

SERMONS

BY THE

REV. THOMAS FRASER,

FORMERLY OF LANARK AND OTHER PLACES,

*And left by him as a Memento of his presence and labours
among them.*

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IN these Discourses there are no pretensions to style or originality; and therefore they are not adapted to the literary or fashionable, but chiefly to humble-minded Christians in plain congregations. To such they are affectionately commended, with the prayer that the blessing of God may attend them.

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SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

The wages of sin is death.—Romans vi. 23.

How different this verdict from those who live and die in sin. They judge, in most instances, that it is a very harmless and innocent thing. Nay, they come to take pleasure in it as a very joyous thing, and even to glory in it, as if it were a very honourable thing. They do so against the most palpable evidence and conclusive testimony to the contrary. For death, that is the most appalling and judicial event that can befall us, is the most conclusive testimony to its evil and demerit. As the text says, “the wages of sin is death.” Death temporal, spiritual and eternal.

We will first speak of death spiritual.

Death spiritual. Ah, how dreadful is this if it could only be properly apprehended ! The death of the soul,—not that its constitutional faculties are destroyed, but that they have become so stupefied and weakened as to become totally insensate to spiritual things. This arises from the departure of God’s Spirit from the soul, and its possession consequently by him who hath enslaved it to himself. And how lifeless and dark must that soul become when He departs from it ! This was

very evident in the case of our first parents when they sinned against Him. They slunk away from His presence when He came unto them, and endeavoured to excuse themselves on grounds the most unworthy and untenable. Besides, fear and the selfish passions come then to be generated, which always turn against God, and bring such a cloud over the mind that they can neither see him aright, nor feel aright even when he appears in mercy before them. Hence we read that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ; also that the god of this world hath blinded the minds of those who believe not. This, brethren, is the scriptural account of the introduction of sin into the world, which wise men and philosophers in every age have endeavoured to account for, but will always be unable on mere philosophical principles. But view it as a judicial act on the part of God, and an enslaving act on the part of the devil, and all mystery vanishes and becomes plain.

The sinner, therefore, now left to himself, because left by God, and to the master whom he chose to serve, goes on as a slave from sin to sin till he becomes dead in sin, till by habit it becomes in him a second nature to sin. And now, dead in sin, what a race does he run in the career of sin, and what a fearful amount of wages does he earn in that career ! For every sin that he commits he draws a check, so to speak, on the bank of spiritual death, which checks are seldom dishonoured there, but repaid with increased drawing and ruin. Let us write for a little, if you please, some of the checks drawn, some of the instalments paid, that we may have some idea of their fearful amount, and be prevented, if possible, from

drawing any more. Every day of anguish, every night of sorrow, every rebuke of conscience, every pang of remorse are so many of the checks drawn, of the wages paid, as fearful omens of what farther is in store. But to be a little more particular, look at the ravings and fooleries of that mind left to itself, where reason is dethroned, and right judgment proscribed ; for we read, and it is true, that the imaginations and thoughts of the heart are evil, and that continually from our youth upward. But to be more particular still. Look at the destruction of every generous impulse, of every kind feeling on the part of the miser and the slanderer ; look at the ribald and blasphemous tongue of the profane swearer ; look at the lost character of the liar ; look at the beastly lust of the licentious, at the besotted countenance of the drunkard ; at the corroding dagger in the breast of the seducer ; at the fearful looking for of judgment that every sinner, notwithstanding his spiritual death, apprehends ; and what a fearful amount of wages does he reap in his spiritual death here ! what a fearful amount accumulating for his eternal death hereafter !

But, say some, these are only extreme cases on the part of our spiritually dead, who are lost to all shame and honour, but not on the part of our honourable men who are alive to character and virtue. Well, take it on the part of such who are so, but who depend on their own virtue for reward, to the rejection of Christ and his salvation. Let us do so, and we will see features of spiritual death in them more flagrant and revolting, though of different hues, than in the more openly flagitious and profane. To see a fallen proud sinner valuing himself on his own character, in preference to the merits of

Christ ; to see him proudly rejecting these merits, or contemptuously neglecting them, to see him treating the Son of God who would be his Saviour, as if he were unworthy of notice ; and I put it to you, if these are not features of character more infamous and revolting than those in the most degraded and flagitious, more indicative of spiritual death in the blindness and perversity of their minds than those who are lost to all decency and honour. So true on the part of all such are these words, “ the light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. How can ye believe who receive honour one from another, and receive not the honour that cometh from God only ? This is the condemnation, that light hath come into the world, but men love darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil.” But notwithstanding all the character that virtuous men so called may pretend to, there is evil reigning at the root if it could only be seen, if it was nothing more than overweening selfishness and nauseating pride disdaining to be dependent on another, even the Son of God, for merit and salvation.

But, say some again, who cannot resist the fact of sin, of spiritual death, in some form or other,—“ Oh all this is to be laid to the account of original sin, for which we are not responsible, but every one only for his own sin, and, therefore, not to be charged to him.” But what is original sin, but a disposition from the first opposed to holiness, and inclined to evil, which the Scriptures assure us is enough to exclude from heaven ? while the fact also is that every one is a sinner, and shall be answerable for his own sins ; that all previous to conversion are dead in sins, and, unless quickened by a new life, shall inevitably perish in their sins. Oh, brethren, this

spiritual death which we have all received as our wages, and which we shew in our blindness, insensibility, perversity, pride and self-complacency, how we should seek to be saved from it, for be assured to be dead in sin in spiritual death, is indeed to be dead in law for eternal death.

But the wages of sin is, farther, temporal death,—temporal, because after a time, to be succeeded by everlasting death. Oh, yes, this temporal death in the decomposition and destruction of our bodies, we have all got to take ; for it is unreasonable to think God would give us such beautiful bodies and noble souls to allow them to turn against himself without destroying them, even though it should seem to mar His own workmanship. Accordingly, He gave a commission to the destroyer to execute his sentence on our first parents in paradise, dying thou shalt die. He next stamped his signet on the whole race, and claimed them as his own. Thence he came in a deluge of rain on the antideluvians, and swept them all away. He came down in a fiery blast on the cities of the plain, and sunk them in the Dead Sea. He comes on the battle-field, and cuts down by thousands at a time. He comes to all in the ordinary diseases of life, and sweeps them all away. He even alighted upon Calvary, and made the Prince of Life bow his head, but that was rather a heavy blow as in its reaction it killed himself. Hence we read that through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, and also that he brought life and immortality to light. But it is lamentable to think how the multitude, notwithstanding these things, prefer to work for sins' wages, shewing that they love death rather than life. Alas! they think not that in sowing the wind they only reap the whirlwind, and that they

are only treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath. The greater number spend their days as if they were to live for ever, but a touch of the cold hand of death soon dissipates the delusion. They build, many of them, as if they were to stand for ever, but death writes decay on their strongest superstructures. They find poison in the beverages they drink, corruption in the air they breathe, thorns on the pillows they rest upon, and stings in their most lively enjoyments; but these beverages, that corruption, these thorns and stings are death. In the race for life also, which most run, there is a victory, but that victory is death's. The multitude, oppressed with burdens, woes and cares, sink into a premature resting-place, but that resting-place is the grave. Oh! yes, the grave is that wide realm into which every sinner must enter, the impenitent, particularly, with terror in their looks and despair in their hearts; for the wages of sin is death.

But not only in usual, but in most unusual and awful ways does death do his work. In the blast of the ocean, and the roar of the hurricane, how many thousands does he shipwreck every year! In the lightning's flash and the thunder's peal, how many also! He is with the terror also by night and the arrow that flieth by day, with the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth by noon-day. He stalks abroad also, arm in arm, with gaunt famine, reels to and fro with the drunkard in his gait, gloats over the lusts of the debauchee, as he marks them as his own, and, as a furious enemy, rushes on imbattled hosts, himself a conqueror over all. The defiant shout, the groans of the dying, the last gasp of the dead, are his martial music, holding apparently carnival over all, to which he invites corruption, earth

and worms. Oh ! death, is he not the high disbursing agent, paying unto all their wages ? for it is appointed unto all men once to die, and the wages of sin is death.

This brings me to the next view of death, namely, eternal death. Oh ! brethren, this is the death of deaths, called in Scripture the second death. A sinner, in the very sight of the cross, plunged into eternity, and dead for ever. Who can describe the woe of those that are cast into hell, that are thrown into the lake of fire, into the blackness of darkness for ever, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ? Some idea may be had of it by considering the different feelings of the mind in different states in this life ; for, example, have we not in all of us the elements of retribution and of future punishment ? Conscience and memory, you know, are ever ready to act against us as with scorpion's stings, in the view of the future.

But to mention some particulars. Have we not all felt the tortures of some disease which no skill could alleviate, no time assuage ? What would it be, let me ask you, to bear them for a lifetime ? What for eternity ? We have all felt the burnings of remorse which no repentance could remedy, no hope alleviate. What must they be when despair kindles them up into a fiercer flame, and conscience into a keener agony ? We have felt, some of us, grief insoluble at the loss of property which can never be regained. What must it be at the loss of heaven for ever, by those especially who once lived by the waters of life, but never drank of the wells of salvation ? We have heard the profanity, the obscenity, the blasphemy of those who are lost to all self-respect, and given up to every excess. What must it be on

the part of those whose tongues are ever venting themselves in blasphemies and curses against themselves, and others, for offences committed, for mercies despised, for salvation rejected? We have all felt the pressure of guilt, the emotions of shame, the sense of condemnation, yet mitigated with the hope that we might yet be redeemed. But what must they be when despair and remorse shall deepen their intensity, and foretell agonizingly their perpetuity? Besides the capacities of the soul ever increasing (even in this life) to take in more increasing misery, and the powers of endurance keeping pace with that capacity, to bear a heavier load. But what must they be when they shall be coeval even with eternity, and reaching ever towards infinity itself? Oh! brethren, so true is it the elements of heaven or of hell are in our own bosoms, so that we may learn from the present what shall be the wretchedness of the future, when all our sins with all their penalties shall be brought before us, when all our feelings and all our experiences here shall be aggravated a hundred fold there, and all our wages which we have earned shall be paid to the last farthing, for such sins particularly as disbelief of God's word, contempt of Sabbathis, a resisting of the Spirit, an anxiety to find fault with the people of God, a postponement of repentance, an invention of excuses for delay, a loss finally of all moral responsibility—when these, I say, and all others shall be added up, oh! then, what wages shall be paid! what a terrible reward shall be given! what an awful verifying of the words, “the sinner shall be filled with his own ways and eat the fruit of his own devices. They consider not that I remember all their wickedness; now their own doings shall beset them about; their wickedness is ever before me.”

And now, my fellow sinners, let me ask you how long shall sin's workmen be in receiving their wages, what time will it take to pay them all up? Will it be in a year, or a lifetime, or hundreds of years? Oh! consider that the wages here were only temporary, and short-lived, and designed rather to shew the quality than the amount of the payment. Consider also that time afforded you, more precious than all eternity, has been misspent; that your souls, more precious than a thousand worlds, have been neglected. Consider that you have been hurled from a platform of grace, on which an arrangement could have been made to meet your liabilities, but you would not. Oh! consider that you spent your days in negotiating drafts on the treasury of hell, instead of making deposits in the bank of heaven. Consider, I entreat you, that these drafts can never be dishonoured there, that there is no bankruptcy of credit in hell, but all must be paid to the very last farthing. What, I ask you, will hinder their payment? what arrest the unceasing demands of justice? what prevent even the increase of these demands? Will the soul cease from sin? Is the pit a place of moral discipline where purity can be elaborated from the very sink of corruption? Is it a state of preparation for heaven? Is that awful blending, continuous howl of blasphemies and execrations a fit prelude for the seraphic anthems of the redeemed? Does the Sabbath's holy light ever penetrate those clouds of darkness which hang over the blackness of darkness for ever? Does one rivulet of the water of life ever enter into that lake of fire? Are these writhing forms ever prostrate in prayer? Does the voice of mercy ever reach over that impassable gulf? Is there a Calvary among the hills of hell, where yet a bleeding Saviour can be

seen and a veritable atonement offered ? Oh ! I ask you how long, and the damned in hell may be imagined asking how long, as the immeasurable ages pass away, while a reverberating answer may also be heard coming over the fiery surges of hell, “As the tree falleth, so it shall lie. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever before the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

I will not urge this terrible subject farther. In conclusion, I would ask, is there any sinner after all this, that feels to repent and believe ? If so, let me tell you that Jesus is ready to receive you and give you pardon and salvation. Nay, He stands ready with open arms to receive you, and in the most gracious manner to welcome you. Nay, His kind voice of invitation is always heard, “Come unto me. He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” It is only to look unto Him who died for you, and to keep looking. And let me tell you that that look will always beget repentance and faith. Oh ! therefore, do not stand at a distance from Him. Do not especially close your eyes upon Him. Do not keep looking merely at yourselves and others. Do not keep indifferent to love Divine, nor heedless to Divine exhortation and expostulation. Do not, I entreat you, be in love with sin. Do not serve the devil. Do not be a captive of his through your own lusts, who will only be your pay-master at last. Do not set your heart on the world in its fashions, votaries and lusts, which will only be found in the end to be a treacherous enemy. Disown them, reprobate them all ; say resolutely, I wish above everything eternal life, and am willing to sacrifice everything that I may have it. Well, then, listen to Christ when he says : “Seek ye the Lord while he is to be found ; call upon

him, while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, who will pardon abundantly." But if you do not, but rather choose to serve sin, and the world, and the devil ; well, hear " the wages of sin is death, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil. As we sow we shall reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; for the wages of sin is death."

A number of the above sentiments, and even expressions, were taken from a discourse which an American Minister gave in this city above two years ago, which so impressed the author that he made as full an abstract of them afterwards as his memory would recall.

SERMON II.

THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION.

And, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but might have everlasting life.—John iii. 14.

THERE is no doubt but Nicodemus would have understood what our Lord said, if he had had only a simple faith. The figure of being lifted up like the serpent, though obscure to us, would not be to him, as the cross was a well-known mode of death in his day, which would readily be suggested by the cross pole, equally well known, on which the serpent was raised. But he would be puzzled to think how such a man as the Saviour could be so lifted up, he being at that time such an applauded and popular man, whereas, such a death was only for the vilest and meanest men; and therefore no wonder he seemed bewildered and confused not knowing what to make of it. But had he rightly reasoned from leading views of the type, he might also to the Antitype. For instance, that as the Hebrews were stung unto death, but were healed by simply looking to the serpent on the pole, so also sinners, by looking to Christ on the cross, would much more readily be so. But his Pharisaic self-righteous spirit blinded him, that he saw not these or other things, and in all likelihood, therefore, would go away as blind as when he came.

Nevertheless our Lord assured him in the most positive terms that it was the only way of salvation, and, therefore, to instruct him in it quoted the type, as what might be a light unto him if he only applied it. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but might have everlasting life."

I mean at present to state only the agreement that is between the stung Hebrews in the wilderness and the whole race of men as stung by that old serpent, the devil, or, rather, simply the fact that all are stung. But what is the poison which has been infused into our blood, and how does it work! The poison is sin, and it works generally in the way either of a spiritual inflammation or an insensate stupefaction. Look at the great multitude among us. Are they not in general in a bewilderment of excitement, not knowing what to think or what to do with regard to their souls! Behold also their staring eye, their proud forehead, their defiant look, their senseless fling, and are they not manifest either of a universal stupefaction or an excited inflammation. Ah! brethren, we are all stung. We have got all disorganized, one faculty or passion raving against another, or some one called the ruling passion predominant over the rest; or we have all got stupid and insensible as to our spiritual state. You see this even in death itself, where the ruling passion is still strong in it; or a morbid apathy, a sadder sign, is exhibited. The truth is, the poison of sin is in our whole nature though it may be variously exhibited. Yet, I do not choose to say what this poison sin is, or how it got injected into us, for I do not know, only that every one may know the

lamentable fact, that it is in him, and that it will terminate in death if not removed. And it is pitiful to see how even on a death-bed, it will shew itself—some raving in madness and despair as if the fire of hell were already kindled up in them, others sinking into insensibility and disregard, as if there was no judgment, no eternity. But, that a spiritual inflammation of some lust or other, or a prostrate insensibility characterises the whole in their natural state, is too evident to escape observation. I hope many of you have gone through that spiritual awakening which the scriptures hold out under the spirit of burning and of judgment, which, however painful it may be, is all necessary as a first step to a cure. And, therefore, we proceed now to the remedy which God hath set before us in Christ,—as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, “even so must the Son of man be lifted up.”

And here the Saviour holds it out as a great necessity, “Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” But what kind of a necessity was this! First, it was a relative necessity. This is evident from the words Son of man. We are ready to overlook this, but this lies at the foundation of this necessity. Man, what is he! Why, a convicted sinner condemned to die; and though the Son of God, as God could not die, yet he became the Son of man, which made him obnoxious to death. Hence, the Apostle’s words, “made of a woman, made under the law.” Ah! yes, when he became the Son of man, he came voluntarily under the law of death, which hung necessarily, because of sin, over every man. And so we read, “it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” True, Christ as a man was not a sinner,

but the very fact that he became the Son of man compelled him in all things to become like unto man, sin excepted. "So," says the Apostle, "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren in all things;" and again being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death."

But, secondly, there was a legal necessity that he should be lifted up, as it had to be of the nature of an execution. When public law is violated, public satisfaction must be made. If it is death, that must be the satisfaction; it must be something different from what we call a fair or a natural death. The law would fail as much in its penal execution as it had done in its moral authority, if it were not so; Accordingly all executions are public. And though a fastidious and delicate public cry for privacy, yet it must be so far public as to be done in the presence of the officers of law. Besides, it is from a wrong impulse altogether that it is sought to be private. For merely to save feeling, as they say, or greater wickedness by the exhibition than would be committed in private, it is altogether wrong in principle and unfounded in fact. The majesty and universal obligation of the law must be maintained, and that by a public execution, as the good that is done on the thousands who only hear of it is far greater than the evil that may be received by any who witness it. But to set all at rest, the Son of man must be lifted up. The great lawgiver himself must be his own executioner and that publicly. The great lawgiver himself, to give majesty and authority to the law, must make its execution as public as its obligation and violation were. All had sinned in the face of high heaven, in the view of all Intelligences, and on the broad

scale of eternity itself, and, therefore, to make full satisfaction, the Son of man must be lifted up in the view of the whole. It is by so being only that God may be said to be exalted, the law magnified, and sinners made to fear and even holy angels confirmed. Thus, even angels desire to look upon it. Thus, may they reason, as Christ said, "if these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry!" If he be lifted up, what may sinners expect, but to be cast down! or rather as Christ himself says, "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

But, thirdly, there was a moral necessity for Christ to be lifted up, to expose the evil and demerit of sin. Had he died a mere natural death among his kindred, it would have had little or no moral effect. It would have done no more than the deaths we are continually witnessing, which are soon forgotten. Job has well described the effect of all such deaths, when he says, "they are destroyed from morning to evening without any regarding it." But not so Christ's; see the effect of a public execution in him, the moral effect to set forth the evil, and desert of sin. These certainly are most luridly and fearfully set forth in his execution. There is hardly a phase of sin but has its counterpart in the cross; hardly a demerit of it but has its desert there. The Son of man, as the Son of God, is lifted up there. What an act! what a spectacle! Surely the great and good God would not allow such a thing without something great to be served by it. It is this; sin must be publicly exposed and punished, that sinners may be afraid; and it was more glaringly so than if the whole multitude of sinners had been so exhibited themselves. He must be lifted up, and hung upon nails, not as a sinner,

but the Son of God for sinners. Be sure, sinner, if you continue in sin you will be holden with the cords of your own sins. He is transfixed. Be sure you will be pierced with the arrows of your own guilt. He is exposed even to nudity. Be sure you also will be so in all your nakedness and shame. He is in agony inexpressible. Be sure you will yet have weeping and gnashing of teeth. The rage of men and devils were let loose against Him. Be sure they will be your tormentors in hell. The crown of thorns was fixed on His head, the sceptre put into his hand, and the scarlet robe of royalty to mock him, but only to flaunt you off, for your pride, your assumptions, your vanity, your ambition. Oh! brethren, what sights are reflected back upon us from the cross, if we only had but eyes to see them and hearts to feel from them, namely, the infinite evil and demerit of sin. God hath done what He could to enlighten and convict us by lifting up his own Son; and what a more fearful and affecting way could he have taken! Christ lifted up on the cross for you. Hence you find all the scriptural writers attributing all their salvation from sin unto it and its moral influence upon them from their sin. Hence, says the Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ. He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity. He died unto sin once; likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." Thus the poison of sin is extracted, the old serpent destroyed, and our souls healed. Oh! shew you by your general sobriety, by the orderly working and harmony of all your powers through the awfully solemnising and melting views of the cross of Christ, that you are saved from your sins, from the poisoned disorder of your nature, from that inflammation or passion of sin you once had

or that insensibility to its nature ; and that by being awakened to a sense of its evil and desert. As God himself says, know and consider what an evil and bitter thing it was to depart from the living God.

But, lastly, there was a saving necessity that he should be lifted up to make an atonement for all our sins. Ah ! what a point this to be fully assured of. How calculated to give peace and joy ; for if an atonement has been made for all our sins, then what have we to fear from sin ! But of this we must be assured only from the most satisfactory evidence. Well, the atonement by the lifting up was the effect of contract or covenant, and, therefore, if made fulfilled, must have been accepted. This is enough to settle the point at once, particularly when you consider the high contracting parties to it, God the Father, and God the Son ; God the Father proposing, God the Son assenting and performing. “ When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. By the blood of thy covenant he sent forth his prisoners out of the pit in which is no water. I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David, my servant, I have given thee for a covenant unto the people.” Brethren, nothing can be surer, because nothing is stronger in law than a covenant, and if among men, then much more between God and his Son. Well, it was made, and its conditions fulfilled, the chief of which was that He should be lifted up, so that we can now proclaim what the scriptures so often do, that Christ died for our sins, that he bore our sins in his body on the tree, and can also say for ourselves we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

But besides the covenant, the lifting up itself to suffer and die is sure evidence of the atonement. Here our attention must be confined to the suffering, as it is in this chiefly that the merit consists. Why, he could not suffer at all but as a merit, being in himself an innocent person ; not but that an innocent person may sometimes suffer, but that is because of an imperfect law or misapplied evidence, but under a just lawgiver, he could not do so. But as there was suffering even of the most extreme character, and that under the just government of God, it behoved that it could only be for others, and be, therefore, meritorious or sin atoning. Ah ! yes, when lifted up He suffered exquisitely, hanging as he did upon nails ; He suffered especially in his soul when all our sins were imputed unto him ; and He suffered from the hiding of His Father's countenance, all of which made them great beyond our conception. And as they were for others only, so you must hold them to be meritorious and atoning. Yes, "he suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us unto God ; he bare our sins in his own body on the tree. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." It would be well for us, brethren, to enter deeply into His sufferings ; for the more we do so, be assured we will become the more satisfied that they are meritorious and sin atoning.

But farther, consider the person who was lifted up. The Son of God, the God man ; then you must see that it was as an atonement. Everything here depends on the person lifted up, and suffering. A mere man, though a holy one, could effect nothing. He could do nothing as a work of

merit or supererogation beyond what he needed for himself. But the God man, as he needed nothing for himself, had plenty to spare for others. Everything that he did and suffered must have been for others, and fully meritorious. Why, look at it. God to God. It is God the Son to God the Father, it is the God man for sinful and condemned men. Such an high Priest became us, who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens." No wonder then the merit also, according to these words, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin. But all this goes on the footing that it was the Son of God as God that was lifted up. And is it not so! Why, what would have been the worth of a mere human offering! Could he be separated from his humanity for one moment either as to place or time! Was it not he, therefore, in His Deity that was offered as well as in His humanity! Could it have gone beyond itself to any other! Is it not because of what the Apostle says, who, with an eternal spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, that our consciences are purged from dead works, or, as what he also says, when he had by himself, as the Son of God, purged our sins! Oh! to think that it was God himself in our nature that was lifted up; and have we not enough to silence every fear, to remove every doubt, to beget the fullest assurance to help us, to say "hereby perceive we the love of God, in that he laid down his life for us!" feed ye the Church of God, which he Hath purchased with His own blood.

And now, in the view of the whole, assured that He was lifted up to make an atonement for our sins, let me beseech you, therefore, to look up to Him who was lifted up on the

cross for us. Nothing is now left for us but the simple action of the Hebrews looking to the serpent on the pole ; and we ought to be so thankful that so much is left for us. I know indeed it is not natural for us, not pleasant to do so. Anything but suffering and death, but shame and agony for such light-hearted creatures as we be ; anything but shameful exposure for such conceited and vain beings as we are. Nothing but the desperation of the Hebrews will induce us, like them, as poisoned creatures, as dying and self-condemned sinners, to look upon Christ on the cross. But you must either look or perish ; for there is no other way in which any can be saved but by the cross. And, oh ! if we would but think of it, we might well look, for there is everything great and good to look at, Christ the Son of God, the Son of man, a perfect and good man, lifted upon it for your sins. And for your encouragement consider that there is no exception, for, as we read, “ whosoever believeth on him, shall be saved.” And, oh ! if you feel, to look, content not yourselves with one look, but with looking, in a manner, all the time, night and morning, Sundays and Saturdays, particularly in the view of death. Then will you have a precious Saviour, a precious salvation, a blessed hope, and a glorious heaven. But if you do not, but rather choose to live and die in your sins, then remember that there is no other sacrifice for sins, but a “ fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”

SERMON III.

GOD'S LOVE TO SINNERS COMMENDED THROUGH THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Romans v. 8.

LOVE is that affection of our nature which leads us to delight in those we love, and, as far as possible, to do them good. It must always, therefore, have an object to exercise itself upon. In the mind of God love is His own infinite complacency and delight in himself as its object, or, it is delight in His creatures in so far as they reflect His own image and attributes. With regard to such, it is evident that He must love them with a great love—even the love of His whole heart, for there is no such thing as loving much or loving little on the part of God ; for those whom He once loves, He loves unto the end, and when He once loves, He does so with His whole heart. According to these words of His, “ I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; therefore, with loving-kindness will I remember thee.”

But it is not much of God in himself considered that we are able to comprehend, but of Him chiefly in His acts towards us. Thus, for instance, creation was a wonderful act of Divine goodness ; Providence is no less so. The daily supply of our wants from the productions of the earth

is greatly so ; but what are all these to the gift of himself ? What to His dying for our sins ? Do not these acts come recommended and enforced as infinite above all other acts ? for, after having bestowed these, when He bestowed himself, even to the giving up of life, is there anything greater or better He could do for us ? Does not the laudatory language of the text, therefore, come enforced to us with every commendation ?” “ God commendeth His love unto us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

There are three things which I wish to bring out from these words—the *person who loved*, the *manner of the love*, and the *objects of the love*.

First, the person who loved God and Christ, one and the same. True, God gave Christ, and yet it is God, in our nature, that was given to us, and, therefore, God that commendeth His love unto us. And what is it, let me ask you, to have God to love us ? We are pleased if we have the love of our fellows, our superiors, our governors ; but what a boon would we consider it to have the love of our king or queen ? But what are all these to the love of God—the eternal, the infinite God, our Creator, our Sovereign ? Surely, this is a blessing, above all blessings, incalculably superior to all, and incomprehensively great. Why, if we can comprehend the greatness of God, then we may of His love, for the one is equal to the other ; if we can measure the acts of God which call forth His greatness, then we may of His love. But what act specially ? Why, he gave us His Son Christ. He gave Him to be made of a woman, to be partaker of our very nature, with all its infirmities and liabilities, and as such presented Him as His best gift to sinners of mankind. And

what more could He do ? What farther or higher could He go in this line of action ? Has He not thereby identified himself with us, married himself, so to speak, unto us, and became as nearly and tenderly related to us as He possibly could ? Has He not made our interests, in every respect, His own ; and has He not bound himself thereby to see that they are secured as much to us as those of His own Deity ? Can anything, I ask you, equal this ? Can anything compare with this ? Is it not infinitely above all comparison ? If so, may He not then commend His love unto us—commend it to our attention, our admiration, our astonishment ? Well may God now say, “since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee and given a man for thy life.” Well may Christ as a man also say, “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.”

But this will appear still more when we consider, secondly, the manner of the love of this God Christ. He died for us—died for us ! Who can enter into this ? Who can sufficiently set it forth in the immensity of the sacrifice, in the love of the act ? He died by His own act. Can you conceive anything greater than this ? He separated what must have been most near and dear unto Him—His soul and body. He broke up all their tender associations and sympathies. He forwent for a time their reflex actions and communications. He dissolved, as it were, for a season their very existence. He did so upon the cross, where the agony and ignominy of the sacrifice added inconceivably to the act. Could He have done more ? I ask you, could He have done greater ? And

what must have been the power that effected such a dissolution ? What the love that urged Him to it ? Could it have been anything less than omnipotence ?—could it be anything less than infinite ? Do not say that it was agony that forced it, for He was calm and collected to the last ; nor say, either, it was exhaustion that produced it, for He was strong even in death. His loud and piercing cry, which He uttered beforehand, showed that life was still vigorous, and might have survived many hours more ; and His expression, when He said, it is finished, accompanied with the act, that He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, declared plainly that it was all His own, without any compulsion or co-agency whatever. Could He have done more, I ask you again, or greater ? What can go beyond death ? What can be greater than the surrender of life by a voluntary all-powerful act ? As He himself said, “ I lay down my life of myself. No man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Doth not He, therefore, commend His love unto us, as that that was far greater than in our creation and preservation—nay, in anything in the whole universe besides ? He died for us ! Having done all the rest in His goodness and providence, He super-added this as what was beyond His reach to do more, so that love here had its greatest bounds, its utmost stretch, its fullest exit. Well might Solomon say, “ Love is strong as death ; the coals thereof are coals of fire, having an unquenchable flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it : though a man should give all the goods of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned.” Is not the

text, therefore, true when it says—does it not come with an irresistible power of conviction upon us, “God commendeth His love unto us in that Christ died for us.” Yes, brethren, it required God himself to commend it, as it was above all human utterance to do so, and He commended it in the act. It appeared, even in the mouth of Christ himself, to commend it as above any human language, and, therefore, makes use of the very smallest, yet most comprehensive word in our language to do so, “God *so* loved the world.” Yes, it was a *so* without a *such*—an example without a parallel. Brethren, let us read it in the act; let us endeavour to comprehend it in the act, and we will see that there is a height and depth in it, a length and a breadth which passeth all understanding.

But this will still farther appear, when we consider, thirdly, the persons, the objects for whom He died—namely, sinners. God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. This the Apostle sets forth very strikingly in the way of contrast in the preceding verses. “Scarcely,” says he, “for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Ah! who would die for a sinner? The greater number feel rather to despise the sinner, and to say, let the law take its course upon him. The greater number feel glad that he is separated from society, and has no longer the power to harm or molest. In all this there may be justice, but there is no love, nothing to save the sinner, but everything to make him feel his desert. Even if it should be that a righteous man were condemned to die, the greater number would leave him to his

fate, yes even though it were a good man ; pointing out that there is not the least chance that any would die for a sinner. There is generally no love, no pity in the heart of any for such.

“ But God commendeth His love unto us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us”—commendeth it as that which was altogether singular, special, and peculiar. He died for sinners. What must have been in the breast of God which could have induced Him to such an act ? What could so have overruled justice as to have given scope to a love so extraordinary and peculiar ? What but that He might recommend it unto us as being so singular, so inimitable. Sinners, redeemed sinners alone will try to appreciate it, while the self-righteous and proud will altogether overlook it.

