DISCOURSES AND SAYINGS

OF

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

ILLUSTRATED IN

A SERIES OF EXPOSITIONS.

BY JOHN BROWN, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY TO THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, EDINBURGH.
AUTHOR OF "EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES ON FIRST PETER," "DISCOURSES ON THE SUFFERINGS AND GLORIES OF THE MESSIAN," ETC

ΔΕΙ—ΜΝΗΜΟΝΕΥΕΙΝ ΤΩΝ ΑΟΓΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ.—ΠΑΤΟΣ.

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
NO. 285 BROADWAY.
1856.
TO JAMES DOUGLAS, OF CAVERS, ESQUIRE.

My Dear Sir,

Your honored name is placed in the front of these volumes, not so much to grace them (though, as Selden says, "bookes are most fitly consecrated to true lovers of goodnesse and all good learning"), as to gratify their author, by giving him an opportunity of expressing the deep conviction he has long felt, of the important and enduring service you have in your writings done to the cause of christian truth and love; and of recording the pleasure and advantage derived from intercourse with you, for nearly thirty years, and the ever-increasing cordial regard which has grown out of that intercourse.

May God, "even our own God," who has blessed you and made you a blessing to the church and to the world, bless you more and more, and more and more make you a blessing. May you long continue, Sir, to adorn your station, to bless your family, to "devise liberal things," and to add to those literary gifts by which, without impoverishing yourself, you are "making many rich" on earth, and, I doubt not, "laying up for yourself treasure in heaven."

I am, My Dear Sir,

Ever yours,

Most respectfully and affectionately,

JOHN BROWN.
“Jesus would not have been ‘Son of God,’ and ‘Son of man,’ had not his words, like his works, with all their adaptation to the circumstances of the times, contained some things that are inexplicable,—had they not borne concealed within them the germ of an infinite development, reserved for future ages to unfold. It is this feature,—and all the evangelists concur in their representations of it,—which distinguishes Christ from all other teachers of men. Advance as they may, they can never reach him; their only task need be, by taking him more and more into their life and thought, to learn better how to bring forth the treasures that lie concealed in him.”—Neander.
PREFACE.

It is a growing conviction in my mind, that vital and influential Christianity consists, much more than is ordinarily apprehended, in an intimate personal acquaintance and friendship with our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the great revealer of God; he is the revealed Divinity. The man knows the Father who knows the Son—that man alone knows the Father. Christ is himself "the way, the truth, and the life;" and it is only in so far as we really know and love him, that we are in "the way," or that "the truth" and "the life" are in us.

To be a Christian, it is not enough that we know and acknowledge a system of doctrine and of law, deduced from the sayings of our Lord and the writings of his apostles. It is necessary that we be acquainted with his person, his character, and his work; that we know the doctrines of Christianity as his mind, the laws of Christianity as his will. The very life of Christianity consists in loving, confiding in, obeying him, and God in him; and he plainly can be loved, confided in, and obeyed, only in the degree in which he is known. Speculation about the person and work of Christ, however correct, is not the "excellent knowledge" in comparison with which the apostles counted all things loss;¹ assent to abstract

¹ Phil. iii. 8.
propositions, however true, is not Christian faith; conformity to ethical rules, however good, is not Christian obedience.

Dr. Owen did good service to the cause of Christianity, two hundred years ago, by showing the pre-eminent place the person of Christ holds in that religion, in opposition to the British rationalists of that age, who had almost lost sight of him in speculation about evidences, and dogmas, and ethics; and Schleiermacher, and his noble followers, Neander and Tholuck, have done a similar service in opposition to the German rationalists of our times. A personal Deity is the soul of natural religion; a personal Saviour—the real living Christ—is the soul of revealed religion. How strange that it should not be impossible—how sad that, through a perverted ingenuity, it should not be uncommon, in reference to both of these—to convert that into a veil which was meant to be a revelation!

A firm belief of the real existence of Jesus Christ, that is, the belief not merely that a person bearing that name lived in a particular country and age, but that the Jesus Christ of the New Testament really did and does exist, that the strangest of all pictures—the gospel history—represents a reality; this living faith of a living Christ (not by any means so common an acquisition as the former) lies at the foundation of true Christianity; and the superstructure is composed of that transforming intimate acquaintance with him, with his person, his character, his mind, his will, which is to be obtained by a careful study of that "Scripture given by inspiration of God," which is His word—he being at once its author and its subject—under the promised influence of His Spirit—the Spirit of truth and of holiness.

Every part of the inspired volume may be, and ought
to be, turned to account in the search after this "excellent knowledge." The study of no portion of Scripture leads more directly to its attainment than that of the gospel histories. Were we carefully pondering these wonderful records, supposing us in possession of the fundamental faith just referred to, we might become better acquainted with our Lord, than any of us is with his most intimate friend. His mind and will are there expressed on a great variety of subjects, with a surprising union of clearness and depth; and we see him placed in an endless variety of circumstances of the most trying kind, which bring out in strong relief, all the features of his character. We see him, indeed, in far more situations fitted to test the character, and disclose its component elements, than we ever have seen—ever can see any man. And in his case we have this advantage—we are quite sure of two things, of neither of which we can be perfectly certain where a mere man is the object of knowledge, and human testimony is the medium through which our knowledge is obtained: We know, and are sure, that Jesus Christ was exactly what he appeared to be, and that his biographers represent him exactly as he was. In him there was nothing assumed—all was real; and with them there is no misrepresentation. They state exactly what took place,—"what they saw and heard, that they declare to us," without extenuation, without exaggeration. He could make only a partial revelation of himself—for the capacities of men enabled them to receive only such a revelation,—but the revelation was perfect so far as it went. His biographers could tell us only what they knew, but they tell us that to the life.

With these convictions, I have always held that the study of the gospel history, and especially of "The Dis-
courses and Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ”—into whose “lips grace was poured,”—who had “the tongue of the learned,” and “spake as never man spake,”—is one of the most probable means of promoting real vital Christianity in ourselves, and that an exposition of these is one of the most probable means of promoting it in others. It is in the hope of, in some degree, contributing to these ends, that the following Expositions have been prepared, and are now given to the public.

These remarks will be misunderstood, if they be considered as, in the slightest degree, disparaging the epistolary part of the New Testament. In some points of view, that, as the completion of the code of divine doctrine and law, given by its Divine Author, not on earth, but from heaven, is peculiarly valuable; but there is comparatively little, if anything, in the apostolic epistles, of which the germ is not to be found in the gospels. The declarations of the apostles are but the development of their Master’s thoughts,—a commentary,—an infallible one—on his sayings; and we do not rightly estimate these divine writings, if we do not consider them as a part of his word; nor rightly use them, if we do not employ them for the purpose of better understanding his mind and heart, and so bringing our minds and hearts into conformity with his.

The general name of Expositions has been given to the discourses contained in these volumes, because no other designation in common use could have accurately described them all. There will be found among them specimens of what are usually in Scotland called Lectures, in all the forms which they ordinarily assume—scholia, on particular words and phrases—continuous comment, and illustrated analysis; and the illustrations
of the "Sayings" of our Lord, as distinguished from his "Discourses" generally, take the shape of the Expository Sermon. But, in all the Discourses, Exposition will be found to be the staple; whatever is doctrinal, experimental, or practical, being presented as the result of the application of the principles of strict exposition to the passage under consideration.

In preparing these volumes for the press, I have studied the original text of their subjects with all the grammatical and lexical helps I possessed. I have further availed myself of every assistance within my reach, to be derived from versions of, and commentaries on, the passages explained. My aim was, not to produce an original work, but a satisfactory exposition of an important portion of Scripture; and if I shall be found in any measure to have succeeded, it will not in any wise diminish my satisfaction, that my success be considered the result less of independent thinking or discovery on my part, than of having carefully consulted and deliberately weighed the inquiries and conclusions of others. In every case, indeed, I claim to have exercised my own judgment; but I have always felt more satisfied when I found myself, as I have usually done, following in the track of the learned and pious of former generations, than when compelled, as I have sometimes been, to walk alone.

It might wear the appearance of ostentation to present a formal list of the works, in various languages, which have been consulted. It is but an act of justice, however, to say that, besides the more ordinary commentaries, ancient and modern, I have found advantage from the works of the following authors:—Calvin, Chemnitz, Cartwright, Rus, Pearce, Saurin, Macknight, Campbell, Bennet, Olshausen, and Neander, on the gospels.
generally; Melancthon, Rollock, Hutcheson, Lampe, Morus, Tittmann, and Tholuck, on the gospel by John; Knapp, in his "Scripta Varii Argumenti," on the Gospel of the Kingdom—John iii. 14–21; Augustine, Episcopius, Blackall, Blair, Venede, Brewster, Tholuck, and Trench, on the Sermon on the Mount; Norris and Grove, on the Beatitudes. My obligations to the judicious work of Brewster are peculiarly numerous.

In illustrating the valedictory discourse, I have been much indebted to Gerhard and to Bengel,¹ but still more to the Lectures of my accomplished relative, the Rev. John Brown Patterson,² whom the Disposer of all things, whose judgments are a great deep, after having remarkably prepared, both intellectually and spiritually, for eminent usefulness, withdrew so soon, and so suddenly, from the sphere of ministerial labor. These Lectures, viewed as the ordinary weekly preparations of a young minister, are, for depth of thought and feeling, and for beauty of expression, indeed wonderful.

The admirable illustrations of the fourteenth chapter of the gospel by John, by my lamented friend, the Rev. Dr. Heugh, did not come into my hand till the Exposition of that chapter had passed through the press. Had I seen them before I composed it, I might probably have thought such a work unnecessary; and even after it was prepared

¹ "Bengelius magnam sagacitatem in rimandis ac presse explicandis sententia
verborumque etiam minimorum significatibus consumpsit."—Winer. I am glad to learn that we are soon to have an English translation of that very remarkable book, his "Gnomon."

² Late minister of Falkirk. Ordained Feb. 26, 1830; died June 29, 1885.

His Prize Essay, "On the National Character of the Athenians,"—Additional Notes to his grandfather's "Self-interpreting Bible,"—an Introductory Essay to a Selection from Jeremy Taylor's Works, his Remains, with a Memoir by his Friend, G. G. Cunningham, Esq.,—and the Lectures referred to,—are permanent memorials of his endowments and acquirements as a scholar, a theologian, and a Christian minister.
for the press, the perusal of them might, perhaps, have on the same ground shaken my determination to give it to the world. I do not, however, regret the circumstances in which I find myself placed. By the perusal of Dr. Heugh's masterly lectures, as well as of the eloquent discourses of my gifted kinsman, my impressions of the transcendent excellence of our common theme have been deepened; and in declaring the unsearchable riches of our common Lord's wisdom and love, I have the solemn delightful "fellowship of the spirit" with those two very dear friends, who, "being dead, yet speak." Their expositions will come into many hands into which mine will not;—mine may come into some hands into which theirs may not; and should they all come into the same hands, I am persuaded our occasional diversity, and our general agreement, will, each in its own way, conduce to stir and to satisfy the minds of our readers.

Specific obligations to the authors consulted have generally been acknowledged in the margin, and would have been so uniformly, but for the fact that most of the discourses were written without the press being seen even dimly in the distance; and therefore, except where not merely thoughts and expressions, but sentences, had been borrowed, the marks of reference were not very scrupulously appended to the original manuscript.

As the Work was intended for the edification of Christians in general, whatever could be interesting or useful only to the scholar has, as in my Exposition of the First Epistle of Peter, been cast into the notes in the margin, or at the end, of the several Expositions. More time and attention have been bestowed on the collection and preparation of these notes, than, from their comparative fewness and brevity, might perhaps be supposed; and to my
brethren in the ministry, I am persuaded, they will not be the least acceptable and useful part of the Work.

In conducting the Work through the press, I have had the kind assistance of several friends. To the Rev. Dr. John Taylor of Auchtermuchty, for the careful revision of the corrected proofs, and to my brother-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Smith of Biggar, for the preparation of the indices, I think it but due to make this public acknowledgment.

Arthur's Lodge, Newington,
July 1850.
ADVERTISEMENT TO SECOND EDITION.

As the most appropriate way of showing the sense felt of the public favor so distinctly expressed for this Work, by the disposal of an edition of so large a book in so, comparatively, short a period, I have endeavored to do what I could for correcting its mistakes and supplying its deficiencies in this re-impression. To secure these objects, it has undergone a thorough revision both by myself and some of my literary friends; and though no material change, or even important modification, of plan or sentiment has been thought necessary, numerous alterations of expression have been made, and many additional illustrations inserted.

The most important difference between this edition and its predecessor, consists in its containing three additional expositions—"On the Christian ministry, and the character and destiny of its occupants, worthy and unworthy;"¹ "On the ministry of our Lord—its details and its results;"² and "On the Son of man, and his going."³ It is hoped that by the insertion of these discourses, some addition is made to the value of the Work, while, at the same time, though the matter introduced occupies considerably more than one hundred pages, by adopting a fuller page, with-

¹ Exp. VI. ² Exp. XX. ³ Exp. XXIII.
out diminishing the type, the size of the volumes has not
been inconveniently enlarged, and the price has not been
at all increased.

It has been my wish to present the work in this new
impression as free as may be from those mistakes in words,
collocation of clauses, and punctuation, which all who are
conversant with such undertakings know it to be so diffi-
cult to avoid; and, from the care of the printers, and the
valuable assistance derived from the just judgment and
observant eye of my much-esteeméd friend, the Reverend
Peter Davidson, of this city, I cherish the hope of having,
in a good measure, succeeded in this object.

I cannot conclude this notice without expressing satisfac-
tion at the fact, that, in consequence of the kind recep-
tion of the "Exposition of the First Epistle of Peter" in
the United States of America, a considerable proportion
of the present edition appears with the well-known and
respected names of "Robert Carter and Brothers, New
York," on the title. It is pleasant to think of contrib-
uting, in any degree, to the increase and permanence of
that union of mind and heart between the Christians of
America and of Great Britain, on which the well-being of
the world's future so much depends.

Arthur's Lodge, Newington,
March 1852.
CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

EXPOSITION I.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

John iii. 14-21.—"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."


EXPOSITION II.

OUR LORD'S CONVERSATION WITH THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

John iv. 4-42—p. 64.

Occasion and circumstances of the conversation, p. 64. The conversation itself, p. 67. The living water the gift of God, p. 69. The nature of acceptable worship, p. 71. The spiritual harvest, p. 76.
CONTENTS.

EXPOSITION III.

OUR LORD'S DEFENCE OF HIS WORKING MIRACLES ON THE SABBATH-DAY.

John v. 17-47—p. 78.

Introduction, p. 78.—Part I. The doctrine, p. 81.—Part II. The evidence, p. 95
—Part III. The application, p. 101.—Notes—Note A. Meaning of ἐπιστριφθησθαι

EXPOSITION IV.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Matth. v., vi., vii.—p. 110.

salvation, Matth. vii. 13, 14, p. 272. § 2. Caution against false teachers, and
the means of discovering them, Matth. vii. 15-20, p. 275. § 3. Caution against
(2.) The foolish builder and his fate, Matth. vii. 26, 27, p. 289.—CONCLUSION.—
Matth. vii. 28, 29, p. 290.—Notes—Note A, “The kingdom of heaven,” Tholuck,
“Moreh,” meaning of these terms, p. 297. Note C’, Swear not at all, Maurice,
Note E, Chrysostom’s illustration of the christian law in reference to enemies, p.
299. Note G, Remarks on the Lord’s prayer: its order, origin, and interpre-
ters, p. 299. Note H, On the genuineness of the doxology annexed to the
Lord’s prayer, Tholuck, p. 302. Note I, Reference of the word πτωποί, Matth.
vi. 11, Trench, p. 305.

EXPOSITION V.

FAITHFUL DENUNCIATIONS.

LUKE XI. 37-54.—P. 306.

CONCLUSION.—Luke xi. 53, 54, p. 326.—Note—On Christians associating with
men of the world, Alexander Knoz, p. 326.

EXPOSITION VI.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY; AND THE CHARACTER AND DESTINY
OF ITS OCCUPANTS—WORTHY AND UNWORTHY.

LUKE XII. 35-37, 41-47.—“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burn-
ing; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will
return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open
unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he
cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, That he shall gird himself,
and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” *
* * * * * “Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful
and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give
them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his
lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, That he
will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his
heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants
and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant
will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not
aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the un-
believers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not him-
self, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

INTRODUCTION, p. 328.—PART I. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, p. 330.—PART II. THE
CHARACTER OF THE OCCUPANTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, p. 331. § 1. Worthy,
CONCLUSION, p. 343.

VOL. I.
CONTENTS.

EXPOSITION VII.

FIGURATIVE VIEWS OF THE PURPOSE OF OUR LORD'S MISSION: OF THE MEANS OF GAINING IT; AND OF HIS FEELINGS IN REFERENCE TO BOTH.

Luke xii. 49, 50.—"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" p. 347.

Introduction, p. 347.—Part I. Of the design of our Lord's mission—"To send fire on the earth," p. 348; and his feelings in reference to this—"What will I if it be already kindled?" p. 351.—Part II. Of the means of gaining the design of our Lord's mission—"The baptism he must be baptized with," p. 352; and his feelings with regard to this—"How am I straitened till it be accomplished?" p. 354.—Conclusion, p. 356.

EXPOSITION VIII.

TRUE HAPPINESS, AND THE WAY OF SECURING IT.

John vi. p. 359.


EXPOSITION IX.

HUMAN AUTHORITY IN RELIGION CONDEMNED.

Matthew xv. 1-20; Mark vii. 1-23—p. 411.


EXPOSITION X.

UNLIMITED INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION.

John vii. 37, 38.—"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," p. 424.

Introduction, p. 424.—Part I. The Invitation, p. 427. § 1. The persons invited—
CONTENTS.

"the thirsty," p. 427. § 2. The fountain to which they are invited—Mt. p. 428. § 3. The double call, p. 429. (1.) "Come," p. 429. (2.) "Drink," p. 430. § 4. The unlimited extent of the invitation—"If any man," 430.—PART II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ACCEPTING THE INVITATION, p. 481. Introductory expository remarks, p. 432. § 1. He who accepts the invitation obtains abundant permanent happiness, p. 434. § 2. He who accepts the invitation manifests his happiness, p. 435. § 3. He who accepts the invitation becomes the means of communicating happiness to others, p. 435. APPENDIX—Expository note of the evangelist. John vii. 39:—"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Connection between the giving of the Spirit and the glorification of Christ, p. 437.

EXPOSITION XI.

MISCELLANEOUS.


John viii. 12, 59—p. 442.


EXPOSITION XII.

THE CHURCH AND ITS OFFICE-BEARERS—TRUE AND FALSE.

John x. 1-9—p. 494.

INTRODUCTION, p. 494.—PART I. Of the Folded Sheep, p. 496.—PART II. Of the Door of the Fold, p. 497.—PART III. Of the True Shepherds who Enter in by the Door, p. 498.—PART IV. Of the False Shepherds who Do Not Enter in by the Door, p. 502.—CONCLUSION, p. 505.

EXPOSITION XIII.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

John x. 11.—"I am the good Shepherd."—p. 508.

INTRODUCTION, p. 508.—PART I. Jesus Christ, as the Good Shepherd, secures for his peculiar people all the blessings they stand in need of, p. 512.—PART II. Jesus Christ, as the Good Shepherd, secures blessings for his people at the greatest conceivable expense to himself, p. 518.—PART III. There subsists the most intimate and endearing mutual acquaintance and intercourse between Jesus Christ, as the Good Shepherd, and his people, p. 516.—PART IV. Jesus Christ, as the Good Shepherd, cares for all his people, p. 519.
CONTENTS.

XX

EXPOSITION XIV.

THE SON, IN ACCOMPLISHING THE WORK COMMITTED TO HIM, 
THE OBJECT OF THE FATHER'S DELIGHT.

John x. 17, 18.—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my 
life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of 
myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This 
commandment have I received of my Father."—p. 523.

Introduction, p. 523.—Part I. The great work in which the Son is engaged, p. 
526.—Part II. The appointment of the Son to his great work by the Father, 
p. 529.—Part III. The Qualifications of the Son for his great work, p. 532. 
—Part IV. The Son's accomplishment of his great work, p. 536.—Part V. The 
complacency manifested by the Father to the Son in the accomplishment, and for 
the accomplishment, of his great work, 537.—Conclusion, p. 540.—Note. Con-
nection and meaning of ἵλπα.—Tholuck, p. 541.

EXPOSITION XV.

CONVERSATION WITH THE JEWS AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.

John x. 22-42—p. 542.

Introduction, p. 542.—Feast of dedication—what? p. 543. The Jews' complaint, 
p. 547. Our Lord's reply, p. 549. His account of their unbelief, p. 551. The 
absolute security of 'his sheep,' p. 561. Our Lord's unity with the Father as-
serted, p. 562. Exasperation of the Jews at this, p. 563. They charge him with 
blasphemy, p. 563. His defence, p. 564.

EXPOSITION XVI.

INTERVIEW WITH THE GREEKS.

John xii. 20-26—p. 574.

Who were these "Greeks"? p. 575. The "hour" of the glorification of the Son 
of man, p. 580. The corn of wheat dying and falling into the earth, p. 581. 
Loving life, the way to lose it; hating it, the way to "keep it unto life eternal," 
p. 584. The duty and reward of the true disciple, p. 585.

EXPOSITION XVII.

INTERNAL SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

John xii. 27, 28.—"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, 
save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify 
yth name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified 
it, and will glorify it again."—p. 588.

Introduction, p. 588.—Part I. Our Saviour's internal sufferings, p. 589.—Part 
II. The exercise of our Lord's mind under his internal sufferings, p. 594.— 
Part III. The Father's approbation of the Saviour's exercise of mind under his 
internal sufferings, p. 597.—Conclusion, p. 599.
EXPOSITION XVIII.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND ITS RESULTS.

JOHN xii. 31-33.—"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (This he said, signifying what death he should die.)"—p. 601.

INTRODUCTION, p. 601.—PART I. THE DEATH OF CHRIST, p. 603. § 1. The fact of his death predicted, p. 604. § 2. The manner of his death described, p. 605. § 3. The nature of his death unfolded, p. 608.—PART II. THE RESULTS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, p. 611. § 1. The judgment of this world, p. 614. (1.) What is meant by the judgment of this world? p. 614. (2.) How is the judgment of this world the result of the death of Christ? p. 620. § 2. The expulsion of "the prince of this world," p. 622. (1.) "The prince of this world"—who is he? p. 622. (2.) The casting out of the prince of this world—what is it? p. 627. (3.) The casting out of the prince of this world the result of Christ's death—how? p. 630. § 3. The drawing all men to Christ, p. 634. (1.) All men, without exception, become the subjects of his mediatorial government, p. 636. (2.) All men, without distinction, become the objects of the invitations of his Gospel, p. 637. (3.) All whom the Father has given him, "an innumerable company out of every kindred, tongue, and nation," are put in possession of the blessings of his salvation, p. 638. 2. What is the connection between this drawing all to him, and his being "lifted up from the earth"? p. 640.—CONCLUSION, p. 643.
DISCOURSES AND SAYINGS
OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

EXPOSITION I.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

John iii. 14—21.—And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

INTRODUCTION.

These "golden sentences" occur in the narrative of a conversation between our Lord Jesus Christ, and Nicodemus a ruler of the Jews. To understand the record of any conversation aright, it is of great importance to know its occasion—the characters of those engaged in it, and the circumstances in which it took place. These, in the case before us, are but imperfectly known to us; but we shall find that even the very partial notices we have of them, cast much light on what would otherwise be very obscure, if not altogether unintelligible.

Jesus Christ, attended by his five disciples, Peter, and Andrew, and John, and Philip, and Nathaniel, had come up from Galilee to Jerusalem. His external appearance was that of a Jew of humble rank, and his followers were men belonging to

1 John i. 40—49.  
2 John ii. 13.
the same class in society as himself. His expulsion of those traffickers who had desecrated the temple by making one of its courts the scene of their secular commerce, and his performance of a number of miracles, had, however, drawn on him a considerable share of public attention; and many had been induced to regard him as a divine messenger or prophet: though the majority of those who had formed this opinion were persons entirely under the influence of the sentiments almost universally prevalent among the Jews respecting the design of the Messiah’s mission, and the nature of the kingdom which he was to establish in the world.

