SERMONS

ON SOME OF THE

MOST INTERESTING SUBJECTS

IN

THEOLOGY.

BY THE

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DEDICATION

TO A

YOUNG CLERGYMAN

ON THE MOST USEFUL STYLE OF PREACHING.

My Dear Sir,

We have frequently conversed together on the most useful and effective mode of preaching. We have been agreed on the general principles which have at various times been submitted to the public, by many authors who have treated upon the subject of pulpit eloquence. The only matter of difference in opinion between us, respected the possibility of so preaching the morality of the Gospel, as not to lose sight of its peculiar duties; as well as the doctrines, which are to be deduced from them. Whether an union between the Anti-evangelical
styles of preaching were practicable or advantage-ous, or likely to be useful to the majority of a Christian congregation. I now beg your acceptance of the following Volume of Sermons, which I submit to you as illustrations of the truth of the proposition which I have repeatedly affirmed in conversation, that as a pious and well-meaning Calvinist, and a pious and well-meaning Arminian, will both unite in subscribing to the Scriptures in general, as well as to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England; because both are written with a view to teach the truth alone, and not to enforce any partial peculiar creed,—so, also, it ought to be with our instructions from the pulpit. Every clergyman is bound, such was the proposition which I affirmed, so to preach the principles of Christianity, and so to enforce the practical inferences, which may be deduced from those principles, that the Calvinist and the Arminian, the Evangelical and the Anti-evangelical hearer, may bestow their approbation on the principles and inferences of the preacher, however they may think that he has not sufficiently insisted upon some points, which are more peculiarly enforced by their favorite systems of theology.

This opinion, especially as the terms in which
it is expressed involve the meaning of the epithets so generally assigned to the two great parties which divide the favor of the reflecting adherents of Christianity in this country, may appear to require explanation. As Clergymen of the Episcopal Church, we profess the same peculiar, as well as more general principles, and we ought so to enforce the same doctrines, that our union as brethren may be more perfect, and the ridicule of the Papist and the Socinian, the Neologist and the Infidel, be no longer so much deserved. While the Church of England is the best bulwark now remaining among mankind, against the pretensions of the infallible Church, which permits no inquiry to investigate the grounds of its decrees—against the pride of reason, which believes no doctrines which it cannot comprehend—and against the presumption and arrogance, which receives no Scriptures, and adheres to no Church—the influence of that establishment is diminished, and the scorn of its enemies is encouraged, by the apparent disunion among its people, and the opposite methods of instruction adopted by its teachers; and great service would be rendered to the Church, and to the world, if some one more competent to the
labor than I am, would devote himself to this work—to lessen the divisions, and increase the union among the advocates of the same doctrines, and the ministers of the same Church.

When I use the words Evangelical, and Anti-evangelical, I do not adopt them as terms of reproach, but as epithets descriptive of two classes of teachers, which have great influence in society. As a Tory was well defined to be the supporter of the rights of the Crown, without losing sight of the privileges of the people; while the Whig was defined, with no less justice, to have been a supporter of the privileges of the people, without losing sight of the rights of the Crown—so would I describe the Evangelical and the Anti-evangelical parties, by a similar antithesis. The Evangelical is the teacher who insists most upon the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, without losing sight of the moral and practical inferences to be deduced from them—the Anti-evangelical insists most upon the moral and practical inferences, without losing sight of the doctrines upon which they are founded. The former is rather Calvinistic than Arminian; the latter is rather Arminian than Calvinistic: though
neither party is devotedly attached to the respective creeds of Calvin or Arminius. If you will permit me to mention very briefly the faults and excellences of the two parties, you will understand more thoroughly the nature of that style of preaching which our best divines have adopted, and which I would earnestly recommend to your consideration.

The faults of the Evangelical teachers are, that they render Christianity repulsive to men of sober judgments, and refined taste, by enforcing the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel in an obscure and unusual phraseology, which is neither consistent with a right interpretation of Scripture, nor with sound and strict reasoning. If they would enforce, for instance, the doctrine of the corruption of human nature, they use language which would lead their hearers to infer that we are demons in malignity and wickedness—whereas we are represented in Scripture, and the truth is confirmed by experience, to be only fallen men, inclined to evil rather than to good, but capable of restoration to the favor of God, which a demon cannot be. If they would deny the merit of good works, they sometimes speak so incautiously that they seem to represent good works as unnecessary; and they do
this by confounding the doctrine of the Reformers, who denied the meritorious nature of penances, pilgrimages, and similar works, with the doctrine of the Antinomians, who deny the merit of repentance, and obedience: whereas, while the former class of good works are utterly useless, as the proofs of true faith, the latter are so essential, that without them faith has no existence. If they teach the necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit, they interpret some passages of Scripture so inconsiderately, that a hearer of their own modes of expression would imagine the Deity to be a capricious, or arbitrary Being, instead of being governed by laws as just, and certain, in His conduct towards His accountable spirits, as He ordinarily proceeds by certain and immutable laws, in His regulation of the material universe. They too often separate passages of Scripture from those which precede and follow them, to enforce the probable truth of opinions, to which the passages which they quote have no reference. They too often insist on some one truth, to the exclusion of others—as the foreknowledge of God to the exclusion of so much free will on the part of man, as renders him a responsible being. They speak with too much familiarity of the love of
DEDICATION.

God, of the Holy Spirit, and of the atonement of our Saviour. They do not sufficiently represent the episcopal clergy as the only authorized teachers. They sometimes speak of the salvation of the soul, as if that salvation depended upon the decrees of the Almighty, and not upon the acceptance of that mercy which the Almighty decreed to be the means of salvation. They do not seem sufficiently to value the sacraments, nor the institutions of the Church. The language of their devotion is mysterious, and almost unintelligible; as when they inquire of their hearers, whether they feel that they have an interest in Christ; by which, and similar phrases, they mean to inquire, whether the belief which their hearers profess in the truth of the doctrines of Revelation, has so influenced their conduct, and their hearts, that they are conscious of having endeavoured to remove wilful evil, and have begun to derive consolation and happiness, under the sorrows of the present life, and in the anticipation of the future. One of the most strenuous advocates of that mode of instruction which is generally called Evangelical, has written an Essay on the aversion of men of taste to Evangelical Religion. If taste be the result of knowledge, cultivation of intellect, and
mental refinement, that taste will never be adverse to Scripture, to the Liturgy, to the Articles of the Church, or to the solemn language of those devotional Christian writers, who unite the soundest common sense with the language of the purest religion. The confession that men of taste can be adverse to Evangelical Religion, while they are not adverse to the Volume of Scripture, and the truth of orthodox Christianity, is the severest condemnation of that system of instruction which is generally called Evangelical.

Such is one class of faults which the Christian Clergyman will avoid—but he will be no less anxious, on the other hand, to shun the extremes which too often characterize those whom we must call, for the sake of distinction, the Anti-evangelical preachers.

The faults of these are no less objectionable; and they may easily be pointed out as being the opposite of those already enumerated. If the Anti-evangelical party, for instance, have occasion to speak of the corruption of human nature, they sometimes use phrases respecting the dignity of man, and the excellence of that moral virtue to which he may certainly attain, even without the aid of revelation, which would seem to imply that
the assistance of the Holy Spirit is not so absolutely essential to perfection, as it is represented to be; both in the Articles of the Church, and in the pages of Scripture. They sometimes confound those moral virtues, which are the result of instinct, society, necessity, and experience (and which are, therefore, practised alike by the heathen and by the infidel, as well as by the Christian), with those higher virtues, which can only be the result of more than human principle. The corruption of human nature consists in this—that the heart of man, and his affections, are alienated from the will of God; and not that he is unable or unwilling to perform the duties which are required by man. The love of children to parents, and of parents to children, are universal duties; but they may be the result of instinct, or natural affection, without any reference to the will of God: and the practice, therefore, of the moral virtues, which are the consequences of this natural affection, does not imply that the nature of man is not alienated from God. The same reasoning will apply to such duties as obedience to magistrates, and many others, which must be practised for the sake of the general happiness. And while these various duties must be all enforced by the Chris-
tian teacher, upon Christian principles, and not upon human motives only, the exercise of these virtues from human motives, no more invalidates the doctrine of the alienation of the heart from God, and, therefore, the necessity of the assistance of a divine power, than the bursting forth of a few wild flowers, or a little self-sown wheat, amidst the thorns and thistles of an uncultivated field, can render unnecessary the toil of the sower, or the labour of the reaper.

The Anti-evangelical preachers have frequently deserved the censure of their brethren, by the incautious manner in which they have spoken of the efficacy of the Sacraments. Baptism, more especially, has been represented to be so absolutely necessary to salvation, and to be attended with blessings so valuable to a Christian, that it would almost appear to be equally essential to future happiness, with faith and good works. They apply those passages in St. Paul’s Epistles, which describe the influences of the Holy Spirit, too exclusively to the apostolic age. When they speak of those subjects, which are too frequently discussed in the affected phraseology to which I have alluded, they adopt the very opposite extreme, and use language so cold, and tame, that it would almost seem as if
they deemed energy a crime, and the eloquence of enraptured devotion, fanaticism or folly. They only then use (pardon the ungrateful terms), a language which may be called cant, when they declaim against canting language. Scripture is too unfrequently quoted. The necessity of spiritual assistance, the one great doctrinal truth of the dispensation under which we live, is insisted upon with too much timidity, as if the divine aids which are afforded to the faithful believer in the atonement, were incompatible with that degree of human liberty, which is essential to the responsibility of a Christian. They study, as they ought to do, severe and strict reasoning, and correct and elegant composition, in their discourses, but they do not sufficiently remember, that all the reasoning of a Christian teacher, is only then useful when it kindles the affections, as well as instructs the mind. They are contented with appealing to the intellect, rather than to the heart; and their hearers sometimes leave their churches, convinced of a truth, but unmoved as to any practical conviction of its importance, and the necessity of its personal application. The bold appeal, the affecting interrogation, the energetic address, the irresistible persuasion which is founded upon the undeniable
solemnities of the truths of Christianity, do not sufficiently characterise the teaching of those, who only seem to be enthusiastic, when they denounce enthusiasm, and who are more anxious to avoid censure, than to attain to excellence.

The Evangelical preachers are worthy of our imitation, where they frequently insist upon the two principal truths of Christianity, the Atonement of our Lord, and the consequent bestowment of the divine assistances of the Holy Spirit. The Anti-evangelical preachers are worthy of our imitation, in maintaining the necessity of outward religion—the authority of the Church over its members—and the peculiar advantages of Episcopacy as the best bond of union to an inquiring people and a divided clergy.

The conclusion to which I think you will have arrived, is probably that which I have so frequently urged upon you—that a Christian clergyman will be anxious to avoid the faults, and imitate the excellences of the two great parties which divide the attention of the public. He will neither enrol himself among the ranks of the one or of the other, but he will be contented to be called a "Catholic Christian of the Church of England." I say a Catholic Christian; for though one of the dis-
DEDICATED ornaments of the Church in the present day, in treating upon this subject, considers it to be sufficient, "that we refuse any distinctive appellation but that of Christians of the Church of England *," I am of opinion that this is not sufficient. One large and corrupt portion of the Church of Christ has assumed to itself the epithet which is alone characteristic of the Universal Church, and not of any particular division of that Church. We boast ourselves to be Catholics. We pray for the Catholic Church. We recognise as our brethren all baptized Christians, who by baptism are admitted into the visible Church. We further acknowledge, by assuming the noble and honourable epithet, Catholic, that all those who "love our Lord Jesus Christ with sincerity," to whatever communion they may belong, are Chris-

* Dr. Whately—Bampton Lectures, p. 260, 261. I meet there too with an admirable remark, which I submit to the consideration of those, who think that, because all clergymen ought to be evangelical in the proper sense of that word, they may safely retain the epithet evangelical in the peculiar sense—"those of the Corinthians who said, I am of Christ, using this title to distinguish them from other members of the same Church, were no less censured than those who said, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos."
tians in deed and in truth—and while we are compelled among the many societies of Christians, and among their many conflicting creeds, to adopt one society, and to prefer one creed—and while we believe, as I firmly do, that the Church of England is the society most worthy of our support, and the creed of that church to be the best summary of Christian truth, I cannot forget that I am a member of the Universal Church—a Catholic of the Church of England. This is true liberality—to compromise no truth, to receive willingly no error, but to love all as brethren, and to believe, and to act, in all things as Catholic Christians, who are members of the Church of England.

Do not deem me tedious if I point out to you yet further, the exceeding advantage which must attend this mode of preaching. The great majority of the numerous errors which have at various times afflicted the Catholic Church, have originated in partial views of truth, and in omitting to take all truth into consideration, when some one undoubted truth was to be discussed. The real Catholic preacher will take a general or universal survey of the propositions he submits to his people. The most usual illustration of this remark is derived from the well-known controversy on the compati-
bility of the foreknowledge of God with the responsibility of man. The Catholic preacher will shew the certainty of the double truth, that without the knowledge of that part of eternity which forms the future to man, God cannot be perfect—and that without some power of determining whether good or evil shall be his choice, man cannot be responsible. He will lament the weakness of intellect which prevents his discerning clearly the right developement of all the difficulties attendant upon the subject; but he will never insist upon one truth, to the utter exclusion of another. The un-Catholic, or sectarian, or partial observer of the system of redemption, insists, on the contrary, upon one only of these propositions. Whether he be called Jesuit, Pelagian, or Arminian, he insists so much upon the freedom of the will, that he almost destroys the doctrine of the foreknowledge of God—while another, whether he be called Jansenist, Augustinian, Fatalist, or Calvinist, seems to annihilate moral responsibility, in his zeal for the supposed perfections of the Almighty.

But it is not in this often quoted instance only, that Christians destroy truth, by their un-Catholic views of some doctrine of Christianity. Nearly every sect, and every party, is established upon a
some error of this nature—that is, upon some partial view of a truth which is undoubtedly to be received, but which is rendered un-Catholic by their peculiar mode of abolishing, or denying, or omitting, or degrading, some other truth which ought to be received as part of the same religion. The Socinian is right in affirming that Christ was a man; he is fatally wrong in denying the truth of the other discoveries in Scripture, respecting the divinity of the same Saviour. The Catholic of the Church of Rome is right in maintaining with the Catholics of the Church of England, and with the Catholics of the Church of Scotland, the real presence of the Son of God, in the administration of the Sacrament—he is wrong in affirming that presence to be actual and corporeal; and so I might proceed through many instances of the same kind. We are required to preach the truth; and if there be one prayer which the Christian preacher is required to offer, more appropriate and more useful to himself and to the Church, than other petitions, it is this—that it would please God, not only to lead him to truth, but, to use the language of Him who spake not as man spake, that He would guide him into all truth. If this petition be granted, the language of the preacher will be like his creed. It will be that
of a Christian and a Catholic: and it cannot be rightly described if it be called by any term which expresses either sectarian phraseology, or a partial view of truth. He will preach in simple and unaffected language, the faith, which I may call the vulgar Christianity—the Christianity, I mean, which was common to the Christian Churches in the three first centuries, before the corruptions of the Church of Rome began—the Christianity which is still common to the Episcopal Churches of England, and Scotland, and America, to the Lutheran and Calvinistic communions—to the Protestant Dissenters of our own country—to the Wesleyan Societies, and to the Church of Rome itself, though it is there disfigured, and disguised, by the accumulated errors of ages. He will preach the union of the doctrines, I mean, of the Trinity, the incarnation, and the atonement—the necessity of divine assistance to restore the soul to its Creator—the certainty of the resurrection from the dead, and the undoubted usefulness of the two appointed sacraments, the outward means of grace, and that system of Church government which is founded upon Scripture, and antiquity, upon usefulness and reason. Make these great truths the foundation of your preaching, and you will then attain to
the character of a true Catholic. Live but according to these, and you will be the real Christian. Never suppose that by shrinking from the bold declaration of these truths, you will conciliate one enemy of Christianity, or establish one wavering Christian in his faith. Never imagine that because the doctrine of the Trinity is mysterious, or the doctrines of the Atonement, and divine assistance have been perverted, you will do well, by avoiding to affirm their truth. Never condescend to degrade your hallowed cause, by interpreting the miracles which are related in Scripture, as if they were natural events, exaggerated perhaps by the sacred historian, or magnified by popular tradition. Remember, that if there is a Deity, that Deity must be Omnipotent; and there is no such thing as nature, considered as a system of laws, independent of God. Nature is but a name, for an effect, whose cause is God. All is God, and the laws of God. The common course of things is the usual law, and a miracle is nothing but an unusual law of the same Deity, who appointed the ordinary routine, which is called the law of nature. If there be a Deity, there is no greater difficulty to a wise man in believing in miracles, upon the evidence of an inspired book,
than in believing in the evidence of his senses. Preach your religion with all its mysteries, and all its difficulties, provided you are satisfied that you preach the fair inferences deducible from Scripture. The union of the concurrent testimony of the best interpreters, and sound, impartial criticism, will be sufficient, by God's blessing, to preserve you from material error. I have said nothing to you upon the inferior subjects of the best manner of preaching, nor of the proper style of composition. Useful directions will be found in many books upon these points, to which I can add but little. I can only say, with respect to the manner of preaching, avoid with the utmost abhorrence all affectation, and address yourself to your congregation as if you were a friend, or a brother, anxious to persuade them to believe some truth which to you appears to be of the utmost importance—or to act in some manner which you are convinced is alone right, and wise, and good. Be in earnest, and that earnestness will be the best eloquence. With respect to your style of composition, I would give you advice of a similar nature. So study your subject, that it shall fill your soul, and occupy all your thoughts. Write out, before you commence your homily itself, a clear and
ample sketch of the proposition you would enforce, the arguments by which you would support it, and the inferences you would desire to deduce from it; and your plain and simple address, when delivered in the manner I have described, will be abundantly blessed by Him, who is ever present with the ministers and the people of His Church. Most sincerely wishing you all the happiness which the consolations of Christianity, or the circumstances of this life, may afford you,

Believe me,

My dear Sir,

Your affectionate and faithful friend,

GEO. TOWNSEND.
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[Preached in the Cathedral, Durham, on Trinity Sunday.]

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[Preached at Northallerton, on Easter Sunday, 1829.]

1 Cor. xv. 35—44.

Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? That which thou soweist is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou soweest, thou soweest not that body that shall be, but bare grain. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of man, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds.—So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body ......................... 400
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MARK xvi. 19.

So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God 415

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ON THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE AND HOLINESS.

EZEKIEL xviii. 25, 26, 27. 30.

Ye say the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die.

—Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin ................................. 430

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1 KINGS xviii. 21. 24.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.—Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God...... 446
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SERMON I.

THE RESIGNATION OF THE MEDIATORIAL KINGDOM A PROOF OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

[Preached in the Cathedral, Durham, on Trinity Sunday.]

1 Corinthians xv. 24. 28.

Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him, that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

The Article of the Christian faith which the institutions of the Church require both its ministers and its people to consider on this day, is, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The Church of England, in common with the great majority of Christians in every age, from the times of the apostles to the present day, believes, that there is "but One living " and true God, the Maker and Preserver of all " things: and in the unity of this Godhead there be " three Persons, of one substance, power, and eter- " nity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."—This is the first Article of our faith: and our mode of worship corresponds with this faith; for we offer
up our prayers, in the same language of adoration, to God the Father of heaven,—to God the Son, the Redeemer,—to God the Holy Ghost, "the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons, and one God," and we implore each, to "have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." There is no mistaking, therefore, the doctrine of our Church, concerning the nature of that God, in whom we believe, and whom we worship: and if it be demanded of us, for what reason we believe and worship in this manner, our answer is, that we derive our notions of the Deity from Revelation alone; and we find, that, in that Revelation, the attributes of Godhead are equally and uniformly assigned to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

If Christians had been contented with the plain language of Scripture, they would have been satisfied with this reply to the inquiry. It has, however, so happened that many, to whom the revelation of Christ has been imparted, are not willing to receive its doctrines, unless they can thoroughly comprehend and explain its discoveries. Forgetting that revelation has been granted to man to supply the deficiencies, and imperfections of our reason,—forgetting also, that the very circumstance of the existence of mysteries and difficulties in revelation is one proof of our immortality, because they are a pledge of the future enlargement of our faculties, when mysteries which we understand not now, we shall know hereafter—forgetting, I say, these things—there are many persons who resolve
to make their reason their guide, rather than revelation; and who reject, therefore, from their creed, every truth, and every doctrine, which appears to them, that is, which appears to their imperfect, and very limited faculties, to be mysterious, or difficult. There are many ways, by which men thus deceive themselves; but the most usual way, when the doctrine of the Trinity, more especially, is the point in question, is this:—they observe that there are some passages of the Holy Scriptures which speak of the Son of God and of the Holy Spirit, in very different language: and because the expressions and phrases which are used, do not seem at first sight to bear the very same meaning—they thence infer, that the Scripture is contradictory to itself,—or, that the doctrine of the Church is erroneous. Now we may lay down one general rule for the interpretation of all those passages of Scripture which speak of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, and the rule is this:—we must distinguish between those passages which speak of the offices of God, and those which speak of the attributes of God. For instance—when our Lord speaks of his office as Mediator, He says, my Father is greater than I: but when He speaks of that attribute of Godhead, by which the Almighty is every where present, He claims to Himself the same attribute, for He says,—Where two or three are
gathered together in my name, there am I. 2. We read, too, in another instance, that the Jews were about to stone Him, because He made himself equal to God 3. Now, because the persons to whom I refer, cannot comprehend how Christ at one time can represent Himself as equal to God, and at another time say, My Father is greater than I, they rush at once to the inference, that what they cannot reconcile, others cannot reconcile; and they come to this conclusion,—that they are wise, and that the Church is foolish; that they are right, and that the Church is wrong—that the majority of Christians in all ages have been wrong also; and that the only way to satisfy their reason, is, to reject, or to deny, one half of the doctrines and truths of Revelation.

The passage of Scripture which I have selected for our present consideration, has been urged more frequently, and more confidently, than any other, perhaps, in the whole Scripture, against the divinity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity. We are here expressly told, that a time shall come when the Son of God shall give up the kingdom to the Father, and when He does so, that He shall become subject to the Father: and—then cometh the end, when He shall have thus delivered up the kingdom 4: and yet we affirm in one of our creeds, that “of His kingdom,” that is, of Christ’s kingdom, “there shall be no end.”

2 Matt. xviii. 20. 3 John v. 18. 
4 1 Cor. xv. 24. 5 Nicene Creed.
We believe in the truth of those passages of Scripture upon which this declaration of the creed is founded: passages such as these,—*Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called the mighty God, and the Prince of Peace; and of the increase of His government there shall be no end*. We believe, with another prophet, *His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away: and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*. And if it be necessary to confirm these prophecies by the testimony of the Evangelists; we believe the declaration of the angel to the mother of Jesus, as it is recorded by St. Luke; *He shall be great: and he shall be called the Son of the Highest: He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end*. We believe in the truth of these declarations of Scripture, that of *His kingdom there shall be no end*; and yet we believe also in the declaration of the text, that *then cometh the end, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom*. Now I shall endeavour to shew you that our faith is not contradictory to itself even in this instance, which has been so often adduced to prove that contradiction. I shall shew you that these passages of Scripture are perfectly consistent with each other; and also, that this very resignation of the kingdom,

*Isaiah ix. 6.*

*Psal. cxxv. 13.*

*Luke i. 32.*
and the subjection of Christ to the Father, so far from being a proof of the inferiority of the Son of God—is one of the most decisive testimonies to the truth of His divinity, and therefore, to the truth of the doctrine which we teach this day.

In order to do this effectually, it will be necessary to consider only these two points: first, the divine nature of Christ, as it is taught in Scripture; and, secondly, the plan of the system of Redemption, in which Christ is revealed to us in His human nature as our Saviour and Redeemer. The consideration of these two points will shew us that Christ is the Lord and Head of a twofold kingdom. One kingdom, which shall have no end, is that dominion which He possessed as God before the world began, and which He shall continue to possess when the world is destroyed, after the resurrection of the dead. The other kingdom, that which shall have an end, is, that peculiar dominion over the souls of men, which He has mercifully taken upon Himself, as the Mediator of mankind—which began with the fall of man, and which shall end only when the last child of Adam shall be converted to God—when the separation between good and evil shall be made for ever—when they that are Christ’s, at His coming to judgment, shall be taken up to heaven, and Christ shall be the Mediator no more, because the object of Redemption shall have been accomplished—when Christ shall again become, after the salvation of the universal Church has been completed, the same which He had been before the world was formed;
one with God; the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. Such is the twofold kingdom of which the Scriptures speak, and we shall understand them more fully if we consider the two points I have mentioned, the divine nature of Christ, and, secondly, the system of Redemption.

And, first, let us consider the divine nature of Christ: this will better enable us to understand that kingdom of Christ, which shall have no end.

By the expression divine nature, I mean,—that union of properties and attributes which distinguish Christ from any created being. The expressions which are used in Scripture to describe the nature of Christ, are the very same, which are adopted, to describe the Supreme Being. If God is called Almighty, no less is Christ denominated the mighty God. Is the Supreme Being every where present? Christ also is no less with His disciples every where present to the end of the world: and so I might proceed through the other attributes, which describe the God of the universe, if the subject before us did not require that we should attend to one above all the rest; that is, to the one peculiar attribute, which more especially describes the nature and the greatness of God, namely, His eternity.

Eternity is that attribute of God, which describes the mode of His existence. The meaning of the word is this: duration without beginning, and without end.

9 Heb. i. 3. 10 Isaiah ix. 6. 11 Matt. xxviii. 20.
Every thing, excepting God, has had its beginning. The world has had a beginning, and the world will come to an end. Angels have had a beginning, but they are created of the same nature as the souls of men, and they are immortal, they shall have no end. God alone, the great God, the Supreme Being—God, He whom language cannot adequately describe, nor thought conceive—God, concerning whom humility is our best praise, and silence our best eloquence.—He alone is eternal. He alone had no beginning, and He will have no end. Millions of years, and millions of ages elapsed, before the world was created; and millions of ages will pass on, for ever and for ever, after the world has been destroyed; and this continued existence constitutes eternity, and this eternity is the attribute of God alone. There is one expression of Scripture which describes this notion of eternity better than any other. It is that, where the inspired writer says of the Almighty, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God; that is, during that portion of eternity which preceded the creation of the world, and during that portion of eternity which shall follow the destruction of the world; even “from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” He does not merely say He shall be God for ever; but He has been, as well as shall be, God for ever. Now the very same expression is used to describe the eternal existence of Christ. Thou Bethlehem

\[\text{Psal. xc. 2.}\]
Ephratah, says the Prophet, out of thee shall the Ruler of Israel come, whose goings forth have been from everlasting; or, as the original expresses it, from the days of eternity. We infer, therefore, from this, as well as from other passages of Scripture, which, for the sake of brevity, I omit, that Christ possesses eternity, the principal attribute of Deity; and therefore that His nature is divine. We are all willing to acknowledge that God the Father is eternal; but so long as God the Father existed, or shall exist, so long also His glory existed, and shall exist; and so long also, therefore, the brightness of His glory existed, and shall exist, and that brightness of His glory is Christ. So long as the Person of the Father existed and shall exist, so long also the express image of His Person existed, and shall exist; and that express image of His Person is Christ. He is, and was, and ever shall be, one with God, in a manner, to us incomprehensible; but not, therefore, to be disbelieved.

Neither must we be contented with supposing that the existence of Christ, in this His own eternity, is merely a passive or quiescent existence. His nature is yet further proved to be divine, by His possessing that other power, which can belong only to an eternal Being, the power of creating, and the power of preserving the world. When the period came in which the one eternal Deity would create the world, Christ the eternal Son became the Creator of the heavens and of the earth.  

\[13\] Mic. v. 2.  \[14\] Appendix, Note I.
ginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; and though they shall perish, thine eternity continueth. They shall perish, but thou remainest; they all shall wax old as doth a garment, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. And as He created, so also He preserves the world; for by Him all things consist. It is Christ's world, in which all rational beings exist; for in Him, as well as by Him, were all these things created. Such are the declarations of the Scriptures respecting the nature of Christ, and that universe of material existences, and of spiritual existences—worlds, and angels, and men—whatever, or whoever it may be, which has been called forth into being by Him; and all these constitute His kingdom, which He possesses as the eternal God; and of this kingdom it is not possible there can be an end; for the subjects of this kingdom are not created for annihilation, but for immortality and glory. As God the Father cannot remove, and cannot destroy His own dominion—as the kingdom of Deity can never come to an end, though ten thousand material worlds like this on which we live, were to be created and destroyed—as Deity will exist for ever, and immortal beings will exist for ever—so also are the dominion of Christ, and the kingdom of Christ, so identified with that same kingdom of "paternal Deity," that they can never come to an end. Christ is eternal, and His king-

15 Psal. cii. 2. 16 Col. i. 17. 17 Col. i. 16.
dom is eternal; and that kingdom is the government of heaven and of earth, which He possesses, and which He has possessed for ever, as the eternal and unchangeable God—or, to use the language of inspiration, *He is Christ over all, God blessed for ever*. Of this dominion, the dominion of Christ as the one eternal God, there can be, and there shall be, no end.

Having thus explained to you from the scriptural doctrine of the nature of Christ, the meaning of that kingdom which shall have no end—we are now to consider what that kingdom of Christ is, of which cometh an end, and which He shall deliver up to the Father; and in order to do this, we must review that system, or plan, of redemption, which is revealed to us, in the pages of Scripture.

I have related to you the glory and the eternity of Christ—and if the declarations of the Scriptures had not been so express—if we had not been so accustomed to believe these declarations from infancy, we should either not believe now, or we should be overwhelmed with delight and with astonishment, with gratitude and with love, at the wonderful scheme of redemption which the Scriptures reveal to mankind. That scheme or system is briefly this—soon after the world was created, some of the intellectual beings whom God had formed, perverted that freedom of their will, in which they had hitherto stood in goodness and

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18 Rom. ix. 5.
happiness, and committed evil. If they had not been formed free to act and free to fall, as well as free to continue in their duty; they had been as mere machines, incapable of pleasing and of serving God. So it was, that some of these intellectual, though fallen beings, which belong to an invisible state, tempted the first parents of mankind, who had not long been placed upon the earth which we now inhabit, to offend against their God. I am unable to relate the mysterious connexion which appears to exist between this world, and the other worlds which God has created; but those persons are much mistaken who would suppose that man is of small importance in the universe of God: for our first parents had no sooner committed their offence against the law of God, by means of the temptation of a being of an invisible state;—no sooner, I say, had they fallen, but the eternal Son of God, the divine Being, of whom we have spoken, condescended to become the King of a new and peculiar kingdom, in which we are assured that the inhabitants of another state are interested; for these things the angels desire to look into 19. Christ then condescended to become the author of eternal salvation to all who would obey Him, and believe on Him: and He further condescended so to rule over the affairs of mankind, and so to govern that universal Church, which consists of all believers, in all ages, and in all nations, that He shall at

19 1 Pet. i. 12.
last utterly conquer all the enemies of the soul of man—Satan—and sin—and death. In order to do this, He consented, when the fulness of time should come, to lay aside the glory which He had with the Father—to place Himself lower than the angels—to take upon Him the nature of man, and the form of man—to obey the law which the first Adam had broken—and then to become the mysterious sacrifice, for the sins which the human race had committed. This was the kingdom of mercy. This was that glorious kingdom which still exists, and of which we are either the subjects or the enemies. I have not time to tell you of the glories, and of the greatness, and of the wonderful mercy which induced the Son of God to undertake the government of this kingdom. I can only very briefly point out to you its beginning, its progress, and, more especially, its end.

The beginning of the mediatiorial kingdom was at that period when the Son of God beheld that there was no intercessor for mankind, and therefore His own arm brought salvation. His delight was in the sons of men from the time of their creation, and He was therefore always with them, from the day when they fell, to the day when He became the Son of the Virgin. In His love and in His pity He redeemed the early Church, and He carried them through the wilderness of this world, all the time of old.

20 Isaiah lix. 16. 21 Prov. vii. 31. 22 Isaiah lxiii. 9.
He communed with Adam in the garden, with Noah before the deluge, with Abraham and with the Patriarchs, with Moses at the burning bush, with the Israelites in the wilderness, and with the Prophets, who spake, in the name of Jehovah, the dictates of His Holy Spirit. Such was the beginning, and such the progress of His kingdom, until the fullness of the time came, when He trod the winepress of His Father’s wrath alone, and of the people there were none with Him. He suffered, and He died. He rose from the tomb, He returned, not as He had before been—He returned into heaven, in the human nature, in which as a King and as a Conqueror He had triumphed over the sin which had conquered others, and over the author of sin, which had tempted others: and because He is now existing in that very nature, therefore it is said, God also hath highly exalted Him. The human nature is exalted above the angels, to which it was once inferior; that every name which is named in heaven as well as in earth should bow at the name of Jesus. There, there, our Redeemer is existing, ruling the affairs of men, and governing the confusions and turbulences of the world, until the result and the consequence of His dominion shall be, that the enemies of His kingdom are made His footstool,—and all the nations of the world shall obey the power of that Holy Spirit, which is ever present with the universal

33 Isaiah lxiii. 3.
Church. Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since Christ has returned to His Father, and it is not for us to know the times and the seasons of His kingdom; but we do know, and we do see, that a part of His kingdom, is established among us. We, we are the subjects of Christ, or we are the enemies of Christ. We are not forgotten in the greatness of His dominion. There is not one among us who is not the object of His mercy, and the theme of His mysterious intercession, at the throne of God.

Thus have we brought down the progress of the kingdom of Christ to our own day; and we know nothing more concerning it, but this—that this kingdom of Christ shall so far prevail, that a time shall at last arrive, when all the empires of the world shall form a part of the Universal Church of God—and then when the progress of this kingdom shall be thus extended, then shall the end arrive; and the manner of its ending shall be thus.—When the world has at length become converted to the profession of the Christian Religion, and this province of earth has been thereby recovered to the empire of God, then the period shall have arrived when the great harvest shall be gathered in. Then first of all, Christ shall again come to earth—He shall come to judge the world—the dead shall rise—the living shall be changed in a moment, and shall be assembled in the air to meet their God. That portion of the Universal Church, which shall be found worthy of that unutterable reward, shall return to
heaven with their Redeemer and their Saviour,—
and then because death shall have been subdued,
and all wickedness shall have been punished, and
all evil shall have been conquered—because all
rule, all authority, all power of wicked spirits, and
of wicked men shall have been destroyed—and be-
cause every object for which the system of redemp-
tion was originally planned, and every object for
which the kingdom of Christ was established,
shall have been fully and entirely accomplished
—then, then shall be the end of this kingdom.
The necessity of its existence has ceased, and
therefore the peculiar dominion of the Mediator,
considered as the Mediator, shall cease also. Be-
cause the object of all His mercy shall have been
accomplished, He shall become subject to the Fa-
ther by ceasing to act as the peculiar and separate
Head, and King of the Church. He shall no longer
reign over the Church in the manner in which He
had done, during the time in which the world had
lasted. He had governed the Church as a Pro-
phet; but now there are none to teach, and none
to direct, for all are admitted into heaven, and He
resigns, therefore, the office of Prophet.—He had
governed the world as our High Priest; but now
there are none for whom He may pray, or for
whom He may intercede, and He resigns the of-
fice of our High Priest and Intercessor.—He had
governed the Church as its King; but now all its
enemies are overthrown; no dangers can disturb
it; no sin, no sorrow can come near it, and there-
fore He resigns the office of King—and by thus ceasing to act as the Prophet, the Priest, and the King, of His Church, His peculiar humiliation is at an end—His peculiar condescension is at an end—He puts a period to the mediatorial kingdom, and by so doing, He demonstrates at the very same moment, His eternal power, His divinity, and His Godhead—for Christ, when He gives up the kingdom of the Mediator, does not cease to exist; He only then returns to the same power, and glory, and majesty, which I have already represented Him as possessing before the creation of the world. Whatever God was before the world was created, He continues to be when the object of that creation is accomplished. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all in all at that period, and the same God is again all in all, without any peculiar manifestation, or any peculiar government of the Second Person of the holy and blessed Trinity.

I have chosen this subject, that you may learn to despise the reasoning of those, who would bring down all the mysteries, and all the sublimities of the Bible to their own comprehension, and who reject them if they do not comprehend them. They make their own ignorance the test of the truth of God. They mistake their darkness for light, their ignorance for learning, their presumption for wisdom. The poor worm at our feet may as reasonably deny the philosophy of Newton, because it
cannot understand it, as a poor wretched man, in this stage of his being, may deny the truths of religion, because he cannot gaze upon that light of Heaven. It is not intended we should know more in this world than is sufficient to guide us to the future.

Thus have I endeavoured to explain to you one of the most difficult passages in the whole book of Scripture, and to point out the difference between that kingdom of Christ, which He possesses as God, and which shall have no end; and that kingdom which began with the fall of man, and which shall have an end, when the object of its establishment shall have been accomplished in the salvation of the Church of God. These are lofty subjects, but they are suited to the day in which the Church requires us to consider the doctrine of the Trinity. I shall only add, that the time will soon arrive when our faculties shall be so enlarged, that we shall understand all the mysteries of God; and the day is coming also, when we shall all know whether we are among the number of those who shall be rejected from the Church of the first-born, and cast away with evil spirits and wicked men, the enemies of Christ; or whether we shall be of that sacred number, who shall be presented at the throne of God by the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.
SERMON II.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF EACH OTHER IN A FUTURE STATE.

2 KINGS XII. 22, 23.

And David said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

Of all the customs which commonly prevail among Christians, there is not one which shews more forgetfulness of their holy Religion, or which excites more pain among those who reflect seriously, than the manner in which we too often speak of the death of our neighbours, our kindred, or our friends. Instead of mentioning their separation from us in the language of hope or resignation; instead of expressing our conviction that the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and that we ought not therefore to sorrow, as men without hope, for them that die in the faith of Christ—a custom prevails among us, of lamenting over them in the
language of pity, or of commiseration, as if the death of our friends were, to them, the greatest of all human calamities. We speak of the dead as if they were separated from us with an eternal separation, and as if we ourselves were to remain upon the earth for ever. Now I cannot but affirm, that this is not the manner in which we ought to consider the subject. The doctrines and the promises of Christianity are revealed to us to very little purpose, if they do not enable us, not only to speak of the death of others with composure, but also of the death of our own bodies, with peace and hope; anticipating the day, the great and solemn day, which is so emphatically revealed in the pages of Scripture, when all the nations of the world, and therefore all the families of the world, shall be assembled in the presence of God. Our fathers have descended to the grave before us; ourselves are following them to the tomb. Our children and our kindred shall mourn for us, and shall be lamented in their turn by others: and so the stream of time rolls on, bearing the successive generations of man to the ocean of eternity, till the day of our immortality dawn, and we shall all, all live again from the first man, who lost us an earthly paradise, to the last infant of the last of his descendants. These are the anticipations, the sure prospects of a Christian. We are not, we cannot be justified therefore in speaking of the dead in the language of grief or compassion only; we are bound to speak of them as if they should live again, and as if we
also, after having passed through the valley of the shadow of death, should rise again, and together with them, and together with those who shall follow us, form a part of that one great family of God, that one holy family, whose father is Jehovah, whose brother is Christ, whose companions are angels, whose duration is eternity, and whose home is heaven. It is delightful to think of the dead, small and great, of the dead, of the living, of the generations yet unborn, as one day destined to form, one great and everlasting society. I have, therefore, selected for our consideration this morning a subject which is adapted, above all others, to induce us to speak of the dead in other language than that to which I have referred; as well as to elevate our own thoughts to that better state of existence to which we are all hastening. It is a subject which appeals to the hearts of us all; for we have all been called, at one time or other, to the graves of our friends, to weep there. It is a subject which will afford us the strongest and most powerful motive, not only to live a religious life ourselves, but to take care that every individual of our family over whom we have the power of exercising the least control, should make the Gospel the rule and measure of his conduct. The subject upon which I mean to expatiate is this—the probability that those who have been united upon earth in the bonds of Christian affection and Christian love, will again meet, and be united, as glorified, and immortal spirits in the world to come. I wish to prove to you, that
as the future state is represented to us, as one great society, which is composed of the spirits of those who have once lived upon earth; it is probable that all the individuals of the various families of the earth, which will form that one great society, will be again known to each other in that brighter and more blissful world.

The principal arguments by which I shall endeavour to prove that we shall be again united to our kindred and friends in the invisible world, will of course be derived from the pages of Scripture, beginning with the very remarkable passage which I have selected for my text. There is one argument, however, which may be derived from the nature of the human soul, which is too important to be entirely omitted. When we shall have considered these various proofs which both Reason and Revelation appear to afford us, we will examine the two principal objections, which have been urged against the doctrine in question: and I trust that the solemn and affecting lessons which it is calculated to impress upon our hearts, may long be profitably remembered by us all.

From the nature, then, of the human soul, I cannot but think that we may justly infer, the probable re-union of those who are separated for a time, by the death of the body. God has created the soul of man to be immortal; that is, to be capable of living in another state without the body, to which in this world it is, for a time, united. Whether the body lives, or dies, the
soul remains unchanged; and whatever the soul may be, at the moment of the death of the body, such it will certainly be, also, at the commencement of that part of its immortality which begins at death;—and the reason of this is evident, for the present life is not wholly unconnected with the future; it is only the preparation for, or the introduction to the future. As the spring is but the introduction to the summer, or the summer to the autumn—as our infancy is but the introduction to our childhood, childhood to manhood, and manhood to age, so is the whole of our present life in this world—the spring of an eternal year, the infancy of an eternal existence, the introduction to an endless and unchangeable state of being. Let us now imagine that the hour has arrived in which the body must die, and the spirit return to its God—and let us select the case of an humble and sincere Christian, in whom the pains of his last sickness have not destroyed the powers of his recollection and reason; and let us inquire what would be, and what we know by experience generally are, the reflections of the dying man at his last hour. Some things, which he perhaps thought to be of the utmost moment in the days of health, will certainly then appear to be as the dust upon the balance. Adversity and prosperity, wealth and fame, the charms of social intercourse, and the anticipations of hope, all, all of these are less than nothing, and vanity, to the dying Christian. But there are three subjects of solemn, serious,
deep, consideration to every human being, whether he lives or dies, and to these three subjects the immortal spirit will turn, both at the moment of death, and at the commencement of its new mode of existence. They are these—the God to whom the spirit is going—the soul which is to be saved, or lost—and the kindred, and the family which shall follow him to the grave. Reflections on these three subjects cannot be separated from the soul, whether the body lives, or dies; and the manner in which they are considered constitutes the happiness or misery of every dying person.—And first the dying Christian will turn to his God. He will remember the mercy which led him through life, the Providence which guided him, the redemption which was revealed to him, the atonement which the blessed Son of God has accomplished for him, that great and wonderful atonement, which is the only solid foundation of our hope of pardon, both in life and death.—The second point to which the dying Christian will turn, is the state of his soul, and its preparation for Heaven. He will remember the sins of which he has, through Divine grace, been led to make a timely repentance; and the ingratitude which he humbly trusts his God has forgiven. He will rejoice in the hope of the approaching glory.—When the thoughts of the dying Christian have thus been directed to the mercy of God, and the salvation of the soul; he will then unavoidably turn to the bonds of affection, the claims of kindred, the union of family
Sect. II.] OTHER IN A FUTURE STATE. 25

and friends. The dying mother will think of the surviving child. The dying child will think of the surviving mother. The same powers of memory which compel them to think of God, and of their salvation, compel them to think of their kindred,—and the happiness which they may derive from reflecting on the two former of these subjects, is so intimately connected with the prospect of the re-union of spirits in the future state; that the very comfort which is derived from their religion appears to be imperfect, unless it is shared by the kindred, and the children whom they love. Such then are the reflections which rightly and justly occupy the mind at the close of life—they are, reflections on God, on the soul, on our kindred.—While these reflections engage the mind, the body dies, and the immortal soul appears before God. Whatever be the scenes which break upon the spirit of man, at that moment, the faculties of the soul are the same; and therefore the remembrance of God is the same, the remembrance of his past life is the same, and therefore the remembrance of his kindred is the same. The happiness which begins in heaven, whatever be the additions which eternity may make to it, will be partly derived from our gratitude to God, partly from the joy of our salvation, and, as we must remember our kindred, partly also from the confident expectation that where the ransomed Christian is, thither his kindred and his offspring shall follow. The desire of the glorified spirit in heaven, at the com-
mencement of its immortality, will be the same with that of the dying Christian upon earth at the moment of his death—the desire that the parent may be again united to the child, and the child to the parent. And because the happiness which God has promised to us in the future state, is the most perfect we can enjoy, we may justly conclude that this desire of the heart, which alone can render that happiness perfect, will be granted to the Christian who dies in the faith of his Redeemer; and the union, therefore, of Christian families, which begins upon earth, will be completed, as the one great consummation of the happiness of them all, in their perpetual re-union in the world of spirits.

Thus does it appear that the very same arguments by which we might prove the immortality of the soul, from the consideration of its own nature, seem to prove also the probability of our knowledge of each other in a future state. Let us now turn to those arguments which are afforded us by the pages of Revelation, in which this doctrine, like those of the being of God, and the immortality of the soul, appears to be taken for granted.

One of the most decisive proofs appears in the passage which I have now selected. On referring to the chapter you will read, that it pleased God to afflict with sickness the infant son of the king of Israel. The agonized father entreated of the Almighty, with strong supplications, and weeping
and mourning, that life might be granted to his beloved child. But the sentence had been pronounced, and the child died. Now it was the custom among the people of Israel to lament their dead with long mourning, and in deep retirement. No sooner, however, did David perceive by the conduct of his servants that his child was dead, than he departed from the prevailing custom—he restrained his tears—he conquered the natural grief which every affectionate parent will unavoidably feel for the painful consequences of the death of the body, and he taught us in what manner a believer in revelation should submit to domestic affliction. He went up to the house of God, and joined in the public worship. This conduct, however wise and noble, because it was unusual, astonished his household; and they requested him to explain the motives of this behaviour. Then it was, that the memorable reply was given which I have now read to you; While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept. ‘I implored the Almighty to spare his beloved life, that I might enjoy the society of my child while my own days were prolonged—and then that the son should bury the parent, and not that the parent should weep over the grave of the son. But now that my prayer has not been granted, it only remains for me to put away my grief, and to look forward to that day, when the soul of the parent shall be again united to the soul of his child, when all the families of the earth, which have been separated for a
short time by the death of the body, shall assemble before the throne of the Almighty.' Now he is dead, wherefore should I weep—I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. I do not merely express this meaning of the words of David, as my own interpretation, or my own opinion only; I submit it to you as the interpretation of the majority of the best and wisest commentators who have studied the pages of Scripture. And it is evident that this is the right meaning. If the king of Israel had believed that the death of the body would cause an eternal separation between kindred spirits, he could not possibly have derived consolation from the certainty of his own death. It can give no comfort to a Christian, when he loses his kindred, merely to reflect that he also must die. There is no comfort in merely submitting to the sentence of death, unless he believes that after death he shall again meet with those whose society was his delight upon earth. Now he is dead, wherefore should I weep? I desire the presence of my child—but my prayers, my tears, my grief cannot restore that presence to me now. Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him. I shall go to him in the world of spirits, in the kingdom of God, in the assembly of the souls of the faithful—and there we shall be united again. I shall go to him in heaven, but he shall not return to me upon earth.

Such is the evidence of this remarkable, and most affecting passage. Let us now turn to others,
and we shall see, as I have already observed, that the doctrine of our re-union in another state appears, like the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God, to be taken for granted throughout Scripture, wherever allusion is made to the future state.

When the rich man in the parable is represented as looking back upon his earthly existence, we read, that it was not only the remembrance of the sins he had committed, or the sufferings to which he was condemned, which excited his deep grief; he thought of his kindred lest they also come into this place of torment, *I have five brethren*¹:—'I grieve, I mourn for them.' May we not justly infer, that if a wicked man is described as being conscious that his wicked brethren should come to him in a world of sorrow, a good man would be conscious that his Christian brethren should come to him in a world of joy? If the condemnation of his kindred encreased the sorrow of the wicked; would not the salvation of his kindred encrease the happiness of the blessed? Again—God is called, and that repeatedly, *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*², and our Saviour declared that *they all lived to God*³. They all died at various periods—they all lived in a state of happiness, and can we suppose that the spirit of the Father was not conscious of the presence of the spirit of his Son? When all were admitted into the same happiness,

¹ Luke xvi. 28. ² Ibid. xx. 28. ³ Ibid.
can we believe that they were not united as a part of one holy society, in one holy fellowship, in one communion of saints? Their spirits went from earth to heaven, though they could not go from heaven to earth; and it is impossible to believe they were unknown to each other. When St. Paul describes the scene which shall take place at the last day, he represents to us the continuance of the same societies of Christian believers which existed upon earth—they were not to sorrow for their dead as men "without hope" of meeting again. If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him; and they were commanded to comfort one another in these words.

It is not possible to refer to all the passages which allude to a future state, and I can only therefore remind you of this remarkable fact; that every description of the future world, without exception, which is given us in Scripture, includes the representation of one great society; which is composed of all the spiritual beings who have partaken of the mercy of God. We shall be admitted, if we die in the faith of Christ, into the general assembly, and church triumphant, in which are the spirits of just men made perfect, Christ the Mediator of the New Testament, and God the Judge of all. There is that great multitude which no man could number. Their faith is represented

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4 1 Thess. iv. 14. 5 Ibid. ver. 18.
as the same—their praise is the same, their adoration is the same, their affections are the same, and all these are expressed in the one, and same song of praise,—Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation 6.

Of what are people and nations composed but of the several individuals and families, who bear the same name, and profess the same religion? And if individuals or families are represented as composing the one great assembly in heaven, as they severally compose the various people and nations upon earth; may we not soberly and rationally conclude, that they shall be known to each other, and be united to each other in the bonds of Christian communion, and holy affection, in the future world, as well as in the present? If the loveliest and purest spectacle which the angels of heaven can behold upon earth, is the sight of a Christian family kneeling at one altar, bound by one affection, comforted by the same hope of immortality, and anticipating with joy their reunion in heaven after their several separations by the death of the body—why shall we not believe that when they are admitted to their reward, they will be conscious of the presence of each other, as the children of God, as the brethren of Christ, and a part of the great family of heaven?

Such are the reflections which present them-

6 Rev. v. 12.
selves to our minds, when we consider the words of David on the death of his child, 
*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me*.

Let us now, as briefly as possible, glance at the objections to this consoling doctrine, and refer to the solemn conclusions which arise from the subject.

It has been objected to the opinion which I am now advocating, that if the knowledge of each other were to continue in the world to come, there might be many unwelcome and painful remembrances, which would not contribute to our more perfect happiness.

To this objection I would answer in the words of our Lord to the Sadducees, who imagined that as our spirits may be conscious of the presence of their kindred, the future state was of the same nature as the present: 
*Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God*.

In the resurrection we shall be like unto the angels of heaven. In the future world we shall be spiritual beings; and those subjects which in this world excite our hopes and our fears, our rivalries and our jealousies, our hatred or our joy, shall have no more effect upon our minds, than upon the minds of angels. No feelings which are merely earthly shall in the least degree intrude upon us; and though we cannot understand this, though we must die before we can comprehend the future, yet the extent of that change by which we shall become spi-

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7 2 Sam. xii. 23.  
8 Matt. xxii. 29.
ritual, and not merely earthly beings, may be partly understood from the consideration even of the bodily change which we shall undergo. We shall not rise again the same as we are committed to the ground. The poor, pale, infirm, and mouldering mass, which we consign to the grave, will not rise again in the same form. It is sown a natural, it is raised a spiritual body; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power⁹; and therefore natural, inferior, worldly things cannot then affect us. All will be spirit and holiness;—and if it shall be said that as our memory will remain with us, and therefore we may recal to mind our sins and our sorrows, I answer,—whatever we remember of our sins, will be so much only as will increase our gratitude to the God who has forgiven them; and with respect to our sorrows, they will be as much forgotten, as the man of a hundred years has forgotten the tears of his infancy or the toys of his childhood. If we shall be, as our Saviour said, like the angels of heaven¹⁰, no worldly considerations will give us either grief or joy.

There is another objection to the opinion, that earthly recollections will be revived in the world to come. It is this: the grief which must be excited in the bosom of Christian parents, kindred, and friends, to be conscious that those whom they loved and regarded upon earth, are excluded from heaven and its everlasting happiness. In reply to this ob-

⁹ 1 Cor. xv. 43. ¹⁰ Mark xii. 25.
jection I can only say, that I have no doubt that the glorified spirits of the redeemed will be enabled to adore the justice which condemns, as well as the mercy of God which saves: and thus they will be reconciled by some mysterious power upon their spirits, to the decrees of the Almighty. More than this I dare not say; for I may not so far speak only of the consolations of religion, as to deny its solemnities and its sanctions: and I cannot but be aware that our Lord Himself has mentioned this truth as one of the very proofs that we shall be known to each other in the future world. Then, says our Lord, shall be weeping, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and ye yourselves thrust out. I dare not weaken the force of this appeal; I would rather urge it upon you as the most impressive warning to parents, and children, and kindred, and friends, to live together in this world as Christians, partaking of the same hope of immortality; as Christians who shall appear before the same Judge of the world, and partake of the same happiness, by means of the same mercy. Yes! my Christian brethren, the dead shall meet again. Parents! the subject appeals to you, that you so bring up your children in the faith and fear of God, that you may adopt the joyful language of Scripture in the great day of account: Behold, I and the children which God hath given me. The dead shall meet again. Children! the subject appeals to

you, that you honour your parents, that you obey and love them; that you overlook their infirmities, and venerate their counsel. It is probable, that, by the course of nature, you may be called upon to follow your parents to the grave. So honour, and love them now, that you may have no reason to look back with regret upon the past; and never forget that the affections of kindred may revive hereafter. And so I might proceed to appeal to all;—to all who have lost kindred and friends, whom they have dearly loved, and highly valued, and whose immortal spirits they believe to be partakers of the happiness of the world to come; and I do implore them to live now the life they shall desire to have lived when they are about to die. Honour the memory of the righteous by following their example, that you may meet them again with joy, and not with grief. I beseech those who remember the dead, and those who shall soon die, to follow the example of those, who through faith and patience have gone to inherit the promises; and I conclude with entreatying you to join with me in this prayer—that all who are now present may be united as one sacred family in the last great day; and that neither parent, nor child, nor brother, nor friend, of all who are here, be finally lost from among the number of those, who shall be admitted, through the mercy of our Lord, to the happiness of heaven.
SERMON III.

HISTORY OF JONAH.

Jonah i. 17.

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Of all the narratives in the Old and New Testament, there is not one which has been made the subject of so much ridicule, as the account of the prophet Jonah.

Whoever has lived but a few years in the world, and mingled but a little in society, must have met with many persons, who are apparently negligent and regardless of the truths of the Christian Religion. If a grave and serious friend, or relation, or minister of truth, expostulate with them upon their conduct;—if we remind them, that the soul is immortal, that the dead shall live again, that the graves shall open, and all the generations of mankind shall stand before the Judge of the world to receive the reward of their works, whether they be good or evil;—if we assure them, that the day must come when the wicked shall be punished with ever-
lasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power'—though they are frequently overpowered, for the moment, by the very sublimity and terror of such representations, yet they soon recover from the effect; and, instead of acting upon the convictions which for the moment subdued them, they return to their usual habits of thinking and speaking; and they endeavour to justify their conduct by inventing themselves, or by adopting from others, some absurd and unfounded arguments against the truth of the Bible which condemns them. They begin by questioning the truth of Revelation, and they become hardened in wickedness, when they meet with any supposed improbability or difficulty in its sacred pages: and the history from which this text is taken, is uniformly made the subject of the ignorant reasonings of such persons. "Are we to believe," they say, "in the account of the prophet Jonah? Is it possible that a man should be imprisoned in the body of a fish for three days and for three nights, and yet continue to live? Are we to receive such a narrative as this? We cannot give our faith to this part of Scripture; and therefore, if we may reject one portion of the Bible, because it cannot be true, we may, with equal propriety, reject another also. We may reject those parts, therefore, which condemn our conduct, and we may live as we please, and

1 2 Thess. i. 9.
“give ourselves no concern on the subject of death, “judgment, and immortality.”

I know not whether there may be any persons present who actually hold this language, because those who thus reason seldom attend our churches, unless from curiosity; but it is probable that there may be many here who have heard language of this kind, and who may have been grieved that they have not been able to answer it. It is possible, too, that some may be here who have been tempted to reason in this manner, whenever the restraints of conscience have been powerful or galling: and I have therefore thought that it might be useful to select this passage of Scripture for our consideration. I wish to impress upon you, that every portion of the Bible is undoubtedly true, and that those narratives, and histories, and events, which appear to us to be so wonderful, so extraordinary, and almost so impossible, because they are contrary to our experience, would not be considered so, if we were to study thoroughly the times in which they took place, the objects for which they were accomplished, and the consequences by which they were followed. I wish to prove to you, that all the objections which have been alleged against the account of the prophet Jonah are derived from the negligence of those who make them, in not considering the history of the period in which the event took place. I wish to prove to you, that the miracle itself was one of the most appropriate and most useful, the most
convincing and the most effective, that was ever wrought in the dispensations of God to man; and we may infer, too, from the truth of the history of Jonah, that infidelity, if it is not the offspring of wickedness, is uniformly, and without one exception, the result of ignorance; and while good men wish the Bible to be true, because it promises them an immortality of happiness; and while wicked men wish the Bible to be false, because it threatens to them an immortality of misery—both the good and the bad may be assured, that in proportion as they study it more deeply, they will be more convinced of its truth; and the good man may believe and rejoice, while the wicked must believe and tremble.

I shall first make some few observations on the possibility of the event mentioned in this passage, and I will then consider, in their order—the circumstances which preceded the miracle—the design and objects of the miracle—and, lastly, the wonderful effect which it produced upon the sailors in the ship, and upon the people of Joppa, and of Nineveh.

And who, in the first place, will say that the miracle was impossible? Is there not one God, the Creator of the world—and is not this great God, all-powerful, and almighty? If He gave laws to the creatures at first, can He not suspend, or alter them at His pleasure? What is the visible creation itself, but one great, and continued
miracle, which man may see, and study, but which abounds with things he cannot comprehend? What difficulty can there be to the Supreme Being in suspending the common laws of His creation? Shall we dare to limit the Almighty? Shall we venture to believe nothing but that which is visible to the eye? Nothing is difficult to God—He has done whatever pleased Him, and He will govern according to His own pleasure. The birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, were more than once made the instruments of His will—and He who stopped the mouths of the lions when Daniel was cast into their den—He who could provide the tribute money in the mouth of the smaller fish, as we read in the New Testament, could appoint the larger, and command it to preserve the prophet.

This, however, is not the point to which I am most anxious to direct your attention. I mention it only to shew the folly and absurdity of supposing that the Almighty can be limited in the exercise of His power. We are now to consider those points to which I have already referred—the circumstances which preceded the miracle, the object and design of the miracle, and the extensive effect it produced.

Let us first consider the circumstances which preceded this miraculous event.

We learn from 2 Kings xiv. 25., that Jonah had predicted the prosperity of the ten tribes of Israel, and that his prophecy had been fully ac-
accomplished. We learn also, from the same passage of Scripture, that he lived in that part of the country, which was nearest to their Pagan and idolatrous neighbours. The prophet therefore must have been well known, both to his own countrymen, and to the inhabitants of the neighbouring nations. They must all have been aware that he was one of those extraordinary persons, to whom had been granted the power of foretelling future events. Every thing which such men said, or did, was everywhere known. Every eye was upon them, every action was scrutinized, Isaiah and Joel were prophesying at the same time in Judah; Hosea and Amos were prophesying in Israel: the five prophets were all raised up together to declare the same judgments of God, and if they acted unworthily of their high calling, the believer grieved, and the idolater rejoiced.

While Jonah, then, was living in this remote part of the country, and when every eye observed him, he was commanded by the Almighty to go down, and preach to the Ninevites; he was directed to go, and to declare that God was about to destroy the city for its pride, and wickedness. Now the possession of the power to prophesy did not imply obedience to the laws of God. It was in the days of Jonah, as it was in the days of Christ,—many possessed the miraculous gifts, who were not the faithful followers of Christ. Our Saviour, tells us, that in the day of judgment many shall say, in thy name we have done many wonderful
works; that is, we have wrought many miracles, but the answer will be, depart from me, for I never knew you; and our conviction tells us, that we all have a clear knowledge of God, but that our obedience seldom corresponds with it. So it was with the prophets of old: they had the power to prophesy, and they were commanded to do so: but they might resist the Spirit of God, and refuse to obey. Jonah was commanded to go and preach against Nineveh; but that city was many leagues distant; the journey was long and dangerous; the people were licentious and cruel. He might be afraid of persecution, if they did not repent at his preaching; and if they did repent, God might pardon them for a time, and he would then be deemed a false prophet. All these motives acted upon the prophet, and he therefore resolved to disobey the positive command of God. He determined to forsake his country altogether, and to hide himself in a foreign land. With this intent he went down to Joppa, a place at some distance from his own province, to take refuge in Tarshish, in Cilicia, where he might remain unknown and unnoticed, till the day of his death.

Here we must pause, to consider the nature of that idolatry which was established among the nations which surrounded Israel, and especially the idolatry which was established at Joppa. It is best described by St. Paul:—They changed the glory

\[\text{Matt. vii. 22.}\]

\[\text{Ibid. ver. 23.}\]
of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things⁴. Some worshipped the forms of the sun and moon; others the star of their god Remphan; some the image of a calf, and others the beetle and the serpent. The idolatry of Joppa was of another kind—Joppa was a city of the Philistines, and was the principal sea-port among that people—the name of the idol which they worshipped was Dagon, and it was represented under the form of a large fish⁵; and this god, this idol-god, was supposed to be the protector of all those who sailed upon the ocean. The idolaters believed that every city, and people, and country, was under the protection of some particular deity. They did not deny that Jehovah was the God of Israel, but they believed that he was the god of that country only; and they believed, on the same principle, that Dagon was the god of Joppa, and that both were equal. The opinion therefore which these idolatrous people would have formed of the conduct of the prophet Jonah would have been this,—that he had fled from the protection of his own God, and placed himself under the protection of another god, even of their own dumb idol. They would interpret his conduct to be the acknowledging the power of their idol to be so great, that he would be able to protect the prophet who was endeavouring to escape from the

⁴ Rom. i. 23.  
⁵ Appendix, Note 2.
God of Israel. It was the first time in the history of the world, that a commissioned prophet of the One true God, had attempted to disobey an express and specific command of his Creator, by endeavouring to flee out of the land of Israel. If Jonah, therefore, had made his escape in safety, the idolaters would have been confirmed in their belief, that their own dumb idol was equal in power to the God of Israel; and deep would have been the grief of the religious Israelites, and loud would have been the rejoicing of the idolaters, if they had seen the timid prophet withdraw from the presence of Jehovah, refuse to obey Him, place himself under the protection of an idol, and then escape in safety.

Such were the circumstances which preceded the miracle related in this text, and now we are brought to the object and design of that miracle.

The first object and design of the miracle was to demonstrate the power of the God of Israel over the god of the idolaters, and to prove to them, by a peculiar act of power over their dumb idols, that He was the God of the whole earth, and not the God of Israel only. It seemed to be necessary to check the madness of the prophet, and to prove to him, and to all surrounding nations, that none could escape His power. Though they should take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost part of the sea, even there also His eye could see,—His right hand could arrest them. Such was the first object of the miracle, and it was one
suitable to the very extraordinary circumstances of that day.