But let us enter a little more particularly into our character, that we may see the commendation of His love for sinners. There is something fearful and appalling in this if we could enter into it—sinners against God, the eternal, the infinite—how presumptuous, how daring ; sinners against God, our Creator—how unnatural, how unkind ; against God our lawgiver, only requiring us to love Him and one another—how hateful, how malignant ; against God, our judge—how defying, how reckless. How all these combined, if we only consider the original circumstances in which it was committed : in Paradise, where was a profusion of goodness, only next to Heaven itself, and from a grandeur of nature and state that were next to God himself (man being in the image and place of God over the creation), sinners farther combining every ingredient of sin in our corrupt nature, every act of sin in our fallen state, every opposition of sin against His nature and cha-

racter, every malignity of sin against His throne and government—sinners, farther, in our natural state against His own Son, whom He generously gave to become our Saviour—sinners that, in the pride and malignity of their hearts, would, like the Jews, if we had been in their circumstances, have cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him”—sinners that would, like them, in the hellish revelry of their souls, have taunted—nay, even reprobated him with these words, “He saved others, himself he cannot save. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him”—sinners, farther, that were not content with one sin, or many sins, but with sinning all the time, sinning also against all manner of entreaty and expostulation, against every warning and threatening from their own consciences and the law, even in the face of hell itself—sinners called, therefore, in the text ungodly, that is every way unlike to God, and, therefore, farther enemies of God, fighting even against him with His own weapons, and turning them into instruments of rebellion against Himself. Yet for such sinners He died. Why are we not altogether confounded and overwhelmed at the thought? Could we for a moment have expected such a thing? Would we not rather have been ready to say, let such sinners die a thousand deaths rather than that one should die for them? Would we not be ready to think He could not spare such sinners, that it would not be right to do so, that every principle of law and justice required their condemnation, and that it was not fit that such sinners should live? But instead of these, Christ died for them, even the very One against whom they sinned. What are we to say for such conduct? Why, in the first instance, that He hath commended His love to them—His

love as far above His wrath and justice, that he hath done what no other lawgiver would or could do, He not only spared, but died to save them. By so doing, it would seem that He passed over all their iniquities, and looked only to their deliverance—not only passed over their sins and provocations, but became their propitiation, to satisfy for their sins. Ah ! it would seem as if the very enormity of their sin, bespeaking the enormity of their punishment, so moved the bowels of His compassion as to induce Him to say, you shall not die—so raised His love as to make Him resolve that, rather than they should die, He would die for them. Surely this was goodness, the height of goodness—you would say, the most illustrious goodness, and that God certainly commendeth His love to us by so doing. In the view of these things, well might John say “ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Herein as if, comparatively, it was in nothing else, while everything else was also full of it. “ Hereby perceive we the love of God in that he laid down his life for us.” Well may we sing unto him that “ loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” Amen. Christ also hath loved us, and gave Himself for us. “ He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He was made sin for us.”

To conclude—the subject, is the love of God in Christ. Brethren, what should we give or do to answer such love ? Why, to give Him our whole heart and lives. He gave himself wholly for us to die. Surely we ought to give our hearts and lives unto Him. This only will be commensurate to his, and make a suitable return. To give anything less,

is, in a manner, to give nothing, or to show that we have never sufficiently appreciated His. Oh, therefore, endeavour to come as near to His as you can ; and with a view to this, be dwelling much on the magnitude and self-sacrifice of His love that He died for you. If so, you will soon come to have such a sense of it as to say, " What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits unto me ?" You will be ready to say, " Here am I ; take my poor heart. I give it to Thee such as it is. No other God or rival shall ever possess me or set up their throne there ; but my purpose shall be to love Thee with my whole heart, and to serve Thee with my whole life."

Brethren, the God man Christ gave himself and His kingdom besides. What have you to give corresponding to them ? Is it not, I ask you, your all ? Anything less will be nothing commensurate to His. Nay, it will come infinitely short of it ; but and if you do so, it will be returned manifold into your bosom, and have an abundant blessing even here. Nay, I would say, deny yourselves, that you may have something to give. Sell of what you have, that you may bestow upon the Lord. Remember the case of the rich man in the parable, and of the young man who went away sorrowing though he had great possessions. Honour the Lord, therefore, with your substance, and with the first-fruits of your increase. Let your gold and your substance, as He hath said, be holiness unto the Lord, and in all your benefactions give evidence that the love of God is in you.

SERMON IV.

THE BELIEVER'S DESIRE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN HIS SUFFERINGS.

That I may know him and the fellowship of his sufferings.—Philippians iii. 10.

It may seem strange, yet so it is, that it was the chief wish of the Apostle to know Christ in these things. And that he might be so, he disowned and gave up entirely every other kind of knowledge. Nay, he counted all but loss that he might win Christ. Nor is it difficult to conceive why it should be so. What are all others in comparison of Christ? What, when we have him, though we have nothing else; or rather when we have him, have we not everything else? In having him we have saving knowledge, the most honourable knowledge, the most satisfying knowledge, the most elevating and rapturous knowledge. It is the knowledge of the Son of God which, for supereminency, is called the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. It is the knowledge of the most honourable attribute, namely the righteousness of God in Him, and knowledge that is to be attained through the most affecting ways, namely fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Oh that we could say that we had the same wish, then we will find that it will lead us to make the same renunciations and also to have the same aspirations, “if,” says he, “by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.”

I propose to confine your attention chiefly to the fellowship of his sufferings, his suffering for us on the cross. Now there are two views I wish to give you of these,—the shame of them and the agony of them. The shame of them. He was exposed, you know, in his nudity as a public spectacle upon the cross between two thieves as if His was the greatest shame. And did he not suffer, think you, through this exposure? Had he not the feelings of delicacy as a man; had he not the high feelings of respect for himself as a pure man; did he not suffer also from the scorn, and contempt that was thus cast upon him as a dishonoured and despised man? But whatever his sufferings were, the eye of a spiritual beholder can discern something more than mere shame through them, namely, a heroic magnanimity to prevent our exposure and yet a practical aim to convict and to humble us of our nakedness and shame. And, brethren, do not we need something of this kind to convict and to humble us, for we vainly think we have no need of any such things? In our own estimation we think we are rich and have need of nothing, and know not that we are poor and naked. But are we not destitute of everything? Have we not lost all in Adam, and inherited nothing but evil, so that nothing is left us but shameless nakedness and want. But if we will not be convinced, just look at Christ on the cross. Was that merely accidental, his exposure there? Was it a mere casual appendage of that kind of death, or was it of purpose and design? Ah! if we knew it, there is nothing accidental in the government of God, much less in the cross of Christ, but it was to expose us and set forth our nakedness and shame. It was to tear to tatters all our filthy rags of self-righteousness, and to reflect back upon ourselves our own

nakedness and shame. Why, just look at Him, and say if these were not the ends and the effects. Was He, the head exposed so, and were not we also the members? Did he suffer from such an exposure on our account, and ought not we at least to seek to have fellowship with Him in his sufferings? Oh, brethren! do not shirk this question, but look at it so, and take it so. By so doing you will not only have fellowship with Him in His sufferings but will come to manifest a becoming conformity to Him in them in hanging down our heads in a spiritual blushing and shame, and as feeling as if we were rather dashed and abased, than proud and lifted up. Besides you will be led to exhibit such an assemblage of virtues of the most agreeable kind which will make you highly acceptable in His sight; namely, self-renunciation, self-denial, self-abasement and humility, even such as will be highly pleasing and acceptable in his sight. Oh, therefore, keep looking and you will be prevented from becoming vain and proud. Keep looking, and you will be reminded how poor and naked you are. Keep looking, and you will be enabled to put away from you every false ornament of conceit, of importance, and of arrogance. Keep looking, and you will be clothed with humility and godly shame. Keep looking in order to these, and, as you may see, you will have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. See all these things beautifully exhibited in the 2nd chapter of this Epistle, 3rd verse: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself. Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

But another view strikingly reflected by His sufferings

is the agony of them,—agony not so much arising from his transfixion by nails, which must have been dreadful enough, nor yet from the crown of thorns, which must have been bad enough, nor from the bloody stripes, which must have been cruel, nor even from any terrible sensation which He had of the wrath of God on His mind, for I do not believe in any such ; for God is not subject to wrath or passion as we are : and I believe Christ was never more the Son of his love and delight than when suffering for us, but his agony in that fearful struggle which he had from the consciousness of our sins imputed to him with his determination to expiate them. Brethren, not a sin which you and I ever committed with all their aggravations and deserts but what passed through His mind ; and, considering His pure and holy soul, what must He have felt in the first instance, but righteous indignation against them, so that between this and at the same time the ardour of His love embattling with it, now that He was there as a sin-offering, and also that submissiveness and calm endurance which he had to maintain to make His offering acceptable, and you may have some idea of the agonizing struggle which passed through His mind at this crisis. But consider, further, His struggle on other accounts, namely, with the author of our sins, and His fell purpose of vengeance against him according to these words : “ And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor ; therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him.” “ According to their deeds accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies :” these, I say, with that cool heroism which also he had to maintain, to prevent any of his enemies obtaining an advan-

tage over him, and you may have some idea further of that awful struggle, that painful travail he had to go through before he could overcome them. The scripture holds it out under these expressions: it was the hour and the power of darkness, the hour of the travail of his soul, when he brought forth salvation unto victory. Oh how feebly do we enter into these! how seldom we think of them! how little fellowship we have with Him in them! But, brethren, this is our duty. But can we have fellowship with Christ in these? Oh, yes, in tender sympathy and conformity. Is a person suffering for us to prevent our suffering, for instance, in the transference of some painful disease or the endurance of some great operation; and are we witnessing it, and are we able to keep from suffering! Is it possible that we could help weeping and even going so far as to beseech that it might come back on ourselves? And shall we witness the agony of Christ our Creator, our elder brother, our near kinsman and beloved friend, without feeling, without sympathy even? Shall he agonize for us? shall he agonize himself? shall he ever call upon the sword of justice to slay him? shall he, even with his own hand, thrust it into his vitals, but so far as it had to be done by others? shall he cry for it, and order it, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, smite the shepherd!" Shall we know all this, and believe all this, and shall we not also suffer with Him? Shall the prophecy which was declared with regard to the Jews not be fulfilled with regard to us, "they shall look upon him whom they pierced, and mourn for him"? Oh, yes, we shall have fellowship with Him in his sufferings. A keen sympathy, a sensitive disposition, a brokenness of heart even shall be felt by us, just as we dwell

on the agony of His sufferings, just as we remember "that he bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Nay, a revenge will be felt by us against them utterly to exterminate them, just as we consider that he died for them, "the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God." Well, all this is fellowship with Christ in his sufferings and conformity unto them which will be manifested by corresponding virtues and acts. For instance, to give an example. At one time when the Missionary Board was very low, and word sent to the missionaries that some of them would have to be discontinued ; and at a time also when they were more than ordinarily successful ; at a time also when there was much extravagance and pleasure at home,—what was the answer, think you, which the missionaries returned to such an intimation ? "It comports very ill," say they, "with fellowship with Christ's sufferings to have so much to spend on extravagance and pleasure, and so little upon Christ and his suffering Church." The return came like a thunder-clap upon the Churches. It wrought like a charm. Money came in in abundance ; and the ladies, to shew that they were not ladies of extravagance, but had fellowship with Christ, tore the earrings out of their ears, and the bracelets from their hands, and sent them in heaps to the Board till they were literally loaded therewith. Brethren, there was practical fellowship with Christ in his sufferings ; and there is no doubt, if we had the same, we would shew it in a similar way by giving ourselves and all that we have to His service. In this fellowship also there would be no sensuousness, no luxury, no vain shew which would be altogether unseemly in the view of the cross ; there would be no selfishness, no interestedness in the view of such a sight, but everything noble, self-denying and generous, every-

thing shewing that we are crucified to the world, and the world to us. Christ crucified, or the Son of God suffering for us, would teach us such fellowship with His sufferings as to lead us readily to imitate Him, and to make such sacrifices on the altar of self-denial and generosity as would shew full conformity to him. Oh, then, let Christ and his sufferings be continually before your mind. Shrink not from it, however unnatural, however unpleasant the exercise may be. Turn not away from it, however delicate your feelings, however sensitive your minds, however repugnant to your natural taste and desires, however ready you may be to feast your minds on other objects as you think more agreeable and attractive. Oh, if you would but only think of it, and look, you would see a halo of glory shining through all His shame and agony, such a halo apprehended by himself as made Him readily endure the cross and despise the shame. Why, what glory? The glory of emptying himself that you might be full; the glory of exposing himself, that you might be covered and beautified; the glory of receiving a glorious recompense for himself, that He might have the power of bestowing it upon you, and thus giving you a happy exchange for all your sufferings in which you had fellowship with Him here. Therefore look till you see all the shame covered with glory, all the agony exchanged for joy, and yourselves beautifully clad and adorned with them. Oh, therefore give not way to your natural backwardness to such a sight, much less to your natural forgetfulness or insensibility, but, with the Apostle Paul, be determined to “know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Why, in heaven itself you will have no other sight than the Lamb slain, so that your best preparation for such a sight there is your beholding

Christ on his cross here. Brethren, have your times, I entreat you also, for cultivating fellowship with Christ, in his sufferings here. See how careful Christ was to furnish you with one of those times in the sacramental occasions as they occur, and in the daily preaching of the word, which chiefly ought to be the word of His agony upon the cross. But, in addition to these, have you your own times as all our forefathers used to have, for cultivating fellowship with Him by close meditation, by earnest reading, by fervent prayer, for tender sensibility, for congenial feeling. Thus may you be assured that you will become like to Christ, in heart, in disposition, in outward conduct, that you will be acceptable to Him, and that He will reward you with His own crown when you have been ready enough to suffer with him here. You will feel also, I am sure, more happiness in these finer and softer feelings of your nature than you would in the gratification of your own vanity and pride, and rejoice far more in sympathy with Christ than with a vain and pleasure going world. My fair friends, arrayed in beauty and in fashion before me, may I speak to you without giving any offence, as I mean none; not that I dislike dress, for I think there is more foolishness in being whimsically singular than robed in the height of fashion, but as those professing fellowship with Christ in his sufferings is there not such a thing as uniting elegance with plainness and gentility with simplicity, and thus indicating outwardly the virtues of the cross and exhibiting the lustre of it instead of the fashion of this poor vain ostentatious world which passeth away. I wish to set before you here the example of a family and congregation with which I was once acquainted in one of our larger cities. I was struck exceedingly with the plainness

and gentility of everything. Though evidently a very wealthy family, I said nothing till I went to their church, which was considered one of the wealthiest in the city, when I observed the same thing. When, in the afternoon, I stated my observation, and asked an explanation from the lady of the house, "Sir" said she, "we live in a splendid and worldly city. We consider it our duty as Christians to shew them an example, not for the purpose of saving, for what we save we give to the Church, but our conformity unto Christ, our fellowship with Him in his sufferings." Brethren, what an example! what an exhibition! what noble self-denial, aims and ends. But to conclude, as Paul said, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us."

SERMON V.

CRUCIFIXION WITH CHRIST.

I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, &c.—Galatians ii. 20.

STRANGE that in our fallen state we all affect independence, wilfulness, and determination, while, in fact, we cannot be so. The most arbitrary must often become the most servile; the most independent, the most sneaking; and the most powerful, even the most weak; see it in despotic rulers and political characters almost of every kind; see it even in all the relationships of life, how in general to get along they have to become humble and condescending, even when they would affect to be great and important. So strange and contrarily do we generally act with ourselves and others.

Even in Adam though he had stood, and we in him, and now suppose we would then have felt consequential and important, yet not so, for then we would have felt as humble and self-denied as now we do under Christ. It would then be that we would all be looking to Adam, and acknowledging our indebtedness to him, and not, as we now suppose, in our fallen state important and great.

But what of all this to the text? Why, brethren, we have a class of Christians that would be arrogant and dictatorial as if they had all mind and virtue of their own, and were perfectly independent of all others; while, as

professed Christians, they have nothing of their own but are fully dependent on Christ alone. They have not even an existence in themselves, but only in Him ; nay, not even that, for it is Christ that liveth in them. They have further no acts of their own that they can speak of but only the acts of Christ ; acts further which they neither would or could perform ; and what is wonderful, they have these attributed to them as if they had done them ; nay even are allowed to speak of them as if they actually had done them, but of course with none of that proud and arrogant spirit which they once had, but with that humility, dependence, and gratitude which now become them. Now for the text, “ I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

But how can any one be said to be crucified with Christ when they are not ? Why, in virtue of their union to Him, and identity with Him, their right also in course to all that He did for them, and wrought out for them in their room, and stead ? Hence in the text they are said to be crucified with Him ; elsewhere to be buried with Him ; nay, even to be raised with Him, and to sit together with Him in heavenly places. Not that any of these were done by them, but only by Him, as their representative and surety, and in Him, in virtue of their union with Him, and identity with Him. Oh ! brethren, I wish we had all a faith that would cover, and take in this ground, and then how assured we would feel of our salvation ; how happy in Him !

But to speak more particularly to the Apostle's decla-

ration, "I am crucified with Christ," I would observe that it must be spoken of in the light of the preceding verse, where it is said, "I, through the law, am dead to the law," the law in its executive and commanding authority, dead unto it either as to any fears or any hopes I have from it. How so ! Because I am crucified with Christ ; in other words the law has executed its fullest sentence upon Him in His crucifixion, and upon me in Him, so that I am dead to the law as to any fears I have from it, also having received its fullest demands from His crucifixion as to any hopes I have from it, that is of righteousness by the law ; and also next, as I shall endeavour to shew you if we are crucified with him, as to those sins which we committed which brought down crucifixion upon him.

First, we say we are crucified with Christ in having the full sentence of the law executed upon us in Him, and are therefore dead as to any fear we have from it. Ah ! brethren, you know our fears by the law of sin and death. Who is free of them ? Who hath not often been in terror of them ? Who in general hath not had the spirit of bondage unto fear ? How many are there who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage ? Yes, so long as sin exists we will fear, for our consciences tell us as well as the law, that "the wages of sin is death," and the Apostle tells us that the "sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." Ah ! yes, the threatenings and execution of the law against sin receives awful confirmation from these words : "The soul that sinneth it shall die. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the law to do them."

But what of these ? The law hath taken its course. It hath done its utmost. It hath executed all its threaten-

ings : and pray what more can it do ? What is your answer, what ought to be your answer ? It is this, we are crucified with Christ. We have met the full execution of the law in Him ; and therefore what have we now to fear from it ? We read of death as the sentence of the law, but not the manner of the death ; but as no death could be more ignominious and terrible than crucifixion, we are warranted to say that we have met the sentence of the law in its fullest infliction upon Him. But what about hell and everlasting misery, some of you may be ready to say. We would answer that hell and everlasting misery are not essential to the penal sanction of the law, otherwise there could have been no atonement, no salvation. These arise out of the nature and consequences of sin itself, which, being hereditary and constitutional, till it is supplanted by a new nature of which we read nothing in the Bible, must necessarily be everlasting. But what the law strictly requires is death. Dying thou shalt die. And this, we say, has been executed in all its extent in his crucifixion ; and what more, I ask you again, can it do ? It can do nothing surely upon a dead person ; and therefore we, who are in Christ, what have we to fear from it ? But the question is, are we really crucified with Christ ? I would answer it, by asking you, do not you say you are crucified with Him, which you are when you accept the punishment of your iniquity in Him in a sympathetic and believing manner ? Then are you crucified with Him, and then can say, I am set at liberty from the sentence of the law, and from all fear. Just as we look upon Him, whom we pierced, and place ourselves in Him on the cross in subjection to law, can we say, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

But, secondly, we are crucified with Christ in having met in His crucifixion the fullest demands of the law, in the way of righteousness; and therefore are dead to the law as to any hopes we have of righteousness from it by our own doings or sufferings. This is not as clearly known and acknowledged as it ought to be; and yet it is evident that the law is as righteous in executing its threatenings as in enforcing its commands; nay throughout the Bible it is held out as the crowning part of righteousness, being at once the upholding and magnifying of the law.

Curious how prone we are to our own self-righteousness, even though we are getting evidence continually of our want of it, through innumerable failures and sins. Mark it in the case of the self-righteous Jews who were so punctilious in the observance of its smallest ceremonies only that they might attain righteousness. Mark it in the case of our virtuous and honourable characters who pride themselves on a name of perfect justice, of charitable doings, and generous sympathies as if these met the full demands of the law. See how near even the Jews came to it in their covering up all their delinquencies by sacrifice and atonement as if the blood of brute beasts would compensate for the whole, and answer for the whole.

But the great error, the great defect in all this is their overlooking entirely of the past, and their fanciful providing for the present and the future. Even though they could have been righteous for the future, what was to stand for the past; what righteousness had they for unrighteousness then? But the great mistake with all such persons is this, that they forget or overlook that they are not under a law of life for right-

eousness in their present state, but under a law of death for death; so that if they really want righteousness by the law, their course ought to be to go to death for death, that they might meet the law of death, and to do this in such a manner as not to break any other commandment by so doing. And even granting that they did go forward to meet the law of death, and that without violence, what, after all, would it amount to; what, after all, would have been the worth of it? Why, it would have been nothing better than the death of a sinner always to continue under the power of death. And where then under death would have been the life to work out further righteousness to the law? Oh! if we could but see it, it would be as death under death all over as the wages of sin, without any hope, any remedy. And what then? Why, to exclaim with the Apostle, when thus convinced, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;" and again, "the law which was ordained unto life I found to be unto death." Well then, if this is all that is to be looked for from the law; if I am to have no hopes from it, of anything I can do for myself, methinks I hear you saying, I may as well go to hell at once; for the longer I am out of it, the worse it will be for me. No doubt, if you continue as you are, it will be the worse for you; still that is not what you ought in reason to say, which is the language only of proud desperation; but in reason to say, well, if I can get no hope from the law, I'll renounce the law, I'll say that the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death. I will say with the Apostle here, "I, through the law, am dead to the law." And, having renounced the law, the next thing you ought to say is this, or to enquire rather, Is

there any hope for me at all in any other way? Is there anything else from which I can have righteousness? Well, now, we are brought to the text. Say with the Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ? Then you will have righteousness. How so? Because it was crowning the final part of His righteousness, even His obedience unto the death by which He magnified the law, and made it honourable, by which He satisfied the justice of God, and made it honourable for Him, though just to be the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus.

It is only necessary farther to know that all the former acts of His life were righteous, as He could not go to the cross as a sinner to make satisfaction. And were they not all so? Who could convince Him of sin, was His own unanswerable challenge even to his enemies. In every act of obedience he could say, "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And, satisfied that he went to the cross as a righteous person, it was only necessary farther to know that all his deportment on the cross was righteous, if it was to be the turning crowning part of his righteousness, for a flaw here would disfigure, and upset the whole. And who will say that there was any unrighteousness in Him in it? Look at His full submission, His marvellous patience, His undisturbed magnanimity, His faithful endurance to the end, till he could say, "it is finished." Yes, his obedience, which was unto the death, was finished. His everlasting righteousness, which he now wrought out, was finished, and was unto all, and upon all them that believe; so that we have only to say that we are crucified with Him to have that righteousness which will deliver from hell and bring to heaven, that that will present us unblameable and unrebukeable

before God at his appearing. Let us view these as submission and obedience to the threatening executive part of the law. Let us have fellowship with Him in his sufferings by looking only on the cross. Then shall we be able to say, we have a righteousness that will both satisfy and adorn, a righteousness that will get a ready admission into the fellowship and favour of God. Acting so, we shall be enabled also to say, as the Apostle says in the 16th verse: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Acting so, we can repel also the insinuation or accusation that we frustrate the grace of God, in rejecting righteousness by the law, and seeking it only by His obedience unto death, according as he says in the last verse, "I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," pointing out that righteousness can come only by his death.

But, farther, we become crucified with Christ when we feel the moral influence of the cross on our old man as a death or crucifixion to all sin. We are more or less under the influence of every object around us, and that as we are interested in those objects. So the Apostle reasoned when he said: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Nay he actually assumes it as a fact that we are dead. Knowing this, says he, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that hence-

forth we should not serve sin. Nor is it difficult to see and to feel the moral influence of the cross upon us as the death of our sin. For instance, in the light of the cross, Christ hanging thereon, how calculated to kill our levity, our thoughtlessness. Christ giving himself for us such an instance of pure generosity, how can we, if we look upon it, but feel dead to all our own selfishness and nearness? In the light of His sufferings and agony to all our deadness and insensibility, in the light of his patience and endurance to all our fretfulness and peevishness; in the light of His shame to all our vain glory and ostentation; in the light of His magnanimity and heroism to our meanness and cowardice; In the light of His great love to our regardlessness and carelessness; in a word, in the light simply of his death to our own natural love for life. Oh! brethren, such is the power of the cross when we give ourselves up to its influence that we become like to it, and it to us; that we become crucified to the world, and the world to us. But nothing but the cross, remember, will do this, the cross, in some view or other, suited to our sin. Thus it is that at every commission, we flee to that view of it, that will be its antidote and cure, till, in the course of time, it will come to be our death and crucifixion.

But to be a little more particular on this vital and practical point, the agony and death of the cross for sin in its moral influence on our death. The agony for sin! What an evil and bitter thing does sin appear to us in this light. His, agony hanging on rugged nails, every motion making him writhe, his agony bearing our sins in his own body on the tree; what a burden! what an anguish! surely, if we estimate the evil of a thing by the punishment it endures, then, what

evil like to this which could only be expiated by such anguish? What a colour does this agony also give to the wrath of God! What a lurid flame does it cast upon hell! What an example this of sin and suffering; what a warning to flee from it! What a terror; what a restraint! Who, in fact, can venture to sin in sight of the cross? It is for the pleasure of it, generally, that any sin; but if anything can destroy that pleasure, it is the sight of agony, such agony as was endured on the cross on its account. We cannot act unbecomingly in the view of the agony of others, especially for us; much less can we of the Son of God, our Creator, our elder brother, our Redeemer. The sight of agony may harden some, but the sight of agony for ourselves, just as we realize it, will soften and break the hardest heart, and crucify to sin. Let us only say, we are crucified with Christ, and we are crucified unto sin. For what more fatal influence can anything have upon it than death? When a near relative dies, we feel as if we would die with him, particularly if he died for us; but if there was agony in his death, how we die with him! There would be no longer any life, any pleasure in that which brought to death, especially if it was the death of the cross, but a hallowed revenge upon it, that it shall die. Believers! live in the view of His crucifixion, His death, for your sins, and you will become crucified, become dead to sin. Have fellowship with Him in His sufferings, and you will be conformed to Him in His death. It may be slow, lingering, and agonizing, like crucifixion in cutting convictions, cruel mortifications, severe strugglings, painful sense of sin and shame, but not the less sure unto the death of sin than His crucifixion was to death.

Brethren, become familiar with the cross of Christ, and endeavour to identify yourselves with it. If you are to be crucified with Him, surely it ought to be most prominently and habitually before your minds. If you only can have righteousness by it to justify, how dear ought it to be to you in the view of the judgment. If only you can have hope by it and freedom from fear, how you ought to regard it, and live by it. But how humbling and grieving to think that we will live hours and days without any due consideration of it. This shews evidently we do not prize it much, do not use it much for the purposes for which it was set up. Oh ! brethren, how does Christ, think you, think of his people, who view it so little, and make use of it so little ? Would not the reflection come often to His mind, "it would appear as if I had suffered in vain, seeing that many of my people hardly think it worthy of a thought, or at least of much thought, and make apparently very little use of it." Oh ! brethren, do not you give occasion to Him to think so or to speak so, but be dwelling upon it night and day, and valuing it above everything for justification and righteousness. We ought even, like the Apostle, to say : " I am determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." It is the only knowledge worth knowing to know it assuredly in the light of justice, sin, death, and judgment ; for what will give righteousness in the view of judgment but it ? Oh ! brethren, if you value your hope, if you wish to be free of fear, if you want good courage in the view of death and heaven, study to say : " I am crucified with Christ."

SERMON VI.

CRUCIFIXION WITH CHRIST.

I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God that liveth in me.—Galatians ii. 20.

A STRANGE compound kind of life this, dead yet alive, dead to all sin, after the manner of the crucifixion, but alive unto all righteousness. Yes, there is now life in him in all holy feelings and exercises which formerly was not the case, a felt movement, a sensible direction, an indication that there is a principle of life, and not the stillness of death. The Apostle does not however say what this life is ; but as there can be no life without its movement, it may be as well to say, confining ourselves to the context, that this is a renunciation of self, a death to the law, a sympathy and identity with Christ, and a dependence on him for all that we need. By these things we know that we live, and can assuredly say, I know that I am both crucified and alive at the same time.

Yet, after all, he confesses it is not he that lives but Christ that liveth in him, passing, evidently, from the life itself unto the Agent of this life. “ I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.” Strange confession to say we live and yet do not live, to say that we live, and yet the life is not our own but another’s. True, we live, but how very

feeble and imperfect often is that life. Nay, how often and how long may we be said not to live at all? How many hours and even days have we no consciousness of life? How often when it would seem we do live, we live in mere habit and form. Nay, is it not the fact that we live only as we are enabled to live, and that our feeling often is, that when we would live it is rather to die? As the Apostle frankly confesses, "when I would do good evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Thus it is, that though the principle of life may be in us, yet it is often so dormant, so paralysed, that we may be said to live and not live at the same time. Often, to confess also as a general truth, we are not sufficient of our own selves to think anything as of ourselves,—a confession that for long used to stagger me, and to acknowledge after a while the truth of Christ's saying, "without me ye can do nothing;" and, therefore, no wonder that the Apostle who was *well taught by Him*, acknowledged, as in the text, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Wonderful confession, we again say, to make of self-renunciation, of life, of grateful acknowledgment with a view to Christ, and yet such a confession as we find great and good men in every age making. Luther, the great reformer and good man, who confessed that he needed to pray three hours every day to get along, used frankly also to confess that he felt too often like a mad dog, but that when he read the Bible he felt tender and pure at the same time. Another good man acknowledged that when he came from the church he could not compose his mind for fifteen minutes together to reflect on what he heard, that is, without wandering or distraction.

Only, brethren, try the matter, try what you can do without Christ, without praying to him, depending upon him, and you will have to confess to miserable failures and insufficiency. I have often tried it, but as often failed. Thus we come to feel our frailty, to see our dependence and to readily acknowledge with the Apostle, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

This, I have no doubt, seems strange to many who, constitutionally, it may be, have strong affections, ardent wills, industrious perseverance, and vigorous action. Yet many of these have confessed that they were only constitutional, that they were exercised when Christ was not the spring or the spirit of them, and that when they wanted to act purely with regard to Him, they had to put themselves into His hands that He would act in them, and enable them to do all in His name, and by His strength. Thus confessing that they were nothing, and could do nothing efficiently without Him, and that when any real life was in them, it was only when Christ himself was living in them, and acting by them. The chief peculiar life, be it remembered, that we should assume, is this, but in many respects so difficult to assume, candid confession, acknowledged inability, humble dependence, believing prayer that Christ would work in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure ; forms of life, I say, which peculiarly befit us. And yet as much his as any other, for there is no life in us of any kind, but what He is pleased to bestow, and keep up in us. As he says, "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

The question therefore is, how does He do so? We answer, by His word, His presence and spirit. "If ye abide in me," says He, "and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. I will dwell in them and walk in them," &c. To dwell in them, is to show his lifegiving presence; and to walk in them, his action and progress, these, being in the soul, tend to stir up its faculties, and excite its affections to himself, in those great views in which he presents himself, namely, as our righteousness and strength. Then it is that when we think of Him as our righteousness, we have a sensible evidence that He liveth in us, and when we trust in His strength, that we are made to experience its reality. It is true we cannot distinguish always between His exercises and our own; nor is it necessary that we should, for assuredly such exercises are not our own, not being natural to us; much less are they from the devil, who does all in his power to prevent them, neither from the world, which has no sympathy with Him; so that when the mind is thus exercised upon Him, it is by himself, who is the spring and strength of our life. True, he comes occasionally by such powerful excitations as that there is no mistaking his agency, as when he fastens a truth powerfully upon our minds, or raises a full flow of affection in our souls; but it is the same as when he excites our minds ordinarily to himself; it is ever Christ in us, Christ living in us. Oh, brethren! I wish you would realize the great truth, Christ living in you, by His word and spirit, Christ, the Son of God the Saviour of souls, stirring you up and engaging you upon himself, Christ your life, by his own life and action within you. Then you would often court his approach, you would

lay yourselves open to his agency, you would often invite it by your own attempts to meditate upon Him, and by your prayers that it would be granted sensibly to you. Nay, you would be encouraged to do so by His own words and promise to that effect. "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and I will love him, and come unto him and manifest myself unto him. If a man hear my voice, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

The Apostle next informs us, what the spring or principle of this life is which he lives by Christ living in him. It is faith. "And the life," says he, "which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." But, as we can hardly speak of faith as a principle, without reference to the life of which it is, so we observe in general that it may be said to be the whole Christian life, more particularly the life of self-renunciation of his own righteousness and strength with humble dependence on him for these. This is evident; for what would be the use of living by the faith of another, if we still clung to something of our own. Oh, no, faith and self-confidence are manifest contradictions, so that if we hold to the one, we must always be renouncing the other. Accordingly the believing Christian, living by Christ is always living out of himself, and therefore is self-distrustful, self-denied, humble and poor, little in his own eyes, and living only by faith on the Son of God, for all that he needs for time and eternity.

