring the principles and spirit of the divine law to bear upon the minutest part of ordinary conduct, will infallibly produce a peculiarity and precision of character not quite agreeable to the general tastes and likings of mankind. But it is in your power to forego it, if you please. God commands you to cultivate it,—but He has not placed you under any compulsion. You have the power within you, and the grace offered ; but you may reject the grace, and suffer the power to remain undeveloped. Thousands make this choice, and they seem to get through the world tolerably well without knowing that there is any such thing as a divine life,—possessed too, it may be, of numerous accomplishments on which the world sets high value. How it may fare with them when they pass into a state of existence where only those who possess the life of God shall be with God to behold His glory,—they may not trouble themselves to inquire. But you, reader, you, as we humbly trust, are animated with a better spirit, with a more enlightened regard to your eternal interests ; and to you we now offer a word of counsel.

The cultivation of the spiritual life must result

from your own deliberate and settled choice. You cannot improve the intellect without this,—far less can you call forth the affections of the heart. Decided choice must always precede strenuous endeavour; and, it requires no small degree of reflection to fix the choice upon spiritual excellence. Our actions are seen; and in regard to them we can often bring the opinions of our fellow men to corroborate our own inward wavering sense of rectitude,—but it is not so with our affections, principles and motives. They are not seen by man, and public opinion cannot impel us to their regulation. Here we have no witness, no check, save God; no monitor, save conscience; no guide save the dictates of inspired truth. Alas, for fallen and erring man, the witness is invisible; the monitor is too easily perverted; the dictates of the guide are too frequently forgotten. How then may our choice be fixed, when the grounds of it are so apt to flit away from our remembrance?

In order then to fix your choice upon the life of God, as an object to be attained, it is necessary that you should cultivate the habitual fear of God.

And this filial fear of God, this love of Christ, must be nurtured into a deep, habitual sentiment, in order to the perfection of this spiritual life. It will grow by what it feeds on. In this sense may be understood the mystic words,—“I am the bread of life.” In the spirit of the figure the soul

that will be animated and imbued with this "life," must "eat the flesh and drink the blood of Son of man." This its daily sustenance will be the spring issuing from the fountain; or in the spirit of another figure, in which the images of light and life are combined, "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image." Christ is the mirror from which the divine glory is reflected. Gaze steadfastly upon it, that you may apprehend the glory of the reflected object, and admire, love, and resemble it. Ye have seen how on a metallic surface skillfully prepared, the sun imprints the image we wish to copy and perpetuate. Ray upon ray falls on the shadow, and its minutest outline is caught and fixed. So by the efficacy of a co-operating grace flowing in silence from the Eternal Spirit, in the channel of a living faith, there rises up on the immortal tablet of the regenerate soul, the similitude of the divine image—the beauty of holiness, the robe of light, the will that blends itself with the divine, the proper life of the creature whose nature is an emanation from God, whose destiny is to return to its everlasting source, and to be satisfied with a perfect bliss when it awakes in His likeness.



**THE SOUL OF MAN—A BOOK.**



## THE SOUL OF MAN—A BOOK.

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And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened.—*Rev.* 20, ch. v. 12.

The passage with which these words stand connected, is an emblematic description of the last judgment,—that which awaits every individual of the human family when the history of our world shall be completed. The images under which this awful event is presented to us are fitted to inspire us with the liveliest apprehensions of its terrible grandeur and sublimity, and all the more deeply that we ourselves are parties immediately and personally concerned in its results. As usual in Sacred Scripture, the eternal Judge is presented under no similitude—since there is nothing in heaven or earth to which we can liken God. For this reason we are forbidden even in imagination, to frame any likeness of him: it is idolatry, whether the delineation be a mere mental image of form and figure,—or a visible and material form fashioned by art and man's device. The pure theism of revelation does not permit it. To aid our conceptions, however, and to render the use of human language