The second object was of a more general nature:—to prove the certainty of the resurrection from the dead, by such a remarkable representation of the recovery of a man from the grave, as was given in the recovery of Jonah. In both these respects the miracle was worthy of Jehovah. It might have reasonably been expected, that He should prove His power over the gods of the heathen, when His own prophets forgot Him: and it was no less important to demonstrate to that ignorant and idolatrous age, as well as to all succeeding ages, that the God of Israel was the Lord of the spirits of man; and that as He could preserve the life of the prophet when he went down into the moving and living grave which God had prepared for him,—so also could God preserve the spirits of men, while their bodies were committed to the grave. It was in this light, too, that our Saviour Himself regarded the deliverance of Jonah. He declared that the swallowing up of Jonah was a type, a representation, an emblem of His own death and resurrection. And thus does the history of Jonah become one of the most instructive narratives in the Old Testament, not only to the Jews and to the idolaters of his own age, but to all the generations of mankind from the times of the prophet until the day of Judgment.

Let us now consider the effect of this deliverance of Jonah, upon the sailors, and upon the
people of Joppa; upon the prophet himself, and upon the people of Nineveh, and of Israel.

The effect of the miracle upon the sailors of the ship in which the prophet had sailed, is fully related in the book of Jonah; they became the worshippers of Jehovah, they forsook the worship of their idol, the god of Joppa, and sacrificed to the God of Israel, and offered their vows to Him. What the consequence of the miraculous preservation of Jonah might have been upon the people of Joppa, is not mentioned in Scripture; we may, however, believe that it was no less effective than it had been upon the mariners. The inspired narrative tells us, that the fish cast forth Jonah upon the dry land*. The sea was calm, and the shore of their country was so low and shallow, that a large fish could approach to it with difficulty, yet they behold, by some superhuman power, that a large fish, the form of the god they worshipped, was thrown far up, upon their coast,—they gather round it, they perceive a living man come forth from its mouth, they inquire who he is, and from whence he came; the repentant Jonah could inform them—* I am a prophet of the God of Israel, I forsook the service of my God, who has in mercy granted you time for repentance, and who calls upon you to turn from your worship of idols to serve Him. The God of Israel has proved His power over your idol god, by com-

* Appendix, Note 3.
manding him to preserve me, and by then per-
mitting your god to perish before his own 
temples in the presence of you, its own worship-
pers, on the sea-shore. See there your dumb, and 
dying deity. He cannot deliver you, you are un-
able to save and deliver him. The Lord Jehovah 
is God, the God of Israel is the only true God; 
serve and worship Him, and Him alone.' The 
mariners would confirm the report of Jonah, that 
he had been thrown into the sea: and there can 
be little doubt that the effect of the miracle would 
have been the same upon the people of Joppa, as 
it was upon the mariners,—that they sacrificed to 
the Lord, and vowed vows.

The effect of his deliverance upon the prophet 
himself was, that he proceeded to the accomplish-
ment of his mission to the people of Nineveh; and 
the consequence of his preaching among them, to 
whom he would certainly have related this mira-
acle, was more remarkable than the preaching of 
any prophet recorded in history. The people of 
Nineveh were proverbial for their licentiousness, 
their idolatry, and their pride. Yet the whole 
nation, from the king to the meanest citizen, re-
pented at the preaching of Jonah; and it is the 
only instance recorded in sacred and profane his-
tory, of the sudden and universal repentance of a 
whole people. They mourned, and they wept for 
their sins, and they were spared forty years longer, 
before they were punished, for their relapsing 
again into idolatry.
Thus do we prove from the circumstances which preceded the miraculous deliverance of Jonah,—from the object and design of the miracle itself,—and from the extensive consequences of the miracle upon the surrounding nations, that the miraculous preservation of the prophet Jonah was the most appropriate, the most useful, the most satisfactory, and the most effective which could have been permitted at the period in which it happened: and I now ask, whether there is any person, who thoroughly understands the matter, who will again ridicule the history of Jonah, and inquire with contempt, and scorn, whether he is to believe that a man was swallowed by a fish, and still remain alive? There was more abundant reason, as I have shewn you, for this miracle, than for almost any other recorded in Scripture; and I address myself, therefore, to the poor, to the ignorant, to the unlearned, to those who have no time to study these things; and I assure them, that the manner in which this wonderful history of Jonah may be shewn to be true, is only a specimen of the mode in which every other obscure part of Scripture may be proved to be true. Never be shaken in your faith, because you are unable to answer the pert and flippant arguments of weak and foolish men. As there was an appropriate and useful cause for the miracle of Jonah, so also were there appropriate and useful causes for every other remarkable fact which is related in Scripture. You are so engaged in the active duties of life that you have no leisure to study these
things,—you may, however, believe me when I declare, that I have anxiously endeavoured to find out all the arguments which have been urged by infidels against the truth of Scripture; and I have found, upon careful examination, that they are all founded either upon wickedness, seeking apologies for vice, or upon ignorance united with presumption: and I have entered upon an exposition of the wonderful narrative of Jonah's preservation, that you may see in what manner objections may be answered; and that you may never permit your faith, your hope, your religion and your happiness, to be sacrificed to the vain words of an erring fellow-creature. The same God, who made the world, and who gives us the fruits of the earth to nourish our bodies, has made no less provision for our immortal spirits. He, and He alone, has given us the books of Scripture to nourish our souls, and to make us wise unto salvation.

The infidel, if there be one in this congregation, may learn from the evidence which confirms the history of Jonah, that the Christian Religion is different from all others in this respect,—that it is not established upon the inventions, or speculations of men, but upon the evidence of facts, and facts alone; and that these facts are proved to be true, in proportion to the study which men bestow upon them. All falsehoods vanish upon inquiry; all truth is confirmed by inquiry. We invite you, therefore, to inquire, to reason, to search, to study. The truth of the Bible is interwoven with the his-
tory of the world; it cannot be separated from it; and the more deeply, therefore, we examine into the subject, the more fully shall we discover the truth, the certain, the undoubted, the undeniable truth of every page, of every action recorded in the volume of Scripture. To use the language of a celebrated writer—"the Bible has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." It is addressed to us, not merely as beings who are to live in this world for a few short years, and then to perish; it is addressed to us as dying men, as immortal souls: it points out to us the way of salvation, the only way of salvation—repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Be an infidel, then, no longer; deceive yourself no longer; mislead the poor no longer; cast no more ridicule and scorn upon the supposed difficulties of Scripture. Remember the object of your creation; that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish that was prepared for him, and then came forth to praise God, who preserved him; so shall we lie down in the grave, and so shall we come forth at the morning of the day of judgment to meet our great and holy God. Believe in these noble subjects, and may God grant to us all repentance unto life, and a joyful and glorious immortality, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, &c.
SERMON IV.

THE UNION OF PREDESTINATION AND FREE-WILL EXEMPLIFIED IN SCRIPTURE.

Acts xxvii. 22. 30. 31.

And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

There is no one subject upon which the serious and reflecting part of mankind have been more divided, than upon that difficult, yet interesting topic, the union of the foreknowledge of God with the free agency of man. The heathen philosophers of every civilized nation in the ancient world; the Jews before the coming of Christ, and even to the present day; the early Christians; the Church of Rome; the Reformers of the Church of England; the members of that Church itself; and many of the various sects which have departed from its Communion, have all differed among themselves, and have all been engaged in controversy, respect-
ing the powers of the will in man, and the nature of the decrees of God.

If we look to reason for our guide, the arguments on the one side of the question appear to be as powerful and as convincing as the arguments on the other; for if we reflect upon the attributes of the Almighty, we are compelled to believe that the future must be known to Him, as well as the past, or the present; and, therefore, that there is a sense in which the doctrine of Predestination is evidently and undeniably true.—If we reflect also on the nature of the human mind, our own experience assures us, that man possesses the power to think, to deliberate, and to decide between opposite motives. He can choose between good and evil: he may avoid sin, or commit sin; he may obey laws, or he may break them; he may comply with the remonstrances of conscience, or he may harden his heart, by wilfully resisting its power: and thus our reason convinces us, that there is a sense in which the free agency of man, as well as the predestination of God, is likewise evidently and undeniably true.—If, from Reason we turn to Scripture, we are no less presented with arguments which appear to be equally favourable to both doctrines. We are assured, in the most positive language, that God worketh all things according to the counsels of his own will 1; that His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure 2; that whom He did fore-

1 Eph. i. 11. 2 Isaiah xlvi. 10.
know, them He did predestinate: with many other passages no less decisive. We are told, on the other hand, that God hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner; that we are to work out our own salvation; that we are to make our calling and election sure. We are warned, and threatened, and appealed to, and commanded, as rational and accountable beings, to repent, and to turn unto God, that our iniquity may not be our ruin. We are addressed as free agents through the whole volume of Scripture.

Such being the difficulty of the subject, and the apparently equal balance of authorities, it may possibly be thought the duty of a Christian minister to avoid all allusion to the topic, and to confine the attention of his hearers to those practical subjects, which are more easily understood.—And if the questions of predestination and free agency had never been, or were not still, made matters of discussion, this objection would be good and valid. But the truth is, that, whether the minister introduces them or not, they are questions which are constantly inquired into by the people. In proportion to their difficulty, men seem to delight to dwell upon them: and the most painful, or the most unjustifiable inferences are drawn from their perversion.—One man perverts the doctrine of the foreknowledge of God, and encourages himself in the most

3 Rom. viii. 29. 4 Ezek. xxxiii. 11. 5 Phil. ii. 12.
6 2 Pet. i. 10 7 Ezek. xviii. 30.
open and abandoned wickedness. "If," he says within himself, "I am elected, I shall be saved, whether I repent or not; for I shall be called, and I shall be converted, even at the hour of death."—Another, a poor and broken-hearted penitent, is plunged into despair of God's mercy, believing that he is predestinated to condemnation; and that no tears, and no repentance, can alter the decree of God.—Others, again, proceed to the opposite extreme, and pervert the doctrine of free agency. "Because man is a free agent," says one, "I will repent when I please; I will change my heart at some future day; I will become a religious man, when the world can attract me no longer."—Another falls into an error no less dangerous, and resolves to depend upon his own merits, his own exertions, and his own perfections, for the attainment of future happiness.—And not only do persons thus come to the most absurd and opposite conclusions, but there is no point on which the differences of opinion have occasioned so much contention, hatred, and disunion.

It is possible that some of these errors, and some of these evils may partially prevail here; and I have thought it advisable, therefore, to beg your attention to the subject, that I may point out to you the certainty that both doctrines are revealed, and the manner in which they agree; and the conduct which is required of every Christian, who attempts to speculate on the foreknowledge of God, and the free agency of man.
That I may the more effectually shew the certainty that both doctrines are revealed; and the manner in which they agree, I have not selected, for our consideration, any one of those passages of Scripture, which may appear to assert one or both of the two doctrines, in the most positive terms; I have rather selected a narration which a child can understand; which requires no argument, and no discussion on either side; but merely a consideration of the circumstances related. It will prove to us that the difficulties of Scripture are best explained by the facts of Scripture. As the facts of the resurrection of Christ from the grave, and the ascension of Christ into heaven, demonstrate the immortality of the soul, and the future responsibility of man, more effectually than the most philosophical arguments;—so does the history of the shipwreck of St. Paul demonstrate the union of the foreknowledge of God and the free agency of man, in accomplishing the happiness, or the misery, of human beings.

We learn then from the narrative, which I trust you will read through at your leisure, that St. Paul was on his voyage to Rome; and, that the ship was overtaken by a violent storm. The sailors, and the passengers, believed that the vessel must be unavoidably lost. The tackling had been thrown out, they were driven at the mercy of the wind, the heavens were covered with clouds, so that neither the sun, nor the stars were seen for many days; and all hope, says St. Luke, the author of
the book of Acts, that we should be saved, was taken away. Under these painful circumstances, when all were in despair, a miracle was wrought to assure St. Paul, that though the vessel should be lost, none of the passengers should perish in the wreck. An angel was sent down from heaven to encourage his fainting hope, and to tell him that God had given him all that sailed with him; and that all should safely escape to land. Here, then, the narrative before us reveals to us the doctrine of the foreknowledge of God. It was predestinated from before the foundation of the world, that all the crew should escape. They were elected to deliverance from the tempest. The decree of God was positive, there shall be no loss of any man’s life; and if there ever was an instance, in which it might be said that men were foreordained to safety, it was in this case; when the absolute promise was given from above, that none of the whole number in this vessel should perish.

Let us now observe in what manner the free agency of man was taught by the same events.—After the solemn declaration of the inspired apostle; thus communicated by an angel from heaven, was given to the crew, the sailors endeavoured to leave the vessel. Why should they not do so? The servant of God had told them, that they should escape. After the positive promise of God, it seemed to be quite unnecessary that men should exert themselves any longer;—but what is the language of St. Paul?—except these abide in the ship.
cannot be saved, except the sailors continue with the soldiers, and with the passengers, and exert themselves to the utmost, and do all in their power to save the vessel, you cannot be delivered. We may easily imagine the surprise of the centurion on this occasion. "Did you not inform me," he might have said, "that an angel from heaven declared that the crew should be preserved. Does not the foreknowledge of God affirm that all shall be saved; what then can it signify whether these sailors leave the vessel, or whether they continue amongst us? If we are elected to be saved, of what possible consequence can it be, that these persons should go where they please?" No! says the apostle, they must remain in the ship; and they must endeavour to save it, as if God had not spoken, no matter what may be the former declaration of the angel,—no matter what may be the promise of God,—except the free agency of man is exerted to preserve the sinking vessel, all will be lost; except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. The word of the apostle was believed in this, as well as in the former instance; the sailors were detained in the vessel, and exerted themselves for the common safety; they used all the human means in their power; and then the lives of the people were preserved, as God had promised.

Thus are the doctrines of the foreknowledge of God, and the free agency of man, both taught in the narration before us. Let us now observe the manner in which they are united.
The shipwreck of St. Paul, then, proves to us, that the world is so governed by the Providence of God, that the free agency of man should have its full, and uninterrupted scope; and that the result or consequences of that freedom should accomplish the objects which the Almighty decrees. God foresees those things which man determines to do; and those things which man thus resolves upon, fulfil the designs of the Creator.

All the events, both of our life and death, may be arranged under these two divisions:—those over which man has no control, and which, being unavoidable, proceed from the Providence of God;—and those over which man has control, which he is able to avoid, and which are the result of his own liberty. Among the former of these events are, the condition in which he was born; the unexpected adversities and prosperities of life; the loss of friends; sorrow, sickness, and death. The latter events are, the uses which man makes of these providential dispensations. Thus, in the case before us, the storm and the shipwreck were unavoidable, and were, therefore, evidently the decree of God. The escape of the people appeared to be merely the consequence of their own deliberation. But as a divine Teacher instructed these persons in what manner they were to be saved, so it is at present. The Almighty has granted to every Christian the knowledge of His will, the influence of His Spirit, and other means of grace, to enable him to attain present and future happiness, whatever be
the unavoidable circumstances of life, the resources, the station, the adversity, or the prosperity, in which God has placed him. To illustrate my position, let me submit to you that instance in which the foreknowledge of God is most forcibly displayed—the death of the body. Man has no control over this event; it is certain, and it is unavoidable: it is the undoubted decree of God; nothing can alter it; nothing can suspend it; nothing can avert it. The merciful God, who has ordained this event, has instructed man to meet it, and to bear with it, though it is not given him to escape from it; and it depends, therefore, upon man to render his inevitable lot peaceful or miserable. We are invited and we are intreated to become possessed of that living faith in God, which can give peace at the last; and if we will obtain this living faith and humble hope, neither the infirmities of sickness, nor the pains of the body, nor the agonies of disease, nor the separation from all that has been dear to us in life, nor all the melancholy attendants of dissolution, can render the Christian miserable, or shake his confidence, or sink him into despair. Thus does God predestinate man to death, as an event over which man has no control; thus does the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, assist the free-will of man with its persuasive energies; and thus the foreknowledge of God and the liberty of man are harmoniously blended together. And as it is with death, so also will it be with eternity. As God foresees that we-
must die, and yet our sorrow or our joy in death depends on ourselves, and on the use which we have made of our religious opportunities; so also our future happiness or misery will not merely depend upon the predestination or the decrees of God; but also upon the use which we now make of the means of grace. Affliction and sorrow may be sent upon men in this world, for we live in a state of trial; and sufferings are sent in mercy, to prove our patience and our faith. But when our probation is over, we shall undergo no evil but that which we have brought upon ourselves. Nothing can make man miserable, but man himself; for the future punishment of sin is revealed to us, as a consequence of sin. As the mariners were saved in this shipwreck by attending to the admonition of St. Paul, so will every Christian be delivered from sorrow, when the stormy voyage of this life is over, if he submits to the influence of the warning and entreaty of the merciful God of Christianity. As those who sailed with St. Paul would have been lost in the tempestuous ocean, if they had rejected the Apostle’s advice; so will man only then perish, when he despises the assisting grace of God, and thus hardens his heart by his own perverseness of his undoubted free agency, till he becomes unfit for heaven.

Let not man, then, say that he must perish hereafter, because he is predestinated to ruin. While the mercy of God is the cause and source of salvation, faith and obedience must be the means
of salvation; and then will future happiness, as well as present peace, be the appointed and the natural effect of our well-founded hope in the Saviour of men. For the system of Redemption is complete; every thing has been effected for the salvation of man, which is consistent with the divine attributes of the God of mercy and of justice. Every motive which could appeal to him as an accountable and reasonable being has been enforced; and that those motives may have a subject upon which to operate, the will is left free and unconstrained;—for had man been divested of his free agency, these motives would be useless and absurd, as being applied for the regulation of creatures, who, by their very constitution, are incapable of being influenced by them: the rational man would have been changed into a mere machine, offering to God an involuntary service. He would have been compelled, without a will of his own, to worship and to praise. He would be no more capable of rendering worthy homage to his Creator than the plants or the flowers, which produce their beautiful but unconscious blossoms, at their appointed season.

On a subject so extensive as the present, it would be easy to occupy your time to an indefinite extent. I shall, however, but briefly notice some causes of the controversies which have prevailed on these points—and conclude with reminding you of the conduct which is required of every Christian
who attempts to speculate on the foreknowledge of God, and the free agency of man.

One of the principal causes of the divisions which have prevailed on these topics, is the practice of forcibly separating a passage of Scripture from its place and connexion, and applying it to an isolated argument, or reasoning, or opinion. Whereas no single passage of Scripture ought ever to be used to prove an abstract, or a dubious point, until all that goes before, and all that comes after it, have been previously taken into consideration. The Bible is a history of the manner in which the providence of God employs the free agency of man for the accomplishment of its own purposes: and I might select all the peculiar texts which are supposed to prove either doctrine, and shew their primary and real meaning to have little or no reference to the disputes, and discussions to which I have alluded.—Another cause of error on both sides, is that right, and pure, and pious, and commendable jealousy which good men of all opinions will ever feel for the cause of truth. One is jealous for the sovereignty of God; and will therefore resolve every thing into the decrees of God; into the election, the predestination, and the will of the Almighty, who must order all things according to His own purposes. But the best way to be jealous for the honour of God, is to receive His Scriptures as He has given them: to receive them as a record of facts, and actions, which are the best, and
only interpreters of mysteries and difficulties—and to give up all our own proud, though well-intended, reasonings upon the subject.—Another is jealous of the accountableness of man; and, in his earnest efforts to prove that man must be a free agent, he is almost willing to deny the foreknowledge of God altogether.—Thus do they proceed to opposite extremes; thus are the parties which divide us willing to sacrifice some part of Scripture, that they may establish the other half according to their own notions—not perceiving, or not considering, that God is Almighty, and must have foreknowledge—that man is responsible, and must therefore be a free agent—that both doctrines to a certain extent are undoubtedly true; and he is right therefore who believes both, and he is wrong who endeavours to deny one, that he may more thoroughly establish the other.—The first point, therefore, on which I would warn you is, never to permit religious inquiries, and religious differences, to be a cause of disunion. Do not hate your neighbour because he believes in predestination; do not hate your neighbour because he believes in the freedom of the will. Avoid all harsh names, and all contemptuous appellations—kindness and love are as valuable as agreement in religious opinions: and nothing is so great a triumph to an infidel, as to observe the folly of Christians contending about the secret things of God, and the difficult doctrines of religion.—Remember too, that while much of your speculations and reasonings on the difficul-
ties of religion may end in vanity, it has pleased God to reveal to you in the clearest manner every thing that it is necessary for you to know.

The only question of real moment to a Christian is this—in what manner shall I secure my own future happiness? and the answer is known to you all. Believe, and hope, and obey: and God, for Christ's sake, will receive you into that kingdom, which was prepared from the foundation of the world. If an angel from heaven were to come down, and to tell any person present that he would undoubtedly be saved, the divine message would still imply, that the means of grace must be used to the last—that the battle against evil must be fought till the victory over its allurements be won. One greater than the angels has pointed out the way to His Father, and our Father, to His God, and our God. Whether you live then, or whether you die—whether you suffer, or whether you re-joice—continue in the path of hope, and faith, and duty; and then 'the godly consideration of the doctrine of predestination itself will be full of pleasant and unspeakable comfort'.

* Article XVII. of Religion.
SERMON V.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SABBATH BY EACH PERSON
OF THE TRINITY.

Exodus xx. 8.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

There is no situation in this world more dreadful, than that of a wicked man, when he is overtaken by sudden death. With such a man it is too often to be feared, that repentance comes too late; for that which requires a whole life of preparation, is seldom effected in a day of pain, or in an hour of agony, when the mind is weakened, and the body diseased. Unable to live, unfit to die, the parting spirit lingers with the fainting form. All the past is bitterness and grief, all the future is darkness and despair. The world is not his friend, for the pangs of dissolution have torn the mask from its vanities and flatteries. God is not his friend, for he has despised His mercy and His love. The Son of God is not his friend, for he has counted the blood of the covenant an unholy
thing\(^1\), and preferred a few years of wickedness, to an immortality of happiness. The Holy Spirit is not his friend, for he has resisted His entreaties and warnings. He has lived in evil, he dies without hope—and if the Almighty be just, as well as merciful; if the voice of Reason speak truth; if the universal declarations of the Scriptures are to be believed, he who thus lives, and thus dies, will be condemned to endless and indescribable misery.

To prevent this fearful ruin—to deliver man from a life of irreligion, and from a death of sorrow, it has pleased God not only to make known His will, to reveal to us the mercy of a Saviour, and to invite us, while health and strength continue, to secure the happiness of the world to come; He has appointed also certain means of grace, by attending to which, we may keep up a perpetual remembrance of the things which belong to our peace. For this the Sacraments are administered, that the bread and the wine may remind us of the dying words and painful sufferings of our holy Lord. For this too, above all, that means of grace was instituted, to which I shall now invite your attention—the setting apart one day in seven, to rouse the wicked man from his lethargy, to save him from a life of negligence, sloth, and sin; to direct him to the Son of God, the only Saviour of men, and thus to preserve him from the terrible

\(^1\) Heb. x. 29.
death which I have described. We will consider, therefore, in their order, the reasons for our observing the Sabbath; the manner of that observance; and the benefits which we derive from obedience to this sacred command.

Let us first consider the reasons, on account of which we are to observe the Sabbath.—Why, it may be said, are we thus to cease from labour one day in seven? We answer, that we are commanded to keep the Sabbath day holy, as Christians; because on this day each person of the sacred Trinity performed the principal action by which He is revealed to us in Scripture; and by which each Person of the Trinity would prove to us, that we are called upon to render them our equal adoration and praise. On this day God the Father was known by resting from the work of creation—God the Son by the resurrection from the dead—God the Holy Ghost by the miraculous out-pouring of the sacred gifts—and this day, therefore, is set apart that we may remember all that has been done for man by the Father in creation, by the Son in redemption, and by the Holy Spirit in sanctifying the hearts of men. Let us dwell upon each of these reasons, and let us improve our hours of worship, by filling our hearts with these powerful reasons for rendering our homage to God.—On this day, then, the work of creation was completed. God rested from that act of His omnipotence, by which the rolling earth sprang into existence, when the firmament was commanded to expand its blue arch above us,
when the day-spring knew its place—when the ocean began to flow—and the dry land appeared. This was the day on which the magnificent temple appeared to be completed for the abode of man after its lord and master had come forth from the dust of the ground to take possession of his new abode. You will perhaps inquire, why I say so much upon this reason for celebrating the Sabbath. I do so, because we do not in general sufficiently remember God, in his character of Creator. We talk too much of the beauties of nature, as if there was some other principle which gave life, and preserves life; and as if God the Creator was to be neglected or forgotten. We often speak of the glory of the rising or setting sun, of the perfections of plants, of the sublimities of the mountain and the torrent. We break forth into raptures when we mention the scenery of a fine land; and do not sufficiently raise our thoughts to the day of their creation, or to the rest of the Almighty, after His great work was completed. The celebration of the Sabbath teaches us to rise from nature to the God of nature, and to remember, when we contemplate the heavens and the earth, the one great reason for which they were formed at first, and for which alone they are still preserved—namely, that they might serve as the scaffolding of that greater and more glorious temple in heaven, on which man shall live for ever: for the rolling globe shall continue no longer than till the last of the sons of Adam is received into heaven.
Such is the first reason for which we are to celebrate the Sabbath; and the second is no less avail-
ing. We commemorate on this day a nobler event even than the creation itself—the resurrection of Christ from the grave. This was the day on which the terrors of death were removed; and life and immortality were demonstrated to be the promise of God. The earth had trembled at the crucifixion, the rocks had rent asunder, the sun in the heavens had veiled his face at the agonies of the Being who commanded him to shine; but when the hour of the redemption drew nigh, the bondage of the grave was destroyed, and the fainting guards, and the trembling ground, beheld the dead restored to life, and victory over the king of terrors was proclaimed for ever. Are not these actions of God worthy of commemoration? Yet even these are not all.—On this holy day the promise of the Spirit was accomplished, when the cloven tongues of fire sat upon the Apostles, and their company, at the day of Pentecost, and their understandings were changed, so that they spake with languages, of which they had, perhaps, never heard; and their hearts were changed from cowardice to courage; and their affections were changed from the desire of worldly honours in the kingdom of an earthly Messiah, to the anticipation of sufferings and persecutions, through a painful and wandering life. On this day began the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, under which we still live. On the Lord’s day, on the first day of the week, the Spirit de-
scended, to prove to us, that it is on this day we are to anticipate the powers of the Holy Spirit. Thus, as I have said, the sanction of each Person of the Holy Trinity has been given to the observance of the Sabbath, to make it always binding upon mankind.—God the Father has sanctified it by the work of creation. God the Son has sanctified it by His resurrection. God the Holy Ghost has sanctified it by His miraculous descent; and for these reasons, therefore, for these principal reasons, do we keep holy the Sabbath day*.—I am willing to give every weight to the other and lesser reasons for so doing. The laws of man, the necessity of repose, the usefulness of rest, the customs of our country—are all good and valid reasons for observing the Sabbath; but they are of little force when compared with those I have mentioned. We assemble to worship God the Creator, who made us; Christ the Son, who redeems us; the Spirit of Holiness, which sanctifies us. We assemble to praise God, who prepared this spacious world for our present life; the Son, who first taught us by His example, and then died to atone for us; the Spirit, which appeals to our wills, to our affections, and to our motives, to raise us to a better world than this, where we shall see the blessed Saviour, and be happy; because we shall be sanctified by the Spirit of God for ever.

From considering the reasons for which we

* Appendix, Note 4.
are to keep the Sabbath day holy, we are led to the second part of our subject. *In what manner are we to keep holy the Sabbath day?* Our reflections under this head may be divided into the duties we are to perform, and the conduct we are to avoid.

The duties we are to perform, on the Sabbath day, are these—private meditation, and public worship—the study of the Scripture, and family devotion.

We are to commence the Sabbath by private meditation.

It is much to be lamented, that men are too often accustomed to consider the duties of religion as a task, a labour, a fatigue. Whereas religion, properly and rightly considered, is the most rational and delightful object, which the intellectual man can enjoy. On this account it is that we read of men to whom the Sabbath was a delight—that it was holy of the Lord, and honourable. We read of men whose hearts fainted to go up to the house of the Lord—that, *one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand* ¹: but now we are told, that all feelings of this kind are to be avoided, as ill-timed, unwarrantable, or as enthusiastic. Let us dwell a little also upon this point.—There is a religious enthusiasm which is absurd and ridiculous; because it misrepresents God, and makes man needlessly miserable—but there is likewise

¹ Psalm lxxxiv. 10.
an enthusiasm in matters of religion, which is founded upon private meditation, and which is wise, and noble, rational, and elevating. If we talk to men of the prospect of riches, honours, power, dignity, are they not enraptured with the anticipation? and shall not the Christian, on the Sabbath day, which is set apart for the contemplation of eternal glory, and power, and honour, be enraptured at this prospect? Shall we be enthusiastic in our admiration of the eloquence of oratory, the beauty of poetry, and the pleasure of literature, and shall we not be enthusiastic when we look upon the blue sky, and the round earth, and remember the God who made them?—Shall we not be enthusiastic when we think of our unworthiness, and sinfulness in the presence of God, and remember the Holy Saviour, who died to redeem us?—Shall we not be enthusiastic when we reflect upon our own inability to conquer the dominion of evil, and remember that the Spirit of God strengthens our resolutions, and conducts us in safety through the wilderness of this world?—Are we not justly kindled into enthusiasm by such subjects as these? Therefore it is that I place private meditation among the first duties of the Sabbath; because it is the best foundation of the right observance of those duties of public worship, which we all acknowledge to be required from us on this sacred day.

It cannot be necessary that I should occupy much of your time, by proving to you that our as-
seming for public worship is an essential part of the duties of the Sabbath. Your actual presence in the house of God sufficiently demonstrates that you consider public worship as a part of your Christian duty—and that you esteem yourselves as immortal and accountable men, and not merely of the earth, earthy. I trust that you are not here from curiosity, from fashion, or from custom alone. You have united in the most eloquent prayers which have ever been composed by uninspired lips. You confessed your sins to God—was your confession made with humility, and hope? You have offered your prayers to God—have they ascended to heaven on the wings of faith and trust? You have uttered praises—were they sent up in gratitude and love? In the name of Christ you offered them. Does your dependance for salvation rest on Him? You heard the Scriptures read; they were the message from God, the Almighty. Have you received them as the declaration of His will?—He who sits in the house of God, is found in the way to heaven. He who comes to worship, fulfils a positive commandment of God—and as all who are here present, are thus in the very performance of their duty to God—as they have, for this morning, at least, forsaken that broad road to destruction, where no prayers ascend, and no voice of mercy is heard—where God is not sought, and God is not found—where no invitation to repentance is heard, and none knock at the door of life, and to none is it opened—as you are at this mo-
ment, at least, placed in the presence of God, and professing the honor and the love of His holy name; my prayer is offered for you, and your own, I trust, is offered for yourselves; that your observance of this Sabbath may be the beginning of your more effectual attention to God, to holiness, and to heaven; that it will be the engaging of the thoughts more and more to repentance, and faith and love, and establishing you in the way to immortal life.

In addition to private meditation, and the public worship, I might remind you of the study of the Scripture, and of family religion. I shall not, however, dwell long upon these. If the Scriptures be so valuable, and so useful, they are evidently worthy of our attention; and if religion be a matter of so much importance to ourselves, it is no less a solemn subject to our children and servants. It is consequently the duty of every Christian master of a family to take care that God is honored in his house, or in his cottage, by daily prayer; and by reading some additional instruction on the Sabbath day. He closes the Sabbath best, as an individual, who terminates it by private devotion; but he closes it best as the head of a family, who endeavours to impress upon his children, and servants, that God is the one common Father of all the families of the earth—and that the love and affections of the heart which begin between parents and children upon earth, will continue if they are cemented by religion, and then only, to flourish, for
ever, in the re-union of them all, though death may part them for a time.

From considering the duties we are to perform, we were to turn to the actions we are to avoid, on the Sabbath.

I have submitted to you the most solemn reasoning for observing the Sabbath, which could possibly be proposed to our reception: but it will seem that I have been speaking to you a mere fable, if we look to the conduct of the world, instead of the law of Scripture.—We are commanded to avoid on the Sabbath day all manner of work; that is, all manner of worldly employment, which is not absolutely, essentially, and unavoidably necessary—together with all those actions which occasion worldly anxiety; or have reference only to business which can be transacted on the week day. The world is permitted to take six days of the week, God requires but one. On the six days we are to pay attention to the body, and our temporal affairs, though without neglecting the soul. On the Sabbath day, our principal attention is to be directed to the soul, without needlessly neglecting the body. We can lay down but general rules. We cannot strictly define every particular case.—Works of charity, of necessity, of mercy, are all permitted. But are these the limits, which the world assigns to the apparent violation of the Sabbath? What do we hear, and see, every where around us? With some, the Sabbath is the day which must be selected for travelling—with others
for completing the accounts of the week. With respect also to our conversation on the Sabbath, is it not too much at least, if not entirely, like that of the week day? Do not the affairs of the neighbourhood or the seasons, the politics of the day, the business of the week, worldly pursuits, bargains, losses, gains, books of amusement, or books on common subjects, do not these occupy, not merely an occasional portion of the time, but even the whole time, which is not employed in the public worship?—Are there not many families who never think of God, and never pray to God, but when they are in the church;—and who never indulge in the least conversation respecting Him, unless it be to express their dislike of subjects so dull, and so unattractive, as those which are connected with religion?—But this, alas, is the least part of the violation of the Sabbath of which a Christian must complain. What are the scenes which present themselves to us in many towns and villages, and hamlets, where Christian masters neglect their servants, and Christian parents neglect their children? Some are indulging in noisy, riotous, and drunken sports. Some employ the whole Sabbath in strolling upon the highway, or wandering over the grounds of their neighbours. I know not whether it is the same here, as it has sometimes been elsewhere, that those who thus violate the Sabbath, have been the children of religious parents, or the servants of religious masters,—but I would entreat all who do venerate the Sabbath,
and who prove it by their presence in the house of God, to exert their authority at least over their own servants and children; and to use their influence in their respective neighbourhoods, to promote the holiness of the Sabbath, according to their opportunities, and station. Be zealous in performing your own duties; be zealous also in persuading others to fear God, and to depart from evil.

We are now to consider as our last point, the benefits of observing the Sabbath.

Though I directed your attention, at the commencement of this address, to a point which comprises within itself, all the spiritual blessings which result from the observance of the Sabbath; namely, that it prevents a death of misery, by enforcing upon the minds of the most negligent, all the solemn considerations of the religion of the Son of God; I could still enumerate, if indeed it were necessary, other benefits, which result from the observance of the Sabbath.—I might enlarge upon its excellence and usefulness to children and servants; in refreshing the one from the toil of learning, the other from the fatigue of bodily labour. I might point out to you the promoting of comfort and order, of cleanliness, and neatness, of morality, and decency of manners, among the various classes of the poor;—I might represent to you the manner in which it binds all ranks and ages in benevolence and kindness, from the mere circumstance of uniting together in the public worship, to confess our sins, to
sympathize in the same wants, to offer the same prayers, to acknowledge the same God, and to know each other as brethren of the same family. The Sabbath alone raises the poor man to his proper rank as an immortal being. The Sabbath teaches the rich, and the proud, that all distinctions are as nothing; for the rich, and the poor meet together, but the Lord is the Maker of them all; and sin and holiness, vice and virtue, form the only distinction between them in the sight of God. Thus is the Sabbath the one great means of advancing at the same time the temporal happiness of man, and of preserving the knowledge and worship of the only true God—and as where the Sabbath is not kept, there is no worship and no religion, but man forgets God, and the world becomes a desart: so, wherever the Sabbath is observed, there is the best security for a life of religion, and for a death of peace.—Such and so many are the benefits which follow the keeping holy the Sabbath day. But these are of little moment, however useful or valuable they may be; they are of little moment when compared with that one great benefit, for which this sacred day was hallowed—the benefit of constant improvement in the divine life; the benefit of becoming weekly and daily more and more prepared for that eternal Sabbath in heaven, of which our earthly Sabbaths are but a type or emblem. The heart of man must be changed before he can be fit for heaven—and the Sabbath is appointed that the Holy Spirit of God may meet
His servants in the courts of the Lord's house, and bless His Holy Word, and change the hardened heart. And I conclude, therefore, by demanding of all who are here present, whether they have so improved their Sabbaths upon earth, that they are beginning to be prepared for the Sabbath of God in heaven. Do you love the world less than you once did? Do you fear death less than you once did? Is your hope of salvation brighter, and clearer, as you advance in years? Remember how many Sabbaths have elapsed since your career has begun. Every seven years you live, you live through one whole year of Sabbaths. So often then you have acknowledged God the Creator. Have you begun to know Him as your beloved Father, and your best Friend? So often have you confessed the Son of God to be your Redeemer. Have you begun to know Him as the Saviour who never fails, and to place your dying hopes on Him? So often you have acknowledged the power of the Holy Spirit. Have you begun to know Him as the conqueror of the sins of the heart, and the comforter of the wounded spirit, in the fears, and in the prospect of death? *The Lord's arm is not shortened that He cannot save, his ear is not heavy that He cannot hear.* If you profess religion, and do not receive of its consolations, the fault is with yourself, and not in the power of God. Put away, then, the sins of the heart. Separate from you all.

*Isaiah lix. 1.
that is evil. Obey the influences of that Holy Spirit which meets you in the Sacrament, and on the Sabbath; and then, as we commemorate our Sabbaths upon earth, we shall assuredly com-
memorate an eternal Sabbath above. As we are united now, in our prayers and hopes as one Christian communion—so shall we be united in another state in our praises, and in our gratitude, as a part of the number which no man could num-
ber, who were received for Christ's sake into the favour of a pardoning and merciful God.
SERMON VI.

NECESSITY OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO AN AGE OF RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

[Preached before the Sons of the Clergy, at Durham, September 4, 1828.]

1 Corinthians ix. 16.
For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.

If any persons, in the days of St. Paul, had embraced those notions of religious indifference, which are so common with us at present, they would have been much surprised at the declaration of the Apostle, in the passage which I have now read to you: Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel. "From whence," they might have demanded, "does this necessity arise? Why should there be woe unto you if you preach not the Gospel? The public law does not require it: the public law, on the contrary, rather condemns it. "The higher classes are against you; the customs of the country are against you; the popular voice
"is against you; the authority of the teachers of
the people is against you. The religion which
you oppose was given to the Jewish nation amidst
the thunders and lightnings of Sinai; and the
God who gave it will, therefore, certainly accept
the devotions of the people who defend it; and
even if they are now wrong in maintaining it,
God is too merciful to condemn those who are
sincere in their belief, even though they are igno-
rant, or regardless, of the new opinions which you
advocate. Whence should there be any neces-
sity that you should thus disturb the public re-
pose? why should there be woe unto you, if you
do not preach this new doctrine, which you call
the Gospel of Christ?"

In such plausible language might the Apostle have
been addressed in his own age: and it is, in fact,
the language, in every age, of those who consider all
religions as of equal moment; who prefer the indol-
ence of indifference to the labour of inquiry; who
value the worldly liberality, which does good to
none, above the Christian charity which would do
good to all.—It is the language of all who would
sacrifice religion to courtesy, and truth to popu-
ularity; and who would deny their Christianity it-
self, if it should cost them the smiles of worldly
society. Such persons—and they form a numerous
class—are always ready to express their surprise
at similar firmness and decision to that which
characterized St. Paul; and the reply by which
the Apostle would have defended his assertion
12.
is the same by which every Christian minister also is required to answer those by whom such language is still urged.—"I have received a com-
mission from the most High God to preach re-
pentance, and forgiveness of sins. I am the am-
bassador of Heaven, to speak comfort and truth 
"to mankind; and the frowns of power shall not 
"terrify me, and the smiles of the world shall not 
"divert me, from the right performance of my high 
"and holy duty. The Almighty Himself has re-
vealed to me the connexion between the genuine 
"reception of Christianity, and the future happi-
"ness of man. The salvation of the souls of my 
"hearers depends on my faithfulness in delivering 
"my message, and I dare not be silent. I dare not 
"be an enemy to man, nor a traitor to my God, by 
"refusing, on any inferior, unworthy considerations, 
"to preach the Gospel with which I am entrusted. 
"Necessity is laid upon me, woe is unto me, in the 
"reproaches of my conscience now, and in the 
"heavy condemnation of my Divine Master here-
"after, if the souls of my brethren perish, through 
"the negligence of their appointed teacher."—And 
because the only reproach which the enemies of 
the new religion could possibly throw upon St. 
Paul, arose from the supposition that he derived 
some personal benefit from the kindness and bounty 
of his converts, he reminds the Corinthians, that 
though he was entitled to live of the Gospel, because 
he preached the Gospel,—as those who, under the 
old dispensation, waited at the altar, were made
partakers of the altar,—yet he had accepted none of their offerings, he had taken nothing at their hands—and he did not mention this to boast of his disinterestedness, but to prove to them, that whether he was poor or rich, whether he received much or little, whether he received any thing or nothing—he was actuated only by that pure and lofty motive, which I have represented, the necessity, the absolute and overwhelming necessity, of preaching faithfully the Gospel of God.

Such may be considered the interpretation and paraphrase of this solemn passage, which appeals so forcibly to the mind and heart of every Christian preacher, who reflects with seriousness upon the noble, yet responsible office, to which he has been called by the Providence of God; and I have selected it for our consideration this morning, that I might enforce the reasoning of the apostle on those of the sacred order, whom I am now honored in addressing.

If the circumstances of the Christian were the same in the present day, as they were in the days of the apostle, there would be little difficulty in proceeding at once to those topics which prove the necessity under which we lie, of preaching the Gospel of Christ; and the certainty of the dreadful punishment which must overtake us, if we neglect this solemn charge. We are, however, very differently situated. The persons among whom the writings of St. Paul were originally circulated, were divided only into two classes—Jews and Christians; and
when the apostle exhorted the Corinthian teachers
to preach the Gospel with diligence or fidelity, they
knew, at once, the meaning of his admonition; and
applied themselves to the fulfilment of his precept.
Widely different, however, is the state of the
Christian world in these days. The universal
Church of Christ has become so divided, and sub-
divided, that some inquirers after truth, professing
themselves to be unable to decide between the op-
posite divisions, are contented to leave their salva-
tion to chance—others take refuge in mere de-
spair, in the bosom of an alleged infallible Church
—others, and these by far the majority, become
indifferent to all religion—while every teacher, of
every sect, party, or communion, even of those who
deny the very foundations of Christianity, the atone-
ment and divinity of Christ—all, all, declare that
they alone are the upholders of the true Gospel of
God, and they defend the zeal of error, and the la-
bors of falsehood, by referring to this very passage—
necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I
preach not the Gospel.—I cannot be contented, there-
fore, under these circumstances, with enforcing, from
this passage, those general exhortations, only, to
fidelity and zeal in our ministerial duties, which, be-
cause they are general, would be esteemed applicable
to themselves by all persons, of all parties—I shall
beg your attention to a point, which, in another state
of things, might be deemed irrelevant, or useless.—
I shall endeavour to ascertain the precise meaning
of the word "Gospel," in this passage—and then
compare with it, very briefly, the three principal classes of opinions, which now divide us. If it shall be proved that the faith, and worship, which are adopted by the communion of which we are members, approach more nearly to the apostolic system, which is here called the Gospel, than the faith and worship adopted by other communions—we shall then have laid a solid foundation for the apparently bold and uncompromising assertion, that we profess the true Gospel of God more fully, and more purely, than others; and, consequently, that we are peculiarly, and especially required to apply the language of St. Paul to ourselves, and to exclaim, as in the presence of the God whom we have sworn to serve—necessity is laid upon me to preach the Gospel.

We are first to endeavour to ascertain the precise meaning of the word “Gospel” in this passage: and we shall be able to do this the more satisfactorily, if we consider the circumstances, and the conduct, of St. Paul.

St. Paul had been converted by supernatural means to be a teacher of Christianity. Now all religion consists of these two parts,—Faith and worship. I define, then, the Gospel which St. Paul preached, to be—that system of inward faith, and outward worship, which was intended to supply the place of the inward faith and outward worship, which had been appointed by the law of Moses. If we consider the two religions with reference to the faith which they inculcated, we shall
find that some doctrines were common to both. Both proceeded from the same divine source; both professed the same object, purity of heart, and life, and dependence on one Redeemer; both taught the mystery of the great atonement, that without shedding of blood, there is no remission; both enforced the divinity of the Word, and of the Spirit; both revealed the fall of man, and the necessity of divine assistance to restore him to God. The difference between these two dispensations consisted in this—that the religion of Moses, pointed to the sacrifice which was about to come, and only partially revealed a future state—the Christian religion pointed out the Redeemer who had already come, but who was despised and rejected—who was crucified, and who, rising again, ascended into heaven; and by this doctrine of the resurrection, life and immortality, instead of being only partially revealed, were fully brought to light by the Gospel. Such are the marks of correspondence and diversity which we find in the Mosaical and Christian dispensations, as to the inward faith which was revealed by the two religions—let us now turn to the more important and essential difference between their outward worship.

The outward worship which was established by the religion of Moses was intended for one nation only. The outward worship established by the Christian religion was intended for all nations:

* Appendix, Note 5.  
1 2 Tim. i. 10.
but as the system of the Jewish worship was this—that one nation should have its one national Church, we infer, that every independent and separate nation, or tribe, or people, which embraced Christianity, should possess also its own separate and national Church; and the union of all these several Churches, which were to be thus independent of the authority of each other, was intended to constitute the one Universal Church, which was to embrace all nations of the earth. We read of the Church of Israel—that is, the one Church of the one great and independent nation of Israel. We never read in the Old Testament of the Church of a province; nor of the Church of a city. We never read of the Church of Zebulon, or of the Church of Naphtali—of the Church of Jerusalem, or of the Church of Ramoth-Gilead. We read only of one national Church, which was extensive as the borders of the nation, and numerous as the inhabitants of the country. When the new religion, however, was to be established, though the whole body of Christians are sometimes called the Church of the living God, we find that a new and peculiar language was adopted to describe the various communities of which the universal Church was composed. We read of the Church at Antioch, the Church of Jerusalem, the Church of Thessalonica. Sometimes the Christians of a whole province were called a Church—sometimes the Christians of a city, even when they were so few, that they could be collected together in one
house. Instead of being bound together by the burthensome rites and ceremonies of the ancient law, they are represented as being bound together by such ties as these—they continued stedfast in the Apostles' doctrine, in Christian fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayer ². Instead of being governed by the High Priest, as the Jewish Churches had been, they were partly governed by the Elders, who had been ordained by the Apostles; and partly by the Apostles themselves, by whom the Churches were at first founded; who, in one instance only, consulted with the whole body of the Apostles who were assembled at Jerusalem. The knowledge of those to whom I am speaking will immediately enable them to refer to those passages in the New Testament which demonstrate the truth of my account. It may, however, be useful to remind them, that I am confirmed in my statement, by the whole conduct of St. Paul, from the time of his conversion to the day in which this first Epistle to the Corinthians was written. Twenty-one years, upon the most general, and, I believe, the most accurate calculations, elapsed between these two events. Within that period he is represented as having travelled through thirty different cities, towns, and provinces, ordaining elders in every place where they were required, and preaching the new religion. In the course of that time also, he wrote the Epistles to the Thessalonians

² Acts ii. 42. Appendix, Note 6.
and Galatians, in which he prophesies the general apostacy of the Churches, and affirms, that faith in Christ alone is the means of salvation. He wrote the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, to give them directions for the right government of the Churches committed to their care, and he wrote this present Epistle, in which he declares the necessity of his preaching the Gospel. I mention these things to shew you, that I look to the facts of Scripture as the best interpreters of Scripture. The precise meaning of the word Gospel must be found where I have sought for it—in the doctrines of these Epistles—in the conduct of St. Paul—and in a comparison of the object designed by the Almighty in the establishment of the Jewish Church, with his object in establishing the Christian Churches. And I again, therefore, define the Gospel to be, that union of inward faith, and outward worship, which was intended to supply the place of the faith and worship appointed by the law of Moses.—It now only remains that we apply our inquiries to the divisions of our own day; and thus learn the duty which is required of us, as well as of St. Paul.

The people of this country may be said to be divided on the subject of religion into these three classes:—The members of that Church, from whose communion we have separated, and the head of which is a foreign Bishop.—The next division is that of a great variety of sects and parties, which it would be tedious to enumerate or to describe — and the last division is that of the
Church, to whose communion we belong—the national Church—which is intended, like the Church of Israel, and the Churches of Corinth and others in the early ages, to be extensive as the empire, and to include all its Christian subjects in one system of inward faith and outward worship.

Let us examine the claims of each of these by the criterion which I have now adopted from the Scriptures alone, and inquire which of them is most entitled to claim the appellation of teachers and professors of the Gospel enforced by St. Paul: let us refer both to the faith which they teach, and to the worship they observe.

If we attempt to describe the faith of all the numerous sects and parties, it is evident that the day would close before our relation could terminate—this only we may say, that the denial of the atonement of Christ is not the Gospel—the denial of the necessity of divine assistance, is not the Gospel—the denial of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, is not the Gospel. With respect also to the system of outward worship, which we find among the several sects, they may all be resolved into this—that a single congregation is a Church, whereas the Churches of the New Testament more generally consisted of a large number of congregations, united into one society, under one teacher, who was the superintendent of the common teachers.

With respect to the faith of that Church from which we have separated, I shall only say that
many of its doctrines are not to be found in St. Paul's description of the Gospel of Christ. The worship of images is not the Gospel. The adoration of our fellow-creatures, who were either really holy, or who were supposed to be so, is not the Gospel. The denial of the cup to the laity, in the Holy Sacrament, is not the Gospel. The exaltation of tradition to an equality with Scripture is not the Gospel. And so I might go on to enumerate many other articles of faith, which form no part of the Gospel, and of which I shall say no more, than that we may not embrace them. And with respect to the outward worship, and system of discipline in this Church, that is, with respect to the authority of a foreign bishop, ruling over all Christian churches, and requiring submission to his universal, spiritual dominion, there is not to be found in the churches which were established between the time of the conversion of St. Paul and the date of this epistle, a fragment, or a shadow of the notion. Neither can it be shewn, that the foreign Church, whose bishop thus aspires to universal dominion, was yet founded, or had begun to exist. Every primitive church was, as I have represented, a separate, independent, self-governed society. The system of outward worship, therefore, established by the Church to which I am alluding, is not the Gospel. There remains, then, but one of the three great divisions, and that is the Church of which we form a part; and of this I shall only say, that I entreat and beseech those
who have not yet examined its peculiar claims to the attachment of Christians, to examine its faith and its worship, by the criterion to which I would bring all churches; and to inquire whether the Gospel which St. Paul preached, is not more peculiarly and exclusively established, and enforced, in this Church, than by either of the two other great divisions which exist among us. If you are not convinced that it has, at least, more of truth, more of the Gospel, more of the primitive Christianity, than others, I can only request you to examine its pretensions to your approbation, by Scripture, by reason, by antiquity—by considering the state of the Christian religion through the world, by experience, by theory, and, if it were possible, by any other mode, in which you may arrive at a satisfactory conclusion in religious inquiry.

And now it will be demanded, for what purpose, I have reminded you, my reverend brethren, of these things. It is for this purpose,—that I might urge upon you, that if we profess more truly than others the Gospel which St. Paul preached, the same absolute necessity is laid upon us which rested upon him. Woe, unutterable woe, will be unto us, if we permit negligence, sloth, indifference, folly, or. any other offence, to turn us from our sacred duties, and to induce us to betray our trust to the people, or to dishonour our commission from God. I say our commission from God: for our conviction that we alone are the authorized
teachers of the people, is the only true and lasting motive of duty. We require this powerful and only motive. We are surrounded with evil; we are beset with trouble, rebuke, and with blasphemy. Exploded superstitions are reviving; religious indifference is mocking the truths of Christianity, and clothing its actual infidelity under the mask of a candour, which pardons all faults but those of the priesthood; and of a liberality, which sanctions all opinions but those which are supported by the institutions of our country, and enforced by the ministers of the national Church. On one side are the openly vicious; on the other, the clamours of the fanatic. If we are zealous, we are regarded as bigotted; if we are patient, and endure, we are called careless and remiss. All are anxious to condemn; none are willing to praise. The advocates of the Church, from which, by God's mercy, we have separated, have united with other opponents, and openly demand our downfall; and every sign of the times seems to require from us, from us, the ministers of the holy communion to which we are joined, more energy and more zeal,—personal piety, and uniform consistency of character. Shall we be indifferent, shall we be negligent? The Head of the Church has put upon us the robe of honour, and clothed us with the perfection of glory, in exalting us to be ministers of His holy religion. Shall we not from this hour devote ourselves more and more to the service of His sanctuary, and make our garments of holiness honourable? Shall we not put
away every inferior motive, and consider ourselves as the authorized teachers of a divided people? Shall we not look only to the glory of God, and the salvation of ourselves and others? Let us not look to wealth, or honours, or dignities; these have been twice taken away; once by the Church from which we have separated; and once by opposite opponents. The State secures them, and the State may sweep them away; and we ought so to be indifferent to them, that we may be ready to undergo poverty, affliction, and contempt, yet once again. These things ought not to move us. If these are all taken from us, still are we the ministers of God; still are we the upholders of truth: and we must know both how to be abased, and how to abound; but we must never forget the dignity of our high calling, nor forsake the holy commission which has been granted to us by the Head of the universal Church. God has honoured us to be the teachers of His people; to Him we are responsible; and may His blessing so rest upon us, that we become ourselves, the living examples of all we teach to others, till we finish our course with joy.
SERMON VII.

THE ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT PROVED FROM THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN MIND.


But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things.—And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, from which I have selected this passage, presents us with an impressive picture of the condition of two immortal spirits in the invisible world. One is in a state of happiness, the other is in a state of misery. Their separation from each other is eternal. Both are represented as having a remembrance of their past lives. The happiness of the one is not so fully related as the misery of the other: it partly, however, consisted in communion and intercourse with other spirits, which had been received into heaven. Lazarus was in the society of Abraham, the first founder of his religion, and the friend of God.—The misery of the rich man consisted in the
recollection of the past, and in horror of the present—in the continuance of his human feelings, affections, and sympathies—in useless prayers—in unavailing remorse—in sufferings, from which there was neither respite nor alleviation. He thought of his kindred, and the reflection increased his agonies. *I pray thee*, said the sufferer, *that thou wouldest send him to my Father's house, for I have five brethren.* But the eternal gulf was fixed; and the spirits of the departed could not pass from one state to the other.

Of all the subjects which can be submitted to a Christian congregation, that which we are now going to consider in the parable before us, is among the most impressive—the doctrine of the future misery of impenitent and wicked men. When we speak of the immortality of the soul, and the nature of the future happiness, we have attentive and willing hearers; but when we would remind them, that the same Scriptures which reveal an eternal state of glory, are no less earnest in enforcing the certainty of an eternal state of punishment, our hearers shrink from the contemplation, not so much with fear and terror, as with aversion and unbelief. They declare their conviction, that eternal misery is inconsistent with the mercy and love of God. They assert, that it is impossible that the Deity could have created man to condemn him for ever, on account of the errors or the follies, the vices or the crimes, of this short life of ignorance or trial. In the midst of all such speculations, the
testimony of Revelation continues unaltered. The just inferences which we draw from the parable before us, are confirmed by the whole Scripture. The immutable doctrine of the Scriptures is this—that it is appointed unto all men once to die—that after death is the judgment—and that, after the judgment, the spirits of one part of mankind will be borne up to a state of everlasting joy; while the other part shall be consigned to ever-during misery. The one state is shadowed out to us by the most sublime and beautiful emblems. We shall be clothed with white robes, crowns of glory shall be on our heads, the palm of victory shall be in our hands.—The other state is described by emblems no less emphatic. There is the worm that dieth not, there is the fire that cannot be quenched, the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever. We do not fully understand these metaphors. We must die, we must rise again from the dead before we can fully comprehend their meaning; but in whatever manner we interpret them, we are certain that they describe two conditions entirely opposite to each other. They prove also, that there never can be a cancelling of some mysterious law, which shall cause an eternal separation between the spirits of men which are received into happiness, and those which are condemned to misery. There is a great gulf fixed; and it cannot be removed by the unbelief, or by the speculations of men.

1 Rev. xiv. 11.
Such is the doctrine of Revelation respecting the eternal reward and punishment of mankind. As the God who has given that Revelation to the world, has given us reason also, I am fully convinced, that the Bible never reveals any thing, which is inconsistent with reason.

Before I proceed therefore to consider the causes of the condemnation of the rich man, I shall endeavour to shew you that the eternal misery of wicked and impenitent men, is demonstrable by the strictest reasoning. I shall derive my proofs, however, solely from these two sources—the nature of the human soul, and the scriptural character of God.

From the consideration of the nature of the human soul, we will deduce our first argument, for the truth of the scriptural doctrine of eternal punishment.

When God created the heavens, and the earth, He gave to angels, and to men, to animals, and to plants, certain unchangeable laws, which we now agree to call their nature. It will not, I trust, appear unworthy of this great subject, if I illustrate my meaning by the plainest and most familiar instances. I will take them from the inferior world. It is the law then of its vegetable life, that an acorn should produce an oak. It can produce nothing else. It is its nature to do so. Change its place—neglect it—or cultivate it—its nature is unaltered; and if it could exist for ever, it would remain unchanged to eternity. In like
manner, also, an animal of the field retains, from its birth to its death, the same nature, the same powers, the same instinct, as its kind. It never changes. If it were always to live, it would be eternally the same unchangeable animal.—Now, after a similar rule of his creation, it has pleased God that the human soul should have its own unchangeable properties. We are not bound by the laws of necessity, as the plants. We are not bound by the laws of instinct, as the animals. We are born into the world, with the wonderful power of exercising our own free will, in choosing either the good, or the evil, which are placed before us. If we choose the good, the laws of our nature make us happy, whatever be our outward condition. If we choose the evil, the same laws of our nature make us miserable, whatever be our rank, our wealth, or our worldly advantages. We are placed in this world, as in a condition of trial, that we may thus form our own happiness, or misery. To induce us to prefer evil, the world allures us, pleasure invites us, passion misleads us. To induce us to prefer good, God bestows upon us the influences of his preventing, his restraining grace. He has placed us in his Christian Church. He has given his blessed Son to die for us. He appeals to us by every motive, which can persuade, or alarm, or affect, the human mind. To induce us to prefer good, He grants to us his Holy Spirit, in such a manner, and to such an extent, that He is ever present with the soul of a believing
Christian— to guide him into all truth, to influence his decision, and to control his mind: and a well-instructed Christian cannot commit wilful sin, unless it be in defiance of all the persuasions, and all the warnings of the Holy Spirit of God within him.

Let us now suppose that a man stedfastly resolves to persevere in wickedness— to quench the spirit of God within him—to count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing— to love the present world only, and to despise all motives to good. According to the choice which he thus makes, his character becomes fixed. — At length the sentence of God goes forth— the dust returns to the earth again, the spirit returns to the God who gave it. Such as the man was at death, his own choice, his own free will made him. Such, — for his time of trial is past, — such, by his own nature, he will be for ever. As the tree falls, so it must lie. His body only dies: his soul continues to live: and all his evil passions— all his bitter remembrances— all his useless repentance— his remorse— his terror— his agony, form the essential properties of his soul: and they can no more be separated from the conscious spirit, than the vital functions can be destroyed in the human body, and the man continue to live. To use the language of Scripture, which alone can express my idea with sufficient authority and clearness. He that is holy, will be holy still, and he that is unjust, will be unjust still. The wicked man is wicked for ever, and therefore

3 Heb. x. 29.  3 Eccles. xi. 3.  4 Rev. xxii. 11.
he is miserable for ever. His nature has become unfit for heaven. He is not able to partake of its happiness, or its glory. He has made himself the author of his own endless misery.

It is possible that some may object to this view of eternal happiness and misery, that it is inconsistent with those passages of Scripture, which represent salvation as the free gift of God:—but let us not deceive ourselves with any vain speculations or fancies on these important matters. It is true that the salvation of the soul of man is the free gift of God; that is, God, for Christ's sake, has prepared a place of happiness for all who desire to attain to it; but this happiness is all holy, pure, and spiritual. It is such as a worldly, wicked, irreligious man, hates and despises. It is not the happiness which he would choose; and therefore, though God gives salvation, the wicked man will not accept it. He does not desire it. He cannot be fit for it.—What is the consequence? It is this. If a wicked man, who dies in his wickedness, were to be raised to that heaven—if he were to be placed at once among the songs of angels, and the purities of that better world; and if he were then compelled to pass an eternity among them, without any fitness for that high society, by holiness, repentance, or faith, he would be utterly unable to enjoy its felicities. It would not be the happiness he had himself chosen; and the harmony of heaven would be discord, the golden crowns would be esteemed as dross, the
robes of glory would be regarded as a shame and dishonor—and to apply the subject to ourselves, we may remark that now, even now, God has placed us in His Church, and given to us, who are here present, sufficient of His Holy Spirit, to enable us to become fit for heaven. He has called us into his visible Church upon earth, as a proof, and pledge, and earnest, that we may obtain that higher salvation, which begins here by holiness, and which is perfected hereafter by happiness. It remains for us only to make that calling and election sure. The gates of heaven stand open to us night and day. If we will not enter therein lest we be called upon to deny some present gratification, the mercy of God is offered to us in vain; and our banishment from the happiness of a state of glory proceeds from ourselves.

The scriptural character of God was to afford us our second argument in confirmation of the truth of the doctrine of the eternal misery of impenitent and wicked men.

You would deny the doctrine of future misery, because the Scriptures declare that God is merciful. It is true, most true, that God is merciful; but can you believe that His mercy will be displayed in any other way, than in that which He has Himself appointed? Is He not revealed to us as a just and holy, as well as a gracious and merciful God? Can any reader of Scripture indeed imagine, that the moral Governor of the universe will permit vice and virtue to be apparently of equal concern with Him
in this world, and that He will make no difference between the righteous and the wicked hereafter? Are everlasting banishment from God, and everlasting joy in His presence, the very same things? Have the threatenings and the promises the same meaning?—If God thus governs the universe of His accountable beings, then the sinner may go on in his wickedness, and the humble believer become the servant of folly. The Gospel may be rejected with impunity, the Sacraments may be despised at pleasure, the Scriptures may be treated with ridicule and contempt. If the wicked and impenitent man, who died in his wickedness, may be saved, merely because God is merciful, does it not follow that Christ has been our example in vain—that the Holy Spirit has been given in vain—that all Christianity is one great delusion, one solemn mockery? Will it not follow, that he is most foolish, who believes in God with most humility and fear?—It cannot be.—We know that the wicked man, who dies in his wickedness, will not be received into heaven merely because God is merciful.—Our reason repels the blasphemy. Our feelings revolt at the supposition,—death is only dreadful to us all, because of the dark futurity which follows it; and it cannot be necessary to prove to you, that if our affections are devoted to God; if our prayer, and our desire, and our endeavour is to live well, to believe rightly, and to die peacefully, we cannot be the eternal companions of those who disdain to pray, and abhor religion—who are careless how they live, and are care-
less how they die, provided they now live at their ease. The nature of the soul, and the character of God, must prove to us, that a mysterious gulf is placed between the good and the bad. Their separation is eternal, and none shall pass from heaven to hell, or from hell to heaven, hereafter.

Having thus considered the doctrine of Scripture, and its confirmation from reason, we will now proceed to contemplate the two examples, which represent the opposite characters, who are either exalted to happiness, or depressed to misery. I shall principally direct your attention to the latter. The causes of his misery are summed up in this emphatic expression, *Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things.*

There was a certain rich man, says the parable, *who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.* As the account of his conduct opens with this description, it has been imagined that his wealth was the cause of his condemnation. But in the view of God, wealth is no crime, and poverty is no virtue. Men are not born virtuous or vicious, because they are born poor or rich. If the mere possession of riches were criminal, the spirit of the patriarch Abraham, who is represented as being in Paradise, would have been condemned also. *He was very rich,* says the book of Genesis, *in cattle, in silver, and in gold.* His possessions filled the country.