Is it righteousness for justification that he wants? then he lives on Him by faith for righteousness. Is it strength for the mortification of sin he wants? then he lives on Him by faith for strength. Is it strength for sanctification he wants?

then he lives on Him by faith for sanctification. Is it the life for universal obedience he wants? then he lives on Him by faith for obedience. And in all these it makes use of Him, as the Apostle says, "as our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and redemption."

But to mention other things no less necessary in their place. Is it to endure conflict, to resist temptation, to bear suffering, to press toward the mark, to die triumphantly, to rejoice in hope of the glory of God,—then it is to live by faith on Him for one and all of these things. Thus you see something of the range of faith, the full life of faith on the Son of God, which, however, we are afraid, is put forth by very few, the greater number contenting themselves with a mere faith of salvation, and letting most of the rest go, as not so necessary or available. But whether on a limited or extensive range, whether for few or many things, it is comfortable to think that it is efficacious as far as it extends, and receives supplies from Christ, as far as it lives upon him and makes use of Him. For what is faith, brethren, but applying and receiving; and what is living by faith, but on what we receive from him? It views him evidently as our fulness for all, and makes use of him for all. Nor does it do so in vain, for its experience is, that according to their faith so it is; as Christ says, "if thou believest with all thine heart, all things are possible to him that believeth." True, many of us are not taking in a large scope of faith just because we have narrow views of Christ and our own wants; but as our views enlarge and our wants increase, so generally does our faith, for we soon come to know that we have no sufficiency of our own, but that Christ must do all in us

and also all for us. Hence it is that faith comes to be our sole spring of action, and not only so, but after a while our sure spring of action, finding by experience that He co-operates with us, and never fails us, nor forsakes us.

And is it not in itself, in many cases, a sure spring of action : for what will more readily prompt to action than the faith that it is obligatory ? What more readily will give strength for action than the faith that it will be successful ? what more readily, pleasure in the action, than the faith that it will be rewarded and accredited ? Hence we read that faith worketh by love, purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world, faith by the Son of God, who in us and by us worketh out all and in all by us. A person without faith is the same as one going to an action without the will to it ; but with faith hath both the spirit and power for it, so that in itself it is a sure spring of action. But for this we have the surest and strongest grounds laid down in the text ; for it is said He loved us and gave himself for us, and therefore faith reasons, that if He so loved us as to give himself for us, what is there not farther that He will not do for us ? Therefore, it is, that we believe on Him for all, and that we live by faith on Him for all, as without Him we can do nothing.

As these are important considerations, we wish to dwell a little farther upon them. A great many persons are perplexing themselves about the grounds and assurances of faith, as if they were beyond their reach, and could not get the benefit of them. The error in their case is, they are looking for these in themselves when they should be looking for them chiefly in Christ ; they are judging too much

inwardly and not enough outwardly. If, instead of judging matters from themselves, they would from Christ, who so loved them as to give himself for them, then they would not only get such grounds as would encourage them to believe, but to believe assuredly for all that they need. Did He love them, for instance, when they were enemies opposed and unreconciled to him ; and shall he not love them more when they are friends, though trembling and doubting ? Did He so love them as to give himself to death for them, even death upon the cross ; and shall He not much more love them when he has resumed life again for them ? If He gave them all he could in his death, will He not much more in his life ? These things so approve themselves to our common sense, and are so congenial to our reason, that we cannot resist them, cannot gainsay them, and therefore give us every ground for our faith, which we can reasonably desire, and every encouragement to believe that if we only live by the faith of Him, we shall live triumphantly and happily. Oh ! therefore, if instead of looking into yourselves or about yourselves for grounds for encouragement, you would but look to Him who so loved you as to give himself for you, then you would have a faith large as the love and great as the gift—a faith that would assure you all things are yours, because Christ is yours—a faith that would assure you that if He died for you, He will live for you—then also you shall understand and believe these words, “He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give all things ?”

And what now, you may be ready to ask, is it nothing but faith, faith the spring of action for all things ? Yes, my

brethren, faith now, faith always, faith in life, faith in death. And what else would you have? what else can you exercise? what else would you exhibit? You have no works of your own that you can offer; you have no good about you that you can present, no merit of any kind that you can plead, nothing about you but wreck and ruin. Well, then, what is left for you but faith, faith in the merit and ability of another? and how thankful you ought to be that this much is left; faith in One who has all willingness and ability, and who will never fail us nor forsake us. There is no other we can have faith on, for they are all broken reeds; but He has proved himself worthy of it, for He so loved us as to give himself for us. It is therefore nothing but faith, for we are constantly in need of mercy and grace. But what then, you may be ready to say, is to be made of good works, of good principles, of good affections? Oh! if you have faith you will have these; but if not, you will not, for these only come of faith. Oh! then, be believing, be so all the time, and be thankful that you have the privilege, the ability to believe; for many sincere Christians, I assure you, are not able to believe. But many do not like this, they want something in immediate possession, something better than faith, namely, vision. Well, I hope some of you may get something of this, some foretaste, some prelibation, some perfection even in advance of faith. But I think at the same time that you will be highly privileged if you can but keep and exercise faith to the end, if you can but say at all times, I am believing. I hear a great deal occasionally about people telling their experience, and how good they feel, &c., and how strongly they purpose, &c.; but I will

tell you the experience I would like you all to tell—"I am seeing more and more of Christ, in something or other about His character and work. I am coming nearer and nearer to Him in a simpler and fuller faith. I am feeling more and more encouraged and strengthened to believe on Him. I feel I could trust him with a thousand of souls, even if I had them all. I am seeing that he would sooner deny himself than a humble believing soul that trusts in Him." Such is the experience I would like; then it would be the preciousness and work of Christ we would speak about, and nothing of our own. If so, then I can only exhort you, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding in Him with thanksgiving.

There are some here who are not living this life of faith upon the Son of God. They are living only upon themselves and for themselves, and what a poor life that is; how soon it will end and come to nothing! Even though you were guilty of no outward sin, nothing that could be charged against you as a dishonour, yet is there not something awful in living in the neglect of the Son of God, and not giving Him your faith. He was crucified for you to save you from hell, and He would now live for you to bring you to heaven, and yet you won't give Him your confidence that He might do so. But how think you does He, your Creator and Redeemer, consider such conduct? How does He feel under it? How will He act towards you at the last day? Will He receive you; will He consider you his friends; will He invite you to come and enter into the kingdom with Him? Ah! if you have neglected Him here, or rather wil-

fully withheld your confidence, what may you expect, but that He will reject you hereafter? If you have robbed Him of your faith, what may you look for but that He will order you from Him; and where then?—to the devil and his angels in hell. And oh! what a state that shall be! what companions these shall prove to you! Be persuaded, I entreat you, to think of Christ, what He is, what He did for you, and what He reasonably requires of you. He is, as you have heard, the Son of God, and became the Son of man that He might be crucified for you; and as He is now exalted in honour as ruler over all, He only requires for your own good that you believe on Him, that you love and serve Him. Will you do so, or will you not? If you do so, He will save you with an everlasting salvation; but if you do not, He will allow you to perish with an everlasting destruction. You have but a short time to decide the matter, for death is near at hand, and the judge is at the door. It may require some trouble, some resolution to decide; but depend upon it, it is the only happy and honourable life; for “them that honour Him, He will honour; but they that despise Him shall be lightly esteemed.”

SERMON VII.

THE GRACE OF CHRIST THROUGH HIS POVERTY THE PROCURING
CAUSE OF OUR RICHES.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.—II. Corinthians viii. 9.

THERE is not a saying in the world more true than it is common, that example hath more weight than precept. This is evident, not only from the evidence it gives us of the sincerity of him who delivers it, but from the force and weight which it gives to the precept when exhibited in example. Wheresoever, and by whomsoever example is exhibited, it speaks more powerfully than even precept itself; for if men cannot resist the obligation of duty when held out to them in the light of precept, much less can they resist it when they see it embodied in example, and consistently followed out in practice. Accordingly we see example imitated and followed when precept is neglected; and how often does it not, by awakening the most just and glorious emulation, and by quickening us from the fear of shame, stir us up to the most laudable and disinterested services?

As thus example has more weight than precept, ought we not to expect that those who have been benefited by example, would in their turn exemplify the same according to their ability for the good of others? If a person in the depths of

poverty and distress should be visited by another person who not only supplied all his present need, but raised him above the fear of future want, how would he not be struck at such enlarged and disinterested benevolence, and be under all the ecstasy of gratitude at such liberality? Moreover the deep sense which he had of his poverty with his conferred elevation above it, would cause him, even in honour of his benefactor, to imbibe the same spirit, to imitate the same example, and to rejoice in relieving the wants of others. But the case goes far beyond our conception, and becomes too weighty for our feelings when we consider that a superior whom we had offended and whom we might justly consider our enemy, should so empty himself of all his riches and treasures as voluntarily to make himself poor that we might be rich. Such an instance of self-denied and enlarged liberality as this would do something more than excite our gratitude, it would kindle into transport all the higher feelings of our nature; and no appeal to our generous affections and sympathetic feelings in behalf of others would be more touching and irresistible than the remembrance of such unmerited and unbounded liberality in behalf of ourselves.

Well, then, this was the very example and argument which the Apostle made use of when urging the Corinthians to liberal contributions on the behalf of others. They had been partakers of the grace of the gospel, but they had hitherto failed to support it with their temporal substance. They had also been behind in their contribution for the saints, so that the forwardness and liberality of other churches were set before them as a chiding example. But the Apostle had a much more powerful argument in reserve than either the

necessities of the saints or the example of other churches ; and to make it the more effectual he for a moment loses sight of these, and by barely reminding them of their once spiritual poverty and distress, which, when properly understood, were much more overwhelming and depressive than temporal poverty, but which were completely supplied and outdone by the riches and the poverty and the liberality of Christ, he founds an argument upon them for liberal relief to others whose appeal was too touching to be resisted, and too powerful to fail of its effect. For, says he, “ ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

By grace we generally understand favour to the undeserving, but here it is favour from the purest and the highest love. In illustration therefore, farther, of its character, I observe, that it is unbounded, self-denying, unmerited, efficacious, and enriching.

First, we say that it is unbounded. To be unbounded is to be beyond all limits and restraints. Now this the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was, whether we consider it as an attribute of His nature, or in its manifestations unto us. As an attribute of His nature it was manifested in all its extent, so that though holiness and justice stood in the way of its exercise, it was manifested in such a way as to illustrate holiness and to satisfy justice, and therefore was manifested in all its extent as the reigning attribute of His nature, without limit, without control. Hence we read of His grace, of the riches of His grace, of the exceeding riches of His grace, of His grace being more abundant, and of grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life.

But it will still farther appear to be so from its different manifestations unto us. It is said "though he was rich he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." Though He was rich in his eternal existence and fulness, He became poor. He condescended to be made of a woman, made under the law, and in this state to become poor and empty, even to the giving up of life itself. Now, if He who was in possession of all things, condescended for a time to give up all things, where can any limits be set to His grace? It was neither restrained by the fulness of possession on the one hand, nor diminished in its exercise by the endurance of want or anguish of suffering on the other, but rather magnified and increased. The sense of riches on the one hand, coupled with that of poverty on the other, would but give scope to the higher exercise of grace, as rejoicing that the impoverished sons and daughters of humanity would be gloriously enriched thereby.

Therefore His grace will still farther appear to be so from the design and effect of His poverty. "He became poor that we might be rich." To put us in the way merely to become rich, would have been a great instance of grace, but to enrich us wholly by means and at the expense of himself would be a clear evidence that His grace was unbounded. Those riches also, because they are suited to the nature of the soul, and commensurate with its fullest desires and capacities, and with the utmost extent of its being, reaching to eternity, show clearly also its infinite character, and give us occasion to say, the more we consider it, "Oh, the depth and the height, the length and the breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus, it passeth all understanding. Of his fulness

have all we received and grace for grace. And the grace of God was exceeding abundant by faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. And great grace was open to them all."

But, secondly, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was rich, but became poor, is self-denying grace. Here we enter upon a difficult and mysterious subject, how He who was independently and unchangeably rich could become poor, so difficult that some eminent men have been led into the notion of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, and they say that it was it that was made poor, at the time of its union with the body, and continued to be so till after His resurrection from the dead. But even granting that the soul of Christ did live in a pre-existent state, we know of no poverty to which it was subjected in consequence of its union with the body. It was always in full possession of the image of God, the full enjoyment of His favour, and could at all times command the resources of the Deity for miracle working or divine teaching. Better therefore to allow the difficulty to remain in all its extent than have recourse to an hypothesis which we neither consider scriptural nor reasonable.

But though we cannot show fully how He who was rich became poor, yet certainly we may be able to see so much of it as to show that it was self-denying. Thus, for instance, though He was rich in His eternal and unchangeable self-existence, yet when, for the sake of enriching us also, He united himself to a finite and dependent nature; who will not say that this was a great act of grace and that it was self-denying? When He was rich also in His original glory and blessedness, but to enrich us also, united himself to a weak suffering humanity; who will not say that this also was self-

denying? and finally, when for the sake of enriching us, though He was rich as the Creator and proprietor of the universe, yet chose to deny himself of all and even of life in our nature, who will not say that as an instance of grace it was of the purest and most self-denying kind? Now the question in all this is, not how he, who was unchangeably rich could become poor; but the question is, when there are two distinct natures yet but one person, how it is possible not to attribute to the one what is done and submitted to by the other. Besides, when we consider that it was the divine nature that engaged and gave all its efficacy and merit to the human, then we can longer resist perceiving how He who was rich became poor, but that His act in so doing was of a self-denying character. This character also is strongly set forth in these words, “who though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Here the whole significancy of the expression rests on these few little words, “yet took upon him,” and they are words of unfathomable condescension and self-denial. We may overlook them; but if a high and wealthy person were to take to himself a mean and poor one, what a public cry would be raised against him, particularly by his compeers and relatives! How he had demeaned himself, dishonoured himself, cast contempt on all his relations, &c.; but Christ the Son of God took upon himself our low and fallen humanity, and gave evidence of his self-denying grace thereby. And so we read that he humbled himself and made himself of no reputation, that he was found in fashion as a man, and was despised and rejected of men.

But, in the last place, I remark, that His grace, as we read in the text, was enriching grace, enriching for body and soul, for time and eternity. Here we enter on a delightful subject, one calculated to engage our attention and to excite our desires. Well, it is His grace alone that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow. For instance, first, with regard to every good thing in this life, food, raiment, shelter, protection. We have these by covenant, right and promise, and the blessing of a thankful heart with them. "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure. The young lions may lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing." Therefore the exhortations, "take no thought for the morrow." And again, "be careful for nothing." But, as some may say, God's people, the most of them are poor; but we reply also, that many of them are rich. As God himself saith, it is He that giveth thee power to get rich, and as he said of Cyrus of old, and of many others, I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places; and we believe also that if He would give the spirit duly to acknowledge and improve, He would give to all his poor to be rich, especially if all sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all other things, as He says, would be added unto them.

But it is of spiritual wealth chiefly that the grace of Christ makes us partakers; spiritual wealth in a rich understanding, with good faith, love, and hope. A rich understanding, according to these words, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding secured to them by the teaching of the Spirit and the many treasures of the inspired volume. A good faith on the righteousness and promise of

grace accompanied with a pure love, according to these words, “ the grace of God being exceeding abundant by faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, and a lively hope in a glorious future, according to these he hath begotten us again to a lively hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.” What wealth, brethren, in these things secured to us only by the grace of Christ ! wealth compared with the former poverty of our souls when we were in darkness and unbelief, which is far above our estimation, and which contrasts most favourably with all the other wealth of this poor world. A poor Christian, having his mind enlightened on the grace of God, and his heart trusting in that grace, is infinitely richer than the man who is stored with all natural science, but has no faith in God, or in his Son Jesus Christ. A bright light shineth within him, which the other wants, a blessed hope particularly in regard to a glorious immortality which the other has not ; and not only so, but a prepossession of all that is future in the way of foretaste.

But his riches are inconceivably higher when we consider them, especially with regard to persons as well as things. He has God, he has Christ, he has the Spirit, and with them the kingdom of heaven at length. We can claim the offer, the possession of them, on the ground of free transfer and gift. “ I am the Lord thy God ;” others would shrink from this with repulsion and terror. And could we enter into it, we would see we could not have a richer, a higher possession. Does it not secure our right, our enjoyment also of every other blessing ? Hence, when every other is promised, do we not find them backed up with this, “ for I am the Lord thy God.”

He has, as you know, also Christ Jesus. And what is this? We all know what it is to have what is very rarely had in this world, a truly sympathetic and wise and generous friend. Ah, we are rich, if we can say we have. But what are any to Christ Jesus! His ear ever open to us, His bowels ever moved towards us, His hands ever open to us and full. But our riches in such a friend, in that he is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Oh, the grace that makes such a transfer of himself, unto us, in these most beneficial and meritorious qualities. Assuredly if we could take a hold of them, and apply them, we would have all and abound. We could say with the Apostle, all things are ours, my beloved is mine, and I am his. In him I have all and abound. True, it takes a large faith to take in all this, but no larger than there is scope for, and no larger than by frequent exercise we may come to attain. Persons complain of weak faith, and narrow faith; but just let them remember that the God-man, Jesus Christ, is theirs in all His relations and offices, and they will come to have a faith commensurate with them, and therefore, correspondingly rich and great.

But the grace of Christ makes them rich in the Holy Ghost. Christ engaged for this person for them, when he undertook their work, and therefore promised Him when on earth, and sent Him when He went to heaven. And think, brethren, what it is to have the Holy Ghost, to have another spirit than your own to guide you, to influence you, and to comfort you continually, to make you fit to become an habitation for God himself. How different this from the spirit of the evil one, that is in every one by nature, only

to impel to evil and ruin, but the spirit of God, ever to suggest to that which is good. These surely are riches which are incomparably above all others. He surely is rich who has the Holy Ghost. And are we not conscious that we have Him? Do we not feel something within us, always reminding and exciting, and making us feel uneasy, but as we are in the way of duty? Do we not feel something acting with great power at times, swaying and commanding the whole soul in some impulse, suggestion, impression or sensation, just as the occasion or the influence may be? And what is this but the spirit of God, which liveth and abideth for ever in the souls of believers. To think of it that we have the Holy Ghost, that divine spirit in such spirits as ours, the greatest gift next to Christ himself, which we could have, and that we have Him solely through the grace and promise of Christ, and how great must that grace be! Christians, how you ought to be looking within you, and watching the operations of your own spirit! for these afford a sufficiently clear and satisfactory evidence whether the spirit of Christ is in us or not. And how, when we do ascertain that He is in us, we ought to cherish his presence and influence, for assuredly He is the greatest gift we could have, and assuredly the greatest evidence of the gift of grace which we could have. "If ye who are evil give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the holy spirit unto them who ask him." To see the grace of Christ here, how much ought we to be thinking of His words, the greatest proof of grace we can possibly have. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you

for ever. Even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

And now having Christ in you, the new man and hope of glory, and the spirit of Christ, the Holy Ghost, does it not introduce you to the full sum of your riches, namely, the possession of the whole Deity himself in his triune character ? Brethren, sons of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, God the portion of our souls for ever, if you could enter into it in all His glory, and all His blessedness, you would see how rich you are, what riches you have, not only in prospect, but in possession ; and oh, to think that we are to have all these riches in full possession in heaven at last, and how great that grace that hath bestowed it.

Brethren, do you know this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Then it is a knowledge of most special excellence and interest, sufficient to command our constant admiration, gratitude and joy. But the proof of the knowledge of it is the possession and exercise of the same spirit. Brethren, Christ is set before us in the exhibition of His spirit. He is so also as an example. Let it be your highest ambition to be like Christ. Let it be your study to have the same mind in you that was in Him. In addition to admiration, gratitude and joy for his grace, let graciousness, if possible, characterize your whole way unto others. Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt, kind, wise, gentle and free. Let your heart feel always kind and tender. Let your manner be courteous and condescending, and your conduct, as far as you can, charitable and free. It was for this end that the Apostle made his appeal to the Corinthians

in the text: "And if ye do them, you will have learned of Christ, you will have known Christ. You will be like to Christ, you will become rich in Christ." Oh, surely this ought to be our highest aim and ambition; for we are, as it were, left in His place to show His spirit as well as to imitate His example. We are all going to Him, to show our likeness to Him, and to become fully partakers of His spirit, and we all expect to be acknowledged and rewarded according to the measure of that spirit we have had here. Oh, how conspicuous and glorious will those shine in heaven, who have made the nearest approach to His spirit and example which he showed on earth. Brethren, we are here but a little. We have a great deal to attain, a great deal to show, and many opportunities to show it in our miserable world. Happy those who can show it in any good degree whenever they have occasion. They are showing Christ, His blessed and holy spirit, and religion, and doing what they can to promote the cause of Christ. Remember, you have ever the example of Christ before you, and never let it be said as an appeal against your own selfishness and uncharitableness, ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as an appeal to you rather to possess and to follow it.

SERMON VIII.

CHRIST'S DEVOTION TO HIS FATHER'S WILL.

The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?—
John xviii. 11.

THE cup—a figurative term to denote the depth and fulness of the Saviour's sufferings—we mean, chiefly, His soul sufferings. Many, we fear, confine their views to those of His body, and think not of those of His soul, or, at any rate, take a very superficial view of them which they designate under the general name of the Cross. But, that they were the chief ones, is evident, we think, from His own words, “ My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death ;” and, also, from the effect of these on His body in the garden, when it is said that “ His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” As this only could be from His soul, we ought, as much as possible, to have some adequate sense of them ; for, assuredly, they were the greatest which He was called on to suffer.

But from what cause, you may be ready to ask, did He so suffer ? We answer, from the imputation of all our sins. We seldom enter into this idea ; we feel rather to think of Him as suffering for sin in the general, or, as some say, in the abstract, but seldom for the particular sins of individual trans-

gressors. We are ready to say or to think that as Adam's sin was the cause of all the rest, so He suffered for this chiefly as including the rest, and not for particular sins. But the Scriptures, we think, speak differently. "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions ; he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. He bare the sin of many ; he bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

From these passages, it is evident that our sins were imputed to Him, and that He suffered from their imputation. But they were not the less severe on that account, but, perhaps, greater, as often appears from ourselves when called to suffer from an imputed charge. How, in general, we rage and storm, and threaten prosecution to the highest rather than submit to another's imputation. But our Lord patiently took and owned it all. He submitted to it, even to the sins of an innumerable multitude. And what was the suffering, think you, from such an imputation and assumption ? Why, His pure and righteous soul must have revolted, in the first instance, from such an imputation, as nothing could be more distasteful, more hateful to Him than sin. Therefore, when they appeared before Him in all their sinfulness and desert, those particularly of a scandalous and aggravated character and most frequently committed, how must His holy soul have shrunk from them and been greatly excited and affected ! Think of it, believers ; your oft-repeated sins all laid upon Him, and all present to His mind at the same time. But as He willingly took them, and patiently submitted to them, so He voluntarily bore the suffering which they must have raised

in His innocent soul. But think of the travail of His soul in so doing—just indignation with patient resignation and suffering ; and what must He have felt until He endured them all ? You have only to cast your mind into this to see something of the travail of His soul ; but you can have no idea of it, as you can have none of the multitude and aggravation of your offences. But love must be brought into view—all-conquering love—to embattle with our sins and overpower them, to have some idea farther of His travail ; love that would cry out for their expiation, seeing He had assumed them, while justice would cry as loud for their condemnation and punishment. Oh ! how great must have been that all-conquering love that embattled successively with every sin till it was fully met and endured, that continued in its conquering and all-absorbing exercise till every sin was expiated, and the sinner consequently set free. Well, truly might it have been said, “ Love was strong as death ; the ardour of it was harder than the grave, the coals thereof were coals of fire, having an unquenchable flame. Many waters could not quench love, neither could the floods drown it,” &c. Yes, it was greater even than just indignation, greater to pacify it ; but the struggle, the travail of His soul, the combined suffering before the victory was accomplished, the soul saved from sin, must have been inconceivably great.

But think farther of the agent in all this, and you will have some idea farther of the suffering. It was His Father. “ The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ? ” Here we are lost. We can enter somewhat into the indignation of another, and, may be, scorn it, but who can that of a father, the highest, the tenderest relative we have ? His

indignation, when just, is, of all others, the most dreadful and poignant, as, the nearer, the tenderer the relation, the more exquisite the feeling. But who can think of it as between the Divine Father and the Divine human Son ? Needless to say here that God is love, and that He cannot be susceptible of passions of any kind, particularly against His own Son. True ; but God, even His own Father, hates sin with a perfect hatred, and therefore, even to His own Son, must have manifested it in some mysterious manner which the purely sensitive nature of His Son could apprehend and feel. Besides, it was not a time for love, but for high displeasure and indignation, when sin, by suffering, was to be expiated ; though we believe, at the same time, that the Son was never more an object of the Father's love than when suffering to satisfy His justice as well as to save His creatures. Yet, while the poignancy was as coming from the Father, it was, in some respects, the sweetness also ; and, therefore, Christ, the Son, as a most complacent and loving Son, says, " The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ? "

But, as may now be conceived of the Father as the great Agent, how much more of His own Deity as the Son, for, speaking after the language of men, it stood nearer and more sensitively to Him than the Father ? His own Deity, I say, is to be considered as the immediate, if not the chief, agent. Now, look at His own Deity and humanity, which were most inseparably and tenderly united ; and yet his own deity is to be considered as the chief agent. Why ? How ? Why, in bringing before the mind of the human every sin in the past, as this the human could not do, being finite ; and every sin in the future, for neither could it do this for the same reason ;

and every sin of the present, which also it could not, because of their multitude, and not only so, but also superadding His own wrath to that of the human when excited, thereby doing so till the whole were fully apprehended and borne, and thus expiating them all by a full assumption. Now, in all this, if we can enter into it, there was the acme of the infliction, the agony of the suffering, and the trial of the patience. Here it is that such expressions as these get their full accomplishment. "Surely, he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. It pleased the Lord to bruise him and to put him to grief. The waters are come into my soul ; I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me." And no wonder, when by His own act, all our sins, past, present, and to come, were laid upon Him. No wonder, when, under such a multitude, He sunk and was overwhelmed, and had no standing. His own act, how wonderful to think of, expressed in other language as His own, against himself, "Awake ! oh, sword against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, smite the shepherd." It is Jesus Christ, as to His Deity, that speaks ; for it is against the man that was His fellow that such an order was given. Under such an infliction and from such an order from such an agent, His own Deity, no wonder that we hear the piercing cry from the Saviour himself by the mouth of the Prophet : "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, in the day wherein he afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." But, of course, coming from himself, He took it willingly, as from himself, though the suffering on that account must have been the more

sharp and agonizing. The Apostle, doubtless, meant as much when he said, "When he had by himself purged our sins." But, if His own Deity had to be the chief agent in afflicting, it had to be also in sustaining, for the human nature could not suffer alone—nay, in some mysterious sense, the Deity also ; for it also had to be offered ; for what would have been the worth of a mere human offering ? But, while it inflicted and suffered in bringing all our sins to view, it sustained also. Hence those wonderful words, "I looked and there was none to uphold ; and I wondered that there was none to help ; therefore, mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me." The arm of Omnipotence, with the fury of Divine vengeance, both concurred to inflict and to sustain the sufferer, so that He was both the priest and the victim, both the sacrificer and the sacrifice, and, therefore, could say, "I lay down my life of myself ; no man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment I have received of my Father."

And now, to complete the sacrifice, to drink the last dregs of the cup, see Him nailed upon the cross. Here it is, as in a mirror, that we see the agony and demerit of sin. The hands that were stretched forth to take the fruit, nailed in token of utter powerlessness and punishment ; the feet that would have climbed up the tree of life and taken of the fruit thereof, by which, as a sinner, He would have lived for ever, the worst thing unconsciously that could have befallen him, nailed, also an obscure token of which we had in the first threatening, "He shall bruise thy heel." The tongue that parleyed with the devil, parched and cleaving to the roof of the mouth ; the head that would have been lifted up in foul ambition to

be equal with God, crowned, in mockery and cruelty, with thorns : the will that would rebel against God restrained and subdued only in suffering ; the heart, the seat of all evil, extinguished and gone, according as we read, " My heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels." Oh ! what a complication, what a completeness of suffering ! showing that a full cup was dealt out to Him, and that, to make satisfaction, He willingly drank it all to the last dregs.

And now, finally, the length of time that He suffered, which might, with truth, be said to be all His life, but at the last, especially, from the garden to the cross. I have often been tempted to think, could not a less period have met the sentence of the law, " Dying thou shalt die " ? But if every sin of every individual sinner had to be laid upon Him before it was expiated, could it have been shorter, considering the fact of His finite mind ? However speedy the act of succession might be, yet, considering the multitude of them, the wonder should rather be that it was so short. Had it been shorter, fewer, perhaps, in all likelihood, would have been saved ; whereas, had it been longer, perhaps more might have been. For not till the last sin of the last person had been laid upon Him, and fully acknowledged and borne, could He say it was finished.

And now one word more as to time, with a view to our Saviour's last exclamation, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " This, taken as it is, seems to be a question of complaint and enquiry, whereas it ought to have been construed to appear merely as a question of time. " My God, my God, to what a length hast thou forsaken me." This is clearly the rendering of one of the Evangelist's *eis ti*,

to what, and often also of the Hebrew word *lama*, which is mentioned in the 22nd Psalm, from which the exclamation is taken, and which there is the idea of time. For though it is rendered "why hast thou forsaken me?" it is immediately added in the next verse, "I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent," showing that it was time, the long time, about which the exclamation was made, "To what a length hast thou forsaken me." This was quite natural and proper, as it would, indeed, appear a long time from the garden to the last of the cross; whereas, on the other supposition, an exclamation of inquiry, "Why hast thou?" we would observe that our Lord knew well enough why, so that He needed not to have asked, and, besides, it seems to bear the marks of some petulance, and conveys something of a reflection which, in the circumstance, would have been sin, and so far would have endangered the merit of the suffering. But the exclamation, "To what a length hast thou forsaken me!" how very natural and true in the circumstance! how suited to His feeling, to His experience! without conveying the least reflection or complaint.

In conclusion, let me beseech you all to see and get as full and adequate a view of the Saviour's sufferings as you can reasonably obtain in this life. This we only can get by dwelling upon them, and holding them up to our view in all their complication and magnitude. But how seldom we do this, and how feebly and briefly we do so when we dwell upon them! It seems to the most of us to be an unpalatable and ungrateful exercise. We are so light and jovial in our minds that we are given rather to things that will excite pleasurable emotions than those that will beget sympathetic ones. But we

greatly mistake ; for the impressive and the tender are more to be cultivated than the light and the pleasurable—" if it is better," as Solomon says, " to go to the house of mourning than of feasting." But it is best of all to go to the Cross of Christ to learn the depth and fulness of His sufferings, chiefly because they were for us, and ought to have been endured by us. Now, if they were for us, ought not this to be a very natural consideration to make us know what they were ? This we do in every other case. What is for us, we want to know all about, especially if it is of value and importance. But can we estimate the value of His sufferings for us ? Can we measure them with an eternal redemption and an eternal life ? If not, let us know them in their greatness and significancy. Let us familiarise ourselves with all the dreadful apparatus of the Cross, with all the varied agony of His mind, and with their reflex action on one another. Thus will our sympathy with Him be excited, and our natural indifference and hardness be removed. Then, particularly, we will know them in their value, and feel assured that they are available for our salvation and glory. Oh, yes, brethren, the fuller our sense of the awfulness of His sufferings, the stronger will be our assurance of salvation by them. You, therefore, who are in doubt and complaining, just look here. The Son of God suffered in soul and body for you ; He suffered for all your sins ; He suffered to satisfy even Divine justice, so that His sufferings, therefore, must have been great. He suffered also suitably to engage our hearts in confidence and love to Him ; for nothing, surely, can be more influential upon us than suffering, sacrifice, and love—nothing, therefore, which should make us more conversant with them than the fact that we

have eternal life by them. Oh, therefore, look upon Him whom you pierced ; have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Behold and see if there was any sorrow like unto His sorrow. Do so at His table, when His broken body is before you. Do so in your life, that you may fill up what remains of the sufferings of Christ in your body. Do so even in your hopes, as having all your expectation from them. And will not this be acceptable, think you, most gratifying to our Lord himself ? What do we want so much as sympathy in this world ? What so pleasing to Christ, even in heaven, as to see sympathy with Him so congenial, so dutiful ? Says the Apostle, “ If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him ; but if we deny him, he also will deny us.”