possible for the delineation of the Deity, holy Scripture speaks after the manner of man, of "the eyes of God"—to which all things are naked and open;—of "the arm of God"—which sustains the pillars of heaven;—of "the voice of God"—which commanded and all things stood fast;—of "the throne of God"—to which all orders of creation are submissive; but no Christian capable of clear and comprehensive thought confounds these figurative forms of speech with the true or real; they are true indeed in their meaning as figures; they are conformable to human analogies; the eye is a sufficiently good emblem of the power of observation, very limited in man, in God unlimited; the arm is a sufficiently good emblem of power, very feeble in man, in God Almighty; the throne is a fit emblem of dominion, local and unstable among men,—with God universal and everlasting. But while these similitudes are employed to shadow forth the attributes of God, no similitude is ever employed to shadow forth God himself. The infinitude of his glory is veiled in unapproachable light; clouds and darkness are round about his throne; his way is in the sea, his path in the great waters, his footsteps are not known; and accordingly, in the emblematic description from which the text is taken, we have represented a great white throne, but no similitude of the terrible majesty which sits upon it. Faith beholds on it, only the emblem of his pre-

ence, who filleth immensity, and hath created the universe ; who hath formed the soul of man with all its powers and capacities, that in the end of the world it might be judged according to its character, and rewarded according to its works.

And the manner of this final judgment, which shall determine the condition of all men, is also represented in the passage before us under a figure :—“ the BOOKS WERE OPENED, and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books.” The meaning evidently is, that every thing connected with the moral history of the accountable creature MAN, is the subject of record ; his deeds or works are particularly specified here—a part being put for the whole ;—for it is consistent with the general scope of holy writ, and with the essential principles of morality, than when any judgement is formed respecting the merit or demerit of a moral agent, the intention or motive must be viewed in connexion with the deed, seeing both are the subject of law, and in both there must be rectitude as defined by that law. The absolute degree of merit or turpitude in any moral agent must, therefore, depend on a great variety of circumstances ;—upon the various influences that may have affected the developement of his moral nature ; upon the culture which his conscience has received, and the directive light under which it judges ; upon the clearness and force of the moral considerations which may have been resisted or

regarded ; upon the religious opportunities that may have been improved, or misimproved : all these must come into account, in estimating the merit, or demerit of any moral agent. The omniscient and unerring witness alone is able to keep this record. He alone knows every thought in man, and all the circumstances, the most hidden and distant that may have led to its conception ;—he alone knows every feeling that may twine around it, and all the moral shades with which every feeling may be engrained ; he alone knows the action not only in its source, but in all its results on the individual and on society in their widest range : and all this, not in one instance only, but in every instance. Returning to the language of figure suggested by the text—the divine register is complete which contains the moral history of every individual ; thoughts and words, intentions and actions ; temptations to sin resisted, and temptations to sin yielded to ; all are recorded with unerring precision ; and every child of Adam shall be judged out of those things which are written in the “ book.” The record is faithful ;—and the judge of all the earth will do right.

But there is another view of this subject to which these solemn considerations will, I trust, be an appropriate introduction. We feel no difficulty in receiving this article of our belief, that God knows all things and sees every thing connected with the moral history of the individual in

its true light ;—that nothing can ever fade away from his unchanging remembrance,—that all things past, present and to come are always fresh upon it. These attributes belong essentially and inseparably to every idea that we form of the true God. This idea of the divine omniscience although overwhelming to beings like us, is nevertheless demonstrably certain ; it is inseparable from our very conception of the all perfect one. “ All things must be naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” This attribute of God is infinite :—we cannot attain to any very clear conception of it—even though it be undeniable ; for who will presume to deny a perfection of the Godhead ; and in this view of it, a perfection essential to the perfect administration of his moral government and the righteous judgment of mankind. But we wish in the sequel rather to call your attention to a fact in the constitution of man, a dim TYPE of this attribute of the Godhead—for man was originally created in the similitude of God. The fact is, that man is capable of discriminating, recollecting, and feeling, or if being made to discriminate, recollect and feel, every thing connected with his own moral history, upon the aggregate of which the sentence of the eternal judge will be founded. This is not to claim for man any thing beyond the proper capacity of his nature in its right or NORMAL CONDITION. True, we have never seen it in this