* Appendix, Note 7.  
* Gen. xiii. 2.
He was honoured as a lord and prince of the land. The rich and wealthy Abraham lived in the full enjoyment of all the temporal advantages and blessings, which the Providence of God could bestow; but they were not the only things which he esteemed good. The higher blessing of God was this, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*. St. Paul assures us, that *Abraham desired a better country, that is an heavenly*. The rich man therefore was not condemned because he was wealthy, but, because in his life time he esteemed his wealth to be his only good; and because he set no value upon the higher and more estimable blessing, the good which lasts for ever. He lived in this world as if his temporal wealth were his only portion, and earth his only home. No great crime is recorded of him. No flagrant vices are mentioned. He might possibly have been considered by his neighbours and friends to have been free from blame, and from the very possibility of condemnation. He is represented as living among them according to his rank, his wealth, or his station; but he was contented to live, as a mere animal of the field—to live as too many do, for whose warning his character is recorded,—he was satisfied with providing sumptuous fare, and gorgeous apparel—these he had, and these he thought sufficient; until his false measure of happiness and security received the dreadful re-

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6 Gen. xv. 1.  
7 Heb. xi. 16.
futation we have now considered—and let us learn from the subject that the only real good of man is to secure the future happiness which God has held out to his acceptance—to improve his faculties, to strengthen his faith, to live the life of the righteous, that he may die the death of the righteous in peace, and faith, and hope. This is our real good: and if an accountable and rational man has not this, all other things supposed to be good, whether they be honour, or wealth, or power, or pleasure, are mere vanity and sorrow, as soon as their novelty is past. The rich man in the parable rejected the greater good, and preferred the less. Of his own free will he chose an earthly, negligent, irreligious life. He esteemed and valued the short enjoyments which this world affords, beyond all that God had revealed, and commanded, and promised: and thus rendering himself unfit for real happiness, he resigned his body to death, without one ray of hope, and his spirit became immortal in misery in the invisible world.

I now bring the subject to its useful termination, when I beg you to inquire whether I have related to you a solitary instance of the causes, and the consequences, of the alienation of man from God? Have I not drawn a short but faithful portrait of many thousands in the present wealthy, prosperous, refined, and luxurious age? Is it not possible that I have drawn the characters of many who are present? If any of you are conscious that I have done
so, I would further ask of them:—Is this the care-
less earthly life which we are born to lead? Has
God invested our immortal and accountable spirits
with such great and wonderful faculties, that we
might thus live, and thus die? Was it to enable
us to lead such a life, that Christ has died—and
the Scriptures have been written—and the Holy
Spirit has been imparted to us? Do not, oh! do
not suppose that no man can be condemned but
the openly profane and the notoriously wicked.
See how the representation of the causes of our
future misery, related in this parable, is confirmed
by the account of the world before the flood.
Why were they destroyed? Was it for their open
wickedness only? They did eat, they drank, they
bought, they sold, they planted, they builded ¹.
What evil was there in all these things? None,
none whatever—but they thought of these things
only—they were devoted to those good things,
which could only continue for this short life—they
lived as if they had no immortal spirit—no God to
fear—no heaven to which they might aspire. Their
poor men were repining and discontented—their
rich men were like him in the parable. The con-
sequences of their wrong choice were hopeless and
irretrievable misery.

The instructions of the pulpit, I well know, are
unfortunately too often considered as a mere form,
and are forgotten by the hearer as soon as the

¹ Luke xvii. 28.
momentary impression of their importance subsides. Permit me, however, in the conclusion of this subject, to intreat you to examine yourselves, whether you have chosen the good, or preferred the evil. You well know that the same mercy of God, which has planted you in the Christian Church, has given you the assisting graces of His Holy Spirit, to enable you to put away all wilful evil, to become pure in motive, and holy in life. I do not inquire whether you have avoided great and notorious crimes: but do you live, or do you not live, as if there was another world but the present? When you resign yourselves to your rest at night, have you a well founded hope, that if it should please God that you should wake no more in this life, you would, through the accepted atonement of our Saviour, be found at peace with Him? These are the only questions of real moment. The short and transitory life which we are now passing through, will soon be over. As the days which are gone appear like a dream, so will the moment arrive when the immortal spirit shall look back upon the whole period of our lives, and forward upon its new and eternal home. That hour ought never to be entirely forgotten. The agonies of our separation from the world must be heighten when we reflect upon a life which can give us no pleasure in the retrospect. It is a fearful thing to add to the terrors of mortality, the remembrance that we have many brethren, children, kindred, friends, who will be required to take warning, lest
their latter end be embittered like ours. It is a sad and fearful thing, to bear the name of a Christian, and to regard that sacred name with horror at the hour of death.

To avoid then this fearful fate—to live the life of a rational, and immortal man—to die in peace, and to awake from the dead with hope, remember the representation of him who had his good things in this life. Are you rich? Act as the stewards of God. Are you elevated? Rank, influence, power, are talents of which you must give account. Are you poor? You also have your respective duties to prove your faith, and form your real happiness. All are required to take their solemn warning from the passage we have considered; and to go home resolving, and praying to their Almighty Father, that their faith in the atonement of His Son, and their belief in the influences of His Spirit, be the source of happiness, while they live upon earth; and the firm and lasting foundation of their anticipated happiness hereafter.
SERMON VIII.

CREATION, PRESERVATION, AND DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD.

GENESIS i. 1.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

On referring lately to various passages of Scripture, my attention was forcibly directed to that which I have now selected for our consideration. It is the sentence with which the Old Testament commences, and it is generally passed by without much notice; chiefly, I believe, because it appears to be needless to demonstrate the truth of the declaration, which is expressed with such perfect and beautiful simplicity—that the world is not eternal, but that both the heaven and the earth were created by one Great and Almighty God. The subject of the text, however, seemed to lead to a most extensive range of thought. I could not but propose the question to myself—Wherefore did God create the world? For what purpose were the heaven and the earth called into existence? Does the
great Creator who formed them, intend them to continue for ever? or, are they to be destroyed at some future day, and is the universe to return to non-existence?—The answers to these questions were given to me by the Scriptures alone—for they are high above the reach of the reason of man; and we cannot by our own powers attain to them; but the answers which the Scriptures did give to these lofty questions lead to a series of reflections, which, above all other subjects, elevate the mind, and improve the heart. They direct us to a survey of the whole system of the Providence which governs the world—they teach us our present duty—they instruct us in the nature of our future destiny—and I concluded, therefore, that we might be usefully employed if we contemplated the Scriptural Revelation on a subject so important, so interesting, and so solemn. We will consider, therefore, in their order—First—the formation of the world, and the purposes for which it was created. This will lead us to inquire into the manner in which the same Providence which created the world is still preserving it—and the natural conclusion of the subject will be, the destruction of the world, when the purposes for which it was created, and for which it is still preserved, are finally and fully accomplished.

In considering the first of these points, namely, the formation of the world, and the purposes for which it was created; I cannot but notice the exceeding folly into which those persons are be-
trayed, who despise the authority of Scripture, and profess to be guided, even in a matter like this, by their own superior reason. There are some who reject revelation, and who wish to persuade us that the world was made by chance—that it is eternal, and made itself, without the operation of a powerful and intelligent Creator.

If it had ever been in the power of chance to produce a plant, or an animal, that power would still exist: but who has ever seen, or known, or heard of, any one event whatever, which can justify the notion that any one plant, or flower, or animal could have been originally framed by other means, than by the wisdom of an Almighty God? When the rocks and the stones which are in the bosom of the earth, shall come forth by their own might—when they shall arrange themselves without the aid of human hands into mansions, and houses, and churches—or when the particles of iron shall come forth from the mine, and form themselves into instruments of agriculture—when chance can paint a picture, or write a page, then may we begin to believe that the heaven and the earth, and the things which they contain, were framed without the hand of a Creator; then may we begin to listen with patience to the blasphemies of the deniers of Revelation, and distrust the voice of reason, and the language of Scripture.—Away with such trifling! There is no possibility of accounting for the existence and origin of all things, but on the principle which is laid down
in the declaration before us, *In the beginning God created*, that is, there was a period when the firmament above us, and the green earth beneath us, had no existence—there was a period when it pleased the only Eternal Being to commence the creation of the visible world; and the heaven and the earth were made with all their hosts, with all their contents, by that Almighty God, before whom we shall all one day appear, when His presence shall be manifested to us in a manner which is not known to our present experience.

The youngest reader of Scripture is well acquainted with the order in which the world was created; that is, with the whole account of the six days' creation, as it is recorded in this first chapter of Genesis. I shall not, therefore, enlarge upon this point, nor relate how the Almighty, when the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, ordered the day spring to know its place, divided the light from the darkness, gave existence to the elements, and so assigned them their operation, that fire and hail, snow and vapor, wind and storm, should equally fulfil His word. I shall not relate how the dry land, when it arose from the gathering together of the waters, was first adorned with trees and herbs, and flowers, and made ready for the innumerable tribes of animals, which were then commanded into existence, to live on its fresh springing surface. There is, however, one point which especially requires our attention, because its consider-
ation is essential to our illustration of the latter part of our subject. It is this, the general and universal manner in which the divine power was employed in this wonderful creation.—God acted over the whole surface of the earth, at every part, and in the same moment of time, and every thing which was made, every plant, tree, bird, or animal, was created for one particular place, and state in the creation, which was equally suited to them also. Nothing was left to chance. The highest, as well as the lowest, was so formed as to possess the greatest happiness of which their respective natures were capable. From the north of the earth to the south, from the east to the west, over all the climates, and through all the latitudes of the round globe, God, the Almighty, at the very same moment, created all the varieties which fill the world, gave all their several laws, and ordered all things in number and weight, and measure *,—till the heaven and the earth became beautiful, and wonderful, as we see them to be—and the angels of God are represented in Scripture, as shouting for joy over the new made world, when they traced the hand of their Almighty Father, scattering the darkness over the face of the deep, till all the fair world was completed, and God saw every thing which He had made, and behold it was very good.

We are now, therefore, brought to the question, for what purpose were the heaven and the earth

* Appendix, Note 8.
thus formed—for what reason was this magnificent world created?

The answer to this question is given in the last event on the evening of the sixth day—when the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them, then that being was formed, for whom alone these were created and made. The mansion was built, and now the inhabitant was to appear—the table was spread, and now the guest was to be introduced—the stars shone in the heavens, and beauty spangled the earth, but there was no human eye to admire, and no human tongue to praise, till it pleased the Lord to create man—the reasonable, thinking, noble, and immortal man. He created man a compound being of soul and body. The dust of the ground composed the body. The spirit of the living God gave him life and breath, and man became a living soul.

My Christian brethren, I would endeavour to excite you to love, and to fear God, and to put away the evil of your doings, and the corruption of the heart, by reminding you of your real greatness and dignity, as the offspring of an Almighty God. There are few who remember their true and real greatness; there are few who do not prefer the body which shall perish, to the soul which shall live for ever. And I am anxious to rouse them from their lethargy, by laying before them a new motive to holiness, when I remind them of their majesty as

1 Gen. ii. 7,
the sons of God, when they were originally created. I well know, that when the generality of men look upon the magnificence of this great creation, they cannot consider themselves of so much importance in the world of God. Yet, remember, I pray you, how entirely this view of the importance of the human race is confirmed by the Scriptures of truth —The other portion of the dispensations of Providence with respect to man, is more wonderful, even than the doctrine which I have now enforced, that the heaven and the earth were created for man. Man fell from God. He was created holy; he made himself sinful. But God would not forsake the work of His own hands—and the means by which alone man could be restored to God were as astonishing as the creation itself.—Who could bring back the apostate? He might gain the whole world, beautiful and glorious as it was; but what would it profit him if he lost his immortal soul? Then it was, that because man could not restore himself, the sublime system of redemption, as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures, was matured in the counsels of the invisible world—the Son of the living God, Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant—a divine and eternal Being.—He alone could restore the fallen man: He must assume that nature in which man was created, and thus accomplish the redemption of the invaluable and undying spirit. Yet even this was not all—because the fallen man was so changed, and so perverted by the transgression of
Adam, not only must the Son of God come down to teach, to suffer, and to die; but the Holy Spirit of God must be granted to us to restore the divine image within us, and to fit, to prepare, to elevate us to that blessed heaven, which we had lost by our folly. When we remember these things—when we remember that no other sacrifice but the death of Christ could be accepted—that no other plan of renovation than the agency of the Holy Spirit, could be discovered to redeem man from destruction—then shall we perceive our true and real greatness, as immortal, and reasonable, though corrupt, and fallen men—then shall we acknowledge that the human race is, and must be, of so much importance in the world of God, that the earth might be created for the happiness of the body, and the heaven be created for the happiness of the soul of man. And who is there among us, who can reflect upon such a truth, and not pray to God that he may be enabled to repent, and to put away evil—that he may attain to heaven at the last, when the earth shall be of no value to him? Who will not adore the God who made him, and the Saviour who has redeemed him? Who will not obey the warnings of the Holy Spirit, which will lead him through the temptations of the world, to those mansions of purity, and glory, for which alone his soul within him was created?

The consideration of the object for which the world was formed, leads us to reflect, in the second place, on the manner in which the same Pro-
vidence, who created the world, still continues to preserve it.

I might here enumerate many arguments which demonstrate, to the most unobservant and thoughtless mind, the absolute certainty of the superintendence of a Divine Providence. These arguments might be derived from the wonderful completion of prophecy—from the beauty, harmony, wisdom, and proofs of design, which are everywhere visible in all the works of creation, whether we look upon the heavens above, or on the earth beneath us. I shall, however, adopt only that argument to which I have already alluded. I shewed you that the Almighty, at the creation of all things, acted by his Providence at every part of the world, from one end to another, at the very same moment of time. We infer, therefore, that, on the very same plan, he continues to preserve the world. He, who created the whole world, created every particular part of it. He, who preserves the whole world, must preserve every particular part of it, and therefore every individual who is born into it.

It is not possible that God should suspend his care, and love, and mercy; and cease to protect the offspring of his power. If He is our Father, He will not forsake his children. If He is our Sovereign, He will take charge of his subjects; and He has done this for six thousand years, and preserved the world itself in the manner we see—and He has brought down the generations of men
to the fathers who lived before us, and to ourselves, their children and descendants. If we look back upon this long period, we are perfectly willing to acknowledge the Providence of God in all the events of the past. We are willing to believe, too, that for us, as well as for our fathers, the sun rises and sets; for us, as well as for them, the earth produces its fruits, and the seasons return in their order; for us, as well as for them, the page of Scripture discloses the path to happiness. Thus far all are willing to believe; possibly, too, you will believe more—you will believe that the same Providence of God protected your fathers, and their families, in all the events of life. Let me now, therefore, intreat you to apply the same reasoning to yourself. If God, at this moment, preserves the whole world; and if, by so doing, He preserves every part of it, then his good Providence must be over you, preserving you, protecting you, and daily doing you good. Why will you not believe in the Providence of God over yourselves, your affairs, and your families, whatever be the mysteries and the difficulties which surround the doctrine? God is still Almighty—He is still Omnipresent—He still acts at all times, in all places—and He desires, and He accomplishes, our real good. He does not, perhaps, confer the supposed good we desire, but that which He sees, and knows to be best. To some He sends adversity—to some prosperity—to all He sends those circumstances which form their trial, their discipline, their
struggling, and their contest in this state of trial. Your thoughts are known to him—your prayers are heard by him—your good intentions, or your wicked resolutions, are open before him. His mercy is around you, and upon you; and I am convinced that there is not one among you, however forsaken, and afflicted He may seem to be, who will not be able to look back upon life, and trace some events, which He is justified in imputing to the especial Providence of God. You may pass from infancy to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to age—time may furrow the brow, or change the form—it may dim the eye, and make grey the hair—it may weaken the limbs, and announce your approaching dissolution—but the Providence of God is with you, now, even now, granting you the powers of his Holy Spirit to prepare the soul for heaven; and preserving the decaying body, amidst all the dangers and difficulties which make the discipline of fallen man. Let not your faith fail you in the Providence of God. Remember the plan of redemption for the soul—remember the mercies you have already received for the body. Hope and trust in God, and be at peace within, whether your lot be prosperity or adversity—whether you live, or whether you die.

I was to conclude the subject by its obvious and natural termination. The world which God at first created, and which He still preserves, shall be destroyed, when the objects for which it was created are finally and fully accomplished.
They shall perish, says the Scriptures, but thou remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment—as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. God alone is great. God alone is eternal. When the prophecies are completed—when the power of evil is inferior to the power of good—when the nations of the world are restored to their Maker, by their general conversion to the truth of God—then shall the world be destroyed—then shall the end come. Immediately before this destruction of the world shall take place, that event shall happen in which we are all interested,—the general resurrection of the dead: and we can only understand the manner in which this shall be effected, by referring yet once more to the doctrine, that the Providence of God can act in all places at the same time. If the Providence of God at the creation could be so present at every moment, in every part, that the mountains, and the valleys, the ocean, and the air, should at once be filled with plants and animals peculiar to their respective stations: and if the same Providence of God can now be present at every moment, and in every place, so that not a sparrow can fall to the ground without his permission—if these things are so, and both reason and Scripture affirm them so to be, why then should it seem impossible that God should raise the dead?
The same Providence of God may be present at every moment, and in every place, at the last great day, to accomplish all over the world, the universal resurrection of the dead. And therefore all the generations of the dead may, and shall, in one hour rise again. No matter whether their bodies may have mingled with the elements—no matter whether they have been consigned to the ocean, or shrouded in the grave, the earth shall cast forth its dead—the sea shall give up its dead—the air shall resign the invisible, once human atoms, which may have mingled with its purer substance—and from the north to the south, from the east to the west—over all climates—in all countries—through all latitudes the dead shall awake, and spring forth to new life, as the plants, and the herbs, and the flowers burst forth at the creation, over all the surface of the earth. They shall wake—they shall arise in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump—for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, to live, and to die no more for ever. They who have gone before us, with our kindred, our parents, and our friends shall break from the prison of the grave—and the dead, small and great of the whole family of man, shall be gathered together from the surface of the rolling globe, to meet their Lord in the air. Then the judgment day shall come. Then shall we all experience, through the countless ages of an endless eternity, the justice or the mercy of our Father, our Redeemer, and our God. Are we
prepared for that day? Are we yet ready to meet our Judge? Then, and then only, the object for which the world was created shall have been finally and fully accomplished—then the elements shall melt with fervent heat—the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up—its existence is no longer necessary to the happiness of the man for whom it was created—and it shall perish—it shall perish—as the old, and broken, and useless scaffolding of a mansion, when the building, which it served, is completed.

Thus have we been led to survey the whole system of the dispensations of God in the creation, the preservation, and destruction of the world. We have surveyed the past, the present, and the future. The past (not only as the former generations of men, but) as the greater portion perhaps of our own lives is concerned, has given up its account to God. Let your hearts tell you what that account has been.—The present is still continued. It is the hour for repentance, and faith, and hope. Let not another day pass without fresh prayers to God, that we may conquer the evil within us; and that we encrease in our gratitude and love to the holy and blessed Saviour, by whose mercy and atonement our salvation may be perfected in the great day of God.—The future, the future is unknown to us. Clouds and darkness are round about it; but some gigantic objects appear through its shadows, in the forms of sickness, and death, and judgment, and eternity. Our time will
not permit us to say more upon these solemn matters. Return to your homes, and think upon them—commune with your own hearts, and in your chambers, and be still.
SERMON IX.

THE GREATNESS OF GOD NO ARGUMENT AGAINST HIS PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD IN THE LESSER AFFAIRS OF LIFE.

Psalm cxlvii. part of the four first verses.

Praise ye the Lord. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem.
He healeth the broken in heart. He telleth the number of the stars. He calleth them all by their names.

I am about to speak to you respecting the Almighty God. I wish to endeavour to develop one part of the character of Him, who created the heavens and the earth at the first, and who has continued to preserve them till the present moment—and because I shall be guided by the Scriptures alone in this attempt, I think I shall be able to lay before you such a representation of the nature of the Supreme Being, that you shall be willing to follow the example of the writer of this Psalm, and declare, with him, that it is good to praise God, for He is worthy of the veneration and
of the worship of all created beings. I think you will come to the conclusion, that the doctrines and the duties, the precepts and the sanctions, of the Christian Religion, will more deeply impress the heart, and more certainly influence the conduct,—if we sometimes take a more general view of their origin and design, by elevating our thoughts to that great God, the Father Almighty, by whom the Christian Religion was imparted, for the happiness of immortal beings.

In order that I may bring this great subject more fully before you, I have selected a passage which appeared to unite, in the most perfect manner, the three principal characteristics under which the Almighty is pleased to reveal Himself to man. We never can thoroughly comprehend God. Even when this life is over, and when our faculties are enlarged and purified, and directed to the contemplation of God alone, in another stage of our undying existence, we shall never entirely comprehend the Almighty. Such knowledge will for ever be too great and wonderful for us; it will be high above our reason, and we can never attain to it—but some parts of His ways, of His character, of His glory, we may even now begin to understand; and the principal things, which we may comprehend, are mentioned in this passage of the Psalm before us; they are these—the greatness of God, the providence of God, and the mercy of God. These are the three principal attributes by which the Almighty can be known, either by angels or by men,
and they are all expressed in the words which I have chosen. We have the greatness of God: *He telleth the number of the stars, He calleth them all by their names.* We have the Providence of God over the kingdoms and the nations of the world: *the Lord doth build up Jerusalem.* And, thirdly, we have the mercy and the love of God, over every person, over every son and daughter of the innumerable millions whom He has created: *He healeth the broken in heart.* Let me beg your attention to each of these, in the order in which I have mentioned them.

And first let us consider *The greatness of God.* *He telleth the number of the stars, He calleth them all by their names.*

There is nothing in the whole visible creation more beautiful than the starry heavens upon a fair and cloudless night: and though many writers have indulged in the most admirable contemplations upon their nature and extent as demonstrating the greatness and majesty of God, I think that our consideration of the precise meaning of these words, will afford us more perfect ideas upon the subject, than any reflections of uninspired men. The expression *He telleth the number of the stars* is more properly interpreted, I quote the learned Bishop Horsley, "He hath set a number to the stars;" or, "He hath allotted a number to the stars." That is, though the number of the stars appears to us to be infinite—though the discoveries of the tele-
scope assure us, that millions upon millions of stars spangle the firmament, and though there is reason to believe that no telescope has been framed which has discovered one-half of their number—though the distance of many of these stars may be so great, that their light has never yet reached this earth which we inhabit—though the reason and the imagination of man cannot comprehend the infinity of the space in which they move—yet it was the God, who called them into existence at the beginning of Christianity; and all their countless millions, wherever they traverse the universe, are known to Him. Their places in the firmament are allotted to them by the Almighty. They move as He directs, and according to the laws which He has appointed. Such is the meaning of the phrase, *He telleth the number of the stars*—and the next expression is no less emphatic, *He calleth them all by their names.*—This expression was used among the Hebrews, to denote an intimate knowledge of the circumstances and nature of that to which the expression was applied. It therefore here signifies, that great as the number of the stars may be, that number is not only allotted by the Almighty, and is known to Him; but—there is not a star in the firmament, whether it is known to man, or whether it has still remained undiscovered by the researches of science, whose nature, and whose circumstances, and whose laws, are not all known to God. And what are the stars of heaven?—By comparing the nature of the sun, which gives light
to our earth, with the nature of the stars which are nearest to us, there is abundant reason to believe, that each star is a sun, like that which shines upon us, and therefore that every star may be surrounded in like manner with satellites, and with planets, each of which may be filled with inhabitants as this earth on which we move. Every star is a world, and each may, and no doubt is, filled with life, and animation, and rational, and accountable beings; and every planet, round every star, will have its times and its seasons, its days and its years; and thus there will be every where, among innumerable worlds in the infinity of the universe of God, life, and gladness, and praise, and glory to the One God, the Creator and Preserver of them all—and wherever the stars and their planets may roll in the firmament of heaven, God, who knows their numbers, calleth them all by their names. He knows their inhabitants, their nature, and their laws. He provides for their wants. He bestows on them the blessings they require. God Almighty is present through the infinity of space. Variety cannot bewilder Him—numbers cannot fatigue Him—the immensity of the heavens is peopled with His wonders—He travels in the greatness of His Almightyness, through the dominions of His unlimited monarchy—and not a star, nor a planet, escapes the greatness of His power, nor complains of the absence of His bounty.

Such is the brief review of the greatness of God, which is alike afforded us by the evidence of our
senses, when we look up to the blue sky above us, and behold the magnificent roof of the firmament, spangled, and paved with stars—which is afforded also by the discoveries of science, and which is confirmed by the language of Scripture, *He telleth the numbers of the stars, He calleth them all by their names*; and we are now, therefore, brought to the second part of our subject—the Providence of God, as it is expressed in the sentence, *the Lord doth build up Jerusalem*.

The consideration of the greatness of God, which I have now submitted to you, has induced those persons who have contemplated the subject, to come to two opposite conclusions. Because the universe which God has created is so extensive, that the sun, and all its planets, together with the earth on which we move, is so small, and so insignificant, when compared with the infinity in which they move, that they would be no more missed from the universe, if they were to be utterly extinguished, than a drop of water from the ocean, or a leaf from the trees of the forest—because, I say, this universe is so extensive, and God is so great, therefore it is, that the Christian and the Infidel have arrived at two opposite conclusions. Both of them use the language of the Psalmist, *When I consider the heavens, the work of thy hands; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, Lord, what is man?* but the Christian

*Psalm viii. 3, 4.*
goes on to say, *What is man that thou art mindful of him?* What is man that Thou hast not only decked the earth with fruits and flowers for his refreshment and his delight? But, what is man that Thou hast provided for him the means of grace, and the hope of glory?—that Thou hast sent thy Blessed Son to die for him, and hast granted the system of redemption that he may be happy for ever?—The language of the infidel is different, "Lord what is man? He is unworthy of thy notice—he is too low in the creation to be the object of redemption—he is too insignificant to be the important object which he is represented to be in the Christian revelation."—Now this objection to the Christian religion is one of the most insidious, and most common of the present day. The greatness of God is made an apology for infidelity—and because the universe of God is extensive, and magnificent, and infinite, as I have described it to be, therefore it is, that the peculiar religion which God has granted to man must be rejected, because it is so sublime, and so wonderful, that it is not probable that God would grant it to the inhabitants of a planet like ours, so small and so insignificant.

Now it is with reference to this argument, which changes our veneration for the God of Nature into an objection against the God of Christianity, that I wish you to observe the proofs of the Pro-

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3 Psalm viii. 4.
vidence of God over the affairs of mankind, which are given in this passage of Scripture, *The Lord doth build up Jerusalem*. There are many other ways of answering the objection—I could refer you, for instance, to the marvellous discoveries of the microscope. If the starry heavens declare the greatness, and the glory of God, no less does the evidence of our senses, when assisted by the power of the microscope, convince us, that there is not a flower of the field, nor a blade of grass, nor an insect of a summer evening, which is not formed with as much perfection, and as much beauty, as if the wisdom and power of the Almighty had been confined to these lesser objects. If the wonders of the heavens make us consider mankind to be unworthy of the system of redemption—the contemplation of the lesser objects of creation ought to lead us to an opposite conclusion—and our Saviour has condescended to use this very illustration of the Providence of God, *If God so clothe the grass of the field, will He not clothe you*? Again, *Fear ye not, ye are of more value than the sparrows*; and the Providence of God is such, that not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without his permission. Such is one answer to the objection in question—and there are others also which may be derived from the remembrance that the effects of the system of redemption may be extended to other worlds besides this.

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* Matt. vi. 30.  
* Ibid. x. 31.
—that the power of the Almighty which created, can no longer be Almighty, unless it preserves—that it is a degradation of the Almighty to imagine that He does not govern the least as well as the greatest—and many other arguments of a similar nature.—We will now, however, confine our attention to the very words of the passage of Scripture before us, to prove to us that the Providence of God is extended over kingdoms and nations—*The Lord doth build up Jerusalem.*

The peculiar value of the argument for the Providence of God, which I shall deduce from this expression, is derived from its allusion to facts, and dates.—The prophecies of the Bible demonstrate the truth of the religion of Jesus Christ: and those prophecies are not the general language of men, who foretold future events at random, as events which might possibly take place; the prophecies refer to exact, and precise dates. The prophets mention the very time when the facts, which they foretold, should happen. Thus the exact time was declared when the children of Israel should come out of Egypt; and when they were at length delivered, we read, in the emphatic language of Moses, *on the self same day it came to pass*; on the self same day which was prophesied—*it is a night much to be observed,* because the exact fulfilment of the prophecy, demonstrated the Providence of God.—So it was also with the Babylonish

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5 Exod. xii. 51. 6 Ibid. 42.
captivity. Seventy years were appointed: and when the seventy years were over, the Providence of God overthrew the kingdom of the Chaldeans, and brought in other powers who had never before heard of the God of the Jews; and who restored the captive tribes at the very time which the prophets had predicted.—So also it was with respect to the seventy weeks of Daniel, that the Son of God was born at the very time, and place, and under the very circumstances which had been foretold.—Now the passage before us has reference to one of the most remarkable of these proofs of the superintending Providence of God. The prophets had foretold that the seventy years' captivity should be ended, and the Jews should be restored; and they added also that Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by the Chaldeans, should be built up again. Now the Jews were certainly restored at the appointed time: but when they proceeded to build the walls of the city, they were opposed by the Samaritans, and by other nations, and the work was suspended for many years. Every application which was made by the Jews to the court of Persia, was made in vain; until about the time when this Psalm was written—and Jerusalem was then permitted to be built for this very remarkable reason—The Persians, who were the masters over the Jews, had been for many years at war with the Greeks. After many battles by land and by sea, the Greeks became victorious. A treaty of peace was made between the two powers—and one arti-
icle of that treaty was, that no Persian army should come within three days march of the coast. Now the city of Jerusalem was precisely that distance from the sea-coast—and the king of Persia, therefore, to strengthen the boundary of his empire, and to secure the general safety, gave the Jews the long-desired permission to build the walls of Jerusalem, at the very time which their prophets had predicted. The Persians did not consider the God of the Jews—the Greeks did not know Jehovah. Both nations pursued their own plans, and their own objects— their ambition— their hatred— their revenge—and their enterprises. Neither of them knew, nor thought, nor cared about, the God who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names—the God of prophecy, the God of Christianity *. Neither of them remembered Him— yet both were accomplishing His will— both were fulfilling His prophecies— both were effecting the designs of the Almighty. And all this was done to convince the world that Jerusalem was to be built, and that the Jews were to be preserved till the long promised Redeemer should be born to save mankind, as the same prophets had foretold— and, therefore, that the religion of the Bible is true, and that the greatness of God in governing the stars of heaven, can be no objection to His interfering in the affairs of mankind. But even this is not all, which we may learn from the words

* Appendix, Note 9.
The Lord doth build up Jerusalem. There are prophecies in the New Testament as well as in the Old; there are prophecies which describe the rise, and the progress, and the downfall of a great corruption of Christianity—and the precise number of years, during which it shall afflict the nations, and prevent the benefits of Christ's religion. And we may be assured that these prophecies also shall be accomplished.—Clouds and darkness may conceal the footsteps of the Almighty; but God sits at the helm—God directs the storm. What has been in former ages, shall be in latter ages—and all the actions of man—all the designs of states—all the policy of empires, and kingdoms, and nations, shall be over-ruled by the all-wise Providence of God, to the accomplishment of His own designs—till the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ—and He shall reign for ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

There yet remains one consideration deducible from this beautiful passage of Scripture, and that perhaps the most important of the whole. It is the consideration of the mercy and the love of God over individuals—as it is expressed in the words—He healeth the broken in heart. If the Providence of God be thus extensive over the world; we may be assured that it takes care of every individual among us. The least is the object

7 Rev. xi. 15.
of His care, as the greatest things are not exempted from His control; and if the world abounds with affliction, we know the cause and the origin of evil—and if the mysterious dispensations of Providence have withheld from you some good which you anticipated, or have inflicted some evil which you feared, the only source of consolation is to be found in that religion which assures you of the greatness and Providence of God, and which tells you also, that *He healeth the broken in heart.* So long as the world smiles upon us—and so long as the deeper and more anxious reflections respecting our future salvation are disregarded, so long there will never be a broken heart—and so long, therefore, there will never be that state of mind which brings the spirit of man to God, which bows down the heart at the foot of the Cross—and which is healed by the mercy of God, that man may be happy for ever. A broken heart denotes a mind bent down by some inward grief. Now grief is always occasioned by one or both of these two things—outward calamity, or a conviction of sin. If a broken heart proceed from outward calamity, it can only be healed by trusting the Providence, which we cannot trace, and by offering the prayer of Him who was made perfect by sufferings—*Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done.* If the broken heart proceed from the conviction that you have offended the

great God of heaven and earth—then are you in that state of mind which is most suited to your condition—which is most becoming a sinful man—and which is the best, and indeed the only, sacrifice which is accepted by the Almighty God. *A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*

If you are thus broken-hearted, we present to you the only remedy for the evil—we preach to you the pardon of sin, and the certainty of peace to the conscience—through the wonderful sacrifice of that holy Redeemer and Saviour who has died that man might live. Return to the Lord and *He will have mercy upon you—and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.*

This message is the remedy for a broken heart. This is the object for which God has been revealed to us. For this we know the God of creation, that we may learn to have hope in Him who *telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names.* For this the prophets have spoken—for this the Scriptures were written—for this the Providence of God has been displayed in the government of the world—that the broken in heart might be assured of the mercy and love of God—and that the message of the salvation of the soul by the Son of God, might be received upon the best evidence, as the only remedy for the sorrows and the sins of man.

Thus have I spoken to you respecting the Almighty God; and, guided by the Scriptures alone,

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9 Psalm li. 17. 10 Isaiah lv. 7.
I have ventured to represent to you, in the most brief manner in which I was able to compress the subject, His greatness, His providence, and His mercy — and I now conclude this noble topic with enforcing the duty and the privilege to which the author of this Psalm refers: *Praise ye the Lord.* Let us not be contented with taking a gloomy view of religion.—Why should we not elevate our hearts to God, and rejoice in the contemplation of His goodness. Even in this life, amidst all our troubles, and amidst all our sorrows, we have reason to praise Him, whenever we attempt to count our mercies, and remember how little we have deserved the least of them. Even now we have reason to praise God, for the discovery of His greatness, which elevates us to the contemplation of heavenly things. We have reason to praise God for His providence—for I am convinced there is not one person present who is not able to look back upon his past life, and remember some proofs, that the Providence of God has been extended to him in mercy and goodness. We have reason to praise Him for His love, for your life has been prolonged to this moment, that you may repent, and return to Him, and believe rightly, and live holily. But if the present consideration of these things will not raise you to that state of delight and of joy, in which you can praise God—remember that a day is coming when the burthen of the flesh shall be removed; when the body shall be parted from the spirit; and when a brighter and
better world than this shall be the portion of the broken in heart. — Oh happy state, when the blissful immortality of man shall begin, and eternity shall be his portion! Then shall we praise God, when we shall contemplate His excellent greatness in the infinity of His magnificent universe — then shall we praise Him for His providence, for we shall understand the reasons for which we were afflicted. We shall know the causes of the evils which appear so mysterious. We shall praise God for the sufferings of life, as much as for the good we receive from Him. We shall praise Him for His mercy and His love; for we shall unite in that sublime and holy praise, which the Prophet has related in the vision which opened to him the future world: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive the glory and the honour, the worship* 11 and the praise of His creatures. *Not unto us, Oh Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise* 12 of our salvation. My Christian brethren, this is the immortality before you; these are the things which the mercy of God now places in your power. Will you not then *lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset you* 13; will you not *run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author* 14 of these great blessings, the sacrifice and the example for man? I beseech you, brethren, by the greatness, by the Providence, by the mercies of

11 Psalm cxv. 1.  
12 Heb. xii. 2.  
13 Heb. xii. 1.  
14 Rev. v. 12.
God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service. 

15 Rom. xii. 1.
SERMON X.

THE FALL, PUNISHMENT, AND RESTORATION OF MAN.

Genesis iii. 4.

The Serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.

I have selected the scriptural account of the fall of man for our present consideration, not only because it affords us the best explanation of the origin of evil among mankind; but because it describes to us the manner in which that evil is still continued, and the mode by which alone it can be overcome.

As my object is usefulness, rather than speculation, I shall not enter into the question respecting the Tempter, which is here represented as conversing with the woman, further than to observe, that there is nothing whatever inconsistent with the most sober conclusions of human reason, in that doctrine which is undoubtedly revealed in Scripture;—namely, that the first sin which was committed by man, was occasioned by the influence of an evil, and powerful spirit, which had
fallen from its allegiance to God. It is certain that there may be other rational and accountable beings, higher in the scale of being than man—some of whom may be good, and some evil; and who may be permitted, by the dispensations of the Almighty, to have some mysterious influence over the human mind. We know nothing clearly respecting the spiritual world; and the body must return to the ground, and the soul must return to the God who gave it, before we can understand it—but, as God, who is invisible, can act upon our souls, which are invisible; so also may other invisible agents influence the same soul,—and there is no greater unreasonableness in believing this to have been the case at the beginning; than in believing the facts which our experience and observation daily place before us—that men are still led away by the false arguments, the undue influence, and the corrupt example, of their fellow men.

Omitting then all speculations, which rather please the fancy, than profit the heart, we will confine our attention to the simple narrative of Scripture, and consider, in their order, the temptation and the fall of man—the punishment which was threatened, and which has been inflicted—and, lastly, the remedy which the mercy of God has discovered, both for sin and misery. The subject will thus lead us to survey the whole system of redemption; and I trust that the reflections which arise from it, will tend, under God's blessing, to our permanent improvement.
Our first consideration is to be, the temptation and the fall.

It might have been supposed that there could have been no temptation sufficiently powerful to have induced our first parents to have fallen away from God. Placed in a Paradise,—in the garden of Eden,—every tree which grew around them was either pleasant to the eye, or good for food. That one, of which they were forbidden to eat, is described in the same language as the rest. It was not more pleasant to the eye, nor better for food, than the others: neither would they have been prohibited from taking of this tree, if the trial of their obedience had not been essential to their more perfect happiness. I mention this, because the question has been sometimes asked, and that too with an air of triumph—for what purpose were our first parents exposed to temptation? Why were they placed in a state of trial at all? For this reason: because the greatest happiness to which a rational being can attain, is that which arises from obedience to the law of God. Angels are higher in the universe than men—they are obedient to the law of God, and therefore they are happy. The animals of the field are lower than man—they are incapable of yielding voluntary obedience to any law of God, and therefore they are not accountable, and they cannot attain to the same lofty degree of happiness, which the Almighty confers on angels, and on men. If therefore our first parents, and their descendants,
placed on the earth without any trial of their obedience—if they had been without control, and without discipline, they must have been degraded from their rank to the level of the inferior animals, whose ignoble nature is unfitted for immortality and heaven. Thus was man created free from sin, though in a state of trial: possessing the friendship of the Almighty—the lord of the visible creation—pure, holy, and innocent—his affections so uncorrupt—his happiness so perfect, that if there were no other evidence of the existence of evil spirits, but the temptation and the fall of man, these alone would be sufficient; for none but an evil spirit could have seduced from their obedience to God, beings so happy, and so blessed.—When the opportunity for the temptation presented itself, the evil spirit directed the attention of the woman to the forbidden fruit, and induced her to transgress the law of the Almighty, by the very same mode of reasoning which is still adopted by all the children of Adam, when they would justify to themselves the violation of the commandment of God. He begins by professing to doubt the truth and certainty of the prohibition. *Hath God said, ye shall not eat?* He well knew, and our first parents well knew, that the command of the Almighty was positive—*Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die:* and the first answer which was made to the tempter, on the part of Eve, declared her knowledge of the law, and her belief in its autho-
sity. Then it was that the further doubt was infused, *Ye shall not surely die*; that is, "Ye shall not certainly die. It is impossible that God should condemn the creatures He has made. The Almighty has implanted within you the desire of food; do you imagine He will destroy you because you gratify that desire? Indulge the wish of your heart, and be at peace. God is too merciful to punish his creatures. Even if He be offended with your transgression of his laws, He will certainly forgive the offence, when He remembers the weakness of human nature, *Ye shall not surely die.*"

Such was the false reasoning by which the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility, and such is the reasoning which prevails with her children at present.—Men do not sin from ignorance of the commands of God, but because they endeavour, by bad arguments, to reconcile the wickedness which they would commit, with the knowledge which they possess. Who has not known within himself reasonings of this nature? When the sinful man would make his companion more wicked than himself; or when the profligate man would stifle the convictions of his conscience, and defy the wrath of a righteous God, and the terrors of the judgment to come; when the guilty man would drown remorse; or even when the dying sinner would meet death without repentance, and without prayer, the uniform language of the heart among all such persons, is, "*I shall not surely die. God is too merciful to punish*—though He has said it, He
"will not do it—though I never repent, yet God will pardon." Such, indeed, is the depth of the corruption of the heart of man, that some persons will carry this reasoning even to the justification of the sins they design to commit. Some persons resolve within themselves to live, for their whole time of trial, in known and wilful sin, in the presumptuous and blasphemous hope, that God will never bring them to judgment—that God will forgive them, though they never forsake sin, and never repent of it. Wherever the heart is thus hardened, the dominion of evil is confirmed, and the conduct is the same as that of Eve, when the temptation of the evil spirit began to prevail. When she was once led to hope, that she should not surely die, she looked upon the forbidden fruit, and desired, and resolved to possess it. When she saw that it was pleasant to the eye, and good for food, she plucked and ate; though all the trees of the garden were no less desirable, and all were at her command—Wickedness is never essential to happiness. When she saw that the fruit was to be desired to make one wise, this also was another motive to induce her to eat. She was not contented with the knowledge of God, and the possession of innocence—she believed that she should not surely die, and she would be wise in that way in which presumption and folly would lead her—she found, too late, as all her sinful children will find, unless by God’s mercy they are restored to Him, that the knowledge of sin is only the know-
ledge of misery—and that the wisdom of wickedness is sorrow and despair.

From considering the temptation, and the fall, we are brought to the second part of our subject, the punishment which was threatened, and has been inflicted.

The punishment denounced against man was this, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* It might at first sight appear that the denunciation was not accomplished. They did eat, and they lived for many hundred years; but those reasoners are much in error who imagine that there is no death but that in which the soul is separated from the body. Three meanings are applied in Scripture to this word—there is the death of the body, when the spirit has returned to the God who gave it, and the body has been committed to the ground, of which it was made—there is the death of the soul, when its love towards God, and its faith, and hope, and obedience, which are the life of the soul, are extinguished—there is an eternal death hereafter, when the soul shall be banished for ever among evil angels, and wicked spirits, from the presence of God, and from the happiness of heaven. Now on the very day in which our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit they died—they became mortal—their bodies, for the first time, became like ours, subject to infirmity, to sickness, and to decay; which should end in the violent and painful separation of the soul from its associate. If they had not sinned, it is
probable they would have ascended after the time of their trial had been completed, without dying, as Enoch and Elijah were received up into heaven, and after them the glorified body of our Lord.—In the day in which they ate of the forbidden fruit their spiritual death began—for they had been accustomed to meet God as a friend—to delight in his presence—to love his appearance; but now they had become dead to these enjoyments—they dared not meet God—they dared not look up to Him—the thought of His presence was a source of terror.—In the same day too, when they ate of the forbidden fruit, they became subject to eternal death—unless God had provided a remedy for their misery. Their endeavours to hide themselves from the presence of God among the trees of the garden—their vain excuses—their overwhelming terror when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, demonstrate, beyond all doubt, that their nature had become corrupt and changed, and they were unfit to enjoy the spiritual happiness for which they were at first created; and, therefore, if they had died in that state, they could not have been exalted to the joy of a better world. Their lot would have been, to be cast out for ever among the wicked spirits who had misled them into evil.

And now let us apply this account of the punishment which the Almighty denounced against fallen man, to those among the children of Adam, who believe that though they live without hope, and die without repentance, they shall not surely die, spi-
ritually and eternally. If the Almighty accomplishes one portion of His threatened punishment, is not sufficient evidence thereby afforded that He will accomplish the other also? The death of the body is that portion.—The death of the body is but one part of the punishment of evil, and it takes place daily, and hourly, to convince us, and to remind us, that as we have all sinned—as we all partake of a corrupt nature, as we are all under the sentence of the death of the body, if we continue to offend God, we also shall surely die, spiritually and eternally. The justice of the Almighty is abroad in the earth—desolating our homes, parting us from our friends, and tearing asunder the bonds of the dearest domestic and social affections. Is nothing meant by this infliction of sorrow and woe? Are no lessons taught us by the voice of Providence?—If too we bear in our own bosoms the consciousness of infirmity, the seeds of sickness, the warnings of death—and if we thus know that our own body shall surely die—by what mode of reasoning are we to persuade ourselves that the other part of the sentence of God shall not be inflicted, as well as the death of the body?—If this reasoning does not convince you that men shall surely die, we bear another still more decisive within ourselves. When our first parents fell, I told you they died spiritually, because they did not dare to meet God, in whom, before their transgression they had been accustomed to rejoice: this change in their conduct was a proof of the death of the soul. Now put the question to yourselves,
and examine the state of your own souls, as in the presence of the same God. Is there life, or is there death, within?—Do you ever meet God in private prayer; or are you so conscious of sin that you dare not approach to Him? Do you live in communion with God, as your Friend and Father; or do you hide yourself from His frown, and banish all serious reflection, as a painful, and grievous thing? Do you humbly hope for the blessing of God? Do you please, or offend Him? Do you avoid evil because it is displeasing to God; or do you commit evil in spite of your knowledge of His will, and the reproaches of your own consciences?—Ask yourselves these questions, anxiously, and seriously; and when you have done so, let us prosecute the inquiry still further. It is possible you, that is the body, may die this night. The soul will then be in the presence of its Maker, such as you by your present question discover it to be. You can tell, each of you, by your self-examination whether your immortal spirit is fit to be separated from the body. If the result of your questions shall be, the discovery of wilful sin—total alienation from God—and a horror at the very thought of dying, because you have not repented,—if this be your condition—then you bear within yourself the consciousness of the second death. You know that if the day of judgment were at hand, you would call upon the rocks and mountains to cover you. You bear within yourself the consciousness of future misery. You feel yourself to be banished,
by your own reflections, from the happiness of a
spiritual state—and if you should die in this con-
dition, hating the thought of God, yet compelled
to appear before Him—as certainly as the body
shall be committed to the grave, so certainly is the
soul in the state of spiritual death, and it cannot
escape from the death which is eternal.

"And, is this," you will possibly demand, "is
this the gloomy conclusion to which we are to
arrive? Is there no hope for man, is there no
remedy? We all know that the body must die.
We know that we are alienated from God, and we
feel within us many tokens of the spiritual death
which you describe; but we are weak, and sinful,
and fallen men, and we sin against our better
judgment, and is there no refuge and no remedy?"
—This was to be the last point we were to con-
sider.—The remedy which the mercy of God has
discovered for our sin and misery. Thanks be to
God for His unspeakable gift; there is hope for man
—there is a remedy for every evil, except for living
and dying in wilful and presumptuous sin. As our
condition is the same as that to which our first
parents were reduced by the fall, so is our remedy
the same also. The redemption which has been
effected for us by the Son of God, has provided a
remedy for each of the evils I have mentioned. He
has provided a remedy for the death of the body—
for the death of the soul, and for eternal death
hereafter.

1 2 Cor. ix. 15.
With respect to the death of the body, though it pleases God to continue the laws of sickness, and of dissolution, yet the terror of death is removed by the removal of the cause of terror. The death of the body was terrible to a Heathen, because of the uncertainty of futurity: the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and His ascension into heaven has removed all uncertainty with regard to the second existence of man in another state; and the consequence of this is, that a Christian only fears death, when he is conscious that the spiritual life has departed from the soul, and therefore that he is unfit to meet God. And the remedy for the death of the soul, is derived from the same source. Because we have all departed from God, and our nature is so corrupted by the fall, that we cannot by our own strength return to God—the Scripture reveals to us one mode by which we may recover the favour of God; and that is, not by our own efforts, nor by our own righteousness alone—but by repentance, united with faith—and that faith is a sincere belief in, or dependence upon the righteousness, the merits, and the sacrifice of the Son of God.

The Scriptures assure us that the sufferings and death of Christ were accepted by the Almighty as the atonement for the sins of man; that is, that Christ underwent that punishment which was denounced against man—and that man was pardoned by his Maker, upon his faith, and repentance, and putting away wilful sin, on account of what Christ
has done and suffered. This is that great and wonderful doctrine of the atonement of Christ, which was the *stumbling-block to the Jew, and foolishness to the Greek.* This is the doctrine which is the sum and substance of the Scriptures—which the reason of man cannot comprehend, and which the pride of man is always desirous to reject—but it is the only doctrine which can comfort a dying sinner; and it is the only doctrine which can give us life, and peace, and happiness. It is the only truth which can conquer spiritual and eternal death—for when a sinful man is thus convinced, that the wrath of God is removed from him, because of the death of Christ; and that Christ has borne our sins in His own body on the tree—then it is that he becomes a happy man. He no longer fears the death of the body, because his sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ—he does not fear the death of the soul, because his love to Christ enables him, under the power of the Holy Spirit, to put away wilful evil—he no longer fears death eternal, because he conquers sin now, and he knows that he shall be delivered from its consequences hereafter, if he be delivered from its dominion at present.—And thus is faith in the Son of God, rightly and rationally considered, the only true and lasting remedy for the sins, and for the sorrows of man. Faith is the true life of the soul. It is the restorer of man to the presence of God. It reconciles God to man. It enables man to obey God—to rejoice in His favour—to hope
in His love—to meet Him with pleasure—to smile upon the terrors of death—and to anticipate with joy, the resurrection of the dead. The atonement of Christ is the only consolation of a fallen, and dying man. It is the vanquisher of spiritual death, and therefore it is the conqueror of death eternal. The terrors of the Lord may persuade many. Let us, who call ourselves by His blessed name, be influenced by the love of Christ—and escape from the evils of the fall. Oh grave where is thy victory, oh death where is thy sting? is the right and noble language which we are entitled to use, if we believe in the redemption which is effected for us by the Son of God. He hath loved us, He hath given Himself for us. Not unto us, but to His name be the glory of our deliverance from the power of evil, and from the consequences of the temptation of the enemy of man. If we live, we will live unto God—if we die, we will die unto the Lord—for we know that our Redeemer is in heaven, and that His power and His mercy will protect us while we live—it will bless us, and receive us when we die—it will be our strength and consolation for ever.

Thus have I endeavoured to lay before you the sin of man—the reasoning of his presumption—the certainty of the punishment of the impenitent, and the glory of salvation from sin and misery. Let me implore you to reflect upon this subject.

\[1\] Cor. xv. 55.
anxiously and seriously. You have been tempted to evil—you have committed sin—what has been your reasoning? Have you repented of your faults, or have you said, *I shall not surely die?* Have you begun to believe from the heart in the redemption of the Son of God, or are you still exchanging peace of mind, and future happiness; for present sin, and future misery? Have you so believed in the Son of God, that you are putting away evil for the sake of Him who suffered and died, to save you from the dominion of evil now by the assistance of His Holy Spirit—and to save you from future sorrow by bearing the punishment of your offences? Reflect upon these things. It is a fearful thing to hear of the fall of man, of the punishment of sin, of death temporal, spiritual, and eternal; and then to hear of its remedy in the mercy of our Lord and Saviour, and yet to leave the house of God without repentance, or faith, or prayer. Let not this be your state. For-sake evil, and live for ever. Return to the Lord, for He will have mercy upon you, return to God your Saviour, for He will abundantly pardon. At this very moment, He is permitting you to live, that you may believe, and return to Him, and obtain pardon, and peace, and salvation.
SERMON XI.

THE FORGIVENESS OF THE PENITENT THIEF, AN ASSERTION OF HIS DIVINITY BY OUR LORD, IN THE LOWEST STATE OF HIS HUMILIATION.

LUKE xxiii. 42, 43.

He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

We learn from the Scriptures of the New Testament, that there were certain persons in the times of the apostles, who turned the grace of God into licentiousness; and of others, that they continued in sin that grace might abound. The same conduct, it is to be feared, is no less common in the present day. Because it is impossible, with the great majority of people to deny the truth of the Christian religion; and because, while they are compelled, by the weight of its resistless evidence, to believe it, they will not live according to their knowledge—they endeavour to reconcile an unholy
life with their conviction of its truth, and with the demands of Christianity: and they do this by a wilful and daring perversion of the Scriptures of truth. When they read, for instance, of the mercy of God, that the Lord is gracious, long suffering, and of great goodness, they imagine that they may delay their repentance, and continue in sin. When they read of the threatenings, and judgments of God, they forcibly dismiss the subject from their minds; they endeavour to persuade themselves that the Scripture in question is not applicable to them, or they determine to defer their consideration of the matter to some more convenient season. In this manner some men reason away the most solemn and impressive passages in the Scriptures. They harden their hearts against all remonstrances. They live, and they too often die, in a state which they dare not think upon, and which they cannot justify; and which ever fills them with horror, when some unforeseen calamity compels them to reflect.

One of those passages of Scripture which are thus converted into an apology for irreligion, is the history of the forgiveness of the penitent thief. The words of our Lord, which I have selected for our present consideration, are misinterpreted more frequently, perhaps, than any other, to the worst purposes. Because our blessed Saviour, in his dying moments, pardoned one of the

1 Exod. xxxiv. 6.
criminals who were crucified with him, many thousands have imagined that they may safely delay all attention to religion, until the last hour of their lives. They will rely on what is absurdly, or falsely, called—a death-bed repentance. While their years pass rapidly away, and change the buoyancy of youth into the maturity of manhood, or furrow the brow and make hoary the head, they resolve to take no note of time, for they are satisfied with their intentions of future amendment. As the penitent thief was pardoned when he was about to die, so also they imagine, that they shall themselves be forgiven at the close of life. Without, therefore, absolutely denying the truth, and justice of God, they will live a few years longer in their contempt of His laws, and neglect of His Gospel; and, after this long indulgence of impenitence or crime, a few prayers, or a few tears, will be sufficient at the last, and their future lot shall be with Jesus in Paradise.

To remove this fatal error, and to vindicate the doctrine which is taught by the whole volume of revelation, I now invite you to consider with me the circumstances of the beautiful and affecting narrative before us.

Every page of Scripture teaches us this one important truth—that he who would die the death of the righteous, must first live the life of the righteous: and no one passage of holy writ ought to be so interpreted, that it shall contradict, or oppose this fundamental truth. Neither can any
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interpretation of Scripture be admitted, which evidently opposes every principle of religion and morality.

I shall first point out to you, from a consideration of the peculiar circumstances in which our Lord was now placed, that, from his promise to the penitent criminal, we cannot be justified in deferring our repentance to the hour of death. My second object will be, to prove to you, that we cannot defend the same error, from the example of the Penitent himself.

And, in the first place, the words of our Lord cannot be so interpreted, as to justify our delaying our repentance till the hour of death.

When Christ uttered the expression, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise, He was in the lowest stage of His sufferings and humiliation. Three years had He travelled over the country of Judea, proving, by His wonderful miracles, and spiritual teaching, that He was the long-expected Messiah. The Jewish nation had now become so corrupt, that they had lost sight of the spiritual character of the Messiah, as it had been delineated by their prophets. They were looking only for a powerful temporal prince, who should overthrow their oppressors. They saw the miracles of our Lord, and they supposed that He would declare Himself their earthly, and irresistible Sovereign, to lead them to victory, and to subdue the Romans, their temporal enemies. But when they heard, on the contrary, that Christ's kingdom was not of
this world—when they heard Him command them to conquer their hearts within them, instead of their enemies without—when, instead of placing Himself at their head against the Romans, He told them, to render to Caesar the things that be Caesar's, and to God the things that be God's—the changeable multitude, who had received Him but a few days before with loud hosannas of joy, united with the Scribes and Pharisees, and repeatedly clamored for His crucifixion:—and now the time had come when their clamor was regarded. The voices of them, and of the chief priests prevailed. In vain did the Roman governor wash his hands before the multitude, and declare, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. Christ was condemned, and He was crucified, and all ranks, and characters, and descriptions of persons had now followed Him from Jerusalem to Calvary; some few to pity Him, but the greater number to insult Him, in the depth of His agonies. As an impostor, they had accused Him—an an impostor, they had condemned Him—as an impostor, He was now extended on the Cross. Now, therefore, they all gather round Him, to ask our blessed Lord if He still persisted in calling Himself the Messiah. They all still affected to consider Him as a deceiver, and they all were unanimous in demanding one proof that He was not so—the people and the priests, the rulers and the elders,

2 John xviii. 36.
5 Matt. xxii. 21.
all declared that if our Lord would give them that proof that He was the King of Israel, they would still acknowledge Him. The proof they demanded was this—that He should come down from the Cross. It certainly appeared to be a reasonable challenge. It seemed but natural, that, if Christ had the power, He must have had the will also, to relieve His suffering body from the dreadful Cross, from the piercing nails, and all the intolerable anguish of that painful death. The cry, therefore, was universal. The rulers, says St. Luke, derided Him—the soldiers also mocked Him—they who passed by reviled Him, and railed on Him—Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the Cross. The Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the Elders said, If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him. If thou be the Son of God, said the multitude, come down. And, last of all, one of the thieves which were crucified with Him united in the general cry, and insulted Him, If thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself and us. Such was the condition of our Lord, when He was addressed as the Spiritual Messiah of the prophets, in the language of devotion and faith, by His penitent fellow-sufferer on the cross. We shall now see the full meaning of His answer.

If Christ had come down from the cross as the people had demanded, the great sacrifice for the sins of mankind could not have been completed. Christ had descended from heaven, to give His own life a ransom for man; and the sublime system of redemption was not to be set aside by the reproaches, and the clamors, of the Jews. The compliance with the request of the people would have been a miracle, it is true; but other, and as wonderful miracles had been wrought in their presence. They had already seen the creation of food in the hands of thousands in the wilderness—they had seen Lazarus, at the command of Christ, raised from the dead. In addition to all such proofs of His own Messiahship, our Lord well knew, that He was about to accomplish a much greater miracle even than descending from the cross,—the raising of His own body from the dead. All these reasons concurred to prevent our Lord from complying with the request of the people, that He should come down from the cross. Still, however, as the cry was so universal, so unanimous, so repeated—it might have been expected that some notice should be taken of it; and that some proof, or token, should be given by Christ, whether He still persisted in declaring Himself to be the Messiah. It might have been expected, that, even if He did not descend from the cross, He would have granted to His weeping friends, and to a sinful world, some merciful demonstration that though He was despised
and rejected of men; He was still the mighty God, and the prince of peace, upon whom there alike rested, as the prophet had foretold, the salvation of man, and the government of the world.—All this was done in the answer to the penitent thief: Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise. That is, "Though I am now dying in the form of a man, I am the Spiritual Messiah, the promised Saviour, the predicted King of Israel. I am the Lord of the invisible world, into which the departed spirits of men shall go, while their mortal body is left to moulder into dust: and I, the crucified Saviour of Israel, I, pardon your sins, and promise you admission into paradise." Such is the full and proper meaning of our Lord's address to the penitent thief. He spake the words to prove that the claims which He had ever made, were continued to the last; and they were uttered to assert His divinity, when it appeared to be most obscured. It is probable that the people heard our Lord's reply, and understood it, and were silent. They had formerly exclaimed, when Christ had forgiven sins, Who can forgive sins, but God, only? And they were right in their opinion. The Incarnate God of their fathers, of the patriarchs, and of the prophets, was before them, though they confessed Him not. In the lowest state of His agony, He asserted Himself to the

10 Isaiah liii. 3. 11 Ibid. ix. 6. 12 Mark ii. 7.
Jews who insulted Him, to the penitent, to us, and to all mankind for ever, the only Forgiver of sins. He was now overcoming the sharpness of death, and opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Having thus considered the circumstances under which our blessed Lord forgave the penitent upon the cross, I would now inquire if any man can be justified in supposing from these words, that he may be pardoned in the same manner as the dying thief. It would be as rational to expect another crucifixion, another resurrection, or other wonders from heaven. Our Lord and Saviour cannot again be crucified. He will never be again depressed by sufferings and agonies. He will never be again called upon by the clamorous insults of His ungrateful, and rebellious people, to prove His divinity, or to establish the truth of His words. When Christ shall again become manifest to the world, (and every eye shall see Him, and every knee bow down before Him), He shall descend from heaven, surrounded by His holy angels, and in all the glory of His Father. Can you imagine, that, when He thus comes down to execute justice upon all who have preferred a life of evil to a life of obedience, you will be selected from among the number of those who will be condemned for the same wilful sins of which you have been guilty; and that you will be commanded to dwell with Him in paradise, because, when you were about to die, the terrors of the approaching dissolution forced from
you a short and doubtful repentance? Can you believe that Christ will then prove His divinity, by judging the world by the law of Scripture, and making you the exception at the great day of doom; because the penitent thief was pardoned on the cross, under circumstances which can never again recur? Your sound judgment—your better feelings—your knowledge of the Gospel—convince you of the absurdity of the supposition. You must live obediently, if you would die happily; and when you would endeavour to believe otherwise, as an apology for evil, your conscience tells you that you are attempting what is impossible.

The second part of our subject leads us to inquire whether a death-bed repentance can be defended from the example of the dying criminal.

It will appear evident from a brief review of this opinion, that all arguments from this source are likewise unreasonable.

True faith in Christ must be founded upon conviction, and it must lead to repentance, and to holiness. The penitent on the cross saw, and believed in, those proofs which were granted at the time of the crucifixion, to demonstrate that Christ was the Messiah. He beheld the darkness that overspread the land—he remarked the patience, and the meekness, of the suffering Jesus. He had observed, perhaps, the silent mildness, and dignity, which our Lord had displayed in the judgment-hall of Pilate. He may have heard, too, the address of our Lord to the women of Jerusalem on
His way to Calvary. It is probable that he was well acquainted with the expectations of his countrymen respecting the Messiah; and when he saw all these evidences that Christ was not a mere man like other men, then his mind was convinced, and his heart was opened, and immediately he turned to Jesus with the holy and spiritual prayer for the salvation of his soul—*Lord remember me, when Thou, after dying on the cross as a man, shalt come into Thy kingdom.* Do you imagine that, if you had been present at this scene, you would have done as this criminal? Let me entreat you to consider the greatness of his faith at this fearful moment. When the conviction that Christ was the Lord, and King of Israel, began to arise in his mind, how naturally might the objection have presented itself—

"Can this be indeed the Christ—can this pale, and faint, and bleeding form—can this suffering, despised, and crucified Nazarene, be indeed the Saviour, and Redeemer of Israel? Am I to depend for my salvation on this man of sorrows, who is thus acquainted with grief*?" Such would have been the reasoning of thousands; but this penitent reasoned in a different manner. He saw, and he believed—in the moment he believed, he repented—he prayed, and he was pardoned.

And is this, then, the example which is to justify a Christian, who delays his repentance till the hour of death? You now possess in the Holy

*"Isaiah liii. 3."
Scriptures all the evidences which convinced this criminal, and the mercy of God has added to them abundantly. You have more reason to believe as He believed—you acknowledge this—and you profess the same faith as that in which He died. So far there may be some resemblance between Him and you. But what was his example? He prayed immediately. You are convinced, but you do not pray, you do not repent. Your very faith in Christ is made the argument for persevering in evil. You believe that Christ, our Lord, is the only Saviour of man; and while life, and strength, and opportunity, are given you, to prove, by your repentance and obedience, the sincerity of your faith, you resolve to devote yourselves to the service of the world, and to leave to this merciful Saviour, the mere dregs of life, the infirmities of sickness, the pains of death! You say that you believe in the Son of God, yet you refuse to put away the evil which you know condemns you! You tremble, when you think most seriously of the love and mercy of a crucified Saviour; yet you imagine you can meet Him with joy, because He forgave a criminal, whose belief you profess, but whose example you decline to follow!