But, farther, to have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings for sin, you will find the best preventative against its commission. Sin is such a hateful, painful thing, when we are once awakened to it, that we feel glad of anything that will be our protection against it. Among the many things, we find the sufferings of Christ, morally speaking, the most efficient. Just as we enter into them, and have a deep sense of their poignancy and value, just so will we find that we are kept from sin. The single thought that He suffered for our sin, when sin presents itself, will mortify us to sin and cause us to avoid it. We will say that it is enough that He suffered for the past when we sinned, thoughtlessly, and presumptuously, but He should not also have to suffer for the present and the future, when it might have been avoided. Besides, when we remember His great sufferings, we will be ready, in our grateful sympathy, to say, “ Oh, that He had but suffered less on my account ! Oh, that I had but sinned

less, that He might have had less to endure. Oh, that I could now but reduce their number by my non-commission, that I might have less to reflect upon equally with regard to His sufferings and my own on their account!" Thus you see how this works, and how Peter's words come to be fulfilled, when we dutifully answer to them: "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness." The fact when sin is present, that we remember our Lord knew this, and say (we commit it,) that He suffered for this, that it all tended to fill up His cup of sorrow, will go far to restrain us from it, to deaden us to it, to make us hate it—will go far to make us say, I will not intentionally commit it, to make Him, as it were, suffer for it in the prospect; but I will eschew it, that there may be no suffering for it, even in any view. This will be generous, dutiful conduct, that will be pleasing to the Saviour—this will show that you wish particularly to have fellowship with Him in His sufferings that you may be conformed to them in His death. Therefore, brethren, know you Him more and more fully and sensibly in these, that you may know them in their power as your preventative from sin; "for if we die with him, we shall live with him."

SERMON IX.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.—Proverbs xvi. 1.

THERE are none who are acquainted with their own hearts, and who truly wish that they were better, but must acknowledge the truth of the words of the text. For after all their endeavours, what really can they do with their own hearts? Can they reform them? Can they prepare them for any acceptable service? Can they venture to appear before God, merely with the presentation of their hearts? They may put on long faces, may hang down their heads, may even shed tears, may speak in a low serious tone, may show, as God himself says, much love, but Ah! the heart—the heart remains the same, incurably wicked under all. Who can move, who can wash it from its wickedness? Who can sanctify it to be a sweet offering to God in His service? True, we often meet with people who have great command of themselves, great power of will, great influence over their affections, and great power even over others; but alas! as one of the greatest emperors, and perhaps reformers that ever lived, candidly confessed, “I can reform my kingdom, but I cannot reform myself;” and as a greater emperor than he said, “He that

ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city, intimating, however, that such greatness is seldom, if ever, attained.

Why, brethren, even the people of God, who have the laws of God written in their hearts, and the Spirit of God dwelling in them, cannot prepare their own hearts as they would wish, but after all their watchfulness and keeping have to go to a higher power, and beg of Him to prepare them for himself. And could you hear their humble confessions and their deep deplorings, and their ardent prayers for grace to prepare and sanctify them, you would see their estimate of themselves and their dependence upon another for all, they need and crave. Blessed be God that He is all-sufficient and that He is willing to undertake the work—to prepare. Blessed be God that we are prepared to say as the Psalmist said, “Thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt incline thine ear to hear ;” or to say as in a new declaration in the words of the text, “the preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.”

This subject, you see, is very large. I will endeavour to speak of it, with a view to a few of those states of heart which we ought to have in prospect of the Lord's Supper. First of all, a pure heart. Here I do not speak of purity as the opposite of sensuality, or in the light of motive, in which it is often considered, or in the light even of those mental and moral evils from which we should all wish to be delivered, namely, pride, vanity, envy, enmity, wrath, revenge, &c. But I would speak of it in the light of that entire consecratedness which we ought to have to an object ; namely, the commemoration of the death of Christ. When the whole heart is set on

any one object, we are pure at any rate with regard to that object, whether it be good or evil.

And, brethren, I ask you, is there any one object more deserving of our consecration than this? Or is there one more calculated to command our consecration than this, the death of Christ, of Christ the Son of God, our elder brother, who should have condemned instead of saved us, of Christ bearing our sins to take them all away, so that they might not rise in the judgment against us. If we could conceive of anything more than death, or anything above death, a death upon the cross that could be done, then we might think of a higher power of consecration; but if this is above our power, then Christ's death comes in for all its efficiency in this respect. Why, brethren, we come to eat broken bread and poured out wine, or rather the broken body and shed blood of Christ. What an act! What a doing! Is there anything, can there be anything comparable to this! and can therefore any call be louder than this, to concentrate the whole soul upon it! Oh, therefore, away for a season with all frivolous and random thoughts; get the mind fixed, bring it to a point here, get a moral control over yourselves, to set Christ crucified visibly before you. Get the acquired ability to keep Him present to your mind. Do not trust to your minister to have a sermon on the subject. Then you will have clean hands and pure hearts; you will not lift up your souls unto vanity. Oh, yes, just as you have a concentrated action on His death, will you have clean hands. No impurity of any kind will attach to them, for that cross which in awful justice was the end of the law for righteousness, will lead you to cleanse your hands from all unrighteousness; and that cross

which commanded the attention of the whole universe for a season, will so overawe and settle your minds as to prevent them from being lifted up unto vanity.

But, oh ! our volatile and fickle minds. Our difficulty to command them to any given object, however solemn and interesting ! Well, you feel the difficulty. Pray. God will help. God will give you the preparation of the heart. Go to him as the Psalmist did, saying “ Thou wilt prepare their heart. Thou wilt incline thine ear to hear.” Just confess your silly minds without heart. Pray that He may stablish, strengthen and settle you, that He may give you such an overawing, solemnizing influence from the cross in its fearful yet saving aspects, as will command your minds, and then you will get purity, consecration with a view to it.

There is one happy peculiarity connected with this, namely, that any one view is sufficient to command us so that the most narrow, as well as the most enlarged can be occupied. But let us, as much as possible, take in all, and then we will have a fuller concentration and faith upon all.

But, secondly, there is the preparation of a believing heart to feed upon him in that ordinance. Surely, as you say, we do not need this, for we would never think of commemorating his death if we did not believe on it. Well, I hope not ; but it is one thing to have a believing heart in principle, and another to have it in exercise. Ah, how often we come away from that ordinance, little nourished or strengthened, and just because we have not fed upon Him by faith. But ought not that to be our very act, our chief exercise at the table of the Lord ? Are we not called expressly by our eating bread and drinking wine to see that it is so ?

And are we going to satisfy ourselves by a mere act of commemoration without this exercise, when we are called especially to feed upon Him? I call you to this; I ask you to have the preparation of heart that will fit you for this. Therefore be exercising yourselves in order to it. Be now, and in order to it, believing. Ask what you are to believe: what you are to take or eat for your nourishment and growth in grace.

The subject here is large. I must confine it, however, to a few essentials, to meet the case of every one, weak as well as strong, believers narrow, as well as full-minded. Well, you eat bread and drink wine as symbolical of His broken body and shed blood. Believe, in the first place, it was actually broken and shed. Believe this as a fact. Then think of the great and indisputable necessity that led to this, the awful justice of God that would not be satisfied merely with death, but with the breaking up of His body and soul alike in death. Then you will see that justice was satisfied, and you will get peace in believing. Think farther of the satisfaction to God, that satisfaction that merited something answering to the greatness of the sacrifice, the greatness of the suffering, namely, His lost favour and love, and eternal life with Him in heaven, and then you will not only have peace but joy in believing. But above all, think of the love of Him who died for you on the cross, that love that induced Him to do so, that love that verified His own words, "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And you will get so strengthened and animated, as to say with the Apostle, "the love of Christ constraineth us, not to live to ourselves, but to him who died for us."

I proceed no farther on those most common acts of believing ; but be assured if you go so far, you will not content yourselves long merely with these, but in a full faith to take in a large meal, a full repast, as Christ himself commanded, "eat, O friends ; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

But though we have spoken only of those commonest acts, alike the duty and the interest of all, yet, brethren, there is something great on the part of Christ to be spoken of here, alike to all. Do you eat bread and drink wine, or the body and blood of Christ ? in other words, do you take Him in to yourselves, do you amalgamate Him with your very self ? do you identify yourselves with Him, and shall he not come sensibly into your souls ? Will He keep back from you, will He hide himself ? Will He not fulfil His own words, "he that eateth me even he shall live by me, he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." But as this is a matter which belongs to experience, I need not speak of it to the experienced, for they know it. But, brethren, believe this, prepare your hearts to receive this, and you may get more than you desire, more than you can take in you ; for hath He not said, "according to your faith so it will be !"

But this preparation of heart just to believe and eat, O how hard to get ! how difficult to attain ! Brethren, be seeking it, and after all your own exercises to attain it, just to be able to feed upon Him, go with your backward, unbelieving hearts to God. Pray for faith, for a clear eye just on the common things we presented, then, we trust, you shall be enabled to say that the bread which we ate was the participation of the body of Christ, and the wine which we drank the participation of the blood of Christ.

But, thirdly. The preparation which we should all seek to have is a tender and loving heart. A tender and loving heart. How suitable this ! How sweet in itself ! What a luxury ! I trust we all have it in some degree, but we ought if possible to have it fully. I had so much of it for several years after a manifestation of Him on the cross at the Supper that I could not speak of it without weeping, without breaking down, and though long since strengthened, yet the spirit still remains. Brethren, seek for it. It is a blessed attainment. It is a great excellency. Oh, can we be without it, can we look upon Him whom we pierced and not mourn ? Can we hear His strong crying and tears ? Can we see His bloody sweat ? Can we behold Him on His knees with His hands stretched to His Father ? Can we behold Him on the cross ? Can we see the rugged nails through His hands and feet ? Can we enter into the travail of His soul, into that mighty contest which He had to maintain ? Can we hear His piercing cry, " my God, my God ? " &c. Can we behold the actual separation between His soul and His body ? see Him actually buried in the sepulchre, without weeping, without even crying, without having something more of a tender and loving heart than we have yet had ?

Ah ! but the sting of the whole is yet to come, the sword that has to pierce our hearts. He died for us. He suffered and agonised for us, earth-born and hell-deserving sinners. Was it for us, most compassionate Saviour, that thou didst die ? Was it for us that would have cried out, crucify Him ! crucify Him ! let Him be crucified ! that Thou didst leave Thy crown and come to the cross ? Was it for such that were enemies to Thee and would have dethroned Thee, that Thou didst leave

Thy kingdom and give up Thy life ? Was Thy love so great as to encounter death and hell that we might be saved from hell ? Was it Thou that saidst “ behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow,” but also said, “ I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me ; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” And shall we not break down and be overcome, shall we not take vengeance upon ourselves, and swear that we shall strive with all tenderness to love Thee with all our heart ? Grant it, Saviour, for thy name’s sake. Amen.

But now, brethren, to turn again to you. Oh, those hard selfish hearts of ours, which nothing but the hammer of God, the fire of His love can soften, labour with them, bring them to the cross, to the love of Christ,—unto God. Pray that He may take away the hard and the stony heart, and give hearts of flesh, give you all the sympathies and feelings which ought to be in unison with Christ and His love. Then shall you have tender and loving hearts, and come in for the benefit of that blessed promise, “ If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him ; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

But, fourthly, I observe that the preparation of heart, which we should all have for the Lord’s Supper, is a devoted and oath-bound heart to His service and glory. It is so far devoted as to come forward conscientiously, to commemorate His death, but I call upon you to be prepared, to have it oath-bound. This surely is our obligation, this our duty. Hence

we call it a sacrament, a holy sacrament, which means an oath. Brethren, surely you have nothing less in view than this. Surely even now you feel oath-bound. Is it necessary to prove this? Such a great sacrifice for you requires this, such a love demands it, such an achievement requires it, such a salvation calls for it. Such also, I trust, you are acting out. You have forsaken all others, professedly to be Christ's. You have willingly renounced and given up everything to be the Lord's. Your very faith in Him as your only Saviour bespeaks this. Your publicly shewing forth His death seals this. But you come to renew your vow, to seal your obligation, to forswear every other, to bind yourselves anew by oath unto Him. Your very act of eating and drinking says that you have taken Christ for time and eternity, for body and for soul, and united you to Him in such a manner as involves an eternal peril should you ever foreswear Him. Brethren, seal the vow, confirm the oath, by endeavouring to feel your deeper obligations, to acknowledge your fuller gratitude, to sound your higher praises, to express your stronger resolutions, to live more fully and devotedly unto Him.

You say perhaps you do not make a vow, you do not take an oath. What! are not actions stronger than words; are not deeds more binding than proclamations? Who would look for a vow from one that was saved from death, who inherits everything by the entire sacrifice of another? His very life and His very inheritance bespeak His vow, and His possession of these trumpets it forth as with a voice of thunder.

Brethren, consider these things. Act not rashly; consider to what you are committed, and do not act unless you are

prepared to stand by it and its obligations. And let it not be a matter of compulsion, but of free will and hearty obligation. And if so, the Lord will come and seal your vow by His own signet, and endorse your act by His own testimony. He will so come and manifest himself as to give you to say

“ ’Tis done, the great transaction's done.

I am my Lord's, and He is mine.”

Brethren, in the view of these things, be renewing, and sealing, and praying, and you will get such a preparation of heart as will befit you rather for the ratification than for the making of the oath which will bind you to the Lord for ever.

Brethren, as the discourse has all along been exhortatory, I do not press it farther on members, but shall close with an advice to those who are not. And here I do not speak at this time to the openly profane and immoral, but to those who may have some wish to come, but excuse themselves by saying they are not prepared. Well, I believe you, but must tell you at the same time that as you view it you never can be prepared. You are seeking it as of yourselves, when you can only have it from Christ, that is by looking to Him, and not from yourselves as the efficient cause. You can do nothing by merely looking to yourselves, or attempt anything as from yourselves. You may indeed see your baseness, your corruptions. You may bemoan yourselves even, but to bring yourselves to any right feeling or principle as against these is above your power. Therefore, acting as I say, you will never be prepared; and saying that you are not prepared, in the view of your being so afterwards, is like speaking to the wind. Your preparation is to be had from looking only

unto Him and praying to Him. But that you do not do, notwithstanding all your pretence of not being prepared, and therefore can have no hope of your ever being so. But, will that excuse you, will that furnish any warrant for keeping back and disobeying His command! Shall He suffer and die for such sinners as we are? And shall we be excused for not looking to Him? not feeling aright to Him? Shall He so love us as to die for us? and shall we not remember His love?

But I rather choose to exhort you, Oh, brethren, turn your attention to the cross. View the Son of God upon it for your sins. Think of the love that led Him to die for you; and that only asks you to remember Him. And if you do so, your hard hearts will begin to relent, your feelings to flow, your faith and love to be excited, and your grateful remembrance of such acts to be stirred up. Now, this is all the preparation that is wanted. This, I may say, that is ready to your hand. This, if you really wish it, and pray for it. Oh, therefore, look unto Christ, pray unto Him, and He will give you the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue which will fit you for eating His Supper.

SERMON X.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PERFECTION.

And this, also, we wish, even your perfection.—II Corinthians xiii. 9.

THE great aim of the Gospel ministry towards believers, ought to be their perfection. This alone is worthy of the high trust of the ministry, this of the high powers of the people, this of their high capable attainments, and the high destiny that is in reserve for them. And, with a view to this, how single and pure ought to be their aim! how direct and decisive their measures, and how urgent and pointed their appeals! But, alas, how have we to bewail on the part of many, a departure from these things! There seems to be little that is direct and close to the heart and the conscience, little that touches on the great points of the Christian character; much on the other hand of the drawing of a veil over their infirmities and faults, of a varnishing even of attainment, as if they had already attained all that was attainable. Nay, what is worse, we have reason to fear that many are more intent in recommending themselves than their message, and exhibiting their own attainments than those which they should urge on their people to attain. Ah! alas, how many self-seekers are there, how few who have the wish of the Apostle in the text!

But it was not so with him. His most simple and earnest

wish was their perfection. And, with a view to this, he set plainly before them their faults and imperfections, reasoned with them on their abuse of privilege and ordinance, set clearly before them their duty, and pled only as his apology for this, his wish for their perfection.

Perfection is either personal or relative, comparative or absolute. As it is of personal or comparative perfection that we are to speak, it must necessarily turn on those higher points of the Christian character, which in some are more perfect than in others.

First, then, we say that that Christian may be said, comparatively, to be perfect, whose mind hath arrived to maturity on the doctrine of Christ, and who has full faith in that doctrine. It is with a view to this, that we hear the Apostle speaking when he says : “ We speak wisdom to them that are perfect, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.” And, brethren, you are aware that there is great room for perfection or imperfection here. How few have that wisdom, or have attained to that maturity of mind which is connected with full faith. Harken to the doubts which many express in regard to their state. Look at their anxieties and fears, and we have at once an evidence of the imperfection of their minds, of the weakness of their faith. But there can be no doubt, certainly, that Christ’s work is a perfect work, that His righteousness is perfect, that His atonement is complete, that, in fact, whatever the Son of God put His hand to, He did complete. We shrink with instinctive horror at the idea that any thing that the Son of God did He left uncertain or incomplete ; and yet how are we to account for the doubts and fears of believers on the

work of Christ, but that it is incomplete? They do not see it fully in its own nature as excellent and meritorious. They do not see it in its connection with law and justice, and the character of God, as to see that it hath magnified and glorified them. They do not see it in its effects as delivering from hell, and bringing to heaven. The truth is, with regard to many, they have hardly one distinct conception of its excellency and character. They may tell you, indeed, with regard to this one thing, that He died for us ; but as to having a clear view on what account He did so, or on how many accounts it is an atonement for sin, they cannot say, and hence their fears and doubts about it. But in opposition to all this, there are some who are mature in their minds, see clearly, and consequently have a full faith. Thus, for instance, to give a few of their views. They see the Son of God in a holy human nature, and therefore they see in this the friendship and the love of God for man. They see, also, human nature honoured and glorified in all this, nay in a certain sense deified. They see the Son of God under law for them, and, in His obedience to it, their substitute and surety ; they see Him also suffering unto death for them even the ignominious and bitter death of the cross, and their punishment transferred unto Him, and therefore they see that, in justice, they must go free, He having made an atonement for all their sins. They hear the Son himself saying, “ God so loved the world as to give His only beloved son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” They hear Him also saying : “ Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” And

in all this, they see there is no room for fear or doubting, but for the fullest assurance and confidence. They therefore believe. They therefore walk in the light. And if you wish to see their highest maturity of mind, their greatest perfection in this respect, on the work of Christ, with their fullest faith thereon, you will see it in those wonderful words of the Apostle which may alike be considered words of challenge and of triumph: "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Oh! brethren, I wish you could all talk so, that you had all that assurance and faith, then you would have little doubt or fear. Yea, you would have full faith, you would have it with a proportion to the excellency of that work on which faith rests; you would be able even to fight the good fight of faith, and ward off all the fiery darts of the evil one. "You would be strong in faith giving glory to God. You would be rooted, and built up in Christ, established in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding in Him with thanksgiving." In a word, ye would be perfect men in Christ Jesus.

Secondly, I observe, that that person, comparatively speaking, may be said to be perfect who has attained in a good degree to a pure heart and a spiritual mind. Ah! brethren, there is great room for perfection or imperfection here. Who can speak much of a pure heart and a spiritual mind? Instead of being pure and spiritual, they must acknowledge, even the best, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that they cannot do the things that they would. For instance, what crowds of vain thoughts, foolish imaginations, and childish desires, come into

the mind ; what sinister hypocritical motives and ends ; what carnal earthly things do we often give way to ! Oh ! brethren, hide nothing ; let the truth be fully exposed and told. What times together will these be indulged in ! how little restraint do we put upon them ! how little do we feel that they sink us far beneath the dignity of our nature when we give way to them ! And when we do seek after purity and spirituality of mind, how little of the disposition we have, how unable to keep it up for any length of time, and how ready is it to be overpowered or drawn aside by a prevailing earthliness and carnality ! Why, the truth is, our views of God are so dim, and our impressions of His glory so light, that we can hardly see anything of God to command and spiritualize our minds.

The great claims of our fellow-men also are so feebly realized by us, that they are soon cast out through a prevailing selfishness and worldliness, and present things make such an impression upon us, through the medium of our senses, that they come to be the all-engrossing matters, corrupting otherwise our pure hearts and spiritual minds. Hence those faithful words, “ They who are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

But though this is the case with the generality, and much, too much, with the people of God, yet there are some of them, comparatively speaking, that are perfect as having pure hearts and spiritual minds. They make it their study to have such. They can say with the Psalmist, “ Oh ! how I hate vain thoughts.” With the Apostle, as they are exhorted by him, they cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. They will

not allow their minds to gad after the trifling and silly things of this world, as they know these to be their degradation and dishonour ; but, as having rational and immortal minds, they wish to exercise them spiritually on God, who is a spirit ; on His Son, who is spiritual ; and on His spirit, who begets and promotes spiritual things in them. They wish to be chiefly engaged about a spiritual salvation and a spiritual life. And, accordingly, we read of eminent, spiritual men, that they walk before God, and are perfect, that they walk up and down in His name, that is traverse in their thoughts of Him from one attribute to another ; and finally that they dwell in God, and God in them. Brethren, do you wish to know the general life of a spiritual man, as having a pure heart toward God ? Well, when he awakes in the morning, his first thought is of God who gave him sleep and protection through the night, and restored him to comfort and favour in the morning. When he comes to his meals, he thinks of God who feeds him, and feels thankful for sustenance and refreshment. When he is about his business, he endeavours to recall his thoughts often to God, and, if possible, to see him in all his ways. When he returns at night, it is to bless his household, and to improve himself and his family by profitable conversation, reading, meditation, and prayer. When he comes to the Sabbath-day, it is to keep it unto the Lord in the various exercises of worship, and not to find his own pleasure on His holy day. He has learned to think of time as a wise man, not with a view to time, but of God who is eternal, with a view to dwell with Him in eternity. Happy man ! for, as the Lord says, “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ;” as the Apostle says, “ To be spiritually minded is life and peace.’

But, thirdly, I observe, that that person, comparatively, is perfect who maintains a scrupulous and tender conscience. Conscience is the guide and dictator of our actions. If it is an enlightened conscience, it is a safe guide ; if not, a very unsafe one. Ah ! how often do we hear it said of persons, they have no conscience, or not a scrupulous and tender one. How often do we see even among good people different degrees of scrupulosity and tenderness, some allowing themselves in one thing which others would not, or standing up for things which others reject ! No doubt, much is to be referred to the different degrees of light which different persons have, and to the more legible indent which some have more than others of the laws of God on their minds ; but still, perfection is in progress, and that man, we say, has the most of it, who has an enlightened, a scrupulous, and tender conscience. An enlightened conscience, I say, on the spirituality and extent of God's law with the corresponding impressions of its authority and sanctions. We must feel also that we are under the eye of God, and that we are to do all to His glory. When these things are begotten in us, then conscience is enthroned in the soul, and the whole life controlled by it. Then, an exact and critical scrupulosity distinguishes its proceedings and an overcoming tenderness intrenches its authority. Then, in its place it guards the authority and laws of God, redeems the honour of His insulted name, and enforces the claims of His disputed kingdom. It is very jealous and tender because God is holy, just and good, because it already sees the punishment of sin on fallen angels, and even in the awful sufferings of His dear Son. It is so jealous and tender as to allow no sin committed to go unpunished, no duty to be compro-

mitted or forgotten, no claims to be overlooked or set aside. It is so jealous and tender as in all doubtful cases it will ponder and pray, and cautiously deliberate before it will act. Happy is that man who condemns not himself in that thing which he alloweth, and comparatively perfect is he who keepeth a scrupulous and a tender conscience, preventing him sanctioning anything, doing anything contrary in the least to God's mind and law.

We have many illustrious instances of this in the ancient Saints. Says David, "Search me, O God! and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me. Thou hast proved my heart, and visited me in the night, thou hast tried me and shalt find nothing. I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." So, also the Apostle, "our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world." And again, in this, "we exercise ourselves to have consciences void of offence towards God and towards men." Finally, that we could say with the Psalmist: "I have walked in mine integrity, I have trusted in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide." Surely such are near perfection.

But, fourthly, I observe that that man comparatively is perfect who is ready to every good word and work. Pitiful to think how backward many are to the work of the Lord, how small their doings, and how they excuse themselves. Though we are under the greatest obligations, and soon will be where no work can be done; yet how backward we are! and the most looking to others that they should do the work.

But while we are idle the enemy is busy. While we are standing still the cause is losing ground. While we are not

coming up to the help of the Lord, many are kept prostrate by the second death. Oh! shall we be saved, and not seek to save others? shall we have grace, and not seek that others also shall have it? Have we the gift temporally or spiritually, and not seek to be stewards of the manifold grace of God? Above all, shall we be idlers when others are engaged? shall we cease to pray when others are at it, or hold back when we see others engaged? If so, we are not perfect men because we have left undone what is as incumbent upon us to do as on others. Oh! did we but realize the greatness of the work in one immortal soul with the greatness of the prize in the eternal crown; could we enter into the sublime luxury of doing good, then it would be that whatsoever our hands found to do, we would do with our might; whatever good work it might be, or in whatever form, whether by Sabbath-meetings or prayer-meetings, or Sabbath-school meetings, or charitable meetings, of any kind, if there was any virtue, any suitableness in them to the end. The time is coming when we, with the whole race of men, shall soon be swept away, and an everlasting distinction made, when all which men so much valued shall also be swept away, when those who were at ease in Zion shall have their woe for ever; but those who improved their talents and opportunities shall have their reward. Happy will it be for us if we shall not then be found barren or unfruitful, but then shall hear these words: "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." Happy will it be for us if it shall then find us as not having been sticklish or whimsical about any good word or work, but as to whatever was lovely and of good report, it found us thinking of these things. It will never repent us when we come

to die, when we get to the kingdom of heaven, if we have been laborious and faithful here, but rather, if there is a possibility of reflection at all, that we have done so little for Christ and His cause. Oh ! therefore, be not weary in well doing. " Whatsoever your hands find to do, do it with your might ; be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," knowing that your labour in the Lord shall not be in vain.

But, lastly, that, comparatively speaking, is a perfect man who knoweth the right use of his tongue, and who keepeth it in that use. This was the judgment of the Apostle when he said : " If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." And again, " who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." Yes, the tongue is the index of the heart. Just as its tones and words are, so we may expect the heart to be. If a boisterous, froward, passionate tongue, or, on the other hand, a discreet modest wise one, it is a sure guide to its counterpart there. But if we can command our tongue when provoked, if, instead of reviling, we bless, of cursing, we pray, and in general can answer discreetly ; then, indeed, we attribute high excellence of character unto it, and are not far from that perfection which we ought all to seek and obtain. Our Lord evidently sets this standard of perfection before us on a very high ground. " Bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you and entreat you, that you may be the children of your Father in heaven ; for he maketh his rain to descend on the just and the unjust, and maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."

But we are told that the tongue is the glory of man. Oh! then to use it in our Master's praise and service in speaking of the things chiefly that concern the King, and not, as is too often the case, in foolish talking and jesting which are not convenient, but rather the giving of thanks. Did we give no countenance to the people of the world in their frothy foolish conversation, but as a good man once said, "I shall not be where I cannot have my Master along with me," then would we shew whose we are, and whom we serve, and would, indeed, glorify God, by our most glorious member the tongue. "A word fitly spoken, how good it is." To employ our noblest member for its noblest purpose, how excellent it is! And to do it wisely and graciously, how becoming it is! Let our speech therefore be always "with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Brethren, be aiming more and more after perfection. Be leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and going unto perfection. Let us seek by reading, meditation, and prayer, to have a full view of the doctrine of Christ, that we may come more and more to have a full faith thereon. Let us be striving also to purify our hearts in love, and to be supreme and habitual in this affection. Then, indeed, we shall have pure hearts and spiritual minds, and have great delight in God, and He in us. Brethren, seek especially to have tender consciences. It will be your guard and your honour, your blessedness and joy. Sin is too great an evil not to be scrupulous about; holiness too great a good not to be jealous of; happiness too precious a jewel to forego by any indulgence whatever. God is too great, and His laws too holy to be trifled with in the least, and conscience too exalted

in the soul to be degraded by any time-service whatever. If you wish to come up to the highest dignity of your being, let your consciences be as the viceroys of God within you, high and supreme, regulating and controlling every thought, word, and action; and holding everything accountable to its dictation and authority. And depend upon it, the more scrupulous and tender you are in your conscience, the more you will be esteemed by the Lord of the conscience, and by all conscientious people. Brethren, we may well seek to be perfect, as it is after such a high model and standard that we are required to be so. After God and Jesus Christ, there is an appeal to our ambition, our highest hope and dignity after. Will you not strive therefore to have the mind of God himself, to walk even as Christ walked, and, like David, to be a man after God's own heart. You profess to be united to Christ, to be one with Him, to have His spirit within you, to live upon His righteousness. Then, surely you ought to consider it your highest privilege and honour to be like Him in all things, and to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Brethren, we are all in a state of trial and improvement. Everything is in progress around us. Our minds are constituted for improvement. It is at once the law and the excellency of our nature that they are so. God looks upon us that we improve. Times does so. The scene of action will soon be removed from us. Death is at the door, and it will not matter then whether we have been high or low, rich or poor; but it will matter everything that we have grown in grace, and been faithful to the talents committed unto us. Then only will we rest from our labours, and our works shall follow us. Then shall we hear the plaudit at

last, "Well done, good and faithful servants." Surely, in the view of these things, you cannot blame us that we earnestly wish your perfection, and that we study to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

But there are some here who are not seeking after perfection, do not want it, who think they are good enough already, because they think they are not as bad as others, very conceited and easily put out should we deal a little too plainly with them about their state and ways. But you are living in the neglect of God and of Christ; you have no submission, no fear, no faith, no desire for His salvation. But, remember, there is one above who will yet call you to account for these things, and who will render strict justice unto every one. How will you answer, think you, when you will be asked: "Did you love me with all your heart? Did you accept of my salvation which I graciously provided for you? Did you value my Son, whom I cordially gave unto you? Did you become righteous with a view to His righteousness?" Ah! then, how will your foolish conceits, your little proud minds misgive you! How you will sink in your own eyes, when you will see all your imperfections and wickedness, and see nothing in Christ, whom you neglected, to cover them! How glad would you then be to flee from His presence, and how you will feel to see yourselves only in the company of those who were equally imperfect and sinful as yourselves, but only to upbraid and accuse you!

I can only forewarn and exhort you. Be convinced that you are unrighteous and lost. Lay to heart that God has given His son to die for you, that He offers His righteousness for your acceptance, His laws for your rule, and His spirit for

your assistance ; that perfection is set before you also on these grounds as well as others, and that if you but sincerely seek it, you shall have it. May God incline you all to seek often that perfection which will at once be the glory and blessedness of your being.

SERMON XI.

DYING IN THE LORD.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.—Revelation xiv. 13.