condition ; we have no explicit record of its ever having existed in this condition. All that we actually know of man establishes the fact that he is perpetually erring, especially in matters connected with morality and religion ;—that conscience is a feeble power within him ;—a power which, even when in some measure directed and enlightened by a divine rule, is prone to err in its decisions ;—above all, every man who is accustomed to look within his own heart is aware, that scarcely any thing is more apt to be forgotten, than the judgements that we pass upon our conduct in the daily feelings and actions of our life. Who among us, for instance, somewhat advanced in age, can remember any considerable number of those acts of disobedience to our parents with which, in early life, we were chargeable ? We cannot remember much of all that variety of feeling and deportment which entered into the moral history of our boyhood, the united results of which have given shape to the character of the man ?—Nay, even when we confine our review to a more limited period, to the past year, for instance, and when we try to stir up conscience to give a faithful report on it, we find ourselves very much in the dark : we open “ the book ” but we cannot find the entries :—all is blank ; we have a general idea that a great deal must have been done amiss, but we cannot trace the particulars : we had them once : conscience judged faithfully enough perhaps at the time,

and memory recorded the judgment, though the lines are now faded, and we cannot revive them. We may be able to recal a few instances in which we were more notably culpable—instances which furrowed deeper lines, but the rest is forgotten. Were a kingdom promised you at this moment you could not by any effort recollect them. Now the doctrine that I wish to insist on is, that it is essential to your character as a moral and accountable being, hereafter to be judged, that all these particulars should be recalled; that there is an absolute certainty that they shall be recalled: that the entries upon the register, be they of right or be they of wrong, are not so deleted that it is impossible to restore them. Nay, we affirm that they are there; that for the purposes of a moral government it is just as essential that the register of your conscience should be kept entire, as that the register of omniscience should be entire. Your present incapacity of recollection makes nothing against this doctrine:—it does not prove that the register of conscience is irrecoverably destroyed. We know that it is quite possible for a man to lose for a time his memory or judgment and to recover them with all their treasures. We know that in old age the long forgotten reminiscences of early life are often revived with great vividness. We know that in certain bodily conditions every mental power is excited into intense activity. Why then should it not be so with conscience,

when the individual is arraigned before that tribunal, where the purposes of the divine government require that all the arraigned should not only acquiesce in the perfect justice of that sentence which shall be pronounced upon themselves, but should also be prepared to join in the acclamation that "the Lord is righteous in the judgments which he executes?"—We may illustrate by an authentic narrative the principle asserted—that nothing once impressed on memory and conscience ever perishes, but becomes immortal as the spiritual essence of which these faculties are a part; that though the power to recall *AT WILL* these recorded impressions may perish for a time, yet the impressions themselves do never. Every act done deliberately in the body, and every thought that has passed deliberately through the mind, is inscribed on an imperishable record—one of the books out of which every man will be judged.

In a letter headed in the *LITERARY JOURNAL*, *THE SENSATIONS OF A DROWNING MAN*, addressed by *ADMIRAL BEAUFORT*, to *DR. WOLLASTON*, the former thus writes:—"Many years ago, when I was a youngster on board one of His Majesty's ships in Portsmouth harbour, I fell into the water, sunk frequently below the surface, was exhausted by my struggles, all hope had fled, all exertion ceased, and I *FELT* that I was *DROWNING*.<sup>1</sup> \* \* \* \* From the moment that every exertion had ceased,

which I imagined was the immediate consequence of complete suffocation—a calm feeling of the most perfect tranquillity superseded the previous tumultuous sensations—it might be called apathy—certainly not resignation, for drowning no longer appeared to be an evil—I no longer thought of being rescued, nor was I in any bodily pain. On the contrary, my sensations were now of rather a pleasurable cast, partaking of that dull but contented sort of feeling which precedes the sleep produced by fatigue. Though the senses were thus deadened, not so the mind; its activity seemed to be invigorated into a ratio that defies all description—for thought rose after thought with a rapidity of succession, that is not only indescribable, but probably inconceivable, by any one who has not himself been in a similar situation. The course of these thoughts I can even now in a great measure retrace—the event which had just taken place—the awkwardness which had produced it—the bustle it must have occasioned (for I had observed two persons jump from the chains)—the effect it would have on a most affectionate father—the manner in which he would disclose it to the rest of the family—and a thousand other circumstances minutely associated with home, were the first series of reflections that occurred. They took then a wider range—our last cruise—a former voyage and shipwreck—my school—the progress I had made there, and the time I had mispent—and even all

my boyish pursuits and adventures. Thus travelling backwards, every past incident of my life seemed to glance across my recollection in retrograde succession; not, however, in mere outline, as here stated, but the picture filled up with every minute and collateral feature; in short the whole period of my existence seemed to be placed before me, in a kind of panoramic review, and each act of it seemed to be accompanied by some reflection on its cause, or its consequences: indeed many trifling events which had been long forgotten then crowded into my imagination and with the character of recent familiarity."