If this view of the conduct of the repentant criminal be not sufficient to remove the error against which I would warn you, let me further entreat to inquire, if you are not more likely to imitate the impenitent, than the repentant malefactor? As men live, such they too often die.
The impenitent thief prayed, in mockery, to our Lord, that He would deliver his body from the pain of the Cross. The Penitent entreated Him to deliver his soul from destruction, and to receive him into his kingdom. Is it not more probable, that if you were seized, this night, with a dangerous disease, your attention would be directed to the body more than to the soul? Amidst the distraction of the thoughts,—the reflections on the past life,—the dread of the future,—the unavoidable anxiety which engages even the best men, on the circumstances of their friends and kindred—the desire of adding to, or changing the order of your affairs—when the mind too is weak, and when the body is in pain, are you not more likely to call for the physician of the body, than to turn, entirely, and exclusively, to the Saviour of the soul? Is it not more probable too, if you will delay your repentance to the last, that your thoughts would turn in blasphemy to the God whom you had so long neglected—and that your exclamation would be—If thou be the Christ, save me from the sufferings of the body, rather than that you would say — Lord remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom. There is nothing, in short, either in the conduct of our blessed Lord, or in the prayer of the Penitent upon the Cross, which can at all justify the opinion, that it is safe to delay repentance to the last; or, that a death-bed repentance can be acceptable. This passage of Scripture cannot therefore be interpreted as a defence of this
THE PENITENT THIEF.

doctrine. The account of the dying thief is related by one Evangelist only. "One instance only," to use the language of the eloquent Augustine, "of the acceptance of a dying repentance is recorded—one only, that none might despair; and only one, that none might presume."

I therefore conclude the subject, by entreaty you to be assured of the absolute necessity of immediate, earnest, and sincere repentance, while it pleases God to grant you life, and strength, and health, for that purpose. If you have been living in the indulgence of that which you know to be wrong, prove your faith in the Saviour of the world, by putting it away from you. Seek the Lord, while He may be found. There is no safety in the prayers which are uttered in the prospect of eternal misery—there is no dependance on the tears which may be shed, in the terror of death. The present, the present alone, is the day of salvation. The future is known only to God; and, this night thy soul may be required of thee.

14 Isaiah lv. 6.
SERMON XII.

RECONCILIATION OF OPPOSITE OPINIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF REGENERATION.

John iii. 5—7.
Ye must be born again. Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

The subject of the new birth is deserving of our most serious attention. While some professed Christians entirely deny the necessity of any change whatever—others misapprehend the doctrine. Some despise the opinion as nonsense, enthusiasm, or folly—others firmly believe its truth, yet they make themselves wretched by the apprehension that they are not born again. Some are miserable, because they despair of partaking of the influences of the Holy Spirit; others presume, without a right foundation, and mistake confidence of spirit for holiness of life. It cannot, therefore, be deemed unnecessary to discuss a subject of such general interest and importance; and the
conversation of our Lord with Nicodemus appears to enforce the topic with the greatest plainness, and simplicity. We learn, from this conversation, that the miracles of our Lord had awakened the attention of this master in Israel. He, therefore, went to Jesus, to obtain some instruction concerning his mission. Instead of discussing matters of little moment, our Lord replies to his courteous salutation, in the words which I have selected for our present contemplation.

As the inquiry respecting regeneration is very extensive, I shall not stop to consider the sense in which the Jewish ruler understood our Lord's words, nor the causes of his mistake; I shall proceed at once to the general question, and arrange the reflections which are to occupy our time in the following order. We will first consider the necessity, and the nature of that change of heart, which is described by our Lord, under the emblem of the new birth. And, secondly, the time in which that change commences. I think it will appear that there is no real difficulty to prevent us from understanding the nature of regeneration; nor any want of sobriety, in enforcing the truth of Scripture upon this controverted point.

We are first to consider the necessity, and the nature, of that change of heart, which is described by our Lord under the emblem of a new birth.

The reason of the necessity of our being born again is forcibly expressed by our Lord in this passage, That which is born of the flesh is flesh.
that is, the nature with which we are born into this world is fitted for this world alone; and He places, therefore, the necessity of this new birth, upon the foundation of that doctrine, which, of all others, is most offensive to our pride and vanity—the fall, and the corruption of our human nature. None can tell, but he who has studied the powerful language of Scripture upon this point, and has read deeply the depravity of his own heart, and examined carefully the history of mankind in general—none can tell but such a student, the depth and extent of the evil which has been produced by the fall of man. When the Almighty originally created man, he was a perfect and spiritual being. His will was the will of God—his motives were pure—his affections were heavenly—his life was holy—his actions were pleasing to his Creator. When, however, he fell by his disobedience, a mysterious and wonderful change took place. We were once spirit, we now became flesh. All who are born into the world are in the same state. All by nature are born earthly—sensual—devilish. They are earthly, because they are overcome by the love of the present world—their thoughts are earthly—their desires, their cares, their pursuits, their hopes, their fears, begin and end with this earth—its riches, its honors, its pleasures, its novelties, its attractions. Men by nature never think of God, unless it be to murmur at His Providence, and to blaspheme His name.—And as they are earthly, so also are fallen men sensual—that is—they are en-
tirely devoted to the indulgence of their appetites and passions—and they are devilish, inasmuch as they are the willing slaves of malice, and envy, and hatred—and as they are the poor miserable victims of pride, and anger, and revenge. Do not think that I paint the portrait of the fallen man in too odious colours. I represent him, as he is by nature, before the Gospel of God has enlightened him; before the grace of God has affected him; and with such men, the thoughts of the heart are evil, only evil, and that continually. I will not deny that the natural man may be possessed of some benevolent and pleasing qualities, as far as his fellow men are concerned. He may be just, and kind, and affectionate. Experience may give him worldly wisdom, and the desire of peace and comfort may give him decency of manners; but the Scripture describes him, and experience confirms its truth, as totally alienated from God, and only capable of being restored to Him by the influence of a Superior Power.

This necessity, then, will yet further appear, if we consider the nature of the new birth. This may be clearly discovered from the words of our Lord, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

This expression, the kingdom of God, has these three several meanings—the outward and visible church—the inward religion of the heart—and the happiness of the world to come. It first signifies the outward and visible church, which God has established in the world, to prepare His people for
a spiritual condition, both here and hereafter. This kingdom of God consists, therefore, of all those persons, whether they be righteous or unrighteous, good or bad, who have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Scriptures compare this kingdom to a field of corn in which the tares and the wheat were to grow together till the harvest. They compare it to a net which was thrown into the sea, which drew many fish to land, both good and bad, but the good were preserved, and the bad were rejected. Into this kingdom we are born again by the waters of baptism. Except a man be born of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That is, except a man be baptized, he cannot become a member of the visible Church of Christ. Many persons, it is true, belong to the Church of Christ upon earth who will never belong to the Church of Christ in heaven—many are baptized with water, who are never effectually baptized with the Holy Spirit—many partake of the public worship, and join in prayer, and praise, and the sacrament, in the outward and visible Church, who will afterwards fall away from God, and who will never therefore unite with the praises of the blessed, and the communion of the Church triumphant above. Still we must be born again of the waters of baptism, because the Christian is then taken into covenant with God, and he cannot lose his reward if he constantly observe the

1 See Matt. xiii. 30. 2 See Ibid. ver. 48.
means of grace, and obey, at the same time, the influences of the Holy Spirit, which bestows his blessing upon every faithful worshipper who perseveres to the end.

Let us now turn to the second meaning of the expression the kingdom of God. Not only does it denote the outward Church. It signifies that progress in religion, which a wise and sober Christian will always make, who perseveres in the means of grace, and desires to fear God. Outward religion is established for this very purpose, that it may promote inward religion. And as we are born again, and as we continue to live, in that outward Church, by outward ceremonies—so must we be born again, and continue to live in the inward and spiritual Church, by inward and spiritual influences; and our outward religion will profit us nothing, unless it be thus made the instrument of raising us to that spiritual condition, in which we gradually become fit for heaven. I well know the follies, the absurdities, and the spiritual pride, of which many persons have been guilty, who have mistaken their inward fancies for the dictates of the Spirit of God. They have imagined that the kingdom of God was within them, when they had not put away wilful sin, and when they were merely puffed up with foolish conceits, and vain imaginations. But if unwise persons have confounded their own opinions, and inventions, with the influences of the Holy Spirit, are we therefore to deny those influences, when we pray for them on
every Sabbath? Are we to refuse to believe in the
necessity of a change of heart, when the Sabbath,
the Sacraments, and the Scriptures, were granted
for the very purpose of accomplishing that change,
under the blessing of that Higher Power which
ordained them? It is spiritual religion alone, which
conquers the love of the world, and the fear of
death—which makes us to desire that which God
has commanded, and to hate, and to abstain from,
that which God has forbidden. It is spiritual reli-
gion alone which prepares us for the world to
come, and makes us meet to be partakers with the
saints in light, and therefore it is that we must
have spiritual religion, or, in other words, we must
be born again, to enable us to enter into the king-
dom of God—or to become fit for heaven, while
we still live upon earth.

We are now, therefore, brought to the third
meaning of the kingdom of heaven—which is that
state, and that place of happiness, in the invisible
world, from which evil is banished—where sin
shall never enter—where death shall be no more.
Now this future world is so glorious, that it must
be evident to all persons, that we must become
changed in heart, and principle, and practice, from
what we are by nature, before we can be admitted
into heaven. As we are born again by baptism to
be admitted into the outward and visible Church
—as we must be born of the Holy Spirit, to be-
come members of the invisible Church—so must
we be born again by the same Holy Spirit con-
tinuing with us, and abiding with us, in life and in death, to become fit for that kingdom of heaven, which shall begin with us after the death of the body. Is it not evident that a change of heart is necessary to prepare us for the presence of God the Creator—for communion with Christ the Redeemer—and for the society of the spirits of the just made perfect. Unless we become holy in heart and in life, under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, we cannot attain to heaven. We are all moving onwards towards death, and we are all, therefore, commanded to aim at, and to desire the kingdom of heaven; but our strength is feeble, our nature corrupt, our resolutions weak, our hopes faint, and the road is full of difficulty. Is it not evident, then, that strength must be obtained from above—that new hopes—new desires—new motives—new affections must be formed within you? Is it not evident, that, if you find not happiness in worshipping God upon earth, you can find none hereafter in the praises of God in heaven? Is it not evident, that you must not die the victim of the same corrupt nature with which you were born into the world? And that, if you be happy hereafter, in the presence, and in the enjoyment of a holy and merciful God, you must undergo the change which is required by the system of redemption? Is it not evident that the words of Christ are true, You must be born again, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of God, in heaven? Having thus pointed out to you the necessity of
a change of heart, both from the corruption of human nature, and the excellence of the kingdom of God, we proceed to that question, the consideration of which has sometimes been productive of actual misery to many well meaning but corresponding persons, who have changed the blessings of Christianity into sorrow, in the fear that they shall never be saved, because they do not know the exact period in which they were born again. Let us then consider the time at which that change of heart takes place; which is described, in this passage, under the emblem of the new birth.

Two opposite opinions on this point have been proposed to the Church of God, and they have occasioned much painful controversy. The first opinion is that which is found in the book of common Prayer, in the Baptismal Service. It is this,—that our regeneration, though not our sanctification and actual holiness, begins, and takes place at that time, when we are admitted by baptism into covenant with God. This opinion is not only founded upon the declaration of Christ—that we must be born again of water as well as of the Holy Spirit—it is defended by the very arguments which prove the corruption of human nature. For we all acknowledge that children are born in sin, and that they come into this world subject to sickness and to death, before they commit actual sin; because they partake of a corrupt and fallen nature. But what is the meaning of a child being born in sin? It can exercise no reasoning faculties—it can form
no desires—its actions are not sin—its tears are not sin—its helplessness is not sin—the smile with which it begins to know its mother, or to turn its calm and placid countenance to the light is not sin. How then can an infant be sinful? What can be the meaning of the expression, *It is born in sin*? The meaning is this—as soon as the dormant faculties and dispositions of the infant begin to develop themselves, the child will as assuredly, by its own nature, do those things which are contrary to the will of God—as a plant, or a tree, by its own nature will produce blossoms in the spring, and fruit in the autumn. But, if a child can be esteemed sinful without actual wickedness, a child may be esteemed holy without actual righteousness: and therefore it is that the words of Christ have induced the Church of God to believe, that as an unsinning infant is born in sin, from the womb of the mother—the same infant may be born from above, by the waters of baptism. If the spirit of evil can possess the mind of an infant before it actually commits sin—so also may the Spirit of God possess the mind of an infant, before it actually manifests righteousness—it is no more unreasonable to impute good to an unconscious infant, than it is to impute evil; and therefore the new birth may commence with the pouring out of the waters of baptism.

Such is one of the two divisions of opinion to which I have referred. The other is this—that the new birth does not commence at the baptism
of an infant, but at some period in after life; when the Almighty, by the influence of the Spirit, suddenly impresses the mind with the conviction of guilt, and the necessity of repentance. From the moment in which this impression takes place, the mind assumes a new character—the man becomes entirely changed—he perseveres in the new life of holiness—he lives in the fear of God, and he dies in the well-founded hope of glory.

I have expressed both these opinions, concerning the time when the new birth commences, in the strongest terms, that I may not appear to avoid any difficulty connected with the subject. Let us now observe the manner in which both these opinions, so apparently opposite to each other, may be shewn to agree.

With respect to the first, it will be acknowledged that many persons pass through life, who appear, to use the scriptural expression, to be sanctified from the womb. No sooner are they able to join their infant hands together, than they are taught by their Christian parents to lift them up in prayer to the God of their mercies. No sooner can their infant tongues lisp the syllables of their language, than they are taught to offer the first fruits of their lips at the altar of God. They are trained up in a Christian life. When their reason begins to dawn, they are instructed in the truth of religion, and in the necessity of holiness. At the
proper age they are brought to the Holy Sacrament. They know, and they confess, their unworthiness—they acknowledge their sins before God—but they are preserved from scandalous offences, and they return thanks to God alone for the mercy and grace which protects them. When the hour of their death arrives, they submit to the sentence of our common doom, with hope in the same mercy which led them through life, and with resignation to the will of God. Such persons, and I have drawn the portrait of the great majority of real Christians, seldom experience any violent emotions, any deep feelings, and sudden conversion. Yet are we to suppose, or can we suppose, that persons, who thus live and thus die, are banished from the presence of God, and condemned to everlasting sorrow? They were admitted into the outward Church,—the visible kingdom of God—then the spiritual kingdom of God was gradually formed within them, by the silent, secret, imperceptible influences of the Holy Spirit. Though they do not remember the time of any sudden conversion—though they have no assurance of the certainty of their salvation—yet they prove that they are born again by their humble hope, by their inward repentance, by their unfeigned faith: and I will not waste your time by endeavouring to overthrow those fearful reasonings, which would teach us, that such persons are not regenerated—or, that believers in the atonement of Christ, who thus prove themselves to be the true members of
the Church of God upon earth, shall be rejected at the last from the kingdom of God in heaven, because they have not some feelings, and experiences, which are granted to others; while they are possessed of true faith, accompanied with holiness of life.

With respect to the second opinion—that the commencement of the new birth, or of the change of heart which is intended by this term, must begin with some sudden impression upon the mind—it is certain, that many persons, for successive years together have led very profligate and scandalous lives; and then some providential circumstance occurs, which deeply, and permanently impresses them, and they never again relapse into their former habits—and it cannot be denied that many persons are suddenly converted to God. And now we see the manner in which both these opinions are united. The great absurdity has been, that men have imagined that the Almighty must be limited to one or other of these means of changing the heart of man—whereas the truth is—that the usual mode in which the mercy of God changes the heart of man, unites both of the ways to which I have alluded. In the far greater majority of cases—the change of heart which the Gospel requires is gradually, and slowly, but certainly, and imperceptibly effected by the union of the means of grace, with various impressions upon the mind; arising from the providential circumstances of life. I appeal to the inward experience
of every sober minded, and sincere Christian, for the truth of my assertion. I affirm, that, in general, God slowly changes the heart, by uniting the means of grace with various impressions upon the mind. Look back to your very childhood. When you began to know evil, did you not begin to know good? Did not your Christian education produce this effect upon you; that there has been a perpetual contest between good and evil within you, from the earliest time, when you could think, speak, or reason? Some of you attended to the reproofs of conscience, when you were very young—others among you endeavoured to stifle, and repress them, but you could not do so. The whispers of the Holy Spirit are louder than the thunders of Sinai. You attended the Church. You read the Scriptures. You came to the Sacrament. Your good impressions were deepened. Your evil impressions were lessened; even though they were not extinguished. During the whole of this time, the Spirit of God was with you, sometimes grieved, and resisted; sometimes obeyed, and followed. Then came the providential events of life. Do you deny the doctrine of the sudden influences of the Holy Spirit, and believe in the means of grace only? Every Christian who has lived but a few years in the world, experiences many, very many deep, serious, and sudden impressions, arising from the dispensations of Providence, which he seldom, or never forgets; and the indescribable solemnity of the remembrance of which often acts upon us,
like a sudden conversion. We all, (for instance) we all weep by the side of the grave. Parents, friends, children, are taken from us; and we are all brought at some period, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to look up to God, in our grief, as the only source of consolation. We all have our sorrows to bring us to God. We all have our approaches to the valley of the shadow of death; to remind us of Him who conquered death. We all have our hours of serious reflection, when the language of Scripture was forcibly impressed upon us, and appealed to us, and entreated us, with all the eloquence of truth, to persevere in the ways of holiness. And thus it is, that the Holy Spirit acts upon the heart, till the heart is gradually, and slowly changed.—The means of grace, and the events of Providence, are united together in mercy to accomplish our spiritual good; and all the instruction we have received, and all the circumstances of life, which occasion religious impressions, are parts of that wonderful scheme of Providence, which takes charge of us, and of every individual in the great family of God; and which so provides every thing which is necessary to the salvation of every Christian, that no son, and no daughter of the Lord God Almighty, shall ever perish for the want of the assistance and influences of the Holy Spirit of God. God is always with us, to impress our minds—and to convert and change the heart. More could not be done for the vineyard of any one immortal soul, than God has already done.
If an angel from heaven could open the roof above us —if the spirits of the dead could appear from beneath us, to impress our minds, and thus to produce our conversion, they could only relate the truths we already know. God has done all, and Christ has done all, and the Holy Spirit has done all, which is necessary to persuade, to influence, to govern without compelling, the human mind. Now, even now, are we the members of the kingdom of God upon earth; and nothing but our wilful irreligion, nothing but indescribable apostacy, can prevent us from becoming the members of the kingdom of His happiness hereafter.

I conclude by addressing the anxious, the desponding, the inquisitive, or the presumptuous Christian, who has been accustomed to inquire, when he reads the declaration of our Lord—Ye must be born again—How shall I know whether I am born again? How shall I know whether the kingdom of God is within me, and whether I may hope for salvation?

We answer—Do not expect that God will do more for you than He has done for other Christians. He has given to your brethren the Holy Scriptures—the public worship—the command of private prayer—the Sacrament—and the Sabbath—and, above all, He gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him—that is, He gives grace upon grace, to those who seek for it. If these are sufficient by God's blessing, to convert your brethren, are they not sufficient for you? Do not expect that you
will ever attain to perfection; for the whole of life is a state of trial, and that trial consists in the possibility of sin. Do not imagine that you are not born again because you do not become perfect. Be not anxious to know the time of your conversion. Put aside all doubts and fears, all curious imaginations, and all vain speculations—and instead of perplexing yourselves with inquiries, and questions, whether you are born again, reason thus with yourself. The Spirit of God is within me, and around me—it knows my thoughts, it observes my ways—it is near me—but I see it not—it tells me what is true, though I know not the manner of its influence. Do I then obey the warning voice which speaks to me? Am I practising the duties which God has commanded? If there be any evil thing which the laws of my country do not punish, and which my companions encourage and approve, but which God has forbidden, do I put away that evil thing, because Christ has died for me, and the Spirit of God warns me? Do I permit my pride, my interest, or my vanity, to lead me into any wilful sin? Do I love good more than evil? Do I place my only hope of salvation upon the merits and death of the Blessed Son of God? Do I, for His sake, obey the laws of my Creator? Do I offer up my prayer that the Holy Spirit of God may so guide me with His counsel through life, that, after the troubles of this pilgrimage, I may be received into glory? If you can answer these questions, as every one
who is moved by the blessed Spirit of God is enabled to answer them, then the kingdom of God has begun within you—then your heart is daily changing more and more; and He who has begun that good work, will assuredly carry it on to the end. God has not revealed His religion to make us unhappy, or perplexed, or miserable, or desponding. Fear not then little flock, *it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*.  
Confide, anxious and inquiring believer, in the promises of the God of Christianity. He who has placed you in His Church upon earth, and enabled you to begin to conquer the power of evil—even He desires your salvation, and your happiness. He will guide you safely through the valley of the shadow of death, and reward you with the inheritance of the sons of God. Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of God; and persevere with humility, and faith, and prayer.

⁴ Luke xii. 32.
SERMON XIII.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

Acts xxii. 6, 7.

And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me—Saul—Saul—why persecutest thou me? And I answered, who art thou, Lord?—And He said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

The conversion of St. Paul has always been justly considered as one of the most important events recorded in the New Testament. It is important in these two respects;—it affords us one of the most unanswerable proofs of the truth and certainty of the Christian religion; and it is the most remarkable instance of that suddenness of conversion, which many persons declare to be essential to our future salvation.

It affords us an unanswerable proof of the truth of our religion, because the character of St. Paul, the circumstances of his conversion, his former conduct as a persecutor, and his after conduct as a Christian, all unite to prove, that there could be
no reason for his change, but that which is here recorded. We cannot find, we cannot imagine, any other motive for his becoming a Christian but this—that he saw the light, from heaven, at midday, and that he beheld the crucified Saviour, and heard his words. I shall not dwell long upon this point, but it is too worthy of notice to be passed over altogether; and it is useful, especially for young persons, to consider sometimes the evidences for the truth of Christianity*.

St. Paul, then, from being a violent persecutor of the Christian religion, suddenly changed his faith, and became an open defender of the religion which he had hitherto opposed. Now this change must have been sincere, as the New Testament declares it to have been, or else St. Paul must have been one of these two characters—He must have been a deceiver, or he must have been deceived. He could not be a deceiver, for he could have had no possible motive for practising a fraud. He gave, on the contrary, every proof in his power that he was sincere. He possessed great authority, reputation, and influence, among the Jews; and he resigned them all to join himself to the persecuted, despised, and contemptible followers of a crucified criminal. He resigned every thing which could make life valuable, in a worldly point of view, to become poor, hated, persecuted, and insulted, with the lowest and most detested of his people—and as he was not a deceiver, so neither was he likely

* Appendix, Note 10.
to have been deceived.—Those who are deceived in religious matters, are either deceived by their own imaginations, or by the frauds of others. There is no reason whatever to suppose that he was misled by his own imagination, for the appearance which converted him took place in the open day, at noon, in the presence of the whole band of soldiers who were going with him to Damascus—who all saw the light, and heard the voice, though some of them did not understand it, and who all observed the effects of the miracle upon St. Paul—that he was deprived of sight for three days. If it had been in the slumbers of the night, there might have been some foundation for the opinion, that he was deceived by his own imagination, or that some person was endeavouring to deceive him; but the appearance was at noon, at mid-day, and there could be no deception, and no fraud.—Neither was St. Paul one of those persons who were likely to be deceived. He was not an ignorant, nor a superstitious, nor a melancholy, nor a credulous man. He was a man of the best education, of deep learning, and of sound judgment. Neither is it possible that he could have been deceived. The followers of Christ were a scattered and timid body, and their leaders, the poor and persecuted fishermen of Galilee, even if they had endeavoured to deceive him, could not have found the means of doing so; and consequently, he was not liable to be deceived, either by his own fancies, or by the arts of others.—There
remains, therefore, but one conclusion, and that is, that St. Paul was undoubtedly converted by the appearance of Our Lord from heaven, who declared that he was the Christ of the New Testament—and therefore our religion, which its former persecutor embraced, is true—and all things which the Scriptures reveal to us are to be received by us with faith and reverence, as the message of the invisible and merciful God to the accountable and immortal soul.

Such is the first important and valuable conclusion, which we may derive from the narrative of the conversion of St. Paul—that it is an unanswerable proof of the truth and certainty of the Christian religion. The next, and the point which we are now more particularly to consider is, that it is the most remarkable instance of that suddenness of conversion, which many persons declare to be essential to future salvation.

An opinion has been entertained that none can be saved, hereafter, unless, like St. Paul, they can mention the precise day, and hour, in which they were converted—and the peculiar circumstances, likewise, under which that conversion took place. The consequence of this opinion is, that while some profess to be able to relate the time, and the manner, in which God appealed to them—there are many others, who believe firmly in the religion of the New Testament, who humbly trust in God, and who hope for salvation through the atonement of the same Saviour, who appeared from
heaven to St. Paul—many of these persons are led to believe that all this is in vain, unless they are favoured with some peculiar impressions, which, they hear, have been granted to their friends, or neighbours—and because they cannot remember that similar impressions have been made upon their own minds, they are unhappy and miserable. Let us now examine into the foundations of this opinion.

The doctrine of conversion is one of the very easiest of all, if we consider the plain facts of Scripture: the difficulty is wholly owing to the partial views of some who deny it, and of others who misinterpret it. I shall endeavour, therefore, to explain to you the whole system of Scripture upon this subject—and with this view, I shall point out to you, the necessity of conversion; the manner of conversion, when we will more fully consider the opinion to which I have alluded; and thirdly, the evidences by which every man may learn, whether he is among the number of those who are converted to God.

Our first consideration is to be—the necessity of conversion.

Because the doctrine has been perverted, many have proceeded to the opposite extreme, and have altogether denied the necessity of conversion. This error must have originated from some misapprehension of the meaning of the word "conversion." It is certain, that in the present day we do not require to be converted from a state of heathenism to a state
of Christianity—neither can we be converted, as St. Paul was, from being Jews, to being Christians; and as we are educated in the Christian faith, we cannot be said to be converted from ignorance to knowledge; because our knowledge of religion commences with the dawn of reason. But there is a sense in which we may justly affirm that it is absolutely necessary we should be converted—and that is, we must be converted from the state of nature in which we are born, to that better state in which we are fit to die. The undoubted, though humiliating, doctrine of the Scripture is this—that every man is born into this world with a nature which is corrupt and degenerate. He who has not known the influences of that holy religion, which elevates the mind of man from earth to heaven; whether he be a heathen, or a nominal Christian, is represented, in Scripture, as being dead in sin—unfit for heaven—unable and unwilling to obtain a knowledge of the Almighty—under the power and dominion of the mere animal nature—governed by his senses, his appetites, and his passions—regarding the body, and negligent of the soul—preferring visible and temporal things, to those which are invisible and eternal—desiring only wealth, honours, pleasures, and outward comfort, and thoughtless of God, of immortality, of the Saviour of the world, and of the happiness of heaven. Such is the state of man, by nature; such is the state of man, who is uninfluenced by Christian principles;
and the change which takes place in such a man, by which he becomes fit for heaven—governed by a spiritual power—regarding the soul as well as the body—preferring the invisible to the visible—heedful of God, of immortality, of the Saviour, and of heaven—this change is justly called, conversion—and when we remember that man is created that he may live for ever, and that the world in which he is designed to live for ever is different from this, and that he cannot be happy in that world unless he is thus changed; then we begin to perceive the absolute necessity of the change to which I am alluding. To prove to us, indeed, the necessity of such a change as this, and in order to accomplish such a change—a change from the earthly to the heavenly—from the worldly to the spiritual—from the power of Satan, to the obedience of God—to prove the necessity of such a change, the whole magnificent system of revelation has been made known to us. For this, the Redeemer was promised—for this, the Scripture was written—for this, the Holy Spirit was imparted—for this, the blue heaven above and around us was opened, that the crucified and risen Saviour might appear to St. Paul—for this, the mysteries, the precepts, the threatenings, the discoveries, the warnings, and the wonders of the Bible were communicated, that the mind of rational and accountable men might be impressed—and that the most insensible among us may be convinced, that religion is a serious, and solemn concern—that a happy immortality is an invaluable bless-
ing, and that the salvation of the soul can only be obtained by our being converted from the state of nature in which we are born, to that state of superiority in which we are fit to die, and to appear before God. This, and this alone, is the one object of Revelation, to raise us from earth to heaven—and from a state of evil to a state of good—and conversion therefore is necessary to render us acceptable to God, both here and hereafter.

We are now brought to the second part of our inquiry. The manner of conversion, or the means by which this conversion is to be effected.

If we submit to be guided by the Scriptures alone in this very interesting subject, we shall find this remarkable fact—that no two persons are there said to have been converted in the same manner—but that the means of conversion are different with different individuals. If God had always used only one way to convert mankind, then the opinion might be correct, that all men were to be converted in that way only. If the conversion of St. Paul had been the only instance recorded in Scripture, we should then be justified in asserting, that every Christian ought to be converted in the same mode in which this apostle was converted—and that every Christian ought to know also, the day, and hour, and peculiar circumstances of his conversion; but on referring to the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, we find that others were converted in a different way. Some we read were converted by the preaching of
the apostles—and the apostles preached often to the people, many of whom first rejected their message, though they afterwards received it, some at one period, and some at another. Some were converted by the first, others by the second, or third, or some subsequent address of their instructors. Some, again, were converted by observing the miracles which attended the preaching of the apostles. Others, we are told, were converted by searching the Scriptures daily, to see if the things which were preached were true. Now the inference to which I would beg your attention from these declarations of the Scriptures is this—if St. Paul was converted in one manner, and if others in his day were also converted in another manner, why should you suppose it to be necessary that you should be converted in that precise mode in which St. Paul was converted, and not in some of those ways, by which many were converted in the days of St. Paul? Why should you suppose that you must be able to tell the exact day, and hour, and circumstance, in which your conversion took place; rather than be able to relate the manner in which you were accustomed to listen to the preachers of truth, and to read the Scriptures of truth, till you thus became gradually impressed with the conviction of the necessity of conversion? Do you believe there is one person present whose conversion is not as much desired by the Almighty, as the conversion of St. Paul, or any of the apostles? The salvation of your souls is as precious before
the heart-searching God, as the salvation of any of those whose names are recorded in the books of the Old or New Testament. God, therefore, grants to you, as He did to the hearers of the apostles, the same sufficient means of conversion, to accomplish this great object. He uses, I say, the same sufficient means, and these are—the continued influences of His Holy Spirit upon the preaching of the Gospel—upon your attentive study of Scripture—upon the outward means of grace, the Sabbath, the Sacraments, the death of your friends, the sickness of your own body—and upon all the events of His Providence. The powerful influences of His Holy Spirit, attend all these, and appeal to you in all, sometimes by bringing solemn subjects to your remembrance in a sudden, a wonderful, and powerful manner, and by remaining with you at all times, as a persuading, and convincing friend. These, these were the means by which God converted thousands and tens of thousands, in the days of St. Paul, and till the present day. These are the means by which the same God appeals to you. He desired their salvation. He desires yours. He grants the same events to you, and the same holy influences to you, which He granted to them; and if you are not converted, the reason is—not that God has not granted you the means of conversion, but that you do not, and will not attend to them. Let me ask you, as in the presence of God—when two men hear the same address from the pulpit, assur-
ing them of the necessity, the absolute necessity of conversion—and one is entirely regardless of the truth, and goes away, and ridicules, and despises it—and the other is deeply impressed with the conviction of the importance of salvation—and repents, and becomes changed—do you imagine that God desires the salvation of one more than of the other—or that He grants the Holy Spirit to one more than to the other? No! the wickedness of man proceeds from himself—and the cause of the difference is, that the same Holy Spirit is offered to both, but one rejects it, the other submits to it. Never be guilty of the hypocrisy of charging your wickedness upon God. He, the merciful God, desires the salvation of you all. He gives power to you all—He invites all—He makes the same promise of salvation to all—and He grants the means of conversion to all. If you will receive the grace of God, more and more grace shall be added to you to confirm your faith, and to change the heart. If you will not receive the grace of God, you must die in your sins. No man can perish for ever, but by his own continued, and wilful sin—and he who charges God, either with his wickedness now, or his condemnation hereafter, upon the supposition that God has not granted him sufficient of the assistance of His Spirit, and of the means of conversion, is guilty of the foulest ingratitude to his Maker. He is equally guilty of hypocrisy, and blasphemy.

Our last consideration was to be—what are the
EVIDENCES of conversion; by which the humble Christian may learn whether he is among the number which are converted to God.

I have represented conversion to be the gradual change from the state, in which we are not under the influence of Christianity, to that state which Christianity is given to accomplish. Now this change may be known by these evidences—first, by the knowledge of truth, and then by the conviction of the necessity of repentance, and faith in God. When the heart is thus impressed, there will be sorrow—deep, and inward sorrow, that you have offended a merciful Saviour, and an all-seeing Judge. If your sorrow be sincere, you will begin to put away from your thoughts, your motives, and your conduct, those actions which you believe to offend God, and to be forbidden by Him. Above all things, you will begin to pray. You will endeavour to please God more and more, and to hope, and to trust in His mercy, through the wonderful redemption by His Holy Son. When your repentance has thus led you to remove evil, to believe, and to hope, then there will arise within the heart, peace of mind, love to God, new apprehensions, and a new understanding of those sublime, and lofty truths, which were formerly known by the head, but which had never before influenced the heart. The Christian will now have new objects, new purposes, and new affections. He loves God, when before he only loved the world—he fears God: before he only feared losses,
sufferings, and afflictions. He mourns that he is not a better Christian, whereas he once mourned for worldly things alone—and so does the Christian go on improving, and rejoicing in the mercy of God, till the day of his death arrive—and every man by examining his own heart may tell if his conversion is begun. Let me beg you to observe, I do not say that it is necessary that all the evidences of conversion which I have mentioned, should meet in one person. I have represented the usual progress by which a man gradually becomes changed. But any one of these evidences may convince you that the change has begun. If you have begun to repent, you are converted—if you have begun to seek the Lord while He may be found, the influence of the Holy Spirit is upon you—if your only hope of salvation is placed upon the atonement of Christ, and you desire on account of that faith to put away evil, your conversion has begun. He will not quench the smoking flax—nor break the bruised reed—for our religion is a religion of comfort—and the least beginning of repentance is known, and accepted. When the prodigal was yet a long way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and met him. True it is, you will be more happy in proportion as you abound in love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the Spirit; but you are converted, if the divine life has begun—and He who has begun the good work will continue it to the day of death, and to the beginning of your immortality—unless you
wilfully turn away from Him who speaketh from heaven.

Thus have we examined the subject which rightly occupies a more than ordinary share of the attention of a Christian. I have shewn you the necessity of conversion—that we must repent and turn to God, or we must die as the heathen without any hope, or any part in the covenant of redemption.—I have shewn you the manner of conversion, that it is by the power of the Almighty attending the means of grace, and in some way, which may be different with different individuals, impressing the heart.—I have shewn you the evidences of conversion, by which every man may know his state before God, and learn whether his conversion has begun, though he cannot tell the day nor the hour in which he was converted.—Some among you are beginning to be converted. Others have made some progress in their spiritual change. Some of you understand the blessings of peace of mind, and well-founded certainty, and a full assurance of faith, and hope—while others are totally unconcerned, and have neither sorrow for sin, nor resolutions of future good. God, who reads the heart, knows well the state of all, and your own hearts can tell you what that merciful God observes. If your conversion has begun, persevere with patience and faith, to the end. Life, with the longest liver, will be soon over—and great will be the happiness, and infinite the glory, of the Christian who dies in the Lord. If your
conversion has not begun—if you are regardless of these things—study, I beseech you, the evidences of Christianity. Look at the example of St. Paul—examine the truth for yourselves—let not the question of wickedness or holiness, of a miserable death, or a peaceful death, of heaven, or hell, of receiving Christ, or rejecting Christ—let not such questions, I say, be left to chance, or to ignorance. Religion is all, or it is nothing—it is deserving our deepest consideration, for the soul never dies, and life is the only time of trial. Endless is the misery, and endless the happiness, which depends upon your rejecting, or embracing, the Gospel of a dying Saviour—and the warnings of the Holy Spirit. Return, then, return to a merciful God. Repent, and iniquity shall not be your ruin. Accept the invitations of the Gospel. Be converted, and live. Be anxious only that your heart be changed. Pray that you may avoid the fate of those who know God, and believe rightly, yet live and die in misery and sin. Pray to God that you improve in your Christian knowledge, and Christian practice—till your conversion be completed, and you receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.
SERMON XIV.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST—CHRIST THE GOVERNOR OF THE WORLD AND OF THE CHURCH.

[Preached at Northallerton, on Christmas Day, 1828.]

Isaiah ix. 6.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

We commemorate this morning that great event in the history of mankind, the birth of our Saviour and Redeemer.

My design, on the present occasion, is to explain to you the extent and the nature of the government of Christ, and to point out to you the interest which we all have in the wonderful system of redemption which was on this day more completely developed to the world.—And the subject is worthy of our attention. For we do not commemorate any inferior event. Life and death, judgment and eternity, infinite happiness or infinite misery, are involved in the question whether
we be the friends, or the enemies of Christ—whether we are the subjects of his kingdom, or whether we are rebels against his authority. For see how short is life, and how certain is death! and see, too, of how little consequence are all the things which we deem most valuable, when we come to die! I appeal to the most aged person who is present: I appeal to those, if there be any such here, who have lived beyond the age which is usually assigned to man, and who have passed eighty, or ninety, or more years upon earth, even if, during the whole of that time, they have possessed more of the comforts and enjoyments than are usual.—I appeal to them whether the words of Scripture are not demonstrated, by their experience, to be true—whether all is not vanity and vexation of spirit\(^1\)—whether they would not be most miserable, in the infirmities of declining years, and the sorrows of weakness and decay, if they had not a good hope of another, and a better life? The belief that we shall live again, and that, when we do live again, we shall be partakers of a more substantial and permanent happiness than any which this world can give, is the only true source of solid comfort, and pure peace of mind, to the young and to the old.—But where shall we find the certainty of this hope? Where shall we meet with the proof and demonstration that there is another life, and that the soul of man is certainly created to be im-

\(^1\) Eccles. i. 14.
mortal in its duration, and to be made happy in its immortality? Human reason cannot assure us. Human reason tells us nothing which is satisfactory upon the subject. Reason is governed by the evidence of the senses alone; and they inform us that man lives a certain number of years upon earth, and then becomes the companion of darkness and the worm—further than this reason cannot go—and with respect to things invisible and eternal, nothing is more ignorant than human reason. No condition, indeed, could be more miserable, and more hopeless than that of the human race, for that event had not taken place which we this day commemorate,—the birth of that Being who is described to us in this passage of Scripture, by every name, and by every character, which can affect, or interest the human heart. Whatever be our wants, or our ignorance,—whatever be our fears, or our sorrows,—whatever be our afflictions, or our sins—the birth of Christ is an earnest, a token, and a proof, that there is pardon for every sin, remedy for every sorrow, comfort under every affliction, conquest over the terrors of death, and a happy world of glory where that Saviour now liveth, to receive the spirits for whom He has died.

The only difficulty in treating upon the subject of this day, especially if we endeavour to review the whole system of the government of God, is to know what part to select—where we shall begin, and where we shall end. For every thing which
is most deeply interesting to us as immortal, and rational men, is now laid before us. Unto us a child is born, the child Jesus—the long promised Redeemer. Shall we dwell on the mysteries of His birth?—and relate how the Virgin conceived and brought forth the child who had no sin, that He might be qualified to deliver those who were born in sin—and corrupt even from the womb? Shall we dwell on the fulfilment of prophecy—or the star which directed the shepherds—or the chorus of angels which appeared to celebrate the union of earth and heaven—when they sang glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men? Even here we might expatiate at great length.—Unto us a son is given. Shall we endeavour to shew how He was the Son of God, and yet how He was the son of man? Shall we dwell on the power by which He acted as God in the forgiveness of the sins of man, or shall we dwell on the mercy by which He willingly submitted to suffer, and to die? Should we select any one of the peculiar characters by which our Saviour is described, we should find no less both of interest and of delight.—Are we ignorant of God, of salvation, and of truth? The Counsellor is now born, who shall guide us through the perplexities of the way, and direct us to happiness, and heaven.—Are we guilty? He is the mighty God to pardon.—Are we unhappy? He is the Prince of Peace.—Do we tremble at the prospect of death? He is the Father of everlasting life, and the promise of life, of that life
is granted to all. So that this passage of the prophet is the sum and substance of all which the Bible has imparted to the world—and that man is happy, and that man alone, who can apply this passage of the Scripture to himself, and commemorate the birth of Christ, by making His religion personal, and by being thus enabled to say—“For me, and for my salvation, Christ the Saviour, the divine Child, the Son of God, was given. I will call His name Wonderful, for I have disct•vered the mystery of that love which pardons my sin, and which shall bring me to God. I will call Him Counsellor, for He shall guide me with his counsel, and after that He shall receive me to glory. Christ shall be to me the mighty God; for I will pray to Him with the dying martyr, when my heart and my flesh shall fail, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. He shall be my Father and my friend for ever. He shall be the Prince of my soul, to whom, alone, whether living or dying, I will look for pardon and for peace.” Happy I say is the man who thus applies to himself the language of this passage—and who celebrates the birth of Christ, by increasing the happiness of the heart within, while he strengthens his faith, and improves in all the life of a Christian.

Such are some few of the more general remarks which are suggested to us by this beautiful and

\[^2\text{Psal. lxxiii. 24.} \quad ^3\text{Acts vii. 59.}\]
comprehensive passage. I shall now, however, turn from these, to direct your attention to that part which informs us of the remarkable fact, which is indeed repeatedly referred to in other passages of Scripture—that God the Father Almighty has committed—to the Child who was this day born—to the Son who was this day given—the government over the things which He has created. In other parts of Scripture we read that, *Christ was before all things, and by Him all things consist*⁴; and in this passage we read, *the government shall be upon His shoulder.* I shall first endeavour to shew you what is the proper meaning of these expressions, and then shew you the manner in which that government has been, and still is, borne, by the Redeemer of mankind, *the mighty God, the Prince of Peace.* The subject will speak peace and happiness to us all; for the more fully we understand the nature of the kingdom of Christ, the more abundantly shall we have reason to rejoice.

We shall comprehend the meaning of the Prophet more clearly, if we consider the subject of which he was speaking. He was describing the state of misery and ignorance into which Israel had fallen, and he assures the people that a Deliverer should arise, who should preserve them from their temporal calamity and danger. From this subject he proceeds, as indeed was usual among the prophets, to allude to their spiritual condition.

⁴ Col. i. 17.
He describes the ignorance and the misery to which evil had reduced the world, and then he breaks out into the animated language we have been considering, and prophesies the birth of a Deliverer who should save mankind. *The government*, therefore, which was to *rest upon the shoulder* of Christ, denotes the redemption of the human race from the consequences of the fall of man; and it includes, also, the providential government of the whole world, in order that this redemption may be accomplished. And here a new scene opens upon us. If we would understand the system of redemption—the extent of the government of Christ, and the rank which we ourselves hold in the great universe of God—we must raise our thoughts above this lower world, and, guided by the Scriptures of truth, enter into the counsels of eternity, and behold the Son of God, not merely as the Child who was born, and the Son who was given—but as the Wonderful, the Counsellor, who existed before the world was formed, and who, from all eternity, undertook the salvation of man. God created man in his own image: man fell from his allegiance, and death and misery entered the world, because of that fall. But man did not fall away through any inward corruption of his nature, for God created him upright—but by the temptations of an evil and powerful spirit. We are too much accustomed to speak of ourselves, and to speak of God, as if there were no other beings in the world than God and ourselves;
but the Scriptures assure us, that the universe does abound with other immortal and accountable beings, higher in the scale of intelligence than ourselves. It tells us also that some of these beings are good, and some are evil; and the evil beings first led mankind into sin, and the good beings rejoice to see man delivered from evil; for we are expressly assured that they desire to look into the things of the Gospel.—And now we shall see the object of redemption.—When man fell, the Almighty might either have destroyed the man, whom He had created—or He might have permitted him to live, though without hope of future happiness. If God had destroyed man, then His justice had prevailed above His mercy;—if He had pardoned him without punishment, then His mercy had prevailed over justice. Millions of angels, and of spirits, were the spectators of the actions of the Almighty; and a solemn lesson was now to be given to the whole tribes of good and evil angels, of the mercy, or of the justice of God. God is a just God, and he is also a merciful God—and the spirits of the invisible world were now to become the witnesses of the manner in which the justice of God was to prevail over His mercy—or in which the mercy of God was to prevail over His justice—or they were to become the witnesses of the manner in which both were to be reconciled. The system of redemption, which was planned in

1 Peter i. 12.
the councils of eternity, is nothing more than the reconciling of the mercy and the justice of God—Christ, the Son of the Father, willingly consented to bear the punishment which the fall of man demanded, and thus the mercy of God can be granted to the fallen race of man—the justice of God is reconciled with the mercy of God, and the innumerable tribes of good and evil spirits now perceive that an atonement is provided for man—the law of God is satisfied—and yet their obedience must be continued to the utmost. Such is the plan of the redemption of the human race, which the Son of God was this day born into the world to accomplish. It is the system which connects this world with another—which unites the visible world with the invisible—which unites the spirits of men with other spirits, which will only be visible to us on the death of the body. It is a system which begins in eternity, and which ends in eternity—and which includes the short period of the existence of this world as a portion of its duration. And though this doctrine of redemption be foolishness to the infidel, or to the ignorant, yet nothing in fact is more sublime, or more rational,—than to view the fallen race of man, not as a portion of the universe of God, unconnected with the other portions of His universe—but to view mankind as a part of that great family, which comprises millions of other spirits—which is infinite in its extent, and which shall be endless in its duration—and of which Christ is the Lord, the Head, the Judge. And this
Christ is more peculiarly the friend of mankind, for man was the poor, the guilty, the friendless, and the fallen being, for whom there had been no Saviour, if the Son of God had not become so—for whom there had been no deliverer, if His Almighty arm had not brought salvation. God created man, that man might be happy. Evil spirits endeavoured to destroy that happiness. Christ is the Saviour to restore man to happiness—to overthrow the work of evil spirits—and to reconcile man to God: and this is the system of redemption—this is the government which is placed upon His shoulder; and all the prophets rejoiced to see the day, when Christ should at length be born. And unto us the child is born, unto us the Son is given.

Such is the proper meaning of the government of Christ, which we celebrate as the earnest of our future salvation. I am now to shew you the manner in which that government ever has been, and still is, borne by the Redeemer of the world, who is at once the mighty God, and the Prince of peace.

Because the Son of God has undertaken the redemption of mankind, the government of the world is uniformly represented in the Scriptures as being given to Christ, that He may accomplish this great work of salvation. Nothing is exempted from the dominion of Christ. Do we look to the good and evil spirits of whom I have spoken? Angels veil their faces before Him—thrones, and principalities, and powers, in heavenly places, fall down before
Him, and acknowledge Him to be the Lord! And if the power of the evil spirits has not yet been utterly overthrown, we know that they also shall be bound in chains of darkness, and be openly and publicly condemned in that great day, when the Child who was born, and the Son who was given, shall sit on the clouds of glory; and when that morning of our immortality shall commence, when we shall understand the mysteries of the continuance of evil—and all the government of God.

If we look to the manner in which the government of this world is laid upon Christ, I acknowledge that we must wait with patience and humility. Evil is still suffered to prevail; and darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. Yet, even here, the Christian can trace the government of God. As all the prophecies of the Old Testament, which seemed to be so mysterious, were every one accomplished in the fulness of time—so shall it be also with those prophecies of the New Testament, which assure us, that whatever be the mysteries which attend the plans of Providence—yet the kingdom of Christ shall prevail—the Gospel shall conquer—good shall triumph over evil—the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ—and Christ shall reign among mankind, King of kings, and Lord of lords: and thus is the government of this earth committed to Christ, the Child, the Son, the Saviour who is given.

9 Isaiah lx. 2. 7 Rev. xi. 15.
I cannot but express my regret, that the time does not permit me to give you some illustrations of the wonderful manner in which all the events of history—all the wars, and pride, and ambition of men and nations, even of those who either never heard of, or certainly never regarded, the kingdom of Christ, have been over-ruled to the fulfilment of the prophecies of God, and to the establishment of His government. This, however, I must pass by. But the declaration I now make, that all the events of history prove the universal government of God, will not excite surprise, when we consider that the world was created, and the world is preserved, and the world is governed, for this reason only—that the Church of God may be conducted safely through the wilderness of evil, and all its faithful members be received into heaven. I do not mean by the Church of God, the members of any particular communion,—I mean those who believe, and follow, the Conqueror of evil, from whatever communion they may be,—I mean that universal Church which is described in the Book of the Revelation as being gathered to God, out of every kindred, and nation, and people, and tongue. The government of this universal Church is granted to Christ.

And now we come to the more personal and interesting part of this subject. If Christ is the Ruler of the Church in general, He must be the Ruler of every member of that Church; and therefore He is the Governor of all who are here pre-
sent, and we are all the subjects of His dominion, or we are rebels against His authority. I will not suppose that, on this day of rejoicing, you are wilfully opposing the government of the Son of God; but this I must say, and with the remarks to which it will lead us, I shall conclude this address—that part of the government of Christ in which we are especially interested, is the dominion of God within us.—Christ has been born for us that He might conquer the three enemies of man, and establish His kingdom in the heart of man. These three enemies are—sin, Satan, and death; and they are conquered by faith in Him as the Redeemer who can save to the utmost, and you are now present to profess, and declare that faith, by commemorating the birth of the Saviour of the world. Look then into your hearts, and enquire of yourselves whether the kingdom of God is beginning to triumph over the kingdom of sin within you. *His servants, His subjects, ye are to whom ye obey*⁸. If you believe that He is born your Saviour, prove your gratitude to Him, by removing from the heart those things which your King has forbidden. *Faith worketh by love*⁹; and if you have faith in Christ, let love and gratitude to Christ purify the conscience, and the heart. If the government of your soul thus rests at present upon the Redeemer who is born, then be assured that the government of that soul will be upon his

⁸ Rom. vi. 16. ⁹ Gal. v. 6.
shoulder in the hour when no mortal hand can help, and no human arm can save. Receive Him as your King now, and He will rule over the terrors of death, and He will have dominion over you for your comfort in the morning of the judgment-day. His kingdom shall have no end, as the God and the Father of spirits, if you who commemorate His birth with outward rejoicing, receive Him inwardly as the ruler of the thoughts, with the rejoicing of a good conscience. So receive Him—and be blessed. So welcome the Saviour as the God of the soul, and then the language of this passage may be yours. To you the Saviour is given. The government of your immortal spirit shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called by you, the mighty God, who has delivered—the everlasting Father, in whose presence you shall continue for ever—the Prince of peace, for He shall save you from the sin which troubles the heart, and from that punishment of the wicked, to which there is neither rest, nor end. May God grant that we may inherit the blessings of the salvation for which we pray, and that our rejoicings upon earth may be the earnest of eternal rejoicing in the blessings of the promised salvation!
SERMON XV.

ON THE NATURE AND OBJECTS OF THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD.

[Preached on the First Sunday in Lent.]

MATTHEW iv. 1.

Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

The subject to which our attention is directed by the Gospel of the day, is the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. The passages in the Evangelists which relate this event are usually considered among the most difficult in the New Testament. So impossible, indeed, has it appeared to many that this temptation of our Lord should be a plain and simple fact, as it undoubtedly seems to be in the unadorned narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke, that they have rejected the literal interpretation altogether. Some have asserted it to have been a vision—others have deemed it an allegory—some affirm it to have been a spiritual
or mental representation of the manner, in which mankind are still tempted to evil; while others have declared it to have been merely the meditation of our Lord upon such evils as are proposed to the mind of man by the influence or agency of the evil spirit. I shall not waste your time by taking any further notice of these speculations: neither shall I submit to you any discussion of the arguments by which they are supported or refuted. I would not even have chosen this subject, though it was brought before us in the services of the day, if I could consider it merely as a theoretical or curious topic. The hours of the Sabbath are to be directed to useful meditation, and not to ingenious disquisitions. I have selected the narrative of Christ's temptation, because it will enable us to take a most useful, impressive, and extensive survey of the Providence of God, over the moral and spiritual world in general, and especially over the sons of men. I interpret the whole story in its plain and literal meaning. I consider the temptation of Christ, with all its apparent difficulties, to have been as certainly a plain matter of fact, as any of the miracles which demonstrated His Divine mission; and I think I shall be able to prove to you, that these difficulties will all vanish, when we consider the temptation, not as an unconnected narrative, as is too frequently done; but as one of these circumstances, which, like the resurrection from the dead, or the atonement upon the cross, form an essential part of the great system of
redemption, and without which, indeed, that system could not have been completed.

Such is the object which I have now in view. I shall first endeavour to prove the necessity of the temptation—this will lead us to consider its nature and its circumstances—the unavoidable inference from our inquiry will be the interest which we all have in this most astonishing fact of Christianity.

We are first to consider the necessity of the temptation of Christ.

In order that we may thoroughly understand this point, we must glance upon a subject, respecting which we receive our information from the Scriptures alone; and in pursuing which we are only safe, while we confide in the Scriptures as our guide. The subject to which I allude is this—the intimate connexion which, as we are informed in the Bible, exists between the present visible world, and that invisible state, into which men will be removed after the death of the body. Our Lord and the tempter both existed before the transaction took place which we are now considering. They lived before man was created in another state. Not only so—we are positively assured, in more passages of Scripture than I have time to mention, that in that invisible world there exist innumerable tribes of beings, inferior to the Almighty, but superior to man; some of whom have preserved their allegiance to their Creator, while others have fallen from their duty—and all these beings, whether they be angels or archangels, good or
evil spirits, are represented as being deeply interested in some mysterious manner in the fall of man, and in his recovery and redemption. In one place we are told that the mystery of the redemption was fully revealed in the days of the Apostles,—to the intent, that the manifold wisdom of God might be known unto the principalities, and powers, in heavenly places—and in another place, when St. Peter is explaining the same matter, he adds, which things the angels desire to look into. Every where, indeed, the proofs of the interest which these holy beings take in the history of man abound in Scripture. We further learn that they are interested in the affairs of man, for this reason—after these angels had been created, and after some had fallen from God, and had been condemned to everlasting punishment from his presence, without hope, without acceptable repentance, and without a redeemer; then God created man, that man might live for ever, in that state of happiness from which the spirits of evil had been banished. Man as well as many of these beings fell away from his allegiance. The design of God in creating him appeared, for a time, to be utterly and entirely disappointed: and all the inhabitants of the invisible world, which are the constant spectators of the affairs of men, beheld the fall of Adam, and waited, with astonishment, to behold the plans of Providence, and the manner in which the Almighty

1 Eph. iii. 10.  
1 Peter i. 12.
would act towards the human race. For now a mighty problem was to be solved, in which all created spirits were eternally and solemnly concerned. The question to be decided was this—whether the Almighty should pardon, or condemn, the offending sons of man, whom He had so lately created. If the Almighty forgave man, without the obedience which He had demanded, then a public example would have been given to all created beings, that the law of God might be broken, and the punishment which God himself had solemnly threatened, might be threatened in vain. If, on the contrary, the Almighty would not pardon the sins of man, then an example, no less public, would have been given that these plans could be defeated; and the power of an evil spirit would have prevailed against the Creator. If God had forgiven the sin of man, after He had punished the fall of the evil spirits, He would not have appeared to be just—if God had condemned man, He would not have appeared to be merciful. The justice of God, on the one hand, and the mercy of God on the other, seemed to be irreconcilable. The very attributes of God appeared to clash; for justice must prevail against mercy; or the mercy of God must prevail against his justice.

And now we shall begin to perceive the necessity of the temptation of Christ. The justice of God required that the law which He had given should be obeyed—the mercy of God required, that the sins of man should be forgiven. Then was
planned in the councils of eternity, the wonderful system of redemption, by which the justice of the Almighty might harmonize with His mercy—by which He who obeyed, was the cause, and source of pardon—by which one great atonement might be discovered for man—by which all created beings, angels, and daemons, and men, were enabled to see that God might be just in requiring obedience to His law; and that He might be, at the same time, merciful, in pardoning the transgressors who had offended it. But who, or where, is he, in the whole compass of the universe of God, who should first obey, and then atone—who, or where is the being who should first accomplish all the will of God, and then undergo the punishment, which the Almighty had denounced against the offender? Angels could not effect it—they were chargeable with folly, they were liable to fall. Man could not redeem his brother, for the nature of the whole race was corrupt, and there were none good, no, not one. Then the mysterious communion took place between the Almighty Creator, and the future Redeemer of the world, which is so sublimely, and so beautifully alluded to in the language of the prophets, and the apostles, when they spake under the influence of the Spirit of the Highest, and related the events of heaven with the tongues of men. He looked, and He saw that there was no man, and He wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own arm brought salvation; that man might have a Re-

\[3\] Psal. xiv. 3.  
\[4\] Isaiah lix. 16.
deemer. *Lo, I come to do Thy will, oh my God, I am content to do it—yea, Thy law is within my heart*. Can it be necessary that I should mention the Redeemer who thus communed with the Father in the counsels of eternity? The Son of God condescended from the glories of heaven to be despised, and rejected of men. It was the Son of the living God who came, first to obey, and then to suffer; and the temptation which He underwent in the wilderness was the one, great, principal trial of His obedience, above all the others, which assailed Him. It was the chief and most solemn deed by which He was to demonstrate to God, to angels, and to men, that He was enabled to overcome the very tempter which had vanquished our first parents; and to conquer also the very same temptations by which they fell. The temptation of Christ was the one great action which began to roll away the curse from mankind. It was the earnest of the remainder of His obedience to the law of God, before He could become the actual Redeemer of man. His life was to be spotless, and sinless, before His sufferings and His death could be accepted as an atonement; and the temptation of Christ, therefore, could not be a vision, nor an allegory, nor a dream, nor a fancy; but a fact, and a reality. For He assumed the human nature—He took upon Him the likeness of a man—the form and body of man, that He might undergo

5 Psalm xl. 8. 6 Isaiah liii. 3.
those very trials, which now affect man in his body, and in the human nature. If the temptation had been visionary, the resistance to that temptation must have been likewise visionary, and therefore imperfect. But man, as I have said, was created that he might be elevated to heaven, not only in his soul, but, as in the instance of Enoch, of Elijah, and of Christ, that he might be elevated to heaven, in a glorified body also. Therefore Adam and his sons are all tempted in the body, and Christ therefore must be tempted in the body, that He might first conquer sin in the body, and then that, after He had suffered in the body, He might with the same body ascend up into heaven, and finally raise up thither all the sons of Adam who believe in Him—and having thus conducted His Universal Church into glory, the design of the Almighty when He created man would at last be accomplished; and the body and the soul which now exist together upon earth should be united again after their separation by death, and live together again in the heaven of heavens—the companions of angels—the brethren of Christ—and the sons of the everliving God.

Such was the necessity of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, I trust that I have not detained you too long upon this point, and that you have found no difficulty in apprehending the observations I have submitted to you. They were in some measure essential to our rightly understanding this great event:—for he who would
thoroughly comprehend the history of Christ, and the doctrines of Christianity, must constantly refer to the existence of another world. He must observe, as I have endeavoured to do in the present instance, the wonderful manner in which the system of redemption connects time with eternity—man with God—earth with heaven—life with death—and faith in Christ, with the restoration of the soul to the happiness, for which alone it was originally created.

The justness of this enlarged view of the subject will appear more clearly, if we now consider, as briefly as possible, the circumstances of the temptation. We will remark upon the words of the Scripture which I have selected, as they occur in their order. They will inform us of these circumstances—the time—the cause, and the place of the temptation—the event itself, and the tempter who appeared—Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

The time appointed for our Lord's temptation is expressed by the word then—immediately after His baptism—in which He was solemnly declared by a voice from heaven, to be the Son of God; that is, perfect as the first Adam, when he was pronounced to be upright by the voice of his Creator. Our Lord had been born under the law of Moses, and had now lived in the world thirty years, obedient to its every rite, ceremony, and observance. Having thus fulfilled the righteousness
of the Mosaic dispensation, because the baptism
of John was ordained by the Almighty as well as
the law of Moses, Christ would submit to this also.
When the Baptist refused, alleging, \textit{I have need to
be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?}, our
Lord persevered in His demand, \textit{Suffer it to be so
now, for thus it becometh me to fulfil all righte-
ousness}—that is, to fulfil every law which God
has given to man. Having thus accomplished
the obedience required both by the law of Moses,
and the teaching of John, then it was that He was
to pass through that spiritual temptation, to which
not only the children of Israel, but all mankind,
were subjected, that He might obey the whole law
of God, and become the Redeemer of all mankind,
as well as of the chosen seed of the house of Israel.
—Such is the just conception of the \textit{time}, when
our Lord was tempted.—With respect to the
\textit{place}, this also was selected, with no less regard to
the general harmony of the plans of Providence.
He was led forth into the wilderness—He was led
or impelled thither, because the wilderness is uni-
formly represented in Scripture as an emblem of
this world of sin and misery, to which the fall of
Adam had banished his children from the Paradise
of God. Adam had been placed in Paradise, and
he was driven into the wilderness of the world;
Christ, therefore, fulfilling every type and emblem
of God's law, as well as every positive command

\textsuperscript{7} Matt. iii. 14. \textsuperscript{8} Matt. iii. 15.
of that law, was placed in the wilderness, that He might lead the children of Adam back into Paradise;—and He was led there by the Spirit, because He was now filled with the Spirit at his baptism. It was poured out upon him without measure, and He was to be led by this Holy Spirit into those scenes, in which He was to accomplish the will of God, to fulfil the prophecies, and to do all that was necessary to the salvation of man.—And now if we consider the temptation itself, we shall find it was the same in principle with that which overcame our first parents, and which still overcomes their children. We read that Christ was in all points tempted like as we are⁹; and as no two persons are ever subjected, in all respects, to the same circumstances of temptation, it is certain that this passage must refer to the sources, or principles of temptation, which are the same in all men. All the sin which tempts mankind is comprised in these three divisions—the lust of the flesh,—the lust of the eye,—and the pride of life¹⁰. Our first parents were tempted by each of these—they ate of the forbidden fruit, because it was good for food—here was the lust of the flesh; the gratification of the appetite in a way which God had forbidden. It was pleasant to the eye, and it was therefore coveted by the lust of the eye. It was desirable to make one wise, in that manner in which presumption and unbelief desire to be wise, namely, by obtaining

⁹ Heb. iv. 15. ¹⁰ 1 John ii. 16.
the approbation of man, and thus to gratify the pride of life. Such was the temptation of Adam; and such, in principle, is the temptation which assails all his sons. So also our Lord was tempted. He hungered, and the tempter prompted him to employ the powers of miracle, with which he was entrusted for higher purposes, to the supply of his own wants, instead of depending upon the Providence of God—here he was tempted to the lust of the flesh. When this trial was overcome, the tempter offered him all the kingdoms of the world, and all their power and glory; all that could gratify the pride of life—and his last temptation was, to the lust of the eye; when Satan presented to our Lord the honour and distinction of appearing as a wonderful being among men, by descending through the air, from the pinnacle of the temple. In all these things our Lord was assailed in vain. He conquered where Adam fell. He conquered all those temptations which now lead captive the sons of men.

With respect to the tempter himself—the last point we were to consider in the temptation—we know but this only, that it was the same evil spirit which tempted our first parents. To them he appeared in the form of a serpent. In what manner, or form, or resemblance he appeared to our Lord, we know not; it is not revealed, and it cannot therefore be necessary that we should know it. Of this only we may be assured, that the approach to our Lord would be as subtil as that to Adam;
and the victory over his stratagems was no less illustrious, than it was important and decisive.

Having thus considered the necessity, and the circumstances of this wonderful temptation of Christ, it remains only that we contemplate the interest which we all have in the victory of Christ over Satan.