Among these individuals was Nicodemus, a member of the sect of the Pharisees, which embraced in it the great body of the apparently pious of the Jews; a man of high rank and respectable character; a ruler of the Jews; a “councillor,” or member of the Sanhedrim, the highest court of judicature among the Jews; and a “master in Israel,” or expositor of the Jewish law. This man—though he appears at this period to have been entirely secular in his opinions and expectations respecting the Messiah, one of those who were looking not for a spiritual saviour, but for a temporal deliverer; not for a personal salvation from guilt and depravity and endless ruin, but for a national deliverance from the foreign yoke of the Romans—seems to have been a person of an inquisitive and candid mind.

It is not at all likely that he thought that this worker of miracles was, or even supposed that he might be, the Messiah, the promised deliverer, with regard to whose appearance all men’s minds were in a state of excited expectation. He must have looked for the Messiah, not from Nazareth, but from Bethlehem; not in the person of an obscure Galilean stranger, but in an acknowledged descendant of the ancient royal house of David.

But he had come to the conclusion that this young Nazarene was a divinely-commissioned messenger, and he wished to have some private conversation with him; no doubt, respecting that “kingdom of God,” or “of heaven,” which both John the Baptist and Jesus had declared to be “at hand,” just about to be established. Probably from a fear of involving himself in danger, either from his colleagues in the Sanhedrim, or from the Roman government, he seems to have wished that the interview should be as private as possible, and accordingly he “came to Jesus by night.”

He introduced himself by declaring his conviction, founded on the miracles which he had witnessed, that Jesus was a divine messenger:—“Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” Instead of permitting him to unfold

---

5 John ii. 14-23.
4 John iii. 1.
4 John iii. 2.
the purpose of his visit, Jesus, who "knew what was in man," and often answered men's thoughts rather than their words, replied in a manner which showed that he was acquainted with what was passing in his visitor's mind. Instead of showing himself flattered by the recognition of his divine mission by a man of such high rank and extensive influence, and endeavoring to secure his assistance in establishing his claims, he in effect states, that Nicodemus was completely mistaken on the subject about which he had come to converse, and that without an entire change in his mode of thinking, and in his mode of feeling too, he could never become a partaker of the privileges of the new order of things to be established by the Messiah, nor even distinctly apprehend their nature. "Except a man," any man, every man, Jew as well as Gentile, undergo a change not less extensive and thorough than that which a heathen does when he becomes a Jew, and which the Jews were accustomed to call a new birth—"except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."7

Nicodemus, if, as is not improbable, he had heard the preaching of John, and even submitted to his baptism, had not complied with the injunction "repent"—"change your views and expectations respecting the kingdom of God;" and therefore our Lord thus turns his attention to the nature and necessity of this "repentance,"8 this thorough inward change, under another, and still more impressive representation.

"The kingdom of God"—a phrase derived from a remarkable prediction of the prophet Daniel,9—a denotes the order of things to be established by the Messiah, an order of things rich in blessings to his subjects, both in this life and in that which is to come—both on earth and in heaven.

To "see" the kingdom of heaven, may signify either to apprehend the truth with respect to this order of things, or to enjoy its peculiar privileges. Both ideas may be included, as it is through apprehending the truth respecting the kingdom that men become partakers of its privileges. It is a phrase of similar import as to "see good," to "see death," to "see God," to "see of the travail of his soul."10

To be "born again," is equivalent to the undergoing of a thorough change, beneficial in its character, and the cause of which is not in the individual who undergoes it.11

---

7 John viii. 37; vii. 36, 61, 64, 65.
8 Dr. Campbell's notes deserves to be carefully perused.
9 John iii. 3. "Regnum Dei ' dicitur status ecclesiae, in quo ea soli Deo, ut regi, subjicatur."—Cicero.
10 metanoia.
11 Dan. ii. 44.
13 Erasmus Cyrilli opinionem sequutus adversarium arsothev male transtulit 'a supernis'. Ambigua est, fatores, illius significatio apud Graecos, sed Christian Hebraico cum Nicodemous loquentem esse stamus. Porro ille amphibleoges locus non fuisse, qua deceptus Nicodemus in secunda carnis nativitate pueriliter haesitat."—Calvin in loc.
14 See Note A.
Nicodemus, who thought that the Jews, because descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were to be the subjects of the Messiah, "the children of the kingdom," declared that this statement of Jesus seemed as strange to him as if he had said that a man of mature age must, in the literal sense of the terms, be born again. "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"  

It is not at all necessary that we should suppose Nicodemus to have been so stupid as to apprehend our Lord's obviously figurative language literally, or so profane as to attempt to turn into ridicule the words of one whom he acknowledged to be "a teacher come from God." It was customary among the Jews, as has been already hinted, when a heathen proselyte was admitted into "the commonwealth of Israel," to term the change he underwent a new birth. In Nicodemus' estimation, he and all Israelites, being the children of Abraham, were also "children of the kingdom." "The kingdom of heaven" was, in their reckoning, merely the more complete development of the theocratic system under which they already were; and he could not conceive what change was necessary to pass on them, to secure their sharing in its immunities and privileges. Had Jesus said, unless a Gentile be born again, "he cannot see the kingdom of heaven," this could have been understood. But the general declaration, "except a man," very probably so uttered as to convey the idea, except you, be born again (for it is plainly to this saying, and the equally indefinite one in the 7th verse, that our Lord refers, when he says, "marvel not that I said to thee" a councillor, a master in Israel, "ye" Jews "must be born again") was so utterly incongruous to all his notions, that he in effect says, "This new birth on the part of Jews, in order to their becoming participants of the honors and blessings of the Messiah's reign, seems to me as strange, and incredible, and useless a thing, as that a grown up-man should be again born of his mother."  

Jesus repeated the statement, adding some circumstances fitted to lead Nicodemus into correct views with regard to the nature of that change which he had represented as necessary for the enjoyment of the advantages of the Messiah's reign:—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter" into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou

---

14 John iii. 4.  
16 "Crescit severitas. Non potest intrare, nedum videre. Quod non natus est negue oculis, neque pedibus utitur."—Bengel.  
17 "Caro vera, sed et caro mera, spiritus expers, spiritui adversus."—Bengel.  
18 "Spiritus, proprius, nam huic non vento voluntas et vox est; et ex hoc nascitur, et qui ex hoc nascitur est, ut hic. Cum vento non immediate compararetur renatus, sed spiritus ipse."—Bengel.
hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This is equivalent to, "Strange as my statement may appear to you, it is indubitably true. The change I refer to is not one of external profession merely, but of inward character. Except a man not only make a profession of a change of mind, such as that made by those who submitted to John's baptism; but actually undergo that change of mind which is produced by the operation of the Holy Ghost, he cannot be a participant of the blessings of the Messiah's reign."b

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "Flesh" may here mean, 'human nature as depraved,' or 'human nature apart from supernatural influence.' In the first place it is equivalent to, 'Depraved man can have a son only in his own likeness. Man must become God's son to become fit for His holy kingdom.' In the second case it is equivalent to, 'As the natural descendants of Abraham, you may be, you are, possessors of external privileges; but you must be spiritually born, that is, in your inward views and feelings you must be radically changed, in order to your being fitted to enjoy spiritual privileges. The Jewish people are born of the flesh,—"of blood, of the will of the flesh, of the will of man," they are men, and may enjoy these external privileges, which it is competent for you as men to enjoy; but the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom; none but those who are spiritual can enjoy its privileges, and none can be spiritual without a thorough change being produced on their spiritual nature by "the Spirit," plainly the Spirit of God.c This seems wonderful to you; but that is no reason why you should not believe it.'

The words that follow have been usually thus interpreted:—
'You have had no experience of this spiritual change, and you have no distinct notion of the manner in which it is to be produced, or why it is necessary; but you never think of denying the existence of wind, which indeed proves itself by its effects, though it is invisible, and though its movements are regulated by laws over which you have no control, and of which you have little knowledge.'

This interpretation does not seem to be satisfactory, as it obliges us to give to the word which occurs so often in the passage, properly rendered "Spirit," an unusual sense, that of "wind." I am therefore inclined to keep to the ordinary sense of the word, Spirit, retaining the same meaning throughout, and to consider our Lord as saying, 'This spiritual new birth, which you find it so difficult to understand and believe, has the common character of spiritual operations. For example, in inspiration

---

59 John iii. 5-8.
60 "From the fact that Jesus says nothing more of the water, but proceeds to explain the operation of the Spirit, it is plain that the former was merely a point of departure to lead to the latter."—Neander.
51 John i. 13.  
62 πνεύμα.  
See Note B.  
See Note C.
THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM. [EXP. I.

(with the idea of which the Jews were familiar), "The Spirit breathes where he pleases:" you do not know the reason or manner of his commencing, or the reason or manner of his terminating, his operations on the inspired person, but you observe its effects, "you hear his voice," you have the revelation. "Thus it is with every one born of the Spirit." It is not a comparison of the operation of the wind and that of the Spirit. It is not a comparison at all. It is the statement of a general law, and an assertion that the case referred to is an exemplification of it. The change is an internal spiritual change. It is the work of the Spirit, who in this case, as usually, does not unfold the reason and manner of his operations, but manifests their effects.²²

Nicodemus, more and more perplexed, utterly incapable of reconciling these statements, as to complete internal change being necessary even on a Jew, in order to being a sharer of the privileges of the Messiah’s kingdom, with the notions he had from his infancy entertained respecting the design of the appearance of that long-promised Prince, exclaimed, "How can these things be?²² "And no wonder," as Neander says, "a dead, contracted, arrogant, scribe-theology, is always amazed at the mysteries of inward spiritual experience." Our Lord replied, "Art thou a master in Israel,²² and knowest not these²² things?²² These words seem to imply, that if he had studied the Old Testament Scriptures he might have known, that an internal change was necessary for enjoying the blessings of the Messiah’s kingdom. ‘Had you understood those Scriptures, with the letter of which, as ‘a master in Israel,’ you are so familiar, you must have known that that kingdom is to be spiritual in its nature, and that no man with the carnal conceptions common among the Jews, can understand its nature or enjoy its blessings.’ Our Lord probably refers to such passages as the following: ‘Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you.’ ‘Behold, the days come, saith the

²² This is the view taken by Bengel and Schoettgen, among others. Jansenius' note deserves to be quoted:—“‘Spiritus ubi vult spirat.’ Quod Cyrill, Chrysost, et Theophylact. intelligunt de vento, Ambros. vero et August. hic rectius de spirtu sancto, quem Greg. Born. sibi et multis Latinis secuti sunt; multi etiam Graeci procersere. Ventus enim nec vult, nec ignoratur, unde veniat, aut quo vadat. Itaque Spiritus nemo Sanctus de quo processerat ubi vult spirat, id est aflat quos voluerit, dividens singulis prout vult ut apostolus loquitur, variisque donis imbuen. Alludere enim videtur ad eos qui in veterini testamento variis modis acti sunt, sicut induit Gedeonem, Samsonem, Samuel, Prophetas. Et vocem ejus audis,’ id est, ejus effecta percepis exteriora, dum loquitor futura per prophetas, mysteria per sapientes, operatur mira par sanctos. ‘Sed nescis unde veniat aut quo vadat,’ id est interiorum accessum recensumque spiritus dum hominem vel contigit vel desert, non intelligent homines. ‘Sic est omnis qui natus est ex spirito,’ id est sic agitur cum eo qui renascitur ex Spiritu Sancto et aqua.”

²² John iii. 9.

²² "The teacher of Israel."—CAMPBELL.

²² "Est emphasis in voce raetra."—CALVIN.

²² John iii. 10.
Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Our Lord proceeded to assert the truth and importance of the statement he had made; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness." "We," not improbably includes John the Baptist, whose doctrine of repentance or change of mind, is entirely coincident with our Lord's doctrine of the new birth. Our Lord thus gently, but powerfully, exposed Nicodemus' inconsistency, q. d., 'You say that you know that I am a teacher sent from God, and you admit John to be a prophet; and yet when we tell you what we know to be true, instead of readily receiving it, you doubt, and hesitate, and object, and cavil. You are come to inquire of me concerning the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, but how will you ever receive the truth respecting it, so widely different from what you as a Jew expect, when you discover so much backwardness to receive the doctrine, comparatively level to your comprehension, that a great inward change, to be effected by the Spirit of God, is necessary to the enjoyment of its blessing, and indeed to the understanding of its nature?"

"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" q. d., 'Your behavior gives me little encouragement to go forward and unfold to you the truth about that kingdom of God, to inquire about which was the greatest purpose of your visit. For if you find so much difficulty in receiving what is comparatively an earthly thing, a doctrine respecting things level to ordinary apprehensions—the doctrine 'that carnal men, men occupied with sensible and present things, must undergo an inward change, a change of mind and heart, of conviction and feeling,—must become spiritual men to fit them for the reception of a spiritual Saviour, and the possession of a spiritual salvation,'—how shall you ever be brought to believe "the heavenly things," the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven, which is as remote, as heaven is from earth, from anything which could have entered into the mind of man; the doctrine of the manner in which spiritual blessings are to be obtained by the Messiah, the persons for whom they are to be obtained, and the manner in which they are to be invested with them?" 

The doctrine of our Lord here is that so plainly taught by his Apostles, that to the understanding and enjoyment of the blessings of the Christian salvation, a thorough change of nature, of

---

38 Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27  Jer. xxxi. 31-33.  39 John iii. 11.  40 John iii. 12.  4 See Note D.
mind and heart, is necessary. "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." As Christians, "we are God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus to good works."31

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven,"32 q. d., 'These heavenly things have never yet been clearly unfolded to men. No man has been in heaven to penetrate into these yet hidden counsels of God. "The Son of Man" (a name borrowed from the Old Testament Scriptures, by which the Messiah was indicated),—the Son of Man who had been in heaven "with God,"33 ay, whose residence as to his higher nature is even now in heaven, he alone can reveal them."34 Our Lord does not here say in direct terms that He was this Son of Man, though the words, and probably the manner, seem to have been intended to suggest this idea.

All this statement, infinitely important as it is, is properly speaking preliminary, and it is at the 12th verse that our Lord proceeds to tell of "heavenly things," to reveal the doctrine of the kingdom. To understand our Lord's words aright, we must never forget that he was teaching the true doctrine of the kingdom of heaven, of the deliverance to be accomplished by the Messiah, to a pharisaic Jew, who labored under the false notions common to his nation and sect.

Had Nicodemus been called on to state his opinion about the kingdom of heaven, he probably would have done it in some such terms as these:—Like David the king of Israel, the Son of Man, Messiah the Prince, shall be lifted up, exalted, to a glorious throne, that all the Jewish people may be delivered from degradation and slavery, and raised to dignity, wealth, and power: For Jehovah loves his peculiar people, and gives them that illustrious person, called in the prophets his own, his begotten, Son, to be their deliverer and ruler; and while he sends him to deliver Israel, he sends him also to punish and destroy the Gentile nations, and all Israelites shall enjoy the blessings of his reign, while all the Gentiles who do not submit to him, and become tributaries to the holy nation, shall fall before his triumphant arms.'

Hear, however, the true doctrine of the kingdom of God from him who comes to establish it. "Messiah shall indeed be lifted

31 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Eph. ii. 10. 32 John iii. 13.
32 John i. 1; vi. 62.
34 "א" ov has generally (e. g., by Erasm., Ernesti, &c.) been regarded as the particle of the imperfect—the same with ἕτερῳ. Now, although this is admissible, the connection here rather indicates the proper meaning of the present."—Thomeck. Dr. Campbell translates it "whose abode is in heaven."
* See Note E.
up, not however as David was exalted to the throne, but as the brazen serpent was elevated on a pole; and the purpose of his being thus lifted up is not Israel’s temporal deliverance, but men’s spiritual and everlasting salvation, that men might not perish but have eternal life; and the manner in which men are to obtain possession of this salvation, is not by being born Jews, or by submitting, if Gentiles, to the resistless arms of an earthly conqueror; it is by believing the truth about this deliverance. Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have eternal life: For God so loved, not Israel merely, but the world, that he gave—devoted to death as a victim—his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life: For God sent not his Son to destroy the Gentile nations, but to be the Saviour of men, without reference to their national descent; and all who believe the truth with respect to this spiritual Deliverer, shall be made partakers of his spiritual salvation, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; while all who do not believe the truth, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, shall be excluded from the blessings of his salvation, and be punished for their rejection of the heavenly messenger, and his heavenly message. Such, in substance, is our Lord’s statement; and if Nicodemus in any good measure apprehended its meaning, he must have been persuaded now of the truth of our Lord’s statement, “that a man must indeed be born again,” that even a Jew must undergo a very thorough change of mind and heart, to see, or to enter into, this kingdom.

Let us now examine our Lord’s doctrine of the kingdom of the Messiah somewhat more particularly. Let us attend to the account contained in the words before us,—

I. Of the Messiah—the only begotten Son of God—the Son of Man—sent by the Father.

II. Of the design of the Messiah’s mission: negatively, not to condemn the world; positively, that the world through him might be saved—that they should not perish, but have everlasting life.

III. Of the grand means by which this design was to be accomplished—by the Messiah’s being lifted up as the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness—by God’s giving him.

IV. Of the manner of obtaining a personal interest in the blessings thus procured—believing the Divine revelation respecting the Messiah.

V. Of the origin of this economy of mercy—the love of God to the world

VI. Of the guilt and punishment of those who refuse to avail themselves of this method of salvation.

Let us turn our attention to these most important topics in their order.

23 “Lifted up” is a feeble rendering for ὑψωτα; Campbell’s version is preferable—“placed on high.”
I.—OF THE MESSIAH.

Let us consider the account here given of the Messiah. He is described as the only begotten Son of God—as the son of Man—and as, Sent by the Father.

§ 1. The Son of God.

The Messiah is described as "the only begotten Son of God." This is an appellation of the Messiah borrowed from the 2d Psalm, which is obviously prophetic and Messianic. "I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." It must be plain to every reflecting mind, that such terms as those now under consideration, when applied to denote the relation subsisting between our Lord and his divine Father, must be understood in a figurative, or, more properly speaking, perhaps, an analogical sense. The principle of interpreting such phrases is a plain one. It is this, "That the terms are to be understood in their ordinary meaning as far as, and no farther than, we know from satisfactory sources they are not inapplicable to the subject in reference to which they are employed." "Son" is a word descriptive of a human relation with which we are familiar, and in its proper literal meaning suggests the following ideas:—Identity of nature—derivation of being—posteriority—inferiority—similarity—mutual affection. "Only begotten Son" suggests the idea of the individual being the only person standing in that relation to him who is termed the Father; and the idea also of that concentration of affection which naturally originates in this circumstance.

Now, what are we taught in reference to the Messiah, when he is called "the only begotten Son of God"? We are taught, in the first place, that he is of the same nature with his Father—that is, that he is God. The word Son suggests this idea, and much more strongly, when it has the epithet "only begotten" prefixed to it, or when he is called God's "own Son"—"the Son of himself"—"his proper Son," in contradistinction to those who receive this appellation merely from their being brought into a peculiar relation, formed to a peculiar character, and being the objects of a peculiar affection on the part of God, while God is the object of a peculiar affection on their part. When the Messiah is termed the only begotten Son of God, his proper divinity is asserted. He who is our Saviour is "the great God."

The ideas of derivation of being, posteriority, and inferiority, though naturally suggested by the name Son, are not to be considered as intended to be conveyed by that term when applied to the Messiah; for this plain reason, that these ideas are incompatible with the identity of nature which is the very first idea

30 John iii. 16.
suggested by the term, and which, from innumerable passages of Scripture, we know does belong to him.

A second truth in reference to the Messiah, suggested by his being called "the only begotten Son," is, that while He is of the same nature with the Father, He and the Father are in some respects distinct from each other. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father; though in reference to the possession of the one divine nature the Father and the Son are one.

A third important truth taught us by the Messiah being termed the Only-begotten of God, is, that he is the object of the supreme love of the Father. A father loves his son, especially his only son. The love of the First person of the Godhead to the Second is expressed by the love which a father has for his son, his only son. "The Father loves the Son." He knows his infinite excellence; and, if I may use the expression, which seems to imply a solecism, up to the infinite measure of his knowledge he loves him. This last idea seems obviously to have been intended to be brought before the mind in the passage under consideration, as what chiefly commends the love of God to the world, is that he gave his only Son to be their Saviour. These, then, are the truths respecting the Messiah taught us by his being termed "the only begotten Son of God."

§ 2. The Son of Man.

The Messiah is described as "the Son of Man." This is an appellation which our Lord employs more frequently than any other in speaking of himself, whether in private or public, in the midst of his friends or of his enemies. The phrase, taken by itself, seems just a Hebraism for "man:"—as in the 4th verse of the 8th Psalm, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Every one at all acquainted with the use of parallelism in Hebrew composition generally, and especially in Hebrew poetry, must see that "man," and "the son of man," are here equivalent expressions.

To understand its meaning, when used as an appellation of the Messiah, we must turn to a passage in the 80th Psalm, v. 17. "Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom thou madest strong for thyself;" the same person who is spoken of in the 15th verse under another of the figurative prophetic appellations of the Messiah—"the branch" which Jehovah had made strong for himself. In the passage generally referred to as the origin of the appellation, Daniel vii. 13, the reference, no doubt, is to the Messiah; but he is there spoken of, not as the Son of Man, but as "one like unto the Son of Man," or having the appearance of a man. While the expression, a son of man, as we have already remarked, is in itself just equivalent to man; the designation,
"the Son of Man," at once marks the Messiah, as truly a man, and at the same time, as distinguished from all other men. He is so distinguished in a variety of ways: as the perfect, the moral man—the representative man, the second Adam—the God-man, God manifest in the flesh—and the predicted man, the great subject of Old Testament prophecy."

§ 3. Sent by the Father.

The Messiah is farther described as "sent by the Father"—"God sent his Son." In the economy of human redemption, the Father sustains the majesty of the Divinity. He is the fountain of authority, the source of judgment and of mercy. He vindicates the honors of the Divine character, and asserts the rights of the Divine government; and he, too, dispenses pardon and salvation in a way consistent with the illustration of these honors, and the maintenance of these rights. While essentially the Father and the Son are one, in the economy of grace the Father is greater than the Son. He invests him with the character of Mediator and Saviour; he qualifies him for the discharge of its duties; he supports him under its labors and difficulties; and he rewards him for the accomplishment of the work given him to do.

When the Father is said to have sent the Son, the meaning is, that Jesus Christ was divinely authorized and commissioned to act as the Saviour of the world; to do and suffer all that was necessary for the attainment of the salvation of man, in accordance with the perfections of the Divine character, and the principles of the Divine government. Such is the view given us of the Messiah in these words of our Lord—a person uniting in himself the natures of God and man, and divinely appointed to effect the salvation of mankind.

II.—OF THE DESIGN OF THE MESSIAH'S MISSION.

The next topic to which our attention must be directed, is the design of the Messiah's mission. That is described in various ways, all of them having a reference to the false views of the design of Messiah's mission entertained by the Jews. It is described negatively: He was sent "not to condemn the world." Then it is described positively: First generally—"to save the world;" and then more particularly, to deliver them from the greatest possible evil—"that they might not perish;" and to raise them to the enjoyment of the greatest good—"that they might have everlasting life." Let us shortly consider the meaning of these various descriptions of the design of the Messiah's mission.

32 For a full illustration of this descriptive appellation, vide Exposition XXII
3 John iii. 17.
4 John iii. 17.
43 John iii. 15, 17.
§ 1. Negatively—not to condemn the world.

The design of the Messiah's mission was not to condemn or punish "the world." "The world" here is obviously to be understood, as the Jews used the term, of all mankind, with the exception of themselves—the holy nation. They expected that the Messiah was to deliver the people of Israel, and to punish and destroy the Gentile nations. The deliverance of Israel, and the punishment of the nations, were in their minds closely connected, and both were to be the work of the Messiah. One of their principal doctors, explaining the illustrious prophecy in the 49th chapter of Genesis, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and to him shall the gathering of the people be," says, 'The sense seems to me to be—"The rod of the oppressor shall not depart from Judah, till his Son come, who shall overthrow the nations, and break them in pieces, and make war on them all with the edge of the sword."' Another Rabbi says, "When the Messiah comes, he shall be as the morning light to Israel, but he shall be as night to the nations of the earth." Such views seem to have been universal among the Jews at the time of our Lord's appearance, as they are still among their unbelieving descendants.