DEATH, brethren, is an awful and grievous affair, separating between the soul and the body, and from all that is visible in this life. It has no regard to the feelings or wishes of any ; but remorselessly breaks up every relationship, and ushers, at once, into the great eternity. It matters not whether we are prepared or unprepared, whether we are willing or unwilling, whether we are to be blessed or cursed, when the time appointed is come, we must die. The decree hath already gone forth, the execution hath already taken place, that dust we are, and to the dust we must return. So that there is no reprieve from this sentence, either to parent or child, husband or wife, brother or sister.

But, though there can be no reprieve from death, yet it is comfortable to think that to many the bitterness of death is past, and that from thence their blessedness begins, namely, those who die in the Lord. And for this, we have the attestation of the Divine Spirit himself, “Yea, saith the Spirit.” And such an attestation, generally, is necessary to the persons here intended, for they, generally, are afraid of it, and need

confirmation. They may try to believe. We may endeavour to persuade them, bring to their remembrance their past faith and faithfulness, repeat to them the promises of God, &c., but all will not do without this Divine testimony. How delightful, then, to think, that it is often given to timid believers, in some way or other, before they die, to quash their last alarms, and to give them some sensible assurance before they depart. They may not hear the Spirit speaking to them, in so many words, but they recognize the fact of it from some impression, sensation, conviction or other, tantamount to a voice, encouraging them to say for themselves, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth; Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

We propose to confine your attention, chiefly to the words, "Die in the Lord." This is a very comprehensive expression, requiring some enlargement and experience of mind to enter into it. It seems to be expressive of a state, rather than an exercise, and yet not altogether so, for if being in the Lord is a state, dying in the Lord must have an exercise corresponding to that state. Let us speak for a little, first, of being in the Lord, and then we shall be the better able to say what it is to die in Him.

To be in the Lord, necessarily presupposes that we have first gone out of ourselves, and away from every other, before we can be in Him. Ah! why should any, I would ask, continue in themselves or in any other, which the generality do? What is there, either as a matter of goodness or happiness in ourselves or others, to induce any to continue in themselves? Are we not all depraved? Do we not often feel wretched? Have

we not a consciousness also, of a craving for something which we find not in ourselves or others ? Is not the Psalmist's account of every man true when he says, "surely, men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie, to be laid in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity." What then ? Why, go out of ourselves, and away from others ? And what farther ? Be in Christ ! And what is that ? We would say, the exercise of your minds upon Him, with their settlement upon Him in true faith. Ah ! did we do so, we would find what a scope for exercise we had, and what a spacious home, so to speak, to live in ! We would find also what an honourable state we had come into, and how happy and secure in that state ! Into the Son of God, to become sharers of his glory and blessedness ! Into the Son of God, and then to feel secure and safe, as once in Him, no arm could take us thence ! Into the Son of God, and then to have come to our soul's rest ! Into the Son of God, and what a life-giving power for all glory and blessedness we would have in Him ! Oh ! surely, if ye would think of it, ye men of ambition, who wish, particularly, for the highest and most felicitous relationships, ye would seek above everything to be in Him. Says the Saviour to them and to all, "Abide in me, and I in you. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them that they may be one, even as we are one."

And now, as to the exercise, as well as the state, what a scope for exercise we would have, if we were once in Him by faith ! To dwell upon boundless merit in his obedience and death, boundless love in coming from the crown to the Cross,

boundless grace to supply every want, boundless glories to gratify our highest expectation ; nay, not only so, but to have an immediate investment in all these, for our present benefit and joy, and what a scope for our enlarged minds to be exercised upon ; what a boundless and glorious field ; what a life-giving power for our highest energies and action ; and what a glorious model and standard for our imitation and perfection !

Oh ! my brethren, you, who are always panting after something new and wonderful to gratify your desires, turn aside, and see this great, this wondrous sight, the Lord in human nature, brightened and irradiated with the Divine—exercise yourselves to see into the treasures of His inexhaustible complex nature—God-man—to appropriate to yourselves all His fulness of glory, and to say, “out of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace,” and to continue to do so till you can say as your right in faith, “we are glorified in his glory, and getting perfect in His love.” Oh ! had we any idea of His excellence, who is the chief among ten thousand, assuredly we would all be going out of ourselves, and away from every other, and studying above everything to be in Him, to exercise ourselves chiefly upon Him, to live in faith on Him in the realization and application of all these to ourselves. Then it would be, when we came to die, that we would feel able to die in the Lord.

To die in the Lord now, that we are brought to it, is simply, we conceive, to commit our souls to Him, in faith. Now this, though apparently a simple, I have not found in my long experience to have been an easy exercise. I have attended many death-beds in my life-time, but such generally is the

darkness and doubt prevailing that the most I could get even in favourable cases was this,—I trust in His mercy. I have a humble hope, but no feeling of assurance. No wonder, brethren. The most have lived so little in Him, during their life, that even as a matter of habit, they feel that they cannot very readily, very easily die in Him. And when their neglectful and unprofitable lives come farther into view, they hesitate, and shrink back, so that they cannot commit their souls readily into His hands. They would fain live a while longer, to be able, as they say, to do so. Depend upon it, it requires much previous living in the Lord, to be able to die in Him, a near and constant union in the practice of those words, “whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord,” to commit our souls fully in faith into His hands.

Farther, it requires much persuasion of mind, arising from a full knowledge of His character, whether, after all, He will save us to die in Him. We will not commit our wife or child or property to any one at our death, till we have tried their friendship and honesty, and are persuaded that they will accept of them. Much less will we commit our spirits into the hands of Christ till we can say,

“Jesus, my Lord, I know His name,
His name is all my boast
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.
I know that safe with Him remains,
Protected by his power,
What I’ve committed to his trust,
Till the decisive hour !”

Yes, brethren, we must know Him, know Him in His works,

as having made full atonement for our sins; know Him in His present work as interceding for us in heaven ; know Him as determined to carry out the full accomplishment of His work in the faith and holiness of His people ; know Him in the communication and sense of His love, as the tokens of our acceptance ; know Him in the gradual communications of the Spirit, as the seals of our acceptance ; know Him in the first fruits and antepasts of heaven, as the earnest of our adoption ; know Him, in a word, in that sensible union and communion with Him, in His word and ordinances, which those ordinarily have that are in the habit of living in Him, and by which they are enabled often to say, "My beloved is mine, and I am His ;" know Him, I say, something in all these, which requires, as I have said, much persuasion and assurance of mind before they are able to commit their spirits into His hands.

But how much reading, think you, and meditation, and faith, and prayer, and experimental power is necessary to be had, before we can come this length. How much even of the promises of God, to be treasured up in the memory before we can lean upon them, as God's staff, when walking through the dark valley. Just make the experiment betimes, which, I fear, few of us are doing, to see how we could meet death, if we were now called to die, and how far we could die in the Lord ; and I doubt many of us would become assured of our cowardice and shrinking, and would ask eagerly for a little more time to prepare ourselves to be able to die in Him. Ah ! I have often seen it to be so. I have been astonished to find it so, on the part of some who passed for very lively and zealous Christians. *And here I would remark that I have found it so particularly on the part of that class who, leaving

the ordinary way of preaching and praying of sound men, cried out and followed after what they wanted, lively preachers, warm prayers, enthusiastic leaders, to warm up their hearts and kindle their imagination ; otherwise, they could give them no countenance, no support. Ah ! I have visited such at the time of their death, I have had some trouble with such, some pains, before I got a foundation again laid in their souls, for faith and hope. Their warm feelings had chilled with the cold hand of sickness and death. Their heat, their enthusiasm had entirely subsided; ‘ their good frames had gone,’ as they said. The darkness of their minds only presented itself, the feebleness of their faith and hope was now felt. Ah ! say they, “ sir, I do not see Him, I am afraid that all my past experience of religion was a mere delusion.” How I have heard such, and how I could have told them if I durst, that it was just so. But how rather had I to begin the A B C of religion with them again, to try to get them back to the simple foundation of the Gospel, and to simple faith on it. “ What,” said I, “ do you not see Christ as the Son of God, and the Son of man ? Do you not see Him as the substitute and surety for sinners ? Do you not see Him in His death, are you not trusting in these, and in nothing else ? Do you not see him in His invitation ‘ Come unto me,’ and in His promises, He that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out ? Do you not see him in His fulness, as having room enough for you, and for me, and every believing sinner ?” “ Oh ! yes,” they would say ; but then reverting to the former delusion, they would also answer, “ I was looking for the evidence.” “ The evidence,” said I, “ is that to be your saviour, your dependence, your all ?” “ Oh ! no, but it was so comforting to have it.” “ And would you put it

in the place of Christ, or be more comforted with that than with Him, with that, that at the best, is so imperfect in this life ?”

But very different those, brethren, who have been living in the Lord, and steadily though it may be slowly, keeping on their life in Him. They have always been ready to read and to hear about Him. It was not so much the preacher as the Saviour that they wanted ; not so much the manner, as the spirit of prayer they wanted ; not so much the frame, the feeling, the enthusiasm, as the substantial food, the real life. They, therefore, grew in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, and gradually were coming nearer unto Him, and living more fully in Him, and thus acquiring an increased facility and ability to die in Him, when their time came.

And now shall I tell you what the closing sentiments and faith of such are when they come to die ? Well, listen and remember, and learn. It is true, methinks I hear them saying, that I was a condemned sinner, for from the time of my conversion I always condemned myself ; but what of that ? Jesus, the Son of God, was condemned on my behalf, and therefore, condemned sin in the flesh for me. It is true that I have been a great sinner during my life, and that I often sinned during my conversion ; but what of that ? I always repented of these sins, and after a while was not conscious of wilfully allowing sin in me. It is true that I was much given to misbelieving, and that even now I have but a small faith to what I ought to have ; but it is equally true that I am not saved for my faith, but for that on which it rests, and that I shall not be tried either for the

weakness or the strength of my faith, but for its reality and sincerity. It is true that I have always failed in the matter of duty, and come far short in its performance ; but it is equally true that my Lord and righteousness did not fail, and that by His obedience, I shall be made righteous ; and not only so, but that He presents his righteousness in my behalf, and prays for the acceptance of my weakest performance. It is true I have not loved Him as I ought, or grown in it as I ought ; but it is equally true that I am conscious of its purity and supremacy, and that I long for the time when I shall love Him with my whole heart, and soul, and mind. It is true that I am unstable and changeable, often up and down, in darkness and light, in joy and sorrow, in faith and doubt ; but it is as true, my Saviour changeth not ; that He is always the same, that He rests in his love, rejoices over me with joy, and that His promises are like himself unchangeable. It is true that I have many enemies and accusers, and the chief of them my own conscience ; but what of that ? for I know also that the accuser of the brethren, who accuseth them night and day, shall be cast out, and that every tongue that is lifted up against me in judgment, He will condemn ; and, therefore, what have I to fear, but everything to hope for and enjoy ? My answer, likewise, is always ready, "It is God that justifieth ; who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. I will, therefore, commit my spirit into his hands, for I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him against that day." But

finally, I would observe, it is true that I am but a worm and no man, and that it may be considered presumptuous in me to hope, and believe in this manner ; but it is equally true that I know that I have a priceless and immortal soul, that I am saved with blood divine, that I have the stamp of God's image in my soul, and that I shall make up a part of the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints ; and, therefore, presumptuous as it may be thought, I will endeavour to rise up to the dignity and value of my soul, to my high hopes in Christ, and put these forth with an exalted faith, even at the last.

Such, brethren, more or less, is what I have heard from dying Christians, and what I have often read of, in regard to others ; and let me tell you they will be all needed when we come to die, for it is the last, the trying hour, when the enemy will do his worst, when either victory or defeat will be the consequence, and for which we ought to be learning to sing our dying song long before we would wish to do so in death.

And now, brethren, to bring these remarks to a close, let me call upon you to lay to heart that death is at the door of every one of us, and know not how soon he may enter. He is coming to one and another continually, and reminding all that he may come next for them. Oh ! brethren, how solemn to think that before another Sabbath, some of us may be numbered with the dead, and have our place fixed in eternity. Then, it will be that we will either be with God and Christ, and good spirits and people, or with the devil and wicked persons in hell. How solemn and responsible our existence here ! How thrilling and fearful our condition hereafter ! Brethren, where are you ? Are you in Christ or out of Him ?

Are you living in Him or for yourselves ? Depend upon it, we shall have to answer these questions at last, and that we shall have to take the issues of the judgment, according to the answer. How awful to think that there are some here who shall have, however unwillingly, to answer, "I have not sought, nor did I care to be in Him, as I was contented with myself, and others like myself." While there are others who shall be ready to say, "I strove to cleave unto Him to abide, in Him, and to live the life of faith on Him." Then, my brethren, the sentences will follow according as our answers have been : "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom ;" or "depart ye cursed, and go away into everlasting punishment." How blessed ! How awful !

Brethren, I can only warn you, I can only exhort you, you the people of God, let me exhort you to keep in Christ. There is no safety but in Him, no satisfaction, no comfort, but from Him. See, therefore, as the Psalmist says, "As the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, and the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress," so, say you also, "our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until that He have mercy upon us." If we were wise, we would be looking unto Him ever in some view of His relation, of His character to us. We would be making Him our very life, our very existence here, as we hope, to have Him for our eternal life hereafter. Whether we are or not, His eye is upon us night and day, for our good ; nor will He cease to do so till He bring us safely to himself. Therefore, keep you ever looking unto Him, praying unto Him, and waiting for His second coming, to take you to himself. Thus, while you live, you will live unto the Lord, and when you come to die, you will die unto the Lord.

But unto you, who do not, but live unto yourselves, Christ will come, but while it will be to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe, it will be also to take vengeance on them that knew not God, and that obeyed not His gospel, that did not think Him worthy of a look, that did not own Him for their head that they might be in Him as His members.

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SERMON XII.

AN EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. II Corinthians iv. 17.

You are all aware of the afflictions to which we are liable from the cradle to the grave, so that I need not mention them ; and, indeed, if they are but light and momentary, as the Apostle says, they are not worth mentioning. Passing over these, we might enlarge upon their practical design and tendency. But, reserving this for the conclusion, we would come to speak principally of the glory which afflictions are said to work out for us. “They work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Glory signifies something that is pre-eminent in excellence, which we will speak of with regard to place, dignity, and possession.

Place, which generally is called heaven, which signifies above. This, brethren, is quite congenial to us, for far different from all other creatures, we are made erect, to look upwards and forwards. And, accordingly, our Creator, to act suitably to His workmanship, hath destined heaven above us, as our everlasting home. Accordingly, we read of a third heaven far above the present system, of a temple that is above, and of a house not made with hands, eternal in the

heavens, as the future locality of the blessed. And is not this glorious, as far above the earth, the sun, moon, and stars, the highest heavens that we know of?

True, we read of a new heaven and of a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, as if this earth were to be the final abode of the righteous, and it may be; but, as it is coupled with the new heaven, they would seem to be interchangeable terms or places, as if each were at the option of the blessed to inhabit or to interchange. But Christ ascended into heaven and lives there, and where He is, there shall also His servants be. Therefore, Christians, lift up your heads as your redemption draweth nigh; and when ye come to ascend, and to ascend up far above all heavens, to where Christ dwelleth, then you will know that you are going truly to a glorious place, worthy alike of your Redeemer and of your own, your native dignity, which He hath redeemed.

But not only as to a place above the highest of all other places, but as to the light and splendour of that place.

This also is quite congenial to us, as Solomon says, "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun." But what idea can be formed of that glorious light, which, in its corruscations, lightens up all heaven and makes it shine? We may, indeed, from considering the sun upwards to every luminous body downwards; we may, from the figurative descriptions given of the place itself, its pearly gates, its golden streets, its light like unto a precious stone, clear as crystal; we may, from what we know of the effects of spirit upon ourselves. They will lighten up our countenance with a heavenly glow, and make even our eyes flash fire; we may, from considering the higher effects of a higher order of

spirits than our own, just to mention one case—a mighty angel seen descending from heaven, when the whole earth was lightened with his glory. But what are all these to the Father of lights, who dwelleth in the light that is inaccessible and full of glory, that cannot be approached for the fulness of that glory? What are all these to the glorious appearing of Christ himself, which irradiates and glorifies all heaven, giving reason to say that there is no need of the sun to shine in it, or of the moon to enlighten it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof? But we can know nothing, we can say nothing, even from these that are comparable unto it, but only that it must be inconceivably resplendent and glorious.

Now, Christians, to be admitted into such a place as this, to be permitted to walk in the light of it, to be assured also that there is no night there, to be told, also, that they shall see God as He is, and behold His face in glory, and see also angels and spirits there, and radiate upon and from each other all the rays of the Divine glory; is not this, I ask you, glory, a glory emblazoned into one luminous halo, and infinitely exceeding any glory which ever they saw in this world?

But not only, as we read, there is glory, but a weight of glory. This is expressive of the abundance and pressure of it. But here, also, we can say nothing beyond what has been experienced of its effects in this world. For instance, when an angel appeared from heaven, whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, it is said that the keepers did shake and became as dead men. When Paul, also, and his company were journeying to Damascus, it is

said that they all fell to the earth from the bright light which surrounded them—which was above the brightness of the sun, and by which he was struck blind. Also, the beloved disciple, when his glorious Master appeared before him, it is said that he fell at His feet as dead. But how this is, we cannot say ; but that we feel it to be so is sure, just as it is often felt that a sudden flash of lightning will strike us blind, or produce immediate decomposition, so the glory of the heavenly world, when allowed suddenly to fall on us, may well be called a weight of glory for the effects which it produces.

This leads us to remark that we will require other bodies than those we now have to bear up under this weight. This, the Scriptures tell us, we shall have, even bodies like to the glorious body of Christ himself. The Apostle hath given us the particulars of this body in glowing terms, after having stated that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, he says, “ It is sown a natural body, and it is raised a spiritual body. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.”

It is little, however, beyond the fact of these that we can say of them ; for, as we know nothing of spirit, what can we say of spiritual bodies ? Some say that they are the same for substance, with our present bodies, but different in qualities ; but how they are so, or even can be so, we leave those to explain who have made the assertion. But, to have spiritual bodies, or bodies that are like to spirit in quality, agile, subtle, capable of transporting themselves, with the rapidity of thought, from place to place (you read that the living creatures, in Ezekiel’s vision, went and returned like a flash of lightning), and there seeing the glory of God in every part

of the visible creation ; and what a glory in this, compared with our present sluggish and heavy bodies, which can hardly go from place to place without danger or fatigue.

But they are said, also, to be raised in glory. This follows from their constitution being spiritual, for it seems to be inseparable from spirit that they should be luminous or glorious ; so our Saviour says “ they shall shine as the sun in the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever.”, Brethren, do we realize that we are so to shine, and to reflect the glory of our light upon one another ? Then, surely, we may be well satisfied with our bodies here, however different in comeliness from others, and rejoice exceedingly, however vile in themselves, that they are yet to be changed into the likeness of Christ’s glorious body.

But they are also said to be powerful bodies. We can as little enter into this as the others, only that we instinctively apply power to spirit, as we often say with regard to some who have weak bodies but strong spirits, what a spirit they have ! as we feel that it is spirit that gives power, and as we read of spirits that they excel in strength, and of some spirits even that they are mighty. And, being glorious, also, receiving and giving out the rays of the Divine glory, we judge they must just be as powerful as they are glorious. We know, indeed, that they must be so to be capable to bear up under the weight of the Divine glory, and to be able to do so, not as here, for the space of threescore or fourscore years, but for all eternity. Here, brethren, is the measurement of their strength, to be manifested in a life of perpetual youth and vigour, which, as compared with its short period here, and with God’s eternity hereafter, may be said to be as the strength of

God himself. How powerful, therefore, must they be ! what a glory awaits us in that eternal weight of glory which they shall be able fully to sustain ! what a glory contrasted with the dishonour that attaches to their short-lived and feeble bodies here on account of sin !

Brethren, how we should be looking at our change, at the perfect glorification of our bodies in heaven, at their eternal existence with God and Christ and holy angels, at their supernatural eternal strength and endurance.

But, farther, there is the glory also of dignity and possession. We put them together, as it is as impossible to speak of one more than another, and as one grand idea runs through the whole. They are held out to us under different names, as a throne, a crown, a kingdom, a mansion, an inheritance that fadeth not away. What an assemblage of things taken from those that are considered the most eminent and glorious in this life ! Who would have thought that those who are considered the most servile, the most straitened, the most oppressed here, as the bulk of God's people generally are, should be the most exalted, the most honoured, and the most rich in heaven ? I speak of them not as distinguished from others, who are rich and great, as many of God's people are, but as distinguished from their own former state. And, oh ! to think of it—a throne, a crown, a kingdom, and a mansion—a glory, certainly, that, for eminence, is unsurpassed, and as impossible to be described as to be conceived. What can be said of that dignity that hath a throne and a crown ?—what of that kingdom that hath a sceptre and a palm ?—what of those riches which have an inheritance and a universe ? We may think of them, we may try to speak

of them, but it is vain ; “ for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath laid up for them that love Him.” We read, indeed, of principalities and powers among the angels, of elders among the redeemed, which imply authority and rule. We read, also, of kings and priests as the universal titles of the blessed ; also that the palm of victory is in their hands, and the shout of triumph in their mouths, and many other things ; but who can speak of the glory of these things, or of the things themselves, as emblazoning that glory ? We may, indeed, with their contrasts on earth, as, for instance, with their poverty, their degradation, their dishonour here ; but if the Apostle, who was in heaven, and saw all the glory and heard unspeakable words, which it was not possible for a man to utter, how shall we, with our common talents and poor language, be able to do so ?

You, the people of God, who are fighting to get the victory of faith, who have barely bread and water to live upon, who have not where sometimes to lay your head, who are generally despised as the low born and trash of the earth, console yourselves. There is a time coming, not far distant, when glory, honour, and immortality await you, when you shall reign as kings and priests, and that, in proportion as you were kept down here ; if you deported yourself suitably in your situation, you shall be exalted hereafter. For, as the Saviour saith, “ To him that overcometh shall I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne. I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father hath appointed me, that ye may sit on thrones.” And again,

He that overcometh shall inherit all things." Happy people—glory, glory for them, even an eternal weight of glory !

But, brethren, we have yet to come to the acme, the climax of all these things. Not only an eternal weight of glory, but a far more exceeding, &c. All that has been said is as nothing which remains yet to be said, if we only could say anything worthy upon it. But if we could not speak of the others, how shall we of this ? for what can exceed an eternal weight of glory ? But what that far more exceeding thing is, is not stated. We may observe that the expression in the original is very different from our translation. It could not be rendered, indeed, in our tongue, "*Katha Huperbolén eis Huperbolé.*" According to a hyperbole, in or above a hyperbole. This will not, you know, read at all in our tongue. Accordingly, our lexicographers translate it exceeded exceedingly. But this is little better, if as good, as our present translation—a far more exceeding. But to speak to the original, a hyperbole, as many of you know, is the highest style of figure to set off the highest style of thought ; but as there was no figure in creation, even amid all its grandeur, that could answer to the Apostle's idea of the heavenly glory, he contents himself by expressing himself under the character of a figure, a hyperbole ; and to give emphasis to the expression, he redoubles it under the same expression, a hyperbole, in or above a hyperbole. We would remark that we met, some years ago, with a translation that we think comes as near to the original as any we have read. It is an eternal weight of glory exceeded by an excess—by an excess above everything else in the presence and commu-

nication of the triune God himself. In comparison of this, everything else, with regard to ourselves and place, comes infinitely short of God the portion and inheritance of His peoples' soul, according as we often sing and say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee"? Yes, brethren, it is God himself, in His infinite glory and blessedness which makes up this excess that infinitely exceeds everything else.

Have you realized it that you are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ?—that God, even God, is your God, and that you have a right to all the glory that is treasured up in Him?—that, therefore, there is an excess always exceeding, an overflowing continually overflowing itself—that all the riches of eternity, in an infinitely boundless nature, is yours, ever flowing into your minds, giving you a living even in God himself, and a capacity to enjoy all that is in God? Then will you have some apprehension to know what it is, as the Saviour says, "To be all perfect in one"—that is, in God, in God who is infinitely above every other, and, therefore, preparing you to enter into the Apostle's words, "We shall then see face to face, and know even as we are known." We shall, also, see that this is what will be giving new strength and development to all our powers, and even adding to their number; for can we be living in the infinite and always making some approach unto it, and yet not always expanding and coming fuller into it? Oh, to have these words of Christ ever fulfilling unto us, "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

Surely, brethren, this must come up to the highest of our ambition, as nothing can possibly exceed this, and, therefore, did we realize it as we might in this world, might keep us in the highest ecstasies of expectancy and delight. In paradise our sinful ambition once was to be as gods, knowing good and evil ; but now the sin, the curse is turned into a reality and blessing, for we are told that “ we shall see face to face, and know as we are known.”

When this shall be realized, then, surely, we shall be ever singing, as I have read, in one of our common songs of the multitude in heaven :

“ Around the throne of God in heaven
 Ten thousand, thousand stand,
 Whose sins are all by Christ forgiven,
 A holy happy band,
 Singing glory, glory, glory !
 Singing glory, glory, glory !”

And here, as in the former case, I would observe, a great change must come upon our minds to fit them to take in all that glory ; and so, as I have said, we shall not only have our powers greatly enlarged, but greatly multiplied. Can this be otherwise than so ? Even phrenologists have discovered in us many more faculties than have ever yet been called into exercise, just because we had no suitable objects to call them forth. But when we get to heaven, there will be room enough for their fullest display, and objects enough to call them all forth ; so that we will be all light, having no part of us dark or dormant. And do we not read of the representatives of the redeemed, “ that they are full of eyes within ?” And what is that but that they are all eye, all

judgment, all understanding? Do we not read, also, of others, "that they are all eye," without showing, as our Saviour says, "that there is no part dark, but we are as when the bright shining of a candle giveth us light"? And does not this throw a wonderful significancy on the Apostle's words: "We no longer see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, no longer see in part, but then we shall know, even as we are known"? In the Prophet's words, also, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light; and thy God thy glory." Here, as our Saviour says, "is the perfection of our being all perfect in one." Here the excess, which exceeds everything, the fulness of our happiness, as the Psalmist says, "In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore; I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

Brethren, to have done, let our afflictions work out for us this weight of glory exceeded by an excess. We have all our afflictions, as you know, and it is necessary that we should have them. The Lord takes away from us our relatives, brings us occasionally into adversity, and visits us with affliction and sorrow. But what of it, if we should only be taught not to look too much at them, or too much at the things that are seen, but at the things that are unseen? Oh, why should we be looking at objects that are so dim and short-lived, and not at those which are unseen and eternal? Surely these are incomparably the best things; surely they will stand in our stead when all earthly things shall leave us. Are they not to be had, also, by simply looking at them? and

could anything be more cheap and easy than this ? But, alas ! they are despised or undervalued by the generality, and the short-lived empty gew-gaws of this life, preferred before them. But the time will come when they shall be seen in all their value, and the others in all their insignificance. A few years, at the most, and we shall all be either in heaven or in hell ! Oh, what a time that will be, when we shall either be singing glory, glory ! or crying out sorrow, sorrow ! Look, I beseech you, upwards, forwards, at things which are unseen and eternal. Have your hearts in heaven, where Christ and all your best kindred are. Have your conversation there also. Have a respect unto the recompense of reward. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but treasures in heaven. Be looking daily for the coming of the Son of man. And if you do so, it will be without sin for your salvation. It will be to glorify you with himself when He cometh in glory. But if not ; if you rather choose to look at things which are seen and temporal, it will be to take vengeance on you, who preferred these to Him, and who despised Him, and His salvation, and His glory.

SERMON XIII.

SALVATION FROM PRESENT AND FUTURE EVIL BY PRAYER.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.—Acts ii. 31.

PROVISION abundantly has been made by God to save his people from every danger. This consists principally in the names and promises of God, of which we have a plentiful variety in his word. Thus to Abraham he made His name known as God Almighty ; to Moses, when he would send him to deliver his people, as the I Am, to Joshua, as the God that would never fail him or forsake him ; and to David as the rock, the tower, the refuge, the God of salvation, &c.

But it is evident that this provision or security in these names intimates to us a duty which instrumentally may be called our salvation also—that is prayer. And so the great stress of the text is laid upon this ; “ Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord.” To assure and quicken us, it is connected also with a promise, a promise expressed in absolute and strong words—“ shall be saved.” Thus we have the three things mentioned in the text : prayer, the name of God, and a promise, to keep up our courage and to be our security against every danger.

As the text is a deduction from the former verses, we

must read it in their connection to see from what dangers we are delivered, 19th and 20th. "I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood and fire and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before that terrible day of the Lord come;" and then the text, "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. These words evidently refer to that period of disaster which befel the Jews in the destruction of their city and polity when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. This is evident from this other programme of the prophecy, 17th and 18th verses: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy," &c., a prophecy which was fulfilled only in the immediate times following our Lord, and is never mentioned in connection with any other future prophecy of destruction so far as we know.

But we propose to apply the text in its fullest sense to every kind of danger; and to the security which the people of God have against these if they only call upon His name. These are many; and as many think we are living in the last times, which peculiarly may be called times of danger, we may in the first instance apply it to them. The prophet Joel, from which the quotation, was taken, evidently refers to these in the succeeding chapter as far more disastrous and imminent than those which befel the Jews. Says he, Joel 3, ix., "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles. Prepare war; wake up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble your

selves, and come all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about ; thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehosaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle for the harvest is ripe ; come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake, but the Lord will be the hope of his people and the strength of the children of Israel."

Brethren, are we living as many think, on the eve of these times ; are the signs portentous with a view to them ? how we ought to be concerned and awake ! Well the text tells us at once our duty and preservation ! " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Call upon the name of the Lord. But this, we fear, is too much neglected, and therefore too often unsuccessful. We may have called upon the Lord, but have we called upon the name of the Lord ? If not, we have prayed without our plea, without our hope ; for the name of the Lord alone, as you often read, is our strong tower and rock of defence. This name is held out in many and different views according to the various lights in which He may be presented, and the various situations in which we may be placed. In addition to those already mentioned, we may add the following : The Lord our God ; the Saviour in the time of trouble ; the brother

who was born for adversity ; our Father and our friend, who will never leave us nor forsake us.

But it is evident that much must be left to a wise discretion in regard to the name that may be most suitable, as, for instance, in the case of Jacob when confronted with his murderous brother Esau, he prayed so to speak on the family name. Oh God of my father Abraham and Isaac, and as much as if he had said of me, also, the promised seed, deliver me I pray thee from my brother Esau. But to mention a few more particular names. Are we in danger from war ?—let us call upon his name as the Lord of Hosts, the Lord mighty in battle. Are we in danger from pestilence ?—let us use his name as the Saviour in the time of trouble. Are we in poverty, as our Father and provider ? Are we forlorn and desolate, as the Lord that will take us up when our father and our mother forsake us ?

But let us remember, when we thus pray on His name and promise, that we do it in faith ; for it is this that gives honour to His name and promise, and pledges Him as it were for their fulfilment. As he himself hath said, what will He not do for His great name's sake ? And for encouragement, farther, let us know as we are told that there is no exception in regard to those who do so, for the text says "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved ;" whosoever—it matters not what he may be, what he has been, if only he is but sincere, but prayerful and believing now, he shall be saved. We have the promise from the mouth of God himself, and what surer can we have ? "Hath he spoken, and shall he not do it ; hath he said it, and shall he not bring it to pass ?" As Joshua said at the end of the war, " No one good thing hath failed ; all hath

come to pass." Oh yes, he must accomplish the desire of them that fear Him, of them that call upon Him in truth. His ear is ever open to their cry, his hand extended for their deliverance. He cannot overlook, He cannot turn aside their petitions. His bowels are moved towards them, His repentings are kindled together. The heart of a father feels for all his children in distress, and the ear of a friend is ever open to their cry, particularly when they plead upon his name. It requires an act of parliament for any to change their name, but as God cannot change, therefore it must remain as a successful plea for all his people as their pledged deliverance from every danger. Just let us plead in faith the name that is most suitable, and we will have to sing and say it endureth for ever, and it is his memorial to all generations.