Solemn and infinite is the interest which we all have in the system of the redemption of the world. Life or death, heaven or hell, depend upon our receiving with the heart the religion of the Gospel of God. Surely and rapidly are we all travelling to the invisible state, and if we had not the revelation of the Redeemer of man, we had been, of all the creatures of God, most miserable—we had known nothing—we had hoped nothing. God would have been regarded as our severe and inflexible Judge, punishing the guilty, and shewing mercy to none. But now has Christ overpowered the dominion of evil, that He might raise us, together with Himself, to the happiness for which we were created; and this is effected by His still retaining in the kingdom of His glory the two natures, the divine and the human. In the divine nature He is God to save us. In the human nature, now exalted into heaven, He is man to sympathise with our sorrows, and to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and thus He is the one Christ

\[11\] Heb. iv. 15.
the one divine Redeemer—in whom dwelleth all
the fulness of the Godhead, and that even in the
bodily form. Our interest in the conquests of
Christ are established upon this doctrine. He is
God to save, He is man to sympathise. In what-
ever light, therefore, we view Him—with whatever
feelings we would approach to God, we now have
an earnest, that every prayer shall be answered,
and the object of our creation be accomplished.
Do we desire pardon, and forgiveness of sin? God
hath highly exalted the Jesus who endured temp-
tation—and given Him a name which is above every
name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should
bow—He is exalted—to be a Prince and a Sa-
vior—for this purpose, that He might give re-
demption, and pardon for sin. Do you imagine
that God is so high, that you dare not approach
Him? Go to Him who is man as well as God—
God in the nature of man. Do you fear that your
sinfulness will banish you from God? Believe only
in Him who has accomplished the law of God—
and imputes his own righteousness to all who
follow Him. We are accepted with the Almighty
for the sake of the righteousness of our Saviour, if
we believe in His divine message. Do you fear the
punishment of sin? Christ has trodden the wine-
press alone, and borne our sins in His own body.

13 Phil. ii. 9, 10.  
13 Acts v. 31.  
14 Isaiah lxiii. 3.
on the tree. Nothing is required of us but faith which purifies the heart, and which so worketh by love, that our gratitude to the Saviour of man shall induce us to forsake wickedness, and to desire to please God. No Christian who receives the system of redemption in this manner shall ever perish. None shall die eternally who thus believes in this blessed Saviour. In His religion alone we have peace of mind, forgiveness of evil, union with the Almighty, consolation in sorrow, happiness in life, and the certainty of immortality hereafter. These are the promises of the Scriptures of truth; and they are secured to us by the conquest of our Redeemer over the temptations of the enemy of man.

Seeing, therefore, brethren, that these things are so—seeing that our Lord is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God, by Him—seeing that the tempted, and conquering Jesus—the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person—when He had by Himself purged our sins, sate down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as the Saviour of man, and the equal with God—Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may find grace to help us in our time of need, in the hour of sorrow, and in the day of temptation to sin. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset us, the

14 1 Peter ii. 24. 16 Gal. v. 6. 17 Heb. i. 3. 
15 1 Peter ii. 24. 18 Heb. iv. 16. 19 Heb. xii. 1.
sin to which we are most tempted by circumstances, and most inclined by disposition;—and let us run with patience the remainder of the race which is set before us, looking to the same Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith\(^{30}\).

\(^{30}\) Heb. xii. 2.
SERMON XVI.

THE DEMONIACS, NATURE AND ORIGIN OF DEMONIACAL POSSESSION.

MATT. xv. 22.

And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, Oh Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

The earnest and affecting supplication addressed to our Lord by the Canaanitish mother, in behalf of her afflicted child, implies, according to the plain and literal meaning of the words, that an evil spirit, from an invisible state, so governed, and controlled, the body, and the mind of her daughter, that she was no longer mistress of her own conduct. She imputes the actions which her child committed, to the agency of an evil spirit. You will observe that no surprise was expressed, at the nature of the petition, either by Christ, or by His disciples, or by the surrounding spectators:
not only so, the calamity of which she complained is repeatedly spoken of in the Gospel, as a common, and frequent event. It seems to be certain that this power of evil spirits over the bodies of men has entirely ceased at present. Whatever opinions may be formed with respect to their influence over the mind, there is none regarding their power over the body, that is—they cannot now force, and compel men, by their own irresistible demoniacal power, to commit those actions which are forbidden by the Almighty. In consequence of this cessation of the open agency of evil spirits, many persons have endeavoured to give another interpretation to every passage of the New Testament which asserts their former power. They make their present experience the criterion of truth, and they explain away every thing which does not appeal to the senses. They affirm, therefore, that the daughter of the woman, who expressed herself in this manner to our Lord, was not, really, under the power of an evil spirit; but that her affliction was merely lunacy, or madness of a more violent kind. Now, leaving out of consideration as a source of argument, at present, the recollection that the Church of God, in all ages, and in all countries, has uniformly interpreted these passages of Scripture in their literal signification, and that the unlearned, and ignorant, who are compelled to be contented with the plain text of Scripture, always understand them in the same sense—I shall endeavour to prove to you that the literal
and usual interpretation is correct, and that the
affliction of which the woman of Canaan com-
plained is consistent with the whole doctrine of
Scripture respecting the system of redemption,
and the government of the world by the Provi-
dence of God: and that you may the more fully
comprehend, and more easily remember the sub-
ject, I shall arrange the reflections which I pro-
pose to submit to you in the following order:

We will consider the scriptural doctrine of the
introduction and continuance of evil in this world
—this will lead us to the more immediate topic
before us—the extent, and the nature, of the in-
fluence of evil spirits at the time when Christ was
upon earth. We will then inquire whether there
is any demoniacal possession in the present day;
and conclude with a few remarks upon the anticipa-
tions which we find in the Scriptures, of the
final overthrow of evil, when Christ, the head of
the universal Church, shall give up the kingdom
of the Mediator to the Father Almighty.

The scriptural doctrine of the introduction of
evil into this world, entirely rests upon this one
fact, that, after God had created man, different from
what he is at present—pure, upright, free from sin,
though capable of committing it—man was first
led into error by the power, influence, and agency
of an evil spirit. The continuance of evil in the
world is partly to be imputed to that corruption
of the human heart which originated with the fall;
partly to the example of others, and the attractions
of surrounding objects; but in a yet greater measure to the still existing influence of the same evil spirit. In one passage of Scripture it is written, that the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty; and this serpent is elsewhere called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. We read, again, that this evil spirit is not a solitary agent; but that there are others also with him, who are called the Principalities and powers of darkness, who have forsaken God, and who deceive mankind. We hear of the Devil and his angels, and the same expressions are often repeated. This doctrine of the agency of evil spirits, however mysterious it may appear to us, is the only one by which we can possibly solve the difficulties respecting evil. The world is full of sin, and it is full of misery. Disappointment and disease, sickness and sorrow, suffering and death, everywhere abound among mankind. We inquire of the reasoner who looks for information upon these subjects to other sources than his Bible, for what cause these things were, and were permitted? If God is merciful, and wise, and good, why should his creatures be made the slaves, and the victims, of all this trouble, and grief, and care? None can answer the question. The origin of moral evil baffles the human intellect, and defies all its powers, until men turn to the pages of Revelation. There we read that man became wicked, and

1 2 Cor. xi. 3. 2 Eph. vi. 12. 3 Matt. xxv. 41.
therefore he became miserable. Misery, the Scripture informs, is the consequence of wickedness; and the same book which records the origin of evil reveals its remedy, by pointing out repentance and faith as the cure for wickedness—and submission, and a good hope of immortality, as the cure for misery—and this is all the knowledge which is absolutely necessary on the subject.

If the presumption of man soars higher, and demands from what source evil originated among the spirits who first tempted man?—we answer—that this matter is not clearly revealed; and it is not necessary that we should be informed of it. What we know not now, we may know hereafter. This only we are told, that their sin was pride, for pride is called in Scripture the condemnation of the Devil. And we believe that the evil spirit, whatever be his misery, cannot repent, because that pride leads him to an undying hatred against the holiness of God.

Since no man, therefore, who believes in Christianity, can doubt of the existence and agency of evil spirits, we may proceed to the inquiry respecting the extent and nature of their influence at the time of our Lord’s appearance upon earth.

In the instance before us we are merely told that the woman of Canaan complained to our Lord, that her daughter was grievously vexed with a devil. No further account is given of the conse-

* 1 Tim. iii. 6.
quences, or extent of the calamity. We must refer, therefore, to other parts of the Scriptures, which explain to us more fully the meaning of the text, by describing the condition of others, who are said to have been afflicted in a similar manner; and I think you will agree with me, that the description of the demoniacal possession presents us with a picture of human misery, so terrible, that the pen of inspiration alone could truly delineate it. Our Lord is represented by three Evangelists, (whose narratives I shall combine together) to have crossed the sea of Galilee, and to have come into the country of the Gadarenes, a remote, desolate, and mountainous tract in the north of Judea. He took this circuit (and I beg your particular attention to the circumstance) before the calling of the twelve Apostles; before His followers knew Him to be Christ; before St. Peter had been so affected by His miracles, as to acknowledge Him to be the Son of God; before the resurrection of Lazarus; and before His repeated miracles had attracted the attention of the people in general. In addition to this, our Lord had never visited Gadara before; and it was a part of the country so neglected, that it is probable His very existence had been but little known to its inhabitants. No sooner, however, had Jesus come out of the ship, than there met him, say the Gospels, a certain man possessed with devils⁵,—who had his dwelling among the tombs

⁵ Matt. vii. 28.
who had often been bound with chains and fetters, which he had as often plucked asunder, and broken, and torn away. Night and day this man was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones—he wore no clothes—he abode not in any house—he was so exceedingly fierce, that no man could pass by that way. So far it is possible that he might have been considered as a violent and raving lunatic; and if no more had been recorded, we might have rested in this conclusion; but now we come to the more wonderful part of the story. No sooner had Christ appeared, than the miserable man saw Him afar off, and ran, and came down from among the tombs in the mountains, and fell at Jesus' feet, and worshipped Him, exclaiming and crying out, with the clearness of knowledge, the bitterness of hatred, and the agony of despair, *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God? We know Thee*, though Thy people know Thee not—though Thy disciples know Thee not—though Thine own reputed father knows Thee not—*We know Thee, who Thou art, the Holy One of God. Art Thou come hither to torment us before our time?* We know that the day of judgment must come—but torment us not before the appointed hour. We beseech Thee—we adjure Thee—by God, that Thou torment us not.*—Such was the terrible prayer which they made to the Saviour of man. And the

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* Matt. viii. 29.    † Ibid.    ‡ Ibid.
answer of our Lord, therefore, was not addressed to the man; it was addressed to the evil spirit which possessed the powers of his mind, and controlled the actions of his body, and occupied the person of the demoniac, as the tempter which beguiled Eve had formerly possessed, and dwelt in, the body of the serpent. *Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit,* said the Conqueror of the powers of darkness—*and the evil spirit,* says the Evangelists, *came out*—and the man who had been possessed became tranquil and submissive—remaining with the Saviour who had delivered him, and praying for permission to continue with Him when He was departing again from the country.

Such is the most remarkable account of demoniacal possession recorded in the Gospels. I could have selected instances of other demoniacs, who knew and acknowledged Christ; but this will be sufficient to enable us to prove, that, though all diseases were frequently, in popular language, imputed to Satan, the possession of the bodies and minds by evil spirits, was as actual, and real, as the occupation of the mind by a thought, or idea; and that we cannot, therefore, consider it as mere madness or lunacy; but that the bodies, and souls of these persons, according to the literal interpretation of the words before us, were actually possessed by a devil—by an evil and fallen spirit.

My reasons are these—In the first place, there is nothing in the language of the demoniacs, when they addressed our Lord, which at all implies in-
sanity. The insane either reason rightly on wrong grounds, or wrongly on right grounds, or they incoherently confound the one with the other. The demoniacs, on the contrary, reasoned rightly on right grounds—they knew Christ—they addressed him as Christ—and though there was misery and despair in their language, it was, as I shall shew you, only the language which many wicked persons in reality use, when they believe in God, yet live in sin.

Again, their conduct towards Christ was not that of the insane. If they had been merely lunatics, their conduct would have been irregular, and inconsistent. Some of them might have worshipped Christ—but some would have reviled him. Some would even have commanded the homage of Christ to themselves, others would have fled from him, according as the disease affected their minds—whereas they all acted in the same manner—they all paid him worship.

In addition to these arguments, we affirm that powerful and sufficient reasons existed for the permission of the more evident influence of evil spirits over the bodies of men, at the time of Christ, than either before or since. Christ was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil—that is, misery and sin. He proved that He could conquer or extirpate misery, by making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dead to live—by

1 John iii. 8.
causing the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing—and He demonstrated his power over sin, and over the invisible world, by ejecting evil spirits from the soul. That there might be no confounding the agency of demons with common diseases, the evil spirits, when they were cast out of the men, were permitted to go into the herd of swine, and hurry the inferior animals to destruction, to prove to us that they were real existences, that the possession was actual, however mysterious; and to shew us also the total ruin of those who are led captive by the power of the enemy of God.—When the evangelists enumerate also the diseases which Christ cured, they distinguish between the sick, the insane, the paralytic, and the possessed. *They brought to Him*, says St. Matthew, *those that were taken with divers diseases—those which were possessed with devils—those which were lunatic, and those which had the palsy, and he healed them* 10. Neither are these all the reasons for our adopting the literal interpretation of the words. The open display of the power of Christ over evil spirits proves to us the astonishing fact, that the invisible world is close upon us, and round about us; and I have no doubt that, when the spirit of man departs from the dying body, it immediately finds itself among the inhabitants of the unseen state.—It shews, too, the extent of redemption. If Christ had not died

for man, it may be justly inferred that the condition of the demoniac who knew the Son of God, and shrank from his presence in agony, would have been the condition of all mankind; and lastly, which is the next point we are to consider, the actual possession of the human being by evil spirits, proves to us the fearful truth, that some demoniacal possession may continue in the present day.

Because the open power of evil spirits over the bodies of men has already been destroyed by the overruling Providence of God, in the Christian dispensation, it does not seem to be sufficiently considered that their power over the minds of men still continues. Their influence, though diminished, is not destroyed; neither can it be entirely overcome, until the day when angels, and spirits, as well as men, shall be summoned to the tribunal of God.

St. James tells us, there are these three degrees of sin, the earthly, the sensual, and the devilish. To the two first of these, a man may be tempted by his own corrupt nature; but to the latter he must be influenced by an evil spirit. You will inquire by what means a man may know when he is under this influence? and there can be no difficulty in answering the question, if we submit to be guided by the representations of Scripture, respecting the miserable victims, who were evidently possessed with devils. That person may be

11 James iii. 15.
said to be possessed with a devil, in whom there is found the union of these four several things—a clear and distinct knowledge of God, and of the divine mission of his Son; wickedness of heart; deep despair of pardon; and bitter hatred against the God of mercy, because he is also the God of justice. The demoniacs had all these. There was clear knowledge—*I know thee who thou art*; there was great wickedness—*thou unclean spirit, thou wicked spirit,* was the language of our Lord; there was deep despair—*art thou come to torment us before our time?* there was bitter hatred—*what have we to do with thee?* These four qualities of the mind may still be frequently found together; and wherever they so exist—there the power of an evil spirit may be said to prevail. The reading or the experience of many must have made them acquainted with some, who have the brilliance of knowledge with the coldness of vice. It is with some men now, as it was with these demoniacs. Some men so resolve to persevere in evil, that neither the knowledge of God, nor the fear of His justice, nor the hope of His mercy, restrains them: but because they will not resign the wickedness they desire, their conscience reproaches them with their ingratitude, and folly, though they try in vain to check it. They endeavour in vain to overpower the stinging remonstrances of this inward monitor. When, therefore, they think upon God, they may exclaim "I know thee who thou art"—when the voice of God is heard within them, its language is
the same as that of Christ to the possessed, *thou unclean spirit, thou wicked spirit.*

Hitherto, it may be said, their wickedness is that of the corruption of our nature, rebelling against the light of Christian knowledge; but now the peculiar influence of the evil spirit begins. When the man will not put away sin, and when his conscience affords him no rest, then he begins to despair, and then he goes on to hatred and contempt—till his reason is weakened, and his hopes of happiness are destroyed. He feels his misery; yet he cannot repent. He turns away from the light, and when he reflects upon the Saviour of the world, his only bitter cry of agony can be, "Art thou come to torment me?" "What have I to do with Thee?" And whoever, on examining his own heart, shall discover these four things—clear knowledge—willful and persevering sin—deep despair of pardon—and bitter hatred against God, is in danger of dying under the power of the evil spirit. He has need to adopt the language of the poor woman of Canaan—*Lord help me, have mercy, have mercy upon me.* Read your own hearts, examine what you discover there. If you find there the knowledge of God, united with unrepented, unforsaken sin, beware lest you sink deeper into impenitence, into the snares of the devil, despair of pardon, and hatred of God. Pray to God that you may forsake evil, lest the heart be hardened—and you become the slave of vice, the hater of the God of mercy, the victim of pride, and despair.
If you know God, pray that you may obey Him. If you have indulged in evil, pray that you may put it away: go not on from sin to sin, till you become like the miserable beings we have considered—sorrowing, but not repenting, despairing of mercy, yet never forsaking sin.

I was to conclude, with the anticipations of the Scripture, respecting the final overthrow of evil, when Christ, the head of the universal Church, shall give up the kingdom of the Mediator, to the Father Almighty. Your time, however, does not allow me to enter at length upon this interesting subject—or, I could relate the manner in which the Son of God shall overthrow all the remaining power of evil spirits, and restore the rebellious province of this earth to the holy empire of His Father. The day shall come, when good shall prevail over evil, and when all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. The blood of the atonement shall not have been shed in vain. The dominion of evil may prevail for a season, but the government of the world shall be upon His shoulder, who is the bruiser of the serpent’s head, and His name shall be called, the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God.\(^\text{12}\) Remember the powerful metaphor of the prophet—\textit{He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied}\(^\text{13}\). As a woman in travail crieth out in her pangs, when she is

\(^{12}\) Isaiah ix. 8. \(^{13}\) Ib. liii. 11.
to be delivered, but soon forgetteth her sorrows
for joy that a man is born into the world—so
shall he see of the travail of his soul, and be
satisfied. He shall forget the agony of the garden
of Gethsemane, the sufferings of the cross, the
desolation of his spirit, and the pangs of his death
—and He shall rejoice to bring His sons unto
glory. He shall rejoice to conquer all the power of
Satan, to become the head of the universal Church,
and then to be the Mediator no more, when all
His sons are presented, without spot or blemish, at
the throne of God hereafter. It remains with our-
selves, whether we will accept the mercy of God;
and become one of that number. The best of us
have need to pray to God that we may have power
and strength to conquer evil,—and none, I am
sure, will refuse to pray, when we think upon what
we know, and reflect upon what we are.
SERMON XVII.

THE MEANING AND OBJECT OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD.

Matthew xvi. 27, 28. and xvii. part of 1—5.

The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father—Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John, into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them—His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light—and behold, there appeared Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter and said, Lord, it is good for us to be here—let us make here three tabernacles—and behold a voice out of the cloud—this is my beloved Son, hear Him.

I have selected the subject of the transfiguration of Christ for our consideration this morning; because there is no one subject in the whole of the sacred Scriptures, which contains such abundant matter for our serious, and most solemn, and in-
teresting contemplation. I know not for what reason it is, that so great a majority of persons consider religion to be a gloomy or melancholy subject. It certainly does not direct their attention to the more common objects of pursuit—honour, wealth, or worldly pleasure—but it does direct them to topics which are more really worthy of the greatness and dignity of an immortal, though fallen, being. It directs us to subjects which are so sublime, so beautiful, so affecting, that if men would study them more, and delight in them more, they would find many of the anxieties, and temptations, and sorrows, and joys of life, to become matters of comparative indifference. They would find that even the happiness of heaven might begin by peace of mind upon earth; and their thoughts would be elevated above the perishing pursuits, and above the unworthy objects, for which men too generally live. For I might demand of you, if you were, from this moment, to possess all the honours, and riches, and treasures of the world, whether the nearness of death, the certainty of judgment, the hope of heaven, the terrors of hell, the solemnities of the resurrection from the grave, and the various discoveries of the destiny of man, contained in the Gospel—whether these things would not be of far greater moment than any earthly possessions, or any worldly pursuits? I am desirous, therefore, to induce you to consider, not merely the warnings and the threatenings of Revelation, but I am anxious to persuade you to pay attention to the
wonderful things which are revealed to us in the Bible, that you may become interested in them, and take pleasure in them, with the conviction that they are more highly deserving of our attention as rational men, than those more common objects which occupy so much of our time, and which call forth all our energies. With this view, therefore, I have chosen the subject of the Transfiguration of Christ, as one which is calculated above all others to raise our thoughts from earth to heaven—to afford us a glance into the future state, and to teach us how much happiness is to be found in the contemplation of divine things—in believing the wonders of revelation, and preparing for the world to come.

We will consider, in the first place, the conversation which preceded the transfiguration—as this will explain its meaning and object. When we shall have examined the meaning and the object of the transfiguration—we will inquire into the causes for which the spirits of Moses and Elias were permitted to appear—the nature of their conversation—and some other circumstances attending this remarkable event.

Let us first consider the conversation between our Lord and his disciples before the transfiguration took place. This conversation will enable us to understand its meaning and object.

The miracles of Christ had now convinced His disciples that He was a great and wonderful prophet; and they had very great hopes that He,
was the long-promised Messiah who should come to deliver them. The minds of the disciples, however, were so unenlightened, at this time, respecting the true nature of the Messiah's kingdom, that the principal, perhaps the only notion which they entertained respecting Him was—that He should conquer the Romans—overthrow their dominion, and render the Jews a powerful and triumphant people. Now the two last miracles which our Lord wrought before the transfiguration were these—the feeding of many thousands of people in the wilderness upon the provision which was sufficient for only a very small number—and the opening the eyes of the blind man at Bethsaida. The first miracle proved to the ambitious disciples that our Lord was able to support, without expence and without difficulty, the largest army which could be collected together; and the second miracle proved, that, whatever were the sufferings which they might meet with in his service, our Lord was no less able to provide a remedy for them all; and it was evident, therefore, to his disciples, who were earnestly desirous of the restoration of the temporal kingdom of Israel, and of their own advancement to temporal greatness, that Christ was able to establish that dominion whenever He thought proper. When their expectations were thus excited to the utmost, He demanded of His disciples, *Whom do men say that I am?* They told him the opinions which had been formed of Him—that one said, He was John the Baptist—others, Elias—others, one of
the prophets. But whom say ye that I am? Then they acknowledged Him to be the Messiah—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. His miracles compelled them to declare it; for they could not believe that any but the long promised Messiah could do the things which He did. 'And now; when they had confessed Him to be the Christ, they expected that He would say, or do, something, which should confirm their notions of his taking possession of his kingdom, and advancing them to power and honour; but what was their surprise, when our Lord began from that day forth, and not till then, to tell them that He must go to Jerusalem,—not to take possession of the palace of Pilate, and the mansion of the Roman governor—He must go to Jerusalem to suffer—to be rejected—to be killed—and then to be raised again! The brief narrative of the Evangelists never pauses to relate the feelings of the persons concerning whom they speak. They relate facts only, and they leave all the rest to the student, and to the Christian, who can love the pages of Scripture. They have not told us, therefore, of the astonishment, and incredulity, of the twelve disciples—they tell us only that Peter, who was generally the principal speaker, took Him aside, and began to rebuke Him—He interrupted our Lord when He began to talk of suffering, and of death—Be it far from thee, Lord—this shall not be unto thee¹. He could not bear, and the rest of the disciples could not bear,

¹ Matt. xvi. 22.
the thought for one moment, that He whom they beheld to be vested with so much power, working so many miracles, should go up to Jerusalem to be despised, and rejected of man, to become the victim and sacrifice. Then it was that our Lord confirmed the truth, and bade them lay aside all their notions of greatness and of honour; for, instead of these things, they were to be called upon to take up the cross—to deny themselves—not to be ashamed of Him in that sinful generation which was about to persecute, and to kill Him. And now, when, as we may easily imagine, their astonishment, and their sorrow, at the prospect before them, as well as the disappointment of all their hopes, was so great, that they could make Him no answer, then, at that painful moment, then did our Lord address them further, in the language which I have just read—"There shall be glory for the Son of Man, and there shall be glory for his followers; but it shall not be of that nature which you have been anticipating—the Son of Man shall come in glory of another kind—He shall come in the glory of His Father: and because you do not understand this—and because the weakness of your faith requires comfort and support, verily I say unto you, that some of you who are now standing round me, and listening to me with surprise and grief—some of you shall be convinced of the truth of my words, for you shall see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom, in the glory which I now mention to you."—Then, say the
Evangelists, after six days, from this conversation, He took three of His disciples into an high mountain, and He was transfigured before them.

Such was the conversation which preceded the transfiguration — and it sufficiently explains the meaning and object of the event itself. The transfiguration of Christ was intended to shew, first to the disciples, and then to all to whom this Gospel should come — the real nature of the glory of Christ — namely, the manner in which He shall come to judge the world, as we are now expecting Him—the manner in which He shall come again in His own glory, and in the glory of His Father, to judge the living and the dead at the last day. This interpretation will be confirmed if we compare the descriptions which are given of our Lord’s appearance at the transfiguration, with the accounts of the same Judge of the world, the Ancient of days, mentioned by Daniel—and with His appearance to St. John as mentioned in the book of Revelation. When the disciples were on the top of the mountain at the transfiguration, they beheld their blessed Master suddenly changed in countenance and in person. His face did shine as the sun—His raiment became shining as the light—exceeding white, and glistening as the snow. So it was also when Daniel beheld in his vision—where the Ancient of days did sit—His raiment was as white as the snow—His throne was like the fiery flame—and thousand thousands ministered unto Him, as the Lord is represented coming

\[1\text{ Dan. vii. 10.}\]
to judgment with ten thousand of his saints, and angels. So also in the visions of St. John, when Christ appeared to the favoured Apostle, *I beheld one, like unto the Son of Man. His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength, and his eyes as a flame of fire*. Not only, too, are the descriptions of the Judge of the World the same as those of Christ at the transfiguration, and in his coming to judgment—but the very same term is used to describe the scene at the transfiguration, and the scene at the day of judgment—both are expressly called, *His glory*. Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, says St. Matthew, *when they see the Son of Man coming in his glory*. And the disciples, says the Evangelists, when speaking of the transfiguration, *beheld his glory*. And the word is used in both cases to describe that change in the appearance of Christ, when He did not seem to be any longer a mere human being, but a glorious, and wonderful being. His brightness was as the sun in his strength—His raiment as the light of heaven—His Majesty the Majesty of God—and his form that of a glorified man, to whom shall be committed the judgment of the living and of the dead.

This view of the transfiguration, as a representation of the scenes which will take place at the day of judgment, will be rendered still more probable, if we consider the causes for which the religion of the New Testament has been granted to

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2 Rev. i. 16. 
4 Matt. xxiv. 30. 
5 John i. 14.
us. It is granted to us to prove, and demonstrate the certainty of another life; and, as far as we are able to bear it, the nature of that life; and we may justly believe that some actions which are recorded in the life of Christ would explain to us all that we are able to bear, respecting the invisible world to which we are all hastening. The temptation of Christ proves to us, that evil spirits, which we cannot see at present, present temptations to wickedness to the mind of man. The life of Christ was intended to teach us how to live. The sufferings of Christ were intended to teach us how to bear up against affliction and sorrow. The death of Christ teaches us how to die. The resurrection of Christ assures us, that we also shall break forth from the prison of the grave. The ascension of Christ proves to us that the resurrection of the body is but the commencement of our immortality—and that, as He has gone up into heaven, so shall we also follow Him thither—for where the Head of the Church shall be, there shall also the members of the body rest. But as all these interesting events in the destiny of man are to be found exemplified in Christ, it is not improbable that the greatest event in man's immortal existence—an event greater even than his death or his resurrection, namely his appearance before the judgment-seat of God, would be also represented in the history of the same Saviour—and it is no where to be found, unless in the narrative of the transfiguration: there, and there
only, we are presented with the proof and pledge and certainty of our appearance at the judgment-seat, by the same kind of evidence—the evidence of a figurative fact—the very same kind of evidence which proves the truth and certainty of our resurrection and ascension. If it shall be demanded of a Christian, for what reason he believes in the fact of the resurrection of the dead? He need not have recourse to long and laboured arguments to account for it. He points at once to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, as the best proof, and the best demonstration, that he also shall rise again. If it shall be demanded of a Christian for what reason he believes in the flight of his immortal spirit to another world—he points to the fact of the ascension of Christ into heaven—and if it shall be demanded for what reason he believes in a judgment to come, he may answer, not only that conscience, and Scripture, and reason affirm it, but that the fact of the transfiguration proves it—for Christ has appeared to His Apostles in the same form, and in the same manner, in which He will come from heaven at the day of judgment, that we might believe in this doctrine of Scripture as we believe in others—on the testimony of facts, as well as arguments—on the actions of Christ, as well as on His sacred words.

Such then is the meaning of the transfiguration of Christ—it was a representation to His disciples, and to ourselves, of the manner in which He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
We will now consider the second point which presents itself in the narrative of the transfiguration—namely—the causes for which the spirits of Moses and Elijah were permitted to appear—**behold there appeared Moses and Elias talking with him**.

We are expressly assured by St. Paul, that when Christ shall appear at the day of judgment, *the dead in Christ shall rise first*[^6], and after them the dead, whose lot shall be with the evil spirits. Those who are alive shall then also be *changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*[^7]. The living shall be taken up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus the power of the grave shall first be conquered—and then the human body of flesh and blood shall be no hindrance to the putting on of a glorified body, but the living shall be changed in a moment, to enable them to join the spirits of the dead in the air. Such is the scene which is to take place. Let us now see how fully this very scene was displayed at the transfiguration of Christ. Moses had submitted to death—Elijah had been taken up into heaven without dying. Both appeared in glory—both had the same appearance—both stood before Christ—as the living and the dead shall stand before Him at the last great day; and thus does the transfiguration present to us not only the manner in which the Judge shall come down from heaven, but the manner also in which the dead and the living shall stand before God. What are the

[^6]: 1 Thess. iv. 16.
[^7]: 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.
reflections which crowd upon you when you consider these things! How wonderful is the invisible world! How mysterious, how incomprehensible is the future existence! Where are the spirits of Moses and Elijah now? Where is the body of Christ now? Where shall our spirits be if we were to be summoned to our great account? Are we prepared to die? I do not ask these questions, or make these statements, either to excite your curiosity, or to lead you into inquiries which no man can answer. I have asked such questions, and I have chosen this subject this morning, that I might lead you to reflect upon God, and the soul, and the facts of Scripture, and that you may so lay these things to heart, that you may love and desire to think of the future world more than the present—and not only to repent and turn to Him who can guide you through life, through death, and for ever—but to elevate your thoughts, and to dwell upon these things with delight and joy. You are told in Scripture that the dead and the living shall appear before God. You are presented in this wonderful view of the transfiguration with the appearance of the spirits of two faithful men from the invisible world, standing before Christ, as all mankind shall one day stand before Him. Within a few weeks your spirit may be called away—are you living without hope, without reflection, without repentance, without prayer? Think how near you are to eternity, and yet how careless you have hitherto been! Think whether you are
fit to stand before the Saviour of the world, among the spirits of those who have died in the faith, and fear of God! One thing I cannot but point out to you in this part of my subject. Though the spirits of mankind are to be divided at the last day into the righteous and the wicked, we have no representation of the state of the wicked in this account of the transfiguration. Moses and Elias alone stood with Christ, that we may understand the communion of good men with their Redeemer. The manner in which the wicked shall stand before Him—the fearful agony of their souls when they shall be overwhelmed with terror at the sight of the Judge of the world, is represented in other passages of Scripture, which paint them as shrieking to the rocks and to the mountains to cover them, and to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb—to hide them from the Lord of mercy—to hide them from the vengeance of Him who came down from heaven to entreat them to live for ever—even of Him who came down to die that He might save them. They are actually represented as crying out to be delivered from the very Saviour of the world, for the great day of his wrath is come. My Christian brethren, if we follow the Saviour now, and talk with Him in His Scriptures, in His sacraments, and in our faithful obedience, we shall talk with Him in the day of our immortality, as Moses and Elias talked with Him in the Mount of Transfiguration: but if

\[\text{Rev. vi. 17.}\]
we reject Him now, we shall wake from the dead to mourn. We shall see Him, but not for ourselves. We shall behold Him, but it shall be for others. We shall see our friends and kindred meet Him with joy, and ourselves thrust out. Let us improve the present that we may not only believe in His holy name, but seek after communion, and holiness, and peace.

Our next consideration was to be the subject of their conversation. They spake of his decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. As the presence of the spirits of Moses and Elijah is a representation of the manner in which the spirits of the departed shall appear before their Saviour also, we may learn from their conversation with our Lord, that we also, if by God's mercy we shall be admitted into His glory, shall admire the system of redemption, and the wonderful plans, by which the spirit of man is saved. It might have been supposed that the spirits of these happy men would have spoken of His glory rather than of His humiliation; that when they beheld His face to shine as the sun, they would not have spoken of the manner in which it should be beaten, and spit upon. Why, when His garments shone with glory—must they say how they would be stripped and divided? Why, when He was adored by angels, and by spirits, must they say that He must be insulted and scorned? Why, when He was between the two most eminent of His ancient servants, must they
talk of His suspension between the malefactors, on the cross? Their conversation was intended to shew us, that thus it will ever be with those who contemplate the religion of the Christian. We wonder at the greatness of God; but we ought to wonder still more at His condescension. We adore His glory, and His magnificence; but we ought to bend the knee, and to melt the heart at His mercy, His suffering, and His love. Christ crucified for sinners, is an object more astonishing and over-powering than Christ glorified in heaven. In heaven, is His home, and His greatness. On earth was His banishment, and His humility. And therefore it was that when the spirits of Moses and Elias were seen with their divine Saviour, they did not express their adoration at His glory, but they spoke of His sufferings, and of His death. And shall we not be instructed by this remarkable truth — learn this, and lay it to heart? If the majesty and the greatness of God cannot move you—if you can reflect without emotion on the magnificence of Christ coming down to judgment, in the clouds of heaven, and in His own glory—if the day of judgment will not move you—if the opening grave will not affect you—turn to the sufferings and the love of Christ—remember the agony of Gethsemane—think of the crown of thorns, and the dying prayer—remember the resigning of the spirit, and the cause of all these sorrows—namely your sins, and the sins of all mankind, and repent, and
turn to God in mourning, for the sins you have committed, and in gratitude for the mercy which invites you to be forgiven, and to be redeemed.

Our final consideration was to be, concerning some of the various additional circumstances which attended this remarkable event. Let us glance at the language of St. Peter, when he beheld the glorious appearance before him. *Lord it is good for us to be here, let us build three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias*; but says the Evangelist, *he knew not what he said.* I shall only observe upon this, that though Christ was constantly with His disciples, He was only transfigured once; and they were able to bear His presence when He was as a man; but they could not bear that presence when He appeared as the Judge of the world. We may learn from this, that, while we are upon earth we ought to be contented with walking with our God in the path of humility and holiness, of faith, and of repentance; without expecting too much of rapture, and of extacy. There are many Christians who imagine that they have no hope of salvation, unless they are always favoured with being on the mount of transfiguration—with seeing Christ in His glory—and dwelling as it were among the glorified spirits in heaven. Their language is, "It is good to be here, let us " make tabernacles on earth, where we may take " up our rest, and have Christ constantly with us; " and have nothing to do but to have communion " with the spirits of the departed." Alas! though
the sincere Christian may have a glimpse of heaven by the study of Scripture, by fervent prayer, by living as in the continued presence of God—there is no perfect rest upon earth—the only rest is in heaven. While we are upon earth we know not what we say, when we talk of rest, and peace, and happiness. There is none to be found here. While we live here we can only have so much of perfection, as to make us long for heaven, while we still sigh and groan under the burden of the flesh: and our safety is, not to aspire after feelings of rapture, and extacies, and visions, but to walk with God humbly, and holily; and then we may sometimes be favoured with that peace of mind which is the earnest of heaven. Serve the Lord with fear, and then He may meet you in the way.

The last circumstance I shall notice is the voice from heaven—There came a voice out of the cloud which overshadowed them, This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him—and with this I would conclude, though I have not proceeded through one-tenth part of the wonderful discoveries, and of the useful inferences, which may be collected from this most interesting subject*; but I conclude with this incident, as the sum and substance of the whole Scripture. Hear the Son of God, for He calls upon each who is now present—hear Him—if you have not repented, and come to the fountains of living water, and prepare for the death of the

* Appendix, Note 11.
body that you may have communion with God in heaven, as Moses and Elias had communion in the Mount of Transfiguration. Hear Him, for He can command as a king, and He will sentence as the judge, though He now only pleads with you as a Saviour. Hear Him, while health and strength, and life remain. Hear the message of His Gospel, and the promise of His pardon—Come unto Me all ye that are weary of sin, and heavy laden 9 with the fear of the future. Take my yoke upon you for it is easy, and my burden for it is light, and ye shall find rest unto your souls 10. May God grant that we may thus learn to hear His blessed Son, to obey Him as our Teacher—to love Him as our Redeemer—and hereafter to adore Him for ever in the company of angels, and of spirits, and of just men made perfect 11 in that holy place, which He has prepared for all who believe in His atonement, and who pray that they may follow in His footsteps.

9 Matt. xi. 28. 10 Ibid. 29. 11 Heb. xii. 23.
SERMON XVIII.

THE NECESSITY AND EFFECTS OF THE ATONEMENT.

[Preached at Northallerton, on the Fifth Sunday in Lent.]

Heb. ix. 13, 14.

If the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.

The time is now rapidly approaching when we shall commemorate the most solemn events of our religion—the sufferings and the death, the burial, and the resurrection, of Christ. The services of the Church, therefore, introduce the subject by directing our attention, on the present day, to a general survey of the whole system of redemption. It is, indeed, a matter of congratulation, that we are, in some measure, guided to a contemplation of these important events in that order in which they took place: for the subject of the atonement and love of Christ towards a miserable and fallen world, is so
important to us, as accountable, and immortal men—it is so extensive, as it comprises the whole substance of Scripture, that our principal difficulty, when we would treat upon it, is, to know where to begin, or where to end; or in what manner to arrange the reflections which present themselves. We will endeavour therefore on this, and on the two following Sundays, as well as throughout the next week, when we celebrate all the events of the last seven days of the period which elapsed between the going up of our Lord to Jerusalem and his resurrection from the dead, so to arrange the extensive matter before us, that few of the principal circumstances shall escape our notice. It is the first season of Easter that I have been among you; and I am anxious that we should so take into our consideration all the events of the sufferings, and of the death of our crucified Lord, as to become more and more devoted, from this solemn period, to the government of our thoughts, and of our conduct, from the continued remembrance of His mercy, and His love.

The passage of Scripture, which I have selected for our consideration this morning, is taken from the Epistle of the day. You will observe that it is chosen from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The reason is this. St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews, both those who had and those who had not yet embraced Christianity—before they were dispersed over the world by the destruction of Jerusalem,—to explain to them the meaning, and the
object, of all the various sacrifices which had been appointed by the law of Moses. The unconverted Jews then, as they do now, regarded the law of Moses as superior to the law of Christ—and they supposed that the sacrifices ordained by his law were still required by the God of Israel. St. Paul, therefore, endeavoured to convince them, that Christ was superior to angels, and, consequently, much more was He superior to Moses. He wrote to impress upon them, that the law was but a shadow of good things to come, an introduction to a better covenant, that of the New Testament—that the blood of bulls, and of goats which were daily offered in the temple to take away the sins of the people, could have no power in themselves to prevent the punishment of wickedness; but were all types, or emblems of a much nobler sacrifice, that is, of the Son of God—and, consequently, that the time had now arrived, when all sacrifices, and ceremonies of the law, having fully answered their design, were henceforward to be abolished—God taketh away, he tells them, the first dispensation, that he may establish the second. In the course of his argument he fully demonstrates this fact, namely, that the religion which God has given to mankind, is in all ages one and the same. And that religion is summed up in this one point; namely, faith in the sacrifice of some great Being, who should have power to take away the guilt of sin.—Before the coming of Christ this faith was maintained in the world, by
the constant offering of the bodies of bulls and goats, which represented the expected true Sacrifice. Since the coming of Christ this same faith has been maintained, by the preaching of the Gospel, by the Sacred Scriptures, and by the institution of the Holy Sacrament, where the bread and the wine still signify both the death of the body of Christ and the pouring out of the blood of Christ, the one great sacrifice for sin, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world\(^1\). The passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews which was read to you this morning, was selected because it fully explains the manner in which the principal sacrifices resembled the sacrifice of Christ; and, by so doing, it explains to us also, as it did to the ancient Jews, the nature, and the consequences, of that atonement which Christ has made for man, and in which we believe. If the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the sprinkling of the ashes of an heifer, could remove the defilement of the flesh of the worshipper under the old law, so that he could be admitted once more to the presence of God—much more can the blood of Christ, and the sprinkling of that blood, remove the defilement of the conscience under the new law, and restore the sinner to the favour of God.

Such then is the subject we are to consider this morning—the nature and the effects of the atonement of Christ explained by the sacrifices of the Jewish law. As I intend my present

\(^1\) Rev. xiii. 8.
address to be merely the introduction to others on
the same point, I shall principally confine myself to
the explanation of those two words, which we so
continently use when we speak of the death of
Christ—sacrifice and atonement. The blood of
bulls and of goats was offered in sacrifice—and
they were accepted as an atonement for the sins
of the ancient worshippers. The blood of Christ
was poured out upon the cross as a sacrifice, and
His death is accepted as an atonement for those
who now believe in Him. The explanation of
these words will lead us to consider the necessity
and the effects of that atonement—of that won-
derful redemption which has been effected for us
by the Son of God.

I am first to shew you the meaning of the
two words, sacrifice and atonement—unless we
thoroughly comprehend them we can form no
clear ideas of the causes of the crucifixion of Christ.

A sacrifice was the slain body of an innocent
and unoffending animal, which was offered up to
God in religious worship. The ox, or the sheep,
the goat, or the bird, which was to be killed, was
selected with great care. After a certain time it was
brought to the altar of God. The worshipper who
brought it, placed his hand upon the head of the
animal, and confessed his sins. He then declared
that because of his sins his own life deserved to be
taken away, in the same manner as that of the
animal which was now about to be killed; and he
concluded by praying that the blood of the sacrifice
might be accepted instead of his own. When he had completed the prayer and the confession, then the blood of the animal was poured out upon the ground, and the body was placed upon the altar and burnt with fire. The blood was poured out, to signify that the blood of the worshipper ought in justice to have been shed in like manner—and the body was burnt after it was slain, to signify that death is not the only punishment which God requires, but that after death there remaineth a still more terrible punishment for the sin of man.

And now you will understand what is meant when you may hear in the course of the ensuing season, that Christ is called a sacrifice. As the animal was brought to the altar, after being selected with great care, to see that it was free from all blemish, so was Christ—who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth—brought to the altar of the cross, a Lamb without blemish, and without spot⁴. As the sins of the worshipper were supposed to be transferred to the animal sacrifice—so the Saviour of the word has borne our sins in His own body on the tree⁵. As the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar, so was the blood of Christ poured forth, when he kneeled down and prayed in His agony at Gethsemane—when the cruel scourge and nails tore His flesh—when the piercing thorns encircled His head—when the spear of the soldier entered His side,

⁷ 1 Pet. i. 19. ⁴ Ibid. ii. 24.
and the blood, which we commemorate in the Sacrament, flowed from His sacred form. As the fire consumed the victim, so was there some mysterious suffering, the fire of the wrath of God, similar in its nature to that which we shall experience hereafter if we die without repentance, inflicted upon the holy Victim, when He cried out, *Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me*—when He exclaimed upon the altar of the cross itself—*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* Then the fire from heaven was consuming the sacrifice—then the sins of man, not the sufferings of the spotless Lamb Himself, drew from His agonized bosom the strong cries and expressions which man, ungrateful man, can reflect upon without emotion—or even if he weeps at the tale, can reflect upon without repentance. Go to the cross of Christ if you would see the evil of sin.—See there in what respects Christ was the sacrifice, which bore the punishment which man deserves, when He died and suffered in the place of the offending worshipper!

Let us now consider what is meant by another word which usually occurs at this season, and which fully explains to us the cause of the sacrifice of Christ,—it is the word *atonement*. The word atonement signifies the satisfaction which is rendered by an offender to a broken law. *Now, with respect to human laws, atonement or satisfaction*

*Matt. xxvi. 39.*
may be made by man himself. If a man breaks the laws of his country, he is punished for so doing; and his punishment is a satisfaction or atonement for his offence. Provided too that the demands of the human law are complied with, this satisfaction may be sometimes made by another. Thus, if one man injures another, and the sentence of the law is, that the offender shall pay a sum of money or be sent to prison; then if, the man himself being unable to pay it, a friend shall pay it in his place, the friend who pays it renders satisfaction to the law, and thus makes an atonement. Now the Almighty God is the Ruler of the world; He governs not man only, but innumerable hosts of beings, equally rational, and immortal as man, which reason and Scripture both assure us, are spectators of the actions of Providence, and subjects of one invisible dominion. To all these beings, —to angels, and to men, God has given this law: Obey God, and live; disobey, and thou shalt be miserable. What may be the trial of the obedience of other beings we know not; but the command to our first parents was, *Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die*⁵. *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*⁶. It cannot be necessary to relate the disobedience of man, or to tell in what manner he became corrupt, and alienated from God: having once broken the law of God, he and all his whole

⁵ Gen. ii. 17.  
⁶ Ibid.

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race became subject to the sentence of the violated law. And now in what manner was the Almighty to act? Many of the angels, we are told in Scripture, had fallen, and they had found no forgiveness; they are bound in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; but they had fallen without temptation, by their own desire of evil. Man had fallen through the influence of another, and though the law of God had been broken, the Judge of the world was willing to pardon the offender, if satisfaction could be rendered to the law which had been broken. It was necessary to the continuance of the government of innumerable tribes of holy angels, who were still liable to fall, that they should all see, that the law of God could not be broken, and the offender escape from punishment—while, at the same time, the mercy of God appeared to require that the whole race of mankind, being led into evil by a superior, though fallen spirit, should not be condemned without hope, and without remedy. But where could the remedy be found? Two things were absolutely necessary—one, that the broken law should be obeyed—the other, that the punishment should be inflicted. But who, or where, was the being who could thus obey, and then suffer? Man had already become corrupt. Man, therefore, could not redeem his own soul, much less could he deliver his brother. Angels were liable to sin, and all their obedience could but preserve themselves. Then

7 Jude, 6.
it was, that the Holy Son of God looked with compassion upon the human race, and the wonderful system of redemption was formed; the completion of which we are about to commemorate. He looked, and He wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore His own arm brought salvation. Freely, and willingly, by His own love and pity for the fallen race, He offered Himself to the work of salvation. Lo, I come to do Thy will, oh my God, I am content to do it—was His language before He took upon Him the nature of man. And He came, in the fulness of time, according to His promise—and having first obeyed all the law of God to the very utmost—having conquered the tempter which had misled our first parents—having fully instructed us in the will of God, and enforced that instruction by His own spotless example, then He submitted to the sentence which man had deserved to suffer. He became the full and sufficient sacrifice which I have represented. He poured forth the blood of the New Covenant, and He died the death of the cross, that the fallen race of man might be delivered for ever. He made satisfaction to His Father for the law which man had broken, and thus became the atonement for the sins of the world. Such was the atonement of Christ, such is the meaning of the word. To us the doctrine is clearly revealed in the pages of Scripture. We believe in the true sacrifice, the Son of God; but

* Isaiah lix. 16.
to the ancient Jews, and to the early Patriarchs, the same truth was inculcated and preserved by the institution of sacrifice; and thus the doctrine that *without shedding of blood is no remission of sin*—that man must be pardoned by the means of sacrifice—that some other atonement than the repentance of the offender was necessary—in short, that such a Redeemer as ours could alone reconcile man to God, ever was, is, and shall be, the one great truth, to be preached among all nations, and in all ages, from the fall of man to the day of judgment—as revealing the only offering which can obtain the pardon of God, satisfy the law of God, and secure the salvation of the immortal soul. *Thanks be to God, for His unspeakable gift* 9—for the redemption of our own souls, as a part of the great family of man, through faith in the blood of the Holy Sacrifice. Do we value it rightly? If we believe sincerely, do we follow Him faithfully?

From thus considering the meaning of the words *sacrifice*, and *atonement*, we are brought to the more immediate subject before us—that the sacrifice of Christ is of infinitely more value than the blood of bulls and of goats. *How much more, does the apostle justly exclaim, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself* 10? It cannot be necessary to prove this point to you, who live under the dispensation of the Gospel—these were the shadows, the death

2 2 Cor. ix. 15. 10 Heb. ix. 14.
of Christ was the substance—they were indeed of no value in one sense, because it was not possible that the blood of animals offered in sacrifice could take away sin,—for there is no connexion whatever between the death of a victim, and the pardon of the sins of a man. The ancient sacrifices, therefore, were only to be valued as they were offered in obedience to the command of God, to preserve the remembrance of that greater and nobler Sacrifice, which was to come into the world. To the persons to whom St. Paul wrote, this doctrine was new, and offensive; to us, however, who possess the completed Scripture, it is familiar and acceptable; and to attempt to persuade you further of its truth would be but a loss of time. Let us proceed to the more useful point which I mentioned, the effect of the atonement of Christ upon the happiness and conduct of man.

Two important doctrines are submitted to us, respecting the nature and effects of the atonement of Christ, by the sacrifices of the Jewish law—they are these—first, that the atonement of Christ takes away the guilt of our sin, and removes its punishment; and next, that it does that which is still more valuable to a sincere Christian, it takes away the power of sin, and of wickedness, over the conscience, and the heart. The blood of the victims was poured out at the foot of the altar, and then the punishment and the guilt of the worshipper were removed: but, in addition to this, some part of the blood was taken up by the priest to be sprinkled
upon the people—thereby to denote the necessity of their applying to themselves the doctrine of the atonement, by removing those sins of the heart, which occasioned the death of the victim. This same truth also was especially enforced by the circumstance alluded to respecting the ashes of the heifer. These were mingled with water, after the whole body of the victim had been burnt upon the altar, and then sprinkled upon those worshippers who came to be purified from their defilements. In the same manner the blood of Christ is first poured out, and His body is offered up as the sacrifice to procure the pardon of all who believe in Him; but in addition to this there must be such an application of His death to the soul, that the conscience may be cleansed from dead works to serve the living God.

It is not enough to believe that our sins are pardoned, through the atonement of Christ. —It is not enough to commemorate His death—to mourn over His sufferings—to hope in His merits—and to say we have faith in the redemption, unless we lay aside the dead works which prove that we have no life in us.—By this expression St. Paul means, all kinds of sin, whether of thought, word, or deed —and they are so called because they proceed from spiritual death. Those are called dead in Scripture, who are without hope, and faith, and obedience to God. Those who have no interest in the system of redemption are dead—dead in trespasses.

and sins—dead to the hope of happiness, dead to the comforts of religion, dead to the invitations of the Gospel. As a dead body can no longer hear the voice of its friends, or the sounds of melody—as it can no longer see the glories of the sun and the beauties of creation—so may a man be spiritually dead. He can bring himself while his body is still alive to such a state, that he can no longer hear the voice of God, nor the sound of His Gospel—he can no longer see the glories of redemption, nor the beauties and excellence of a good hope in the Son of God. Therefore, the actions which men commit in such a state are called dead works. But those who desire to feel an interest in the death of Christ begin to live—they live to God—a new spirit is breathed into them—they are purified by the sprinkling of the blood of the great Sacrifice, and, while their sins are pardoned, they serve also the living God. You may remember that there were sacrifices provided under the Jewish law for all sins, but for the sin of presumption. For that sin no sacrifice was provided—and so it is also with us. The blood of the atonement cleanses from all sin; but if we profess to believe in the death of Christ, and approach to Him with the dead works of presumptuous, and unrepented sin; then our faith is in vain. The same blood which is poured out for our pardon, must be sprinkled upon our conscience, that we may serve the living

12 Eph. ii. 1.
God, while we profess to believe in his Son. It is not enough that sin be pardoned, unless sin be also forsaken.

I conclude, therefore, by reminding you, that if you desire to commemorate the approaching season with this holy temper—if you are conscious, upon a survey of your past lives, that you have broken the law of God—but that you desire the pardon of your sins, and then the purifying of your conscience from dead works to serve the living God—then to you is the word of this salvation sent—then the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself as a spotless sacrifice for sin, shall be your deliverer, from the wrath to come, and from all the punishment of an offended God. If, however, there are those among you who have other hopes of salvation than the atonement of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, such persons must be told that their hope is in vain. If the pride of their reason rejects it—if they are unwilling to resign the sin which separates them from their Saviour, and therefore reject it—if for any cause whatever they imagine that they may reject the crucified Son of God, and be saved in the great day of judgment by any other hope, they have rejected the counsel of God against themselves—and they shall rise from the grave with sorrow. There is no name under heaven by which a fallen man can be saved but the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whose death we are about to commemorate. Hope then, and believe in Him,
if you value peace of mind now—if you desire happiness—if you would obtain pardon for the past—strength for the present—or eternal salvation hereafter—seek for all in the atonement of the Son of God. Blessed are all they, and they only, in life and in death, who put their trust in Him.
SERMON XIX.

ON PALM SUNDAY.

[Preached at Northallerton, on the Sunday before Easter, 1828.]

JOHN xii. 1. 12, 13.

Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.—On the next day, much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.

I REMINDED you, on Sunday last, that the time was drawing near when we were to be called upon to commemorate the sufferings and the death, the burial, and the resurrection, of Christ; and I endeavoured to explain to you, from the customs of the Jewish law, the meaning of the two words, which we so often use to describe the causes and the consequences of our Saviour's sufferings. I wished to shew, as an introduction to the general
subject, that the cause of His death was, that He might become the sacrifice which the justice of the Almighty required; and that the consequences of His death were, that an atonement, or satisfaction, being made for sin, man may be pardoned by faith in the Son of God. We commence on this day the commemoration to which I alluded.

Our Lord had now nearly completed His ministry. By the silent influence of His teaching, and His miracles, He had directed the attention of the whole nation to Himself. He had performed the greatest of all His miracles—the raising of Lazarus from the dead—in the presence of many of the principal persons of the country; and the Pharisees, and chief priests, who expected, and who were resolved to have, a different Messiah,—a Messiah who should deliver them from the Roman yoke,—summoned a Council at Jerusalem, and then came to a resolution to put Him to death. From that day forth, says St. John, they took counsel together to put Him to death 1. And they issued a proclamation against Him, that if any man knew where He was, he should inform them, that they might take Him. Now it is one of the many proofs and evidences of our Saviour's divine mission, that He not only accomplished all the prophecies which related to Him; but He also fulfilled the various types under which He had been shadowed forth in the Old Testament. He is called our Passover 2,

1 John xi. 53. 2 1 Cor. v. 7.
and the Lamb which was slain. It was necessary, therefore, that even these types should be fulfilled, and that, when Christ proved Himself to be the Lamb of God, which was to be slain, He should only be slain at the time of the Passover, and thus fulfil the Scriptures, even to the very letter. In consequence of this resolution of the Pharisees, our Lord retired for a short time to a city called Ephraim, until the celebration of the Passover drew nigh. That season had now come, and Jesus perceiving that the time had arrived when all things were to be accomplished—came forth from his retirement, and began his last journey to Jerusalem. Freely and willingly He came forth to suffer the things which He knew would befall Him; for He told His disciples by the way, that He should be betrayed unto the chief priests, and scribes, and they should condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles, who should mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit upon Him, and crucify Him—adding this, however, for their comfort, that He should rise again the third day. The text which I have selected informs us that this, the last journey of our Lord, had now reached its termination. Six days before the Passover, at which He was to be crucified, He arrived at the place where He had performed His last miracle; that Lazarus might be seen in His company, and that any of the people who desired to make in-

* Rev. v. 12.
quries respecting the raising of Lazarus from the
dead, might have an opportunity of doing so, and
be satisfied. He remained at Bethany that day;
and on the morrow he went up to Jerusalem in the
manner, and under the circumstances, which we
commemorate on the present Sunday, which we
call "Palm Sunday," because the people of Jeru-
usalem came down from the city to meet their King
with branches of palm-trees in their hands; salut-
ing Him with hosannas, and anthems of praise.
This, therefore, is the subject which we are more
particularly called upon to consider this morning.
And as every day of this holy week is distinguished,
in like manner, by its peculiar events,—and each
day is set apart for religious worship, to enable us
more deeply, and more efficiently to consider the
passion of our Lord, I propose, throughout the
week, after the morning prayers, to relate, and to
discuss the actions of our Lord on each respective
day, until He broke from the prison of the grave,
and rose from the dead. And I invite every per-
son, but more especially the younger part of my
hearers, who may not be prevented by the un-
avoidable duties and engagements of life, to come
to the Church. I am anxious to lay before you a
connected review of the events of the final week of
our Saviour's ministry—that you may understand
better that wonderful sacrifice, and atonement,
which He was now about to offer. Knowledge is
the parent of true devotion—and the Christian re-
ligion is so perfect—the conduct of Christ is so
lovely—the character of Christ is so pure—the
ercy and compassion of Christ towards mankind
is so unbounded, and so wonderful, that we ought
not to be satisfied with general admiration and
gratitude. We are bound to examine closely, and
to endeavour to understand thoroughly, the system
of redemption, and the religion of the Bible; that
we may establish our faith upon knowledge, and
obtain the enlightening of our understanding; that
we may the more effectually affect our hearts, and
regulate our conduct.

Let us now consider in their order, the events
which we this day commemorate—the going up
of Christ to Jerusalem—His conduct on His ar-
rial there—and the character in which our
Lord must be received by His people—namely,
as the king of His spiritual Israel.

We are first to consider the going up of Christ
to Jerusalem. On the next day much people that
were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus
was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees,
and went forth to meet Him, and cried Hosanna.
St. John wrote his Gospel after those of the three
other Evangelists had been given to the world, and
he has not, therefore, informed us of many parti-
culars which are mentioned by them, and to which
we may refer. We learn from their united narra-
tives—that on the morning of the fifth day before
the Passover, He sent two of His disciples to the
village over against them, telling them that they
should find an ass tied, and a colt with her, whereon
never man sate, loose them, and bring them to me —and say to the owner, who may inquire why you loose them, that the Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them. The disciples did as Jesus had commanded; and He rode on the colt in the same state as the ancient kings, and leaders of the people, in the early days of the history of Israel. Then the multitude met Him—and the people of Jerusalem, because they had heard of His mighty deeds, and especially of the raising of Lazarus, came forth to meet Him. And a very great multitude came, and some spread their garments in the way, as they were accustomed to welcome their princes and their kings—others bore the branches of palm-trees in their hands, as the Jews used to welcome the conquerors who returned home in triumph—others cut down branches from the palm-trees, and scattered them before Him, as they were accustomed to do in the feast of tabernacles, in token of happiness, liberty, and joy. Thus was He severally acknowledged to be the king of Israel—the conqueror of their enemies, and their expected Messiah—and the multitudes that went before, and they that followed, began to rejoice, and to praise God for all the mighty works which Christ had done among them. They cried out to each other, according to the custom of their country, that if one person passed by another, and began a passage of Scripture, he that was

3 Matt. xxii. 3.
going by went on with it—*Hosanna to the Son of David—Hosanna in the highest—blessed be the kingdom of our Father David—blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.* And here let us observe how wonderful are the ways of Providence with respect to Christ. Not only by His going up to Jerusalem in this triumphant manner did He accomplish the prophecy of Zechariah, which had been delivered three hundred and eighty years before, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion—Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass*⁵—not only did He accomplish this prophecy—(and that He, He alone, accomplished it, at this time, appears from this fact—that no one king, prince, chief, or illustrious man, ever entered Jerusalem in a similar manner from the date of the prophecy to this period)—He fulfilled also that type, or emblem, under which He was represented in the institutions of the law of Moses. It was the custom of the Jews, on the fifth day before the Passover, to select, from the rest of the flock, the lamb which they intended to sacrifice—and it was always led out, and carefully set apart, till the day on which it was to be killed, with shouts and with acclamations of joy. So did Christ our Passover go forth on the fifth day before His crucifixion to the place in which He was to be slain. No human hand

⁵ Zech. ix. 9.
drew him out, as the poor lamb was taken away from the fold. Of His own love and mercy He separated Himself from His brethren, and became a free-will offering for mankind—and He went on nearer and nearer to Jerusalem among the Hosannas, and the shouts, and the acclamations, of the multitude, the holy and consecrated Sacrifice who was to die for the sins of man. And now He approached to Jerusalem: and what was His conduct when He came within sight of the city? He had already, by His command to His disciples in the morning, proved that His knowledge was more than human—when He told them, that they should discover in the village an ass tied, and a colt with her—and that the owners would at first resist their removal, but that they should at length consent, when they were told that the Lord had need of them—and now He demonstrated to them that His compassion, like His knowledge, was also divine. When He came near, says the Evangelist, He beheld the city—He wept over it. He looked down upon it, from the summit of Mount Olivet, and Jesus wept over Jerusalem. He wept over the city which was to reject Him with insult and scorn, when they found that He was their spiritual deliverer, and not the temporal Messiah whom they demanded. He wept over the men who should scourge Him, and strike Him, and condemn Him to death. He wept over the Jews who betrayed


v 2
Him, the disciple who sold Him—the Romans who crucified Him, and the rabble and the multitude who derided His sufferings on the cross, when they called upon Him to leave His work of mercy unfinished—Come down from the cross, and we too will believe Thee. And would you now demand what spiritual instruction may be derived from this part of our narrative? Every incident abounds with the most impressive and forcible lessons. Did Christ go up to Jerusalem among the hosannas and praises of the people? So has He gone up into heaven, amidst the shouts of the hosts of angels, when He ascended among them as Lord and King of glory. Did He know the hearts of men upon earth? He knows them still, whether they pray to Him, or whether they reject Him. Did He pause to weep over Jerusalem, amidst the Hosannas of the gathered multitudes of Judea? So does He now weep, till the work of salvation be ended, over the sins and apostacy of His followers, who confess Him with their lips, but deny Him by their lives—who crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. If thou hadst known even thou, He exclaimed, over the abandoned and bloody city, at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. We are acquainted with the things that belong unto our peace. The day of hope, and of faith, is continued to us—this is the day of our salvation, when we commemorate the last scenes of the ministry of our Lord. Are we
taking care to improve it, lest the things which belong to our peace be for ever hidden from our eyes?

From considering the going up of our Lord to Jerusalem, we were to turn to His conduct on His arrival in that city.