§ 2. Positively—to save the world.

Now, says our Lord, the design of the Messiah's mission is not the punishment of the Gentile nations—it is not the punishment of men at all. He comes not to punish, but to save; and to save, not Israelites merely, but men of every country, and people, and tongue, and nation. He is sent "to save the world;" to deliver mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, from the evils under which they are groaning. He comes, not to bring evils on men, but to remove evils from them—to deliver them from ignorance, and error, and guilt, and depravity, and wretchedness, in all their various forms.

(1.) That the world may not perish.

But the design of the Messiah's mission is more particularly described: he comes that mankind "may not perish,"—that they may be delivered from the greatest of all evils. The evils, the removal of which his mission contemplated, are not the external and temporary evils which press on one nation, or even on the whole race, but the spiritual and eternal, and therefore otherwise irreparable, evils, to which all mankind are liable. Man, whether Jew or Gentile, is a sinner. He has broken God's law. He has incurred God's displeasure. He is a depraved as well as a guilty creature; "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance
that is in him," sunk in ignorance and error, and moral pollution
of every description; and because he is guilty and depraved, he
is miserable, exposed to numerous external evils, and destitute
of all real inward happiness. And this state of things, so far as
man's own exertions are concerned, so far as the exertions of the
whole created universe are concerned, is irreparable. He must
sink deeper and deeper in guilt, and depravity, and misery. If
the ordinary course of the divine government be maintained, he
must be "punished with everlasting destruction from the pres-
ence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." His im-
mortality of being must be an immortality of unmixed, intolerable
wretchedness. To deliver men—not men of one particular nation,
but men of every nation—from this tremendous aggregation of
evils, this state of perdition, was the design of the Messiah's
mission.

(2.) That the world may have eternal life.

But mere deliverance does not form the sole purpose of the
mission of the Son of God. He comes that men might have
everlasting life. "Life," though not directly signifying enjoy-
ment, according to the Hebrew idiom conveys more strongly
than any other word the idea of happiness, as "death" does that
of misery. Everlasting life is of course ever-during happiness.
The happiness of a being like man, consists in the Divine favor,
and image, and fellowship; in knowing God, in loving God, in
being loved by God, in knowing that we are loved by God; in
venerating God, trusting in God; having our mind confirmed to
his mind, our wishes subjected to his pleasure, thinking along
with him, willing along with him, choosing what he chooses,
seeking and finding enjoyment in what he finds enjoyment. This
is life. This is happiness. And the never-ending continuance
of this is everlasting life. To obtain this kind of happiness for
men, for men of every nation under heaven, and to secure the
permanent enjoyment of it during the whole eternity of their
being,—this is the great and glorious object of the divinely-com-
missioned God-man—the Messiah.

In three most important points, this design differed from what
the Jews considered as the design of the Messiah's mission. Pun-
ishment was not at all the object of the Messiah's coming. The
deliverance which he came to effect was not secular, but spiritual;
and it was intended, not for the nation of the Jews exclusively,
but for mankind generally. The object of his mission was purely
merciful. His salvation had a direct reference to the soul and
eternity; and as this salvation was universally needed, so it
was intended for mankind of "every kindred, and people, and
tongue, and nation."

2 Thess. i. 9.
III.—OF THE MEANS BY WHICH THE DESIGN OF THE MESSIAH'S MISSION WAS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED:—FIGURATIVELY, BY HIS BEING LIFTED UP AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS; LITERALLY, BY HIS BEING GIVEN BY GOD FOR AND TO MANKIND.

We now proceed to attend to the grand means by which this benevolent design of the Messiah's mission was to be accomplished. The Son of man was "to be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."44 "God gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life."45

Here, as in the former case, the truth is exhibited in opposition to the false views generally entertained by the Jews. They expected that the Messiah was to accomplish the deliverance of Israel, and the destruction of the nations, by being exalted or "lifted up:" elevated first to the throne of David his father, and then to the throne of the world. 'Now,' says our Lord, 'Messiah shall be lifted up; but he shall be lifted up in a very different way from what you expect. He shall be lifted up, not as David or Solomon was, to the throne of Israel, but "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."' There is a striking analogy between the way in which the Messiah shall obtain spiritual and eternal salvation for mankind, and the way in which the serpent-stung Israelites in the wilderness were cured of the otherwise incurable distemper which they had brought on themselves by their unbelief and disobedience."46

What we are to understand by the Messiah's being "lifted up as the brazen serpent in the wilderness," we need be at no loss to discover. "And I," said our Lord on another occasion, "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." "This," says the evangelist, in an explanatory note, "This he said, signifying what death he should die."47 "The salvation of mankind is to be obtained by the Messiah's dying an accursed death, dying as the victim for human transgressions; and by his being exhibited, held up, as the slain victim for human transgressions: that is, by the truth respecting his vicarious and expiatory sufferings being made known to men. Oh, how different was this from anything Nicodemus looked for! He probably expected, with most of his countrymen, that the Messiah was to "abide for ever,"—was not to die at all. How must he have been astonished, if he understood our Lord's words, to be told that the Messiah was not only to die, but to die the death of a felonious slave!'

44 John iii. 14, 16.
45 Neander, and many other good interpreters, think that Christ's words end at verse 16, and that what follows is the illustrative statement of the evangelist. The decision of this question has no bearing on the interpretation of the passage.
46 Numb. xxv. 4-9.
47 John xii. 32, 33.
Let us, however, look a little more closely into the mystery of Divine wisdom and mercy: Mankind are to be saved by the divine incarnate Saviour, suffering and dying as a victim for sin—dying on the cross. The same idea that is suggested by the expression, “The Son of man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” is conveyed by the words, “God gave his Son.” Some interpreters consider these words as equivalent to, “God graciously appointed his Son to be the saviour of the world.” In that case, however, it would have been said that he gave him to the world, not merely he gave him. It is plainly parallel to, “The Son of man must be lifted up;” the lifting up of the Son of man, and the giving of the Son of God, being but different descriptions of the same great event.

The meaning of the phrase is best illustrated by parallel passages:—“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”44 “And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.”45 “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.”46 “If we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”44 “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”47 “Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”48 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”49

The meaning of the words, God gave his Son, then, is, ‘God devoted his Son to death, as a victim for the sins of men,’ and the first truth with regard to the manner in which the benevolent design of the Messiah’s mission was to be gained, taught us here by our Lord, is, that it was to be the result of his submitting to death, as the victim for the sins of mankind.

This, though not revealed so as to be generally, if at all, understood till the prediction was accomplished, is, now that the light of fulfilment has shone upon them, the obvious meaning of the following ancient oracles, which must have been very mysterious to the saints under a former dispensation, and into the meaning of which, even the prophets themselves would find it necessary to “search diligently.” “God made to meet on the head of his righteous servant the iniquities of us all, and exaction was made, and he became answerable; and he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was on him, and he made his soul an offering for sin:

44 John vi. 51. 45 Luke xxi. 19. 46 Gal. i. 4.
41 Rom. iv. 24, 25. 42 Rom. viii. 32. 48 1 Tim. ii. 6.
44 Titus ii. 14.
and he bare the sins of many." "The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself." 58

The same doctrine is often taught by our Lord's apostles, and is, indeed, the grand peculiarity of the Christian faith:—"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." "He redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse in our room, as it is written, 'cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' " "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "He gave himself for us a sacrifice and an offering, that he might bring us to God." "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace." "He hath reconciled us in the body of his flesh through death." 59

There is another important truth respecting the means by which the benevolent design of the Messiah's mission was to be accomplished, conveyed by the words of our Lord:—"The Son of Man must be lifted up, as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness." The brazen serpent was not only lifted up on a pole, but exhibited, that all the Israelites might look at it and be healed. In like manner the Son of Man must not only be lifted up on the cross, but he must be exhibited, as lifted up on the cross, that all men may believe in him and be saved." The knowledge and belief of the truth, with respect to the atonement, is in ordinary circumstances as necessary to the accomplishment of the design of the Messiah's mission, in the case of individuals, as the atonement itself, and hence the truth about the atonement must be published to all nations.

Here, as in the former case, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." "By his knowledge, shall my righteous servant justify many." "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." 58

Here, too, the apostolic testimony concurs with the declaration of the ancient prophets:—"The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation." "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, whether Jew or Greek, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." 59

These are the grand means by which the benevolent design of our Lord's mission, the salvation of mankind, was to be accomplished.

There is a peculiarity in our Lord's language on this subject, that deserves to be noticed before we conclude. He does not

59 1 Cor. xv. 3. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Eph. v. 2; i. 7. Col. i. 21, 22.
58 "'Exaltari,' significat collocari in loco edito et excelsa, ut omnium aspectui pateat: id factum est Evangelii predicacione."—Calvin in loc.
59 Rev. xix. 10. Isa. lii. 11; xiv. 22. Zech. xii. 10.
60 Rom. i. 16. 1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2. Gal. vi. 14.
say the Son of Man shall be lifted up, but “the Son of Man must be lifted up.” It is becoming or necessary that the Son of Man be lifted up in order to the gaining of these ends. Some would refer this to the necessity of the death of Christ for the fulfilment of Old Testament predictions. But there is certainly more in it than this. The expiation of sin was necessary in order to its pardon; the death of the incarnate Son was necessary in order to this expiation; the faith of the truth with regard to this expiatory death is necessary, in order to our participation in the salvation procured by it; and the exhibition of Christ crucified,—in other words, the preaching of the Gospel,—is necessary in order to this faith. This we shall have an opportunity of showing more at length by and by.

IV.—OF THE MANNER OF OBTAINING THE BLESSINGS PROCURED BY THE MESSIAH: FIGURATIVELY, BY LOOKING AT HIM; LITERALLY, BY BELIEVING IN HIM.

Let us proceed, now, to consider our Lord’s statement, respecting the manner in which individuals are to obtain a personal interest in the blessings procured by the Messiah. That is contained in these words, “Whosoever believeth in him” shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. He that believeth is not condemned.”

The Jews expected that, on the part of their nation, nothing was to be necessary to secure a share in the blessings of the Messiah’s kingdom, beyond their descent from Abraham; and that in order to any of the Gentiles participating with them in these blessings, they must submit to the Messiah’s conquering arms, and become proselytes to the Jewish religion. In opposition to these false views, our Lord states, that it was only by believing in him, the Messiah, as “lifted up,” as “given by the Father,” that any Jew could become a partaker of the blessings of his salvation, and that every Gentile who should thus believe in him, should become a partaker of these blessings.

The allusion to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness, seems intended to illustrate not only the means by which the

60 “Diserte exprimere voluit, quamvis ad mortem videamur nati, certam tamen offerri liberationem in Christi fide, ita mortem que aliqui nobis imminet minime timendam esse. Et universalem notam apposuit, tum ut promiscue omnes at vitae participationem invitet, tum ut praecedit excusationem inerudilis. Eodem etiam pertinent nomen Mundi quo prius usus est. Tametsi enim in mundo nihil reperietur Del favore dignum, se tamen toti mundo propitium ostendet, quum sine exceptione omnes ad fidem Christi vocest, quae nihil aliud est quam ingressus in vitam.”—Calvin in loc.

61 “He intended expressly to state, that though we appear to have been born to death, undoubted deliverance is offered to us by the faith of Christ; and, therefore, that we ought not to fear death, which otherwise hangs over us. And he has employed the universal term ‘whatsoever,’ both to invite all indiscriminately to partake of life, and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. Such is also the import of the word ‘world,’ which he formerly used; for, though nothing will be found in ‘the world,’ that is worthy of the favor of God, yet he shows himself to be reconciled to the whole world, when he invites all men, without exception, to the faith of Christ, which is nothing else than an entrance into life.”—Rev. W. Pringle’s Translation.

62 John iii. 15, 16, 18.
Messiah was to obtain salvation for men; but also the manner in which men, as individuals, were to be interested in that salvation. The analogical illustration, when fully brought out, seems to be this: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that whosoever of the diseased Israelites looked at it might not die but live, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever of the ruined race of man believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." Looking at the brazen serpent, may have appeared to the Israelites a paradoxical cure for the serpent's bite, and such a paradox does the salvation of men, through faith in a suffering Messiah, appear even to the wisest of men untaught by the Spirit.

There is no difficulty in apprehending the meaning of the statement. "Every serpent-stung Israelite, who looked on the elevated brazen serpent, was healed;" and there should be as little difficulty in apprehending the meaning of the statement, "Every sinner who believes in the Messiah, as lifted up, shall be saved." We all know what it is to look; and we all know, at least we all may know, what it is to believe.

"To believe," when used in reference to a person, is to give credit to him, to count true what he says. To believe, when used in reference to a statement, is to give credit to it, to reckon it true. It has been supposed by some, that there is an important distinction between believing a person, and believing in a person—believing a thing, and believing in that thing; but a careful attention to the use of the phrases in Scripture, will lead to a different conclusion. To believe in Moses, is either to believe that there was such a person as Moses, and that what is recorded of him in the Bible is true; or to believe what Moses, as a divine messenger, has revealed. To believe in a future state, is just to believe that there is a future state. To believe in the Son of Man lifted up, to believe in the only begotten Son of God sent and given by the Father, is just to count true what is stated to us in the Gospel, respecting the Only-begotten of God being devoted to death as a victim for the transgressions of men, according to the most benignant appointment of his divine Father."

The statement of our Lord, then, is, "That it is by believing the truth on this subject that men obtain the blessings of his salvation." This is one of the grand peculiarities of the christian method of salvation, and it is very frequently brought before our minds in the New Testament. I will quote a few passages where it is very distinctly taught, that it is by believing that men obtain possession of the blessings of the christian salvation. "He that believeth on the Son"—that is, who has received his testimony—"hath everlasting life." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." "I am the bread of

---

"See Dr. Stewart's "Hints on the Nature and Influence of Faith."

"John iii. 36.

"John v. 24."
life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 45 "It is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life. 46 "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believ ing ye might have life through his name. 47 "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not have been justified by the law of Moses. 48 "To him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him should receive the remission of sins. 49 "What must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. 50 "The righteousness of God—that is, the Divine method of justification—"is upon," takes effect on, "all them that believe." 51 "By grace are ye saved through faith. 52 Every one, then, who believes the truth respecting Jesus Christ, God's Son, dying as a victim for the sins of mankind, is interested in the salvation which he has procured for men. He is no longer in a state of condemnation; he receives the remission of his sins; he shall never come into condemnation; he has peace and joy in believing; his heart is purified by believing; he is sanctified by faith which is in Christ; and not turning back by unbelief unto perdition, he believes to the salvation of the soul, which he in due time receives as the end of his believing.

The connection between the faith of the Gospel, and the enjoyment of the Christian salvation, is thus very clearly stated in Scripture; but clearly as it is stated, it is very generally misapprehended. Men think of this faith of the Gospel as some difficult work which must be performed by them, to give them a claim on God for the blessings of salvation, instead of thinking of it as that which, in the very nature of things, is necessary in order to their possessing these blessings. That conformity of mind and heart to God; that inward peace and joyful hope, in which the Christian salvation, so far as it can be enjoyed in the present world, chiefly consists, cannot, from the very nature of the case, be obtained, but by the faith of the Gospel; and, on the other hand, the faith of the Gospel cannot exist without conveying these blessings into the heart.

It is not on account of our faith that God saves us; it is through means of our faith. Our believing, and our being saved, are not to be considered so distinct, as that the first must be finished before the other can be enjoyed. It is in believing that we are saved; and the measure of our enjoyment of the Christian salvation depends on the extent of our knowledge, and the firmness of our faith in the Gospel.

The blessings of salvation are thus freely presented to all to
whom the Gospel comes; and nothing is necessary to secure participation in these blessings, but the faith of the truth; and that is necessary, not as a meritorious condition, but as an indispensable means. It is just as if a rich feast were presented to a famishing multitude, and it were said, 'He that eats of this feast shall be relieved from the pangs of hunger, and shall be refreshed and strengthened.' The eating is obviously not the meritorious condition; but it is, from the nature of things, the indispensable means of relief from hunger and exhaustion, and of the enjoyment of the refreshing and invigorating effects of the prepared viands. Many seem to think that the declaration, that whosoever believes shall be saved, is a kind of limitation of the Gospel offer. But it is just such a limitation as that which we have referred to, 'Whosoever eats shall be satisfied.' To say, that whosoever believeth shall be saved, is just to say, that the guiltiest of the guilty, and the vilest of the vile, is welcome to salvation, and shall assuredly obtain salvation, if he will but receive it in the only way in which, from the nature of the case, it can be received—in the faith of the truth respecting Jesus Christ, the incarnate only begotten Son of God, as the Saviour, the only Saviour, the all-sufficient Saviour.

This is a most important truth; and it derives striking illustration from the comparison between the manner in which the serpent-stung Israelites were cured, and the way in which sin-ruined men are saved. "Every one bitten," says Jehovah, "Every one bitten, who looks on the brazen serpent, shall live;" and the sacred historian informs us, that "if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." However frequently he had been bitten by the serpents, however far advanced the disease was in its progress towards a fatal issue, if he looked to the brazen serpent he recovered. In like manner, however guilty, however depraved, however wretched—however numerous, however aggravated, may have been his violations of the Divine law—whosoever believes the plain, well-accredited testimony of God respecting full salvation through the death of the Just One in the room of the unjust, "shall not perish, but have everlasting life." There is no exception. The vilest miscreant on the face of the earth, the most degraded, and despised, and miserable of mankind, believing in Christ, shall be "saved in Him with an everlasting salvation."

No holy qualification is required to warrant the sinner to apply to the Saviour. It is because he is guilty and miserable, that the salvation is provided. The more guilty, the more miserable, he is obviously the more necessitous; and he is assuredly not the less welcome. Desert of anything but destruction is here out of the question altogether. He who understands and believes the Gospel, must see with equal clearness, that any just claim of merit to the blessings of salvation, on the part of the sinner, is impossible, and that it is unnecessary. The invitation is, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."
The promise, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." 58

No sin but the sin of unbelief bars the sinner's way to the Saviour. Even the sin against the Holy Ghost is rather an apparent than a real exception. If the sinner who hears the Gospel is condemned, it is "because he will not believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The efficacy of this method of obtaining a personal interest in the blessings of the Christian salvation, has been tried in apparently very desperate cases. Paul was a blasphemer, a persecutor, a first-rate sinner; but through the belief of the faithful saying, Paul obtained salvation. 59 The Corinthian Christians had some of them been absolute monsters of wickedness; but they were "washed, they were sanctified, they were justified through the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Instances of the efficacy of the faith of the truth in saving sinners, happily are not wanting in our own day; and it will, till the conclusion of the present order of things, be a glorious truth, receiving constantly new accessions of illustration and evidence, that whosoever believeth in Christ Jesus crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

The having long-neglected, or even the having despised, this only means of salvation, does not bar the ungrateful criminal from now obtaining the saving of his soul through believing. It is possible, that some of the Israelites, when they heard of the plan of cure, through the elevation of the brazen serpent, made light of it, hoping for a recovery by the use of ordinary means, and cherishing infidel doubts as to the possibility of their obtaining any good from looking at a brazen serpent; if any of these, finding the disease gaining on them, raised a believing eye to the divinely-erected standard of salvation, as the only means of escaping death, we have no reason to doubt but that the ordinary healing influence would have gone forth. And so it is here. However long men have continued in unbelief, and impenitence, and sin, however "stout-hearted" they are, and however "far from righteousness," still it is "the accepted time," still it is "the day of salvation," and we proclaim to him who has oftenest turned a deaf ear to the voice of mercy, "to-day, after so long a time, if thou wilt hear his voice, harden not thy heart." "Believe" now "in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." For it is still true, "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." 59

V.—Of the Primary Source of this Economy of Salvation, The Love of God to the World.

Let us now proceed to consider the primary source of this economy of salvation, as stated by our Lord. The love of

57 Rev. xxii. 17. John vi. 37.  
58 56ος. 1 Tim. i. 13-16. 1 Cor. vi. 9-11.  
God—the love of God to the world. "God so loved the world."

The advocates for the doctrine of the atonement—the doctrine that the death of the incarnate Only-begotten of God, as the victim for the sins of men, was necessary in order to the Divine mercy manifesting itself to sinners in the communication of pardon and salvation, consistently with the righteousness of his character and law; the advocates of this doctrine, have often been accused of holding that the interposition of the divine Son was necessary to produce in the bosom of his divine Father, a disposition to pity; and to save, man; and, as it has been forcibly put, "that the compassion of God rather than the souls of men, was the purchase made by the incarnate Son, when he laid down his life as a ransom." It has been said that they represent the Divinity, as a being of resentments so fierce that nothing could mitigate them, but the tears and prayers, the blood and death, of his own Son.

It must be acknowledged, that the doctrine of the atonement has not always been taught in "the words which become sound doctrine," and that language has sometimes been employed on the subject, by good men, which seemed to intimate rather that Christ died, in order that God might be induced to pity and save man, than that he died, because God pitied man, and was determined to save him.

The doctrine of the atonement, as taught in Scripture, however, lays no foundation for such conclusions. "God," according to its declarations, "is love," perfect in benignity, "rich in mercy." In forming conceptions on this subject, when we err, it is by defect, not by excess. Our ideas fall beneath, instead of rising above, the truth.

There was, there could be, no discordance among the persons of the Godhead, in reference to the salvation of man. The will of the Godhead is, and necessarily must be, one. We are not for a moment to suppose, that the Father and the Spirit were disinclined to the salvation of man; and that the Son became incarnate, and suffered, and died, to induce them to comply with his disposition to show favor to the guilty and ruined race. The wondrous economy of redemption is the fruit of that sovereign benignity which equally belongs to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. In that economy, the Father sustains the majesty of Divinity. All is represented as originating in him. But his holiness is the holiness of the Divinity; his justice, the justice of the Divinity; his love, the love of the Divinity.

Christ did not die that God might love man; he died because God loved man. "God commendeth his love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his

"John iii. 16.—"Primam salutis nostrae causam et quasi fontem aperit Christus."—Calvin.
only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The atonement is thus not the cause, but the effect, of the love of God. It is the wonderful expedient devised by infinite wisdom, to render the manifestation of sovereign kindness to a guilty race, not merely consistent with, but gloriously illustrative of, the righteousness of the Divine character, as displayed both in the requisitions and sanctions of that holy law which man had violated.

That law is not an arbitrary institution. It is simply the embodiment of those principles which are necessary to the happiness of intelligent, responsible beings, while they continue what they are, and God continues what he is. That law originates not in sovereignty, but in that union of perfect wisdom, holiness, and benignity, which forms the moral character of God; and to uphold that law is a necessity of his nature; he cannot but require truth, righteousness, and benignity of man. This law had been violated by man. The consequence was, man became liable to the dreadful consequences of transgression. He had sinned, and he deserved to die. The hopeless, the everlasting destruction of the sinner, must have seemed to every created mind the necessary result of this state of things. But “God who is rich in mercy,” and infinite in wisdom, devised and executed a plan, by which the honor of the law might be vindicated, and yet the violators of that law pardoned and saved; by which the evil of sin might be exhibited to the intelligent universe in a light far stronger than if the whole race of man had perished for ever, and yet an innumerable multitude of that self-ruined race be rescued from destruction, and “saved with an everlasting salvation.”

The only begotten Son, in glad compliance with the merciful appointment of his Father, having taken the place of the guilty; and in their nature, and in their room, yielded a perfect obedience, in circumstances of the greatest temptation and difficulty, to that law which they had violated, thus showing the reasonableness and excellence of all its requisitions; and submitted in their room to such sufferings as, in the estimation of infinite wisdom and righteousness, more signally honored the sanctionary part of the Divine law, than the everlasting punishment of sinful men could have done;—“God hath set forth his Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus;” “a just God, and a Saviour.”

Having thus endeavored to show that the atonement of Christ is not the procuring cause of God’s love to sinners, but the means which God in his wisdom devised for rendering the display of his love consistent with his righteousness, I go on to illustrate

15 Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 9, 10. 17 Rom. iii. 25, 26. Isa. xlv. 21.
somewhat more particularly, the great truth upon which, in this part of the subject, I wish to fix your attention: that the whole of that wondrous economy of salvation unfolded by our Lord, proceeds from the love of God, from the love of God to the world.