And have we not evidence of the truth of the promise continually? Have we not in our own experience; have we not from the acknowledgements of others? What is our own testimony, but that we have always been preserved? what of others, but their preservation also? Are not the Scriptures also full of such testimonies? I set before you only one because it seems to me to cover the whole ground of danger and to meet every want, Job v. 19: "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue, neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh, neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the beasts of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. And thou shalt know

that thy tabernacle shall be in peace, and shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin." And all this as what they had observed merely from the providence of God, as they say, in the last verse, "Lo this ; we have searched it, so it is, hear it, and know thou it for thy good."

Does not this cover the whole ground of exposure, of danger, and of want ? and if these ancients had so much merely from observation, how much more ought we to have from our own also, and also from Scripture ? Listen to some of the declarations and assurances which the Scriptures farther give us, and also to their exhortations on that point. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his face evermore. He is the Lord our God ; his judgments are in all the earth. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee ; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine own hand. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee, for thou wilt answer me. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer. Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here am I. Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your heart before him. He only is my rock and salvation ; he is my defence, I shall not be moved. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him ; I will be with him in trouble I will deliver him and honour him. There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." And, finally, the text, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Finally, we would apply the text to the troubles coming, just as Peter did to the trouble then, and as Christ and the other Apostles often did, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jews, to excite the people to prayer and faith.

These, as many fear, are impending and sure, and they are more dreadful from prophecy than any that have yet occurred. We have read the prophecy of Joel already in regard to it, and need not again. But are not things, I ask you, brethren, alarming and threatening? Are not the foundations of the earth but of course ; and man set apparently against his brother man everywhere? Are we not kept in trepidation even in our own border? Who knows how soon it may come upon us, and what the end may be. We ought therefore to be forwarned and also forearmed, and the words of the text continually urged as our duty and protection. Says God also elsewhere, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast; for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity ; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain." If we were wise we would seek to hide ourselves, for it is feared there is great wrath coming over all the land, and if we did so according to the text we might have hope that we will be saved ; and not only so, but might be able to say, like the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble ; therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." It is the promise also, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

I only farther observe, as an encouragement, that, whereas in all former troubles the righteous generally suffered in common with the wicked, in this last it is thought they will all be

saved. But this, as I have said, is only as an encouragement the more readily to pray that they may be saved. For the promise is as much to them in the view of those coming as in the past, and therefore should especially be acted upon in the view of their approach. "Trust in the Lord at all times, pour out your hearts before him, he will be a refuge for us. Whoso shall call upon the name," &c.

But, secondly, we must call upon the name of the Lord for spiritual salvation as well as temporal. This is no less as clearly intimated to us from the scope of the passage as well as the other, and therefore must be acted upon; spiritual salvation from sin and misery. From sin the greatest evil which could have befallen us, and which makes the chief element of our misery in hell. Sin as consisting in our entire estrangement from God, and our complete absorption in ourselves in all that is selfish, sensual and devilish. Hence our life is a continual fight against God and a continued opposition to his authority and laws. Thus we become prepared for a final separation from Him, and a shutting up to our own personal reflections, which, from the remembrance of the past and the forebodings of the future, produce nothing but remorse and despair. God and the sinner being separated for ever, he has nothing to feed upon but his own total exclusiveness, his own sense of loss and of wrath, his own sense of sin and desert. Hence these words: "The sinner shall be filled with his own ways, and shall eat the fruit of his own devices. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

But, blessed be God, we are not left without a promise, for

we read that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved ; the name of the Lord which we have as suitable for our spiritual salvation as for our temporal ; His name that he is our righteousness and strength ; our righteousness to save us from wrath, and our strength to save us from sin. Hence we read, "This is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness;" and again, "In the Lord have we righteousness and strength." I do not enter at large into the ways in which He is so, but only that by His obedience unto death he became our righteousness, and by his spirit our Saviour from sin.

It is only for us therefore to call upon His name as our righteousness and strength, that we may be saved, for it is evident we can do nothing for ourselves if left to ourselves. No merit of ours, no strength of ours can save us either from misery or sin, so that it is only as we call upon His name that we can be saved.

Brethren, are you calling upon his name as the Lord your righteousness and strength ? then you have the promise that you shall be saved. But mind, you must allow them to have their full scope and exercise upon you ; you must make them your only plea, your only dependence and hope. Mind, further, you must have renounced all your own righteousness and strength, and found them only to be perfect rags and weakness to save you either from sin or misery. But if you thus do so and pray, nothing will be more sure to you than this promise, nothing which you shall experience more satisfactorily in your happy peace of mind and in your gradual deliverance from sin. Your praying views also of the righteousness of your Lord will serve as a guide and stimulus

also to all manner of righteousness, while His strength also, which you will daily invoke, will be experienced by you as your strength against sin. Need I mention other passages than those I have already quoted to assure you of these things? "Trust in the Lord at all times; pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us. Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

In fine, brethren, shall I exhort you to prayer ? I am afraid I need to, for I doubt there is little genuine prayer. God's complaint may as well be made now as before. "There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee, therefore thou hast hid thy face from us."

But why should we not pray ? Why not pray even without ceasing ? Is there not every necessity, every urgency for it ? Are we not invited, encouraged to do so ? Are we not welcomed in the act ? Is there not every difference as regards our heavenly Father, our merciful Saviour, from all others even our nearest, our dearest. Ah ! we seldom go to them with confidence, with freedom. We fear a frown, a repulse, a denial ; a noble-minded person would rather almost starve than beg. But not so God our Father, Christ our Saviour. Only draw near to them, and they will draw near to us. Only go in sincerity without hypocrisy in the heart, and they will hear. But that's the evil—we do not pray really from the heart. We really do not want the blessings we pretend to ask. We keep, it may be, praying, praying con-

tinually, and yet confess we do not receive, and are at the same time contented though we do not. We pray also in such a general way, the most of us, that it is hard to say whether we are praying or talking, whether tantalizing or invoking the Deity. But such prayers, if not a mockery, are at least a delusion, a nonentity. When we pray, let it be seen that we pray, and that by seeing specifically what we pray for. Let this be the case especially with regard to sin. Let us pray against it, naming our particular sins as well as afflictions that we want to be saved from. It may be our selfishness that we may have generosity. It may be our sensuality that we may have purity ; our earthliness that we may have heavenliness ; our pride that we may have humility ; our temper that we may have meekness ; our general darkness and deadness that we may have light and life, and we will not need to pray long in vain. We will ever be experiencing a present salvation, and in the end an everlasting one. May we all therefore be enabled to continue in prayer as we ought, calling upon Him especially in the time of trouble, waiting patiently yet hopefully for salvation ; and then we shall be enabled to set our seal to the promise by saying, “ Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Amen and Amen.

SERMON XIV.

THE HISTORY OF THE SEVEN SEALS.

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it was the noise, of thunder, one of the four beasts saying Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer. —Revelations xi. 1. 2.

THIS book with the seven seals, we only say in the general contains an account of the chief counsels and purposes of the Deity, which none but the Lamb could open as being a party to these counsels. The Lamb, it is said, opened one of the seals, and a noise as of thunder was made by one of the four beasts or lives, saying, Come and see. This life, the first of the four, is mentioned in chapter 4th, verse 7. And the first life was like a lion, not in form, but in character, which appears from the third, which is said not to be like a man, but as having a face as a man, which shows with regard to the others, that it was a mere likeness to quality and not to form that was intended. The life that spake here, and in the 4th chapter, 8th verse, is said farther, in common with the rest, to have six wings, and to be full of eyes within, which shews their full knowledge for their particular departments, with their full powers of despatch for their accomplishment.

But, strange that among the heavenly powers or agents one should be distinguished for one particular quality, and another for another, just as what we see in this life, thus shewing

that each takes with himself his own constitutional character, and is, therefore, selected for the particular service for which he is more particularly adapted. Therefore, this first life was like a lion, the king of beasts, as the dispensation he was to introduce and superintend was of a particularly lion-like and heroic character. His strength is indicated by his great voice, which was, as it were, thunder calculated to strike and command attention. It may be observed that this and the other lives were evidently redeemed spirits, for they are represented in the 8th, 9th and 10th verses as singing the song of the redeemed unto the Lamb.

The character of the dispensation answering to his likeness is mentioned in the next verse. Verse 2nd: "And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto Him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer." A white horse—the symbol of purity, and victory. It is not said who sat upon him; but from the fact of a crown being given unto him, we may readily judge. A bow also was given unto him, the instrument of attack in the east, but the symbol of conviction and self-condemnation in the Spirit. "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies." And, it is said, he went forth conquering and to conquer.

This, all agree, represents the Gospel dispensation under the lion of the tribe of Judah, who went on conquering till he completely conquered under Constantine the Roman emperor, who, by the representative voice of the nation, at Constantinople, declared the religion of Christ to be henceforth the religion of the empire, in the year 324.

Christianity before this had to contend with every foe, civil

and religious ; had to go through the ordeal of ten general persecutions. Yet in spite of all, it went forth conquering, subduing the people under it, and converting them, till under Constantine it finally conquered. The heathen temples were shut, their priests proscribed, and every house was dedicated to the worship of Jesus ; a remarkable event which only occurred once, and has never occurred since, and will not till the millennial day comes in a splendid certainty and universal victory.

We have another dispensation described under verses 3rd and 4th, namely universal and exterminating war. “ And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second life say, come and see. And there went out another horse that was red, and power was given to him, that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and there was given unto him a great sword.” The second life was said to be like a calf, or rather as it should be, a young bull ; the emblem of strength and of attack when excited. Can such constitutional qualities be among the heavenly inhabitant ! Can one, especially as a leader among these, be there ? Oh ! yes, we see them among ourselves, and recognize among them sterling characters of excellence. Who has not heard of the Iron Duke ? and yet he was Christian. Who does not see that such constitutional qualities are connected with other pre-eminent excellences, for great objects ? A commander of an army, to be successful, must have such. An overthrower of a nation and kingdom must have such powers of strength and attack ; and such may be among the spirits of heaven as well as earth. There is one here to introduce and carry out a tremendous dispensation of war, and carnage. A red horse,

the symbol of war. A great sword given to him. We take this to be the next dispensation that succeeded the triumph of the Gospel under Constantine and his successors, and which after a one hundred years' peace ended at length in the complete subversion and extinction of the Roman empire in 476.

The guilt of the Roman nation was great as a persecutor. Its punishment now must be equally great in its extinction. One horde of barbarians after another came down on the Roman capital and empire, from Alaric to Genseric, under the Goths, the Huns, and the Vandals, from the year 395 to 476, till they were completely subverted. But the burnings, the sacking, the massacres of all orders and ages from the highest to the lowest, from the oldest to the youngest, during that long period are above all description. Literally, as the text says, peace was taken from the earth, and they killed one another.

The next dispensation that follows is, we think, that of darkness and persecution under the man of sin. Verses 5th and 6th: "And, when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third life say, come and see, and I looked, and beheld, and lo! a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances, or rather a yoke in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four lives say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the wine and the oil." This third life had a face as a man, shewing sagacity and wisdom. This is more conceivable as an agent in heaven, than the others, and even there might be equally rare with the others. This points out clearly that the dispensation that was to be next introduced was to be chiefly by the power of mind, though one of darkness, super-

stition and death. A black horse the emblem of ignorance—"darkness hath covered our hearts and gross darkness the people," and he that sat on him had a yoke in his hand. There is only one word in the original so translated instead of the four, in our translation "zeuges," a yoke; and who does not know of the yoke, in this dispensation of darkness; in their numerous impositions, exactions, penances, mortifications, subjection of soul and body alike, to its system?

In this dispensation the holders of the faith shall be few, shewing a famine of the people of God. The wheat and barley, emblems of the people of God, rare and valuable, as every one knows during the dark ages. A measure of one and three measures of the other for a day's wage, and yet a bare sufficiency for a day's sustenance for one person; a state of things which in the greatest extremity is hardly conceivable, but as applied to the people of God, as expressive of their quality and rarity, quite conceivable. "Gather the wheat into my barn," is a figure quite familiar to all, and so of the barley, expressive of a lower standing of Christians, scarce and valuable in that age.

"See thou hurt not the oil and the wine." A warning of a solemn character made in a very particular way, from the midst of the four lives, by some voice different from the rest, but which voice may be known; a warning indicating persecution on a particular class, represented by the oil and the wine, and tantamount to the fact, that it is foreseen to be when warned against not to be. The oil and the wine evidently representing the ministers of the sanctuary who had chiefly to do with these in their office and sacrifices, and who were known to be chiefly selected and liable to persecution. Only

get the priest hurt, or removed, and the people would soon scatter. But as the crime was the greater as against them, so the warning was the more explicit and solemn, given as it was in such a way. Now this dispensation of darkness, of oppression and persecution, was introduced by one who had a face as a man. On the leader and leader's part, it was to be introduced, and kept up chiefly by the power of mind, the manly qualities of mind in preference to the mere beastly qualities of the others. And who does not know that this is particularly characteristic of the powers of darkness? It requires, as is known, the highest power of mind, to keep up the system of darkness and superstition that prevail. In the prophecies of Daniel, this same power is said to have the eye of a man.

This dispensation was introduced in the year 533, when Justinian, the Roman emperor, set up the Pope of Rome to be head over all Christendom with power to have all Churches and persons under his control, and is to last 1260 days (or years), or forty-two months, or a time, times and a half, which amount to the same number, and is to be accomplished in 1793, which was the fact, as the Romish Church was then effectually broken in France, and the year following the Pope dragged a prisoner from Rome; and though he was replaced after a number of years, by the Holy Alliance, yet is allowed only to exist by sufferance, having no power to persecute, as his time apprehended by every one is near at hand.

The next dispensation that is here introduced, is an awful one, and is contained in the 7th and 8th verses: "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth life say, come and see. And I beheld, and lo! a pale horse,

and he that sat on him was death, and Hell followed with him, and power was given unto them, or rather him, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." The fourth life was like a flying eagle, the emblem of rapidity and conquest, a dispensation, therefore, characterised by these: a pale horse, a dispensation of spiritual ghastliness; Death, his rider, an entire extinction of spiritual life; Hell, following him; the place of the damned attending. In this dispensation destructive war over a fourth part of the earth. What dispensation, as immediately following the papal one, could more fully answer to this, than that which goes under the name of the French revolution?—a revolution, in which the civil government was overthrown, the king slain, the nobles and priests massacred, all religion proscribed, death called a perpetual sleep, the Sabbath abolished, a strumpet set up in the great cathedral, as the God of nature, to be worshipped. Surely, all this was paleness and death to the life, as indicating nothing, but the ghastliness and extinction of all spiritual life, of all human and God-like virtue, and as inevitably followed by hell, and misery. The figures are so striking, and so answering to the time, that it is difficult to see how they could be misunderstood or misapplied.

This dispensation was said also to be of a foreign as well as domestic warlike character over the fourth part of the earth; and was it not just so? Was not Europe, the fourth part of the earth, then invaded and conquered by that power called Napoleon? This dispensation lasted but a short time, twenty-two years, eleven under the republican, and eleven under the imperial. And is it not remarkable how suitably it was

marked by the symbol of a flying eagle, marking the rapidity of march and conquest, which was the fact ; and remarkable, also, as being the motto on the standards of these revolutionary armies. It ended with the battle of Waterloo, in 1815 ; a compound of infidelity, of immorality, usurpation, slaughter and death.

The next dispensation is that of resignation and peace to the souls of the martyred dead. It is contained in the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses : “ And, when he had opened the tenth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth. And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” Here, it is remarkable that no agent should be mentioned as introducing this dispensation nor the two following, which shews, we think, that God has become his own agent, that he is himself to bring speedily to a close all further dispensations, and that the present system of things is rapidly coming to an end.

We have come to that period, when the persecutions of the pagan and papal world had ceased, for there has been none since the Romish power was broken up, in 1793 ; and though that power was replaced in 1815, it was intimated to it by the allied sovereigns, that persecution should cease ; and, therefore, the martyred deceased are very naturally introduced asking for vengeance, as supposing that their time for it had

now come round. They are told, however, that there is yet to be another, and they must have patience till that time, when it will be fully granted. And this is what is generally believed, when the last struggle for power and place will be finally made. As much as this is intimated in the text, and in other places, particularly in the 19th chapter of this book, 19th and 20th verses, where we find the beast associated with other kings to make war against the Lamb and his people; but when he is finally destroyed. But in the meantime, white robes are given unto every one of them, emblems of victory, and of peace, that they may be able to rest quietly till that time, and enjoy themselves in the certain anticipation of it. Here also, we have sure evidence that the spirits of the departed are alive and well, and that they take a certain interest in a future retribution.

We are introduced next to one of the most awful and ruinous dispensations that ever occurred in the history of man, verses 12th and 13th, to the 17th, namely, what is generally called the last universal war, verse 12th: "And, I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo! there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth," &c. A great earthquake, a great shaking, an overturning of the kingdoms, in which sun, moon, and stars, indicative of the whole reigning sovereignty of the earth, are to be extinguished and prostrated by blood and war. When all these are coupled together as making up the whole system, it is to shew the ruin of the whole; when only one, then a single kingdom or power only. The sun, the chief sovereignty, the moon, the lesser, and the stars, the

chief officers of state. Verse 14th: "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." Everything, that is above others, everything that seems stable and fixed, whether with regard to persons, or institutions, places, or things literal, or figurative, seem here intended as to be all removed, and set aside. The event must declare and prove the full meaning of those words, so sweeping and universal are they. But the next verses will shed some light—verses, 15th, 16th and 17th: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." These words make plain, what is included in sun, moon, and stars, heaven, mountains, &c., everything that seems exalted and fixed, and declares their dreadful consternation and ruin, when their downfall comes. But it is declared chiefly at a particular circumstance, namely, the coming, the presence, the wrath of the Lamb. This is no new thing, no recent fancy. It has always more or less been entertained, and very much so at the present time. The scriptures also are full and express upon that point, as may be seen from the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel, but especially from the last chapter of Zechariah, and the last of Isaiah, from the 15th verse; and from Daniel 7th and 22nd, and also from the 24th of Matthew, 29th verse. He is to be seen at any rate, for the cry is to be hid from the "face of him, that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Ah! his face and wrath at last, to take judgment

upon all his adversaries, the great and mighty of the earth ; how terrible in war it will be when they are all committed against one another ! We do not say when this will be, but have we not alarming prognostications of it at present ! What has been, and is now the continent of America ! What has been India, of late ! What China just now ! What even Britain ! What Europe, but a volcano ! What when the Rush shall invade Judea !—at the last then, Christ shall come, then the end shall be.

There has just been one hindrance to all this, for some years past, namely, what is called the Holy Alliance of the four great powers of the earth. Therefore, the next chapter, 1st verse, intimates as much : “ And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.” Not after these things, as they happened, but these things as they were seen without the order of their occurrence. But their occurrence is mentioned in the 3rd verse, in the prohibition given to them, not to hurt the earth, sea, nor trees, till a certain thing shall be accomplished, pointing out that the hurting of all these by their hands is the same with what he had seen about the kings and mighty men, &c., in the former verses. Four angels on the four corners of the earth, the four potentates, Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, styled the Holy Alliance, to hold the four winds that there be no hurt from war, from any quarter ; hold, in other words, to preserve the peace of Europe. Have we not been under this influence these fifty years !

Their object was to preserve peace, but God’s object was to protect His missionaries in preaching the Gospel. 2nd verse :

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” But for this prohibition persecution would have raged as the Gospel was preached ; but for this, not only every protection would have been taken away, but every hindrance presented to its progress. But trees, as well as the earth and sea—trees, men of righteousness, were not to be hurt till the servants of God should be sealed, marked by conversion, and set apart to God. And have not our missionaries and ministers had an unprecedented liberty and protection these years back through the prevalence of this holy alliance for peace ? But when the servants of God shall be sealed, then it will be given to them to hurt the earth, sea, and trees alike, either by being united for these ends, or by being broken up, and set against each other, which is more likely.

During this period of protection and peace, the number of the sealed among all the different tribes of the earth is given in verses 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th. We make no remarks upon these, because they are plain, but never, we would say, have missionary operations been more extensively and efficiently carried on to make up this number, whether an exact or merely a definite number, than during this period of peace. Or if you wish to confine the words literally to the Jews, never was more done for them than now, and as many sealed, it is said, during the last fifty years, as during the years of Christendom besides. And if the exact or definite number

are now nearly, if not wholly made up, how solemn to think that we are on the eve of the last universal war, when it will be given to these four to hurt the earth and the sea!

After this war shall be fought out, then we are next introduced to the innumerable multitude of the redeemed, that afterwards appear from every nation. When they appear before the throne of God, and the Lamb, how they are engaged worshipping God and the Lamb, along with all the angels of heaven! how they are clothed with white robes, &c., whence they came, out of great tribulation, and then their blissful reward; they shall hunger no more neither thirst any more,—all of which relates plainly to what is called their happy millennial state; for it is still all under the sixth seal to be fulfilled on earth, and which things are so plain, and so frequently referred to by other Scriptures, that we think it unnecessary to make any remarks upon them. We only make one remark with a view to another remark, namely, they stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, pointing out that the Lamb was present with them, and, therefore, on earth, during their happy millennial state. Now though this is not a popular idea, it has always had many advocates, and it must be granted, that the Scriptures often assert such a thing. Just one passage among many; Revelations xxi. 1, 2, 3: “And I saw a new heaven; and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And, I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people;” and at 22nd chapter

3rd and 4th verses : “ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God, and of the Lamb, shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.” They shall see His face : of course, He is there. But as the passage is thought by many, and with good reason, to refer to the new Jerusalem state, the state beyond the millennial one, we must refer to other passages which we have already done, at the close of the preceding chapter in proof of this. We have now come to the close of this world, and of the Church’s dispensation, and have seen that they end in a glorious climax. Nothing more can be considered as to be done, or revealed ; and therefore we read in another place, at the sounding of the seventh last trumpet, that it is finished, the mystery of God ; in the government of the Church and of the world, is finished, nothing more to be done on earth, whatever may be done in heaven. And accordingly under the seventh seal, nothing farther is added, but as it were a short breathing time before other announcements are made under the trumpets and seals. “ And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour.”

Thus, have we given our views on these seals. They are different, we confess, from the general ones. Most commentators consider them all as fulfilled during the first four centuries, and consider them as extending no farther than Constantine’s victories and revolutions in Church and State. But however important these may be, we consider them as coming far beneath these prophecies in grandeur and fact. We think also that the book so solemnly sealed and written, could not be with a view merely to a few centuries first, but to all as

containing all the great and important events during all the centuries of the Church, as in fact a great index map or chart detailing the chief things, and leaving the lesser intermediate details to be afterwards mentioned. So we think of the book of seals. We do not pretend to any originality in what we have advanced. These views have been the result only of some reading, and comparing one author with another. Yet we are thoroughly convinced of their soundness and application. We have presented them to our different congregations for the last forty years, and they have been accepted and asked for publication. We have ventured to give them in our own words, as we have been often asked by our people to do so, and we do so the more readily as we think they come far nearer and plainer to the text than others in general that have been advanced. And we only ask they may be carefully read and considered. As such we commend them to God, and look for His blessing on them only in so far as they are scriptural.

SERMON XV.

QUALIFIED MINISTERS FOR THE GOSPEL.

Apt to teach.—Timothy.

APT to teach, or adapted, or qualified, to teach. Of all offices held for the teaching of mankind, we believe there are none which require more competent qualifications than the ministerial. It has to do with such exalted subjects, and grapple with such darkness and prejudice, that talents and attainments of no ordinary nature are required of him. Hence, the good sense of mankind has always insisted on a qualified ministry. Hence, the early establishment and the long continuance of the school of the prophets. Hence, the care that our Lord Jesus was at, for nearly four years, to get his disciples well qualified for the Apostleship. Hence, the propriety of the charge of Paul to Timothy in regard to a succession of ministers, “The things which thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.” In a word, that which concentrates every other qualification in this, as a paramount one, the injunction of the text, apt to teach.

To be apt or qualified to teach, implies evidently, in the first place, that we be well instructed ourselves in those matters we teach to others. These are many and important, but yet not equally so, nor alike necessary. Considering the

standing of our people in general, we hold that it is much better to be thoroughly acquainted with a few than ordinarily with all, and to feel always at home in a masterly manner upon these, than feeble with all. And you can readily enough anticipate me in those few essential things which, I insist, should be thoroughly attained. They are the corruption of man, the need of a Saviour, the fulness of the atonement, the riches of grace, the nature of faith and of regeneration, with the obligation and fulness of Gospel obedience. Oh! that we were only thoroughly versant with these, that we knew every idea connected with them, and that we saw them clearly in their fulness and harmony, and what enlightened and qualified men would we be! what stars in the gospel firmament, what teachers shewing clearly, aptness to teach. And yet, brethren, I wish to derogate nothing from the Christian ministry, though, with all respect, I venture the saying that I have never yet heard in the whole course of my ministry what might be called a simple and direct, yet rich discourse with a reference to the common sense of mankind, apart from all system, on either the fulness of the atonement or the simple nature of faith and regeneration. Oh! when I recollect my own enquiries when a youth in regard to faith, the sermons I read and heard about it, the conversations I had with the believing on the subject, the difficulty I had with terms of a figurative character to denote it, before I came to know that it was nothing more than simple trust in the righteousness, and death, and fulness and promise of Christ for salvation, I feel still grieved at the view of my anxieties, and humbled that there was so little of plain direct instruction. And how mortifying still the declaration which we are obliged so often

to hear, because there is so much occasion for it. Oh ! it was a very able, a very excellent discourse, but without point, without application. This, however, would not be the case, had we the faculty of speaking close to the man as he is, for it would then take hold of him, and prevent him from putting it away from him to others, or giving it the indefinite character which it pleases too many to give.

My brethren, without the least dictation, for I am certain I have none of it, let me beseech you to be thoroughly acquainted with the few leading subjects of the gospel, and to make them your study, your preaching and your strength. Oh ! let us see to it that we are masters at home on these great subjects, that we are able to take a deep and extensive view of them, and thus flash light and conviction on all around us. Oh ! let us, as far as possible, be far above merely giving an intellectual treat in a scientific and abstract manner ; but while there are so many proud, conceited, and pleasurable, yet dictatorial and fastidious sinners among us, let us shew our capability to humble them, to convince them, to strip them of their arrogancy, and send them, as convicts and condemned to their dependence on the cross ; nor fear the charge that we are always hammering at the same thing, as if we knew no other, if only we are more clear and convincing and decisive on these points. One of the most acceptable preachers in London has invariably but one subject, namely, faith in Jesus, but from the increasing interest and application with which he manages it, his hearers are obliged to say that his last sermon on the subject was the best of the whole. One of the most popular and powerful ministers of Scotland was one who invariably had but one kind of application to

sinner and saints, whatever his sermon otherwise had been. Need I mention my own experience and practice ? I believe few men have written more largely and variously on the subjects of religion but now avail themselves as little of them ; sermons in scores and fifties for years past lie unperused, and just because they are too general and diffuse, without point and application. And the longer I live, and the more closely I enter into the work the more I confess my mind is narrowing and closing only on subjects that are chiefly fundamental and personal. My brethren, if we are real Christians, we will necessarily, though it may be slowly, come to this. We will find that our own life in the advancement of it, is connected with a very few elementary principles, and that our edification is best promoted by a constant recurrence to those few. We will find also, if we associate with the people of God, that their relish of subjects and edification from them are chiefly from those of the Gospel, those that tell upon the heart and the conscience, which are as few in their number as special in their kind. Brethren, to have done ; if we would be qualified to teach, and willing to confine ourselves to essential things, let us see that we be thoroughly acquainted with them, and therefore apt to teach others, them. And, in order to these, let us give attendance to reading, to doctrine, that we stir up the gift that is in us, that we meditate upon these things, that we give ourselves wholly unto them, that our profiting may appear unto all.

In the second place to be apt, or to be qualified to teach, is to be capable in some degree of accomplishing the ends of our teaching. No teacher is considered qualified if he cannot teach, much less if he cannot accomplish the ends of his

teaching. Not, when we say so, that we take the work out of God's hands, or do not look for a blessing, but only as we mean in the light of an adapted instrument to a particular end. God works by means, by worthy and appropriate means, and as much so we believe in the ministry as in any other thing. It is therefore with all boldness to be asserted that those only are qualified to teach, who are capable, as instruments under God, of advancing the ends of their teaching. These at present we would briefly consider under these three, namely, attention, impression, and transformation.

First, attention. Ah! it is no easy thing to gain to keep the attention of an audience for an hour together. And yet it is in vain to think to teach them without their attention. If the mind is absent, it avails not that the eye is fixed. If the mind is not commanded, our words are mere sound and not sense. But surely there is power to gain the mind, there is a capability to enchain the attention, there is a way to communicate thought to the soul. My brethren, you are aware of it. It is, after all, a very easy and a very effectual way. It is only to speak sense in a natural and easy manner. But the difficulty is so to have it, as to speak it naturally and easily. Unless we ourselves see the truth clearly, and have it ready in words fit to be expressed, we are not fit to teach; we will only darken counsel by words without knowledge, we will only rave like fools or rant like madmen. And oh! how humbling, how mortifying to hear the truth murdered in the mouth of a rampant and furious declaimer, and the desk degraded by an immodest and blustering fanatic! how insulting and repulsive the violence done to a sober and enquiring mind often by the scattered nonsense of a crack-brained fool!

However much such persons may take by a certain class of people, we must hold them as unqualified to teach, as they do violence to all the constitutional susceptibilities of our nature, and stand in revolting aspect to all our sympathies.

Brethren, shew your aptness to teach by your capability of holding the attention, by a natural and easy communication. For this purpose be well read and conversant with the truth which you are to teach; study it and digest it in your own minds. And be concerned only to tell it as you would talk it to another. Let your communication be natural, free and easy. Then will you gain the attention of mind, and be successful in communicating thought. Then, farther, will it appear that you are polished shafts in God's quiver, that you are accomplished servants in His house, workmen that need not be ashamed, apt to teach.

All this no doubt implies labour and study, forethought and possession, and discountenances that rash and audacious conduct which too many shew in rushing presumptuously into the pulpit unprepared, as if we were warranted to speak any thing and any way as it may occur to us. Ah! the awful guilt on our heads when we do so! No wonder we distract and weaken the attention, and render abortive all our attempts to gain it when we do so. Brethren, be concerned to prepare ourselves to teach, and we shall be able so to command the attention as to give instruction.

Secondly, another end to be accomplished by our teaching to shew our aptness for it, is impression. It is a great thing to gain the attention, but it is so only as it is subservient to impression. We all know unless the truth is impressed upon the heart it is unavailing, and therefore unless this is effected

by the teacher, his qualification for office is questionable as he falls short of his end. And ah ! were we all to be judged by this rule, how incompetent would many of us appear ! But surely no incompetency can be charged upon the truth itself to effect its end, but only our manner of handling it. If ever truth was of a heart-stirring and impressive nature, surely it is the truth of God with regard to salvation, through the love and the sacrifice of the Son of God. But the most awakening and important truths can be murdered by a bungling and incompetent teacher, by the disconformity that there often is between the spirit and the letter of his ministration. This points out to us the secret of our failure, and from the evil teaches us the remedy. We all know that to impress others, we must be impressed ourselves, to engage others, we must ourselves be engaged ; to make others weep, to shed ourselves the first tear. We assert, therefore, that no man is qualified to teach, but an impressive and engaged teacher. O ! therefore that we only felt the weight of truth ourselves, that we only sought to feel it, that with a view to the condemned and miserable state of man, we only felt compassionate and earnest ; with a view to his slavery to sin and Satan, we felt hostile and warlike ; that with a view to his redemption by Christ, we felt anxious and believing with a view to the love of Christ, we felt animated and lively ; and finally with a view to the claims of Christ, we felt dutiful and zealous ; and then what competent teachers we would be ! how capable of making an impression, and getting a hold equally of the heart as of the head in every answerable impression and emotion !