When He was come into Jerusalem, says St. Matthew, all the city was moved, as it might well be, saying who is this?—This, the multitude answered, with the same zeal which had marked the whole of their actions, this, is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. The Pharisees had requested our Lord to reprove the people when they welcomed Him with hosannas. He for the first time justified the popular attention—I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones of the streets would immediately cry out—that is, some new and wonderful miracle would have taken place to demonstrate the certainty of our Saviour's mission, if the multitude had not accomplished the prophecy of Zechariah, when the King of Israel entered into His own city. Still the acclamations were continued, and again the Pharisees requested Him to silence the multitude: again He refused, though they had followed Him, into the temple of God; for He came up to die, and He was now regardless of the malice and hatred of the rulers of the people. They followed Him, as I have said, into the temple of God. The King of Israel was not received into the palace of the governor—His own priests would not welcome Him—the Scribes and the Pharisees
looked upon the acclamations of the people with contempt and scorn. Christ regarded them not. Intent only upon the duties of His divine mission, He proceeded at once to the holy temple, and there, by an influence which none of the Evangelists have described, but of which we read only the effects, He drove out, by the terrors of His presence, all the profaners of the temple, who occupied with their tables for changing the money of the worshippers, those parts of the house of God, which were appropriated to the Gentiles who came to sacrifice to the God of the Jews. He had entered Jerusalem as a king; and the driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple was the only act of royal authority which He exercised while upon earth; as if He would prove to us, that purity of faith, and worship, is the one great object which is to be effected over the whole world by the mission of the Son of God. Having thus cleansed the temple of God, He proceeded to heal the lame, and the blind, and the sick, who had been attracted by the universal excitation, and had followed Him into the house of God. From each of these events, a series of useful inferences might be derived; each however was intended to compel the universal attention of the people to the King of Israel, and to the mere notice of this object we must, at present, confine our remarks. The last event however, which took place on this fifth day before the passover, deserves more especial notice. On two several occasions our Lord had been pointed out to
the people of Israel by an audible voice from heaven. Once in the wilderness, after His baptism—there came a voice from heaven, which declared Him to be the Son of God, to all the crowds who were assembled at the baptism of John. At the Mount of the Transfiguration again, the voice from heaven declared *This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him.* And now, for the third time, the same miracle took place, in the temple of Jerusalem, in the presence of all the people who had followed Him—*Father,* said our Lord, when the admiring throng had gathered round Him in the temple, *glorify thy Son*—

Then came there, says St. John, *a voice from heaven—I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again.*

Our Lord, as you well know, was revealed as the priest, the prophet, and the king of His people. The first voice from heaven at His baptism, announced Him to be the priest, who was then to begin His public ministry—the voice at the transfiguration announced Him as the prophet, who should come into the world; and He accordingly began, from that time, to prophesy His sufferings, and His death—and the voice from heaven on this fifth day before the passover announced Him to be the king whom Zechariah had predicted. Thus are we bound to receive Christ as the priest who should sacrifice for us, even His own body on the tree—as the prophet who should teach us, both in life, and in death—as the king who shall govern us,

7 John xii. 28.
both here, and for ever. The evidence, too, which assures us that He is revealed in all these three characters is the same; that we may depend upon His sacrifice, listen to His teaching, and submit to His government. And as the lamb which was set apart for the passover was sealed upon the forehead to shew that it was free from blemish, so did our Lord receive the seal of the Spirit from above, when the voice now came from heaven to confirm His own act and deed, in separating Himself from His brethren and mankind, as the sacrifice which He was about willingly to make. The evening of this sacred day was now approaching, and our Lord solemnly declares to the people, after the voice from heaven, the nature of His death, and the effects of His crucifixion upon the world—\textit{I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.} He then added the assertion related in this twelfth chapter of St. John, that the word which He had spoken should judge the man who rejected Him, in the last day. And He returned with the twelve to Bethany, from whence He had departed in the morning.

Such were the events which we commemorate this day. It is not necessary that I should attempt to prove to you how forcibly they ought to appeal to us, even if we consider them by themselves; when, however, we view them as introductory only to the more perfect development of the system of redemption, we shall be still more impressed with the conviction of their importance—
and this brings us to the last point we are to consider, the character of Christ as the king of His spiritual Israel.

The doctrine of the day, that Christ is the king of His spiritual Israel, is beautifully enforced upon us by the epistle of the day. There we learn that the same Jesus, who appeared in our human nature, is highly exalted; that at His name every knee should bow, and every tongue confess Him Lord. Christ, says the apostle, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and was found in fashion as a man. This language is somewhat obscure, and by many is not understood—the expression to be in the form of God, signifies to be God, and the expression found in fashion as a man, denotes being a man. The expression also, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, has been misapprehended. The meaning of the passage is—Christ, being God before the foundation of the world, thought it no usurpation to exercise the powers of God; nevertheless He made Himself of no reputation: He became man, and was subject to death—even the death of the cross. The latter part of the passage too may appear to require explanation, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him. If, it may be asked, He was already God, how can it be said God hath highly exalted Him? I answer, that Christ, since He became man, though He is now exalted into

Phil. ii. 7.
heaven, is not raised there in the same manner as He was before the foundation of the world. He is exalted in that human, though glorified nature, which He put on when He became man; in which He suffered, in which He died, in which He ascended. God, therefore, hath highly exalted that human nature, which Christ bore upon earth—that every knee should bow—not merely unto God the Father—not merely to the Son of God considered as divine—but that every knee should bow at the name of Jesus—of the man Jesus, who rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, as the Mediator between God and man—as the forerunner of man, as the proof and earnest of our own elevation.

And now you see for what reason Christ went up into Jerusalem as on this day. The Jerusalem on earth is an emblem of that place of glory which St. Paul calls the Jerusalem from above⁹. As Christ went up into the earthly Jerusalem, the brother of the sons of Abraham, the searcher of their hearts, the mourner for their sins, the king of His people Israel; so is He gone up into heaven, the brother of the children of men, the searcher of our hearts, the mourner for our sins, the king of the universal Church. As the people and the multitude hailed Him the king of Israel, so at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord—Lord of the heaven and of the

earth—Lord of the living, and of the dead—to the glory of God the Father. Yes, Christ the suffering, the crucified, the risen Christ, is the Lord, and King over all. His kingdom extends over us, as well as over others; and we are, at this moment, His obedient subjects, or His rebellious foes. To Him the power is granted to defend us from our enemies—to protect us in temptation—to deliver us from evil—in the hour of death to comfort us—in the day of judgment to save us. I could relate, if your time permitted, the extent of His dominion, the greatness of His majesty, the glory of His power. Sitting at the right hand of God, wield ing the sceptre of the universe, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; He is still the friend of man, the Saviour of all who believe in the message of His mercy and love, and who pray to Him for pardon for the past, and strength for the future. Let this mind then be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus—who being God, and exercising the powers of God, nevertheless became an humble, and suffering man. Follow Christ in His humility, the virtue for which we pray through this holy week, because the pride of the heart is the foundation of all inward evil, and is hateful in the sight of God. Follow Christ in His patience, amidst the afflictions and calamities of life. Follow Christ in His resistance to evil—in His meekness under reproaches—in His gentleness, in His kindness, in His devotion to God, in His benevolence towards man. Highly exalted as He is, He invites you,
His brethren, and His sons, to follow Him through the vale of tears, to the kingdom of His glory. He bids you to remember the promise which He has so graciously made to the universal Church, and to each of us among the number. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne*\(^\text{10}\). Let us offer our prayers to God, that as we are now partakers of the same nature with our King, we may render Him the loyalty of subjects, and become partakers of the same happiness.

\(^{10}\text{Rev. iii. 21.}\)
SERMON XX.

MONDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

[Preached at Northallerton on Monday in Passion week, 1828.]

Matthew xxi. 18, 19.

In the morning, as He returned into the city, He hungered, and when He saw a fig-tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever; and presently the fig-tree withered away.

Pursuant to the plan which I submitted to you yesterday, we are to direct our attention this morning to the events which occurred on the fourth day before the passover, on which our Lord was put to death. As the week which we now keep holy is called Passion Week; and as the services of the Church direct us more particularly to the sufferings of our Lord, some surprise may possibly be excited that I should dwell at such length upon the last actions of the life of Christ, and not upon the agonies of the garden of Gethsemane, the pains
of His cross, and the sorrows of His death. My reason is this—not only do we hear in the course of the week, the relation of His apprehension, His crucifixion, and His death, from the narrative of each of the Evangelists—not only too do we appropriate one particular day to the contemplation of the sad moment when He commended His suffering spirit to His Father; but there is so much of wisdom—of propriety—and of every imaginable excellence in the various actions which marked the last few days of the ministry of Christ, that we obtain from an examination of them new proofs of His divinity, and become more and more confirmed in our conviction of the one great truth, which I am so desirous to impress upon you, that Christ was the willing sacrifice; and, therefore, the acceptable atonement for the sins of the world. Our reflections upon the death of Christ may be said to be in some measure of the same nature with our reflections upon the loss of our private friends. We remember them more affectionately, we lament them more deeply, in proportion as we reflect upon the virtues of their lives, or their affection towards ourselves. So also shall we commemorate, with more heartfelt emotion, the dying hour of our blessed Lord, if we first employ our leisure in contemplating the loveliness of His character, and the proofs of His unbounded mercy.

The present day, the fourth before the crucifixion, was distinguished by fewer events than yesterday, and fewer instructions than, as I shall shew
you, were delivered as on to-morrow. The first event was that which I have read to you in this passage from St. Matthew, the withering of the barren fig-tree—the others were the second casting out of the buyers and sellers from the temple, and the continued plotting of the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the chiefs of the people, to accomplish His destruction. The two last of these have been already considered. In confining ourselves, therefore, to the first, I shall endeavour to point out to you the design which our Lord had in view, in pronouncing this remarkable sentence—the conclusions we may derive from our contemplation are submitted to us in that sublime passage of Isaiah, which has been read in the service of the day.

Let us first inquire what was the design of our Lord in pronouncing that sentence upon the fig-tree, under which it withered away. It cannot be necessary that I should attempt to prove to you, that our Saviour could not have acted from any inferior motive: there must have been some useful object proposed by this action; and that object must have been connected with the particular instruction which He intended to impress upon the people, before He was taken from among them. Now the instruction which He was endeavouring to enforce upon the Jews, was this—that if they continued to reject Him—their long promised Messiah—and to bring forth no fruits of repentance, their Church and their state should both be in-
olved in one hopeless ruin. The principal question, therefore, which we have to consider is, whether this lesson could be impressed upon the Jewish people, by the miraculous withering of this tree?

To enable us to answer this question, we must take into consideration the custom which then prevailed among the Jews—which is everywhere to be found in Scripture—and which still exists among us, and every other people, to a greater or less degree. The custom to which I allude, is this—the expressing spiritual ideas in language which is derived from visible objects—and especially from those which abound in the country, the mountains, and the fields. Thus the ancient prophets, when they speak of the anger of Jehovah, describe Him as *threshing out the Heathen, and trampling them beneath His feet* 1. He scatters His enemies like chaff upon the mountains 2. He treads them down, as the grapes are trodden in the wine-press 3. Now, of all the visible objects which are most commonly used to describe spiritual objects—the most usual is, the emblem of a vine, and of a vineyard, as representing the Church of God—*Thou, oh God, broughtest a vine out of Egypt* 4—that is, the Jewish Church—*what more could be done for my vineyard that I have not done* 5 6 that is, "what more could have been done for my people.

1 Hab. iii. 12. 2 Jer. xiii. 24. 3 Lam. i. 15.
4 Psalm lxxx. 8. 5 Isaiah v. 4.
"to induce them to obey my commandments?"
And so I might multiply many instances. Now,
in the New Testament, we find that the same mode
of expression is used by our Lord after He had
been speaking of the destruction of the tower of
Siloam, which fell at Jerusalem. He assures the
people of Jerusalem, that unless they repented, they
should perish in the same manner; and He then
goes on to relate this parable as applicable to the
subject before him: A certain man had a fig tree
planted in his vineyard. Now, we know that the
vineyard meant the whole kingdom or Church of
Israel, and as our Lord had been speaking of Jeru-
usalem only, and applied His parable to that city,
we may infer that by the fig tree in this parable,
He denoted the city of Jerusalem. These three
years I come, says the parable, seeking fruit upon
this fig tree; and the ministry of Christ continued
three years; cut it down. The fig-tree, however,
was to be spared another season, as Jerusalem was;
and it was only to be cut down at the last, if it did
not produce fruit in its season. Having then com-
pared Jerusalem to the fig-tree in a former parable,
the appearance of that tree which He passed on
this fourth morning before the passover, was so
emblematical of the condition of the Jewish people,
that He only completed the parallel by pronounc-
ing that destruction upon it which He had be-
fore predicted in His parable.—As He was hungry,

and desired fruit from the fig-tree, so had He earnestly desired to see the fruits of righteousness and faith in the highly favoured Jerusalem.—As the fig-tree was covered with leaves, and made only a goodly and beautiful appearance to the eye; so did the people of Jerusalem wear the outward appearance of religion; they had the beautiful temple, the splendid worship, the strict adherence to the ceremonies of the law, while they were on the very point of murdering their Messiah; and righteousness, mercy, and faith were absent.—As the fruit might have been expected from the fig-tree, because the time for the gathering of the figs by strangers had not yet come; and, therefore, they ought still to have been found upon the tree, if the tree had at all borne them; so might the fruits of faith and holiness have been expected from the Jews, before the Gentiles were called in to partake of the privileges of the Church of God. Thus was the withering of the fig-tree, the open and visible emblem of the state of the Jewish Church, at the time while our Lord was about to be crucified; and thus, by his actions, did He prophesy to that generation, even before He predicted it in words, on the next day, the total destruction of Jerusalem—the holy city—the favoured city—the joy of the whole earth—the place where dwelt the honour of God. All that the love of God could do—all that His prophets could say—all that His wonders could accomplish—the discourses of Christ—the miracles of Christ—the tears of Christ—all,
all were in vain, to warn and to change the hearts of the apostate Church of God, and to bring the people of Jerusalem to their King. I told you, yesterday, how He wept over the city that should slay Him—and to-day we learn this sad and fearful lesson, that the men, and the people, and the city which will not repent, when the tears of their Saviour were shed to appeal to them, must be condemned to utter and signal ruin. Under this sentence they still suffer. From that generation to the present day, the Jewish nation have wandered over the earth, the scorn and the contempt of mankind—the living witnesses of the mercy, and long-suffering, as well as of the justice and righteousness of God. Three years, says the parable, the fig-tree was spared, but it bore no fruit—it was cut down as a cumbrence to the ground, and the nations of the Gentiles are planted in its place.

We are now, therefore, brought to the second part of our subject. The reflections which ought to influence us when we perceive that the Jews, the once highly favoured people, were thus rejected, at least for a season—for all the prophets declare they will certainly be restored again upon their repentance, when the fulness of the Gentiles has come—that we might become the Church of God. The conclusions to which I would direct you are these—that if the Gentiles are now planted in the vineyard of God, in the place of the Jews, the precepts, the promises, and the threatenings which were applicable to them, are useful to us. Our
Saviour and our King is the same—our deliverances from evil are the same—our scriptures are granted by the same Spirit of inspiration—all the mercy of God is the same; and I grieve to add, that our ingratitude towards God, and our danger of falling away from Him, and of incurring that sentence which He pronounced upon the emblematical fig-tree, is the same—*Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?—Let no fruit grow on thee, henceforward for ever.* The Reformers who framed the services of the Church appear to have been influenced by considerations of this nature, when they selected for the epistle of the day that beautiful prophecy of Isaiah, in which these reflections are summed up. The prophet is wrapt in one of those extacies in which the future was opened before him in the visions of prophecy, as the past is opened to us in the pages of history. He beholds the coming events, and breaks out into an animated address to the expected King of Israel, the conqueror of the enemies of His universal church; and He receives the reply of the Messiah in return. The prophecy, therefore, is delivered in the form of a dialogue between Isaiah on the one hand, and the mighty Personage whose coming he predicts, on the other. The first interpretation, therefore, of the prophecy, must refer to the Church of the Jews; its second interpretation is applicable to ourselves, as their successors in the vineyard of God. It is divided into three portions—the coming of the Messiah to deliver them from their enemies—the review of the
mercy manifested to the Church—and the prayer of the Jewish people, to whom the compassion of the Redeemer was first to be extended.

Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah; the prophet begins, this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? "Who is this," the meaning is, "who cometh from the conquest of the enemies of the Church of God—this, that is more glorious in His appearance than the sons of men—traveling in the greatness of a strength which none can resist?" The answer is, "I, the Messiah, I, the King of Israel, I who shall one day be revealed as a suffering and dying man, I that speak righteousness, mighty to save."—Allusion is then made to the wine-press, the same emblem of the wrath of God which is mentioned by St. John in the Book of Revelation. \textit{Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel, and Thy garments like Him that hath trodden the wine-press? }I have trodden the wine-press alone, is the answer, of the people there were none with Me. I looked, and there was none to help—I wondered there was none to uphold, therefore my arm brought salvation. That is, "I, the Son of God, have undertaken the deliverance of My people from their spiritual enemies, whom I have trampled in mine anger—I have conquered by suffering—I have saved my people by my death— I, even I, alone, have done it—there was none

\footnotesize{Isaiah lxiii. 1—6.}
other to save mankind—neither man, nor angel, was with me in performing this work of salvation—My arm alone accomplished it." Every line of this prophecy is worthy of separate consideration. The spiritual Edom—the Bozrah, from which our Saviour is represented as returning in triumph—denotes the common enemies of the spirits of men, whether in the early or in the latter ages. Christ came to conquer the enemies of the salvation of man. He came to conquer the fear of death which bows down the spirit of man, by teaching how to die. He came to conquer that which makes the death of the body terrible; namely, the spiritual death within, the power of evil in the heart, and the dread of the punishment which shall come after the death of the body. He came to conquer the tempter which first introduced evil, and which still too much governs the hearts of men, and rules in the children of disobedience. He came to conquer the world—to subdue the attractions of its prosperity, its riches, and its honours, by teaching man that these are all the lesser blessings of life when compared with a good hope of happiness, and present faith in God. He came to teach man to conquer the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, by preferring poverty, affliction, and adversity, to the splendor of thrones, and riches, and pomp, and pride—and thus, having conquered evil, He bore the punishment of man, and thus He trod alone, and unassisted, the wine-press of

1 John ii. 16.
the wrath of God. Such was the character in which their Messiah was revealed to the Jews as the Saviour of their souls, and the leader of their immortal spirits to a better world. I need not relate to you the manner in which they received Him—how they rejected a spiritual Saviour, and demanded an earthly conqueror—how they rejected a deliverer from sin and death, and required a worldly conqueror, who should save them from the power of Rome. Who hath believed our report? was the demand of the same prophet—and the Son of God was revealed in vain—and the wine-press of the wrath of God was trodden for the sins of man—but the Jews regarded it not, till their city was destroyed, and their temple laid desolate, and we, the Gentile nations, were made the Church of God. And now, therefore, the prophecy is addressed to us—we are invited to receive the Saviour whom the Jews rejected. To us, as to them, He is revealed as the conqueror of the enemies of the soul of man. To us His arm has brought salvation, and we will believe in, and obey Him. We will learn experience from the lessons of the past, and remember that if God cast off His highly favoured people, the Jews, because they crucified the Lord of life, so also shall we be rejected, if we receive the message of a dying Saviour in vain. If God spared not the natural branches, says St. Paul, take heed, lest He also spare not thee.

9 Rom. xi. 21.
The second division of this prophecy is, the review of the mercies manifested to the Church.

When the prophet had described the Messiah of Israel as the conqueror of the enemies of the Church of God, he looks back upon the unnumbered mercies which had attended the people of Israel from the earliest ages to the time of Christ. *I will mention the loving kindness of the Lord, according to the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses. For He said, surely they are My people, children that will not lie; therefore He was their Saviour. In all their affliction He was afflicted. In His love, and His pity He redeemed them*¹⁰. The meaning of these expressions is, that, throughout the whole of the period in which the people of Israel had been selected from among the rest of mankind as the chosen people of God, one continued series of goodness and mercy had followed them. He had brought them out of Egypt, by a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm. He had led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness. He had guided them through the desert by the fire by night, and the cloud by day. He had planted them in the land of Canaan, and the vine was brought out of Egypt, and it took root, and filled the land. The whole of their history was one continued course of mercy and of love—of patience and long suffering—and of no people could it be

¹⁰ Isaiah lxiii. 9.
said with equal justice—*in all their affliction He was afflicted.* Therefore it was, that when the prophet beheld in his visions the coming of their long expected Lord, he expresses his conviction that the people of Israel would remember these mercies of God, and receive the Spiritual Messiah of their fathers. *Surely they are my people—children that will not deny me* 11: but, alas, when the desires of man are opposed to the commands of God, mercies will not move them, gratitude will not affect them, the warnings of Providence will not impress them. More could not have been done for the vineyard of the Jewish Church, than had been done—yet they rebelled, and they vexed the Holy Spirit, and He turned against them, and fought against them. And is it not so with us? Is not this part of the prophecy applicable to us? Have not goodness and mercy, both temporal and spiritual, followed us also, all the days of our lives? Cannot we look back upon the peculiar mercies of God, and trace the hand of Providence in our prosperity, and adversity? Have there been no loving kindnesses bestowed upon us in the multitude of the mercies of God? Cannot we say, as well as the Jews of old—*in all our afflictions He was afflicted?* He was our support, and hope, and comfort, when every human aid was of no avail? And if we are thus conscious of the continuance of the Providence of God, shall we not avoid the ingratitude of those

11 Isaiah lxiii. 8.
who in this respect also are held up to us as an example? The character of the conqueror of the enemies of God did not move them—neither did the recollection of the mercies of their God impress them. Shall we imitate their example in the unbelief which rejected their Messiah, or in the ingratitude which induced them to despise Him? If the Almighty had done as much for us as He did for the Jewish Church, will not the same return be demanded? If mercies will not move us, will not the justice of God appeal to us? If we do not produce the fruit which is demanded of us, as the trees which are planted in the vineyard of God—are we not in danger of grieving His Holy Spirit, that He resolve no more to send us the gracious rain of His divine influences, to enable us to bring forth fruit? Is there not danger lest our ingratitude bring upon us the sentence, cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?

And now that I have shewn you the meaning of that apparently mysterious action of our Saviour, the withering of the barren fig-tree, that it was an emblem of the ruin of the Jewish Church—having shewn you also the manner in which their own prophet predicted the coming of the Messiah whom they rejected, and the review of the mercies which were sent to them in vain, I conclude with repeating to you the prayer with which the prophet closed his prediction. Look down from heaven and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory—Thou, oh, Lord, art our Father and
our Redeemer—return for thy servant's sake, the tribes of thine inheritance 12.—The best remedy which we can adopt for restoring us to our place in the vineyard of God, is fervent, humble prayer. If we have forgotten the Conqueror of our spiritual enemies—if we have been unmindful of the mercies which ought to have assured us of the continued kindness of our heavenly Father—let us now implore Him to look down from heaven upon the vineyard of the Gentile Church. Our Father and our Redeemer, may our prayer be, let us never forget Thy mercy in delivering, Thy power in conquering—never let us forget the mercies we have already received—never let us forget that Thou art mighty to save, and hear Thou the prayers of Thy people. Keep us stedfast in that faith which we profess by our worship in this holy week—preserve us from the conduct and from the punishment of those, who rejected Thy mercy, and crucified Thy merciful Son—deliver us from all the power of the enemy of the soul of man—in temptation and in affliction, and in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment!

12 Isaiah lxiii. 17.
SERMON XXI.

TUESDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

[Preached at Northallerton, on Tuesday in Passion week, 1828.]

Mark xi. 27—30.

And they come again to Jerusalem: and as He was walking in the temple, there come to Him the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders, and say unto Him, By what authority dost Thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?—And Jesus answered, I will also ask of you one question, and answer Me, and I will tell you, by what authority I do these things.—The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?

The most inattentive reader of the New Testament must have observed one remarkable difference in the conduct of our Lord at different times. Sometimes, after the performance of a miracle, He commands the person who was healed to tell no man—now, before His crucifixion, He comes forth in the boldest, the most public, and most unreserved manner, and addresses the rulers of the people in the most unsparing and stern language. The cause of the difference in question was this—
at the time when He began His public ministry, and through the whole course of that ministry, the people of Israel were in constant expectation of the Messiah; but they had so misinterpreted the books of their prophets, that they anticipated an earthly and temporal deliverer, who should break off the yoke of the Romans, and make the Jewish nation once more a powerful, warlike, and successful people. In the midst of these anticipations, an obscure, and humble stranger from Galilee makes His appearance among them.—He traverses the country from one end to another—He teaches the people with purity and simplicity, with force and truth, in a manner which they had never before heard—He heals the sick—He raises the dead—He proves that He could support large armies without expence, and thus if He pleased, overthrow the Roman yoke at once; for He feeds at one time seven thousand, and at another time five thousand persons, in the wilderness, by multiplying a small portion of bread in their hands. This obscure and humble stranger gradually attracts the notice of all the people, and their astonishment and delight at His miracles was so great, that they were once resolved to take Him by force, and to make Him a king—that is, to make Him the warlike sovereign whom they were expecting. Now, it was our Lord’s anxious endeavour so to give His instructions, and so to perform His miracles, that He should impress the people with the conviction, that His object was the salvation of the souls of men, and not the
bestowment of any worldly honours, power, or wealth. He was willing, therefore, at all times that His miracles should be seen, for He could at the same time prove, by His appearance, and language, that He did not aspire to temporal dominion—but He was unwilling that the public curiosity should be excited, and the temper of the people inflamed with any more reports of His miraculous power, because it was necessary so to act, that, while the whole attention of the people should be directed to Him, no encouragement should be given to the mistaken opinions of those, who desired a Saviour different from Himself. And now the time had come, when this part of His mission was completed—the attention of the whole nation had been directed to Him, and there is no doubt, that, while many of the people received Him as their spiritual king, others expected, now that He was received with acclamations and hosannas, that He would throw off the mask, and declare Himself the temporal king of Israel. Having been disappointed in their expectation that He would save them from the Roman yoke, they resolve not to submit to His claims as a prophet and a teacher. They had determined, if He persisted in His pretension, to put Him to death; and they published this decree, as I have told you, on the day when He raised Lazarus. On that occasion He carefully, cautiously, and studiously, if I may venture so to speak, confined all His words to His spiritual mission—I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in Me
shall never die. It was for this kind of expressions rather than for the miracle itself, that they resolved to kill Him. They considered Him as assuming divine honours, and declaring Himself to be the Spiritual Teacher of Israel, to be the Messiah in short, without attempting to deliver them from the Romans. If He had raised Lazarus from the dead, and then affirmed that He would make the Jews an independent and warlike people, they would all have become His supporters—the rulers would have united with Him—every party would have sanctioned Him—the Romans would have been banished—the Jews, for a season at least, would have been again powerful, warlike, and independent—and the work of atonement would have been left undone, and the world would have remained under the curse of God, without hope, and without salvation.

These remarks on the causes of the different conduct of Christ at different times, will enable us to understand the exceeding hatred and indignation which appear to have marked the conduct of the Jews on this day, the third before the passover, when all the various sects and parties among the chiefs of the people came to Christ in their turn, and endeavoured to say something to Him, which should injure His influence as a prophet and teacher. They could not deny His miracles; they were too publicly performed. Their last and only resource was, first to entangle Him in His talk,

John xi. 25.
and when this method failed, to execute their former resolution, and to betray Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor. It was on this day that they attempted the first of these objects, which, therefore, we shall proceed to consider. The betrayal took place on the Thursday, and the crucifixion on the day following.

The passage which I have selected as my text, relates to the beginning of these attempts to diminish the influence of Christ as the spiritual teacher of the people.

Immediately after His arrival in the city, the heads of the people came to Him, to demand by what authority He professed to act; though they well knew, as Nicodemus did, that no man could do the miracles which Christ did, except God was with Him. Their object was to obtain such an answer from our Lord, that they might find something whereof to accuse Him. Christ, therefore, avoided the snare, by demanding of them the origin of the mission of John. He knew that they would not dare to offend the people, and that, therefore, if they answered at all, they must acknowledge that the baptism of John was from heaven; and if they did this, He could then refer to the testimony of John to Himself, as the Lamb of God, which should take away the sins of the world. He could refer to John as His own forerunner, and thus affirm to them upon their own acknowledgment that He was the expected Mes-

2 John iii. 2.  
3 Ibid. i. 39.
siah. If we shall say, they reasoned with themselves, that the baptism of John is from heaven, He will say, why then did ye not believe his testimony concerning Me? They perceived this consequence, and they refused to answer, and our Lord read their hearts, and understood from their hesitation, that they believed Him to be the Messiah of the prophets, but that they would not receive Him for the reasons I have mentioned. Christ saw that they, like some professing Christians at present, did not reject His gospel through ignorance, but through their attachment to the things of the world, and the prejudices which were occasioned by their own love of pomp, wealth, and power; and He proved to them that He knew their thoughts, when He instantly turned to them, and addressed them in the two parables of the vineyard and the marriage feast, in both which He foretold their rejection as the Church of God. In the parable of the vineyard, He reminded them and us, that knowledge is not religion, opinion is not religion, profession is not religion—but that religion is repentance, and holiness and faith—and that the publicans who were hated, and the harlots who were the outcasts of society, would be received before the proud and haughty Pharisee, who cast the Son of God out of the vineyard, and rejected the atonement of a spiritual Messiah, and slew the Lord of Life. “I perceive your thoughts,” was the practical language of our Lord, “I under-stand the reasons for which you reject me; but
"this is the last time in which I appeal to you, and
I now therefore tell you, that the vineyard shall be
given to others, and the stone which the builders
have rejected, shall become the head and corner
stone of the Church of the Gentiles." The par-
able was a prophecy that the Jews should be re-
jected, and the Gentiles be chosen in their place:
and we are the living witnesses that the prophecy
has been accomplished.

And now, when our Lord had demonstrated to
the rulers of the people, when they came to Him
in one body, the power with which He read their
hearts, and the wisdom with which He answered
them—it might have been expected that they would
not have renewed their attacks in their various
sects and parties. So far, however, was this from
being the case, that they all severally came to
Christ, and endeavoured to entangle Him. The
Herodians were the first.—Is it lawful to give tribute
unto Cæsar or not? Render unto Cæsar, was the
wise and perfect answer, the things that be Cæsar's,
and to God the things that be God's—render to the
world, to your brethren, to the duties of life, to the
demands of society, to the customs of the country,
to the proprieties of the station in which God has
placed you, all that can be demanded, all that is
innocent, all that is due—but render to God the
things that be God's—render to the religion of
your country, to the volume of Scripture, to the
demands of conscience, to the government of the

3 Matt. xxi. 41, 42.
Spirit, all that is due; and so long as man consists of body, and of soul, and is required to attend to both, and to render to both their due, this sentence of Christ will be his perfect and unerring guide.—When the Herodians were gone, the Sadducees came. These men, like our modern infidels, imagined that religion is to be despised with impunity, because it contains mysteries and difficulties. They could not understand in what manner God could raise the dead, and therefore they rejected the doctrine of the resurrection. They imagined, therefore, as some men do now, that because they had discovered something which appeared to them to be difficult, they had totally overthrown the truth. They imagined, because they were ignorant, that the Scriptures of truth were false. Whose wife, they demanded, shall a woman be, of the seven husbands she married, when they all appear together at the resurrection? Ye know not the Scriptures, was the answer. In the resurrection men shall arise with other bodies, and in a new form, and all the relations of marriage shall cease: and they shall be like the angels, who know of no other relationship than love to God, and obedience to His will. If God was revealed to them as the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, who had all been dead many years, then the souls of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, must be still alive in an invisible state, though their bodies were committed to the grave. —But yet another attempt was made to ensnare Him. The foolishness of man must ac-
complish the will of God; and, therefore, the Pharisees came to obtain from Christ another answer, which may be deemed one of the unchangeable foundations of the duty of man. *Master, which is the great commandment of the law?* The Pharisees, like many Christians, were more attached to controversy, to disputing, and to speculation, than to holiness and obedience—for it is always far more easy to have a religion of discussions, and of quarrellings, than of holiness and virtue. Our Lord, therefore, came to the point at once. He refused to enter into their contentions. —He replied in the words which ought to be engraven upon our hearts—*This is the first and great commandment: thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; and that Christian who brings all his controversies to this conclusion, is the best and wisest of his brethren.

Such were the attempts which were made by the various parties among the Jews to entangle our Saviour in His talk. I think you will admire the wisdom of His answers, and the instruction which they afford us. Let us now turn to the circumstance with which He introduced His last solemn appeal to the rulers of Israel, and His last prophecy, with which He concluded His earthly ministry.

*Mark xii. 30, 31.*
It is a remarkable circumstance, that the various parties of the Jews had no sooner left Him, than He went up to some of the Pharisees and proposed a question to them, by which He evidently asserted His divinity. *What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?* They answer Him, *the Son of David*—*how then doth David, when speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit, call Him Lord?* The Lord said unto my Lord—*sit thou on my right hand till I make thy foes thy footstool*—that is, the Father, whose name is Jehovah, spake unto the Son, whom I the king of Israel acknowledge also to be Jehovah, be thou my equal in the government of the world, until all the enemies of the dominion of the Messiah are subdued beneath thy feet. If David then call the Christ, Lord, or Jehovah, *how is He his Son?* They could not answer Him—or they would not. Christ was the Son of David in His human nature—but in His divine nature, He was the equal with the Father and the Governor of the world: and it is, as I have said, a remarkable circumstance, that our Lord should have selected this particular moment, to impress upon the Pharisees this doctrine. Our Lord had repeatedly been called the Son of David, and the Pharisees knew this well. And now He explains to them that the Son of David is the equal with God; in that very hour in which He was completing His ministry among them—for after He left the city on the evening of this day, He returned to it no more as a public teacher. He
returned to it only to be betrayed and crucified. He gave no further instructions; He made no more appeals to the people after this time. All His future addresses were made to His disciples only; and He completed His public ministry by teaching His divinity, as the equal of God, as if He would prove the truth of the doctrine which is so strenuously enforced in our Church, that our belief in the divinity of Christ is the foundation of all our religion. For He could not save us, He could not atone for us, unless He were more than man—unless He were the Son of David to suffer, and to obey, and the equal of God to pardon us now, and to receive us into His glory hereafter.

And now we come to the last solemn appeal which the Son of God made unto the children of men. He was now about to depart again from Jerusalem: the morrow He passed in retirement at Bethany, while the chief priests and scribes were engaged in plotting His death. The day after, He instituted the Holy Sacrament, and on the following He was nailed to the cross. This, therefore, was the last solemn hour of instruction, and it was such as we might have expected from the assertion of His divinity, and the solemnity of the occasion. I am compelled to pass over His stern reproof to the Pharisees, when He rebuked them for their hypocrisy, and their inconsistency, as blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. I pass

5 Matt. xxiii. 24.
by His address, *ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*—I pass over His affecting appeal—*Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee*;—I pass over these and some other circumstances—all of which, however, if your time permitted, are deeply worthy of our attentive study—to conclude with that which more especially concerns us all. Jesus, after He had finished His appeals to the Pharisees, went out of the city. He departed from the temple and sate on the mount of Olives—from thence He could look down upon all the buildings of Jerusalem. When the disciples came to Him, they marked His stedfast gaze as He contemplated the city—and they demanded of Him what He could mean, when He had declared as He was leaving the holy temple, that *not one stone should be left upon another, which should not be thrown down*. *What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?* Then it was that our Lord began and completed that wonderful prophecy, one part of which has been fulfilled in the most fearful and signal manner, and the other part of which shall be accomplished to the utmost in the presence of an assembled world. He prophesied first, the destruction of Jerusalem, and then the day of judgment. I must refer you to the pages of history for an account of the sad,

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5 Matt. xxiii. 37.  
7 Ibid. xxiv. 2.
and woeful destruction which overwhelmed the city of Jerusalem, after it had betrayed and crucified the Lord of glory. *His blood be on us, and on our children,* was the dreadful imprecation of the assembled populace; and His blood was upon them, to destroy, and not to save. The blood of Christ was upon them in vengeance and in anger, when the pestilence and the famine, and the fire and the sword, destroyed their thousands and their millions, with a terrible devastation, such as the world had never seen before, nor has seen since.

We are next to consider the latter part of the same prophecy—the coming of our Lord to judgment. He had concluded His last address to the Pharisees by asserting His divinity, and He now concludes all His earthly teaching by asserting the manner in which that divinity shall be publicly exercised, in the presence of an assembled universe. *The Son of man,* the name by which He was most commonly known, *the Son of man shall come in the clouds of glory, and all the holy angels with Him. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory—and before Him shall be gathered all nations—and He shall separate them one from another, and He shall say to the one division, *Come ye blessed of my Father*—and He shall say to the other, *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire.* Christ, the crucified, the dying Christ, shall be openly manifested to the gathering dead at the last great day to be the Judge.

* Matt. xxv. 31, 32, 34, 41.
of the world. This, this is the doctrine to which the prophets, the apostles, and the evangelists unanimously refer. He, the Messiah of the Jews—the Jesus of the Christians—the *ancient of days* ⁹, of Daniel—the *wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace* ¹⁰, of Isaiah, by whatever title, by whatever name He may be called—He, the Personage of whom we have been speaking—the Son of David, and yet the Son of God—He, the despised, the insulted, the crucified Saviour—He, whose death was at hand, whose earthly ministry as a teacher was now over—He, was to be exalted as the Judge of the universe, in the day of God, and every eye shall see Him, and every knee bow down before Him. Nor tongue can tell, nor heart conceive, nor pen describe the terrors of *that day*, when the trumpet of the Archangel shall sound, and the dead, small and great, shall stand before God. That day of judgment shall come, it shall come—as surely as we now commemorate the sufferings, and the death of Christ, so surely shall we awake from the dead, and stand before the Son of God. Who will not lay to heart the words of our holy Saviour—words of such importance, that He repeated them before the high priest, when He at length broke silence, in the judgment-hall, to reply to His solemn appeal, *I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ* ¹¹—I *Am*, was the answer, and thou, my earthly judge,

shall see Me, who now stand before you, a betrayed, and patient sufferer, thou shalt see the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven—thou shalt stand before Me, among the spirits of the living, and of the dead!

We, our families, our friends, our kindred, shall all be there—and as we lie down in the grave, so shall we rise again—as we live, so shall we die—if we live to the world, we shall die without hope—if we live to the service of the Most High, we shall die in the faith of the Christian, and He, who was crucified for man, will be our Redeemer and our Saviour, as well as our Judge. Reflect, I implore you, reflect often, and seriously, upon the concluding words of the last appeal of our Saviour, as He descended again from the Mount of Olives, and returned once more to Bethany—These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.¹²

¹² Matt. xxv. 46.
SERMON XXII.

WEDNESDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

[Preached at Northallerton, on Wednesday in Passion week, 1828.]

Mark. xiv. 1, 2. and 10.

After two days was the feast of the passover, and the chief priests, and the scribes, sought how they might take Him, (Jesus,) by craft, and put him to death.—But they said not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.—And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him.

I have hitherto directed your attention to the last actions of Christ, as the spiritual teacher of His people. We have accompanied Him, when He entered into Jerusalem, amidst the acclamations of the people, to the mount of Olives, where He pronounced His memorable prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the day of judgment. We now begin our survey of the latter part of the concluding week of the ministry of our Lord, in
which He appears before us as the serene and passive victim—the patient, the silent, the suffering Lamb of God. He had now instructed mankind; He had obeyed the law; whatever He taught to others, He had Himself performed. He had accomplished all the prophecies which related to the place of His birth, the conduct of His life, to one part of His goodness to man, and His devotion to the service of His Father; and now He was about to accomplish the remainder of the prophecies, those which predicted His painful agonies, His cruel death, and His joyful resurrection. Three days we have devoted to His actions as our teacher and example; three more we devote to His sufferings as our Saviour and atonement. The events which we are to consider this morning, are merely introductory to His passion. They are mentioned in the passage which I have read to you; they are the conspiracy of the chief priests and elders, and the offer of Judas to betray His Master. Our Lord did not go up to Jerusalem on this day, as He had hitherto done. He remained at Bethany with Simon, whom He had cured of his leprosy; and with Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. We shall obtain, I think, a more connected view of the transactions of this day, if I bring them before you in the form of reasons, on account of which our Lord did not go up into the city. I shall confine our inquiries this morning to this one object—what were the probable causes, which induced our Lord to remain at Bethany, and not to
go up to Jerusalem, as He had done on all the former days of this memorable week? In reply to this question, I would say that He continued at Bethany while the chief priests and Judas Iscariot were conspiring together against Him for these reasons—that the Scriptures might be fulfilled by the manner of His death; that His innocence and holiness might be more manifest by the conduct of Judas—and that He might become Himself more prepared for His approaching sufferings by contemplating the trial before Him, and for the exaltation which the prophets had predicted. I am much mistaken, if we shall not find abundant cause to admire in these things also the wisdom of Providence, and the mercy of our blessed Saviour.

And, first, our Lord would not yet go up to Jerusalem, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, which declared the manner of His death.

The chief priests and the scribes, says the Evangelist, sought how they might take Him by craft and kill Him—but they said, not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people. They were desirous to secure the person of our Lord on this very day; because the day following was the commencement of the passover, during which time no person could be put to death. You may remember that I told you yesterday, that the very last address which our Lord made in public to the Pharisees and to the people, asserted His divinity—this they considered blasphemy, and for this crime they had before endeavoured to stone Him—then
took they up stones to stone Him¹, says St. John, and when they were restrained for a time by our Lord's expostulation, they said to Him—not for any good works do we stone Thee, but that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself equal with God². Now, what they had done before, they would certainly endeavour to do again, especially at this moment, when they were more enraged and indignant against Him, than they had ever yet been. If, then, our Lord had gone up to Jerusalem before the feast, the great probability is, that the Jews would have endeavoured to stone Him for blasphemy; and if they had done so, then these prophecies would not have been completed, which predicted a much more painful and cruel death. For instance—the prophet Zechariah predicted, they shall look on Him whom they pierced³—if Christ had been stoned as a blasphemer, the spear of the soldier would not have Pierced His side, and that prophecy would not have been accomplished. Again, it was said, a bone of Him shall not be broken⁴. This too would have failed, if He had been stoned. They parted my garments among them, and they cast lots upon my vesture⁵, is a plain prophecy of the conduct of the soldiers at the crucifixion of our Lord—this too would have fallen to the ground. Another prophecy affirmed that Christ should be given up to the Gentiles. If He had been stoned, neither

¹ John x. 31. ² Ibid. ver. 33. ³ Zech. xii. 10. ⁴ Exod. xii. 46. and John. xix. 36. ⁵ Psalm. xxii. 18.
Herod, nor Pilate, nor the Romans, would have been the Gentiles to whom He was delivered. In another place it was predicted that He should be sold or betrayed for thirty pieces of silver⁶, and that with this silver, when it was returned by His betrayer, should be bought the potter's field⁷—if our Lord had gone up to Jerusalem before the feast, and been then put to death by the Jews, they would have not only have made both these predictions void, but they would have declared that the supposed Messiah was cut off for Himself, for the sin of blasphemy, and that the prophecy of Daniel, therefore, did not apply to Him, which said, that He should be cut off for the sins of the people⁸. Now they were resolved, by any means in their power, to put Him to death at the very moment in which they were enabled to do it; and if they could not apprehend Him before the passover, they could not, for fear of the people, put Him to death during the whole week in which the passover continued. If they could not apprehend Him, therefore, on this day, there remained only one way in which they could destroy Him, and that was, by giving Him up to the Romans, and insisting upon His crucifixion, by Pontius Pilate, without any delay. The Romans, they well knew, would prevent a rescue. The Romans, too, had no scruples respecting the passover—they would condemn Him to be crucified, therefore, immediately,

and thus their own wicked rejection of the Lord of Life would be accomplished, and all the Scriptures would be fulfilled, which declared the manner of the death of Christ. You well know that it was one great object of the plans of Providence, that every prophecy should be fulfilled in the sufferings and death of Christ; and our Lord repeatedly tells his disciples, that He was able to escape from His sorrows altogether, but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled? All this was done. We read in another place, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. The consequence of this precaution on the part of our Lord has been, that the history of Christ may be now read in the prophecies of the Old Testament, as plainly as it is read in the narratives of the New Testament. In Him, and in Him alone, are they all accomplished; and the Old and New Testaments, therefore, both agree so entirely throughout, in their descriptions of Him whom we acknowledge to be the only Saviour, that we can look to no other but to Christ as the promised Redeemer of the world. All this our Lord well knew; and He prepared Himself, therefore, for a more terrible death, the death which was pointed out by the prophets, even the death of the cross—the death which the Romans only, and not the Jews, inflicted.

Another reason, on account of which our Lord did not go up to Jerusalem on this day, might have

9 Matt. xxvi. 54. 10 John xix. 36.
been, that His innocence and holiness might more evidently appear by the conduct of Judas Iscariot.

I have often told you that He who would make atonement for the sins of the world, must be perfect, and blameless, and free from sin. Christ came into the world, first to obey, and then to atone. His atonement was to begin on the morrow—and this day, therefore, was the last day, on which His fitness for the office of Redeemer was to be brought to the test; and it was, therefore, to undergo a farther test, to which it had not yet been subjected. And no more impressive testimony in favour of the purity, the perfection, and the innocence of the character of Christ could possibly be adduced, than that which is afforded by the conduct of Judas Iscariot. This man was offended because he had been reproved by his divine Master. He therefore went to the chief priests to betray Him. He offers to sell Him for the paltry reward of thirty shekels of silver—the smallest price which the law of Moses demanded as a compensation for the life of the meanest slave. Do you not believe that when Judas went to the chief priests, they would eagerly demand of the apostate traitor, all the particulars which he could communicate respecting the thoughts, words, and actions of Christ? If there had been one erroneous sentiment, one imperfect action, one instance of apparent wrong, do you not believe that the traitor would have related it, to palliate his treason, and to form one apology, at least, for his treachery? Judas had long lived
with Christ as His daily friend, and bosom companion. He had long been the witness of His public teaching, and the partner of His most unreserved conversation. He is angry with His divine Master—he betrays Him—he sells Him; but he cannot accuse Him—he can find no fault in Him. Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sin, and from sinners, the Son of God had come down to obey the whole law, and every spectator of His conduct, however he might have hated Him, could find no fault in Him at all. See how all His actions, His friends, and His enemies united to bear this same testimony—When He began His ministry, He wrought miracles at Capernaum; but when He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, He refused to work any miracles, because they had seen His conduct from His earliest years, and His spotless innocence was a greater miracle than healing the sick, or restoring the blind; and therefore to that, and to that only, He appealed.—When the Jews sought to kill Him, He demanded of them openly, and publicly, which of you convinceth Me of sin?—The chief priests who accused Him, and the high priest who condemned Him, could declare nothing against Him, but that He made Himself the Son of God—*I find no fault in this Man* 11, said the Roman governor, who observed with astonishment, and surprise, His humble, yet majestic superiority—*Truly*

this was the Son of God, was the exclamation of the Centurion after he had beheld His expiring agonies, and heard His dying words, and marked the convulsions of the shaking earth, and the darkness of the mid-day sun, when all nature sympathized with its Lord.—Prophecy had announced Him as the holy one of God; and Peter and John, who also, with Judas, were His bosom companions, and friends, assure us that He did no sin; and Judas, the traitor Judas, for of him we ought principally to speak, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver,—I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. When you shall hear then tomorrow, and the following day, that Jesus, the Son of God, is the atonement for the sins of the world, remember these testimonies to His innocence; and believe that He is qualified for the office He came from heaven to assume. He was fit to bear the punishment of our sins in His own body on the tree, because He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; and having fulfilled all the law of God, even to the uttermost—freely and willingly He presented Himself to be the sacrifice to save us.

Having thus pointed out to you two reasons, on account of which it is probable that our Lord did not go up to Jerusalem on this day, let us now consider the remaining cause to which I have alluded, it was this—that He might become more prepared

glory for which they were created. Are you securing your own happiness, by complying with the desires of a dying Christ?

But not only is it predicted that He should see His spiritual offspring. When His soul had been made the offering for sin—He was to prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in His hands. How did He prolong His days? He was cut off from the land of the living in the time when the strength of the body is greatest; and within forty days after He visibly ascended into heaven. The answer is granted in the pages of prophecy—Thou gavest Him a long life, even for ever and ever. He ever liveth to make intercession. Death could not bind Him. The grave could not detain Him. Earth was not fit to receive Him, when His new life began after His resurrection—when the very human nature, the nature in which He lived, and taught, and suffered, and died, openly and publicly ascended through the blue air into another state, from which He had formerly descended—to prove to us, that as He died, and rose, and went up, so shall all the race of man die, and rise again. A multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, shall ascend up with their Lord and Master, to the same place; though some, like the Jews who denied Him, shall be banished, by their continued, and unchanging sin. Such was the reward

16 Psalm xxi. 4. 19 Hebrew vii. 25.
which the system of redemption has granted to the Redeemer, who was now about to suffer. And this reward was with Him, before He bowed His neck to the yoke—as a good man, even now, who has placed His hope of immortality upon the solid foundation of the religion of the New Testament, may still look forward with peace, and humility, with hope and joy, to the fulfilment of the promises of the Scriptures in a state of happiness hereafter. Is it further said the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand? What is the pleasure of the Lord? It is what I have told you, the salvation, and the happiness of man.—I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth saith the Lord God, but rather that a man should turn from his way, and live 20—this is the will, or the pleasure of God, even your sanctification. And much of the pleasure of the Lord has already been accomplished. From the hour of the death of Christ to the present day—the Gospel of truth has been going on, conquering and to conquer. Goodness, and wisdom, and holiness, have been established among mankind to a greater extent than they had before been: though the day of His greater triumph has not yet come, when the dominion of Christ shall be extended over all nations; and all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. Even this period, however, to the remotest ages, was present to our suffering,
Lord—for the day was shewn in prophecy both to St. Paul, and to St. John, and much more was it shewn to Christ—the day when all things shall be subdued under His feet, sin, and death, and the tempter which hath the power of death, and when all the rational creation shall unite in one chorus of praise and joy—Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive glory, and honour, and wisdom, and power 21.

The statement which I have thus submitted to you, must demonstrate this one solemn, and unchangeable truth—that if God so earnestly desires the happiness, and salvation of man, that He gave His only Son to die for us—if the Son of God so earnestly desired the happiness and salvation of man, that He condescended to suffer, and to atone for us—and if the only reward which the Son of God can receive, is the beholding this future salvation of the sons of men—then the future, as well as the present misery of man must proceed from himself. Men must be obstinately, and perseveringly wicked, before they can be rejected of the Almighty. When the God in whom we believe looks down from heaven upon the sons of men, and sees the hearts, the motives, and the conduct, of you who are here present—does He behold you among the children of the covenant which He has made with the suffering Redeemer?—Does He behold you among the subjects of that everlasting dominion, for which His days as the Mediator of

21 Rev. v. 12.
the Church are prolonged? Does the pleasure of the Lord prosper in your hands, or do your own will and pleasure guide your thoughts, and direct your actions? Does He see of the travail of His soul in you, and can He be satisfied with your faith, and hope? Remember that there is but one atonement: and if you reject it, or despise it, there remaineth no other sacrifice, no other hope! Remember the warning which was read to you in the services of the day.—As it is appointed unto all men, once to die, and after death, the judgment, so has Christ been only once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them only who look for Him, shall He appear the second time unto salvation. You are now in your state of trial, in your state of hope—you are members of the outward and visible Church—it remains with you to receive the grace of God, and to become members of the Church above. Now is your accepted time—now is your day of salvation.

22 Heb. ix. 28.
SERMON XXIII.

THURSDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

[Preached at Northallerton, on Thursday in Passion week, 1828.]

Matthew xxvi. 17, 18, 20.

On the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.—Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve.

Though I might have selected a passage from the New Testament, which has a more direct reference to the subject which I design on this occasion to bring before you, namely, the painful sufferings of our blessed Lord, I have rather chosen that which I have now read to you, in pursuance of the plan which I have hitherto followed in these addresses. I have been anxious to lay before you on each successive day of this solemn week, the events by
which that day is distinguished in the sacred narrative. We commemorate on this day yet more important events in the last week of the life of Christ: but I am still anxious to establish every devotional feeling upon the facts and narratives of Scripture; as the most effectual means of rendering our serious reflections permanent, as well as useful.

The events of the day before us are these—the institution of the Holy Sacrament, in the place of the Jewish passover—the commencement of the sufferings of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane—the conduct of the officers, and chief priests of the Jews—and the predicted denials of his Master by the too confident Peter. We will consider each in their order.

The text relates to us a custom which very generally prevailed among the Jews, when our Lord was upon earth; and of which He made use, to enable Him to commemorate the last passover. The law of Moses ordained that every man who was able to perform the journey, should go up every year to Jerusalem to eat the passover. The consequence of this regulation naturally was, that the city of Jerusalem at this time was so thronged with strangers, that there would have been no room for them, if it were not a general custom, for the inhabitants of the city to receive them into their houses. This disposition was so universal, that the principal people always prepared an upper room in their houses for the re-
ception of strangers; and it was to one of these with whom our Lord was acquainted, that He directed His disciples. In the course of the day the paschal lamb was prepared, and killed in the temple, according to the law of Moses, and brought home to this large upper room, which had been made ready for it, together with all the various things which were required for the due celebration of the festival. In the evening of the passover, which we are now to consider, our Lord sat down with the twelve. Now so much has been said and written respecting this last passover, and the institution of the Holy Sacrament, which immediately followed, that I think we cannot more usefully employ the first part of our time, than in carefully examining the scriptural account of the whole transaction.—I shall first explain to you the manner in which the Jews, at the time of our Lord, observed the passover. Unless we have some knowledge upon this point, we shall not be able clearly to comprehend for what reason Christ is called our Passover.1 Neither can we otherwise fully understand the several accounts which the four Evangelists have given of the institution of the Sacrament.

The Jewish passover was ordained by Moses at the command of God, to commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt—and the passing over of the houses of the Israelites by the destroying angel, when the first-born

1 1 Cor. v. 17.
were slain in every house of the Egyptians. The passover itself, strictly speaking, was a lamb without blemish, and the ceremonies with which it was eaten consisted in these four separate and distinct observances:—When the family had assembled together, not less than ten in number, nor more than twenty, that all might eat of it, they first partook of the flesh of the lamb, and of bread and wine. They then took part of a mixture of vinegar and bitter herbs, which formed the sop in which Christ dipped the bread, when He gave it to Judas—this was put on the table in remembrance of their sorrow in Egypt. They thirdly divided among themselves a small portion of bread, which they called "the bread of affliction;" and the youngest person in the company was accustomed to inquire of the master of the family, the meaning of the passover—and the answer to this inquiry was called "the shewing forth." After this ceremony was over, they drank again of the wine, which was called "the cup of blessing;" or, "the cup of salvation;" and the whole service ended with their singing the 113, and five following Psalms, which they called the great Hallel.

Now this account of the passover will enable us to understand the scriptural narrative of the conduct of our Lord, from the time when He sat down with the twelve to eat the passover, until He went to the Garden of Gethsemane, late in the evening. —He first ate of the passover itself, that is of the bread and of the flesh of the paschal lamb. When this was over, there was placed upon the table the
second part of the paschal supper—the mixture of vinegar and bitter herbs—and now it was that He began to accomplish His design of establishing the Lord’s Supper; but before He did so, He gave a solemn lesson to the world, that no person is to come to the holy sacrament who intends, at the very time he comes, to betray Christ, and to continue in wilful evil. Judas Iscariot had sat down to the table, and partaken of the first part of the passover, that is of the lamb, because all, whether good or bad, under the Jewish dispensation, were required to do so; but he was not to be permitted to partake of the remainder. He was sent from the table in that manner which must be known to you all. As they did eat, Jesus said, verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you which eateth with Me shall betray Me². When they were sorrowful and astonished at His remark, and began to say to Him one by one, Lord, is it I; He answered, he that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me³; and he it is, He said in answer to another question, to whom I shall give a sop, after I have dipped it⁴. The custom was to dip the bread at the table in the mixture of wine and bitter herbs, and give it to each other. Our Lord did this, and gave the bread to Judas, who then perceived that Christ knew that he had been in secret treaty with the chief priests, and had sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Judas was enraged

at the discovery, and instantly left the room, before the holy sacrament was instituted. Now I mention this, that I may enable you to come to some conclusion upon that question which has often distressed the minds of many who desire to do right, namely—whether they are justified in going to the Holy Sacrament, when they are conscious to themselves that they are not so perfect as they ought to be? I wish to enable them to answer the question for themselves, from the facts of Scripture, instead of resorting to many perplexing arguments.—If you wait until you are sinless, you will never come.—Those may be admitted to the sacrament, who approach to it with humble faith, and true repentance, with holy resolutions, and forgiving charity, with gratitude to God for his mercies, and a heartfelt desire to believe rightly, and to live obediently. The eleven disciples partook of the sacrament; yet they so forgot their duty, that they all forsook Christ, and fled. Peter was admitted to it, yet he denied his Lord three times—but both Peter and his companions, when they sate with Christ, loved their blessed Master, and would have been shocked at the idea of abandoning or denying Him. Judas only, the traitor, the hypocrite, the apostate, who dipped his hand in the dish, he only was excluded—and you, if you love your blessed Master, and desire to live to His service, are invited, and entreated, to go to the holy sacrament, for strength to enable you to fulfil your resolutions. But if you wilfully
resolve within yourselves to continue in evil, then profane not that holy sacrament, lest you bring down upon yourselves the wrath of an offended God.

No sooner, then, had Judas left the room, than our Lord reminded His disciples once more, that the prophecy of Isaiah was now about to be accomplished, and he was numbered among the transgressors ⁵. I told you that the third ceremony at the Jews' passover was the placing upon the table some more bread and wine, which was called "the bread of affliction," and "the cup of blessing." When Judas had gone, and when our Lord had predicted His own death as the consequence of His departing, He took the bread and the wine, which had thus been placed upon the table, after the paschal lamb had been eaten, and He blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you ⁶. "Eat no more of the "body of the paschal lamb to celebrate your de-
"liverance from Egypt—eat of the bread which is "the broken body of the Lamb of God, in remem-
"brance of a greater deliverance, the salvation of "the soul from the power of sin and misery"—do this in remembrance of Me, for "I appoint the holy "sacrament at the moment when I am looking for-
"ward to my death." Then, says the sacred narra-
"tive, likewise after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying,

Drink ye all of this—this is My blood—the blood of the new sacrifice; not that of the lamb which has hitherto been slain, but the blood of the Holy One of God, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins—which is shed for you. And they all drank of it, says St. Mark, and it is our duty to drink of it in remembrance of this sorrowful hour, when the dying Saviour was about to be taken from them, and the sheep of the flock were to be scattered abroad. We are not worthy to be the disciples of Christ, if we can hear or read of His sufferings and death, and live for many years together, in the systematic and uniform neglect of the holy sacrament. Such was the institution of the most solemn rite of our religion, on the day before the crucifixion. And now, as they still sat at the table, our Lord addressed them in that beautiful language recorded in the fourteenth chapter of St. John, which we may all read with advantage after we partake of the sacrament—Let not your hearts be troubled—I go to prepare a place for you. Whosoever ye ask of the Father in My name, He will give it you—Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you—and many other gracious expressions which are most suited to the disciples of Christ, after they have renewed their vows, and expressed their obedience, at the holy altar of God.

The fourth ceremony which I mentioned to you as customary at the Jewish passover, was the singing of the hymn, which they called the great Hallel. St. John, at the end of the fourteenth chapter, tells us that our Lord added—arise, let us go hence. St. Mark tells us, that when they had sung an hymn, He went out to the Mount of Olives. There can be little doubt that this hymn was the same which completed the observance of the passover. The last act of the obedience of Christ to the law of Moses was rightly concluded with praise. It would be impossible on this occasion to relate all the conversations of Christ with His apostles, on their way to the Mount of Olives, before they arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane. You will read them at length from the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth chapters of John. Read them, and study them at your leisure—they are the parting advice of Him who loved you, and gave Himself for you. There you may see that if Christ is the vine, we are the branches, and that love to our brethren is the best proof of love to God. There you may read the promise of the Holy Spirit, and His effects upon the hearts of all who receive Him—and you may conclude the affecting narrative with the most devotional chapter in the New Testament, the seventeenth of St. John, the last intercession prayer of Christ for mankind, before He went on to His sufferings. These words spake

10 Ver. 31.  11 Mark xiv. 26.
Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven—Father, the
time is come—glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may
glorify Thee—I have glorified Thee on the earth, I
have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.
"I have finished My instructions to man as their"
"Prophet, and example of action—now I go to my"
"death as their Priest and Mediator," that they
also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me
where I am. I pray not that Thou shouldst take
them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep
them from the evil. This beautiful chapter, indeed,
has been considered the model of that intercession
which we are assured our Lord now makes for
man in the invisible state. It relates to us the spi-
ritual blessings of which we have need, and which
our Lord bestows upon His followers, with the con-
tinuance of His unspeakable love for the members
of His Church in all ages. Happy is the Christian
who can find, in the last prayer of Christ for His
disciples, the expression of the desires of his heart!

We are now brought to that wonderful and
mysterious suffering of our Saviour, the agony in
the garden of Gethsemane. There is no character
under which our Lord is predicted, more affecting
than this, that He should be a man of sorrows, and
acquainted with grief. There is no passage in the
Old Testament more impressive than this—that it
pleased the Lord to bruise Him and to put Him to
grief—and that not the body only, but the soul

12 Isaiah liii. 3.
13 13
of Christ also, was to be made an offering for sin. And now was the hour when some deep, inward, mental suffering began, which the Evangelists seem to labour for words to describe. The expressions in the original all differ from each other, and all pourtray a feeling of united distress, and pain, and grief, and horror of soul, which cannot be fully explained, but which ought to convince us, that the sufferings of Christ were so deep, and so agonizing, that some proportionate cause must have required their endurance—and no cause can be assigned but His bearing the punishment of our sin in the sorrows of the soul, as well as in the pains of the body. I will endeavour to combine together all the accounts of the Evangelists, that you may see there must have been some deeper cause of the sufferings of this hour, than any prospect of the death of the cross, or any of His bodily tortures.

When Jesus had spoken these words, says St. John, that is, when He had finished His prayer of intercession, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered with His eleven disciples, for Judas was now completing his treason in the city. When He had arrived at the garden which was called Gethsemane, He said to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. He then took with Him those three disciples, who had been witnesses of His glory, when He manifested Himself at the transfiguration to be

18 Isaiah liii. 10.
more than a mere man—to be the divine Personage who had appeared to the patriarchs, and to the prophets of old. He took these with Him, that, as they had witnessed His greatest glory, they might now be witnesses of His deepest humiliation, and suffering, and be enabled to relate to the world, both the majesty, and the sorrow of their divine Master. *He began,* says St. Matthew, *to be very sorrowful*—to be depressed with unutterable grief. *He began,* says St. Mark, *to be sore amazed,* to be exceedingly astonished, and overwhelmed with anguish. *He said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,—*even to the moment which is so near, in which I must die—*my soul is filled with sorrow. He went forth from among them, and kneeled down. He then bent forward on His face, and prayed. He then fell prostrate upon the ground, and prayed again, that *if it were possible*—if the inward suffering which He endured, were not absolutely essential to the deliverance of man—if His torture of soul at this moment did not form an unavoidable part of that punishment for man, which He had come down from heaven to undergo—that this hour of woe and sorrow might pass away. *Abba! Father! let this cup pass from me; if it be possible remove this cup from me*—nevertheless, if it be a part of Thy sentence against man, and if I must drink it to deliver them from misery, *not my will, but thine be done.* Still it pleased the

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15 Matt. xxvi. 37.  
16 Chap. xxvi. 37.
Lord to bruise Him, and to continue this unutterable distress, that we might know how fearful a thing it is, to fall into the hands of the living God. He prayed, says St. Luke, yet more earnestly; and being in an agony\(^\text{17}\), that is, in fierce and dreadful contest with the causes of this astonishing bitterness, and terror of mind; and in that fervent prayer and terrible emotion within Him, the drops of blood broke forth upon His fainting form, and fell from Him to the ground. In the Litany of our Church we implore our once suffering, but now exalted Saviour, “by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, deliver us from sin and sorrow.”—The Eastern churches, in allusion to the sorrow in Gethsemane, have added to this petition, “by thine unknown sufferings, good Lord, deliver us.” We are unable as I have said, fully to explain the deep, and keen, and overwhelming agony of our Lord. When, however, we remember that He came down from heaven to conquer the power of the evil spirit—that after the temptation it was said, Satan left him but for a season—and that we have no account through His ministry of any other contest with the tempter of man—when we call to mind that He told His disciples before His betrayal—the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me—no temptation to allure Me, no evil upon which to mislead Me.—When we remember too that He told His

\(^{17}\) Luke xxii. 44.
betrayers after His agony, *this is the hour of the power of darkness*.—When we consider, too, that the word Gethsemane itself, may signify "wine-press," and that the ancient prophets describe the worst and keenest sorrows, as well as the greatest triumph of the Son of God, under the figure—why art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like Him that hath trodden the wine-press?—*I have trodden the wine-press alone*.—When we add too, that the same word is used by St. John to describe the utmost energy of the wrath of God—I cannot but conclude that the opinion of those interpreters of Scripture is correct, who explain the suffering of Christ in His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, to have consisted in these two things—His last fearful contest with the invisible powers, who introduced evil, and continue it in the world, and also—in His bearing that nameless and horrible punishment, which the God of justice will inflict upon that immortal soul, which departs from the dying body without hope, without repentance, and without faith, in the only Atonement for the sins of Man. Christ certainly came to bear all the punishment of evil, that the law of God might be satisfied, and man be saved. The punishment of man consists in two things—grief of body, and grief of mind. That Christ bore the grief of the body is but too evident in that part of His sorrow which we commemorate to-morrow. That He

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19 Isaiah lxiii. 3.
bore the grief of the soul was also evident in the discoveries which we make of His inward feelings upon many occasions: but the greatest inward grief was borne in the garden of Gethsemane,—and there is no other explanation of its causes but this, that He bore that grief and horror which is prepared for the wicked when they die without God, and without hope. Nothing can be more intolerable than the condition of such a spirit,—may God grant that while our lives are still prolonged we may flee for refuge to the hope set before us, and lay aside every weight and the sin that doth most easily beset us, either from our age, our circumstances, our temptations, our acquaintance, our friends, or the world!—while life lasts may we so believe, and so live, that we may meet death with peace, and hope; and never know, by undying experience, the condition, the miseries of that outer darkness, where the worm of conscience never dies, and the fire of the justice of the Almighty is never quenched! May we never know the weeping, the wailing, and the sorrow of lifting up our eyes in the invisible world, amidst the company of the outcasts from hope, and heaven! An atonement has now been made for the sins you have committed. He, the Saviour of the world, has borne the punishment you have deserved. Repent, and turn to God, and your iniquity shall not be your ruin.