§ 1. The love of God, the origin of the plan of salvation.

We may begin with asking in what could the plan of salvation originate but in love,—pure sovereign benignity? Contemplate the attributes and relations of God, and then contemplate the character and circumstances of man. Look first at the bestower, and then look at the recipients of salvation, and say, from what it could flow but from spontaneous kindness?

Look upwards to Divinity and say, if anything but sovereign kindness could have actuated him in devising and executing the plan of human salvation? It could not be strict justice that influenced him: that would have led to the infliction of punishment, not the conferring of benefits; that would have led to man's destruction, not his salvation. Selfish considerations are, from the absolute independence of the Divine Being, entirely out of the question. The sources of the Divine happiness, like the sources of the Divine excellence, are in the Divine nature. No creature can either advance or diminish the happiness of God. Our gratitude, obedience, and praise for the benefits of salvation, cannot increase his felicity. "Our goodness extendeth not to him." "Can a man be profitable to God, as he who is wise is profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous; or is it gain to him that thou makest thy way perfect?" And if this wondrous plan of salvation could not originate in a selfish desire for our services and praises, it could as little originate in a selfish fear of our enmity, reproaches, or rebellious attempts against his government. The very idea is as absurd as it is blasphemous. "Will he reprove thee, for fear of thee? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; but if thou sinnest what doest thou against him; or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou to him?" He can easily render all the attempts which men and devils can make against his government, but so many occasions for the display of his wisdom, his power, and his righteousness. Had the whole sinning race of man been consigned to endless perdition, would he not have gathered through eternity a revenue of praise from their sufferings, as illustrations of his immaculate holiness, his inflexible justice, his inviolable faithfulness, without any disparagement of his benignity, which would indeed have been manifested in their interminable sufferings, as in those of the "angels who kept not their first estate;" such infusions being direct means of upholding that law, which is as necessary to the happiness of his

---

62 Ps. xvi. 2. Job xxii. 2, 3. 47 Job xxxv. 6, 8. 42 Jude 6.
intelligent creatures, as it is to the honor of his character, or the stability of his throne?

When we thus look upward to God, the giver of the blessings of the christian salvation, we are constrained to say, 'Nothing but love could influence him in bestowing them.' And when we direct our thoughts to the recipients of these benefits, we are conducted by a very short process of reasoning to the same conclusion. There is nothing in the situation or character of man which can lead us to trace blessings conferred on him to anything but pure benignity.

He is a creature, and therefore, strictly speaking, he can have no claim on God. It was of God's free sovereign pleasure to create him, or not to create him; and when he created him, it was of his sovereign pleasure that he made him a living, thinking, immortal being, rather than an irrational brute, or an inanimate clod. As a creature, man, in common with all creatures, must be a pensioner on Divine bounty for every blessing. But though in no case could man have had a claim on God, had he continued what God made him, an innocent, a holy being, we may safely affirm that the equity as well as the benignity of God, would have secured for him everything necessary to true and permanent happiness.

But man is a sinner. He is guilty of innumerable violations of that holy law, one transgression of which deserves everlasting destruction; and he is not, as the economy of grace finds him, a penitent sinner. No, he is a hardened rebel, "going on in his trespasses," receding farther and farther from God. When God looks down from heaven on the children of men, what does he see? "They have all gone aside, they have altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."55

What could induce God to spare, what could induce him to save such beings? Holiness, justice, wisdom, had they not in the Divine nature been conjoined with infinite benignity, would have suggested anything rather than "thoughts of good" towards such a polluted, rebellious, worse than useless, mischievous, class of creatures; a set of beings whom a mere act of will could have annihilated, or punished with "everlasting destruction." What but love, pure sovereign compassion, could have said, "Deliver these from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom."56

As it is thus plain, that nothing but love could have been the source of the economy of human salvation, so it is equally evident, that that love must have had "a height and a depth, a length and a breadth," that exceeds the computing powers of created intelligences. Well may we with the apostle stand in adoring wonder and exclaim, "Behold what manner of love!" "Herein" —"herein" indeed—"is love;"57 as if all the other displays of Divine benignity were unworthy of regard when compared with this.

There are two ways by which we naturally measure the strength

55 Psal. xiv. 2, 3. 54 Job xxxiii. 24. 52 1 John iii. 1; iv. 10.
of a benevolent affection: the intrinsic value of the benefits bestowed on the objects of it; and the expense, labor, and suffering, at which these benefits are obtained for them. Let us apply, or rather attempt to apply, these measures to the case before us, and we shall be obliged to confess, that this love "passes knowledge."

The salvation which is by Christ, includes deliverance from numerous, varied, immense, unending evils. It is deliverance from "perishing." It includes also restoration to numerous, varied, immense, unending blessings. It is the enjoyment of "eternal life." It is deliverance from evil, moral and physical, in all its forms, and in all its degrees, for ever and ever; and the possession of a happiness suited to, and filling to an overflow, all our capacities of enjoyment during the whole eternity of our being. When we think of the number, and variety, and value of the heavenly and spiritual blessings bestowed on us, we must acknowledge that it is "great love" wherewith God loves us; when we reflect on the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, we are constrained to say, the mercy which bequeathes it, "is abundant mercy." This measure we can but very inadequately apply. Only the hopelessly lost know what the salvation of Christ delivers from. Only the blessed in heaven know what the salvation of Christ exalts to. Even they know these things imperfectly. Eternity will be ever disclosing new horrors in the one, new glories in the other.

If we attempt to apply the second principle, we soon arrive at the same result. To obtain these blessings, the Son of God must become incarnate, and obey, and suffer, and die. "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up in our room as the victim for our transgressions. He made him who knew no sin, a sin-offering in our room. He made to meet on him the iniquities of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; and he was wounded for our iniquities, bruised for our transgressions, and the chastisement of our peace was on him. He who was in the form of God, and who thought it no robbery to be equal with God; made himself of no reputation, took on him the form of a servant, and humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross." If it was a strong proof of the regard of Abraham to God, that he did not withhold his son, his only son, from him, how shall we estimate the love of God to a lost world, which led him to give his own, his only begotten, his beloved Son, that he might give himself, a sacrifice and an offering for man's salvation!

§ 2. The love of God to the world the origin of the plan of salvation.

There is another idea to which I wish for a little to turn your attention on this part of the subject. The love in which the economy of salvation originates, is love to the world. "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son." The term

Rom. viii. 32. 2 Cor. v. 21. Isa. liii. 5, 6. Phil. ii. 6-8.
"world," is here just equivalent to mankind. It seems to be used by our Lord with a reference to the very limited and exclusive views of the Jews. They thought God loved them, and hated all the other nations of mankind. These were their own feelings, and they foolishly thought that God was altogether such an one as themselves. They accordingly expected that the Messiah was to come to deliver Israel, and to punish and destroy the other nations of the earth. But "God's ways were not their ways, nor his thoughts their thoughts. As the heavens are high above the earth, so were his ways above their ways, and his thoughts above their thoughts."

Some have supposed that the word "world" here, is descriptive, not of mankind generally, but of the whole of a particular class, that portion of mankind who, according to the Divine purpose of mercy, shall ultimately become partakers of the salvation of Christ. But this is to give to the term a meaning altogether unwarranted by the usage of Scripture. There can be no doubt in the mind of a person who understands the doctrine of personal election, that those who are actually saved are the objects of a special love on the part of God; and that the oblation of the Saviour had a special design in reference to them. But there can be as little doubt, that the atonement of Christ has a general reference to mankind at large; and that it was intended as a display of love on the part of God to our guilty race. Not merely was the atonement offered by Christ Jesus sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, but it was intended and fitted to remove out of the way of the salvation of sinners generally, every bar which the perfections of the Divine moral character, and the principles of the Divine moral government, presented. Without that atonement, no sinner could have been pardoned in consistency with justice. In consequence of that atonement, every sinner may be, and if he believe in Jesus certainly shall be, pardoned and saved. Through the medium of this atonement, the Divine Being is revealed to sinners, indiscriminately, as gracious and ready to forgive; and the invitations and promises warranting men to confide in Christ for salvation, are addressed to all, and are true and applicable to all without exception or restriction.

The revelation of mercy made in the Gospel, refers to men as sinners, not as elect sinners. Their election, or their non-election, is something of which, when called on to believe the Gospel, they are necessarily entirely ignorant, and with which they have nothing to do. "The kindness and love of God toward man," the Divine philanthropy, is revealed. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." He appears in the revelation of mercy as the God who "has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; who willeth all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." "The grace of God" revealed in the Gospel "brings sal-

87 Isa. 1v. 8, 9.
vation to all," without exception, who in the faith of the truth will receive it."

I am persuaded that the doctrine of personal election is very plainly taught in Scripture; but I am equally persuaded that the minister misunderstands that doctrine who finds it, in the least degree, hampering him in presenting a full and a free salvation as the gift of God to every one who hears the Gospel; and that the man abuses the doctrine who finds in it anything which operates as a barrier in the way of his receiving, as a sinner, all the blessings of the Christian salvation, in the belief of the truth. Indeed, when rightly understood, it can have no such effect. For what is that doctrine, but just this, in other words,—"It is absolutely certain that a vast multitude of the race of man shall be saved through Christ?" And it is as certain, that if any one of those to whom that salvation is offered, remains destitute of it, and perishes eternally, it is entirely owing to his own obstinate refusal of what is freely, honestly, presented to him. The kindness of God, as manifested in the gift of his Son, is kindness to the race of man; and when, as an individual, I credit the kindness of God to man, so strangely displayed, so abundantly proved, I cannot find any reason why I should not depend on this kindness, and expect to be saved even as others.

Whenever a man hesitates about placing his dependence on the mercy of God, because he is not sure whether he be elected or not, he gives clear evidence that he does not yet understand the Gospel. He does not apprehend "the manifestation of the love of God to man." When he sees God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, "he does not need to ask, Is the plan of mercy such as I am warranted to embrace? may I not somehow be excluded from availing myself of it? These, and similar suggestions, which draw away his mind from the voice of God to the speculations of his own mind, are no more regarded." He sees God rich in mercy, ready to forgive; just, and the justifier of the ungodly. He cannot but place his confidence in him. "Jehovah," as it has been happily said, "by the manifestation of what he has done, especially in sending Christ, and delivering him up, the just in the room of the unjust, pleads his own cause with suchsubduing pathos, that there is no more power of resistance; but the person, who is the object of the demonstration, yields himself up to the authority and glory of the truth." The sinner, thus cordially believing the Gospel, gladly and gratefully receives "the Saviour of the world" as his Saviour, and trusts that by the grace of God he shall partake of "the common salvation."

VI.—OF THE GUILT AND DANGER OF THOSE WHO DO NOT AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THIS ECONOMY OF SALVATION.

Let us now consider the statement in the text respecting the guilt and the danger of those who will not, by believing the word,
of the truth of the Gospel, receive the salvation which it reveals and conveys. These are very strikingly stated in the verses now before us:—"He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

"He that believeth not," is a general description which applies to all who, while they have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the meaning and evidence of the revelation of mercy, do not give credit to its declarations, whether this originates in profligacy, inconsideration, or pride, in any of its varieties; whether it take the negative form of merely not believing, or the positive form of discrediting and denying, the Divine testimony. The infidel—the person who rejects the divine authority of the Christian revelation—is no doubt an unbeliever; and the person, too, who, while he admits that the New Testament is a divine revelation, yet denies its most characteristic doctrines, such as the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, and the radical depravity of human nature, and the necessity of divine influence, in order to the production, and maintenance, and progress of true holiness in the human heart, is also an unbeliever. But, besides these, there are multitudes who would resent keenly any attempt to class them with infidels and heretics, who yet are, in the Scripture sense of the word, unbelievers. Every man to whom "the word of this salvation" comes, who does not really believe, because God has said it, that "He has given to us eternal life, and that life is in his Son;" that the "wages of sin is death, and the gift of God eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" he who does not so count this "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation," as to place his own individual hope of final happiness on the free grace of God thus revealed, and as, under the influence of "the love of God shed abroad in the heart" by the faith of the Gospel, to "present himself to God a living sacrifice;" that person, however correct his speculative views may be as to the evidence, and even as to the substance, of Christian truth, is an unbeliever; and with regard to all to whom the appellation unbeliever can with propriety be applied, it is the declaration of our Lord that they are "condemned already."

These words of our Lord admit of two modes of interpretation, according to the meaning which is considered as belonging to the principal word in the declaration, "condemned." The primary meaning is, to be sentenced to punishment, in opposition to being acquitted or pardoned. Supposing this to be its meaning in the passage before us, our Lord's words convey this important truth, that while he who believes the testimony of God concerning his love to mankind, manifested in his devoting his Son as a victim for their transgressions, "is not condemned," but pardoned and accepted as righteous—justified through believing; he that does not

---

50 John iii. 18-21.
believe is "already," even now, condemned—sentenced to punishment—doomed to destruction." This proposition may be understood as conveying one or other of two closely-connected, yet still distinct ideas: either the unbeliever continues to lie under the sentence of condemnation which he had previously incurred as a violator of the Divine law, or the unbeliever subjects himself, by the very act of unbelief, to a new sentence of condemnation. Both these propositions are truths, and important ones.

When the Gospel comes to a man, it finds him already a sinner, doomed by the holy law of God to that death which, under his government, is the "wages of sin." The Gospel presents to the man a full and free pardon; that pardon can, from the nature of the case, be received only in the faith of the truth; and, as a matter of course, the unbeliever continues without it; he remains as he was before it came to him—a condemned sinner.

From what follows, however, we are strongly disposed to think, that, supposing the word "condemn" to refer here to the sentence of condemnation, the reference is not so much to the old condemnation which remains, as to the new condemnation which is incurred. The unbeliever is condemned, not only for what he had done previously to the revelation of mercy being made known to him, but he is emphatically condemned, because he has rejected this revelation of mercy; "because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God;" trampling, as he does, at once on the authority of God, as manifested in the commandment which he has given to believe on his Son, and on the grace of God, as manifested in his "not sparing his Son," but giving him for us on the cross, and to us in the Gospel; not only is he condemned, inasmuch as he continues in condemnation in consequence of his unbelief, but he is condemned, inasmuch as he incurs a new condemnation on account of it.\footnote{\textit{He is condemned "already."}}\footnote{\textit{Preteritum verbi tempus ipsis tiques posuit, quo melius exprimere de omniabus incredulis actum esse."—Calvin.}}

He is condemned "already."\footnote{\textit{Henceforward, he who is condemned must not complain of Adam and his inborn sin; the seed of the woman,} promised by God to ‘bruishe the head of the serpent,’ is now come, and has been stoned for sin, and taken away condemnation; but he must cry out against himself, for not having accepted and believed in this Christ, the devil’s head-bruiser and sin-strangler. If I do not believe the same, sin and condemnation must continue; because he who is to deliver me from it is not taken hold of; nay, it will be a doubly great and heavy sin and condemnation that I will not believe in the dear Saviour by whom I might be helped, nor accept his redemption.”—Luther.} That may signify, either ‘He is even now condemned; in not believing, he contracts guilt; he subjects himself to punishment;’—\textit{\footnote{\textit{Mark xvi. 16.}}} ‘He is already sentenced to punishment. Not only will he be condemned at last, but the sentence of condemnation is already passed; and if it be not reversed, the judgment of the last day will only confirm that sentence.’ It may be said, where is the doom of the unbeliever to be found? we reply, it is to be found in that book, according to which the sentences of the great day will be regulated. “He that believeth not shall be damned.”\footnote{\textit{Mark xvi. 16.}}
Proceeding still on the principle that "condemn" means here sentenced to punishment, the 19th verse must be considered as explanatory of the Divine judicial sentence announced in the 18th verse, and as a vindication of it from every imputation of undue severity or injustice. "And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and that men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." According to this mode of interpretation, "condemnation" is equivalent to 'the cause of condemnation;' this is the reason why the unbeliever is condemned. "Light"—that is, truth, and its evidence—holy benignant truth, calculated to make men wise, and good, and happy—this "has come into the world;" a plain and well-accredited revelation has been made of it. It appeared, embodied in the person of the incarnate Son, "God manifested in flesh," the revealer of truth, the author of salvation; and of him as the image of God, we have an accurate representation "in the word of the truth of the Gospel."

If men, to whom this revelation comes, continue in ignorance, and guilt, and depravity, and misery, it is not because they have not the means of obtaining the knowledge, the favor, the image, and the fellowship of God. These are brought very near them, and pressed on their acceptance. The true account of their conduct is, "they love darkness rather than light;" and it shows that, however miserable they are, and are likely to be, they themselves are the authors of all that misery, by obstinately refusing what the Divine kindness has provided for them; they prefer ignorance to knowledge, error to truth, sin to holiness; and, in effect, misery to happiness.

It is added, as the reason why they act so irrational as well as wicked a part, "because their deeds are evil." "Deeds" here are not to be restricted to external actions, nor are we to suppose that the persons referred to by our Lord are exclusively the openly wicked and notoriously profligate. The word "deeds" is to be interpreted with a reference to that law to which man is subject, which is spiritual, "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" and includes evil desires and affections, as well as what are more properly denominated "deeds." Paul enumerates, among the "works" or deeds of the flesh, "hatred, wrath, envy." "The old man and his deeds" is descriptive of the whole frame of habits, whether internal or external, which characterize our fallen unchang'd nature. When our Lord says "their deeds are evil," it is equivalent to, 'they are depraved and unholy;' and, consequently, the words are a declaration that all unbelief of the Gospel has a moral cause, and that that cause is evil; that, if men do not believe it, it is not at all because the statements it contains are unintelligible, or the evidence on which they rest defective, but it is because they love sin, and are determined to live in it."

" Cp. 4.
"" I earnestly recommend to the reader's perusal Dr. Wardlaw's illustration of these verses, in his able little work, entitled "Man Responsible for his belief."
SIN AND DANGER OF UNBELIEVERS.

Such is the mode in which these words have been ordinarily interpreted, and it must be admitted that the sense thus brought out is coherent and important, perfectly harmonious with the general scheme of doctrine taught in the New Testament, and well fitted to serve the purpose which our Lord had in view in his discourse to Nicodemus.

At the same time, I am inclined to think that it does not exactly express our Lord's meaning. I apprehend that, throughout the whole discourse, our Lord uses the word "condemn" as equivalent to 'punish.' He employs it as an antithesis, not to 'pardon' or 'acquit,' but to "save." "For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn," that is, not to punish, "the world, but to save the world." not to inflict evil, but to confer happiness. In the 36th verse, "to be saved," as the certain effect of believing in Christ, is described as "having everlasting life;" and what is here called "judgment" or "condemnation," the effect of unbelief, is described as "having the wrath of God abiding on a person." This variety of signification not unfrequently belongs to the word as employed in the New Testament. On this principle of interpretation, which, upon the whole, we prefer, our Lord's meaning may be thus expressed: 'He that believeth is not punished; he does not perish; no: he is "saved," he has everlasting life." By his faith he enters on the enjoyment of the salvation which the Gospel announces. But he who does not believe, he is "punished," "already punished."

Some would interpret the word "already" as equivalent to 'he is as sure of punishment as if he were already punished;' as we say of a man condemned to death, or laboring under an incurable disease, 'he is a dead man.' I rather think the meaning is, 'in not believing the Gospel, he punishes himself.' A state of unbelief is necessarily a state of perdition. He shuts himself out from the enjoyment of true happiness, which is to be obtained by man only in the faith of the truth. It is true that he will be punished more severely by and by; but he is even now punished, "because he does not believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

"And this is the condemnation," or rather 'punishment.' In this consists the misery, "Light has come into the world." Light is the emblem of knowledge in opposition to ignorance; of truth in opposition to error; of holiness in opposition to depravity; of happiness in opposition to misery. "Light has come into the world," is just equivalent to, 'The means of obtaining knowledge, wisdom, pardon, holiness, and happiness, have been furnished to men.' But "men loved darkness rather than the light." The unbeliever obstinately refuses to avail himself of these, and punishes himself by excluding himself from the enjoyment of all these blessings. He prefers ignorance to knowledge, error to truth, sin to holiness; and thus, in effect, misery to happiness. Is not such a person "punished already" in the necessary consequences of

**Acts vii. 7. 2 Thess. ii. 12. Heb. xiii. 4. Rev. xvi. 5.**
his wilful unbelief? For it is wilful. The cause is not, that the revelation is too obscure to be understood, too weakly supported to be credited; it is, that "their deeds are evil," the whole frame of their sentiments, and dispositions, and habits, is depraved.

How this operates in preventing men from believing the Gospel is explained by our Lord in the 20th and 21st verses. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

In these verses, our Lord refers, I apprehend, directly to the different reception his Gospel was to meet with from different classes of his countrymen. Such of them as were entirely carnal in their desires and expectations in reference to the Messiah, would reject him and his doctrine. They would not "come to the light lest their deeds should be reproved" or exposed. They would not embrace—nay, they would not even examine—a system which, instead of promising to gratify their fond carnal expectations, required them to relinquish them; and which offered only a holy spiritual happiness, for which they had no relish. They had no desire to be awakened from their dreams; and therefore, they tried to extinguish the light which threatened to break their repose. On the other hand, those among the Jews who "did truth," that is, whose characters were formed, and whose conduct was guided, by that comparatively obscure revelation of truth which they had received; such men as the apostles, who with the exception of Judas, seem all, however imperfect and incorrect their notions might be, to have been looking for something more in the Messiah than a merely temporal deliverer; who were "Israelites indeed, in whom there was no guile;" men, whose knowledge and faith were very limited, but who lived under the influence of the will of God, so far as they knew it; such men would gladly hail "the day-spring from on high visiting them," and "come unto the light, that their deeds might be made manifest, that they were wrought in God," that is, in conformity to God's will. They would readily avail themselves of the means of discovering how far they were right, and of having their whole frame of sentiments and affections brought into a more complete conformity to the Divine will. Such appears to me the meaning and reference of this portion of our Saviour's discourse.

Before concluding, it may serve a good purpose to bring together, in a brief statement, the great truths whether taught in this passage or elsewhere, respecting the fatal consequences of refusing or neglecting to avail ourselves of the merciful provisions of the Divine economy of salvation. They may be all reduced, I think, to the three following: 1st, The unbeliever continues under the sentence of condemnation which he has already

"It is an ingenious thought of Campbell, that these words were intended as a mild rebuke to Nicodemus for coming "by night."
incurred by his other violations of the Divine law; 2d, He excludes himself from the enjoyment of those benefits which can be obtained only by the faith of the truth; and 3d, He exposes himself to a new and heavier sentence of condemnation on account of his unbelief, which is disobedience to the great commandment of God under the new economy, direct opposition to the favorite purpose of God, if I may use the expression, the salvation of sinners through the mediation of his Son. Let us very briefly illustrate these three remarks:

1st, The unbeliever continues under the sentence of condemnation which he has already incurred by his other violations of the Divine law. The man called to believe the Gospel is already a sinner. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," i.e. have lost the Divine approbation." The notion of a universal pardon—if, by this, anything else is meant than that, by the atonement of Christ, all bars in the way of the salvation of men, arising from the law or justice of God, are removed, and pardon freely offered to all—it is a baseless, and delusive, and ruinous dream. "Whatsoever things the law says, it says to them under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world be brought in guilty before God." There is but one way of obtaining deliverance from this burden of guilt. Men must believe in Jesus, that they may obtain the forgiveness of sin; if they do not, their guilt remains. There is no expiation for sin but the atonement of Christ, no saving interest in that atonement but through believing. The unbeliever must continue under the power of guilt, just as the patient, under the influence of disease, who refuses to use the only and the effectual remedy. But this is not all.

2d, The unbeliever excludes himself from those benefits which can be obtained only through the atonement of Christ, and can be enjoyed only in the belief of the truth. The believer, "being justified by faith, has peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also, he has access by faith into this grace wherein he stands, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God; and joys in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." His heart is purified through believing. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even his faith," and he has "joy and peace in believing." Through the faith of the truth he is conformed to the Divine image, made to think along with God, and will along with God. He thus obtains a permanent source of powerful motive to duty, and of abundant consolation and suffering. In the faith of the truth, "he has in him a well of living water springing up into everlasting life." Now, from all this, the unbeliever wilfully excludes himself. He cannot, just because he is an unbeliever, participate in these exalted blessings; and he must, just because he is an unbeliever, continue under the pressure of the corresponding evils. Fear, remorse, and all the misery

---

88 Rom. iii. 23.  89 Rom. iii. 19.  90 Gal. ii. 16.
of untamed passions, and unsatisfied desires—those vultures of the mind—must be his portion. But even this is not all.