Oh ! brethren, let us not fall short of our office ; let us seek

to be impressive and influential. And for this end let us preach the truth which we have prepared for others first to ourselves ; let us feel the influence, the effect of it upon ourselves ; let us pray over the whole ; let us have the susceptibility of having this impression, and that impression, according to the nature of the truth delivered ; and then, indeed, we could come forth as men feeling the burden of truth, and ready to impart our own souls in the delivery of it. Then, indeed, would our mouth be as a sharp sword ; and we could stand and feed in the strength of the Lord God, and in the majesty of the name of the mighty God of Jacob. Ah ! how then would sinners quail, if not melt, before us, and saints be greatly edified and comforted. O ! when I read of some ministers studying their sermons on their knees, and of others being two hours in their closet before they would go to the pulpit, I cease to wonder at their success, and only wonder at myself and others, that we should be tolerated at all to enter into the pulpit. Brethren, let us have the ambition of being qualified teachers. Let us seek that the mantle of Elijah may rest upon us, that we may be impressive and efficient teachers. Let us be ashamed that with such an office, and with such power, and with such susceptibilities, and with such an instrument we should yet be so heartless, so insipid. If we would only awake to the work in any measure suited to its greatness, and enter into it with any spirit suited to its importance, we would soon shew our comparative competency and efficiency for the work, and again render the ministry, as it once was, authoritative and weighty. Let us therefore quit us like men and be strong, let us reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and authority. Let us be an example

of the believers in word and conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. In a word, let the spirit of glory and of God rest upon us, then we will shew our aptness to teach.

The last end to be effected by our teaching, if competent for it, was transformation. This is the great and final end of all ; if we fail in it or succeed in it, that is to be the great test of our competency or incompetency. Ah ! how tremendous the evidence ! how fearful the result ! Are we not ready to tremble on the very threshold of the trial ? Have we the courage to venture an examination here ? What if we should be convicted and found wanting ? But we must venture an examination, and risk a trial. My brethren, what have we accomplished during our past lives ; what even during the past year ? Have we enlightened many ? Have we been the instrument of transforming, of converting many ? What if it should be found that we have been of few or none ? I tremble for myself, I tremble for you. Doubtless there is inefficiency, there is incompetency somewhere, or why should we be compelled to say, " I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought." But the truth is, we have not laboured in the right way, we have not spent our strength in the right direction. We have been labouring for things rather than for persons ; for doctrines than for souls. We have also come short of the great point of labour, and spent our strength in disport of it ; when it ought to have been reserved for the last great effort in our applications. Pray who of us have made it the burden of our ministry to call sinners to repentance ; who of us have so brought ourselves up to this work as to exhaust our whole strength and energy upon it. Ah ! I am going to make no apology when I boldly yet humbly say, we

have kept back from it ; we have had a shrinking timid policy in regard to it, we have been afraid to call sinners right up to repentance as if we were making them our production, or as if we were taking the work out of God's hand. Nay, the greater number of us have stopped short at the very point where we ought to have commenced, leaving only a feeble inference or two for sinners or for saints after a doctrinal discussion, when the whole burden of our subject ought to have been on the application. It is certain we cannot accomplish much by this kind of work ; we cannot have the credit of being skilful and able teachers. Oh ! my brethren, why should we stop short in the great matter of application ? why should we be afraid of coming right up to the great point, calling sinners to repentance, and throwing our whole energy into this business as if even the whole accomplishment of it depended upon ourselves. ? Has not God said, that His word shall not return to Him void ? Has He not commanded us in the prophet in these words : “ Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye, dry bones, hear the word of the Lord ; has he not said, if the prophets had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have caused my people every one of them to have turned from their iniquity. Has he not said, ask of me concerning my sons, and as concerning the work of my hands command ye me.” In fine, has not our Lord said, “ Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature, and lo ! I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen ?” In a word, has He not said, “ according to your faith so be it ?” Surely these sayings are calculated to bring us up fully to the point of duty, and to give us a spirit of courage and fidelity in the performance of it. Oh ! there-

fore, let not our hands be slack, nor our hearts be feeble in this business. While there are hardened and proud sinners among us, let us enter fully into their case, let us deal freely with them as to their guilt, let us fearlessly denounce them as to their condition, let us unhesitatingly and boldly call them to repentance, and let us fasten the whole burden of their impenitence and unbelief on themselves. At the same time, to encourage our faith, and to stimulate our ardour, let us all the while be looking up to God that He would concur with us, and make his word as a fire and a hammer to break the hard heart in pieces. Then I believe we would see souls breaking down, and humbly and willingly coming forward, and asking what they shall do to be saved, and ready to receive the word of faith from our hands, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Brethren, the circumstances of the times require that we should be forward and engaged, for there is a spirit of enterprise, and of bold daring in all the sections of the Church around us. Every denomination seems to be awake and active while we content ourselves with blaming, and being at ease. Every one shews the spirit of going forward and making invasions upon the enemy, and calling upon sinners as captives to emancipate themselves, and as sinners to come to Christ. Many of them are making successful efforts, we wish to believe, in these things. They may not be doing it by preaching sovereignty, election, perseverance, for they know that these are not the weapons to accomplish this warfare. They may be doing it rather by preaching general atonement and free will, which are partly true and partly false, just as they are viewed; but they do it, we believe,

with a view to the direct points of faith and repentance, and God who alone can separate the true from the false blesses them, we have reason to believe with a view to them.

We have a people also that are not read and informed enough to care much about doctrine, that are too proud, and consequential to be subdued by doctrine, but at the same time are feeling and susceptible, if we only speak to them in the right spirit, and urge suitably upon them their immediate interest. But we have a people who, because they cannot get these things as they wish from us, even though they are our own people, and have all their predilections with us, are willing to go off to others where they are served as they wish, and become incorporated with them. Oh ! shall we not catch the spirit of our age ? Shall we not be wise and condescending to accommodate ourselves to the uncontrollable circumstances of our situation ? Shall we not with all our orthodoxy and all our bulwarks of defence yet strive not to conceal, but to manifest our orthodoxy in such a manner as finally will best bring it out, and establish it in the real conversion and sanctification of sinners ? Ah, I know the difficulty of the case ; I feel it and labour under it to this very day ; I know the power of long habit, of ancient prejudice, and particularly of the early biasses of our education. Oh ! would to God if instead of our didactic and polemic theology and our critical acumen and attainment, now the pride of our schools, a new era of education was introduced among us, namely to take a young man, a student, converted, and teach him the Scriptures as they are, and particularly this, how to deal with a sinner in the different stages of his iniquity ; an enquirer to bring him into the faith of Christ, and a believer in the dif-

ferent stages of his sanctification ; then what other men would we have for the Gospel ministry, what champions for the field of battle. But long experience has to teach what we cannot get from the schools, and many disappointments and mortifications have we to bear till we get new weapons put into our hands, which we never thought of before, and the power from experience to wield those weapons. It is well if we are only willing to learn from disappointment, and to enter upon a new course which observation and experience tell us is alone available, and efficient.

My brethren, let me call upon you to be girded for the work, and to have your eyes open within and around you. We are in an enemy's country, in a land of sin, death, and misery. Thousands around us are in the broad road to destruction. Thousands are in the bonds of sin and the devil. Eternity is just at the door. Even now the glory of heaven and the flashes of hell blaze before our eye. The great Saviour waits to be gracious. He stands with outstretched hands ready to receive every penitent. His command to every one of us also is, preach the Gospel, compel them to come in, stand between the porch and the altar, and pray, " Save, Lord, thy people." My brethren, let us be up and be doing. Let us feel the burden of our great charge, our great embassy. Let us remember that the blood of souls is in our hands. Let us have the urgency and energy of the Apostle when he said, " We are ambassadors for God, we pray you in Christ that ye be reconciled to God." Let us have his tender persuasiveness also when He said, " I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." To have

done, let us preach the Gospel, be instant in season and out of season, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Take heed to ourselves and to the doctrine ; continue in them ; for in doing this, we shall both save ourselves and them that hear us.

I must say a few words also to elders and professors, and impenitent sinners, before I close. You, who are the elders, you have also a great charge in common with the ministers, which is to rule the flock, to superintend your respective divisions, to warn, to reprove, and to encourage, and to see that the people are walking in the faith and order of the Gospel. You are also required to be fellow helpers with the minister, and to strengthen his hands, and encourage his heart in the work of the Lord. You may not have any temporal reward for your labours here, but, oh ! if you will only enter into the honour of being pillars in God's Church, and what it will be to be elders in the new Jerusalem hereafter, you will not gudge to spend, and be spent for Christ and his Church, when you know it will come with a great increase to you hereafter. See therefore that you are elders who rule well, that you may be accounted worthy of all honour.

And to you still farther in common with all professors, remember that, with the minister, you are all called upon to teach, and therefore ought to be ready to this good work. As you have opportunity therefore, teach and admonish in all wisdom and in all fear. Never come in contact with a sinner without throwing some light on his guilty and necessitous condition, and pointing to the Saviour. Never spend a day or a week in your own family, or with your kindred, without calling their attention to spiritual things. Oh ! if elders and

members were only engaged, if they had any sense of the greatness of the work which they might do, any sense of obligation to that work, how would we see light breaking in in the midst of darkness, and the night of sin, in many instances succeeded by day. Remember that the Saviour expects it of you, that even the world expects it of you, and that you are only in your true character as you make your light to shine, your good deeds to be seen, and your conversation to be heard. Arise therefore, every one of you, and shine, for the glory of God hath arisen upon you. Every one of you in your place strive to be teachers, and let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace to the hearers.

But there are those among you that are ignorant and backward, sitting in the region of darkness and shadow of death, and need to be brought into the light of life. You are sinners, but know not the evil of sin. You are in condemnation, but know not that you are damned. You are in need of a Saviour, but are ignorant of Him, and will not come unto the light that you may be taught of Him. But the time is coming when you will be convinced of these, but it may be too late ; nay, even when you will repent of these, if reproach and remorse can be called repentance.

I was, you will say, at one time within reach of the light, but I would not enter into it. I was once urged to come to God and to Christ, but I would not. I rather chose to continue in the darkness of my situation, in the love of myself and the world, and now I have no world, no God, no Saviour,

no heaven. I am deprived for ever of all these, and cast out and left here a solitary and a wretched creature to be conscious only of my loss and misery. But there is hope of you, if you only wish for hope ; God, even God, whom you have offended, hath given His own Son to die for you, and even now is calling upon you to come to Him that you may be saved. Hear then His voice, I beseech you : “ Look unto me, and be ye saved. Come unto me, and I will give you rest. He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” If you come by trusting on Him, He will save you, but if you do not, He will condemn you. I have set life and death before you, and addressed the call to every individual. God grant that it may not make up a part of your aggravated condemnation that you did not comply with it. But may He give unto us all to come unto the light of life, as the Saviour says, “ whosoever believeth in me shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” Amen and Amen.

This discourse was preached to two different Presbyteries and proposed in one of them for publication ; but it got lost in the office and therefore never appeared ; it is now, with others, published in the hope that it may be acceptable and useful.

SERMON XVI.

A LECTURE ON THE TRUMPETS AND VIALS.

The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.—Rev. viii. 7.	And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them that worshipped his image.—Rev. xvi. 2.
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WE put them together, side by side, the trumpets and the vials, as, with the exception of this and the fifth, they evidently relate to the same things, and throw mutual light on each other. Even with regard to the first and fifth, though different, yet as they took place, as we shall show, at the same period of time, we put them together, and only farther say that what comes under the trumpet relates particularly to civil things, while that under the vial or vase, the vessel used in the Church, to religious. This, we think, is the reason of distinction, while evidently referring to the same things and the same time. Verse 7th: "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." With regard to this trumpet sound, it is almost impossible to say to what it relates as distinguished from others, it being so general in its terms and so indefinite as to time. But as it is not so much so with

regard to the vial, as though there is nothing definite with regard to time, yet if we take the *sore* in a strictly literal sense, as we intend to do, it may give us some light even as to that. But by looking into the introduction of each, we may get something still more direct for our guidance, and then, in the light of history, sufficient information in regard to both. The introduction to the vial, particularly, will be our clearest guide. This we have in chapter xv. 2, where it is said, "I saw, as it were, a sea of glass, mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb." Now the introduction stands in immediate connection with the vial, so that if we only know the meaning of the words, we may get to the time and the meaning also.

The beast is evidently the man of sin. The image of the beast, the second beast alluded to (chap. xv., 11), something that is the exact likeness of the first beast; the mark, some insignia to mark its votaries; and the number of his name, his age, or duration. With regard to this last, there is something very significant about it, as in the 13th verse wisdom is mentioned as in connection with it, "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast," and as it is alluded to also in another place (chap. xv. 2).

These expressions, "the number of the beast, a number of man, and the number of his name," have given rise to a great amount of speculation, and, we think, to much mistake and misapplication. It has been supposed to relate chiefly to the

numerical force of letters in a person's name, and this has led to look for a word or name in which this number is contained. And, accordingly, they have fixed on the word *Lateinos*, a Latin man, which contains this number, as many other words, as is well known, do. But this word is not the name of the beast, but simply his nationality, and is, therefore, no more his name than of any other man in the Latin kingdom. The name of the beast is, that he is the head of all Christendom, the vicar of Christ, or the Lord God, the Pope; but it would be difficult, I am afraid, to get the number 666 in any of these names, showing evidently that it is not from a number that a name is to be taken, but from a name a number. The expression evidently means, we think, a mere calculation with regard to time. And with this comports an exact translation of the text—not as we have it, the number of a man, but simply as it ought to be, a number of man that is a man's number; of any man apart from the beast, a different man. The whole comes simply to this, “Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of man, and his number is 666.” Count the number of the beast from the time he was made the beast till he became 666, and then you get at the idea intended by the expression. Justinian gave him his name as the head of all Christendom in the year 533. Then count his number 666 from that time, and we are brought to 1199. And with a view to this, let the wisdom of the text be exercised; for there was certainly no wisdom in counting the amount of the numerical letters in any given name—a thing which was quite common among the Greeks—or in discovering any name having this number; but there was great scope for wisdom after counting the number and coming to 1199, to consider about

that 1199. What of it? What about it? What is to be observed from it? Well, we answer if the persons who lived at that time had but the wisdom to observe, they would have seen something; and if we, who live in this remote period, would but have looked to history then, we would have observed something also. But, in all likelihood, the people then, no more than the people now, did observe anything, as there was not wisdom enough in them to do so; while it is equally true, as the Psalmist says, "He that is wise will observe these things." But if wisdom had been exercised, it would have observed the *rise* of the second beast, who turned out to be the exact image of the first, namely in his assumption and exercise of absolute and irresponsible power in prosecuting, judging, and condemning the saints. (See verse 12, chap. xiii.) "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." Dominic, a fiery, bloody-minded man, was appointed by the Pope to go with another one and enquire after these heretics, as they were called, the Albigenses and Waldenses, who lived at the foot of the Alps—a people secluded by themselves originally, as was thought, from Bohemia, but directly, as some think, from the Apostles, who always held to the simple scriptural doctrines of the Bible, and, therefore, had the audacity to protest against the Pope and his whole system. This came like a thunder clap upon Rome, who now held the whole earth under his control, and, therefore, directed this Dominic to go and enquire, so that from this act he got the name, for the first, of Inquisitor; and if he found them, as reported, to endeavour, in the first instance, to convert them; but, if failing that, to persecute them. They set out on their object; but after doing their best among the people, they returned with this report—that even their

youths of twelve years of age were able to answer all the arguments from the Bible, and, therefore, other arguments than those must be used. Accordingly, war was immediately inaugurated, which continued with various successes and reverses for thirty years, but ended in the destruction of a million of lives, their almost total annihilation. Yet, as a Church, they conquered in the triumph of their faith, having sealed their testimony with their blood.

We are now prepared to refer again to the introduction, to give us light in regard to this vial. The introduction speaks of those who had obtained a victory over the beast, and his image, and the number of his name, even over those that had been appointed in the year 1199 to go out and convert them; and it is introduced not so much to speak of the victory as to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb in the view of the judgments that were to follow that victory. The judgment is foretold in the vial under consideration.

“And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and who worshipped his image.” Very soon after the slaughter of the Albigenses a noisome and grievous sore, in the form of what was called the black death, or the sweating sickness, came over the whole land, which cut off, it is said, two-thirds of the population and left many places a complete grave—a sore coming so soon that could not but be acknowledged as a Divine infliction.

And if praise by the victorious was given in the view of the judgment, so in the corresponding introduction we find prayer offered for judgment; and the judgment, as predicted under the trumpet, gets a clear fulfilment in the light of history:

the same time. (See the prayer and the judgment again in chapter viii. 1st verse.) Now that the Albigensian Church was all but exterminated ; and the Pope, vainly imagining that he was sitting securely on a universal throne, was tempted to issue a decree by which he subjected all kings and kingdoms to his authority and sway. The French king, against whom this was specially directed, endeavoured to take the Pope captive, which so affected him that he died in three days. The next that was elected had to fix his residence in France for seventy-two years, styled in contempt the Babylonish captivity ; after which two were elected, the one to reside in Rome, the other in France in Avignon, which lasted for other fifty-one years ; when these and a third were deposed by the Council of Constance in 1414, all of which were sufficiently humiliating to the grand Popedom. But all this does not reach the meaning of the trumpet, “ hail, fire, blood, and desolation.” Rome, the capital, in the absence of its head, became the parent and fomentor of tumults, cabals, and civil war, in which a great part of Europe became involved by seditions and suffering. Besides, the contemporary Popes assailed each other with excommunications, maledictions, and plots, so that the calamities of those times were indescribable, as in all these Pontifical factions immense loss of life and of property was involved. The Ghibelines, a most factious set in Italy, most hostile to the Popedom, invaded and laid waste the Papal territories, and occasioned the revolt of many cities, which was only one of the many occurrences which took place during those times. France itself, which finally gave their aid to exterminate the Albigenses, was most severely punished ; as in her wars with England during this time she was all but ruined in the celebrated battles of the Black

Prince against her, particularly Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, which robbed her of her king, and nobles, and peasantry, and which produced such exhaustion and desolation as will meet the language of the text, "There followed hail and fire, mingled with blood; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

And the second angel sounded, and, as it were, a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.—Verse 8.

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died on the sea.—Chap. xvi. v. 3.

This trumpet and vial, taken as they are, we think, are quite plain, though we think also have been grievously misapplied. They are simply a great destruction of ships and men upon the sea. We know of nothing that answers so plainly and fully to them as what is known in history as the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588. England being, in a great measure, the great Protestant country, Philip King of Spain, stung with disappointment in being refused by Elizabeth, and burning with indignation at the Protestant religion, and instigated by the Pope, who promised to bear much of the expense, prepared a powerful armament of ships, one hundred and thirty or more, and manned them with nearly 9,000 men and 20,000 soldiers, and nearly 3,000 cannon, and hoping to be seconded with nearly 41,000 men on the coast, set sail to invade and conquer England, and bring it back to the Holy See. It is said they extended in a circuitous form seven miles. It is said that with all the tormenting apparatus of the Inquisition on board, they had a mock trial to convict and punish Protestant England. But

when they set sail, everything went against them. The very next day they were met by a violent tempest, which obliged them to return to port to refit for a month—that afterwards, when they got into the channel, were attacked five different times with the Queen's fleet—that the first day they captured the Spanish galleon, which had the Admiral and all the treasure; the next that they sent fire-ships among them, which, favoured both by wind and tide, went right among them, producing great consternation and confusion, compelling them to raise anchor and flee as they could—that, pursued and attacked by the Queen's fleet, they had to return by the Orkneys, the wind being against them to take the direct course; and that the northern storms at that season wrecked so many of their ships that only some fifty-two returned to Spain; thus showing the wrath of God against the whole combination, and the protecting favour of God to our beloved land. The strength of Spain, the great bulwark of the Catholic faith, was exhausted by the struggle, and from that time has continued to decline. It is said that the Pope, on application, refused to make any compensation for the loss.

And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great fire from heaven, burning, as it were, a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters. And the name of the star is called wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter.—Verse 9.

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, oh, Lord, which art and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. Chap. xvi. verse 4.

This trumpet and vial seems to cover much ground, but in general is plain. A star, either the angel of a church, or a

church itself; burning, as it were, a lamp, a bright shining minister or church; a star fallen made prostrate through some power; a star fallen on the rivers and fountains of waters, either on some hilly country, or on the centres of population; a star in the fall producing wormwood and bitterness—namely, sorrow and anguish through blood shed by persecution; for it is the blood of saints and prophets—blood, however, that has been revenged in victory, for thou hast given them blood to drink; blood in vanquishment, therefore, that God gives the glory, for true and righteous are His judgments. In a word, it has been a religious persecuting war, which, though successful sometimes in prostrating the Church, resulted in victory on the part of the assailed. Where are we to look for this war?—in some mountain country as the fountains of the waters, or in some centres of population? Why, in both, if we find them.

After the punishment of Rome and France in the fourteenth century, we read of the punishment and defeat of other persecuting powers in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. In the sixteenth century, Charles, the Emperor of Germany, turned his arms against the Protestant faith, and produced much suffering. At length Maurice, one of the Protestant Princes, came down upon him; and, in 1552, so terrified him that he was glad finally to make terms of peace with him in 1555, by which full protection and liberty were secured to the Protestants in that kingdom in all time after. The Emperor of the French, also, from the year 1533 to the close of the century, turned many times against them in furious battles, as often as six or seven different times, in all of which they compelled him to agree upon terms of peace, but

which were all basely violated ; in the midst of which the Bartholomew massacre took place in 1572, which took off, it is said, 70,000 men throughout the kingdom ; but in 1598 was followed with the edict of Nantz, which, for nearly a century, gave them liberty and protection. The Emperor of Austria turned also against the Protestant ruler of Bohemia, and Hungary, in 1618, conquered him, despoiled him, fought many battles, till, in 1630, the great Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant Swedish King, espoused their cause and became their captain general, and, with his leaders, conquered continually the Imperial forces, till, after a thirty years' war, he compelled even the Royal family to flee for safety from the capital itself. In all these kingdoms, which symbolically may be called rivers and fountains of waters as the great centres of population, the Protestants often and eventually triumphed and conquered, compelling their persecutors to give them peace and liberty. Or if you take the fountains of water in a more literal sense as referring to a hill country, then we are led next to the country of the Cevenes, in the south of France, to which many of the Huguenots fled after the Bartholomew massacre, and thought to enjoy their Protestantism unobserved ; but even there the armies of Louis followed them—even 20,000—and thought to subdue them, during the first years of the eighteenth century ; but even there they compelled Louis to come to terms of peace with them, and grant them freedom.

It was a war for several years. The instances of heroism and adventure both on the part of males and females are altogether extraordinary, so that Louis, even in his own dominions, is compelled, at length, to terms of peace.

It would be most gratifying to read the history of that war, to see what pious resolutions will accomplish against such terrible odds, when determined under God, to conquer or die. The angel of the waters that superintended and carried on the war might well give the glory to God, who, in justice, gave the victory, or who, for blood, gave them, as we read, blood to drink.

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon and the third part of the stars, so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third of it, and the night likewise.—Chap. viii. verse 12.

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues, and they repented not to give him glory.—Chap. xvi. verse 8.

These two, we think, are very plain, and illustrate each other. A third part of the political horizon in its objects are darkened, and the agent that does so is the Sun. This receives its plain and fullest explanation in the wars of Louis XIV. in the last half of the seventeenth century, and who had for his motto or emblem the Sun. Suffice it to say that he was almost master of Europe, ravaged in war all its countries, made and unmade kings at pleasure, made and unmade treaties at pleasure, and was absolutely despotic in spirit and action—a great persecutor as well as warrior, and, therefore, evoked the edict of Nantz in 1675, and made 600,000 flee the kingdom. The kingdoms, however, had all, more or less, been guilty of persecution, and, therefore, must now receive a sweeping and universal punishment. They got it till Marlborough and Eugene took the field against him, and obliged him, after twenty years of success, to disgorge all, so

that the last years of his life were as miserable as his first were successful. But it was all lost on the guilty nations ; for we read that “ they blasphemed, and repented not to give him glory,” Europe as bad at the last as at the first of his reign.

We come now to the fifth trumpet and vial. But before we do so, we would observe that they are declared to be the first of the three last woes that are to come upon the earth. Verse 13, chap. viii. : “ And I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.”

We must be near, therefore, we should think, the end of time. Chap. ix. verse 1 : “ And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.” Verse 2, “ And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.”

We unhesitatingly say that this relates as the next great event after Louis XIV., who died 1715, to the French revolution, which occurred in 1792. The star here that fell from heaven, the chief officer of the Church then, but not a shining star, Gobet, the Archbishop of Paris, who fell from his high office and station when he and his fellow-Bishops, in the great Cathedral of Paris, abjured their functions, by declaring all religion to be an imposture—a great fall surely. Literally, then, also, a key was given to him to open the bottomless pit, and

there would come out of it a smoke, a cloud of darkness, not only in the want of all Bible light, but in hideous doctrines, which they forthwith proclaimed—no Sabbath, no God, but the god of nature in a strumpet, no judgment, but death an eternal sleep ;” which smoke might well be said to be as the smoke of a great furnace, because of the fire—the heated and violent enthusiasm—with which it would be attended ; extrême darkness or ignorance often the most ostentatious and heated. “ And the sun and air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.” The king, the great luminary of the political kingdom, and the air, or that all in which he lived is extinguished by it, slain.

Verse 3 —“ And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.” In the death of the king and the want of all leaders under him, the people, as a multitude, like the locusts without leaders, would come forth out of this smoke of darkness, this want of all Bible light, this abeyance of all religion in all the fulness of their depravity, having power as scorpions only for evil. A disorderly multitude in the fulness of darkness and corruption are the most to be dreaded of anything for evil.

Verse 4.—“ And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads.” The people of God are to be safe. The products of the earth not touched.

Verse 5.—“ And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months, and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.”

Verse 6.—“And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”

The reign of terror, under a lawless mob, without king, without government, only crying out for liberty, lawless liberty, avenging themselves upon all not of their class and creed—that is, on everything aristocratic and independent, whether priest or noble, all who were not as enthusiastic as they for lawless liberty and authority, making themselves so inimical and fatal to all such as were within their scorpion power, as would make death itself more preferable than life.

This power they should have for a limited period—five months—the utmost time of a locust's life, the utmost time it could live itself.

Verse 7.—“And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for battle, and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were, as it were, the faces of men.”

Verse 8.—“And they had hair as the hair of women ; and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.” A new scene ; they are no longer like mere locusts, a multitudinous yet compact body, though without light, without leaders ; but a most gorgeously arrayed and attractive company, bearing all the marks of civilized soldiership, with the ferociousness of trained horsemen, no longer merely to torment, but in order for battle.

Verse 9.—“And they had breastplates, as it were, breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle,” cuirassiers for foreign fight.

Verse 10.—“And they had tails like unto scorpions, and

there were stings in their tails, and their power was to hurt men five months."

Artillery, bomb shells, fiery trains attached to bombs to make them explode for all miseries, are truly stings in their tails. In this foreign war, evidently the same length of time as in the former case, five months, the utmost length of locust life, and the same period as the former.

Verse 11.—"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name, in the Hebrew tongue, is Abaddon, but, in the Greek tongue, hath his name Apollyon." In their highly organised and imposing state, they have a king over them of corresponding power and purpose, a destroyer. Apollyon—a Greek word, which, when standing by itself, without a vowel either at the beginning or end, according to the Greek pronounced with a consonant—therefore, Napoleon. Who can be at a loss after this? A destroyer, as the word signifies, and who was so, far above any conqueror on record—at least of six million, as some say—others of ten million of men.

There is, we think, the history of the French revolution. Its period of time was the same in each; its full locust life eleven years, twenty-two in both, which, we think, was the only idea intended, and not an exact period of days and years symbolically under five months. This is the first of the three woes, and a woe it was above all others that came on the earth.

The corresponding vial will go to confirm all this as having its accomplishment literally in the same period of time.

Chap. xvi. 10.—"And the fifth angel poured out his vial on the seat (literally) on the throne of the beast, and his

kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their deeds."

In the year after the revolution, Bonaparte invaded Rome, but was bought off at a great price ; but, in the year following, his general made the Pope a captive, and turned his kingdom into a republic, so that it was full of darkness, giving no light of what it once was, and continued so, both the beast and the kingdom, till restored by the Holy Alliance.

We come now to the sixth trumpet and vial, chap. ix. v. 13, " And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river, Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed which were prepared for an hour, or rather for *the* hour, and the day, and the month, and the year, for to slay the third part of men."

The corresponding vial is substantially the same, chap. xvi. verse 12, " And the seventh angel poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared."

We remark here that as Babylon, throughout this book, is the mystical Babylon of Rome, so may the Euphrates here, which was the defence and wealth of Babylon be also mystical, of what was the defence and wealth of the Babylon here intended. We consider the Babylon here intended to be Paris, in France, and the Euphrates to be what may be considered the defence of that city—perhaps the impassable Alps.

There were four angels that heretofore were bound by some difficulty—that is, they could not act together; and so it was with the powers in regard to Napoleon. They could only act by couplets, or, at the most, triplets, against him; while they knew, at the same time, that the union of the four was necessary for the deliverance of Europe. Well, the time came now when they could unite; for, as we read, they were prepared for the very hour and day to do so. Accordingly, England, Prussia, Austria, and Russia, now unite and proclaim war against him, and proscribe him, namely, Napoleon. They are no longer bound by some Euphrates; but whatever was the defence of France, and Paris, was so no longer; Paris is invaded, and kept for some years, and Napoleon is sent to Helena. Such we conceive to be the meaning of the emblem. The Euphrates, literally, cannot be thought to be ever dried up. The kings of the East, these four that came against him as may be seen by a map, as much from this earth as any other.

All this appears conclusive from the 11th chapter, the 14th verse, where the second woe is said to be past after what is said to take place in the preceding verses. The witnesses slain at the end of the 1260 days. They are raised after three days and a half. The same hour, or era of time, there was a great earthquake, and seven thousand men killed, and then the second woe is past. Now, the beast, as we have already said, was raised by Justinian, in 553. The 1260 days were up, therefore, at the commencement of the French revolution; at which time they killed the two witnesses by proscribing all religion, in the National Council, declaring it an imposture but which they revoked in the same Council, precisely in three years and a half afterwards, by ordering all

churches to be opened at the sound of bells, which hour, or era of time, a great earthquake or revolution occurred in the overthrow of the Napoleon dynasty—after the slaughter of seven thousand, the emblem of a great multitude, at which time also, when all was done, the second woe was said to be past.

Now, the question is, who accomplished all this? Was it not the four powers who conquered Napoleon, overset the infidel kingdom by great slaughter, and thus accomplished the second woe? The four angels are evidently, therefore, the four brought forward in this illustration, and in their work as done, the second last woe is also past.

This explodes, we confess, the long cherished theory of the Saracenic and Ottoman invasions, which, they say, occurred the first, in 606, but which lasted much longer certainly than five months; and the Ottoman invasion, under the Turks, which commenced in the eleventh century, and still lasts. The mistake, we conceive farther, is, that they reckon years for the continuance of this last power, the Ottomans, from an erroneous translation, which is from an indefinite instead of a definite article. Instead of an hour, a day, a month, and a year, it ought to be prepared for *the* hour, *the* day, &c.—that is, a particular period of time, and not a length of time, which even they cannot bring out exactly.

We are now brought to the last trumpet and the last vial.

Chap. xi., verse 15th., and chap. xvii., verse 16.

And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, Oh Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the Prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent, and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

We would observe that, in our opinion, these only remain to be accomplished, the others having been. We do not dwell upon the things themselves, as we consider them sufficiently plain in the declaration, only a clause in the 18th verse, very ready to be overlooked ; a clause expressive plainly of the first literal resurrection of the saints when this trumpet shall be sounded. And the time of the dead that they should be judged—that is, in the reward that He would then give to His servants, the Prophets, and to the saints, &c. Without dwelling upon it, we just mention a few other passages in proof of it. Read particularly the 20th chapter of

this book, from the 4th verse to the 8th ; and if these do not convince, we know of no language that could do so. Read also the Apostle's words, " the dead in Christ shall rise first. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"—that is the first, for there is no use of greatly wanting the other, for all shall have it. " We groan waiting for the adoption"—to wit, the redemption of our body. If it is only the last redemption at the general judgment, there is no need for groaning for that, for that is sure to all. Isaiah 25th and 8th : " He will swallow up death in victory ;" that is as we read from the 6th, 7th, and 9th verses, as well as the 8th, at the commencement of the millenium, when Christ, as we learn from other paragraphs, will come. Also Isaiah 26th and 19th : " Thy dead men shall live, my dead body shall arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead," at the commencement, as we read in the next two verses of the last great war, when we are told Christ shall come. The last part of the 29th verse, " The earth also then shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." That noted passage also in Daniel, generally overlooked or misapplied, 12th chap. 2nd verse. We give it as it ought strictly to be rendered : " Many from out of the sleepers in the dust of the earth shall awake, these to everlasting life ; those to shame and everlasting contempt."