30 Heb. xii. 1. 31 Ezek. xviii. 30.
We have not time to consider, at present, the further events of this day—the apprehension of our Lord—His condemnation by the high priest before He was taken to the tribunal of Pilate in the morning—nor the denial of his Master by Peter. The subject, indeed, is exhaustless, and much at last must be left for our contemplation at other times. I conclude, however, with the same words with which our suffering Redeemer addressed His disciples after His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, when His sorrows had been ended by His victory over the enemies of His soul. He had left His disciples, and commanded them, saying, watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. He returned, and found them sleeping. So it is with us, while the goodness of God waiteth to lead us to repentance—while His mercy is exerted to deliver and to save, even His disciples are careless of His sufferings, and negligent of the cause.—Could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. Cannot we, too, sometimes arouse ourselves from our carelessness and security, and watch against the evil which misleads us? If we would be preserved from surprise in death—from the power of wickedness—from the snares of the world—we must not be contented with bearing the name of the disciples of Christ, nor with witnessing the sufferings of His life, nor believing in the value of His death, without sincere

22 Matt. xxvi. 41.
repentance for sin. There is no religion at all, unless it is personal, practical, and self-controlling. And the words of our suffering Lord, therefore, are applicable to us all—watch and pray—watch against the opportunities and temptations of sin, and pray for grace to conquer, for faith to believe, for the power to practice, and for strength to persevere to the end. Watch and pray, and the atonement of Christ will be the salvation of the soul.
SERMON XXIV.

GOOD FRIDAY.

[Preached at Northallerton, on Good Friday, 1828.]

MATT. xxvii. 50, 51, 52.

Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost—And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened.

The hour is coming—and it is a fearful and solemn hour even to the wisest and the best—the hour is coming, when we must bid adieu to the scenes which please us, to the families we love, to the friends we esteem. Whether we think, or whether we think not, that body which is now warm and active with life, shall be cold and motionless in death—the countenance must be pale, the eye must be closed, the voice must be silenced, the senses must be destroyed, the whole appearance must be changed by the remorseless hand of our last enemy. We may banish the remembrance of the weakness of our
human nature—we may tremble at the prospect of dissolution; but our reluctance to reflect upon it, and our attempts to drive it from our recollection, are in vain. We know that we are sentenced to die, and though we sometimes succeed in casting off for a season the conviction of this unwelcome truth, we never can entirely remove it. The reflection haunts us still—it attends us in solitude—it follows us into society—it lies down with us at night—it awakes with us in the morning. The irrevocable doom has passed upon us, and too well do we know it—dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return

Instead, therefore, of banishing the remembrance of that which is so unavoidable, and so certain, let us, on this solemn morning at least, endeavour rather to bring home the conviction of our destiny to our heart and conscience. Instead of shunning the recollection of death, let us bring the subject before us, and represent to ourselves the solemn hour which may soon arrive to the youngest and the healthiest of us all. Let us imagine that it has been announced to us that we have not one day more to live—that we have arranged our worldly affairs—that we have taken our farewell of our families, our kindred, our friends—that we are awaiting the hour of our departure, and have no thought of any thing but the moment of death, and the consequences which shall

1 Gen. iii. 19.
follow. Place yourselves, by anticipation, upon the bed of death, and now, at this moment, consider yourselves as in the presence of God, with a dying frame, and a departing spirit—and then seriously, solemnly, and anxiously ask yourselves this question—what are my hopes of future happiness? And on what foundation are they placed? Will you say that you depend on the mercy of God, because you have lived a good life, and have done no harm? What is the meaning of this language? Have you never committed evil? Are you perfectly free from those actions which conscience reproves, and the Scriptures condemn? Have you at all times devoted yourself to the will of God, so as to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, as God has required of you? Have you continued in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them? You may possibly have been preserved from some evils into which others have fallen, but have you not been led into many errors, and committed many offences, which are forbidden by the God in whose presence you are about to appear? Do you turn from the remembrance of your failings to the merits of the repentance to which you have resorted in the anticipation of future sorrow? Repentance alone can never remove sin. If an offence is committed against the law of man, that offence must receive its punishment; it cannot be done away by repentance. Will repentance alone pardon a murder—will re-
pentance alone remove the consequences of vice, folly, or extravagance? So also, if the Almighty had revealed the pardon of sin upon repentance alone, then an encouragement had been given to all men to violate the law of God, because men might go on to sin through many years of life, and be pardoned, after a long career of evil, upon a death-bed repentance—a just and holy God would have appointed a law which sanctioned all wickedness while men lived, provided they repented when that wickedness attracted them no longer, because they were no longer able to indulge in its commission. Would you leave your salvation to chance, or to some undefined resolution of reformation, if your life was to be continued? In this case you would acknowledge to the world, to your friends, and to yourself, that you die without any, even the least Christian hope, of the mercy of God. Would you drive from your mind all reflection upon the subject?—it cannot be done. A dying man cannot separate the reproaches of his conscience from his soul. Neither presumption, nor despair, can annul the solemn declarations of Scripture, that it is appointed unto men once to die, and, after death the judgment. As the doctrines of immortality and life have been brought to light by the Gospel—as we are assured, and know by the most undeniable evidence, that there is a spirit in man, so we know that he who most succeeds during life in excluding

— 2 Heb. ix. 27.
from his mind the remembrance of God, and judgment, aggravates his condemnation, increases the terrors of death, and heaps up wrath against the day of wrath.——All these resources are vain. The only foundation of hope in death, and of happiness hereafter, when the pains of death are over, must be a reliance upon that atonement which was accomplished for the human race by the divine Being whose death upon the cross we this day commemorate. If we would die in peace, we must believe in Him who is revealed to us in the Scriptures of truth, as the Saviour and Friend of man—who came from an invisible world to obey that law of God which man had broken, and then to offer Himself a perfect and willing sacrifice to the justice of the Governor of the Universe, that the law of God might be exalted in the presence of millions of reasonable beings, in other worlds than this—and that the sinful, the ungrateful, the dying race of man might obtain pardon and peace. This is the message of the gospel of God, recorded in the New Testament—God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind—and he who believes in this message, may die happily and serenely, whenever his time shall arrive. His good deeds shall be accepted for the sake of Christ, his sins shall be pardoned, his terrors shall be removed, if his only consolation, and hope, and comfort in the prospect of meeting with his God, are established.

Rom. ii. 5.  
John iii. 16.
on the unchangeable redemption of the divine Being who on this holy day completed the work of mercy, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Such is the message of happiness, of peace, and of pardon, which is on this day confirmed to the world: and we call alike upon the careless and upon the profligate, upon the abandoned and the ignorant, upon the young who are entering upon life, and upon the aged who must soon leave it, to arouse from their spiritual death, and to awake from the lethargy in which they have hitherto lived, and to repent and return to the God of their immortal and accountable spirits, before the day of death shall for ever prevent that repentance. We invite the unbeliever, and the speculator, with the man who imagines that he may reject the atonement of Christ, and still be accepted of the Almighty, to examine the evidences of the truth, and the whole system of redemption. We entreat him to look and see if there be any religion so just to God, so safe to man, as this. The language of God to man is ever the same. It addresses itself neither to the passions, to the imagination, nor to the feelings—it addresses itself to the reason only, and when the reason is convinced, then alone is the heart affected, and the mind subdued. *Come and let us reason together*, is the eloquence of the Creator of the spirits of men. *Come let us reason*—let us

*Isaiah i. 18.*
search and find if the preachers of Christianity do not speak the truth, and the truth only, when they address themselves to the people, and tell them that they are sinners before God, but that all their sins shall be pardoned, if they will receive the message of Him who, after He had accomplished the law of God, died upon the cross. What is it you believe? From what point shall we begin to reason with you? Do you believe the mere elements of religion—in the existence of a God, and that you are composed of body, and of soul? If so, the evidence of your senses must convince you that the God in whom you believe has made abundant provision for the body, which your reason, and experience, and consciousness, all prove to be of much less value than the soul. The body of man is weak and frail and feeble—it is subject to infirmity, sickness, and decay—it dies, and it returns to the dust—yet, for this poor, corrupt, miserable, perishing body, the earth is spread with fruits—the clouds of heaven drop plenty, the glorious sun rises and sets, the seasons return in their beauty, and in their order, and all creation rejoices in the goodness of the Lord God Almighty, who has thus lavished His mercies upon the body of man. But the soul of man, in proportion as the body decays, improves in strength and power—it reasons better—it obtains more knowledge—it rises superior to pain, sorrow, sickness, suffering—and when the death of the body arrives, it seems then only to have begun to understand the certainty and nature of its destiny—it then
only begins really to excel in the possession of its
faculties. Can we believe then that the merciful
God who has made such abundant provision for
the dying body, has made no provision for the liv-
ing soul? Shall the body, which is the ignoble
part of man, receive more care from the provi-
dence of God than the soul? But where has God
manifested His care of this soul, unless He has
done so, in granting revelation to man? Take this
away, and we have no hope, no certainty, no pro-
vision for the immortal spirit. And why are the
Scriptures revealed, and all its mighty wonders re-
corded, but to relate to us the causes of the evils
we every where see around us, and feel within us
—to tell us why the body is thus subject to death
and sickness, and how the soul can be made happy
after the body is dead? It tells us that man was
originally created in a different state from that in
which we now find him—that he offended God,
who, therefore, sentenced the body to death, but
who provided that remedy for the soul, which
was perfected and completed on this holy day.
I mention this, because I am anxious to impress
upon you the conviction that the religion which
enables us to die in peace, is established upon facts
and evidence which are undeniable and unanswer-
able. When we think and speak on this day re-
specting the sufferings and the death of Christ, our
hearts appear to receive an impression which never
can be removed. We sympathize with the sorrows
of our Lord—we follow Him from the agony in
the Garden of Gethsemane, where, as I related to you yesterday, He appears to have suffered that sort of indescribable misery which is prepared for the soul of a wicked man immediately after his spirit has departed from the body. We follow Him to the judgment-hall—we behold Him on the cross—we hear His prayer for the murderers—we listen to the expressions of the sorrow of His soul—we imagine that the feelings of grief and of sympathy will never be removed—But we mingle with the world, and all is forgotten! I cannot but believe that the impression would be more permanent, if we remembered the wonderful evidence upon which its undoubted truth is established. When, therefore, you are tempted to evil—when the world begins to resume its attractions—when the impression of devotional feelings and emotions begins to fade away—then endeavour to remember that your religion is something more than feelings, however deep, however impassioned. The religion of Christ is truth, founded upon miracles, supported by prophecy—challenging the inquiry of the unbeliever—suited to the nature of man—and thus healing all the diseases of the soul, and supporting us in the prospect of death, and of the day of judgment.

Let us now proceed to consider the events which took place on this day, when our blessed Redeemer closed His long and bitter sufferings with a cruel and ignominious death. We will consider these events in their order throughout.

The last circumstance which we dwelt upon was
the mysterious mental agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, where the drops of blood fell from our Lord's sacred body to the ground. It was now night, and He was faint, and weary, and exhausted; but no sleep, no repose, refreshed the Saviour in this dreadful hour. His betrayer was at hand. Judas approached, and with him a multitude of soldiers, and of the people, to apprehend our Lord. Even in the going forth of the Lamb to the slaughter, one event occurred which proves that His sufferings were willingly borne. No sooner had He told His betrayers, *I am He whom ye seek*, than they *went backward, and fell to the ground*. They could not have taken Christ to the cross, unless He had willingly offered Himself to death. Their strength ceased in a moment, until our Lord Himself restored their power to apprehend and seize Him. Before He could be insulted by the Gentiles, He must be given up and rejected by His own people. They led Him, therefore, first to the high priest—who inquired of Jesus concerning His disciples, and His doctrine. Respecting His disciples our Lord made no reply—they had all forsaken Him, and fled—and the hour of their persecution had not yet come. Respecting His doctrine, He appealed to those who had heard Him in the synagogues, and in the temple. Upon this the first blow was struck by one of His own nation, and His own people. No evidence could be adduced

\[5 \text{ John xviii. 6.}\]
against Him, but a misinterpretation of His own words—*destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*¹. He had spoken this of His body, and the witnesses declared that He spoke of the temple of Jerusalem, which the Jews venerated so highly, that it was deemed blasphemy to speak against it. When there was some disagreement between the witnesses who spoke even to this fact, the high priest arose, and said, *Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*—“art thou the Messiah whom this “nation has been so long expecting?—art Thou “the Christ of the Prophets?”—*I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us, whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God?*—*I am*, was the answer of our Lord, *I am: and Thou shalt see the Son of Man, the poor, despised, insulted criminal before thee—thou shalt see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven*. *He hath spoken blasphemy, was the exclamation of the high priest. What, He, the poor, pale, miserable victim before them!—He, the Nazarene—He, the Galilean—shall he be the Judge of the world? Still it is the same with us. He hath spoken blasphemy, is the language of the infidel.—He hath spoken blasphemy, is the language of the man who rejects the doctrine of the atonement of Christ, and all the invaluable blessings of our holy faith. Shall He, who was manifested as a Man, the Son of Mary—whose reputed father was a carpenter, shall He be the judge of the universe?—Is this the

¹ John ii. 19.  
² Matt. xxiv. 30.
question of any here? I AM, is the language of our Saviour, I am the Judge of the living and of the dead. And all of us, my brethren, shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. O! let us embrace the Son of God, lest He be angry with us, and we perish from this day of grace before we have repented. Every eye shall see Him, and every knee bow down before Him. Blessed are they who trust in Him.

Then the high priest rent his clothes, an act which the law of Moses forbade him to do, except in some dreadful calamity—he turned to the rulers of the nation, who even at this late hour had been summoned to sit in judgment, What further need have we of witnesses?—what think ye? or, "what decide ye?"—They gave their votes, and their opinions—and they all, all the whole national council, the rulers, and representatives of the people, they all condemned Him to be guilty of death. Thus was He despised and rejected of men, of His own people—We are now His people: is He despised and rejected by us?—Then the soldiers seized Him, and retained Him in the court of the palace, where they kept watch, where Peter betrayed Him, and where the soldiers and the servants began to mock Him, and to spit upon Him. Is there not here also some resemblance?—are you not often like those who, having apprehended Jesus, waited until authority and power had frowned upon Him, and then began to mock him, and to spit upon Him, and to buffet Him—to smite Him on the face, and blasphemously
to speak against Him? The rulers had hitherto treated Him with respect, but, when they had once condemned Him, the rabble insult and mock Him. Did you never, against your better judgment, sneer at religion, speak slightly of the Gospel, and perhaps deny some truth, because the society in which you moved, or the friend who had influence over you, first condemned Christ, by speaking bitter and wicked things, which you knew to be false, and which you would have censured, if you could have dared to do so; but which you first heard in silence, and in which you at last united? If you believe these things, dare, oh dare, to confess and defend them.

The morning of the day of the crucifixion at length dawned, and the whole multitude led Him away from the place where His own nation had rejected Him, to the hall of Pilate. The Roman governor appears to have been astonished at the transaction. The high priest, the rulers, the soldiers, go down on one of the days in which their passover was to be eaten—when by the customs of their country, they were required to be in their houses, engaged in religious devotion—to commit to him the person of a poor, despised Galilean, who, by his humble appearance, seemed to be totally unworthy of notice. What accusation bring ye against this man? They had no accusation. He is a malefactor they answered. Then judge Him according to your own law was the reply. The passover has begun, and we cannot now put Him to death as a blasphemer, which we ought
to do. Pilate, who, like most of his nation, thought the whole people of the Jews to be unworthy of much attention, only smiled at this accusation; for he made no answer; and they then for the first time cried out, that Christ was a rebel against Caesar—we found this fellow forbidding to give tribute to Caesar—saying that He himself is Christ, a king. They well knew that the emperor Tiberius, who had sent Pilate to govern the Jews, was of a disposition so jealous and tyrannical, that he seldom forgave any of the governors of the provinces, if they pardoned a crime against his authority: and Pilate himself, having been very cruel and oppressive, was afraid lest any complaint should be sent against him, to Tiberius, by the Jews. By saying then, that Christ had forbidden to give tribute to Caesar, the affair began to assume a new character. He went to Christ and asked Him, art Thou a king? You have heard in the services of the day the conversation which took place. The result was, that Pilate, wicked, cruel, and abandoned as he was, could not consent without a struggle to give up the meek and patient Sufferer before him, to the terrible death of the painful cross—I find no fault in this man.\(^8\) —I find no fault in him at all.\(^9\) The chief priests still clamoured, and Christ made no answer. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. Pilate was astonished at His silence: but Christ still answered nothing—and the Roman

\(^8\) Luke xxiii. 4.  
\(^9\) John xviii. 38.
governor proceeded to do all that he dared to do, to deliver Christ. He sent Him to Herod; hoping that Herod would prevail upon the Jews to release Him. Herod was disappointed in the conduct of our Lord, and therefore sent Him back with contempt. When Christ returned, Pilate requested the Jews to permit him to chastise Him, and let Him go—for there was nothing worthy of death in Him. His request was in vain. They still clamoured for His death. It was usual at the passover to release some one prisoner, in compliment to the religious ceremony of the time; and the people were accustomed to demand that prisoner, against whom the least crime was alleged. Pilate requested them to release Christ—No, they preferred Barabbas, a robber and a murderer. The surprise of Pilate, and his anxiety to save Christ encreased. Three several times he still attempted to deliver Him—being willing, says St. Luke, to release Him. Three times the priests and the rulers clamoured for His death—not this man, but Barabbas—crucify Him, crucify Him—let Him be crucified. Why, what evil hath he done?—I have found no cause of death in Him. They only cried out the more exceedingly, crucify Him. They were pressing, and earnest, and instant with loud voices—crucify Him, crucify Him. And the voices of them, and of the chief priests prevailed; and Pilate washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person

—see ye to it. His blood be on us, and on our children! was the clamorous and cruel reply. And that blood has ever since been upon them in anger and justice. May it be upon us for mercy, and peace, and salvation. Barabbas the murderer is released, and Christ is given up to be crucified. The soldiers took Him and scourged Him, as was usual, before men were crucified—they then put on Him a scarlet robe because He had called Himself a king, and a reed in His hand instead of a sceptre. They platted a crown of thorns and put it upon His head, and then they bowed the knee in all the bitterness of insult, hail, king—hail king of the Jews! It is probable that the personal appearance of our Lord at this moment was of the most humble and pitiful description—for Pilate made one last attempt to save Him, by bringing Him forth to the Jews, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe—Behold the Man! he exclaimed, is this the man whom you are so anxious to condemn—"surely this poor miserable victim deserves your pity, not your hatred."—Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him 12, was the answer—and there was no remedy. They put the cross upon Him, and led Him out of the city to Calvary.

I have occupied your time much longer than is usual with this sad story—yet it is necessary that we should follow our Lord to the scene of His death; though the heart should break at the narrative.

12 John xix. 15.
GOOD FRIDAY. [Serm. XXIV.

They led Him away to Calvary. Vinegar mingled with gall was given to insult Him further. Wine mingled with myrrh was given to stupify the senses; but He rejected them both. He tasted the gall and the vinegar, and accomplished a prophecy. He rejected the wine and the myrrh, for His sorrows were all voluntary, and He refused to lessen the sufferings which He came to bear. He had wept over the inhabitants of Jerusalem, though not for Himself, as He went on to Calvary—and He now prayed for His murderers, Father, forgive them  

13, as they were in the act of piercing His hands, and His feet, by nailing Him to the cross. There at length He hangs for us men, and for our salvation. There, amidst the still-continued mockeries of the priests, the soldiers, and the rabble, He declared to them and to us, the reasons for which He was put to death, by pardoning the penitent thief, who had reproved the blasphemy of his companion, and offered up the prayer, Lord remember me when Thou comest unto Thy kingdom—Verily I say unto thee, was the answer, this day shalt thou be with Me in paradise  

14, though “I am dying as a man, I have power to forgive “sins. I will not descend from the cross, as these “demand. Here will I remain, though writhing in “agony, that the atonement for man may be com-“pleted; but I am God to pardon, as well as man “to suffer, and I pardon thee, as I will pardon all “who pray to a crucified Redeemer.” And now

13 Luke xxiii. 34.

14 Ibid. ver. 43.
the sixth hour was come, and there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour — the hour when the lamb was to be slain according to the law of Moses. Then the true sacrifice also was to be slain, that all things might be accomplished to the uttermost. At the ninth hour the last prayer of Christ was uttered — the last exclamation of suffering was heard. One more prophecy remained — and that He might fulfil it, He drank of the acid drink of the soldiers, which one of them gave Him for refreshment: and when Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished. All is finished which the prophets predicted — all which God required — all which man could suffer — it is finished — and man is saved. It is finished, and the souls of those who believe in Me shall never perish. Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit — and He bowed His head, and resigned the suffering soul to the God whose law was satisfied, to the God who was now reconciled to the world. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom — though the priests in the temple who beheld it, did not know that now the Gentile world were admitted into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Christ. The earth trembled — it will tremble much more on that day when He shall come down in His glory, and the heavens and the earth shall melt away at His presence. The rocks rent — they opened by some invisible power, as they will cast

15 Matt. xxvii. 45.  
16 John xix. 30.
out the wicked at the last great day, who will flee to the mountains, and to the rocks, for shelter from the coming Judge. The graves were opened, as they shall all open on that dreadful morning, when the dead, small and great, must stand before God. Which of you will not exclaim with the Centurion, when he saw what was done—*truly, this was the Son of God!*—Who will not sympathize with all the people who came together to that sight, and beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned?—Such are the events which we this day commemorate. I will make no remarks upon them, I will draw no lessons from them: but I conclude with offering this one petition for myself, for you, and for all the Church of Jesus Christ, which He hath now purchased by His most precious blood.—O Lord God Almighty, make our knowledge of redemption the source of holiness, and of happiness, both now and for ever.

"Matt. xxvii. 54."
SERMON XXV.

EASTER SUNDAY.

[Preached at Northallerton, on Easter Sunday, 1828.]

Matthew xxvii. 52, 53.

The graves were opened; and many bodies of saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

I have selected this passage of Scripture for our consideration this morning, because it enables us to complete the view, which has now occupied us through the last week, of the circumstances which occurred at the conclusion of our Saviour's ministry. When we last met, we dwelt upon the dying hours of our blessed Lord, and the wonders which took place when He resigned His suffering spirit to His Father—when He bowed His head upon the blood-stained cross, and when the hopes of those who thought that He had come to redeem Israel appeared to be in vain. We now celebrate the moment of His triumph over the power of the grave, when He became the first fruits of them
that sleep, the pledge and the earnest of that great harvest when all mankind shall rise in like manner. I know not whether to dwell upon the prospects that were this day opened to the human race, when life and immortality were brought to light—when our future existence in a better, and more glorious world, was made so undeniably certain, that there can be no longer a doubt of our resurrection upon the mind of any man who will study the evidences of Christianity—or whether I shall follow the custom which is so generally observed on this day, of pointing out the truth of certain facts, and shewing the force of those arguments which prove the rising again of our Saviour; and, therefore, of our own resurrection. The views which open upon the soul of man when he shall rise again from the dead, are so splendid, and so attractive—the representations of an endless existence where affliction shall never reach us—where tears are banished, where temptations cannot enter—where evil cannot prevail—where the weary are at rest ¹—where there is fulness of spiritual joy—and serenity and peace in the continued enjoyment of the presence of a reconciled God—these representations, I say, which abound in the Scripture of truth, are so endearing, so lovely, so magnificent, that it is difficult to direct our attention to other things, when we are to treat upon our resurrection from the dead, and the glory which shall follow. It will, however, be more useful if we proceed in the customary way

¹ Job iii. 17.
of considering the evidences, rather than the consequences, of this resurrection—more especially under the circumstances in which we are now placed. We have proceeded regularly through all the principal events of the conclusion of our Saviour's ministry. And it now only remains that we consider those which now followed—namely, His death upon the cross; together with the events which demonstrate the certainty of His resurrection. Our review of the incidents of this period will thus be more properly terminated: and I am sure, that our examination of these proofs which establish the truths of this latter fact, will confirm our faith in the system of redemption—and will so lead us to the study of the wonderful immortality which is prepared for us, that we may elevate our thoughts to heaven, and be more influenced to a holy life by the rewards which are promised, than by the terrors which are threatened.

The evidences in favour of a resurrection from the dead, may be divided into those which are taken from the testimony of reason—those which may be inferred from such passages of Scripture as that before us—but principally those which are derived from the resurrection of Christ. All of them are extensive and satisfactory. We will briefly consider them in the order I have mentioned.

There may be, in the first place, some arguments in favour of the resurrection of the body derived from reason. I do not mean that reason alone could discover them; but that since Revelation has
brought the doctrine to light—reason approves and confirms the discovery. I therefore mention this, to appeal to those who so much exalt the power of their own reason. It is certain that when the eye of affection gazes upon the consequences of death—when we look down upon the cold, and pale, and silent form which but a few days ago was all animation, strength, and life—the first natural, unavoidable impression even of the best men, too often is, the total impossibility of the restoration of our departed friends to a new and better life. The voice which came to the prophet, when he was placed in the valley of the dry bones, appears to be the voice of reason, and of nature—Son of man, can these dry bones live? Yes, they can. Since the Son of God has arisen and brought life and immortality to light, every thing must prove to us the certainty of the resurrection of the body, as well as the immortality of the soul. Reason declares it—in the work of creation—in the very return of the spring—in our own experience of the union of soul and body. You may remember that I sometime ago urged the doctrine of the possibility of a resurrection from the work of creation. If God by His Almighty power could so act, that the trees, and fruits, and plants, and flowers, which are suited to every varied soil and climate under heaven, should come forth, and bud and blossom over the whole surface of the earth, at the same moment of time—why should not the same power be able to raise the dead? If, too, the hand of Providence
is so ruling and governing the surface of the earth, that the invisible seeds which are scattered over it, begin to break forth in the spring of the year, and cover the ground with verdure and beauty, why should not the same Providence bring forth to life that which has ever been of more value than these inferior things? If the trees can awake from the death of winter, when they are bare and barren, and leafless, to assume their foliage, and fragrancy, and loveliness in the spring, why shall there not be the spring time of the grave, when the winter of death shall be over, and a new scene of existence begin? This, indeed, is the very argument which is used by St. Paul—Some men will say how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Is it with the same bodies in which they departed hence, or is it with other bodies?—That which thou sowerst, is the answer, is not quickened, except it die. The grain of wheat, or the seed of a flower, which a man puts into the earth, cannot live again, except it first die, and seem to perish; and thou sowerst not that body that shall be. We do not put a grain of corn into the ground in order that the same one grain of corn shall come forth. We put it into the ground that it may come up in a far different, and more attractive form. We expect its appearance with the tenderness of the stalk, the beauty of the plant, the fruitfulness of the ear. It comes forth quite different from that

1 Cor. xv. 35. 2 Ibid. ver. 36.
bare grain which was buried in the earth—so also is the resurrection of the dead. Our friends are taken away from us—and we commit to the bosom of the cold ground a pale and mouldering form, which is sown in corruption, to be raised in incorruption. Which is sown in dishonour, to be raised in glory. Which is sown in weakness, to be raised in power. Which is sown a natural body, to be raised a spiritual body. Such as it is committed to the ground, it shall not rise again; but it shall rise—as the seed of the last year shall come forth in the form of the plant, and flower. The least reflection also upon the wonderful union of the soul and body, ought to prove to us that the spirit of man cannot be confined in the grave. And as the body and the soul have suffered together, and have sinned together, together therefore must they be rewarded, or punished. The soul of man improves most when the body is most infirm. It is then more fitted for another state. Here it is narrowed, and cramped, and confined. It is in a prison—a body of corruption, and infirmity—a body of sin, a body of death. It groans to be released—it longs in its better moments to be in a more heavenly state. The soul feels within itself a fitness for a better world—while the body is fitted in its present state merely for this lower world. The rational anticipations of man, therefore, are, that he shall live again, both in body and soul, in some nobler and happier state. These are the arguments even of an enlightened reason. I acknowledge that they
are not sufficient in themselves; but this they prove— that while philosophy seeks for truth, Christianity alone can find it. And the faint glimmering of a hope of immortality which is thus pointed out by human reason, when it can overcome the first natural impressions occasioned by the death of the body, is confirmed by the facts of revelation, to which I now direct you, as our second argument on this interesting subject.

We demonstrate then the resurrection from the dead by the wonderful facts by which our Saviour proved His power over death, even before He Himself submitted for a time to its dominion. The great object for which He came into the world was to save mankind first from sin, and then from death—but the peculiar proof of the truth of His mission was to be the resurrection of the bodies of men, to prove to us that there was another world in which we might live again. Our Lord, therefore, with that wisdom and mercy which marked His whole conduct, did not confine His proofs of this truth to His own resurrection. He first triumphed over every process of the corruption of death—He conquered the king of terrors in every stage of its dominion over the body of men, and the passage of Scripture which I have selected is only the last of His victories, and the greater earnest of His universal authority, when all the graves shall open, and the dead of all ages, and of all nations, shall appear before Him. The law of mortality is this, when the spirit of man has forsaken the body, that
body first decays, and then in the course of years appears to be totally decomposed, and mingled with the elements—and it is this terrible experience which made the resurrection of the body appear so impossible to the Athenians, who heard St. Paul with patience, until he spoke of the resurrection of the dead. Now I cannot repeat it too often, that one great excellence of our holy religion is, that it is not, like false religions, founded upon opinions or fancies: it is established upon facts, which invited the inquiry, and challenged the examination of all to whom the Gospel was preached. Our Lord, therefore, knowing the opposition which this doctrine would receive, proved the possibility of the resurrection at every period of the decay of the human frame. He restored the daughter of Jairus immediately after she had died. The spirit came back instantly after it had left the body, at the command of Him who had the keys of death, and of the unseen world. He restored the widow’s son, when they were carrying him forth to his burial—when the decay of the body was beginning, and his own weeping mother was compelled to commit it to the ground. He restored Lazarus, when he had been some days buried—his sister told our Lord that He must not go to the sepulchre, for humanity could not bear it—he hath been dead four days. But the voice was uttered, Lazarus come forth, and he that was dead came forth. And now we arrive

3 John xi. 44.
at the last of this series of wonders. Christ upon the cross bowed His head, and exclaimed, *into Thy hands I commend my spirit* *, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened—and the bodies of saints who had been dead many years, and whose corruptible frames had undergone a total decomposition, came forth after His resurrection. I say after His resurrection—for it was appointed by the Providence of God, that Christ should be the first fruits of the dead—that is, that He should be the first who should rise from the dead with that glorified, spiritual body, which we shall all receive at the resurrection. The widow's son—the Centurion's daughter—and Lazarus, were only raised to life, that they might resume their places in their families, and die again. Christ was the first who appeared in the resurrection body. But as the more general tokens of His victory would entirely establish the proof of His dominion over the invisible world, it was ordained that He should give that proof of an universal resurrection, which I have now read to you—the graves opened at His death—the bodies which were placed in them had been buried at different times—and were consequently in the different stages of the effects of their mortal decomposition. Until our Lord arose, the graves continued open—and the bodies within them slowly and gradually recovered from the sleep of death, till the restoration of those forms

was completed at the resurrection. Then they went to Jerusalem, and at the moment when Christ arose from the dead, they appeared to many of their friends, and announced to them the triumph of Christ over the king of terrors. St. Matthew’s Gospel was published within a short time after the resurrection of Christ—it was extensively circulated, it was everywhere known in Judea, and in Jerusalem. The persons who opposed the Gospel would have made their inquiries upon this subject, when they heard the apostles preaching the doctrine of the resurrection with that remarkable boldness which distinguished their conduct after the descent of the Holy Spirit—the opponents of Christianity would say—"Where are the persons who saw their friends after this resurrection of the Galilean? The Jews are accustomed to go to the graves of their friends and weep: which of all those who did so, saw the graves thus opened, and the bodies of their friends restored?" The answer would have been given by many—"I was walking and weeping over the grave of my father or my mother," one would have said, "and suddenly, at the end of that singular darkness which overspread the land on one of the first days of the passover, the solid rock of which the sepulchre was formed broke asunder, and the grave opened—and I saw the forms I loved, once more before me—but oh, how changed—the flesh had withered—the bones were decayed—I gazed, but I stirred not—for suddenly I be-
"held them begin to move—and the bones came
together, and the sinews and the flesh seemed
to renew themselves, and they looked as if they
would live, but there was no breath in them—but
on the third day after—when I was recovered
from the trembling with which I had beheld them,
they appeared to me in my own house at Jeru-
usalem, and told me that the Galilean who was
crucified had restored them to life." "I had fol-
lowed," another might have said, "Jesus of Na-
azareth from the judgment-hall to Calvary. I be-
held the darkness. I saw Him expire. I smote
my breast and returned—three days after I also
saw in my own house, at Jerusalem, the form of
my nearest and dearest friend—with whom I had
so often conversed about the strange prophet who
had appeared amongst us, and he told me that
his resurrection had taken place through the
power of this same Jesus, who declared Himself
the resurrection and the life—of Jesus of Na-
azareth, whom these men preach, and whom you
oppose in vain."—Such must have been the con-
versations at Jerusalem when the Gospel of St.
Matthew appeared in the very midst of the en-
mity and inquisitive examinations of the Jews—
such were the consequences of the resurrection of
Christ, first to the saints, to the followers, to the
disciples who loved Him. No wonder that the
word of God went on and prospered, when, in ad-
dition to all the other evidences in its favour, the
eye-witnesses of the friends of the departed could
thus bear testimony to the power of the Son of God.

I have dwelt, I fear, too long upon these proofs of the resurrection of the body—let us now consider the resurrection of our Lord Himself.

No sooner had our Saviour bowed His head and died, than the remembrance of His miracles and teaching so impressed the mind of a rich and influential man of Arimathea, that he resolved to endeavour to preserve His crucified body from those indignities to which the bodies of criminals, who suffered this terrible death, were universally exposed. They were cast out to the dogs, and to the birds, unburied and unnoticed. The disciples of Christ, the fishermen of Galilee, poor, unknown, timid, and despised, were too much overawed to ask for the body of their Master; and if they had done so, they would probably have been refused with insult. But a higher power than Herod, or Pilate, or the council of the Jews, had declared, that though He made His grave with the wicked, yet the rich should take charge of Him at His death, and the will of man accomplishes the purposes of God. Joseph of Arimathea demanded the body from Pilate; and Pilate, after wondering at the request, ordered it to be given; and Joseph, attended by Nicodemus, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and wound it round about the body with spices, as the manner of the Jews was to bury. The place where He was to be buried was a garden

5 See Isaiah liii. 6 John xix. 40.
near Jerusalem, into which none could obtain admission but those who were permitted by the owner. This was the first security. Within this garden was a sepulchre, which was hewn out of the solid rock, and had therefore but one entrance, so that the body could not have been taken in at one door and removed at another. The body was laid in this sepulchre—the door of the sepulchre was shut—and it was farther secured by a large stone rolled against it. It is probable that Joseph feared it might have been insulted by the relentless enemies who had pursued his divine Master even to death. The women, who had followed Him from Galilee, marked also the place where the body had been laid. And now the malice of the Jews continued after the death of their victim. They imagined that they had struck the most effectual blow at the new religion: but they would still go farther, and remove every possibility of its revival. The chief priests, and the Pharisees, therefore, came together to Pilate—"Sir, we remember that that Deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again—command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away." Pilate, to whom all this was quite incomprehensible, and who thought that their anxiety was very absurd about a poor criminal whom they first compelled him to crucify, and whose dead body they were now so anxious to protect from His own friends—

\[\text{Matt. xxvii. 64.}\]
immediately granted them a guard of soldiers to watch the sepulchre—and they went and placed their seal upon the stone—and appointed the band of soldiers to prevent any one from coming near it. After the resurrection, the Jews affirmed that the disciples stole away the body while the guard was sleeping. Let us examine if this was possible. The soldiers were Romans, to whom it was death to sleep on their posts. It was the finest time of the year in that country; so that they had little temptation to sleep. They were appointed to watch but for one night; so that the duty was not fatiguing. The moon was nearly at the full; for the Jews always celebrated the passover at the full moon. The sepulchre, like all the Jewish sepulchres, consisted of two rooms, the outer room was that in which the mourners were accustomed to visit the tombs; the inner one was that in which the bodies were deposited. If any person, therefore, had ventured to come near the place where the body of Jesus lay, they must first have climbed into the garden—then they must have gone through the outer room, where a band of Roman soldiers was placed—and then they must have rolled away the stone from the inner door, and broken the seal, forced open the inner door itself, and removed the body from among the guards, and taken it from the tomb, and from the garden, unseen, unnoticed by any—Is it necessary that I should stop to prove the absurdity of these suppositions, and the falsehood of the story which the Jews invented, that
His poor timid disciples came by night and stole the body, while the Roman soldiers slept! They would not, because they had no interest or reason for doing it. They could not, for they had no power. They dared not, for they had no courage. There is but one truth—the resurrection of Christ from the grave. King of Glory come forth! Son of God arise! Break from the prison of the grave—and burst the bars of death asunder! The hour of the resurrection has arrived—the third promised day has come. First born from the dead—Saviour of man—giver of immortality—arise and come forth!—and He has risen, and we shall rise also. No matter where our bodies may be, or how they may be lost, the ocean may cover them—the grave may enclose them—the elements may surround them. They may be invisible through the power of corruption, to the sight of man—but the sea shall give up its dead—the graves shall all be open—the elements shall melt before their God, and resign all that was once human—and we shall all rise again—we shall awake from our deep slumber, and break from the repose of ages. We must rise again. Christ is the head, and we are the members—and where the head of the Church shall be, the members must be there also. When the moment came in which the redemption was to be sealed, then the same scene was witnessed on the smaller scale which shall be more extensively witnessed at the general resurrection. There was a great earthquake, and the angels came down from on
high. The Angel of the Lord descended from heaven—His countenance was like lightning, and His raiment white as snow—and He was terrible to the Roman soldiers, who knew not God, nor His Son, and despised the purpose for which they had been sent there. But He was serene, and gentle, to the poor women of Galilee, who had come first to the tomb, not knowing of the guard, to weep over the body of their Lord. So shall the earth tremble—and the angels of heaven at the great day be the ministers of wrath to the wicked who have lain down without hope—while the same angels shall rejoice to calm the terrors, and to soothe the fears of those who slept in the hope of a joyful resurrection through the Son of God. Then the declaration in this passage of Scripture was accomplished—many bodies of the saints came forth from the graves which had been opened in the hour of the death of Christ, and they appeared to the followers of their common Lord, to prove to us, that though the grave may part us from our kindred and our friends for a season, we shall all be restored to each other, and nothing be left of mortality to disturb our peace and union, which shall continue for ever. If we are Christians indeed, our immortality will be happiness, to an extent, and in a manner, which we must die before we can experience; but of which some faint hints are given us in Scripture, to elevate our affections above this earth, and to place them upon the scenes of endless and certain glory.

Such is the event with which we conclude.
review of the last week of the ministry of Christ. The half has not been told you, but I trust that enough has been said to induce you to study the pages of inspiration, to believe in the truth of the gospel, and to live as in the presence of God. Remember how short our time must be upon earth—look at the length of life, and reflect how much has passed away already. Death cannot be the end of man—it is only the completion of the first stage of an undying existence. The events which you have this day commemorated, demonstrate that you must live again. Prepare then to meet thy God—prepare to meet Him with joy—not as an angry Judge, but as a merciful Deliverer from sin and death, as an eternal and beloved Friend. You are invited to happiness, and peace, and joy—you are entreated to partake of consolation, in the prospect of death, and comfort in the consciousness of approaching dissolution. Believe in these things from the heart. Put away the allurements of known evil—die to the world, and live to God—and the Redeemer who has died and risen again, will rejoice to receive you in the last great day. Follow your Lord upon earth, and He will not be ashamed of His disciples, when all the dead appear before Him—when He cometh in the clouds of heaven, and all His holy angels with Him.
Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds.—So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption: it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

The Christian religion is established upon two kinds of evidence, which are called the external or outward, and the internal or inward evidence. The external evidence consists of a certain number of facts, and actions, which are proved to be true, by the same mode of demonstration by which we shew that any circumstances recorded in history may be
proved to have taken place. The internal evidence consists in this—that there are certain doctrines and declarations in the books of Scripture, which could not have been discovered by human reason, but which may be proved, after they have been once submitted to us, to be perfectly consistent with the most strict and severe reasoning. The subject which I have selected for our consideration this morning, must be added to the latter of these. It is the subject of the resurrection of the body. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul was a part of that revelation which was given to man at the beginning, and, therefore, it was a doctrine which was never entirely forgotten among mankind. All nations, however savage, or in other respects ignorant, retained some persuasion that there was within them a reasonable soul, and that that soul was immortal, and would live again in some mysterious manner, after the death of the body. But the resurrection of the body was a doctrine which was never fully revealed, until life and immortality were more fully brought to light by the gospel; and therefore it was, that, when St. Paul preached at Athens, the philosophers and the people heard him with patience, until he spoke of the resurrection from the dead; and the converts to whom this epistle was addressed, in spite of all their willingness to receive the doctrines of the new religion, were staggered at the difficulties attendant on the resurrection of

1. 2 Tim. i. 10.
the body, and exclaimed in the language of the passage before us—*How are the dead raised up?* How is it possible that the poor, pale, cold, decaying form, which the weeping kindred commit to the melancholy grave—how is it possible that this corruptible, mouldering clay, can recover from the embraces of corruption, from the revellings of the worm, from the mingling with the elements, and from the laws of destruction, and rise from the crumbling ground, and live, and move again? *How are the dead raised up?* And even if it be possible that they should be raised, as the Scriptures declare—*with what body do they come?* Do they rise again in the same form as that in which they were committed to the ground? Can the body of flesh and blood inherit the invisible kingdom of God? Would not such a body be merely a burden and hindrance to the soul? Shall we again put on the form which has been so long subject to sickness, infirmity, and age? Shall we rise to perpetual youth, and to the renovated beauty of earlier and happier years? *How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?* Such was their language, and such is ours also—for it is the language of nature, when we think of our own death; and it is the language of affection, when we remember the death of others; and it is a question, therefore, which, even on this account, deserves to be considered and answered. There is, however, yet another reason, on account of which we seem to be required to consider it. There is not one per-
son present who has not wept over the grave of his friend—there is not one person present, over whom his friends also shall not weep, when he is committed to the grave. Over the bodies of those whom we have lost, the words which I have selected have been read aloud in our churches—and they will be read over our own lifeless bodies also, when they shall say of us, as we now speak of others—"He is gone to give account to his God."—These are the words which have been read for our consolation, when we have stood by the graves of our friends; they will be read for the consolation of others who shall follow us with affection, or with kindness, to the grave—and they are therefore especially worthy of our attention—for they alike appeal to us as mere human beings who look forward to one common doom—as Christians who have one consolation—and as members of the same spiritual community, who have the same mode of expressing their faith and their hope.

To the two questions, then, How are the dead raised up and—with what body do they come? St. Paul returns two distinct and separate answers—the first of which is of a more general, though very satisfactory nature, and affirms that the body with which we shall rise again shall be different in its form and appearance from that which is committed to the ground. The second answer is more minute and particular, and its object is to prove that the bodies which shall thus be changed, will be as much fitted for, and adapted to, a higher and
more glorious state, as our present bodies of flesh and blood are fitted for, and adapted to, our present inferior and fallen condition. He first answers the question, How are the dead raised? He then adds the interrogation—With what body do they come? We will consider both in their order.

The first answer of St. Paul explains to us, how the dead are raised—that the body with which the spirits of man shall then be clothed, is different in form and appearance from that which it now possesses—and his illustration of this truth is such as a child can comprehend. It is taken from that which every day presents itself—the difference between the seed of a plant, and the bud or the flower which proceeds from it. That which thou sowest, thou sowerest not that body that shall be, but bare grain. If we commit to the ground the seed of a flower, or a plant—that seed does not spring up above the ground in the same precise form, and shape, and appearance in which it was sown. It first dies, and corrupts, and seems utterly and totally to perish—but when the time of its resurrection arrives, then it breaks forth from the earth, with the tender leaf, with the beautiful bud, with the opening flower. It is the same in substance, in a manner which is quite as incomprehensible as our own resurrection, while it is different in its form from that which was committed to the ground. So also, shall it be in the resurrection of the human dead. We shall rise from the grave at the last day, the same in substance, though different in out-
ward appearance. If the Almighty God, as we see in every revolving year, is able to preserve the seeds of the plants, and of the flowers—if His providence is so extended over all the climates and countries of the earth, that He is able to preserve in every land, and on every shore, the small and invisible seeds which, to the eye of man, appear to be totally lost, and dead, and perished—if He can so protect them through the storms, and snow, and tempests, and desolations, of the winter in every part of the world, that they shall come forth in the spring of the year, to cover the reviving ground with their beauty and their fragrance, surely the same God who works this miracle is able to preserve the bodies of the human dead through the winter of the grave, and to restore them also in the morning of that everlasting spring, when the dominion of death shall be ended. If the seed of the plant; aye, and of innumerable plants may die, and rise again in a new and more glorious form, according to those laws of being which are fixed by the Creator, why cannot the God of Creation command the prison of the grave to open, and the dead, small and great, to come forth before their Judge? Why cannot that one Almighty produce the dead bodies of mankind in a new and more glorious appearance? If the Almighty, in the spring of every successive year, performs that wonderful miracle which our own eyes behold, but which we do not sufficiently consider, because it is so often repeated; why shall not the same divine
power perform another miracle of the very same nature, which only appears to be astonishing because there is but one day of judgment, and the miracle of the resurrection of the dead shall therefore take place but once. Such, then, is the answer to the first question. How are the dead raised up? To reply to the second is more difficult. Even if we allow that the dead shall thus rise again, still we ask, With what body do they come? Why must they rise again in another appearance? And how are we to understand the causes of this change, and the nature of that state, which is prepared for mankind?

Let me beg your attention while we endeavour so to be guided by the language of inspiration, that we may look beyond the valley of the shadow of death, and explain this part also of St. Paul's reply. His answer is to this effect:—As the mortal body which our spirits now occupy is fitted and adapted to the mortal condition in which we are now placed; so also will the body with which we shall rise again be adapted to that new mode of existence, where we shall be the companions of angels, and other spirits, in an invisible world. To enable us to comprehend this, the Apostle reasons in this manner:—All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds—that is, God has so created this lower world, that He has divided it into different states or conditions—and He has created different animals and different
bodies suited to each of those states or conditions.—For instance, He created the land, and He created the beasts which possess it, and He has so formed them, that the earth is adapted to them, and they are adapted to the earth. He created the water, and the fishes are adapted to the sea, and the sea for them. In the same manner He created the air, and the birds which possess it—and the birds cannot inhabit the water, and the fishes cannot occupy the air—but birds, and fishes, and beasts are only able to live in that part of the creation, and in that state of being, which God at first assigned to them. In the same manner in which God has thus created the land and the sea, which is the visible creation—so also has He created another world which at present is to us invisible; and as He has filled the land and the sea with one kind of flesh of beasts, and another of fishes; so has He filled the invisible world with other kind of beings—with angels and archangels, with cherubim and seraphim. And this is what St. Paul means when he tells us there are bodies celestial, or heavenly, and there are also bodies terrestrial, or earthly—and as the bodies of the animals, the beasts, the fishes, and the birds, are fitted only for the land, the sea, and the air; so also are the forms of the angels, and of the archangels, fitted for and adapted to the state of glory in heaven, in which they now exist—and none of all these various beings, whether they be high or low in the scale of creation, can change their place, or change their nature. The terrestrial cannot become
cestial. The celestial cannot become terrestrial. The earthly remain earthly—and the heavenly remain heavenly. Let us now see in what manner St. Paul applies this reasoning to the resurrection of the dead. He reasons thus:

With respect to all the inferior bodies of which he has been speaking, there is no change whatever. With them whatever has an earthly body, is intended for earth alone—and whatever has a celestial body is intended for heaven alone; but man, immortal, highly honoured man, was so created that he might possess both of these conditions—first the earth on which he lives at present, and then, that he might obtain that state which is possessed by the angels of heaven. Man is the only being in the whole creation which can pass from the lower state of existence to the higher. Man, who now possesses an earthly or terrestrial body like the mere animals of the field, is alone capable of inheriting a heavenly or celestial body, like the angels of heaven. His present form is adapted to his present place in the universe of God—he fills that place which is neither so low as that of the merely earthly bodies, and which is not so high as that of the heavenly bodies—and there is a necessity, therefore, for some wonderful change to take place, that the body which is now fit only for earth, should become fit for its better destiny. And the change which is thus necessary, is described by our Saviour in language as express as that of St. Paul. In the resurrection, he tells us, the laws of the mere
earthly relationships of life shall cease—for then, those who have lived on earth as men, become like the angels; they partake of the home, and abode, and state of angels, and therefore they become of the same nature as angels. As men only live among men, so do immortal spirits live only among immortal spirits—or in the other words of inspiration—*the corruptible shall put on incorruption, the mortal shall put on immortality.* We are now of the earth earthly; we shall then be of the heaven heavenly. We now live as bodies terrestrial—we shall then live as bodies celestial. Now we live on, the victims of sorrow and woe, whose sentence is—*Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust*—then we shall live free from the burthen of the flesh—unfettered by the prison of the grave—untouched, unsullied, by the dust and ashes of the inferior and earthly body—*We shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.* That which has been of the earth earthly, shall then be of the heaven heavenly. *As we have borne the image of the earth,* which was adapted to our place on earth—we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, which is adapted to our place in heaven. Such is the full meaning of the argument of St. Paul, and when he has thus shewn the necessity of that change which shall enable the body of flesh and blood to become fit for another state—then he

Burial Service.
goes on to describe at greater length, the nature of the change which shall thus take place when we are summoned from the grave. The mortal body, he tells us, is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in corruption, it was subject to death—to the mouldering in the tomb—to the mingling with the elements which surround it; but it is raised in incorruption—for the resurrection body shall never die, death shall not destroy it—it is immortal as the angels among whom it lives, and lasting as the heaven which it is commanded to inhabit. It is sown in dishonour—a vile body, a body of humiliation, subject to corruption, and to deformity—the object of loathsomeness, and of abhorrence—till the tenderest affection speaks of the dead, whom, when living, it most loved and cherished, as Abraham spoke of his beloved Sarah, bury the dead out of my sight⁴;—but it is raised in glory—it is raised in the likeness of Christ, it shall be like to His glorious body, for where He is, the body as well as the soul of the Christian shall be; and as He partook of our nature when He was upon earth, so shall we also partake of His nature when we are received into heaven—when I awake up after Thy likeness, says the inspired writer, I shall be satisfied with it⁵.—But not only this, the mortal body which is committed to the ground, is sown in weakness—it is exhausted by labour—it is wasted by sickness—it is withered by infirmity,

⁴ Gen. xxiii. 4. ⁵ Psalm xvii. 15.
it is worn down by age,—but it is raised in power: nor pain, nor sickness, nor age, nor sorrow shall diminish nor enfeeble its strength. And, lastly, as the sum of all, it is sown a natural body, fitted for this world only by its form, and by its qualities—it is raised a spiritual body, fitted for and adapted to a spiritual world—in which it may take its place according to the object for which it was created, among other spirits of the just made perfect, among the innumerable company of angels, with Christ the Mediator of the New Covenant, and with God the Judge of all.

Such, then, is the doctrine of Scripture respecting the resurrection body—and such are the answers to the questions which nature and affection dictate—How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? They are raised up from the winter of the grave, as the plants and the flowers from the dreariness of the natural winter; and they come with an incorruptible, a glorious, an immortal, and a spiritual body, with which they may dwell for ever in the presence of their God, their Father, and their Saviour. And I have considered the subject of our future existence in this manner, that I might shew you, that the belief of a Christian in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, is not like that of the heathen, a mere vague, undefined, and dubious hope of immortality: but that our belief, as it is principally founded on the re-

Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.
surrection of Christ, so is it confirmed by the evidence of our senses, and by the severest reasoning—and therefore that we have no excuse, and no apology, if we live without securing a good hope of immortality through the Author and Finisher of our faith'. This is the conclusion to which we ought to arrive when we consider the rapid flight of time—the certainty of death—the nearness of death—and the solemn change which awaits us, when this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption. This, however, is the common language of exhortation, and of reproof, in which you are so frequently urged to remember the future, and to prepare to meet your God. I will not, then, use such language on this occasion. If you can hear of the death of the body, and of the change of the earthly into the heavenly, and still require remonstrance, and rebuke, it is doubtful whether any arguments could move you. Permit me, rather, to call upon you to reflect upon the death of the mortal body with consolation, and comfort, and hope. The whole chapter from which this passage of Scripture has been selected, was written for this express purpose—that when we reflect either upon the death of others, or upon the death of ourselves, we might rejoice in the promises, and in the consolations of the Gospel, as well as fear its threatenings, and believe in its merciful Author. For this same pur-

Heb. xii. 2.
pose also, this chapter is read in the funeral service of the Church. And for this purpose only I have now chosen it, that we may derive comfort and happiness in the expectation that we shall all meet again, in a better state, and in a more perfect condition, or to use the language of another part of the same beautiful service—That we may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul. Why is it that we should so uniformly look upon death as a source of terror? Why, when we have the faith of Christians, must we always retain the fear and trembling of Heathens, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage? The sting of death, you will answer, is sin, and the answer, is true; but, shall we never conquer, shall we never at least begin to conquer, when we have a divine power to assist us, when this wonderful system of redemption is open to us—when God Himself invites us—when the Saviour of man has gone before us, and drank of the bitterness of death that the cup might be sweetened to His followers? You have already followed many to the grave, and before your own lifeless form be carried there, you may be called upon to follow others. Will you, again and again, listen to these words of St. Paul, on occasions so solemn as these, and put away no evil, nor offer one prayer, nor strengthen your faith in the great and Holy Conqueror of sin and death? Will nothing move you, but the constant preaching of the terrors of death, and the vengeance of the Almighty, and the fearfulness of an
eternity of woe, and sorrow? Surely you will desire to partake in the comforts and consolations of your religion. Let the still small voice of the mercy of the Son of God now move you; and pray to conquer evil, that you may obtain the promises of that religion which reveals to us the resurrection of the body, as well as the immortality of the soul. The Christian religion is a religion of comfort; and he who believes in it, and receives it, and does not derive comfort from its discoveries, and its consolations, does not rightly understand its nature, or will not partake of its benefits.
SERMON XXVII.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

MARK xvi. 19.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

This passage presents us with the most lofty subject of contemplation, either in the Old or New Testament. The Ascension of Christ into heaven was the closing act of the dispensation which He had come down from the glory of His Father to establish. He had now completed every thing which was necessary to fulfil the purpose of His divine mission. He had given His people an example of holiness of life—such as the world never saw before—and will never again behold. Whate’er things were honourable, whate’er things were pure—whate’er things were lovely—whate’er things were of good report— all these He taught.

\[1\] Phil. iv. 8.
by His precept, and illustrated and enforced by His example—so that, when the hour arrived in which His fallen disciple betrayed Him to be crucified, His enemies could allege nothing against Him, while they clamoured for His death. The judge, who was compelled to condemn Him, declared, *I find no fault in Him at all.* He had been nailed to the cross; and in the midst of His suffering He had prayed for His murderers. His lifeless body had been committed to the grave, but the bands of death had no power over Him, who shall one day command all who are in their graves to come forth—and now nothing remained, but the event which is recorded in this Scripture, that He should return to the enjoyment of that happiness which He had for a time resigned for our sakes only. Nothing remained but to prove to us, that as Christ was the first fruits of the resurrection, so should He be the forerunner of His Church into heaven, to give us an earnest and security, that there was an invisible world of happiness and glory.

Let me then beg of you this morning, while we endeavour to contemplate a subject so glorious as this, to lay aside, for the moment, all worldly anxieties, and worldly sorrows—and follow the Son of man, in His flight from this lower world to the abodes of peace and joy. We will consider in the first place the manner of His ascension, and the meaning of the phrase—*He sat at the right hand of God.* When we shall have done this, we shall be
better able to understand the causes for which He ascended, and the necessity of our own serious preparation for that great change, which must be wrought upon our bodies, before we can arise from the dead, or follow our Saviour into heaven.

Let us first consider the manner of Christ's ascension.

After our Lord had explained the fulfilment of the prophecies which predicted His sufferings, and death—and after He had declared that all power was given to Him both in heaven and in earth⁴, He closed His ministry, by solemnly conferring on His apostles the authority to go and preach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you⁵. Having thus granted to His Apostles their commission, He led them out as far as Bethany, and there He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, says the Evangelist, that while He blessed them, and while they beheld, while the Apostles still gazed upon Him as their master, and their friend, and were intent upon His serene countenance in the midst of His last affectionate blessing—slowly and suddenly He began to arise from among them. No human hand assisted—no angelic aid was demanded. Calling into energy the divine power with which He was invested, He bore up Himself above the earth, and ascended.

Matt. xxviii. 18. ⁴ Ibid. ver. 20.
into the open air, rising higher and higher through the blue firmament, in the time of day. All the Apostles beheld Him in silence, with transport, with joy, and yet with an awe which is unimaginable and indescribable. They continued to gaze up steadfastly into heaven, and they beheld their Lord ascending up above them; until a bright cloud interposed between them; and they saw Him no more. We are not informed whether the inhabitants of Jerusalem were spectators of the ascension of Christ. They had rejected Christ in His humiliation; they were not invited to be the spectators of His glory. The mount of Olivet, however, from which Christ ascended, was so near to the city, that it is not impossible that many, whose names are not recorded, were witnesses of His elevation; and they could have confirmed the accounts of His apostles, and have demonstrated the truth of this wonderful event. And there is much reason to believe that it was so—for the Apostles returned to Jerusalem, and affirmed the ascension of their Lord, and none ventured to deny, none to contradict the truth of a fact, of which the time, and place, and circumstances were mentioned to the people to whom they appealed. Thus was terminated the earthly career of Christ—and the object which He had in view in thus ascending into heaven immediately after He had commanded His disciples to baptize all nations, appears to have been—to convince them, and us, and all mankind, who shall be admitted to the outward and visible Church of
God, that they are all so interested in the ascension of Christ, that if they fail to follow Him from the tribulations, the temptations, and the scenes of this life, to that heavenly state to which He is gone—they fail by their own fault, and not because of any deficiency in the mercy and goodness of God. Neither let us suppose that man alone is interested in the ascension of Christ. We shall not greatly err, if we affirm that it is the doctrine of Scripture, that all the intellectual creation of God is interested in the redemption of man, and in the mighty scenes unfolded to us in the pages of revelation. When the king of Israel, speaking under the influence of the Spirit of inspiration, prophesies of the coming of Christ, and the glory that should follow, He breaks forth into language, which the Church of God and which Christians in general have interpreted to refer to the ascension of Christ, as the exclamation of the angels of heaven when He returned in triumph to His Father. *Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in*. What were the everlasting doors, but the gates of heaven? Who was the king of glory, but He who first descended from heaven to return in triumph? Even this is not all. Not only the earth was moved, and the angels were concerned at the ascension of Christ—the powers of hell were conquered, when our Lord and Saviour arose into

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*Psalm xxiv. 7.*

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Heaven. For here also the language of Scripture is most explicit—when the Lord ascended up on high, He led captivity captive—that is, He conquered the powers of darkness and of evil, which had hitherto overcome the sons of men. From His birth to His death, Christ had uniformly been opposed by the spirit of evil. At His birth—Herod had endeavoured to slay Him. After His baptism, He was tempted by Satan. When He preached, His words were entitled blasphemy. When He wrought miracles, they called Him a devil. At His crucifixion, He was insultingly placed between two thieves. At His resurrection, the disciples were accused of deception. But when the Lord ascended into heaven, evil followed Him no longer. The malice of demons was silenced. Satan, like lightning, fell from heaven. The principalities, and the powers of darkness were openly led in triumph. The disciples had witnessed—the angels of heaven had attested His ascension, and the friends of Christ rejoiced, and the enemy of God and of man, was conquered, and was still. So shall it be with the Christian. The power of evil shall not cease, till the day when he ascends into heaven. Now temptation shall assail him. Affliction shall depress him. The gates of death may close upon him. But he shall rise—he shall rise from the dead—his body was buried in peace—his spirit shall return to its God—he shall ascend

* Eph. iv. 8.
up on high—he shall follow Him who was tempted, and suffered, and died. Where the Head of the church shall be, the members of his body shall follow. The affirmation of the Gospel is true—if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him—if we believe in His promise of His salvation—we shall not be disappointed of our reward.

Our second inquiry was to be, the meaning of the term, *He sat on the right hand of God.*

It was the custom with princes, and kings, and rulers, among the ancient nations who flourished at the time when those prophecies were written, in which this expression is first used, to place on their throne, at their right hand, those persons who were either equal to them in rank, or who had rendered them any great and eminent service. Thus we read that when the mother of Solomon went to make a request to her son, she sate down on his throne, at his right hand. Now the doctrines of Scripture, however difficult or mysterious, must be expressed in language which is derived from the usages of men; or we should not be able to comprehend them—and as the throne of a sovereign is the highest place of honour and majesty, this comparison is adopted to denote the honour and majesty, to which Christ is raised in consequence of His ascension. Therefore it is that Christ is said to be, *on the throne of God,* or *at the right hand of God*—and the expression has the same meaning as those, in which we read that our Saviour is
equal with God—\textit{that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name—that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth}—\textit{that God hath set Him in heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet}—\textit{and when the angels of heaven, and the spirits of the departed, are represented in the book of the Revelation, as offering their praises to the Almighty, no less do they offer the same praises to the Son of God, who is seated on the throne of His Father. \textit{Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing}. Such is the meaning of the expression, \textit{the right hand of God}—\textit{and as the phrase to sit down, is used also in various senses in Scripture, so in each of these meanings do we discover some impressive truth respecting the majesty and glory of our Saviour. Sometimes the term to sit, signifies \textit{to remain, or abide for a long time in one place.} So hath Christ ascended to remain and continue a king and \textit{God over all, blessed for ever}}. Sometimes it denotes, \textit{rest, and quietness, and peace,} and

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\textsuperscript{6} Phil. ii. 6. \hfill \textsuperscript{7} Ibid. ver. 9, 10. \hfill \textsuperscript{8} Eph. i. 20. \\
\textsuperscript{9} Rev. v. 12. \hfill \textsuperscript{10} Rom. ix. 5.
Christ is ascended to the right hand of God to rest from His pains and sorrows. Sometimes it denotes "dominion and majesty," and He shall reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. Sometimes it denotes, "the power of judgment," as a judge is said to sit on the judgment-seat, and so also do we read that Christ shall sit as the Judge of the world; and all who are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: and they shall see the Judge of the living and of the dead, seated on the throne of His glory, and all His holy angels with Him. Then, and then only, cometh the end of this wonderful system of redemption—when this very Saviour, this Jesus of Nazareth, this Lord, this King, this Judge of the world, shall say to the wicked, depart ye cursed—and to the righteous, come ye blessed of my Father: enter into the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world. Who will not venerate the mighty Saviour, when we remember his power—who will not fear Him for His justice—and adore Him for His mercy and His love!