3d. The unbeliever exposes himself to a new and heavier sentence of condemnation on account of his unbelief. That not to believe a Divine revelation—the terms of which are level to our apprehension, and the evidence of which would be satisfactory to our reason, were it carefully and candidly weighed, is criminal, and criminal in a high degree, is just about as evident as any principle in morals can be. That unbelief is a sin, and a great one, involving deep guilt, and exposing to correspondingly severe punishment, is very obviously the doctrine of Scripture. To despise the Divine invitation, to disobey the Divine command, cannot surely be innocent or safe. The following passages of Scripture place in a very strong light the sinfulness of unbelief, and the awful responsibility which it involves. “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me.”

“’And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.’

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed), in that day.”

There is no part of the Christian system more unpalatable to worldly men than this.—’That if a man, however correct in his manners, however amiable in his temper and character,—do not believe the Gospel, he must perish everlastingly.’ It seems to them a hard saying, and they cannot receive it.” But let us look at the case as it really is, and we must be persuaded, that this Divine appointment is in the highest degree reasonable and right. We may borrow an illustration from the case of the Israelites. I can suppose that, among the murmurers against Moses and God, there was a man, very respectable in the ordinary sense of the term, who, on being stung by a serpent, concluded that “a chance had happened him,” and used the ordinary means of cure; and on hearing what Moses had done and proclaimed, smiled inwardly at the folly of those who could expect to be cured by looking at a brazen serpent; and determined that he should die sooner than

---

5 John xvi. 8, 9.
6 Mark xvi. 15, 16.
1 John v. 10.
2 Thess. i. 7-10.
4 John iii. 36.
degrade himself by fanatical folly. Would there have been anything hard in allowing this man to suffer the natural results of his ungodly pride? And yet, if that man had been left to die, it would have been just, because he wanted faith. All have sinned. The most amiable and useful man in the world is a sinner. The interests of intelligent creatures, equally with the honor of God, require that sin should not go without a distinct mark of Divine disapprobation. Every sinner deserves to be punished. God has provided, at immense cost, a method for saving sinners. He has given a plain account of this to men, accompanied with satisfactory evidence that that account comes from him. He has so arranged it, as that without the belief of this account, the individual sinner cannot obtain the advantage of this only method of salvation. Is there anything wrong, anything hard in this? And if, as very often happens, amiable, respectable, worldly men, because in this method of salvation there is something that shocks their prejudices, and is at war with their pride and other propensities, choose to remain ignorant amid the means of information, and harden themselves in unbelief, in the face of evidence,—are they not guilty of impiety in one of its worst forms? and if there is power in the arm of God, can it be more appropriately put forth than against men, who treat the God of truth as if he were a liar—the all-wise God as if he were a fool,—who trample on Divine condescension, and defy Divine vengeance?

We conclude with again proclaiming the glad tidings, and, in the name of God, calling on all to believe them. "Hear and your souls shall live." "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted; and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorner delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as
desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when
distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call
upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but
they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did
not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel;
they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit
of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the
turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity
of fools shall destroy them. But whose hearkeneth unto me
shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

---

Note A, p. 25.

“Ἡ Βασίλεια τοῦ Θεοῦ.—Ἀνωθεν. The meaning of βασ. τ. θεοῦ,
kingdom of God, must here be explained. The Jewish theologians re-
garded the heavenly world of spirits either under the image of a family
of God, דוד נביאים, or they considered it under the image of a state;
—the angels as princes and citizens, God as the king. Again, the
Jewish theologians knew that their external theocracy was designed to
represent a royal priesthood, and people consecrated to God, Exod. xix.
6. Now, on account of this destination, they regarded their theocracy
as an earthly image of that heavenly realm of spirits, and named it
まして, heavenly state. But as it was obvious that the ancient
theocracy did not fully realize this elevated destination, and as the proph-
ests had pointed to the Messianic time as that in which the theocracy
should be glorified, and brought nearer to its true state, the Messianic
kingdom received, sensu eminenteri, the name of γῆς ηψώτατης. So it is
already in Daniel vii. in the Chald. Targum on Isa. xi. 9, in the Medrasch
on Schir Haschirim, and in many other places. Synonymous with this
term were also the expressions, ήψηλας ηψώτατα, higher world, ἡττα φθιδή, 
future world, ἡττα θρεάτης, the Jerusalem above. All that the Chris-
tian doctrine permits the Christian to hope concerning his fellowship with
Christ in a future life, the Israelite expected from the Messianic king-
dom. In this the idea of an hereafter was disclosed to them; for the dead
were then to rise, in order to participate in it. This meaning of the
word, peculiar to the Old Testament, now passed over into the writings
of the New Testament; only with such modifications as were consistent
with the fact, that the Messianic period had actually commenced with
Christ. According to the revelation of the New Testament, we must
now distinguish two divisions of the Messianic period: the one, in which
it is something that develops itself internally, and the other when it will
appear externally visible and glorified, at the end of time. In the one
point of view, then βασ. τ. θ. is something internally present; in the other
aspect, it is something externally future, though both are essentially the
same, and the latter is only the highest completion of the former. Among
the recent writers, Olshausen has apprehended the conception of βασ. τ.

7 2 Cor. v. 18-21; vi. 1, 2. Prov. i. 20-33.
NOTES.

οὐδὲν in the most spiritual manner, Comm. zum. N. T. Th. I. s. 150. In the most general sense, we should translate: The Messianic kingdom; but, at the same time, it will be necessary to keep in view the development given above, in order to be reminded of the different references involved in the expression. ἴδιον, according to the Hebrew idiom, as well as γείσομαι, means to experience, Psal. lxxix, 49: xvi. 10; infra iii. 36; viii. 51, 52, &c. ἀνωθεν may be the same with ὁ γείσομαι, from heaven, v. 31; xix. 11.; James i. 17. So Orig., Theophyl., Erasm. Philo also, de Gig. ed. Fæ. p. 285, uses the expression ἀνωθεν γείσομαι to designate a heavenly mode of thought, for which Mangey unnecessarily wishes to substitute ἀνάβει. The ἐν θεοὶ γενν., i. 13, might then be compared with it. But it is better in the sense of πάλιν, for so Nicodemus understood it, v. 4, since δεσπέρων stands there in the place of it; and in regard to this point simply, Christ could not have been misunderstood by Nicodemus, for the conversation was carried on in the Aramaean language, in which there could be no word of a double meaning used; this manner of apprehending it is also confirmed by the Syriac and Coptic translations, by the Vulgate, and by almost all modern interpreters. The phrase, then, corresponds to ἀνωθεν γείσομαι and παλιγγενεσία, 1 Pet. i. 3; Tit. iii. 5. Birth gives a new existence. Christ therefore means to say: He who wishes to enter into the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, must receive a new existence, a new principle of life."—Tholuck.

Note B, p. 27.

"Many, like Calvin, take spirit as exegetical of water: aquae spirituales non fluviales, and appeal to the hendiadys, Matt. iii. 11. So also in Winer, Ex. Stud. p. 140. Others, like Grot. and Teller, understand a hendiadys reversed: spiritus aquae instar emundans. Some, as Cocce. and Lamp. understand by ὁ διὰ the obedienta pura of Christ. Zuilingius' intelligit per spiritum coelestem operationem spiritus Dei; per aequum cognitio tentem, claritatem, lucem coelestem. Others, like Beza, Beausobre, and Herder, supposed that Christ referred to the then well-known rite of John's baptism, or that of proselytes; and, as Beaus. says, it may be translated without hesitation: Si quelq'un n'est né non seulement de l'eau, mais aussi de l'esprit, 'If any one is not born, not only of water, but also of the Spirit.' Some also think of a mystical, ethereal element—the higher water—out of which the spiritual body of man is formed; so Schubert (in v. Meyer Blätter für h. Wahrh. II. 76. Ueber einige Bed. des Wortes Wasser in der Schrift,) and also the Ev. Schultheer. Heisen in a Dissert., von 1727, shows that the Rabbins spoke of a heavenly water in a mystical sense, and he believes that allusion is here made to the history of creation, where The Spirit moved upon the face of the waters. Finally, according to Erasm. πνεῦμα is to be understood of the air; Christ places figuratively the two purest spiritual elements in opposition to the gross earthly birth. The view of Olshausen is peculiar: 'The ideas of birth and creation are very nearly allied; as in the creation water appears as the passive material, and Spirit as the forming power, so also in the γεννηθησαίς εἰς διατομὴν πν., being born of water, the Spirit is the creative power of regeneration, whilst water is the feminine principle, in repentance the purified element of the soul, which becomes, as it were, the mother of the new man. . . . . The interpretation, then, which refers this to baptism, is entirely correct, only it
must be understood as intimating, not the sacrament but the idea of baptism.”—Tholuck. This view of Olshausen is strangely mystical.

Note C, p. 27.

“This passage is not without difficulty, and different interpretations of it have been given, which I shall briefly notice. They are principally three. By ‘flesh,’ most interpreters understand natural depravity; and by ‘spirit,’ the Holy Spirit in the first place; and in the second place, that gracious disposition of mind which is implanted by the Spirit. According to this view, the meaning is as follows: He that is born of depraved men is himself depraved; but he that is born of the Divine Spirit, is of a divine disposition; as if the sentence had run thus: ὁ γεννημένος ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς, σαρκικὸς ἐστιν καὶ ὁ γεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος, πνευματικὸς ἐστιν. ‘He that is born of the flesh is fleshly; and he that is born of the Spirit is spiritual.’ This interpretation is quite agreeable to the usage of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament. Others, however, suppose that our Lord, in these words, has a reference to the opinion entertained by the Jews, that they, in consequence of their descent from Abraham, were the objects of God’s distinguished love and favor, and were the only heirs of the kingdom of heaven; that by ‘flesh,’ therefore, we are to understand the nature of man simply, or natural nativity, and by ‘spirit,’ spiritual nativity; and that, therefore, our Lord’s meaning is this: He who is born of men is a man,—that is, by the mere privilege of birth, a man has nothing peculiar, besides human nature and the external rights of kinship; but he who is born and changed by the Divine Spirit has a divine disposition of mind, which is necessary in order to entering into the divine kingdom. Our Lord added these words, to show that no one by birth has the right of citizenship in the Messiah’s kingdom, but that this is received only by those divine dispositions implanted by the Holy Spirit, and that, therefore, regeneration was necessary to the Jews. This interpretation is not inconsistent with Scripture usage, and it is by far the most agreeable to the context and the subject matter; it is approved by Semler, and greatly commended by J. F. Bahrdt, a Leipsic divine.” Once more, others suppose that by ‘Spirit’ we are to understand spirit in general, therefore, according to the law of disjunctives, by the word ‘flesh’ we are to understand body, and that in these words our Lord meant to give an example, to show what kind of generation he intended, namely, not natural, but spiritual generation, productive of spiritual effects, not the propagation of bodies, but the transformation of souls; and that his meaning was this: Like is born of like, of flesh is born flesh, of body that which is corporeal, of spirit that which is spiritual; that generation is not by body, therefore it is not corporeal, but by spirit, therefore it is spiritual. Erasmus interpreted the passage in this way, and the interpretation of Chrysostom is much the same. But interpret it how you may, it stands true; that a transformation of the human spirit may be effected, and really is effected, by the Divine Spirit.”—Tittmann.

Note D, p. 29.

“‘Earthly things,’ τὰ ἐντείνεια, denote things that are well known, and

¹ Proil. Fesl. Nat. Chr. a 1773, publice proposita.
² Rom. xxv. in Jo. Tom. viii. Opp. p. 144.
more easy to be understood: 'Heavenly things,' τὰ ἐνθώφαντα, are things of a more abstruse nature, less known, and more difficult to be understood. The latter, indeed, are generally explained of things pertaining to the kingdom of grace and glory; the former, of worldly things; the connection, however, seems opposed to this interpretation. 'Earthly things, are things which occur on earth and before our eyes; and again, things which may be easily known and understood by all; they are such things as those which our Lord had hitherto communicated to Nicodemus; such as: The necessity of a change of mind on the part of the Jews, and of their learning to see, and think, and act differently, if they would enter into the kingdom of the Messiah; these things every one could easily understand who was acquainted with the perverse opinions and manners of the Jews; and therefore they are called 'earthly things.' Heavenly things, therefore, are properly things which are done in heaven, and again, things which are secret, and, even if revealed, difficult to be understood. Of this nature are the things which our Lord immediately proceeds to inculcate; such as: The Messiah is the Son of God; the Messiah shall die upon the cross; and by his death shall procure redemption, not for the Jewish nation only, but for the Gentiles likewise, and for the whole human race; these things were ἐνθώφαντα to the Jews of that period, that is, they were high and mysterious doctrines; Paul several times calls them 'mysteries,' Μυστήριον, and Peter calls them 'things hard to be understood,' δύσοντα, things which they could not digest, and which were altogether contrary to their opinion and expectation; since they seem at that time to have had little or no understanding of the divine nature of the Messiah, of his death, and of a salvation extending to the whole human race; they supposed, rather, that he would be a most illustrious secular prince, that he would never die, but would reign for ever, deeming happiness on the Jewish nation only, but destroying the other nations.3

Note E, p. 30.

"Illa quidem Christi cum Deo Patre conjunctio omnino perpetua fuit, semperque continuata est, postea quam is ex caelo descendit et versari in terra coepit; ut, quamvis in terra habitaret, tamen etiammune in caelo esse iure dicetur, tamquam in domicilio proprio et suo. c. viii. 29; x. 38; xiv. 9–11; xvi. 13; xvii. Verumtamen hoc loco in verbis, 'O ὅσιο ὁ ἐσχάρατος, proprietatem participii praesentis temporis morosiur urgere nolim. Qui enim cum camerario, erasmo, raphelo, bengelio, ernesto, multisque aliis, ὁ ὅσιο πρὸ ὃς ἡ̄ postium putant, et sic interpretantur: 'Qui erat in caelo, antequam ad terram, descendere,' id sane nihil faciunt, quod usui loque ndi repugnet; (Graeci enim hoc participio saepè sic utuntur, ut vim habeat imperfecti; cf. etiam Io. ix. 25; xix. 38; Luc. xxiv. 44; 2 Cor. viii. 9.) nec leve huic sententiae praesidium parant o verbis ipsius Christi Io. VI. 62; Si videritis homine natum ec adscendentem, ubi ille ERAV antea (ὁσιο ἡ ὁ πρῶτος). Ac de pondere quod in Christi verbis inest, hae interpretatio nihil detraxit. Idem enim ille, qui iam ad terram descendere at, erat in principio, et erat apud Deum; (Io. i. 1, 2.) eratque gloria praeditus apud Patrem ante mundum conditum, h. e. ab ace rerno, c. xvii. 5."—Knappus. Dr. Pye Smith’s Dissertation on this verse, in his Scripture Testimony, book iv., chap. iii., sect. i., is deserving of careful perusal.

3 2 Peter iii. 16.
EXPOSITION II.

OUR LORD'S CONVERSATION WITH THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

John iv. 4-42.

"I am found of them who sought me not," is the language of the Messiah in the prophetic word, many ages before he made his appearance among mankind; and the oracle has been frequently verified. His saving blessings are not only always unmerited by those on whom they are conferred, but they are often unsought; and of all who form a part of his peculiar people, it may be as truly said as of his apostles, "It was not they who chose him, it was he who chose them." When they were going on in their folly and sin—when they were alike ignorant of, and careless about, him and his salvation, He, to use the apostle's peculiarly appropriate word, "apprehended" them, aroused their attention, poured light into their darkened minds, opened their understandings to understand the truth, and their hearts to receive the love of that truth, so as to be saved by it. We have a beautiful illustration of these remarks in that part of the Lord's history, on the consideration of which we are about to enter.

We were lately engaged in illustrating the remarkable conversation which took place between our Lord and Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The course of our expositions calls us now to turn your attention to a not less interesting conversation between the same illustrious person and a Samaritan woman. There is a striking contrast between the characters and the circumstances of the two individuals with whom our Lord conversed; the one a Jew—a man of rank, a senator, a man of learning, a doctor of the law, and apparently a man of unblemished reputation; the other a Samaritan—a woman of the lower ranks, for she came to draw water—a woman of very limited information, and apparently of loose habits, or, to say the least, of doubtful character. But the Samaritan woman does not seem to be farther from the kingdom of God than the Jewish senator; and the Saviour's "meekness of wisdom" is equally displayed in his treatment of both.

The general interest which the preaching of Jesus had excited in Judea, and especially the circumstance of his baptizing great

1 John, xv. 16. Οἵς ὑμεῖς με εξελέξασθε, ἀλλ' εγὼ εξελέξαμην ὑμᾶς.
2 κατέλαβε. Phil. iii. 12.
multitudes, through the instrumentality of his disciples, attracted
the notice of the Jewish rulers, who are called "the Pharisees"
here and in some other places in the gospels, probably because
the majority, and the most influential part of the Sanhedrim,
belonged to that sect; and seems to have suggested to them the
necessity of taking some steps to prevent the progress of one
whose views plainly were very different from theirs, and whose
growing influence over the minds of the people might be dan-
gerous to their authority."

Our Lord being aware of this, knowing that his hour was not
yet come, and that much was yet to be done, before he closed his
work on earth by his expiatory death, instead of waiting till he
should be driven out of Judea, left that district of his own accord,
and retired into Galilee, which, being remote from Jerusalem, and
under the government of Herod the Tetrarch, was less immedi-
antsily under the eye, and less directly subject to the power, of the
Sanhedrim. In going from Judea into Galilee, our Lord's most
direct route lay through Samaria—not the city of that name,
which was then known by another name, Sebaste, but the prov-
ince of which that city was once the capital, and which still re-
tained the name—a district of Palestine, bounded on the south
by Judea, and on the north by Galilee, on the west by the Medi-
terranean Sea, and on the east by the river Jordan. It was pos-
sible to go from Judea into Galilee, by crossing the Jordan, and
passing through Perea; but this was a very circuitous route,
though some of the stricter Jews seem to have been in the habit
of taking it, to avoid intercourse with the Samaritans. The
direct road lay through Samaria."

This region, at the original settlement of the Jews in Canaan,
had been allotted to Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh."
From the time of the revolt of the ten tribes, its inhabitants had
generally ceased to worship at the temple of Jerusalem, and fol-
lowed first the corrupted form of religion established by Jeroboam,
the son of Nebat;* and then the Gentile idolatries introduced by
his successors. After the great body of the ten tribes had been
carried captive, and these regions left almost uninhabited, the
king of Assyria planted in them a colony of various nations from
the eastern part of his empire, who, mingling with the few origi-
nal inhabitants, formed to themselves a strange medley of a
religion, by mixing together the principles and rites of Judaism
and those of oriental idolatries—"fearing Jehovah," as the in-
spired historian remarks, "and serving their graven images."

At the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity, the
Samaritans, after having their alliance refused by the Jews, be-
came their bitterest enemies, and the most active opposers of the
re-building of their temple and capital.* At a subsequent period,
Manasseh, the son of Jaddua, the high priest, contrary to the
law, married the daughter of Sanballat, the chief of the Samar-

---

* John iv. 1, 2.  
1 John iv. 3, 4.  
2 John xii. 25-33.  
3 Josh. xvi., xviii.  
4 Kings xvii. 24-41.  
itans, and when the Jews insisted on his repudiating his wife, or renouncing the sacred office, he fled to his father-in-law, who gave him an honorable reception; and, by the permission of Alexander the Great, built a temple to Jehovah, *ix* which Manasseh and his posterity officiated as high priests, in rivalry to the divinely-instituted ritual at Jerusalem.  

The Samaritans received as divine the five books of Moses, and probably, also, some at least of the prophetic oracles; but they did not acknowledge the authority of the historical books, as written by the Jews, whom they regarded as their worst enemies. The natural consequence of all these circumstances was, that the Jews and the Samaritans regarded each other with a much more rancorous dislike than either of them did the idolatrous nations by which they were surrounded.  

In passing through this region, our Lord and his disciples arrived in the neighborhood of one of its towns one day about noon, which in that country is intensely hot, and weary with his journey he sat down, "*thus*"—that is, like a fatigued person as he was, near a celebrated well, which took its name from the Patriarch Jacob—while his disciples went into the town to buy provisions. The proper name of the town seems to have been Shechem, or Sychem, but it was commonly called Sychar by the Jews—which appears to have been a species of reproachful nickname—the word signifying "idolatrous," or "drunken." The town is still in existence, and is now called Nablus, a corruption of Neapolis.  

This town was remarkable for being in the neighborhood of that piece of ground which Jacob seems first to have purchased from the descendants of Hamor, and afterwards, when some Amorites had taken possession of it, to have recovered as his right by a successful appeal to arms—and which he lift as a legacy to his favorite son Joseph.  

We have no reason to doubt that the well which bore his name, was indeed dug by his orders, and that out of it he and his family drank while residing in this neighborhood.

While our Lord was sitting alone, and worn out with fatigue, by Jacob’s well, under the burning heat of an almost vertical sun, "a woman of Samaria,"—that is, not a native of the city of Samaria, but an inhabitant of the Samaritan region, and a professor of the Samaritan religion,—came out from the neighboring town to draw water. Jacob’s well, which still exists, is about a mile from Naplous, but it is not unlikely that the ancient town extended further in the direction of the well than the modern one.

---

9 1 Mac. iii. 10; Jos. Antiq. xii. 5, 5.  
11 Orig. Rev. iii. 16; orig. "Sic uti qualsueque loci opportunitas ferebat, sine pompa, solus, et qui non prae se ferret expectationem Samaritidis, sed mere insoletudinis causa quietem vellet capere."—Bengel.  
12 Relandi Palestina, p. 1,009. Robinson’s Researches, iii. 96.  
On this woman, bearing her pitcher, approaching the well, our Lord requested of her a draught of water:—He said to her, "Give me to drink." The request, though it seems to us a very natural one, appears to have struck her with surprise. She knew the extreme dislike which Jews cherished towards Samaritans; she knew that, though they would buy and sell with Samaritans, it was accounted a sin by them to have any friendly intercourse with that people. "The Jews," says the evangelist,—for the words are plainly an explanatory note introduced by him,—"The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

The general tone of feeling on this subject may be judged of by the following extracts from the Jewish Rabbins:—"It is prohibited to eat the bread, and to drink the wine, of a Samaritan. If any one receive a Samaritan into his house, and minister to him, he will cause his children to be carried into captivity. He who eats the bread of a Samaritan, is as if he ate swine's flesh."

Aware of this extreme antipathy, the Samaritan woman expresses her amazement that a person, whom, from his dress and dialect, she perceived to be a Jew, should deign to ask, or even receive, a favor from a Samaritan. "How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" It is impossible for us to say precisely what was the temper in which these words were spoken. It depends very much on the tone and manner in which they were uttered, whether they were the expression of simple surprise, or malignant exultation.

Whatever were the woman's feelings towards the Saviour, his feelings towards her were those of compassion and kindness. His thoughts were "thoughts of good, and not of evil." "If thou knewest," said he meekly; "if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

By "the gift of God,"[11] that which God gives freely, we apprehend we are to understand the blessings of the Christian salvation—the knowledge of the true character of God—the pardon of sin—genuine holiness—conformity of mind and will to God—real happiness, suited to our various capacities of enjoyment, and enduring throughout the eternity of our being: in one word, that "eternal life," through Christ Jesus, which is "the gift of God."[12] If, then, the Samaritan woman had known the nature

---


See Lightfoot, Schöttgen, and Lampe. The general dislike to strangers, which was a proverbial characteristic of the Jews, is strikingly portrayed in the words of the Roman poet—

"Non monstrare vias, cadem nisi sacra colenti, Quassitum ad fontem, solos deducere verpos."—Juvenal.