"May not all this, he says, be some indication of the almost infinite power of memory,\* which we may awaken in another world, and thus be compelled to contemplate our past lives? or, might it not in some degree warrant the inference that death is only a change, or modification of our existence, in which there is no real pause, or interruption? But, however, that may be, one circumstance was highly remarkable that the unutterable ideas which flashed into my mind were all retrospective; yet I had been religiously brought up—my hopes and fears of the next world had lost nothing of their early strength, and at any other period intense and awful anxiety would have been excited by

\*Not memory alone: all the mental powers were combined in this retrospect: they always act in combination.

the mere probability that I was floating on the threshold of eternity ; yet at that inexplicable moment when I had a full conviction that I had already crossed the threshold, not a single thought wandered into the future—I was wrapped entirely in the past. The length of time that was occupied by this deluge of ideas, or rather the shortness of time into which they were condensed, I cannot now state with precision,—yet certainly two minutes could not have elapsed from the moment of suffocation to that of being hauled up.”—The whole lifetime of the young sailor overhauled in two minutes !

Now observe, I pray you, for what purpose I have quoted this narrative. It is to illustrate a fact, established by ample evidence from various sources, that every impression once deeply made upon the mind is permanent and ineffaceable ; that though the power voluntarily to revive them may be lost for a time, yet the impressions themselves do not perish, but remain treasured up within the chambers of memory and conscience until by some means the faculty of recollection, acting either voluntarily, or involuntarily, be restored. We know that a partial reviviscence of former forgotten impressions, of all that has ever been the subject of thought and feeling, may, in the present mode of our being, be accomplished in various ways. In the paroxysm of a fever, amidst the excitements of a dream, during some period when the soul is aroused to a high pitch of

mental activity : in these states, how often does it happen that long forgotten things are brought up to remembrance, and within the compass of a few moments, as in the preceding narrative, the events of a lifetime may be compressed. Recurring once more to the language of figure suggested by the text, the register of life is opened before us ; its entries start up on the successive pages ; the illumined eye runs over them with more than electric rapidity ; all the past has a living and distinct existence in the present now ;—and there is only needed a power to sustain this energetic recollection, and the whole history of the individual would become an ever open book from which it would not be possible to turn the eye for a moment away.

And this state, we repeat, does not need a miracle, an immediate interposition of divine power to produce it : it falls in with the natural working of the human mind ; and is only the proper developement of its capacities, were these left untrammelled by the hindrances which our sinful apostacy has entailed. For, who will say that it is either a natural or a necessary thing—a thing appointed by the creator and unavoidable, that a creature like man, endued with memory, reason, conscience ; accountable to God, the subject of a divine law, and hastening on to a world of retribution to be judged according to his works—who will say that it is a natural thing,—a thing of creative arrangement, that his memory

should be framed to forget the larger portion of what had been committed to it, never to be recalled?—and that the motives, and deeds of every day, and of every period of life, on which conscience passed, or ought to have passed a judgment, should be permitted to perish **OUT OF OUR BOOK**, when they still continue written **IN THE BOOK OF GOD**, which shall be opened in the day of final judgment?—Is it not beforehand more natural to suppose that God who has ordained that we shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, has taken care that no part of the evidence on which the individual shall be tried shall be lost; and that, as this evidence lies for the most part within the soul itself—in its thoughts, feelings, motives, intentions, aims, so these will not be permitted to perish, but will continue to constitute a part of its very being: a book, out of which nothing will be erased, which, in the day of doom, will be produced as the ground of that decision which the Eternal judge shall pass on the arraigned. And this conclusion beforehand, founded on what would seem to us the necessary prerequisites of accountability in man, is confirmed abundantly by actual observation, which proves that impressions which seemed utterly lost and forgotten, can nevertheless, in various ways, be restored, and with all their original vividness. This is sometimes done by causes operating indirectly upon the mind, through its mysterious connexion with the body.