As this is an important verse, we must decipher it. We have no words in the original answering to those " of them that sleep ;" but one word in the genitive plural, with the prefix *m* from out of the sleepers ; also *all alla*, the adjective pronouns, not *some, some* ; but, when placed in juxtaposition,

these, those, to distinguish the classes—the one who awakes, and the other who is allowed to sleep on ; a most conclusive passage, therefore, for the first resurrection of the saints, as the Jews, as a nation, believed, and as Daniel himself was notified of for himself in these words, at the close of the chapter, last verse, “ But go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

Christians, in the view of this great Bible truth, lift up your heads as your redemption draweth nigh, and be not ashamed of this blessed occurrence, as too many are ; this glorious truth, because of its apparent nearness and awfulness.

We enter not into the other points of the predictions, as they are plain enough, except the one under the vial, verse 19, chap. 16th, “ And the great city was divided into three parts.” May not this be, as appears from present indications, the Romish, the French, and the other party who is for liberty, however they may be denominated. But the event, when accomplished, will make this and the other points sufficiently plain in all their awfulness, and grandeur, and felicity. Oh that the present generation were but prepared for that time when God’s wrath shall come ; when the lightnings and thunders, &c., and great hail shall take place, and great Babylon come in remembrance before God, then they may hope to be saved in the day of His anger.

Many ask how near are we to the fulfilment of this last trumpet and vial ; as from the signs, which are sufficiently portentous, they apprehend, and that justly, very near ? Daniel tells us, in his 12th chapter, 11th and 12th verses, “ And from the time that the abomination that maketh deso-

late is set up, &c. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Add this number to 533, and you have 1868 ; but a year must be taken away, and you have '67. Ah ! so near ! How solemn, how awful to think so ! How little the world think so ; but not more than they would do thousands of years hence. How little the religious world think so, especially those who have young families, much business and good returns. But Scripture dates will stand, however much we may postdate or miscalculate.

There have been many mistakes, we grant ; but if we are right in this calculation, it is in common with great numbers at the present time, who also make it. But, whether Christ's coming visibly to accomplish the things under this trumpet and vial is as near as this or farther off, the duty is the same—namely, as Peter says, " Looking for and waiting unto the coming of the day of God. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blemish." Jesus' appearing is a holy and just one, and how we should be diligent, willingly and preparedly, to meet Him in His true character. Many of us shall meet with Him even before then, and all of us at a short time at longest. But many of us also may live to see Him coming in the clouds to take possession of His kingdom, as in the trumpet, to take to himself His great power to reign, to overthrow, and destroy all that are opposed to Him ; but, at the same time, to raise His own dead and to reward His saints. Oh ! how happy shall we be if we shall be able to stand such a sight at that day—if we shall feel to welcome His coming, and to be rewarded by Him. I can only repeat

Peter's exhortation, that you may realize those things, "Be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blemish." Be found of Him in peace by renewing your peace with Him every day at the foot of the cross, and by carefully avoiding everything that would renew a quarrel between you ; and, therefore, seeing to it that you keep yourselves without spot and blemish. Oh ! to be blameless, to have consciences void of offence towards God and towards man ! then shall we not care how soon Christ comes—then shall we daily rejoice in the prospect of His near coming, and be ready for it.

Brethren, be talking of these things to one another, particularly to your children, and much of the dread of that near day shall pass away on their account—much of the joy of hope shall rather come to be experienced by you, that you all expect to be so soon together with the Lord, where death divided friends shall part no more. May God grant it to us all, and that by keeping us looking out and prepared for the last trumpet and vial, and then we shall feel secure and happy here, and abundantly happy hereafter. Seek righteousness ; seek meekness. It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

SERMON XVII.

THE APOSTLE'S FINAL EXHORTATIONS.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.—II Corinthians, xiii. 2.

THERE is something, brethren, in the nature of man that leads him, in the event of a final separation from his brethren, to wish them well with all his heart, and to give to them the best of his advice;—that is, the general sympathy of his nature excited at the dissolution of those associations which rendered life agreeable, besides the interest which he feels in their felicity. From the conjoint operation of these two principles, his heart goes out towards them in the most benevolent regards; nor can he feel satisfied till he has expressed these with a spirit that will bear some proportion to their purity and ardour.

It was thus evidently with the Apostle, in regard to the Corinthians. Now, that he had given to them all the directions and exhortations which he judged to be necessary, the whole ardour of his soul seemed to be excited when he was drawing to a conclusion, and taking his leave of them, perhaps for ever. It is impossible to conceive of words more expressive of the warmth of his affection, and the intensity of his interest for them, than those of the text, “Finally,

brethren, farewell: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

I hope, my brethren, that it is from the same spirit, though far short, I acknowledge, as to the intensity of it, that I venture, at the close of these discourses, to address you from the same words. And, in speaking from them, what I intend is to call your attention to the various parts of the Apostle's exhortation and then to his farewell.

I. In the first place, then, he exhorts them to be perfect. To be perfect, is to be complete in the things that are required of us. Now, these, with regard to the Christian, may refer either to his knowledge or character, or both. That it refers to his knowledge, is evident from this same Apostle, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, the second chapter and 6th verse, where he says, "We speak wisdom to them that are perfect;" that is, to those whose knowledge is complete, or whose powers of understanding are so vigorous and spiritual, compared with those of whom he also speaks, that they "are weak and carnal," that it may be said to be complete. It does not, however, refer exclusively to knowledge, but also to character, as is evident, by taking a view of the context that precedes the text. Says the Apostle at the 9th verse, "and this also, we wish even your perfection;" which wish, when compared with what he says in the 7th verse, where he prays that he may "do no evil" but "do that which is honest;" and when compared farther with what he says in the first part of the 9th verse, evidently refers unto character. As, then, the perfection here spoken of refers to these two things, let us consider it, for a little, in reference to each.

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1st, Be perfect, or complete in knowledge. But what, you may be ready to ask, is that knowledge which we are required to have, and be complete in? Why, of those things particularly which concern our Christian system, the Christian's standing, and the Christian's character. We ought to acquaint ourselves, particularly, with the fall and depravity of man,—his helplessness and condemnation;—with the constitution of Christ's person as God-man;—His condescension, humiliation, sufferings, and death,—His resurrection and glory,—His intercession and reign in our behalf. We ought to acquaint ourselves, also, with the right of interest which sinners have in his death,—the security, fulness, and joy of the believers standing in Him, and with the glory and felicity they expect from Him. We ought to acquaint ourselves, also, with the general lineaments of the Christian character, the general duties of the Christian life, the general principles from which the Christian acts, with his great and pressing obligations to duty. With all these, as entering essentially into the Christian's system, the Christian's standing, and the Christian's character, we ought to be acquainted; that is, we should know them not only in their nature and evidence, but in their relation to one another, as constituting one harmonious whole. Nay, not only so, but, according to the idea in the text, we should know them perfectly, or completely; we should endeavour to know the uttermost that can be known of each of these: we should know them in such a manner, as to have a lively representation of them in our minds, as to be able, if possible, at a glance, to take a clear and minute survey of each; to see them, also, in their native beauty, their relative harmony, and blessed effects; and so as that we may be able

at all times, to speak of them, at all times to apply them, and, at all times, to derive that strength and comfort from them which they are calculated to give. This, my brethren, we conceive, is to know them perfectly, or completely; this, we conceive, is to have attained that measure, with regard to knowledge, which makes us perfect men in Christ Jesus.

But, alas! how few are there who have attained this length! how few even among ministering Christians, can say, in the language of the Apostle, "those, who seemed to be somewhat in appearance, added nothing to me!" But, on the other hand, how many are there, of whom it may be said that they are still "babes in understanding"—that they cannot be spoken to as to spiritual—and that, "when for the time they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them, which be the first principles of the oracles of God."

But, without dwelling upon such, let me call upon you, my brethren, to be perfect, or complete in knowledge. And, for this end, give attention, I entreat you, to reading, to meditation, to godly converse, to prayer, and attendance upon the ordinances. Let the Bible be frequently and earnestly read by you. Content not yourselves with having a general idea of its general contents, but with being particularly informed on its particular contents with regard to salvation. Endeavour to know what is the meaning of every particular important passage; and, when you have attained it, embody it so much with your own sentiments and feelings, as that you may at all times easily command it. Let your meditations also be habitually exercised about the things you have attained, as well as those that you are in the act of attaining. They are the most suited to your spiritual powers. They are the most

capable of enlarging, purifying, elevating, and quickening your minds. They alone are capable of repaying the exercise of your faculties, and furnishing you with comfort in the evil day. Oh! therefore, meditate upon them, and show, by your avidity for information, how consistently you act with yourselves and your best interests. Engage frequently, I entreat you also, in godly converse: it will sharpen your faculties; it will recal and strengthen your recollections; it will clear up your ideas; it will facilitate your expressions;—besides the comfort which you will have from mutual communication, the love which will be increased and warmed between you, and the deeper interest you will take in one another. Above all, pray for the Spirit of Light to be granted to you, and that, as is usually the case, by giving a bias to your minds towards divine things, by enlarging, deepening, and invigorating your powers, and by causing you to perceive one idea after another, and coming to one conclusion after another, till you shall be enriched unto all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Finally, my brethren, be regular in your attendance on divine ordinances; as, though you may receive nothing new, you shall, at all events, receive what will be profitable and pleasant; you shall have also your old ideas revived, your past recollections recovered, your present impressions deepened, and your whole soul so invigorated and quickened, as to add yet higher attainments to your knowledge. In the words of the Saviour, then, let me still farther call upon you to “search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life;” in those of the Psalmist, as imitating his example, “commune with your own hearts:” in those of God, as descriptive of the exercise of the fearers of

the Lord, "speak often one to another:" in those of the Psalmist, pray "that God may open your eyes, that you may behold the wondrous things of his law:" and in those, finally, of the Apostle, "forget not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another." And if you do so, you will soon become perfect, or complete in knowledge; or, your progress here will resemble that of the morning light, which shineth brighter and brighter to the perfect day,

But, perhaps, you may be ready to ask, Why should we be so much urged to be perfect in knowledge? What obligation are we under to be perfect here? Why, I would observe, every obligation arising from the Word of God, with which you are favoured,—your own powers, your relation to God, to Christ, to your fellow-men, and to eternity, and your own interest. If God hath given you His word, which is of the most plain and essential import to your souls, and powers of mind to be chiefly conversant on that word, how think you, can you be excused if you do not acquaint yourselves with it? How is it that you do not see your obligations to be completely informed therein? If also you have a relation to God, as accountable creatures,—to Christ, as redeemed,—to man as your brother,—and to eternity, as your final destiny; how is it that you do not see your obligation to be fully informed on all these? that you may know your duty to them—your interest in them—and your prospects from them. But, lastly, your own interest, I would observe, and which, perhaps, may weigh with many as the greatest argument, is your obligation to this attainment,—your own interest, I say, with regard to salvation, character, and joy. How, think you, without the

knowledge of yourselves, in relation to law, can you come to the knowledge of your sinful and condemned state, and your need of salvation? How, think you, unless you be sufficiently acquainted with the character and work of Christ as your Saviour, can you come to the knowledge of your right to be saved by Him, and your interest in His death? How, think you, unless you be sufficiently acquainted with the perfection of His work on earth, and the prevalency of His intercession in heaven, besides the guard which He is exercising over you, can you come to the knowledge of your abiding security in him, and your infallible possession of heaven at length? How, think you, unless you be sufficiently informed in the laws and prohibitions, the promises and threatenings of His Word, can you know to detect every evil suggestion, and resist every fiery dart of the enemy?—can you answer every unbelieving suggestion, and quiet every groundless alarm?—can you maintain your souls tranquil, nay, even joyful, in every state?—and can you know, in fine, to perform every duty, and to exercise every hope, with a due regard to the various situations in which you may be placed? You cannot; so that you may see what is your interest as connected with your knowledge,—it is, that it is the foundation of every grace, of every duty, of religious comfort, and eternal life.

From the consideration, therefore, that it is your interest to be perfect in knowledge, see, from the obligations which arise from this, as well as the others which we mentioned, that you make it your study to be perfect here,—see, in the use of the means which we have already mentioned, that you “leave the first principles of the oracles of God, and go on to perfection,” that you be not children in understanding,

but that in understanding you be men ; and that, with a view to these, you imitate the Apostle in your conduct, when he says, “ I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” But,

Secondly, We ought to be perfect in character, as well as in knowledge. Character in the Christian has a regard, particularly, to the various graces of his heart. We cannot enumerate all these at present, much less dwell upon them, but shall content ourselves with dwelling particularly on the two following, which are of primary importance, as they embody and lead to every other ; namely, faith and love.

In the first place, Faith : this being the principle by which we become possessed of salvation, you are aware that it is very weak and imperfect at first, and unable to support us in the various trying situations in which we may be placed. It may be sufficient, in its first apprehensions of the Saviour, to quiet the conscience, and to produce comfort ; but it is altogether unable to make head against that host of corruptions which still remain in us, and those various troublesome situations into which we may be brought. It cannot take such a full view of the death of Christ, in its relation to the law, in its relation to the justice of God, and to death and hell, as to repel every artful accusation of the enemy,—every accusing suggestion of our conscience,—every fear about death and hell,—and to maintain our confidence and joy unimpaired. It cannot take such a full view of the life, and intercession, and reign of Christ in heaven, as managing every concern, appointing every event for good, and triumphing over every enemy, as to beget the highest confidence and steadfastness in every state—the highest feelings of assurance and triumph.

It cannot take such a full view of the fatherly relations and perfections of God in Christ, as having a sympathy and care for us in every state, that all our wants, temporal and spiritual, shall be so supplied as to keep our souls equally easy in every situation—our joy equally unabated—and our strength and courage equally unimpaired. Oh, no! there are few if any, at any time, that ever attain these lengths, much less, even the strongest, at their first exercises of faith. Though they have believed, and cannot give up with believing, yet it is pitiful to think how weak it is, and how little it influences their whole man;—pitiful to think how wavering it is under trial or temptation,—how desponding under darkness or desertion,—how deficient in realizing clearly its various objects and subjects, connected with God and heaven,—and how comfortless and uninteresting it is in its general and particular actings. In so far, then, as this is the case with any Christian, in so far are they defective in the exercise of their faith, and in so far are they called to complete what is lacking in it.

The exhortation, therefore, of the Apostle is in all its force, with regard to this point of Christian character,—be perfect in your faith, or complete what is wanting in it. And, for this purpose, let me call upon you to exercise your understandings on the great matters of your faith, that you may know, and be able to say what they are, and that you may see that they are truth, from the most indubitable evidence. Be assured, for instance, that there is such a person as the Son of God,—that He actually suffered, rose, and ascended,—that He orders every event, every step of your lives for good,—that He gives whatever is necessary for our state,—that He never leaves, never forsakes us,—and, that neither

death, nor life, nor any other thing, can ever separate us from Him. Be assured, that He is the wisest and best friend which you can possibly have ; and that His Father is the kindest and most compassionate. Be assured of these, by studying them in their own nature, and in those intimations which he hath given of them in His Word and Providence. Be assured of them, by studying them also in their relation to one another, as constituting one harmonious whole, and as throwing additional light and beauty on one another. Be assured of them, by studying them also in their application to every particular state, and that for the confirmation and joy of your faith. Be assured of these, by abounding in prayer as well as in study, that you may “know the things which are freely given to you of God ;” that you may “be filled with the knowledge of his will unto all wisdom and spiritual understanding ;” so that thus you may be strong in faith, giving glory to God. And if you do so, with that desire and energy of mind which the importance of this point of Christian character requires, you will fill up what remains of the measure of your faith. You will not be found wanting in any day of your pilgrimage here, or in the day of Christ hereafter. Whether you are in adversity or prosperity, in health or sickness, you will be equally confident and happy in all, and at length receive the reward of your faith, even the salvation of your souls : be perfect, then, in your *Faith*. But,

Secondly, Be perfect in your *Love*,—your love of God, and of your fellow man,—your love of God, which consists in a high esteem of His excellence—a supreme regard to His character—and a delight in His goodness.

And, my brethren, you must be aware that you have great room for being perfect in these ; for however perfect you may have conceived yourselves to be at first, yet, when your new state became familiar to you, and the fire of your first love consequently abated, you have become convinced of great deficiencies and neglects : you have felt coldness, and ingratitude, and enmity remaining in your hearts to a high degree. But how, you may be ready to ask, are you to become perfect in your love ? Why, by laying to heart, more and more, the criminality of your coldness, ingratitude, and enmity as being entirely contrary to His character, and consequently hateful in his sight,—by laying to heart, particularly, the power of his love in giving his Son and Spirit, and thus delivering you from hell and bringing you to heaven,—by considering how great is that goodness which He hath already conferred on you, as well as that which He hath laid up for you,—by praying more and more that He would shed abroad His love into your hearts, and thus make you feel its power and sweetness,—and, finally, by abstracting yourselves more and more from the love and communion of this evil world, and taking yourselves up more and more with God, as your only portion and joy. Such are the ways, generally, in which you will become perfect in your love ; and, if you attended to these with that constancy which their importance requires, you would soon become more pure and ardent in your love, and show the reality of it in your deeper spirituality of mind ; your closer walk with God ; your more lively frame ; and your greater ardour of spirit in His service. You would show, that it is God chiefly whom you regard in the present life ; and that, when you are enabled to exercise yourselves

to him in any becoming manner, you only then feel satisfied. See, then, that you have that love to God, which “is the end of the commandment, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.”

But there is love also to our fellow men, which you are required to be perfect in, as well as to God. That love which leads us to esteem every grace which we see in them; to behave to all in the most condescending and agreeable manner; and to do to them, in all things, as we would wish to be done to. And, my brethren, when you consider our natural selfishness—our peevishness, also, on the least occasion of offence, not to speak of our haughtiness, our wrath, our evil speaking and acting, in which we are too ready to indulge, you will see, that we have great reason for being perfect in our love. But how, again, you may ask, are we to be perfect here? Why, by laying to heart their general relation to us, as brethren, and the particular relation which his people have to us in the Lord,—by considering how highly His own people are beloved by Him,—how richly they are endowed,—and how great is the glory which is in reserve for them;—and, lastly, by considering how much it is the will of Him, on whom we all depend, that we delight in, and add as much as possible to the felicity of one another. And, if we did so, we would soon come to have a love to our brethren, and to be perfect, comparatively, in our love. We would show the reality of it in a more open, agreeable, and condescending demeanour towards them,—in a greater readiness to give praise to whom praise is due,—and to throw the mantle of concealment over the infirmities and faults of all;—and, by acting in a more bountiful and sympathetic manner to the

poor and afflicted. See, then, that by attending to these things, you make a point to be perfect more and more in them ; and “ the Lord make you to abound and to increase in love one towards another.

II. Let us now come to the second part of the Apostle's exhortation—“ Be of good comfort.” This we will consider, with regard to the three following things ; namely, your salvation, generally ; the season of darkness and desertion ; and the trials and afflictions of life.

First, Be of good comfort with regard to your salvation, generally considered. If you have the faith of this salvation, let no suggestion whatever disturb your minds, in regard to it. Listen not to the fears which unbelief may raise up, as arising from your sinfulness ; nor to the doubts which the darkness of your minds may start, as to its reality. Give not way for a moment to any uncertainty which you may conceive attending it, whether as arising from the greatness of the salvation itself—the distance at which it is still kept from you—or the length of time that may intervene before you receive it. Attend not to any say of these, for they are either the offspring of the Devil, or of your own pride and unbelief, but take all the comfort from your salvation generally, which it is calculated to give. Consider that it is a perfect salvation, and was wrought out without any regard to your unworthiness, but with the full view of it in all its criminality ;—consider, that if you only are convinced of sin—only loathe yourselves on its account—only believe, and apply the salvation to yourselves, that you shall as certainly be saved as there is salvation ;—consider, that it is carried on and perfected, without any regard to your merits, but merely

for the glory of God, and to make you more humble, more grateful, more believing and more depending on his grace ; so that, if these things are in you, and particularly, if you are sensible of a growth in them, you may also be sensibly assured of your salvation. And when you have considered these things, and laid them to heart, take all the comfort from them which they are calculated to give ; say, I am satisfied that there is salvation, and that I have an interest in it ; say, that victory over sin and death is mine, and that heaven at last shall be mine also. And, when you thus speak from a believing regard to your salvation, endeavour, even now, to feel what that blessedness is, which consists in a deliverance from hell, and a hope of heaven ; what that is, to be living in the assured prospect of future felicity. But, should any unbelieving fears still arise, reason and quarrel with yourselves against them, in the same manner as the Psalmist did. “ 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.” If, after all, you cannot find arguments to remove your fears, reason against them in the following manner :—I cannot die, because Christ died for me,—I cannot fall short of heaven, because Christ hath taken possession of it in my name, and pleads triumphantly my cause there, and because His own honour and interest are engaged in my preservation. I will therefore be of good comfort ; and, instead of giving way any longer to unbelieving fears, shall rather say with the church of old, “ Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid ; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation. Therefore, with joy shall ye

draw water out of the wells of salvation." Yes, Christians, thus be of good comfort.

But, secondly, Be of good comfort during the season of darkness and desertion. You may, for a season have no light, and labour *also* under the sense of desertion, or the want of His favour. But without entering into the nature of these at present, let me call upon you to be of good comfort, even in the midst of them. They are not the effect of wrath, but merely of fatherly chastisement. They are not given to bring us back to the bitterness of past experience, but merely to try and to humble us,—to bring us to the recollection of some omission of duty, or some commission of sin,—to make us feel in a higher degree the pleasure of duty for the time to come,—and to deliver us for the same time from the accusing torment of sin,—to make us appreciate, also in a higher degree, the blessings of light and favour, and to raise in our minds greater desires after these blessings. Besides these, the darkness into which we may be brought is never so great, we apprehend, as to deprive us of all light, or our want of His favour so great as to rob us of the recollection of past experience, much less to be succeeded with the alarming apprehension of wrath, or the sinking depression of despair. No, even in our greatest darkness there must be some light, in our greatest desertion some comfort, were it nothing more than the feeble recollection of past ideas and experience ; so that instead of asking, with the Psalmist when in this state, "Is his mercy clean gone, and will he be favourable no more?" we ought rather to keep ourselves up in good courage and comfort. We ought to take the benefit of the little light which we have, and of the remaining calm which may be left

in our minds ; or, should these be wholly awanting, we ought to take the benefit of our past experience and recollection ; and with these, to comfort ourselves for a while—with these to wait upon God—with these to plead for a renewal of past favours—with these to hope that “ he will make darkness light before us,” and that “ he will make us glad, according to the days wherein he hath afflicted us.” It was thus evidently that the Psalmist acted, when in a season of darkness and desertion. “ I will remember thee,” says he, “ from the land of Jordan, and the Hermonites from the hill Mizar.” And no doubt the remembrance was sweet and pleasant to his soul ; the remembrance kept up his spirit, preserved his faith and courage, kept him waiting on God, till he interposed in his behalf, and opened his mouth in songs of thanksgiving. Act you in the same manner, from your experience also, and be of good comfort and courage ; and we will venture to say, that sooner or later you will have the same occasion for gratitude and joy. For the comfort of all, however, who are in this state, let them remember the words of God, and obey them. “ Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light ? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.”

Be of good comfort, lastly, under all your trials. Whatever these are, do not sink under them—do not rise up against them—do not murmur or fret. They are the necessary appointment of a wise Providence. We would be much worse without them than with them. They are given, in general, for the correction of some evil temper—for the mortification of some evil prosperity—for the dissolution of

some undue attachment—for the cultivation of some latent virtue—the revival of some dying grace, to bring us more frequently, and keep us more nearly at the throne of grace, and to make us take up our happiness chiefly with divine things. Besides, they are never given in such number and bitterness as to overwhelm our spirits, but in such measure and succession, as makes them bearable; and the grace and consolation of God are particularly promised, to counterbalance our afflictions, besides the assurance which we have of their sanctified use, and their short continuance, to make us submit to them. As this, then, is the case, how patiently should we submit to them? how cheerfully acquiesce in their appointment? and how readily should we build ourselves up in comfort, in the assurance of an expected end? But as our spirits, after all, are too ready to sink, or as we are loath to take to ourselves the comfort we might have, let all who may be in affliction lay to heart the following expostulations, and improve them:—Why should you be overmuch troubled at the afflictions of this life, when they cannot deprive you of the joy of the next, but rather enhance and increase it? Why should you be too much affected at the pain of the body, when it only tends, by the blessing of God, to purify and to strengthen the mind? Why should you grieve at the loss of earthly substance, when it cannot affect your heavenly crown, but remains securely and gloriously the same? Why should you be dejected at the loss of worldly favour, when you may ever enjoy that which is of a more transcendent and delightful kind? Why at the loss of earthly friends, when your best Friend ever lives? Why pine away in sorrow and disquiet, at the sin and wretchedness, the carelessness and

wickedness of your near relations, when your own escape from hell was a miracle of mercy, and your own carelessness and wickedness so great? Answer, I entreat you, to these expostulations; and if you act a rational and incumbent part, you will find that you have far more occasion to be grateful for what you possess, than dejected for what you want; far more occasion to rejoice in your present good and future prospects, than afflicted at present troubles, however great. Act you, therefore, a Christian and incumbent part, by being of good comfort in every state, for "the Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." "Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies." "He maketh sore, and he bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole." Be of good comfort, therefore, for though he cause trouble, he will give help and deliverance. "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,"

III. Let us now come, in the third place, to the other part of the Apostle's exhortation—"Be of one mind." This refers evidently to unity of sentiment on the great doctrines and duties of the Gospel, and to the purity and order of church discipline. Surely we ought to be one on these when we are not left to our own judgment to know them, but have an infallible standard of faith and duty in the Word of God and in our subordinate standards of confession to inform us of them for our guidance and faith. The Scriptures throughout speak only one language, have only one aim, are all in harmony with one another, and in the simple language of common sense, so that there is no room left for jarring of opinion, for gainsaying, or contradiction, but for the fullest

unity in faith and action. And blessed be God, there is a general agreement among those who are called Christians in regard to Christ and God. There is a general agreement in faith and practice, and a general toleration for little diversities or merely circumstantial points on the whole ; there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and several other things, till, as we are told, Ephesians iv. and 13, we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. But on account of our own prejudice and conceit we are all ready more or less to differ and to bring discord and wrangling into our differences; and as these are very unseemly, and apt to produce uncharitableness and division, which it has done in too many instances, we need to be exhorted to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,” namely, “with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love as endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace : as there is but one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.” Ephesians iv. 1.

Here in the text also he calls them to be of one mind. He reproves highly for the want of this in several important points in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and lays down many rules for their unity of faith and action on many points. I do not however mention these at this time, having already done so in the first part of this discourse, so that if we only know and acknowledge these, we will have no difficulty in having unity of mind upon these. Brethren, be therefore of one mind on all disputed things, give up your own mind, and appeal at once to the final standard of all controversy, the Scriptures ;

be ready to say at once what saith the law, and let that decide the matter in all controversies. For, as the Apostle says, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Be as much as possible in one mind, waiting for the time when we shall all see eye to eye, and when with the mouth together we shall sing.

IV. Let us now come, in the last place, to the other part of the Apostle's exhortation—"Live in peace." But here, as in the former case, I do not see any necessity for dwelling particularly on this duty. Let me only call upon you to live as much in peace for the time to come, as you may have done in time past. Go along cheerfully with one another, and give in to one another, for the general good. Show the same kindly feeling and temper to one another; and if anything like irritable feeling or expression should escape, be ever ready to exercise mutual forbearance and charity to one another. View one another, I entreat you, in the best light possible; and as brethren, I trust, in the Lord, hide as much as possible the infirmities and faults of one another, and never, never, let the voice of accusation be lifted up by any of you against your brethren, but "let that charity which is the bond of perfectness," and that "peace of God which passeth all understanding, rule and keep your hearts," and you shall be enabled to live in peace.

Having thus called your attention to the various parts of the Apostle's exhortation, let us now come to the encouraging declaration which He hath annexed unto them;—"And the God of love and peace shall be with you." I cannot enter at length into these characters which the Apostle hath

applied unto God, but shall merely observe that he is the God of love, as it is the natural effect of His own infinite nature, which being self-sufficient and independent, must lead Him to delight Himself abundantly in His own goodness, and in its manifestations to His people. He is the God of love, also, as He has given the brightest display of it in the gift of His Son and Spirit, and in those present and future blessings which he hath given to us through them. And He is the God of peace, as He alone devised and carried into effect the conditions of it by His Son, when it was broken on our part; and as He remains ever the same, notwithstanding our frequent rebellions against Him; and shows the reality of it on our renewed repentance and obedience.

Now, the Apostle says, this God of love and of peace shall be with us—with us, as to the sense of His presence, which will ever command our souls in due regard to Him—with us, to guide us in the way, to strengthen us under weakness, to console us under trouble, to carry us on from one step of our pilgrimage to another, and to perfect that which concerneth us—with us, particularly, as the God of love and peace, to give to us the sense of love and peace. I cannot, however, show you at length how He gives this sense, but merely that it is by giving a direction to our minds, to think of Him in these views, and such an influence from them as shall settle in the production of it.

But observe, my brethren, the ground on which we have reason to expect His presence. It is only as we are perfect, are of good comfort, of one mind, and live in peace. Yes; there is such a connection between the two, that it is only as we have the one, that we may expect the other. It is only

as we grow in knowledge, that we can have the sense of His presence, which relates to His being and perfections ; for in what other way can these be realized as present with us, but only as they are the subjects of knowledge ? It is only as we grow in faith and love, that we can have the sense of His presence as the God of love and peace ; for in what other way can He be realized as present with us, but only as He is thus apprehended by faith ? It is only, also, as we are of good comfort, that we can have the same ; for with regard to ourselves, we find, that a person of an unhappy disposition we studiously avoid ; whereas, one who is cheerful and happy in his mind we delight to be with. It is only as we are of one mind, and live in peace, that He can be with us as the God of love and peace ; for, independent of the fact that God is one, and His ways one, and that He is the God of order and not of confusion, and therefore can have no communion with disunited disorderly persons : we are altogether unable to realize Him in His one character, as present with us, if we are jarring in our sentiments,—unable to have the sense of His love and peace, if we are living at war with one another. We may, indeed, have the sense of His presence partially, and also of His love and peace, without being particularly distinguished for these things ; but, unless that sense is suitably appreciated and improved by us, we will soon find ourselves deprived of it. And, accordingly, how often, when we have ceased to exercise our minds on the great views of His character, have we found them become feeble and dark and even unable after a time, to realize the view of His character ? How often, when we have given up with faith and love, have we lost the sense of His presence as a God of

love, and felt our former alarms coming back upon us? How often, when we have given up with comfort, and indulged in a melancholy disposition, have we felt that we were only sinning against our own mercies? and when, if we have indulged in a wrangling and furious disposition, that we have gone on in the high way of misery? It is only, therefore, as we are perfect, of good comfort, of one mind, living in peace, that the God of love and peace shall be with us. Yes; this follows not merely as the natural effect of an adequate cause, but also, as all His people know, of the special communication of His grace. He is so pleased when He sees us thus living, as to testify His approbation of us, by giving us at times the special sense of His presence, love and peace. Who of His people has not felt this, in the awe of their spirits, the moving of their affections, the elevation of their minds, and the rapture of their praises and anticipations? Such experiences assure us heartily of His love and peace, and engage us therefore the more heartily to the maintenance of them; while God on His part is the more readily engaged to grant them the more sensibly to us. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest which we promised to Moses. And the God of love and peace shall be with us," if we study to be perfect, to be of good comfort, and to be of one mind, and to live in peace. And if so, then we need hardly say farewell to you, for you shall fare well. You shall have God's blessing on you while you live. You shall be happy in life and happy with one another, and come to have a meetness for the happiness of the saints in Heaven, where the God of love and peace shall smile on you for evermore. God grant it for His name's sake.