This general dislike was sharpened in the case of the Samaritans, by the peculiar relations of the two nations.

and excellence of this gift of God, and if she had known that he who had requested her to give him a draught of water was indeed the Messiah—the promised Saviour—the author of this salvation—the person by whom God was to bestow this gift on mankind—instead of hesitating about complying with his request, she would immediately, in her turn, have become a petitioner; and, in answer to her petition, she would have found no hesitating delay, but would have received from him, what well deserves the name of "living water," as calculated to quench, and satisfy completely, the thirst for happiness.

This is plainly our Lord's meaning; but it was not apprehended by the Samaritan woman. "Little did she think"—to borrow the words of an old divine—"little did she think of the glories of him who stood right against her. He who sate on the well had a throne placed above the head of the cherubim; in his arms, who then rested himself, was the sanctuary of peace, where wearied souls were to lay their heads, and dispose their cares, and then turn them to joys, and to gild their thorns with glory; and that holy tongue, which was parched with heat, streamed forth rivulets of holy doctrine, which were to water all the world—to turn our deserts into paradise.""\(^{21}\)

The woman replied, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with," and the well is deep; from whence, then, hast thou this living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?\(^{22}\) The phrase "living water" literally signifies water issuing fresh from the fountain, as contrasted with water stagnant, and as it were dead, in a reservoir. Understanding the word in this sense, the woman's meaning may be thus brought out—'Spring water must be got either here, or somewhere else in the neighborhood. You cannot get it here, for the well is deep," and you have no means of drawing water; and it is not probable that you are in this respect greater than Jacob, whom we, as well as you Jews, claim for our ancestor,—that you are better acquainted with the vicinity than he was, so as to know of a better fountain of spring water than that which he bequeathed to us, and out of which he and his family were accustomed to drink.' Or, as the practice of figurative speech is common among the Orientals, perhaps the force of her reply may be—'You make great promises, but I see no evidence that you can perform them. If you can give me what will in any respect answer to your words, you must be a greater personage than Jacob—which I much doubt.'

Our Lord proceeds to make a statement, fitted and intended to render it still more plain that he was speaking figuratively.

---

\(^{21}\) Jeremy Taylor.

\(^{22}\) "Thou hast no bucket."—ἀντίθεμα.—Campbell.

\(^{23}\) John iv. 11, 12. ὑδάτινα. Hesychius explains it thus: μπορηματα, προβάτα, ῥίπτειν. Κυρία comes in domestico. It is one of the ἀτελείας λεγώνον. 

\(^{24}\) Travellers tell us the well is 105 feet deep, containing at different seasons more or less water. Maundrell, in March, found 15 feet of water in it; Robinson, in June, found it dry.
EXP. II.] CONVERSATION WITH WOMAN OF SAMARIA. 69

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."* The "water" spoken of by our Lord has been explained by some of his doctrine; and by others of the influences of the Holy Spirit. We think it far more natural to understand it as coincident in meaning with the "gift of God," as equally with that phrase referring to the Christian salvation in all its extent. This salvation is of such a nature, as not only to give immediate relief to him who receives it, but to satisfy him permanently. Howsoever his capacities of enjoyment may be enlarged, there is in this salvation what will fill these capacities to an overflow for ever. This is the idea so beautifully expressed by this living water being, in the person who had drank it, "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

It may be said figuratively of all earthly sources of enjoyment, as well as literally of Jacob's well, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again." It is the living waters of "the salvation that is in Christ with eternal glory," which alone can quench for ever the thirst for happiness. To borrow again the language of the eloquent theologian formerly quoted—"Here we labor, but receive no benefit; we sow many times, and reap not; or reap, and do not gather in; or gather in, and do not possess; or possess, and do not enjoy; or if we enjoy, we are still unsatisfied: it is with anguish of spirit, and circumstances of vexation. A great heap of riches makes neither our clothes more warm, our meat more nutritive, nor our beverage more pleasant. It feeds the eye, but never fills it. Like drink to a hydropick person, it increases the thirst and promotes the torment. But the grace of God fills the furrows of the heart; and, as the capacity increases, it grows itself in equal degrees, and never suffers any emptiness or dissatisfaction, but carries content and fulness all the way; and the degrees of augmentation are not steps and near approaches to satisfaction, but increasings of the capacity. The soul is satisfied all the way, and receives more, not because it wanted any, but that it can now hold more, being become more receptive of felicity; and in every minute of sanctification, there is so excellent a condition of joy, that the very calamities, afflictions, and persecutions of the world, are turned into felicities, by the activity of the prevailing ingredient: like a drop of water falling into a tun of wine, it is ascribed into a new family, losing its own nature by a conversion into the more noble. For, now that all passionate desires are dead, and there is nothing remnant that is vexatious, the peace, the serenity, the quiet sleeps, the evenness of spirit, and contempt of things below, remove the soul from all neighborhood of displeasure, and place it at the foot of the throne, whither, when it is ascended, it is possessed of felicities eternal. These were the waters which were given us to drink,

* John iv. 13, 14.
when, with the rod of God, the rock, Christ Jesus, was smitten. The Spirit of God moves forever upon these waters; and, when the angel of the covenant had stirred the pool, whosoever descends hither shall find health and peace, joys spiritual, and the satisfaction of eternity.”

We can scarcely believe that the woman still thought our Lord was speaking literally. She must have seen that he was using figurative language, and that the living water he spoke of, was something else than water fresh from the spring. But she seems to have considered him as a person who was amusing himself, by attempting to awaken in her expectations he could not gratify, and therefore she replies to him in a sarcastic jest:—“Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”

It was the purpose of our Lord “to manifest himself to this woman in another way than he does to the world.” It was his determination to make her acquainted with his true character, and to put her in possession of the blessings of his salvation. Instead of replying to her jesting request, he bids her “go and call her husband.” This led her to state that she “had no husband,” and this statement drew from our Lord a declaration, which must have overwhelmed the woman with astonishment and shame, as it showed that this mysterious stranger was intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of her history, which had not been a very honorable one. “Thou hast five husbands; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that sayest thou truly.” Whether these five husbands, whom this woman had had in succession, had all died, or whether one or more of these marriages had been dissolved by divorce, it is needless to inquire, for it is impossible to know. It seems plain, from the circumstance of her living in concubinage with a man to whom she was not married, which is the most obvious meaning of the words, “He whom

28 John iv. 16.
29 John iv. 17.
30 John iv. 18. What strange dreams learned men pass off for interpretations of Scripture, was perhaps never more strikingly manifested than in the following remarks of the erudite, acute, pious, and generally judicious Hengstenberg (Diss. on the Authenticity of the Pentateuch, Dis. I.):—“By the divine guidance, the higher relations of this woman’s people are portrayed in her inferior relations, and on this very account she is chosen by Christ as the national representative. She had had five husbands, and he whom she now had was not her husband. He had not thought her worthy to be united to him in wedlock. And thus also her people. They had, in earlier times, entered into a five-fold spiritual marriage with their idols; this marriage was dissolved; the people sought for a marriage with Jehovah, but this was refused, because they did not belong to Israel. The King of Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 24) brought colonists from exactly five nations—from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sebaraim—and each of these nations had their peculiar deity, or, according to the language of the ancient East, their husband.” “This similarity,” says the learned German, with great gravity, “of the relations of the people and of the woman, is, indeed, too remarkable altogether to be disregarded without levity.” Notwithstanding, we do feel it impossible to repress a smile. It would be difficult to find, even in Origen or Cocceius, anything more fanciful than this.
thou now hast is not thy husband," that she was a person of loose morals, and disreputable character.

Self-knowledge is necessary to prepare for the right apprehension of divine things. The knowledge which our Lord discovered of this woman's character and history, persuaded her that he must have supernatural means of information, and accordingly she said to him:—"Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet;" and, not improbably, glad of an opportunity of shifting the discourse from a subject so painful and discreditable to her, she introduces the great point of controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans, that she might hear his opinion respecting it. It is no uncommon thing for persons living in sin, not merely to pretend, but really to have, an interest in, and a zeal for, what they call their religion. Speculation about theological doctrine is often found in unnatural union with habitual neglect of moral duty; and among the endless tortuositics of the depraved human heart, this is one, to seek in polemical discussions respecting orthodoxy and heterodoxy, protection from the shafts of conviction, for plain violation of the law of God. "Who can understand the errors" of that "deceitful and desperately wicked" thing, the human heart?

Anxious as it were to get rid of so uncomfortable a theme, she proposes to Jesus, as a prophet, the great question between the Jews and the Samaritans, respecting the proper place of performing public worship to Jehovah. We have no reason to think that this woman had any conscientious anxiety as to the resolution of this question. The subject seems introduced by her merely for the purpose of turning aside a conversation which was likely to lead into details in no way agreeable or creditable to her:—"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

To "worship" plainly means here 'to perform the solemn rites of public worship.' In the laws of Moses, which the Jews and Samaritans equally acknowledged as divine, it was distinctly stated that after Israel had entered into Canaan, there should be a particular place appropriated for this purpose, where alone public worship could be lawfully celebrated. So far both parties were agreed; but the Jews insisted that Jerusalem was the proper place for this purpose, while the Samaritans obstinately stood up for Gerizim.

"Our fathers," says the Samaritan woman, "worshipped in this mountain." It is not easy to say exactly who those fathers are, to whom she refers. It is possible she refers to those remote ancestors, Abraham and Jacob, who erected altars at Shechem, on or near Mount Gerizim; or to the Israelites, who, immediately after their coming into Canaan, had the Divine blessing pronounced on them from that mountain, and for 300 years were accustomed to worship in that neighborhood, at Shiloh; or to their more immediate ancestors, who had built a temple on

31 John iv. 19.  
32 John iv. 20.  
33 Deut. xxxi. 5-14.
Mount Gerizim, where services, similar to those of the Jewish temple at Jerusalem, were performed. That temple had indeed been destroyed by John Hyrcanus, about 160 years before this, but it is not improbable that it had been rebuilt, though with less magnificence; at any rate, public Divine worship appears to have been still performed there.

The Jews, on the other hand, held that "Jerusalem was the place where men ought to worship," and they had good ground for so holding. David, by whose direction the ark of the covenant, the symbol of the Divine presence, was brought to Jerusalem, was a prophet, and acted under Divine direction. The particular site of the temple was fixed by a miraculous sign. The temple was thus built in strict accordance with Divine revelation. Jehovah solemnly declared to Solomon:—"I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever;" "I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name may be there." The Psalmist says, "He chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he had established for ever." "The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Such were the opinions of the Samaritans and Jews, respecting the proper place of worship, and such were the grounds on which their respective opinions were founded. It was obviously the design of the Samaritan woman to engage our Lord in the discussion of this controversy; but he in a good degree waived it, turning her attention to a subject of infinitely greater importance than the place of worship, even the nature of acceptable worship; and assuring her that the time was at hand, when all controversies in reference to the place of public worship would become obsolete, and would lose their interest:—"Woman," said he, "believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." The meaning of these words plainly is, 'The time is just at hand when the solemn public worship of God "the Father," the common Father of his human family, shall not be confined to any one place, and when of course the controversy whether Gerizim or Jerusalem has the better claim to that honor, shall be superseded.' Some have supposed that a particular period is referred to as the ultimate limit of that order of things, in which the solemn public worship of Jehovah was restricted to a particular place. In this case the reference is probably to the fall of Jerusalem; but I do not know that more is meant than merely, 'Yet a very little while, and this state of things shall be no more.'

"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." In saying that the Samaritans

---

34 1 Chron. xvi. 26, &c. 35 1 Kings ix. 3. 2 Chron. vi. 6. 36 Psalm lxviii. 68, 69. 37 Psalm cxxxi. 13, 14. 38 John iv. 21. 39 John iv. 22.
worshipped they knew not what, we apprehend our Lord refers not so much to the object of worship, as to the manner of worship:—"In worshipping God, ye are not guided by his will as to the place of his worship; you have no divine authority for worshipping at Gerizim. On the other hand, we Jews know, on good grounds, that in worshipping at Jerusalem, we are acting in compliance with the Divine will.' These words are just equivalent to, 'In the question between you and the Jews, you are wrong, and they are right; you are ignorant, and they are well-informed.'

He adds as a reason, "for salvation is of the Jews." "Salvation" here seems equivalent to 'the Saviour'—that is, the Messiah. In this way the word is used in Luke:—"'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God;'" and in the Acts of the Apostles—"So hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."" "The Messiah is to arise from among the Jews, and therefore the true mode of worshipping Jehovah is to be found among them.'

But that question, as to the proper place of worshipping Jehovah—though, without doubt, the Jews were right, and the Samaritans wrong—was, as a practical question, very soon to cease to be of much interest. For, continues our Lord, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."" "Under that order of things which is just about to be established, and in which the Divine Being is to be remarkably manifested as the "Father" of men, the great question will not be, where he is to be worshipped, but how. The worshipper at Jerusalem will not be accounted a true worshipper because he worships there, nor the worshipper at Gerizim a false worshipper because he worships there; the worshipper in spirit and in truth, wherever he worships, whether in Jerusalem or Gerizim, or anywhere else—whether in Canaan, or in any other country—he, he alone, is the genuine worshipper.'

"To "worship in spirit," is to worship spiritually; to "worship in truth," is to worship truly. They are not two different kinds of worship; they are two different aspects of the same worship: to worship spiritually, is in opposition to the performance of mere external rites, to give to God the homage of an enlightened mind, and an affectionate heart; to know, admire, esteem, love, trust, and submit to him; and to worship him truly, is either to worship him according to the truth—that is, in a manner suited to the revelation he has made of his character; or really, not merely in appearance, but in substance—not in pretence only, but in sincerity. Such—such alone—are the acceptable worshippers. The

40 Luke ii. 29, 30; iii. 6. 41 Acts xiii. 47. 42 John iv. 23
Father seeketh these for his worshippers. These are the worshippers whom he acknowledges. The worshipper at Jerusalem, without this, will not be accepted. The worshipper at Gerizim, with this, will not be rejected. The economy, whose great characters were externality and typism, is about to close; the economy, whose great characters are spirituality and reality, is about to take place.

"God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The Father seeketh those who worship in spirit and truth as his worshippers. They are the objects of his choice and preference; and the reason is plain—he himself is spiritual—"God is a Spirit." These words are equivalent to—"God is a living, intelligent, active being." And, from his nature as God, he must possess all those attributes in the greatest possible, or rather, in an infinite, measure. He is the author and fount of life; he knows everything, and is infinitely wise; he is the great original power in the universe, "who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will;" "who doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth;" whose arm none can stay, and to whom none dares say, "what dost thou?" Worship, to be acceptable to him, must be suited to his nature. It must be spiritual; it must be the worship of man as an intelligent being—the worship of the mind and of the heart; it must be true worship, not false, like that of the idolater; not merely external and apparent, like that of the formal ceremonialist; not insincere, like that of the hypocrite. "How has the lofty truth, the world-historical import of this saying of Christ, been lost sight of by those who have taken it as an isolated expression, apart from its connection with christian theism, and with the whole divine process for the development of christian life; by those abstract, naked, one-sidedly-intellectual deists and pantheists, who have dreamed that they could incorporate it into their discordant system by their spiritual fetishism, which substitutes the deification of an idea for the spiritual, truthful, adoration of God as a Spirit. The aristocracy of education, the one-sided intellectualism of the ancient world, was uprooted by Christ when he uttered this great truth to an uneducated woman, who belonged to an ignorant and uncultivated people."  

These sublime truths, to which nothing comparable is to be found in the writings of the most accomplished of the heathen sages, were, no doubt, but imperfectly understood by the Samaritan woman. She was probably mortified at his determining the question so decidedly against her country; and though she does not contradict him, she refers the settlement of the controversy to

44 Even under the former economy, such alone were acceptable worshippers in the true sense of the word. Psal. I. 7-23. Isa. i. 11-20. Micah vi. 6-8. Amos v. 21-24.  
45 Morus' Dissertation "De Deo, Spiritu, ad popularem intelligi accomodate describendo" may be consulted with advantage.—Dissert. Theol. et Philol. Vol. i., Diss. x., p. 328.  
46 Neander.
the Messiah, who, on his coming, would "restore all things"—set all things to rights. "I know," said she, "that the Messiah cometh," or is coming; (the words, "who is called Christ," form an explanatory note of the Evangelist, showing that the Gospel was originally published among those who did not understand Hebrew;) "when he is come, he will tell us all things." 47

It seems probable that the expectation of the speedy appearance of the Messiah was general at this period among the Samaritans, as well as the Jews. The former do not seem to have mingled the political element with their expectations; and anticipated in him a teacher as well as a deliverer. That expectation, probably, was founded on the oracle: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." 48

Our Lord, with infinite condescension and kindness, revealed his true character to this poor woman, and assured her that He was the Messiah, whose coming she was expecting, and that this was the instruction which was to be expected from him:—"I that speak unto thee am he." 49 Our Lord was very cautious of owning, in so many words, his Messiahship among the Jews, for two reasons—they were ready, either to stir up insurrection, and take him by force, and make him their leader, or to accuse him to the Roman government as a seditious person. There was no such hazard here. The Samaritan woman believed our Lord's declaration, and, we can have no doubt, asked and obtained the living water; but, impatient to impart intelligence so important and so delightful to her fellow-citizens, "she left her pitcher, and ran back into the city."

Just about this time his disciples returned with the provisions they had obtained; and though they were amazed that their Master should have entered into familiar conversation with a Samaritan woman, being under the influence of their national prejudice, which held it unworthy of a wise man to talk with a woman, 50 and unfit for a Jew to be familiar with a Samaritan, yet such was their reverence for him, that they did not presume to make any remark on his conduct. 51

On arriving at the city, the woman invited her fellow-citizens to come along with her, and see a person who had discovered a perfect acquaintance with her history, and who, she had reason to think, was the long-promised Messiah:—"Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" 52 Struck with her statements, many of them accompanied her in her return to the well. 53

Meanwhile our Lord's disciples, seeing their Master apparently absorbed in thought, urged him to partake of the provisions they had brought. 54 He replied to their friendly requests:—"I have

49 "He who instructs his daughter in the law is like one that plays the fool."— Talmud. Tr. Sota, l. 26.
50 John iv. 28, 29. 51 John iv. 30. 52 John iv. 31.
meat to eat that ye know not of." Our Lord’s meaning plainly is, ‘Something of which you are ignorant has occurred, which has delighted and invigorated me, so that I have no appetite for natural food.’

His disciples, though even already they must have been in some measure accustomed to his enigmatical form of speech, understood him literally, and supposed that, in their absence, some person might have furnished him with food. To remove their misapprehension, our Lord subjoins:—"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work;" that is, the work he has entrusted me with. ‘In performing the great work committed to me, I find more pleasure than even in my necessary food; success in that, is, in my apprehension, the richest feast.’

At this moment, the multitude of Samaritans appear to have been seen leaving the city, and coming towards them. On perceiving them, our Lord thus addressed the disciples:—

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, one soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors."

'It is a common saying among you, When the seed is cast into the ground, in four months we shall have harvest; but lift up your eyes, and say, if, though we have but commenced sowing, it be not harvest already; are not this people really a people prepared for the Lord?" It is likely our Lord refers here not only to what had just occurred, but also to the great success which had attended his labors, and those of his disciples, in Judea.

"And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together," q. d., ‘This is a work in which it is indeed a privilege to be engaged.’ ‘The reaper,’ that is, the person who succeeds in converting men to the faith of Christ, ‘he receiveth wages,’ he obtains a glorious reward; and ‘the fruit he gathers shall be to life eternal.’ This either refers to his reward being an eternal one, or rather, denotes that those who are converted by his means, the fruits of his ministry, shall be saved eternally; so that the sower, he who used means for their salvation, and did not see their complete success, and he that reapeth—that is, who has been the means of their conversion—may, in their everlasting salvation, find a common enjoyment.

The proverb, ‘one soweth, and another reapeth,’ was fulfilled in the case of our Lord’s disciples—other men had labored, and they had entered into their labors: ‘I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored, and ye are

---

56 John iv. 32. 57 John iv. 35-38.
58 John iv. 33. 59 John iv. 36.
entered into their labors." It was owing to John’s preliminary labors that their preaching had been so successful. This was, very likely, said by our Lord, to repress the vanity of his disciples, who might be flattered by the great multitudes that in Judea had been induced to submit to baptism. Some interpreters have supposed that these words are prophetic, and refer to what took place when his disciples entered into his labors, as well as those of John the Baptist, and the ancient prophets, thus including the abundant harvest of vast multitudes, both of Jews and Samaritans.

Many of the Samaritans were induced, by the report of their towns-woman, to believe in Christ Jesus as the Messiah; which almost necessarily leads us to the conclusion, that, in so short a narrative, many circumstances which took place must have been omitted. These converts, on coming to our Lord, earnestly requested him to remain with them some time. With this request our Lord graciously complied, and continued with them two days. These two days were no doubt busily employed by him, in instructing them in the word of the kingdom. Whether he performed any miracles here we cannot certainly say; there being no mention of them is not certain evidence that they were not wrought. At any rate, by means of his discourses, a great number of additional disciples were gained to his cause.

The "creed," or profession of faith of the Samaritans, deserves notice:—"We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." They seem to have been freer from prejudice as to the design of the Messiah’s mission than the Jews. This may have arisen from the principal prediction of the Messiah, recognized by them, distinctly stating, "That to him should the gathering of the peoples be."

The passage we have been considering is replete with practical instruction.

Let us be grateful that we live under the spiritual dispensation; let us improve our privileges; let us recollect that they bring with them a heavy responsibility, and that a carnal, nominal, hypocritical professor of Christianity will be punished much more severely than a carnal, nominal, hypocritical Jew or Samaritan.

Let ministers and others engaged in cultivating the spiritual harvest beware of becoming "weary in well-doing;" "in due season they shall reap if they faint not." Let them imbibe the spirit, and imitate the conduct, of their Lord and Master.

And let all seek to know, not only from the testimony of others, but from their own experience, that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the divinely-commissioned and qualified Saviour of the world. It is only as the Saviour of the world that any of us can ever have access to him as our own Saviour. But if we do not through faith receive him as our own Saviour, it will avail only to our deeper condemnation that he was made known to us—it may be acknowledged by us, as the Saviour of the world.

---

60 John iv. 37, 38. 61 John iv. 39-41. 62 John iv. 42. 63 Gen. xlix. 10.
EXPOSITION III.

OUR LORD’S DEFENCE OF HIS WORKING MIRACLES ON THE SABBATH-DAY.

John v. 17-47.

To understand aright the very interesting passage which has now been read, it is of importance that we keep steadily in view what it is that makes these statements, and what were the circumstances in which he was placed when he made them. The speaker is Jesus Christ, the incarnate Only-begotten of God; the divine, and the divinely-appointed and qualified, Saviour of men; “the Word, who was in the beginning, who was with God, who was God;” who had become “flesh, and dwelt among men, full of grace and truth,” possessing and displaying, amid all the weakness of the nature he assumed, and the debasement and suffering of the state to which he submitted, a glory peculiar to himself—“the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father.” If this be not steadily kept in view, many of the statements contained in this discourse will be unintelligible, and apparently inconsistent.

The circumstances in which this illustrious speaker was placed when he uttered this discourse, must also be attended to, if we would rightly understand it. On the Sabbath-day, the day appropriated by Divine command to cessation from labor, Jesus Christ had miraculously cured a man who had labored for thirty-eight years under a paralytic affection; and had commanded him, as an evidence of the completeness of his cure, to take up the bed on which he lay, and carry it. On this account, he was charged by the Jewish rulers with the violation of the rest of the Sabbath, which, under that economy, was not only, in a religious point of view, a sin, but, in a civil point of view, a crime, exposing him who was guilty of it to the punishment of death.

This was a charge repeatedly brought against our Lord by his enemies; and his ordinary mode of meeting it was by pleading the character of the works which he performed. They were acts of mercy: and it was admitted, even by themselves, that the law of the Sabbath was not violated by such acts, however laborious and troublesome. Of this mode of vindication we have various instances:—“And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on

¹ John i. 1, 14, 16, 18.
the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore, it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days." "And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him."

In the case before us, however, for the purpose of unfolding the truth with regard to his own personal dignity and official character, he chose to follow a different course. He takes at once far higher ground, and distinctly intimates that he, as well as his Father, is the Lord of the Sabbath.