Only let some stimulant be applied to that part of our frame which is the more immediate seat of mind ; let the blood ascend to it with a feverish frequency ; let some stimulating gas, or liquor, or drug, be made to exert its influence upon it, and an energy is awakened, for a time, which seems like the energy of a higher life. Thought flows with unusual brilliance and rapidity ; memory gives up her stores from her deepest chambers ; imagination paints with her finest colours ; and the processes of reason rival the dictates of intuition. Again, we know that similar effects are produced, though better and more permanent, FROM MORAL CAUSES. Let the soul be moved by some strong passion ; let it be acted upon by the stirring conviction of some momentous truth—as when the gospel is brought home with demonstration of the spirit and power, in the conversion of the sinner, we know that a peculiar clearness is then imparted to all its moral perceptions ; that the convert's by-gone history starts up in details of aggravation which were not apprehended before ; that practices which formerly appeared to be indifferent, then appear exceedingly sinful ; in short, and to use the words of scripture, the convert is “ quickened to a new life,” by which he becomes qualified to FEEL, and JUDGE, and ACT, as a moral and religious being, with a power never possessed before. Let us take these well established facts to aid us in our conceptions

and conscience when the soul is arraigned at the judgment seat. No miracle is needed to open **THIS BOOK**, or to render legible all that is written in it. After the soul is set free from its mortal encumbrance, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," every impression that had been made upon it will spring to life again; and in the more invigorated condition of its faculties, and under the scrutiny of an unerring judge, every decision which it passes upon itself, in the review of the individual acts which compose its moral history on earth, will be in perfect accordance with the judgment of Him who sits upon the throne: or, in the figure of the text, when the books are opened, there will not be the slightest discrepancy between the Book of conscience and the Book of omniscience; and the judgment which God shall pronounce upon saint and sinner, will be identical with the judgment which saints and sinners shall pronounce upon themselves.

Desisting for the present from farther illustration of this view of our moral nature, in its bearing upon our immortal destiny, permit me for a moment to indicate how a truth so awful should influence the whole course and habits of your life. Every day you are filling up the register out of which you will be judged. I speak not now of the Book of the divine omniscience;—I speak of the Book of which the soul itself is the enduring page. Remember, that from the

very constitution of your being, as moral and accountable agents, every thing that affects you in that character is inscribed upon it,—not in words, (for words how precisely soever we may try to define them, are, after all, very imperfect signs of moral qualities,) but in the living reality; and though for a time you may forget it, it never perishes, and will certainly appear in that day when God shall judge the secrets of mens' hearts. The polluted fancy which passes and leaves its stain; the malice and uncharitableness which rankled, though only for an hour, and were then rejected; the deeper graving which the love of the world impressed as you were borne along upon its current; the irreligious temper which has gained greater strength by another day's indulgence—all these constitute realities—facts in your personal history, qualities in your moral being, which, if no change be wrought on you, must abide in that nature for ever. Happily this law of our moral nature operates with equal force on the side of virtue and happiness. The truth which is sealed among your enlightened conviction abides there;—the pious affections, daily nurtured by grace from heaven, grow into the very essence of the soul itself, and partake of its immortality;—the benevolent sentiment, and the benevolent deed, leave upon the soul itself an impression that cannot be effaced. Whatever may be the excellences or the defects in which you manifest these qualities, they are entered

just as they are, not only into the Book of omniscience, but into the the Book of your own moral nature, out of which you will be judged according to your works. Is it not, therefore, a dictate of the highest prudence to search daily—hourly—the entries that are made in it; to ponder over them with the utmost seriousness that you may not proceed unthinkingly to the tribunal where the sentence shall be past that shall fix your fate for ever. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

## NOTES.

"We quote to screen ourselves from the odium of doubtful opinions"—is not the reason which has induced the author to subjoin the following quotations. Of the truth of the doctrine advanced he has no doubt. He is persuaded that it is in full accordance with divine teaching and the true philosophy of our nature. The preceding discourse was written without the slightest reference to any human authority, as a simple and obvious illustration of the text; and the incident embodied in it may be taken as suitable, whatever value be attached to its authenticity. But while these sheets were going through the press, he was pleased to find such corroborations of a truth which had forcibly impressed himself, and he deemed the perusal of the passages in this place might be useful.

"It is *fabled* (?) of the drowning man, that in the brief space of time that precedes unconsciousness, every event of his past life passes in rapid review before his eyes, and there is certainly something of this hurrying, in the avenging events all having a connexion with his past life, which God crowds on one another to make the ambitious, and proud and malignant, discover that he has all along been ruling their destiny."—McCosh, on the Divine Government.