We were to consider, in the third place, the causes of our Saviour’s ascension; and the language of our Lord himself will best inform us for what reason He was thus visibly raised up into glory, after the days of His humiliation were completed. In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and

11 1 Cor. xv. 25.  
12 John v. 28.  
13 Matt. xx. 31.  
14 Ibid. xxv. 34.
receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also. In other words, Christ has ascended into heaven, that all who name the name of Christ, and depart from iniquity, may be received there also. And because man cannot reconcile himself to God, we are expressly assured that Christ prepares this place for us in heaven by undertaking the wonderful and merciful office of interceding with the Father Almighty, and pleading at the throne of His glory for the forgiveness of the human race, in consequence of the merits of His sufferings, and death—and this intercession of Christ is the only foundation of our acceptance with the God who created us. I do not, I cannot, pretend to explain the nature of the intercession of Christ. It is a secret of the other world, and no uninspired being can hope to explain it—but the doctrine is undoubtedly scriptural, and it is our duty to submit our reason to revelation, and to thank God that our hope of future happiness is placed upon the mediation of the Son of God, and not upon our own virtues, our own perfections, our own resolutions. How explicit is the declaration of Scripture! If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins. He has borne in his own body, on the cross, the punishment which the justice of God would have otherwise inflicted upon man; and now He has gone up into heaven to plead the merits of His

15 John xiv. 3. 16 1 John ii. 2.
death, that we may be delivered from the future wrath of God. Thus it is He prepares a place for us. Unless the Son of God had interceded for us, we might not, even now, have been indulged with the power of repentance. As the sun shines upon the evil and upon the good, upon the just and upon the unjust, so does the Mediator between God and man, implore that the wicked may be continued yet a little time, to repent and to return to God; and that the prayers of the repentant may be accepted, for the sake of Him who died for all.—But there is another purpose also for which Christ has ascended into heaven. As it is not possible that man can be received into a state of holiness and happiness, while he continues to be impenitent, hardened, and wicked; therefore, the merciful Saviour has ascended, not only that He might prepare heaven for man, but that He might prepare man for heaven. He said to His disciples, *I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth.* But when did Christ thus pray to the Father? It was not when He was upon earth—it must have been after He had ascended into heaven—and we all know what was the result of His prayer. The Holy Spirit descended at the day of Pentecost, and new powers, new affections, new energies were granted to His Apostles. We are not now to expect the gift of miracles—but so much of divine assistance as is essential to our attaining the prize of our high calling, will certainly be granted to us in consequence of
the intercession of Christ. For Christ is our High Priest in that kingdom of heaven to which He has ascended; and as He was once man like ourselves, we are assured that *We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin* 17. As He was once tempted, He knows our infirmities. *He remembers that we are but dust* 18. He knows that we require other assistance than our own good resolutions; and He therefore prays to the Father, that He will send to us, also, as He sent before unto the apostles, another Comforter,—who will influence our motives, strengthen our resolutions, purify our hearts, lead us into all truth, assist us through life, support us in death, and remain with us, our guide and our friend, for ever. Oh! blessed Jesus, these are thy merciful works. Oh! Son of God, thy love is the same for ever—the same when, in blessing the disciples, thou wast borne up into heaven—the same to the poorest, to the meanest, to the humblest, of those who are now assembled within these walls, to bless thine holy name. Yes! it is so. The object and the cause for which Christ has ascended into heaven, is this—to prepare the way for us—and to prepare us by the gift of divine power for that unutterable happiness. Father, He exclaimed, while He was still upon earth—*Father, I will, that those whom Thou hast given Me, be with

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17 Hebrews iv. 15. 18 Psalm ciii. 14.
Me where I am. The prayer will be granted. We are given to Christ by our baptismal vow, by our Christian name, by our Christian profession, by our hopes, by our repentance, by our prayers. Even now the powers of the Holy Spirit are granted to assist your desires, and confirm your resolution. And you cannot perish, unless you wilfully grieve the Holy Comforter, and turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven.

We have considered the triumphant manner of the ascension of Christ, the nature of His honour and majesty, implied in the expression, He sat at the right hand of God, and the causes for which He went up into heaven. I now beg your attention, in concluding this inquiry, to the expression with which this passage of Scripture commences—So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven. He was not received up until He had spoken to His disciples, all which it was necessary they should hear and know. In the same manner the Lord hath spoken by His evangelists and apostles, all that is necessary for us to know before He shall descend again to judgment. Our religion is founded upon facts—those facts are recorded for our belief—and we cannot doubt their truth. As certainly then as Christ went up into heaven—so certainly shall He again descend to approve or condemn us, who have heard the message of His ministers, and been convinced by their teaching. The ascension is a fact which demonstrates the certainty of the day of judgment.
And now, if our life could be prolonged to a thousand years, we could know no more than the Scriptures have already taught us. The Lord hath spoken—and we have heard the message. We know that our Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth—that though worms destroy this body, yet in our flesh, after our resurrection shall we see our God—and we shall behold Him for ourselves, and not for another. Let each then propose the question to himself, "Am I prepared to meet my God? The hour of my death may be at hand—the Judge may be even now at the door. I cannot hope to return with the Lord to heaven, at the great day of judgment, if I reject His invitations to repentance, while He grants me the power to repent." It is of little importance to understand the manner in which He is said to sit at the right hand of God; if you do not thus aspire to, and hope for, the same majesty and glory, which it is now in your power to obtain.

—It is of little moment to you to know that Christ will prepare a place in heaven for those who trust in Him; if you wilfully despise the mercy which would prepare you for heaven—Whether you have been accustomed to indulge in scornful contempt of religion; or in flattering yourself that God will make no difference between the Christian and the Infidel; be assured, that there is no real enjoyment upon earth, unless you have a well-founded hope.

10 Job xix. 25, 26, 27.
of happiness hereafter. We invite you then to be religious, that you may both live in peace, and die in comfort. We invite you to be religious, that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear; we also may awake from the dead with joy; and ascend with Him to the glory which He has died and ascended to obtain for all who believe in His redemption, and fear His name, and trust in His mercy.

20 Col. iii. 4.
SERMON XXVIII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE AND HOLINESS.

EZEKIEL xviii. 25, 26, 27. 30.

Ye say the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die.—Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

I have read to you in this passage, the sum and substance of Scripture—the full and complete account of all which God requires of man. The holiness of a religious life is the one great object for which the Scriptures have been written, for which Christ has been crucified, and for which the promises, and the threatenings, the precepts, and the wonders
of the system of redemption have been imparted to the world. All that we can believe, or know, or understand, is summed up in this passage—that the righteous man must persevere in his righteousness; for, if he depart from good, and commit evil, he shall not save his soul—and that if the wicked man turn from his wickedness to do that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul. And it might at first sight appear so plain, and evident, that this declaration is true, that there could be no necessity for reasoning on the subject; and that nothing could remain, when it has once been submitted to you, but to apply the undoubted truth to your hearts.

It is, however, much to be lamented that the same custom prevails to a great extent, among Christians at present, which was adopted by the woman of Samaria, in her conversation with our Lord; as well as by the Jews, who lived when this passage was written. The custom to which I allude is this—that when men are convinced of sin, and when the absolute necessity of repentance, and holiness, is pointed out to them; instead of praying that they may persevere if they have repented; or instead of praying that they may repent if they have not already done so, they either take refuge in some of the disputes and controversies which prevail among Christians, or else they endeavour to discover some excuses, or apologies, for not obeying the laws of God; and these excuses are generally derived from some supposed difficulty or controversy, arising from their very knowledge of religion. Thus
the woman of Samaria, when our Lord reminded her, that she was living in sin, for the man whom thou now hast. He said, is not thy husband; instead of confessing her guilt, and resolving to forsake evil, replied to Christ, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem, men ought to worship;” that is, she wished our Lord to settle a controversy between the Jews, and the Samaritans, as to the place on which the temple ought to have been built. What was the controversy to her, when compared with repentance, and forsaking sin! In the same manner also the Jews acted in the days of the prophet Ezekiel. They knew the law of God, yet they acted contrary to it. The prophets foretold the punishment which should follow. They declared that the whole nation should be carried into captivity. The Jews continued in their idolatry in spite of their knowledge. Then the denunciations of their prophets came to pass. The whole nation was led into captivity. But did they repent of the evil they had committed? Did they forsake their sin?—No. They dared to say that God had acted unjustly! They pretended that they were punished for the sins of their fathers, and not for their own offences; and, instead of repenting, they charged the Almighty with injustice. In reply to this unfounded accusation, God answers them by the mouth of His prophet, in the language of the passage before us—O, house of Israel, are not your ways unequal,

1 John iv. 18.
are not my ways equal and just? "I punish the "children for the sins of the fathers, when the "fathers commit those actions which unavoidably "bring sorrow upon the children—as when an ex- "travagant father squanders the property of the "children, and leaves them poverty and grief as "their portion; but with respect to spiritual mat- "ters—the father shall bear his sin—and the son "shall bear his sin. The soul that sinneth IT "shall die. The father shall not bear the iniquity "of the son. The son shall not bear the iniquity "of the father. When a righteous man shall com- "mit evil, he shall die; when the wicked man for- "sakes evil, he shall live. All excuses, all apologies "shall be in vain. I will judge men according to "their ways; and by these, and by these alone "shall they be judged, saith the Lord God."

Such is the meaning of this passage of Scripture, and such was the occasion on which it was spoken. I shall now endeavour to apply it to our own cir- cumstances. I shall first, therefore, prove to you from the declarations of the Scripture, the truth which I have already affirmed, that holiness and repentance, and a religious life, is the one great object of all Revelation. I shall then consider some of the principal excuses and apologies, by which professed Christians justify to themselves the delay of repentance, or their deficiency of holiness.

We are first to consider this point—that holi- ness of life, is the object of all religion. And here I
shall be met in the very beginning of the subject, by the question, what do you mean by holiness? I answer—Holiness means, setting apart, or separating ourselves from that which is evil, to devote ourselves to that which is good. The sacrifices of the law were called holy, because they were separated from the common flock of cattle, to be set apart for the service of the temple. Holiness, therefore, is a separation from evil to good. It is persevering in righteousness, if we have begun to be righteous—and it is turning to God, and putting away evil, if we have not yet begun to repent. This is holiness. This is all which is desired of us, because he who leads a religious life, in consequence of believing rightly in the Gospel of the Son of God, must obtain everlasting happiness. And if you ask me for the proofs that this is all which is required; I refer you to every passage of the Bible, which describes the object for which our Saviour came into the world: beginning with the last prophet of the Old Testament. Does Malachi describe the coming of Christ? He represents Him as the Saviour who requires holiness of life. The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple—but who may abide the day of His coming—who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner’s fire. When John the Baptist, the first of the Prophets of the New Testament, the connecting link between the covenant of Moses and the covenant of Christ,

2 Malachi iii. 1, 2.
announced the coming of our Lord, the same sentiment was expressed. *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* When the angel foretold to Zacharias the coming of the same Baptist—he declared that *many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God—he shall make ready a people prepared for the Lord.* When another angel appeared to the Virgin Mary, to declare the design with which Christ should come into the world, the same object was announced—*Thou shalt call His name Jesus, why?—for He shall save His people,* not only from the punishment, but from the dominion of *their sins*—*He shall save His people from their sins.* When Simeon held the infant Jesus in his aged arms in the temple, he uttered the same sentiment—that this was the *holy child Jesus,* who should *turn His people from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* When our Saviour Himself began His mission, this was the commencement of His preaching—*I came to call sinners to repentance*—and when He had finished His course upon earth, and His disciples had succeeded Him in His divine office, and when the powers of the Holy Spirit had miraculously been poured out upon them, their language also was the same—that God had *raised up His Son Jesus, to turn every one from His iniquities*—*Him hath God exalted*

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3 Matt. iii. 2.  
4 Luke i. 16, 17.  
5 Matt. i. 21.  
6 Acts xxvi. 18.
to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel'—and so I might proceed to quote from every book of the Bible, and from every one of its inspired authors to prove to you, if, indeed, proof were necessary, that the one great object of religion is expressed in this passage; namely, the putting away the evil of the heart. God requires holiness—the government of the heart—the control of the thoughts—purity of principle—and spirituality of motive: and if we profess ourselves to be religious—if we call ourselves Christians—if we name the name of Christ—there is but one, one proof only that we are sincere—which is, that the righteous persevere in his righteousness, and that the wicked man forsake his iniquity. All other proofs of our being religious are vain, absurd, and false; and yet men will endeavour, by every sort of apology and excuse, to flatter themselves that they are Christians, while they do not aim at the holiness which God requires. There are some who affirm, like the Jews of old, that the ways of God are unequal—that is, they invent arguments by which they would persuade themselves, that God is unjust in requiring from them that life of consistent holiness, which they cannot but perceive is uniformly demanded through the whole volume of Scripture. This then was to be our second consideration. We are to examine the

Acts v. 31.
excuses, and the apologies, by which many, who call themselves Christians, flatter themselves that they may retain the hope of salvation, and yet not seriously endeavour to put away evil.

Now I do not, as I have already observed, refer so much to those excuses which are made by ignorant and profligate men, as to those which are made by persons who, like the Jews in the time of Ezekiel, had some knowledge of religion, and who derived their excuses and apologies from the perversion of that very knowledge. And I begin with that apology which is founded upon the abuse of the doctrine of Scripture, respecting the foreknowledge of God, and the weakness and sinfulness of man. "Why," says some one, who calls himself a Christian, "why do you thus insist upon repentance and holiness? I am an imperfect and sinful man, and I cannot become holy. My repentance cannot save me—but I believe in the election of grace: and if I am elected, and decreed to be saved, then I must be saved, because such is the counsel and decree of God." This excuse I believe to be now very seldom made; but it is one of the objections which some Christians present against our exhortations to holiness. They make the very electing love of God an apology for indifference. But what is the truth of Scripture in reply to this apology? It is this: God, who decrees the salvation of men, decrees also the means of salvation; and that means is holiness of life. Let us illustrate this point by a familiar comparison,
God has decreed the season of harvest. He has decreed that the fields should produce a good or a bad harvest. But what should we think of the farmer, who should refuse to plough and sow, because of the decree of God? God, who appointed the weeks of harvest, has decreed also the means of obtaining the harvest. He gives the rain, and the dew, the heat and the cold, and man must give the labour, and the toil, the ploughing, and the sowing. So also it is in redemption. God decrees the salvation of man. He of His free grace elects the soul of the sinner to everlasting life—and He gives the means of grace, the dew of His sacred influences, the rain of heaven, the fruitful season of the Gospel, the time of harvest when the soul shall be rewarded—but He demands the improvement of these sacred gifts, the labour of repentance, the fruits of holiness, the preparation for death. And as there can be no harvest to the farmer, whatever be the dew, the rain, the season, and the climate, unless there be also the ploughing and the sowing; so also can there be no salvation, whatever be the electing love and mercy of God, whatever be the means of grace, and the offer of glory, unless there be also repentance, and holiness, and obedience to the power of the Holy Spirit. The salvation which God decrees, is only the completion of that holiness and repentance which God requires.

Such is one of the excuses by which a Christian man justifies his indolence, by affirming that the ways of God are unequal. Another excuse is
this—"I know that holiness is demanded, and that "without holiness I cannot see the Lord—but I "am waiting to be converted. I am waiting for "the influences of the Holy Spirit, which alone "can change my heart."

Oh, wicked hypocrisy! The very knowledge which you possess is a proof that the means of conversion are offered to you. Conversion is that change of heart, which begins with knowledge, which goes on to conviction, which ends in the repentance and holiness, of which I am now speaking. And who has granted you the knowledge of these things? Is it not the Holy Spirit, attendant upon the means of grace? And does not the same Holy Spirit even now convince you of sin? And if so, are you not conscious that He who convinces of sin has certainly granted you the power to become more holy than you now are, and to repent more than you now do? No man shall be condemned hereafter for want of power to be converted. Wherever the Gospel is preached, the power to become holy is granted. Christ is with his Church to the end of the world—and He is with it by the continued influence of the Holy Spirit, which is sufficiently imparted to all. Those who receive it become more and more prepared for heaven—those who reject it, harden their own hearts, and live in sin, and die in sorrow. Never be guilty of the blasphemy of supposing, that God has placed you in the Christian Church, and yet has not given you the power of repentance, and the means of
spiritual conversion.—But there is another apology, which arises from misapprehension of the nature of redemption.

"Do not tell me," says one sincere and well-intentioned, though mistaken Christian, "of holiness and repentance being either the reward or the condition of salvation. We must be saved by the merits and atonement of Christ alone, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags."

True it is that all our righteousness is to be thus regarded as far as its merit is to be esteemed. No supposed goodness on the part of man can deserve to be rewarded with eternal life—but if this righteousness is the only proof we can give that our faith is rightly placed, are we not to endeavour to attain to it? True it is, most true, that we are saved by the atonement and merit of Christ alone. But can you believe for one moment that Christ has died for man, that man should continue in sin? He died to save sinners. But do you think that He died to save those sinners who do not repent and pray that they may forsake evil? We are saved through the merits of Christ alone, because, if He had not died for us, then heaven would not have been opened to us—the Holy Spirit would not have been imparted—the way of salvation, by which God may be just, and yet be merciful, had not been made known to us. If Christ had not died, we should have had no

* Isaiah lxiv. 6.
hope, no pardon, no Saviour, no heaven. But is there no difference between Christ dying for man, and between our believing rightly in that blessed atonement? Is there no difference between God offering you salvation, and between your accepting that salvation? Is there no difference between the persuasions of the Holy Spirit, and your listening to those persuasions? Never mistake God's promise of heaven for your fitness for heaven.—Do not be misled by disputes, and controversies, and vain words about faith and works—do not perplex and bewilder, and confound yourselves by empty jangling—whether you can be saved hereafter by any other means than those which I am now insisting upon. Do not be guilty of the hypocrisy of doing away the necessity of holiness and repentance, by confounding your understandings with any foolish delusions concerning these subjects. I do not undervalue faith—neither must we undervalue works. Faith is the root and foundation—holiness is the fruit and the building. You must be saved by faith, because faith is the spring, and life, and source of acceptable action—you must be saved by works, because holiness is the proof, and consequence, and result of good motives. But if there should perchance be among you any well-meaning, though mistaken man, who shall suppose that by thus insisting upon the absolute necessity of good works, and a life of religion, I am taking away from the mercy of Christ, and from the power of the Holy Spirit—if any shall think
that my insisting upon holiness and repentance, implies, that by these we merit salvation, and thereby that we diminish the grace of God, permit me yet again to illustrate this point also, and to explain to you the true doctrine of faith and works, by an easy and familiar comparison.

If one friend were to offer you, of his own will and pleasure, a large estate, provided you would leave your own home, and travel to a distant country,—and if another friend were to offer to guide you in the way, to direct you safely, and to attend you to the end of your journey, until that promised gift were secured; and if you did at last obtain that promised gift, could you say that you obtained it because you deserved it? It was offered to you freely at the first. The assistance by which alone you secured it, was offered freely also; and you would say, that you obtained it by the kindness, and by the friendship both of him who promised it, and of him who enabled you to obtain it. So it is with the salvation of the soul—Christ has died for man, and He offers us salvation as a free gift. The Holy Spirit assists us, and directs us, and enables us to obtain it; but we must set out on the journey which He points out to us, and that journey—that walking in the way to obtain it—is, the holiness which God requires. And if we do obtain the salvation of the soul at last, shall we say that we have deserved it by our own merits, and by our own good works alone? Oh, no! to God alone be the glory. The salvation of the soul is the gift of
Christ, for He died to procure it. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit—for He teaches us, and enables us to attain it. But repentance and holiness are the ways in which we must walk, or the promise of the Saviour, and the assistance of the Spirit are alike in vain. Repentance and holiness are the fruits of the Spirit, and without them the soul cannot be saved. And there is no difficulty in the subject. We give honour to God the Father, who planned the scheme of redemption—we give honour to God the Son, who died to purchase redemption—we give honour to God the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies the heart to enable us to secure it; and we prove and demonstrate our gratitude to the Sacred Three, and our acceptance of the salvation of God, by the proof which the prophet has laid down in this passage—The righteous man is to persevere in his righteousness, and the wicked man must turn from his wickedness—and then, and then only, he shall save his soul.

I might enter into the discussion of many other apologies and excuses which are made by those who hear the invitation of the gospel, to remove evil from the conduct, and from the heart. They are all to be explained by the desire which almost every man conceives, of continuing in evil against light, and knowledge, and Scripture, and conscience. One relies on youth, another on health, another on the possibility of a death-bed repentance. I might reply to all these, but I wish to confine my remarks to those objections which are derived from
the perversion of religious knowledge, and which are all so fully expressed in the words of Ezekiel—
*Ye say the way of the Lord is unequal.* The remarks which I have made may convince you that the ways of the Lord are equal—and that no possible objection can be made to the language of Ezekiel, that if the righteous man turn from his righteousness, he shall die, and if the wicked man turn from his iniquity, he shall live. I shall conclude, therefore, with appealing to you in the last words of this passage—*According to your ways I will judge you—repent and turn from all your transgressions—so iniquity shall not be your ruin.*

Repentance is essential to happiness, and it is necessary for us all. Whatever be our professions of faith in Christ, whatever be our hope, our zeal, our knowledge; whatever be our privileges, or our progress in the understanding of the Gospel, the only serious question is, do we turn from our transgressions? or are we indulging in any secret or open evil? *My Son give Me Thine heart*,* ⁹* is the language of the law of God. If the favourite sin of the heart be like the right hand, or the right eye, it must be plucked away, and you must turn to God with all your heart, and with all your soul. If your faith in the death of Christ lead you to sorrow for sin—If your conviction of sin lead you to prayer for divine assistance—If you submit to the guiding and teaching of that Holy Spirit which

⁹ Prov. xxiii. 26.
will direct you in the way everlasting, then *iniquity shall not be your ruin*—then you shall find pardon for the past, peace of conscience, joy in the prospect of death, and everlasting happiness in the world to come. Repent then before it be too late. Remove the evil of your ways, and begin to be happy. Put away the sin of the heart; and God will be gracious to you for the sake of Him who died to redeem you.—If you believe in the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, prove your gratitude to that Saviour, by repentance for all that is past, and by turning henceforth from all that is evil. If you believe in the divine assistances of the Holy Spirit, prove your faith by submission to His persuasions and power. Unite holy practice with a holy faith. Persevere, and be stedfast in the way to heaven, pray that you may be immovable in your Christian profession—*always abounding in the work of the Lord* 10, and then your labour, and your repentance, your faith, and your hope, shall not be in vain.

10 1 Cor. xv. 58.
SERMON XXIX.

ON INDECISION OF CHARACTER.

1 KINGS xviii. 21. 24.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.—Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God.

The chapter from which I have selected this passage, relates the solemn and triumphant appeal of the prophet Elijah to the idolatrous tribes of Israel. The example of surrounding nations, the influence of the kings, who had established the worship of idols, to prevent the people from going up to Jerusalem to the temple of Solomon, as the law of Moses commanded, together with the natural desire of the human heart to comply with the fashions of the world, rather than with the strict observances of religion, had all contributed to destroy the obedience of the people to the true God, and to confirm them in their apostacy from His service. It cannot, however, be supposed that the people
had entirely forgotten the law in which they had been educated. Wickedness and idolatry, however they might be encouraged by the united causes I have mentioned, could not so suddenly and so universally prevail, as to lead the people to revolt immediately and entirely from the religion of the one true God, and to forget all the happiness which they had experienced when they had faithfully served Him. It is not easy for those who have had a religious education, and who have known the power of religious impressions, to become all at once, very wicked, and very abandoned. The people of Israel, therefore, appear at this time to have been divided into three several classes, or descriptions of persons; namely, the professed idolaters—the professed worshippers of the true God, the seven thousand who had not bowed their knee to Baal—and the wavering, undecided multitude, who halted between two opinions. To the last of these the prophet made his appeal. He met the king, who sanctioned and encouraged the public idolatry. He summoned the people and their priests to Mount Carmel, where their fathers had been accustomed to offer sacrifice, before the temple at Jerusalem was built. There he called upon them to submit their pretensions to an open and public trial. He proposed that both parties should build an altar, and lay a sacrifice upon it, and put no fire under to consume it; but that both should pray openly to the God they worshipped—and the God who answered by fire—he should be acknowledged
as God. There could be no objection to this proposal, because the god of the idolaters was the sun, who was worshipped as the god of fire; and he ought therefore to be able to send down the fire which should consume the sacrifice. But the God whom Elijah worshipped was the Creator of the sun, and of the stars, the God of all gods; and the prayer of the idolaters was made in vain. The fire of the Lord descended upon the sacrifice of Elijah; and the people fell upon their faces, and confessed that the God of Israel, the God of their fathers alone, was worthy of their homage, and of their worship; of their prayer, and of their praise.

Such is the narrative contained in this interesting chapter. And I shall address the same question, with which the prophet appealed to the Jews, to the same description of persons—to the wavering, the hesitating, the undecided. In considering this passage, I shall not, as is most usually done, make any observations upon the manner in which many persons halt between two opposite systems of religious opinions; and remain all their lives undecided, to which party, or Church, or sect, they shall belong. I shall address those only who are divided between obedience to God, and obedience to the world—who know what is right—but who from weakness, and indecision alone, do not live according to their knowledge. The very same three classes of persons which divided Israel in the days of Elijah, exist among us. They are these—the openly wicked—the decidedly religious—and the
undecided, who halt between truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil. I am speaking neither to him who has forsaken the guide of his youth, and who is living year after year without hope, and without God in the world—neither am I addressing those happy persons who improve their time of trial by deep and anxious earnestness in securing the salvation of the soul—who regulate their hearts, and motives, by the principles of truth—and who can enjoy the consolations and comforts of Christianity, with a well-founded hope of immortality. I beg the attention of that large and numerous description of persons, who are represented by the prophet as halting between two opinions in religious obedience. I entreat such to bear with me while I attempt to describe their character—to reply to their arguments—and to appeal to them in the same language as that of Elijah—How long halt ye between two opinions—between happiness and misery—between the god of this world and the God of heaven? The God that answereth by fire, let Him be your God.

I am first to describe the character of the undecided.

Those may be called undecided, or halting between two opinions, who have much knowledge of religion, and many convictions of the necessity of obedience to that Holy Spirit which so often persuades and appeals to them, but who delay from time to time to act according to their knowledge and convictions. They are so divided between God
and the world, that they derive no comfort nor happiness from either. They see the evil of sin, but they feel that they are not delivered from its power. They reverence, in some measure, the dictates of conscience, but they are not so governed by its directions as to obtain peace of mind. They understand the demands of their holy religion so well, that they cannot sin without uneasiness or remorse—while, at the same time, they yield so much to temptation, that they derive no satisfaction from the blessings of the gospel of truth. Like the idolaters in Israel, they remember their Lord, and faith, and reason, and conscience assure them that He is the true and only God; but they imagine themselves to be compelled to pay some regard to the worship of Baal, for it is supported by custom, it is honoured by fashion, it allows the indulgences which God has forbidden. The consequences of this indecision display themselves in their whole conduct. A wavering and undecided Christian will comply with every part of religious worship, which is attended with no trouble, no self-denial, but which meets, on the contrary, with general approbation—neither indeed can he bear to be guilty of any shameful or continued neglect of his public religious duties. He will often be found in his place in the church—he will sometimes attend the sacrament, and he will resolve, when he partakes of that holy ordinance, to become entirely and unreservedly devoted to God; but he returns to his home—and when he is there, he remembers, that
if he does persevere in his good resolutions, he must forego some unjust profit, or part with some forbidden folly, or incur some despicable ridicule, or a little unmeaning laughter from his companions—and the least reason of this kind appears to be a sufficient apology for postponing to another period, all those duties of religion, which he had firmly resolved to practise. He delays secret self-examination—private prayer, and the perusal of some portion of Scripture—to all of which he had resolved to attend—and because he thus delays to devote himself to these duties, in which a decided Christian always takes a silent and satisfactory comfort, he loses all that consolation which he had begun to derive from the public worship, and from his partaking in the sacrament of the bread and wine. His indecision and his wavering ruin his spiritual happiness. He still keeps up the form of godliness, but he will not entirely yield to its power. He attends the outward duties of religion to silence his conscience, rather than to obtain benefit to his soul. He repeats his prayers, but not with earnestness. He desires to enter in at the strait gate, but he does not strive; he makes no exertion to obtain the reward—and thus the undecided man professes a religion which gives him no comfort. He has no peace of mind, for his conscience condemns him. He has no liberty, for he is the slave of inconsistent habits. He has no victory over evil, for he is overcome by the enemies of his immortal soul. Though he often exclaims, let me die the

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death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his—he knows that he has no well-founded hope of thus dying, for the life of the righteous he will not live. He feels that he has not, and does not, and will not surrender the heart, the affections, and the will, to God; though he knows that if he does not do so, he never can attain to holiness upon earth, or to happiness in heaven—and thus the religion which was granted for his comfort, becomes a source of inward and constant uneasiness.

Such then is the character of the undecided man, of the man who, in his religious conduct, may be said to halt between two opinions: and I have dwelt upon it at some length, because I believe it to be the character of a large portion of professed Christians. Let us now proceed to the second part of our subject, and reply to the arguments by which the wavering man would apologize for, or palliate, or excuse his indecision.

When the Christian minister first proposes to his people the question of the prophet Elijah, how long halt ye between two opinions? the conscience of the people, like that of the idolaters of Israel, does not at first permit them to answer a word. When, however, the impression subsides, the corruption of the human heart soon discovers or invents excuses, to justify the conduct of which the prophet complains.

"I cannot be different from others," is generally the first excuse with which an undecided man
satisfies the reproaches of his conscience. Whereas, it is not intended nor desired that he should be different from others in any other respect than in avoiding evil, and cultivating inward religion. You must be the same as others in the common concerns and duties of life; the same in your pursuits, in your engagements, in your employments. But why should you be the same as others in those things wherein they offend God? Why should you be the same as others in despising the remonstrances of the Holy Spirit—in restraining prayer—in delaying repentance? Do not imagine that any other change is demanded of you than a change of heart within, and putting away wilful evil without. No mistake is so great as to suppose, that because you prefer God to Baal, you must therefore become an enemy to the common observances among men. This strange and singular mistake, indeed, has been made the foundation of sects, and parties, and factions, who believe that they may please God by the outward distinctions of an austere look, or an affected dress; whereas the only distinction which God requires is, the government of the heart, and the removal of wickedness—and this may be done without any peculiar or remarkable distinction from your fellows—this excuse, therefore, is unworthy of you.

Another argument against decided religion is, that “it abridges the pleasures of life.” No, my brethren, it increases them all. It confers real happiness. It gives peace to the mind—nobleness to
the character—elevation to the soul—serenity to the countenance—and happiness to the heart. It is true, that a wicked man cannot understand the happiness of a decided Christian. He cannot comprehend the serene and holy joy which arises from a belief that our sin is pardoned through the atonement of Christ—that the power of the Holy Spirit is not given in vain—that he may die in peace, whenever the summons of death may come. This is the true happiness of the Christian; but the happiness of the wicked is like that of the worshippers of Baal. It is noisy, and useless, and unsatisfactory, and empty. To use the strong language of the prophet, the worshippers of the world weary themselves with very vanity—with vexation, and trifling, and folly. When we call upon you to become decided, and not partial Christians, we invite you to the highest happiness to which a human being is capable of attaining.

"I have not time to attend to religion," as much as I could desire is another excuse, and I therefore content myself with outward duties. My Christian brethren, this excuse is also founded upon mistake. Decided religion is a disposition of mind—a renewal of the heart—a change of the affections. You always have time to cultivate good or bad dispositions, even though you have not time to perform the actions which might manifest them. If, for instance, you are offended by the conduct of a neighbour, you have time to be angry, even though your numerous engagements would allow you no
time for revengeful, or angry actions. So also you have time to think upon God, and heaven, and the things of the future, even though you could not find time to read much of the Scripture, or to employ your hours in prayer. Give the heart and the affections to your Creator, even when you have no leisure for outward duties.

But "I am not able to become religious," says another. "I strive in vain to conquer the dominion of evil, and to become holy and happy." Alas! this apology for indecision is but too common, and it is as treacherous and deceitful, as it is universal. Cannot you become more decided than you now are? Is there no one evil you can remove? When you feel in your bosom the warnings and persuasions of that Holy Spirit, which entreats you to submit to its merciful influences, are you not conscious that you are then enabled to become a more decided Christian than you have hitherto been? Is there no self-denial you can practise? Is there no one sin you can put away? Is there no inward evil which you can mortify? Can you do nothing in the divine life? Must you always be the very same you now are? It is true that you cannot become entirely free from evil on this side of the grave, but you may act more and more upon your convictions and upon your knowledge than you have hitherto done. You may become more decided, and better. You may become more wise, and therefore more happy.
There are other excuses also to which I might refer, which are all vain, and futile as these. Let these be sufficient, as instances of the apologies with which some undecided persons, who firmly believe in the truth, and claims of the Christian religion, sometimes endeavour, but in vain, to deceive themselves. Remember that I am addressing those who believe, and who act inconsistently, and who are unhappy because they do so. I address those only; and I tell them, that there can be no happiness for them, unless they act upon their knowledge and their convictions. If the Gospel of truth is not the savour of life unto life, it is the savour of death unto death. If a Christian knows and believes, as you all know and believe that Christ has died to save sinners, even the very chief, and that He has died, therefore, to save you—and that He has sent His Holy Spirit to enable you to follow Him through the wilderness of this world, to the happiness of heaven—and if you permit these excuses to cause you to neglect that great salvation which has been purchased for us by the Son of God—if these excuses lead you to quench the Spirit, and to harden the heart—then the misery which you feel now, when your conscience reproves you, may be regarded as the earnest of that undying remorse which the despisers of the Covenant will experience hereafter. God, the Almighty, the merciful God—God the giver of Christianity, the Saviour of the soul, de-
sires your happiness, and He has imparted the revelation of His will to assure us of this truth. *How long then halt ye between two opinions?* The Lord, and not Baal, is your God. Follow Him in the way He has appointed. Follow Him, not merely by outward profession, and outward observances, by useless resolutions, and by broken vows—follow Him by firmer faith—by secret prayer for strength to conquer evil, and to obtain peace of mind, and repose of conscience. Follow Him by repentance, which shall not be repented of—till you possess the only two real blessings of existence, Christian holiness, and Christian happiness. Follow Him by the dedication of the heart, by inward, and decided religion, by instant obedience, without excuses, and without delay.

I now conclude by urging upon you the same appeal, as that of Elijah—the God that answereth by fire—let Him be God. You are not called upon to attempt the difficult task of your salvation by your own strength. If this were so, you might indeed despair. You have a faithful Friend who assists your infirmities, and strengthens the resolution of the weakest—for He sendeth the Holy Spirit to them that ask it—*The God that answereth your prayer by giving happiness and peace, let Him be God.* The world is all misery, and it is all false. The world will profit nothing in the day of wrath; and it is all vanity and vexation of spirit to those who trust it now. The world smiles on the young—and flatters the thoughtless—and long
experience is sometimes necessary to prove the painful truth, that he who seeks for comfort in any earthly good, must be disappointed. But the truth is so; for the soul of man is immortal, and nothing but immortality will content it. The capacity of the soul is infinite, and nothing but the religion which the Bible reveals, and which God has appointed, can satisfy the mind and heart. The God that answereth prayer by bestowing that best of blessings—peace of mind—let Him, let Him be your God. If we will look to the world for peace, it can give us none—for human life is a scene of trial, and death is an hour of sorrow—but the God that answereth prayer can render the very afflictions of life a source of peace; and change the agonies of the death of a Christian, into comfort, and hope, and joy. And if these are not sufficient to persuade you to decision, we at length appeal to you in the very language of the prophet himself—the God that answereth by fire—let Him be your God. The God that answereth by the fire of a burning world—by the terrors of judgment—by the unquenchable flame of future wrath, upon the despisers of His mercy, and His love—the God that thus answereth by fire—let Him be your God. For the day is coming when the fire of the Lord shall descend, not upon the sacrifice of Elijah, but upon the round globe, and all that is therein. The elements shall melt with the fervent heat, and the dead, small and great, shall come forth from the ashes of the burning world, and appear before the
Judge of the universe. As certainly as the generation of the people of Israel beheld the fire descend upon the sacrifice of Elijah—as certainly as another generation beheld our Holy Saviour as a meek and humble man, living among them as their example—dying for them as their Saviour—rising from the dead, and ascending in glory and triumph among the angels of heaven, to His Father, and our Father, to His God and our God—so certainly shall the dead, small and great, and the living who shall be upon earth at the day of judgment, behold once more the same Almighty Redeemer, amidst the terrors of a dissolving universe, and the fire of the wrath of God. The Saviour Judge shall come—the Redeemer Judge shall come—and those who would not be saved by His mercy shall perish in the day of His anger. The God that answereth by fire, He shall be, He must be God. Who shall abide this day of His coming, who shall stand when He appeareth? Let Him be our God now, while life, and health, and strength, and the day of salvation, and the offer of pardon, and the power of repentance, are granted us. Let Him be our God now, when the temptations of the world, and the corruption of the heart are around us—and He will then be our God, and our Saviour, our Redeemer, and our Deliverer, when those only are blessed who have believed in, and depended upon Him.
SERMON XXX.

ON THE EXCELLENCE AND NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

1 Corinthians xiii. 13.

Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

One of the principal evidences for the truth of Christianity in the days of the apostles, was the possession of the miraculous gifts. The demands of the new faith were so imperious, and so exclusive, that the most undoubted and abundant proofs of its divine authority were indispensably necessary for its progress and establishment. These proofs were afforded. The Almighty granted to the apostles, and to the primary converts in the first century, the wonderful gifts which are enumerated by St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians: and allusion is made to these gifts as the standing evidence of that age, in every one of the epistles. Wherever the apostles came, and laid their hands upon the converts, an invisible influence attended
the holy ceremony. To some was imparted the gift of speaking many languages—to others, the power of discerning the thoughts of their brethren—to some healing of diseases—to others, the gift of miracles in general. Now, it was with these gifts, as it too often is with the more common blessings which have been imparted to ourselves—they were abused to other purposes than those for which they were originally granted. The new believers became proud of these wonderful talents committed to their charge, and frequently perverted them to the purposes of ostentation and vanity. In the chapter, therefore, from which I have selected the passage for our consideration this morning, St. Paul checks their presumption by affirming that the time was approaching when these gifts should be discontinued. *Whether there be tongues, they shall cease—whether there be prophecies, they shall fail—whether there be supernatural knowledge, it shall vanish away.* And because a time was coming when these astonishing proofs of the truth of our religion should wholly cease, he proceeds to shew the superiority of the Christian virtues over the Christian gifts. The position, however, which St. Paul lays down in the passage before us, is not at first sight so easily to be comprehended. The very first object of our Lord's teaching and miracles—the one peculiar design, also, of the bestowment of the miraculous gifts on the apostles, was this, to turn the people from darkness to light, from idolatry to Christianity, from unbelief to faith. *Faith* was the
beginning and the end, the sum and substance of all their labours, and all their instructions; and upon this faith, which was established with so much difficulty, was to be founded, hope in the mercy of God, with all the consolations and comforts of that virtue. The declaration, therefore, that any Christian excellence can be superior to these eminent qualities, has justly excited surprise. It may be, therefore, an useful introduction to the more immediate object of our attention, if I attempt to prove to you the truth of the apostle's assertion, and shew you in what manner charity is superior to faith and hope.

Charity is superior to faith and hope, for these reasons—Charity is more extensive in its objects—it is more permanent in its duration—and it is more useful both to ourselves and others.

In the first place, faith may be said to be inferior to charity, because it can exist alone. Faith may sometimes exist even without hope. We read in the New Testament, that there are somewhere in the universe of God, invisible spirits who have fallen from their high estate—and who know, and believe, and tremble. Neither is this true only of the evil spirits. The history of the Christian church, and possibly the experience of some who are present, will inform us of many wicked men who, from early education, or from impartial inquiry, are fully, and firmly, and deeply convinced of the undoubted truth of Scripture—who believe in the resurrection of the dead—the certainty of
future judgment—and the mysterious and eternal separation of the good from the bad—who are assured, that upon their repentance, their sins will be forgiven—and that by acting according to their principles, their conviction, and their knowledge, they will certainly be made partakers of the mercy of God, through the infinite value of the great atonement. Yet, while they believe this, they will not turn to God, they disdain to pray—they refuse to repent—they hold the truth in unrighteousness, because they will not part with some beloved folly which separates them from their Maker. They love that which God has forbidden—they despise that which God has commanded; and, therefore, while they believe, they tremble. They have faith, but no hope. They possess the means of happiness, but they make themselves miserable. Like the poor wretch in the gospels, who was excluded from the society of his fellow men, and had his dwelling among the tombs, and who knew our Saviour when He came near, and entreated Him to remove away, and exclaimed out in his agony—I know Thee—who Thou art—the Holy One of God—art Thou come hither to torment us before our time?—we beseech Thee, torment us not?—so does the wicked and inconsistent Christian separate in his heart from the communion of the church of God, to dwell amidst the impurity and corruption of his vices—and when the truth of Scripture, and

the convictions of his faith flash upon his conscience, then he exclaims in the secret and deep agony of his heart, as he looks up to heaven—*I know Thee, who Thou art*, "leave me to indulge in "my vices—torment me not, before my time." It is not possible that human language can adequately describe the despair, and the misery of that man, who has the faith of the Gospel, without hope: and wherever we read in Scripture of the excellences, and advantages, and sublimities of faith, there is generally some quality united with it, which is more strictly applicable to holiness, charity, or hope. Faith without hope, and, consequently, without charity, suggests to our minds the accounts which some travellers have given us of certain lofty mountains, which are so high, that their bases may be wrapped in the darkness of midnight, while the beams of the evening sun, in all the glories of its setting, may illumine their summits. So may the darkness of despair possess the heart; while the brightness of knowledge may adorn the head. So may faith exist without hope—and every Christian should beware lest his faith be thus separated from his motives of conduct—lest he change the happiness which is offered to us in the system of redemption, for an inconsistent life, and therefore for inward misery. I trust that I have not described the condition of any who are present—but look into your own hearts, and if you find there great knowledge, unrepented sin, and consequent despair, give yourselves no rest till you have
put away evil, and returned to happiness and peace.

It is not necessary to prove to you that if faith may exist without hope; so, also, both of these may be united without charity. It is true, that this separation will seldom take place: because where hope is founded upon faith, that faith will have become a principle of action, and will no longer continue to be the mere barren conviction of truth. Still it is certain that many persons are contented with the purity of faith, and the comfort of hope, who are but too indifferent to the happiness of others: and this is so evident, that I shall not stop to insist upon it. Our second consideration then was to be—that charity is superior to faith and hope, because it is more extensive in its objects, and more permanent in its duration.

Faith may be said to have reference to God alone. Hope, to God and ourselves. Charity to God, ourselves, and others. The union of the three, and the superiority of charity, will better appear, if we inquire into the manner in which the mind which is duly influenced by faith, hope, and charity, will look upon the principal objects of Christian belief. We will select the most important—the resurrection of the body, and the future happiness.—Faith, then, can anticipate the day which the prophets and the apostles have predicted, when the dead shall wake at the voice of the Archangel, and the ocean, and the earth, shall resign their trust. Hope unites with faith in her anticipations
of the scene, and rejoices in the prospect of its own great reward, and its own permanent felicity, in that solemn day. Charity, extensive in its anticipations as the mercy of God itself, exults rather in the view of the universal restoration, when all mankind shall obtain their new existence, and stand before God.

Faith assents to the divinely attested doctrine of the happiness of heaven. Hope rejoices in the prospect of its own participation in it. Charity surveys the countless millions of the redeemed, who shall bow down at the throne of the Almighty.

Faith listens to the song of angels, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and honour, and glory. Hope looks forward to its own union in the great and everlasting chorus. Charity hears the resounding voices of the innumerable multitude of the sons of men, who shall join with the angels of heaven, saying, Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Faith believes that all this glory will be eternal, that the curse shall be removed for ever—that there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor sighing, nor tears. Hope dwells upon its own endless deliverance from pain and grief. Charity delights at the everlasting liberation of the sons of Adam from mourning and woe.

Faith believes that the spirits of the departed, when they again meet in the presence of God, shall be known to each other, and be happy in
their reunion in perfect bliss. *Hope*, justly delighting in its Christian privileges, expects its own portion in those rapturous hours, when the mother shall again meet and clasp her child, when the child shall leap to the embraces of its parent, and the united and happy Christian family shall never be sundered again, but all shall be praise to their common Redeemer, and joy and consolation for ever. *Charity* extends its view to the whole race of man, and beholds all the families of the earth reunited in the kingdom of God, and all the relations of life renewed in perfection and purity and love.

If the eye of *Faith* is compelled to remark the mysterious view which is given us in Scripture, of the fate of the impenitent, and hardened—*Hope* can rejoice in the mercy which redeems it—*Charity* can pray to God, that the blood of the atonement may be extended to those who have not heard, nor known, of the Saviour of man. It dwells with gladness, though with submission, upon the sentence, that, he who knew not his master's will, shall not suffer equally with those who knew, and rejected it. In all these, and in other instances which might be adduced, *Charity* is the very religion of religion. It is the attribute which likens man to God. *Faith* is the virtue of man—and *Hope* is the virtue of man, and neither of them can belong to God; but *Charity* is the attribute of God Himself; and it is the one great attribute of God, which can be imitated by man upon earth.
And as it is thus extensive in its nature—so is it permanent in its duration. *Charity never faileth.* When the immortal spirit shall be received into its happiness—when the soul of man can no longer anticipate the future with the eye of faith—nor desire that future with the eagerness of hope—when faith shall be changed into reality, and hope into enjoyment—then, even then, charity shall still exist, immortal as the soul itself, and permanent as the heaven it possesses. Charity shall last for ever, rejoicing in the universal love of God—partaking of the common happiness—sympathizing with the joy of angels, and the gratefulness of saints—doubling every felicity, even in the heaven of heavens.

Thus is charity superior to faith and hope, as it is more extensive in its objects, and more permanent in its duration. It is also more useful, both to ourselves, and others.

It is more useful to ourselves, because it unites so many virtues which contribute to our greater happiness. Holiness and virtue are so often commanded in the Scriptures, because they are the principal sources of human happiness. We are not to suppose the poor man, or the sick, or the infirm, or the unfortunate, are unavoidably miserable. All these may be not only contented, they may be happy in the very depth of their misfortunes, if they are resigned to the will of God, and are living in his faith and fear. The wicked man alone is miserable; he who is most virtuous, the Christian
alone, is happy. See now, how many virtues, and how many excellences form the grace of charity, and thereby promote the happiness of him who possesses it. Read the description at your leisure. Does charity suffer long, and is kind? Here is the virtue of equanimity, and the virtue of courtesy. *It vaunteth not itself,* and so it is modesty—*it is not puffed up,* and so it is humility—*it is not easily provoked,* and so it is gentleness and lenity—*it thinketh no evil,* and so it is simplicity—*it rejoiceth in the truth,* and so it is candour and verity—*it beareth all things,* and so it is fortitude—*it endureth all things,* and so it is patience. It includes both faith and hope, *for it believeth and hopeth all things,* and so it is confidence and peace. Happy is the man who so learns Christianity, as to possess the grace of charity. It will unite him in practice as well as in principle, to the God who made him, and to the Saviour who redeemed him. It will give peace to his mind, firmness to his purpose, serenity to his demeanour, respect among men; and, above all, the benevolence and generosity which will make him useful to others. This was to be our last consideration; and it will lead us to the more immediate object of our present attention, the claims of the school which is established among you.

What a duty is set before us, when we look with the eye of religious belief upon the sorrows and sufferings of our brethren! Here, too, charity demonstrates its undeniable superiority to faith, and hope. The most careless and inattentive observer
is sometimes overwhelmed with the sight of the misery which subdues the majority of mankind. *Faith* surveys the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now. It inquires the cause. It traces the power of the evil spirit which first brought "death into the world, with all our "woe." It remembers the promise, and believes that before the day of judgment, before the morning of the resurrection, before the future state shall begin, the dominion of moral evil shall be less powerful than the dominion of the Son of God—and the weight of physical evil, with all its long train of sufferings, shall be wonderfully lessened and reduced. Faith believes that *His* kingdom shall come, and *His* will be done upon earth, even as it is in heaven. *Hope* unites with faith, in desiring the moral and religious amelioration of man, with the diminution of human suffering—but *Charity* angelic, god-like charity, offers up the prayer of its piety, and extends the hand of its liberality to send the gospel to the heathen, to give the Bible to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to heal the wounds of sorrow, to administer to the sick and the diseased, to lessen the sum of misery with which it is surrounded. *Faith* will sometimes leave the poor to Providence, and say with a cold heart, and an empty hand, *be ye warmed, and be ye filled*. *Hope* may glance at the extent of sorrow, and desire the removal of pain and grief. *Charity* de-

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3 James ii. 16.
spises the hypocrisy of religion without benevolence, and loves to follow the example of the Saviour of man, in conferring benefit upon others. It desires to do good to man in obedience to the will of God, to prove the purity of its faith in Christ, and the sincerity of its hope in His mercy.

[Then followed the application of the subject, by a statement of the peculiar claims of the institution for which the preacher undertook to plead.]
APPENDIX.
APPENDIX.

NOTE I.

Sermon I. page 9.

The declarations in the Scriptures and in the Creeds respecting the creation of the world, seem to present a difficulty which I feel it incumbent on me to endeavour to remove.

The Apostles' Creed ascribes the act of creation to the Father; the Nicene Creed, with apparent inconsistency, ascribes it both to the Father and the Son.—"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ—by whom all things were made:" the whole Church assembled at Jerusalem declared, in their devotions, their faith in God the Father as Creator of all; Lord, thou art God which hast made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all that in them is: against thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together. Here we are told that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, who created the heaven and the earth, and consequently the Father of Jesus Christ is the Creator of the world. The express prediction of the Prophet Isaiah is no less clear than the declaration of the Church at Jerusalem. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens and
stretched them out, he which spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. St. John in his gospel, and St. Paul in his epistles, distinctly and repeatedly assert that all things were created by the Son. Now, here is the difficulty: for since the Apostles teach us that the Son made all things, and since the prophets assert that they were produced by the Spirit, how can we attribute that peculiarly to the Father, which is also assigned in various passages of the Scriptures indifferently to the Son and to the Spirit? Bishop Pearson, in his elaborate and most learned exposition of the Apostles' creed, has given the following solution of the difficulty:—"Two reasons may particularly be rendered of this peculiar attributing the work of creation to the Father. First, in respect of those heresies arising in the infancy of the Church, which endeavoured to destroy this truth, and to introduce another creator of the world, distinguished from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. An error so destructive to the Christian religion, that it razeth even the foundation of the gospel, which refers itself wholly to the promise in the law, and pretends to no other God but that God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; acknowledgeth no other speaker by the Son than Him that spake by the prophets; and, therefore, whom man and the prophets call Lord of heaven and earth, of Him our blessed Saviour signifieth himself to be the Son, rejoicing in Spirit, and saying, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth.' Secondly, in respect of the paternal priority in the Deity, by reason whereof that which is common to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may be rather attributed to the Father as the first Person in the Trinity. In which respect the Apostle hath made a distinction in the phrase of emanation or production: To us there is but one God, the Father, of
whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, and we by him. And our Saviour hath acknowledged the Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do; which speaketh some kind of priority in action, according to that of the Person. And in this sense the Church did always profess to believe in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth."—Pearson on the Creed, Third Edition, page 65.

**NOTE 2.**

**Sermon III. page 43.**

That Jonah was ejected at Joppa is very credible, from the well attested fact, that the enormous bones of a sea monster were long preserved and venerated there. Pliny mentions the circumstance, and tells us, moreover, that those bones were brought to Rome, and were exhibited there by M. Scaurus in his Ædileship: the ribs were longer than those of an Indian elephant, and the length of the spine was forty feet.

**NOTE 3.**

**Sermon III. page 46.**

Although it would be presumptuous to assert, that the bones of the sea monster referred to in the preceding note, were undoubtedly the remains of the animal by which the prophet had been miraculously preserved, yet the facts which I have stated are well worthy of consideration, particularly when the nature of the shore at Joppa is taken into account; it is described by Bryant in his "Observations" upon this passage, as being low, and shallow, and sandy, and such as fully agrees with his two very probable opinions upon this subject—that the bones which had so long been preserved at Joppa, were those of the fish which disgorged Jonah,
and that the shore of Joppa was the place upon which the sea monster was thrown.—See "Observations upon some passages of Scripture which the enemies to Religion have thought most obnoxious, and attended with difficulties not to be surmounted." By Jacob Bryant, 4to. p. 199, &c. See also "Arrangement of the Old Testament," vol. ii. pp. 251-2.

NOTE 4.

Sermon IV. page 70.

I have designedly omitted in this sermon all notice of the question respecting the alteration of the observance of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, by the Christian Church. The view which I have taken of the subject did not necessarily lead me to that inquiry, nor is that view affected in any way by the various opinions which are entertained respecting the origin, or obligations, of the Christian Sabbath.

NOTE 5.

Sermon VI. page 87.

As the laws of England are enforced by temporal sanctions, but take for granted that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is true, because it is a part of Christianity—so also the laws of Moses were to be enforced by the interference of a special visible providence when necessary, but the doctrine of a future state, wherever it was necessary to be noticed, was taken for granted: thus Enoch's ascension proved a future state; the death of Abel proved that virtue was not rewarded here.

The presence of the divine Instructor from an invisible world, constantly, when necessary, appearing to the patriarchs and to Moses, proved a future state.
NOTE 6.

SERMON VI. page 89.

In St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (chap. iv. 15), we find him desiring the converts to salute a brother named Nymphas, and these words, *The Church which is in His house*, as well as the passage quoted in the sermon, seem to demand the following remarks:—When the converts were so numerous that they could no longer meet in one house, they were still called the Church of that particular town or province in which they had originally met; consequently, several congregations formed one Church, who remained under the superintendence of their first pastor, and thus became what we should now call Episcopalians.

St. Paul, indeed, wrote to the Romans, and mentioned the Churches as assembling in their houses—by which we infer that the separate assemblies were sometimes called a Church. But one fact never invalidates other facts. The several congregations at Corinth—Rome—Antioch, &c. formed collectively and respectively the several Churches of Corinth—Rome—Antioch, &c. &c.

Many persons are of opinion that the Church and the State ought to be separate communities. My own opinion is—that if any Christian kings, princes, senators, or magistrates, to whom the welfare of a commonwealth is committed, attempt to place the public sanctions of morality on any other foundation than that of the Christian religion, they are guilty of a scandalous and most indefensible deliction both of their duty to God as immortal men, and of their duty to the subject, whose highest good, that is whose spiritual interests, they are bound to advance, according to the great and manifold opportunities which their authority and influence afford them.
NOTE 7.

SERMON VII. page 105.

It does not appear to me that our notions of eternal punishment should necessarily include the idea of a positive infliction of suffering on the part of the Almighty; that punishment loses nothing of its terror in our apprehensions if we suppose it only to be the unavoidable result of unfitness for the best state of happiness, namely spiritual happiness. I find that the same view is taken of this subject by Dr. Horberry, in his learned and unanswerable reply to Whiston, on the eternity of future punishments; from which I extract the following paragraph:

"We see that vice has terrible consequences, which naturally attend and follow it in the present scene of things: and there is no reason to think it will be otherwise when this scene of things is over. It is easily conceivable how inveterate and incurable habits of it may affect the temper and frame of the soul. And though there may be more difficulty in this point with regard to the new-raised body; yet we know that the man cannot be happy while the mind is miserable. Besides the nature of the state and place to which the wicked are condemned must be taken into consideration; as also the company they are confined to—that of beings like themselves, wholly alienated from the nature and life of God, and such as have extinguished all the sparks of virtuous and good affection. In the natural result and necessary consequences of these things together, their punishment will consist, and nothing more terrible can be presented to a thoughtful and virtuous mind."

It is well known that some learned men, following the

opinion of Origen, have contended for the scheme of a restoration as they call it, while others have maintained the idea of a final annihilation of the wicked. They have been led into these unscriptural, and I may add irrational theories, by a belief that eternal punishment is inconsistent with the justice and mercy of God. These heterodox doctrines have been solidly confuted by Bull, Tillotson, Dawes, Clarke, Butler, Dodwell, and Horberry; they are also virtually abandoned by Dr. Burnet himself, one of the most elaborate defenders of the notion of a restoration, who, in his work, De Statu Mort. et Resur. is forced to own that Scripture is on the other side. It cannot be expected that in this note, I should enter at any length into the particular bearings of this much agitated inquiry; but I think it right to make one or two remarks, which seem to be called for on the present occasion, referring the reader, who desires additional information, to the writers mentioned above. When it is said by the impugners of the doctrine which I have maintained, that "eternal misery for temporary crimes is inconsistent with every principle of justice," they are chargeable with the folly of indulging in a mere play upon words. Temporary crimes, if the expression have any meaning, must signify crimes committed within the period of this life. Now I desire to be informed, how the shortness of the period within which a crime has been committed, lessens its malignity or guilt. I have never understood that justice always requires the duration of punishment to be proportioned to the duration of the act which incurs it; or that an offence committed in a moment might not merit a punishment of greater severity, and longer continuance, than another the commission of which occupied a day. But the decisive answer to these objections is contained in the declaration of our Lord, (Matt. xxv. 46.) that the wicked shall go εἰς κωλασίαν αἰωνίων and the righteous εἰς ζωὴν αἰωνίων.

It is necessary to rescue another passage of Scripture
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from the corrupt interpretation which some have attempted to fix upon it. I allude to 1 Cor. xv. 25. *Christ must reign till he hath put all things under his feet.* This, say they, holds forth the doctrine of restoration. I have already in my Sermon * on this text shewn, and enlarged upon, its real signification; and far from lending any support to the system of universal restoration, I think it is plain that a striking argument against it is deducible from the context.

The last enemy, says the Apostle, that shall be destroyed is death. And the subjugation of this last enemy he manifestly represents as accomplished in the resurrection of the bodies of believers. He adds that Christ's mediatorial kingdom will then be ended. Now if Christ must reign till all his enemies be put under his feet; if that shall have taken place at the general resurrection; if at the general resurrection (as he himself declares) those who have died in their sins will be consigned to misery; it necessarily follows that the end of Christ's mediatorial kingdom will be so far from bringing on the restoration of the wicked from a state of punishment, that it is precisely then that their punishment will begin!

NOTE 8.

Sermon VIII. page 115.

Every serious reader of the volume of Revelation, feels a sensible delight in observing the marvellous correspondence which appears in numerous instances between the words and works of the Creator,—between the declarations of his lips and the operations of his hands. I do not recollect to have met with a more interesting or remarkable example of this, than one which Mr. Mason Good has stated in his "Book of Nature," (Vol. I. Lecture II.) "It has been

* Sermon I.
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"minutely ascertained," says he, "within the last ten or
twelve years, by an almost infinite variety of accurate and
well-defined experiments, that the combination and separa-
tion of all simple bodies, are conducted in a definite and in-
vARIABLE ratio of relative weight and measure. And it is
not the least important part of this discovery, that not only
in the union or separation of simple substances, but in all
well-known and more complicated compounds, so far as the
experimental series has been carried, the elementary bodies
which enter into them exhibit proportions equally definite
and invariable; thus affording another proof of close con-
nexion between the phenomena of nature and the occasional
developements of revelation; the philosopher beholding now,
as the prophet beheld formerly, that the Almighty Archi-
tect has literally adjusted every thing by weight and
measure; that he has measured the waters and meted out
the heavens, accurately comprehended the dust of the earth,
weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance."

NOTE 9.

Sermon IX, page 136.

The particulars of this interesting fact are thus given by
the learned Dr. Hales:—" At length, in the twentieth year
of his reign, Artaxerxes granted that permission which he
had so long refused, of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem,
to the instances of Nehemiah, a Jew, and his cup-bearer
(when Esther the queen was present), whom he appointed
tirshatha, or governor of Judea, in succession to Zerubbabe-

"This change in the conduct of Artaxerxes respecting
the Jews, may be accounted for upon sound political prin-
ciples, and not merely from regard to the solicitations of his
cup-bearer, or the influence of his queen.
"Four years before, in the sixteenth year of his reign, Artaxerxes, who, after the reduction of Egypt had prosecuted the war against their auxiliaries, the Athenians, suffered a signal defeat of his forces by sea and land, from Cimon, the Athenian general, which compelled him to make an inglorious peace with them, upon the humiliating conditions:—1. That the Greek cities throughout Asia should be free, and enjoy their own laws; 2. That no Persian governor of the provinces should come within three days’ journey of any part of the sea coast, with an army; And, 3. That no Persian ships of war should sail between the northern extremity of Asia Minor and the boundary of Palestine, according to Diodorus Siculus, lib. xii.

"Thus excluded from the whole line of sea coast, and precluded from keeping garrisons in any of the maritime towns, it became not only a matter of prudence, but of necessity, to conciliate the Jews; to attach them to the Persian interest, and detach them from the Grecian, by further privileges, that the Persians might have the benefit of a friendly fortified town like Jerusalem, within three days’ journey of the sea, and a most important pass, to keep open the communication between Persia and Egypt; and, to confirm this conjecture (due originally to Howe), we may remark, that in all the ensuing Egyptian wars, the Jews remained faithful to the Persians, and even after the Macedonian invasion." Hales’s Analysis of Chronology, 4to. vol. ii. pp. 527, 8.

NOTE 10.

SERMON XIII. page 191.

The remarkable and unparalleled circumstances attending the character, situation, and conversion of St. Paul, are well known to have convinced the cautious and scrutinizing mind of Lord Lyttleton, who, in his admirable "Letter to
Gilbert West," has laid before the public a view of the argument as it presented itself to his own mind. The tract is well worthy the attention both of the friends and enemies of the Christian religion. It cannot be expected that I should give, in this place, a perfect analysis of the arguments; but a brief view of it may perhaps be acceptable to those who have not seen the publication of the noble and learned writer.

First, he enumerates all the possible varieties of character under which St. Paul can be regarded; and then, after a most complete and impartial examination of all, he shews, demonstratively, that the only one which will agree with the Apostle, is that under which he is regarded by the Christian Church, namely, as sincerely convinced, and really converted, by an undisputed miracle. Every possible objection to this conclusion is stated, and examined, and sifted, with all the acuteness and severity of scrutiny which can be exercised by a human intellect, naturally keen and penetrating, and trained and disciplined by the rules and assistance of art and study. But the most triumphant establishment of his argument is that which he deduces from the peculiar character of St. Paul—an apostate from Judaism, disowned by the rest of the Christian teachers, displaying the whole gospel to the Gentiles, and succeeding in converting them! This is demonstration.

NOTE 11.

Sermon XVII. page 266.

In the view which I have taken of the transfiguration of our Lord, I have followed for the most part that interpretation of the transaction which has been adopted by Bishop Porteus, and by some of the earlier commentators; but I have enlarged upon some of the particulars, which seemed
to require a more extensive elucidation, and to involve more important consequences than I have met with in other expositions of this important event; and I have thought it necessary to shew, what has hitherto been overlooked, that the nature of the gospel dispensation, viewed as the complete and final revelation of the scheme of human redemption, seemed to require such a symbolical display of the glory of Christ, and of his followers, as is the ultimate object of all the "means of grace," and the accomplishment of all our "hopes of glory."
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