"My Father," said he, "worketh hitherto, and I work." The meaning of these words, and their force as a defence of our Lord's conduct in healing the impotent man on the Sabbath day, have been variously understood. Some consider them as equivalent to—"The works which I perform are not only my works, but my Father's; my Father works while I work; the healing of this impotent man is not so much my work, as the work of my Father: as he says elsewhere:—"The Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." "In blaming me, then, you blame God. The work which I have done is one which nothing short of Divine power could accomplish; and to represent it as an unlawful deed is the height of impiety."

This is quite an appropriate and an unanswerable defence, but we doubt if the words, fairly interpreted, express this meaning. The idea they naturally suggest, and which, from the impression made on the minds of the Jews, the idea they seem to have suggested, is:—"My Father hitherto, from the creation of the world, has continued to work on the Sabbath-day; and I also work on the Sabbath-day." Though God on the seventh day rested from the work of creation,—the giving being to new orders of creatures,—he is continually employed in the preservation and government of the world. The great machine of the universe does not stand still on the Sabbath-day; the mighty and the minute processes of nature experience no interruption: the sun rises

---

2 Matt. xii. 11, 12. 3 Luke xiii. 11-17. 4 John v. 17.
and sets, the grass grows, the river rolls on, the blood circulates, on the Sabbath, as well as on the other days of the week. 'What my Father does,' says our Lord, 'I do.' He works on the Sabbath-day, and I work on the Sabbath-day; and who dare call in question either his right or mine to do so?'

Our Lord here obviously claims a two-fold equality with the Father. He does the same works with him; and, like him, he works perpetually.

Instead of being overawed by this statement, made by one who, by his miracles, had clearly proved that he was a divine messenger, the Jewish rulers were exasperated by it, and thought that they had now found an additional and a stronger reason for seeking to bring him to capital punishment. He, in their estimation, had not only violated the law of the Sabbath, but been guilty of the crime of blasphemy, in saying "that God was his proper Father, thus making himself equal with God."

It is quite plain that our Lord's argument has no force, if his claim of sonship is not thus to be understood. It were at once impious and absurd for those who are termed "sons of God, in the sense in which the Jewish magistrates received this appellation, or in the sense in which the term is applied to all good men, to argue in this way, 'I have a right to do whatever God does.' It is obvious that our Lord did claim sonship, in a sense peculiar to himself—sonship, in a sense which implied identity of nature, and equality of authority. 'My Father works on the Sabbath-day, and who dare find fault with him? I work on the Sabbath-day, and who dare find fault with me?'

The Jewish rulers, not believing him to be what he was, an incarnation of God, and the divine, and the divinely-appointed, Saviour of the world, considered this assertion as, in itself, a greater crime than that for which it had been brought forward as a defence. To the crime of Sabbath violation, he had, in their estimation, added that of blasphemy; for, in calling God "his Father," he had claimed identity of nature with him, thus "making himself equal with God."

Such was the inference they drew from his words, and it appears that it was a fair inference. He does not accuse them of misrepresenting his meaning; he does not protest against their construction of his words. He goes on to state the truth with regard to his person and office, and the evidence on which it rested, and thus to vindicate himself equally from the charge of Sabbath violation in having healed, by his divine power, an impotent man on that day, and of blasphemy, in making an assertion which, by necessary implication, was a claim of equality with God.

I.—THE DOCTRINE.

The general idea pervading the whole discourse is this:—

'There exists a perfect unity of mind, and will, and operation.'

* * *

\[\text{John v. 18.}\]
between the Father and the Son. The works of the Son are really divine works; so that, neither can he be justly accused of Sabbath violation for working on the Sabbath-day, nor of blasphemy, in making himself equal with God.

"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." These words have sometimes been explained, as if they meant, 'The Son, as the mediatorial servant of the Father, does nothing but according to the will of the Father.' This is true; but it does not seem to be the truth here stated. Our Lord's defence is not, that his works were divinely-appointed works, but that they were divine works. The meaning seems to be, 'The Son can do nothing separately from the Father.'

The word "can" is, I apprehend, to be understood in its strict meaning of physical impossibility. It is true, that from the moral perfection of the God-man, Christ Jesus, he was morally incapable of doing anything inconsistent with the will of his Father. But here the question is about an act of physical power—the miraculous cure of the impotent man—and the meaning seems to be, 'It is impossible for the Son to exercise divine power separate from the Father; when the Son works, the Father works also.'

To "see," here, is just equivalent to 'to know'—to know intuitively. When the Son exerts his divine power, it is always in the conscious knowledge, arising from the possession of the same divine nature, that it is the will of the Father that it should be so exerted; and as in this way the Son can do nothing but what the Father does, so, on the other hand, "what things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." He does only what he, by the possession of the same divine nature, is conscious that the Father is doing; and he does all that the Father does "likewise," in the like manner, doing not only what He does, but doing it as He does it; that is, in a way comporting with the absolute perfection of their common divine nature.

All is of the Father—all is by the Son. Did the Father create the universe? So did the Son. Does the Father uphold the universe? So does the Son. Does the Father govern the universe? So does the Son. Is the Father the Saviour of the world? So is the Son. Surely the Jews did not err when they concluded that our Lord made himself equal with God. Surely he who is so intimately connected with God, that he does what God does, does all that God does, does all in the same manner in which God does it; surely such a person cannot but be equal with God.

Our Lord adds, "For the Father loveth the Son." There is an ineffable, infinite affection of the Father to the Son, neces-

---

' John v. 19.
" Candor est lucis aeternae. Attendere canorem solis. In celo est et expandit canorem per terras omnes: Si separas canorem solis a sole, separa Verbum a Patre."—Augustin.
sarily springing out of their common possession of infinite excellence; and this love is manifested in the Father's "showing the Son all that he doeth" in—if I may venture on the expression—his having no secrets with him.

The idea seems to be this, that the love of the Father and of the Son, their perfect complacency in each other, is manifest in that perfect knowledge which the Son has of the period at which, the purpose for which, and the manner in which, the divine power equally possessed by them is to be put forth. 'Is it in consequence of this perfect knowledge,' as if our Lord had said—'that in this case I have exerted divine power while my Father was exerting it.'

And he adds, 'still further—still more extraordinary manifestations of this community of knowledge, will, and operation of the Father and of the Son, will be made.' "He will show you greater works than these, that ye may all marvel!" or, so "that ye shall all marvel;" that is, we apprehend, 'The Son, in consequence of his perfect knowledge of the mind, and will, and operations of his divine Father, will yet make still more remarkable displays of that divine power which is equally his Father's and his own,—such displays, as will fill with amazement all who witness them.'

What these displays were to be, appears from what follows.—He had healed an impotent man, but he was soon to raise to life some who had been dead; nay, at a future period he was to raise to life all the dead, and act as the Governor and Judge of all mankind.

Such intimate knowledge of all the designs and operations of the Almighty and Eternal God; such knowledge as may be compared to acute vision; such intuition of the Divine plan of operation, together with the putting forth the divine energies necessary to carry this plan into execution,—surely this, if anything can, proves the proper divinity of our Lord and Saviour.

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." These words seem an illustration of the statement made in the close of the 19th verse,—"whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise;" as well as a specimen of "the greater things" than the healing of the impotent man.

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." The Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them,—that is, 'God possesses the power, and that power is peculiar to Divinity, of raising up and giving life to the dead.' It is one of the peculiar characteristics of the living and true God, that he is "the God that quickeneth the dead." Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death."

---

"Why should it be counted an incredible thing, that God should raise the dead," says the apostle, obviously intimating that it might well be accounted an incredible thing that any one else should raise them. Now, this power is claimed by our Lord in the most absolute manner,—the power not only of raising up, but of quickening, and of raising up and quickening whom he will.

He "has life in himself, as the Father has life in himself," so that he can, not merely, like the apostles, acting as the instruments of divine power, or rather as its heralds, declare that power shall be manifested in raising this or that person from the dead, but he can resuscitate and re-animate whomsoever he will. It is a power inherent in him, which he can exert whenever he chooses. With regard to all the dead, he has but to speak the word, and they live.

But not only is the Son thus possessed, as a divine person, of the same power as the Father, but in the economy of salvation, the Father has appointed him to fill such offices, and to perform such works, as are competent only to one who is possessed of divine perfections, and he has done this for the express purpose that men should yield to his Son the same religious homage as they do to himself. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.""

The sum of our Lord's statements, in what goes before, seems to be this,—"The Son is, equally with the Father, possessed of divine perfections.—His works are, equally with the Father's, divine works." The sum of the statement that follows, seems to be,—"In the economy of man's salvation the Father has appointed him to manifest his own divine perfections, so that men may be led to honor him, even as they honor the Father."

The word "judge," may be understood either in a more confined, or in a more extended sense. In the first case, it is equivalent to 'finally to determine,' and refers to what we ordinarily term "the last judgment," which is to follow the general resurrection, and in which all men are to "receive according to the deeds which they have done, whether they be good or evil." In the second case, it is equivalent to 'to govern—to rule.' The last sense includes the first, and therefore we are inclined to prefer it, being disposed to take the words in the most extended sense they will bear.

Under the economy of grace, the whole administration of the Divine moral government is put into the hands of the incarnate Son—the glorified God-man, Christ Jesus. "Jehovah has said to our Lord, Sit thou at my right hand;" and there he sits and reigns, and must continue to reign, till all his enemies are made

---

18 Acts xxvi. 8. 19 John v. 22, 23. 20 syri. 21 2 Cor. v. 10. 22 Psal. xcvii. 13; xcviii. 9; cx. 6. Isa. lii. 4; xi. 3. Mic. iv. 3. Rev. xiv. 11. 23 Psal. ex. 1.
his footstool. He has obtained "a name above every name." "Angels, principalities, and powers being made subject to him." The Father administers government under the new economy, not directly, but by the Son; he hath committed all government to the Son. Everything connected with the government of the church and of the world, inclusive of the final distribution of rewards and punishments, has been entrusted to him.

It has sometimes been said, with something like a sneer, by the Unitarian enemies of the doctrine of our Lord's proper divinity,—"It would seem, according to your views, that this appointment was a very unnecessary thing; nothing being given to the Son except what, according to you, he always possessed.' But surely it does not require much acuteness to see the distinction between the possession, and the exercise, of a power, "to observe the distinction between an original ground of suitableness in the capacity and qualifications of an agent fit for a given purpose, and a consequent investment of that agent with a particular function appropriated to that purpose.""

The design of the Father in appointing the Son to be in reference to all creatures the Supreme Ruler, is "that all may honor the Son as they honor the Father." He has appointed him to an office, the discharge of the functions of which, absolutely requires divine perfections, that in the display of these he may appear entitled to, and may receive, divine homage. "That," they may either be considered as equivalent to, 'in order that,' or 'so that,' as indicating the design of God, or as indicating the conclusion which ought to be drawn from the fact. Surely our Lord has here very distinctly told us who and what he is. For, after having attributed to himself works obviously divine, he here, in express words, claims for himself divine worship—worship equal to that rendered to the Father.

The word rendered "to honor," does not of itself convey the idea of worship. But to honor God, is to worship him. Every mark of respect, inferior to worship, would be not honor, but insult to Him. To honor God is to worship him; and to worship God, is just to think, and feel, and act, towards him, in conformity to the revelation he has made of himself. He has revealed himself as infinitely great, excellent, and good—the creator, preserver, proprietor, governor, of all things. To think, feel, and act in conformity to this revelation; in other words, supremely to esteem, reverence, love, and trust in God, and to express these sentiments in obedience and submission, this is to worship God.

To "honor the Father," expresses that modification of religious worship which rises out of the revelation which God has made of himself in the paternal character. God has made himself known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as our God and Father in him; as God loving the world,

---

44 Phil. ii. 9. Eph. i. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 22. 45 Pye Smith. 46 Iva. 47 Tyidon.
God reconciling the world to himself. Now, he is not honored in this character, unless we look to him with unsuspecting confidence for every blessing we need for time and eternity, through the mediation of his Son.

To "honor the Son," is just to regard the Son with those sentiments and feelings which correspond with the revelation made of him as "the" eternal "Word," "the brightness of his Father's glory," "God manifest in the flesh," the divinely-appointed and divinely-qualified, Redeemer of men.

The honor which it is the will of the Father should he given to the Son, is the same honor that is due to himself, "that all should honor the Son as they honor the Father." It is not an honor resembling that due to himself; but it is honor equal to that due to himself, the same honor that is due to himself. He is to be worshipped as the true God, possessed of all divine perfections, the creator, preserver, proprietor, governor, saviour, and judge of the world.

That the honor here referred to, is really the honor of divine worship, is plain from the reasons on which the claim is founded. God is his proper Father; he is God's proper Son; there is identity of nature. He is equal with God; he has divine powers and prerogatives; equally with the Father, he has the power of raising and quickening whom he will; equally with the Father, he is the ruler and judge of the universe. These are the grounds on which a claim is made, that the Son should be honored as the Father.

It is added, "He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." It is the will of the Father, that all men should honor the Son as they honor himself; and if this will be not complied with, the Father is dishonored. The Father wills to be honored and worshipped through the Son; his will is to be worshipped by men as the Father of our Lord, and our Father in him. Now this cannot be done unless we honor the Son. Indeed the Father cannot be honored in any other way than by honoring the Son. He who does not honor the Son, does not acknowledge God as the Father, such as he has manifested himself in his Son; he does not acknowledge the paternal love towards us, manifested in sending his own Son; he does not place his confidence in the Father, just because he has not faith in the Son; he cannot love the Father, for he does not acknowledge the love of the Father. He cannot obey the Father, because he wants those aids, which can be supplied only by faith in the Son. It is in the Son that the Father manifests himself:—"He who has seen the Son, has seen the Father," and he who has not seen the Son, has not seen the Father. So closely connected are the worship of the Father, and that of the Son, that the one cannot exist without the other.

The proper interpretation of the paragraph which follows, (verse 24–29,) depends on the right resolution of the question,

20 John xiv. 9.
whether the leading words in it, "death," "life," and "resurrection," are to be understood literally or figuratively."

There can be no reasonable doubt, that "death" is often in the New Testament used to describe that state of moral corruption and spiritual inactivity in which all men are by nature; and "life" to describe that state of holy activity and enjoyment, into which they are brought by the faith of the Gospel; and that the transition from the one state into the other is sometimes represented as a resurrection; and some interpreters have considered the passage before us as one of those in which, under these significant figures, the power of the doctrines of Christ, when understood and believed, to effect a great and most salutary change on the character and condition of mankind, is brought before the mind.

On carefully examining the passage, however, I am persuaded that the words are to be understood in their literal signification, and that they do not refer to the conversion of the irregenerate, but to the resurrection of the dead. The reasons which have induced me to form this judgment, are the following:—

Unless the context absolutely requires it, we are never to depart from the literal signification of words and phrases, when they afford a true and consistent meaning.

On the principle of figurative interpretation, it seems impossible to attach distinct ideas to such expressions as, "all who are in their graves shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life, and some to the resurrection of damnation."

The context obviously not only admits of, but seems to require, the literal interpretation of these words. Jesus Christ had performed a miracle of mercy on the Sabbath-day, and the Jewish rulers accused him of Sabbath violation. The question between him and them referred to his right to perform works on a day set apart by Divine authority to cessation from labors. In answer to their objection he might have done, what he did on other occasions, have urged the character of the works he performed. It was a work of mercy, and therefore no violation of the law rightly understood. But he chose, as we have seen, to occupy other and higher ground. From his possession of the same divine power as that displayed by his Father in the upholding and governing of the world, he argues his right of exercis-

29 This is one of the most difficult questions in exegesis. The mystical or spiritual interpretation is comparatively modern. It is that of most of the rationalistic interpreters, such as Ammon, Eckermann, and Eichhorn. The literal is that adopted by the more ancient Greek and Latin interpreters, as Chrysostom and Tertullian, and by such modern interpreters as Storr, Tittmann, and Schott. Some very good interpreters, as Calvin, Lampe, Lücke, and Neander, endeavor to cojoin the two interpretations; I think not very successfully. The only serious difficulty in the way of adopting the exegesis which, upon the whole, seems the preferable one, rises out of the use of the perfect in the close of the 2th verse, where we should have expected the future; but in prophetic statements, the perfect often stands for the future, to indicate the absolute certainty of the event. As Tholuck says, "He who has become a believer in the Son is regarded by God as already holy and glorified for all eternity," Rom. viii. 30. A very good view of the arguments for both modes of interpretation is given by Tittmann in loc.
ing that power on the Sabbath-day, as well as on other days, just as his Father exercised it. The Jews understood this as claiming equality with God, and they seem rightly so to have understood it, for our Lord does not complain either of their misapprehending or misinterpreting his meaning. What follows, then, is our Lord’s explanation and vindication of the assertion, which the Jews considered as blasphemy, that he was equal with God, that he had the same power that God has. To say, what according to the figurative mode of interpretation our Lord says, that the doctrine which he had been commissioned of God to teach, if understood and believed, would effect a salutary change in the character and condition of mankind, so great and wonderful, that nothing short of the resurrection of the dead could afford, an adequate figurative representation of it, would have been to state a truth, but a truth which seems to have no direct bearing on the obvious object of our Lord’s discourse; whereas to say, what the words, literally interpreted, plainly convey, that he was possessed of the same divine power with the Father,—power which he had manifested in the performance of miracles, and would still farther manifest in the performance of still greater miracles, immediately or very soon, in not only curing diseased men, but quickening dead men, and ultimately in raising to life all who had ever died,—this was just to make the assertion which the circumstance required, and which his previous statements led to expect.

On these grounds we are disposed to prefer the literal interpretation of this passage, to the mystical, or even to the mixed, interpretation of it. Let us proceed to examine it somewhat more closely.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him who sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

To “hear,” is often, in Scripture, used to denote, to attend, to believe, to obey; for example—“This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.” He that hears Christ’s word is just he who attends to, who believes, who obeys him, as a divine teacher,—who considers all that he says as divinely true, and as divinely true because he says it.

To “hear the word” of Christ, and to “believe on,” or to “believe him who sent him,” is substantially the same thing, for our Lord himself says—“My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me: He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.”

Now, our Lord’s assertion is, that every one who, by receiving as true his doctrine, as the doctrine of a divinely-commissioned teacher, gave credit to Him whose messenger he was, should become the subject of that divine power, which he in common with his Father possessed. He “hath,” that is, he shall assuredly have, “eternal life,” he shall be made capable of, and shall in due time enter on, a state of everlasting holy activity and

10 John v. 24.
enjoyment. "He shall not come into condemnation." The word rendered "condemnation," properly signifies 'judgment;' but here, as in many other parts of Scripture, especially of the Gospel by John, is equivalent to 'condemnation or punishment.' The meaning is: 'He shall not be condemned or punished.' On the contrary, "he is passed," that is, shall pass, "from death to life." These words are often, perhaps ordinarily, explained of conversion; but in their connection here, it seems more natural to explain them, of "the resurrection of life." He who hears Christ's words, and believes on Him who sent him, is not exempted from death. "It is appointed to men once to die." The awful doom extends to all mankind:—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." "The body must die because of sin,"—the first sin of the first man. "But the spirit lives, because of" the free and full "justification," by the obedience unto the death of the second man, the Lord from heaven; and "he, who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal body." To all who have his word, and believe on him who sent him, death is but the way to life.

The declaration in the passage before us seems nearly equivalent to the following:—"This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die."\[235]\[235] But the hearers of our Lord, were not required to wait till they got into the world of spirits, to witness these greater things which the Son, in the exercise of that divine power which equally belongs to him and to his Father, was to perform: He adds, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."\[236]\[236]

These words are, we apprehend, a prediction of the miraculous resurrection of Jairus' daughter, of the son of the widow of Nain, and of Lazarus, and it may be of others; for we have no reason to think that all Christ's miracles are recorded; nay, we certainly know that he did so many other things besides those which are recorded, that, "had they been written every one, I suppose," says the evangelist, "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."\[237]\[237] "The hour is coming, and now is," that is, 'the appointed period is just at hand,' "when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live;" that is, 'when I the Son of God, shall by a mere act of my will, expressed by a word of my mouth, restore to life those who are dead.'

How accurately does the event correspond to the prediction! Hear the story of Jairus' daughter:—"While he yet spake, there

\[231\] κρίον.
\[232\] See Note A.
\[233\] John v. 25.
\[234\] John vi. 40; xi. 25, 26.
came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue. Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha-cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel (I say unto thee), arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. 

Hear the story of the widow’s only son:—

And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. 

Hear the story of Lazarus:—

“Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.”

Our Lord not only states that he would raise the dead, by merely commanding them to arise, but he, in the plainest terms, informs us that he would do this in the exercise of that independent power of giving life which belongs, and can belong, to no creature, but which is common to him and his Divine Father. “I for as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he

40 Mark v. 35-42. 42 Luke vii. 11-15. 43 John xi. 38-44.
given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

This is by far the most difficult passage in the whole of our Lord's discourse. At first sight, it seems to involve a contradiction. To have life "in himself," and to have it "given to him to have life in himself," seem incompatibilities. The life which he has, seems to be represented as at once independent and dependent, original and derived. Let us examine the passage attentively. We shall find that, while there may be some things obscure, there is much that is clear; and, that, what is at first sight obscure, may, on closer inspection, lose much of its obscurity.

It is very plainly stated, that "the Son has life in himself," and that he "has life in himself, even as the Father hath life in himself." "Life," when attributed to God in the Scriptures, seems to denote the property of independent existence, the possessing life, in the highest sense of that word, and the power of communicating life to those who have it not, and of restoring it to those who have lost it, or been deprived of it. When we call God the living God, or say that in him is life, we mean that he is the source of life, the fountain of being, the creative, life-giving principle. "The Father has life in himself;" it belongs to his nature; he has received it of no one; it is an essential attribute of his necessarily existing nature: he so has life, that he can impart, withdraw, and restore it to whomsoever he pleases. He is the fountain of all life. All in earth and in heaven, who have life, have received it from him "in whom is life," "with whom is the fountain of life," who "has life in himself." They have not life in themselves. "In him they live, and move, and have their being;"

Now, the Son is said to have "life in himself," that is, the Son is a possessor of independent existence. He derives his life from none; he has the power of communicating life according to his pleasure. "He has life in himself, even as the Father has life in himself." All the life in the universe is as really from the Son as from the Father. He is equally with the Father the possessor of that independent existence, and that power of giving existence, which is one of the grand characteristics of Divinity. He and his Father are equally "the first, and the last, and the living One." These principles are very clearly stated in the passage before us; they are in perfect accordance with the general doctrine of the Scripture; and our confidence in them is not to be at all affected by the difficulty which may attach to some of the other expressions in the passage before us.

The whole of the difficulty lies in the phrase:—"The Father hath given to the Son to have life in himself." There is something very peculiar in this phraseology. It is not said, that "the Father hath given the Son life in himself," but "he has given to

---

38 John v. 26, 27.
the Son to have life," or, that he might have." Life in himself!

The first mode of expression would have distinctly stated a communication of life from the Father to the Son; and, had it been our Lord's intention to express this idea, he would probably have adopted it as the simplest and most unequivocal method of expressing it. The second mode of expression, which is peculiar, seems intended to convey some other idea. What that is, we hope to be able by and by to make evident.

Most interpreters appear to have overlooked this peculiarity of expression, and have considered the words as expressive of what they have termed that eternal communication of the Divine nature, which they consider as implied in the very nature of our Lord's sonship. I cannot find in the Scriptures any sanction to this language. I can attach no distinct idea to it. It seems to me a contradiction in terms. I know very good divines have spoken of the Father as the fountain of Deity; but, in doing so, they have, I apprehend, "darkened counsel by words without knowledge." A derived independent existence, a communicated original power, are certainly downright absurdities.

But, the expression is not. The Father hath given to the Son life in himself, or independent existence, and the power of giving existence to whomsoever he will; but he has given to the Son to have life in himself. The word give is often used in Scripture, as equivalent to 'appoint.' The appointment of the Son to be the Messiah is repeatedly expressed by this word:—"Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." 46 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." 47 The Father has appointed the Son to have, or hold, life in himself. The word "gave" does not seem to refer to the life itself, but to the manner of having or holding it. The Father, as the head of the mediatorial economy, appoints the Son to hold and exercise that independent power of conferring life, which is the characteristic property of that divinity, of which they are equally possessed. He constitutes him the fountain of divine life to mankind, because he is in himself adequate to this function. The idea seems materially the same as, when it is said, that "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell"—"that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily;" that so out "of this fulness we might all receive grace for grace"—superabounding grace. This appears to me the most satisfactory mode of explaining this somewhat difficult passage.