"There are facts in the mental phenomena which give a high degree of probability to the conjecture, that the whole transactions of life, with the motives and moral history of each individual, may be recalled by a process of the mind itself, and placed as at a single glance, distinctly before him." \* \* \*  
 "Time past is contracted into a point;—time to come is seen expanding into eternal existence."—Abercrombie's *Philosophy of the Moral Feelings*.

"Such cases contribute to make it even probable that all thoughts are in themselves imperishable; and that if the intelligent faculty should be rendered more comprehensive, it would require only a different and apportioned organization—the body celestial instead of the body terrestial—to bring before every human soul the collective experience of his whole past existence.

And this—this, perchance, is the dread book of judgment in whose mysterious hieroglyphics every idle word is recorded. Yea, in the very nature of a living spirit it may be more possible that heaven and earth shall pass away, than that a single act, a single thought, should be loosened or lost from that living chain of causes, to all whose links, conscious, or unconscious, the free will, our only absolute self, is coextensive and copresent.”—Coleridge.

“ One of the most startling and mysterious phenomena of our nature is the sudden revival of the recollection of scenes, events, and thoughts which had apparently been long forgotten. In many instances we can explain this by the law of association ; but not unfrequently the recollection flashes without warning upon the mind. It is as though we had been gazing out into the blank darkness, which, lighted up all at once by a sudden flash, should become a theatre upon which the minutest events of our past life are re-enacted. \* \* \* Phenomena of this kind, more or less distinctly marked, occur in the experience of every individual, in his ordinary and normal states. But, here as in so many other cases, great light is thrown upon the latent capabilities of the mind by its action when physical disease has induced changes in the conditions which regulate its manifestations. The bodily organs, in their healthy state, seem to act as checks and limitations upon the operations of the mind, somewhat as the balance-wheel of a watch checks and regulates the uncoiling of the spring. We do not know how rapidly the wheels may be impelled, until this check is taken off. The balance wheel makes the watch move in time ; and it may be the limitations of the bodily organs only which compel the mind to act in reference to time. A disembodied spirit may have as little to do with time as with space. To all spirits, in their degree, as well as to the Supreme Spirit, one day may, in the most literal acceptation of the words, be as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day ; so that in the future life we may continually live over again every portion of our past existence, not piecemeal, and fragmentarily, but as an undivided whole ; just as the eye takes in a single glance the whole prospect before it, no matter though it be bounded only by the remotest distance from which the farthest ray of light has come, which has been coasting earthward since creation.”—Sayguern.

“ The abstract possibility of an entire restoration of memory, or of the recovery of absolutely the whole that it has ever contained, need not be questioned ; or if it were, an appeal might be made to every one’s personal experience ; for we suppose there are none to whom it has not happened to have a sudden recollection—a flashing of some minute and unimportant incident of early life or childhood ; and perhaps after an interval of forty or sixty years. With some persons these unconnected and uncalled for reminiscences are frequent, and very vivid, and they seem to imply that, although the mind may have lost its command over the entire stores of memory, and may no longer be able to recal at will the remote passages of its history, yet that the memory itself has not really parted with any of its deposits, but holds them faithfully, (if not obediently), in reserve against a season when the whole will be demanded of it. Might not the human memory be compared to a field of sepulture, thickly stocked with the remains of many generations ? But of all these thousands whose dust heaves the surface, a few only are saved from immediate oblivion, upon tablets and urns ; while the many are, at present, utterly lost to knowledge. Nevertheless, each of the dead has left in that soil an imperishable germ ; and all, without distinction, shall another day start up and claim their dues. \* \* \* The moral life is, in a peculiar sense—A HISTORY ; it is a process involving successive stages, through the course of which the unalterable laws of the spiritual economy are in turn brought to bear upon the dispositions and conduct of those who are subject thereto. Take away memory, and we annul government and destroy accountability.”—Physical Theory of Another Life, by Isaac Taylor.

#### ERRATA.

Page 97, line 9, dele *is*.

“ 133, “ 14, for *administration* read *admonition*.

“ 221, “ 21, read:—Death in our creed is dissolution, not  
destruction ; transition not annihilation.

“ 251, last line, for *heat* read *heart*.

Some other errors of the press have escaped, not materially  
affecting the sense, which the reader will easily correct.