That the words refer to a Divine appointment, having a reference to the mediatorial economy, is obvious from what follows: "and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." 48 To execute judgment is, we apprehend, to administer the government of the world, including, of course, the passing and executing final sentences on all

39 ἐξευθέν. 40 Isa. Iv. 4. 41 John iii. 16. 42 John v. 27.
intelligent beings. The Father has appointed the Son, in his mediatorial capacity, to be the ruler of the world; "he hath committed all things into his hand." He has appointed him to discharge functions, for the proper discharge of which, divine perfections are absolutely necessary; for what, short of divine power and wisdom, could enable a person to govern the universe?

It is added, he has done so, "because he is the Son of man." I have already had an opportunity of explaining to you the meaning of the appellation "the Son of man," when used as a descriptive appellation of the Messiah. The force of the particle rendered "because," has been variously explained. We are disposed to think the most probable method of interpretation is that which supposes that there is a reference to the remarkable prophetic oracle recorded by the prophet Daniel (chap. vii. 13, 14). It is obvious that our Lord, though using the third person, is speaking of himself; and it is just as if he had said, 'The Father hath appointed me to be the ruler of the world, for I am the person to whom, according to the ancient oracles, a kingdom without limit and without end was to be committed.'

Our Lord now directs the attention of his hearers to a still more remarkable manifestation which was to be made by him of the divine power which, equally with the Father, he possessed, and which, by the Father, he had been appointed to display:—

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." That is, 'There is a period coming, when all who have died shall, by their being restored to life by the Son, find in their own experience that he has life in himself, as the Father has life in himself; and when it shall appear also, that all judgment is committed to the Son, by his sentencing those who have done good—who have complied with the Divine will respecting the salvation of men, by believing the truth, and living under its influence—to life, everlasting life; and by his sentencing them who have done evil—who have lived and died in a state of unquelled rebellion against God—to punishment, everlasting punishment; and by bestowing the rewards, and inflicting the punishment, to which he has respectively adjudged them.'

— Dr. Campbell and many others take another view of the meaning of the phrase. They render it, and fairly enough, "Because he is a son of man." It is remarkable that this is the only place in which the appellation is employed without the article. They consider the sentiment expressed as equivalent to—for it suits the ends of Divine wisdom, that the Judge, as well as the Saviour of men, should be a man." This sentiment is undoubtedly a just one, though no ἄνθρωπος, none but a man in union with God as the incarnate Son was, could have been fit for discharging the functions of such an office. Some of the reasons why the power of judgment was given to our Lord as a son of man, are very well assigned by Witsius in his "Exercit. in Symb." Exercit. xxii. § 9. Scholten "de appellatione του Υιου του 'Ανθρώπου," deserves also to be consulted.

—I John v. 23, 29.
The only illustration this verse demands, or indeed admits, is to be drawn from parallel passages of Scripture, of which the following are a specimen:—"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." 

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he also say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." 

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whore

---

1 Thess. iv. 16.  2 Thess. 1. 7-9.  Matt. xxy. 31-46.
mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

Our Lord concludes, as he had begun, by declaring, that in all the exertions of his power, and in all the acts of his government, he did nothing separate from the Father. “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” In doing all these things I act along with the Father,—our mind, and will, and operation are one. I can do nothing separate from him.” “As I hear, I judge.” The word “hear,” is to be understood in the same way as the word “see” in the preceding context. “My judgment is in every case in exact accordance with the mind of the Father, of which I have the most intimate knowledge, a knowledge absolutely perfect, as arising from the possession of the same divine nature. And the justice of my judgments shall be made manifest, as all of them shall be made to appear to be guided, not by any regard to what might be considered my own private will and interest, but by a strict regard to the will of the Father, who hath appointed me to manifest the Divine perfections; to do the Divine will; “that God may be all in all.”

In the preceding part of the discourse, Jesus Christ has unfolded the great fundamental truths of his religion,—that he is a divine person, possessed of the distinctive nature and attributes of Deity; and that he is the divinely-authorized, and divinely-qualified, Saviour, and Ruler, and Judge of mankind; and he farther states that the belief of these principles is most intimately connected with the most important interests of mankind. “He that believes them shall be saved; he that believes them not shall be damned.” In requiring his hearers to believe these doctrines, under sanctions so awful, our Lord made no unreasonable demand. He accompanied his statements of principle, with corresponding statements of evidence; and there is a beautiful proportion between the importance and the strangeness of the doctrines he taught, on the one hand; and, on the other, the power and variety of the proofs by which he supported them. He demands belief, unhesitating belief; but he does so only on the ground of having presented the most satisfactory credentials, that he was “sent and sealed” by the Father. To these credentials we find him soliciting the attention of his hearers in that paragraph which now comes before us for consideration. The substance of that paragraph may be thus stated: ‘Of the truth of these principles, strange and even blasphemous as they may appear to your prejudiced minds, you have been presented with varied and most conclusive evidence; and should you reject them, your conduct in doing so will be altogether inexcusable.”

II. THE EVIDENCE.

Our Lord begins with stating, that he did not expect these statements to be credited on his own unconfirmed assertion. "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." These words are plainly to be understood in a limited sense; Jesus did bear witness of himself, and his testimony was true; and we find him asserting on another occasion, when this saying of his had apparently been retorted on him by his opponents,—"Though I bear record of myself, my record is true," the limitations under which our Lord's assertion is to be understood, are easily defined. It has been justly remarked, that in all countries where there are standing laws, and a regular constitution, there is what is called a forensic or juridical use of certain terms, which differs considerably from the familiar use of the same words. To be guilty, properly signifies, to have perpetrated a crime; but in the forensic use of the term, he only is said to be guilty against whom a crime has been proved by legal evidence. There is a similar distinction between the ordinary and the forensic sense of the word here rendered "true." In the latter sense it is equivalent to 'valid' or 'trustworthy.' It is held that a man's unsupported testimony, in reference to anything that concerns himself, is not in ordinary cases to be considered as evidence. It may be true, but it must be confirmed by other evidence before it can be admitted to be true. Our Lord's assertion then is, 'Were there no evidence for the statements which I have just made, but my own unsupported declaration, they would not deserve credit. It were unreasonable to demand belief for such important and such strange statements, on the simple word of him whom they principally concern.'

But our Lord's testimony was supported by a variety of the most satisfactory evidences. "There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true." The word "true," here occurs in the same sense as in the previous verse. It is as if our Lord had said:—'I do not urge my own unsupported declaration as valid evidence, but there is another person who has given testimony to the same effect, whose declaration must be sustained as valid evidence.' It has been a question among interpreters, who that other witness is to whom our Lord here appeals. Some consider the reference to be to John the Baptist; others, to the Father. Those who take the latter view of the subject, consider the following to be the train of thought:—'I do not claim belief to these declarations on my own unsupported affirmation. They are supported by the testimony of one, whose credibility is far above all question. I might appeal to the testimony of John, whose evidence ought to have much weight with you, considering the high estimation in which

60 John v. 31. 61 John viii. 14. 62 Campbell. 63 John v. 32.
he was generally held by you; but I have no need of the support of his, or indeed of any human, testimony, though for your advantage I advert to it. For the evidence of the statements I make, I appeal to my Father, whom you call your God,—to the testimony he has given in the works which he performed by me, in the voice from the most excellent glory, and the supernatural appearance which accompanied it, and in the declarations contained in those writings which you acknowledge to be his word.' The very emphatic manner in which our Lord speaks of that "other" witness, as one whose testimony he knew to be valid and trustworthy, and his statement, that he referred to John's testimony, not because he needed it, but because it might have a salutary influence on the minds of his hearers, render it, in my opinion, all the more certain that this view of the meaning is a just one."

"Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth." Our Lord here plainly refers to the testimony which John bore to him as the Messiah, when the Jewish Sanhedrim sent a deputation to inquire into the nature of his pretensions. Of this we have an account in the first chapter of this gospel:—"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not: but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us; what sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent, were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptisest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptise with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptising. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptising with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.

"Ἀλλος cannot be the Baptist (see John v. 34), as Chrysostom and Euthymius think, but is the Father. Christ calls him 'Ἀλλος' to excite their attention. John viii. 18."—Thorow."
And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." This was not a solitary instance in which John testified,—publicly declared,—our Lord to be the divine, and the divinely-appointed and qualified, Saviour promised to the fathers. A still more explicit declaration on these subjects was made to his disciples, when they came complaining of the growing popularity of Jesus. "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Our Lord does not mention John's testimony as if he needed it, but because it was fitted to make a salutary impression on the minds of his hearers. "But I receive not testimony from man, but these things I say that ye may be saved."

To "receive" here, as in verse 44, where it is interchanged with the word "seek," is equivalent to 'grasp at,' as if he had said, 'I am not anxious to build my cause on human testimony: but I mention this circumstance for your advantage.' John's testimony was likely to have—most certainly ought to have had—much weight with the great body of the Jews, who, with scarcely any exception, held him as a prophet; and especially with the Sanhedrin, who, if he had been a false prophet, should have punished him according to law. His testimony should have been sustained as valid by them, as it was given in reply to a solemn inquiry instituted by themselves, and they had never proceeded against him as if he had borne false witness.

Our Lord desired the salvation of the Jews; he well knew that they could be saved only through the belief of the truth; and he notices John's testimony, not, by any means, as in itself the strongest evidence he had to bring forward, but as evidence peculiarly fitted to make an impression on their minds. "He was," says our Lord, "a burning and shining light," or he was "the lighted and shining lamp;" and "ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." He was a teacher of truth, distinguished by the fervor of his zeal, and the clearness of his statements respecting the Messiah, when compared with the pro-

---

96 John i. 19-34. 97 John iii. 27-36. 98 John v. 34. 99 John v. 35.
phetic oracles; and "ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." It is plain that the Baptist was, in the earlier stages of his ministry, highly popular as a teacher. Vast multitudes followed him, listening to his discourses, and submitting to his baptism. The phrase "for a season" refers either to the comparatively short period of John's ministry, —"he was a bright but a passing meteor;" —or rather to the still shorter period of his popularity; for there is reason to believe that his doctrines became less popular as they became better understood; that many rejoiced in him as the herald of Messiah the Prince, who turned with disgust from him as the supporter of Jesus of Nazareth. The circumstance of John's high qualifications and character as a teacher is noticed by our Lord as a reason why his testimony should be accounted true or trustworthy by the Jews, q. d., 'My claims, in all their extent, were admitted and proclaimed by one whom, for a season, you honored as one of the most illustrious of public teachers.'

"But," continues our Lord, "I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." The whole of what follows is our Lord's account of the testimony of God, as contrasted with the testimony of John, or of men.

The first Divine testimony is that given by the "works" which the Saviour did—"works which the Father gave him to finish" or perform. Some have supposed that, by these works, we are to understand all that our Lord did in the execution of the great office of Saviour of men, to which he was divinely appointed, and for which he was divinely qualified; and there can be no doubt, that the whole of his work, especially when compared with the prophetic testimony respecting it, affords satisfactory proof of his divine mission. At the same time, our Lord's miracles are often called his "works," e. g., "Now, when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples." "His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest." "Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel." "Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me:" "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." And our Lord often appeals to these miracles as evidence of his divine mission. We apprehend, therefore, that, in the use of the word "works" here, there is, if not an exclusive, at least a principal reference to them.

Our Lord's declaration, then, is equivalent to 'God has testified my divine mission by the miracles which I have wrought,'

and which nothing but divine power could have accomplished.' Miracles are not a direct proof of the truth of doctrines, but they are a direct, and indeed it would appear the only satisfactory, evidence of a divine mission. The place which miracles hold in the system of Christian evidence, is very clearly pointed out by Nicodemus:—"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God, for no man can do these miracles which thou doest except God be with him." The works done by our Lord were obviously such as divine power alone could have performed. They were the seal of God; and, when we consider his holiness, and justice, and benignity, we cannot for a moment suspect that he would attach that seal to imposture."

But the miracles performed by our Lord were not the only nor the most direct evidence given in favor of him by his Father:—
"The Father himself who hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." It is a question among expositors, to what particular testimony our Lord here refers. Many, perhaps most, seem to consider the reference as made to the testimony contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, which are expressly appealed to in the thirty-ninth and succeeding verses; and they view the words in the close of the thirty-seventh verse as merely introductory to the bringing forward this evidence, q. d., 'Though my Father has not appeared in human form, and given evidence with an audible voice, yet, in his word, which ye profess highly to value, he has given testimony concerning me.' Others, with whom we are disposed to coincide, consider the words in the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth verses as referring to the remarkable testimony given to our Lord at his baptism by a voice from heaven, and a supernatural glorious appearance. In this case, the words must be read, not affirmatively, but interrogatively:—"Did ye never hear his voice, or see his form, or have ye not his word abiding in you, that ye believe not him whom he hath sent?"

The following is the account of this remarkable testimony:—
"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to John, to be baptised of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptised went straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The supernatural luminous appearance, commonly called the Shekinah, which was the symbol of the Divine presence, is, in Exodus xxiv. 17, called "the sight of the

---

64 A condensed view of the force of the miracles of our Lord, as evidence of his doctrine, may be found in Exposition XIX.: "The Ministry of Christ—Its Details and Its Results."

65 John v. 37.

66 Matt. iii. 13-17

b See Note B.
glory of the Lord," or the glorious form of Jehovah. It is, as
if he said, 'Did not an articulate voice from heaven declare me
the beloved Son of the Father, in whom he was well pleased;
and was not this declaration accompanied by the appearance of
that supernatural light which, from the beginning of the Jewish
economy at least, has been the symbol of the Divine presence?'
Could more direct testimony be given to me by God? How is it
that ye do not then receive me? "Is it because ye have not the
word of my Father, which he then spake, abiding in you?" that
is, 'Have ye forgotten the solemn declaration which he then
made?' Ah, "Ye have not his word abiding in you, for him
whom he hath sent, him ye believe not."

But, besides the testimony borne to our Lord by his Father,
in the miracles which he performed, and in the supernatural voice
and appearance which distinguished his baptism, he appeals to
the evidence of his divine mission, which was to be derived from
the Old Testament Scriptures, which were, and were admitted by
the Jews to be, given by inspiration of God:—"Search the
Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they
are they which testify of me."

These words admit of three renderings. They may be ren-
dered indicatively, "Ye search the Scriptures;" or imperatively,
as our translators have rendered them, "Search the Scriptures;"
or interrogatively, "Do ye search the Scriptures?" We are
inclined to prefer the last mode of rendering them, "Do ye
search the Scriptures, because in them ye think ye have eternal
life? they testify of me; and will ye not come to me, that ye may
have life?"

The Jews professed to have a very high regard for the Old
Testament Scriptures. They, especially the doctors of the San-
hedrim, whom our Lord was now addressing, searched and
studied them. They considered them as the only really valuable
literature, holding in contempt the Grecian and Roman phi-
losophy. They thought that in them "they had eternal life;"
that is, that they afforded the adequate means of attaining true
and permanent happiness. 'Now,' says our Lord, 'these Scrip-
tures, which you profess so highly to estimate—these Scriptures
are the Father's testimony concerning me. I am the great subject
of the Old Testament revelation. To me all the prophets bear
witness. There is such a minute and accurate correspondence
between what I am, what I teach, what I do, what I suffer, and
what, according to these Scriptures, the Messiah was to be, and
teach, and do, and suffer, that, were you not blinded by prejudice,
you could not but see and acknowledge that I am He of whom
Moses in the law and the prophets did write; and yet, will ye not
come to me, that you may have life? Though the books you
yourselves admit to be sacred, and to contain the only true ac-

67 Τὸ εἶδος τῆς δόξης τοῦ Κυρίου.
66 "John is fond of the word μένειν. 1 John iii. 9; ii. 27, 28. 2 John ii. 9. John
xv. 7."—Tholuck.
69 John v. 88.
70 John v. 39.
count of the way to happiness—though these sacred books clearly
testify that I am the true author of happiness, the all-sufficient
and only Saviour, will you yet, after all, refuse to acknowledge
me? will you not come to me in the character that belongs to
me, according to these Scriptures, as "the way, the truth, and
the life," that you may obtain those blessings which I, and I alone,
can bestow?"

Such is our Lord's account of the testimony of the Father, to
the divinity of his mission, and the truth of his doctrines. The
substance of his statement may be thus given: 'I do not require
you to believe, what I have just now asserted—as to my being
the divine, and the divinely-appointed and qualified Saviour and
Ruler of men—on my unsupported assertion. I know a person's
testimony in his own cause is not accounted valid. I require you
to believe this statement, on evidence which is altogether irre-
fragable. I might appeal to what John the Baptist said of me,
and his evidence ought to have much weight with you. But I
do not need his testimony, and I advert to it in passing, merely
because I think it may have some influence on your minds. The
testimony I appeal to, is infinitely superior to that of John. It is
that of my Father, "of whom ye say, that he is your God." He
has given testimony to me in a variety of ways. He has testified
of me by the miracles I perform. These could not be performed
but by divine power; and they are his seal to my credentials as a
divine messenger. He has testified of me, by an audible voice
from heaven, and by that supernatural brightness which is the
well-known symbol of his peculiar presence; and he has testified
of me in those sacred books, which you admit to be given by his
inspiration.'

III.—THE APPLICATION.

In the judgments which men form and express of the charac-
ters of others, they often unconsciously make a manifestation of
their own. In scrutinising the motives which have led another
to a particular course of conduct, they often unfold the principles
which have a governing influence over their own actions. Exter-
nal conduct enables us to judge of inward character, by afford-
in the means of conjecturing the motives in which it originates;
and in the way in which we learn to argue from action to principle,
from conduct to motive—is by reflecting, 'What would have
induced us to do such an action, or to follow such a course of
conduct?' It is in consequence of this, that a selfish man is
constantly disposed to trace an apparently generous action to
some interested motive: that none are so uncharitable in their
judgments, as those who have the lowest claims on the good
opinion or even forbearance of others; and none so much disposed
to form excuses for the faults of their neighbors, as those who
have least occasion for the indulgence in return. A bad man is
generally disposed to trace even a good action, to an unworthy
principle; while a good man readily gives his neighbor credit for good intentions, even when he may not be able altogether to approve of the wisdom or propriety of the action, to which the intention has given birth.

Of this tendency to judge of others by ourselves, we have an example in the opinion formed of our Lord, by the Jewish rulers. The leading principle of their minds was the desire of human approbation and applause; and when they perceived Jesus manifesting an eager desire, that men should embrace his doctrines and become his disciples, conceiving that he was animated by motives and principles similar to those which influenced and guided their own conduct, they considered him as an ambitious man—fond of fame and of power. They were incapable of forming a true estimate of his character, for they were utter strangers to that disinterested regard for the honor of God and the happiness of men, which formed its principal elements. They had no experience of the influence of such motives over their own minds, and for that very reason, they were disposed to trace our Lord’s conduct to any other motive, rather than the true one.

It is a peculiarity in our Lord’s discourses, which I have more than once had occasion to refer to, that he often so frames his speech, as not so much to answer what men had said, as to meet the workings of their mind, to show that he was perfectly aware of what was going on within. An attention to this remark, will often make what is at first obscure in our Lord’s discourses appear quite plain; and will show, that transitions which seem harsh, are indeed quite natural. We apprehend we have such a case now before us. Jesus had made a clear and strong statement of the truth with regard to himself, as the divine and divinely-appointed and qualified Saviour and Ruler of mankind; he had brought forward the evidence of the justness of his claims, afforded by the three-fold testimony of his Divine Father, in the miracles which he performed by the divine power, in the supernatural appearances which accompanied his baptism, and in the Old Testament Scriptures; and he had expressed his regret and astonishment that, after all, his countrymen would not come to him that they might have life. For all this the Jewish Sanhedrin, before whom he stood, judging of him by themselves, concluded, that like them he loved the praise of men. Our Lord knowing their thoughts, disclaims the unworthy motive, and proceeds to unfold the true reasons why they so obstinately refused to receive his doctrine as a divine message, and himself as a divine messenger.

“I receive not honor from men.” It is true in the ordinary sense of the word “receive,” that Jesus did not receive honor from men. Not honor, but shame and disgrace were what he received:—“He was despised and rejected of men;” “Men hid as it were their faces from him, he was despised, and not esteemed.”

11 John v. 41. 12 Isa. liii. 3.
PART III.] THE APPLICATION.

But it seems obvious that the word "receive" here, as in the thirty-fourth verse, and again in the forty-fourth verse, is used as equivalent to "seek," or "catch at." 'I am not desirous of obtaining honor from men. When I state my claims, and complain that you disregard them, it is not because I wish to ingratiate myself with you; not because I covet your approbation or that of any man, or set of men.' He did not need their sanction: He could receive no honor from their applause. His object was to secure the approbation of his Divine Father, by faithfully executing the commission with which he was entrusted; and so far as they were concerned, his desire was not that he should be applauded by them, but that they should be saved by him. If he regretted, and he did most deeply regret their obstinate unbelief and impenitence, it was for their own sakes, not for his own. Such was the unambitious spirit of our Lord, and such should be the spirit of all his ministers. All who are "allowed of God, to be put in trust with the Gospel," should "so speak, not as pleasing men but God, who trieth the hearts;" they ought "not to use flattering words, nor a cloak of covetousness; nor ought they of men to seek glory;" for if they "seek to please men, they cannot be the servants of Christ."  

Indeed, the doctrines of our Lord were little fitted to secure to him who taught them honor from men; and the fearless, honest manner in which he stated them, was calculated to do anything but ingratiate him with men of worldly and corrupt minds. When our Lord made the statement, 'Notwithstanding the abundant evidence there is of the truth of my claims in books, the divine origin of which you yourselves admit, you will not, you are indisposed, to come to me, that you may have life,' it was not that he eagerly wished their approbation, but it was because he well knew that the principles which governed their minds and hearts, so long as they maintained their influence, made it morally impossible that they should recognize his claims, or receive his message.

"But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you."  

The love of God is the vital principle of true religion, and is used here for religion generally. The Jewish rulers professed to be very religious. Their very rejection of the claims of our Lord was covered by the cloak of pretended regard for religion. They persecuted him, and would have wished to put him to death, because he broke the Sabbath-day; and because in his defence of himself, he had, by calling God his own Father, made himself equal to God. But in reality they were irreligious men, destitute alike of the true knowledge, and the love of God. They were "of this world," they were "from beneath." They were thoroughly worldly men—men, looking not at "the things unseen and eternal," but at "the things which are seen and temporal." They had no relish for that spiritual salvation which he came to reveal, to work out, and to bestow; and this was the true reason

1 Thess. ii. 4–6 Gal. . 10. 

14 John v. 42.
why they would not come to him. And so is it still. The reason why men, to whom the claims of Christ and Christianity are addressed, reject them, is to be found, not in the want of evidence on the side of these claims; but on the utter indisposition on their part to attend to these claims. They have not the love of God in them.

But how did our Lord know this? Was there not something uncharitable in tracing the conduct of the Jewish rulers to such a motive? No. He who used these words, is “He who searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the children of men; who needs not that any should testify to him of man; for he knows what is in man.” But, besides, the conduct of the Jews completely warranted the conclusion. Our Lord “came from God,”—gave the clearest evidence of coming from God. He was “God manifest in flesh.” He and the Father were so “one,” that “he who had seen him had seen the Father.” Yet he was contemptuously rejected by them. Can those love the prince who contemn his accredited ambassador? Can those love the Father who treat with contumely and cruelty his only begotten Son? If they had loved Him who begat, they would have loved him who was begotten of Him. Their want of love to God had been manifested in their rejection of Him who came to them in His name; and was still farther to be manifested in the ready reception they were to give to persons, who should come without anything like satisfactory evidence of being His authorized messengers.

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” Jesus came in his Father’s name; that is, invested with His authority, and bringing satisfactory evidence that he was invested with his authority. Yet, notwithstanding this, they did not receive him. Instead of receiving him, they rejected him as an impostor; they punished him as a blasphemer. Could they more clearly prove, that the love of God was not in them, than by thus treating him whom He had “sent and sealed”?

Their want of the love of God was to be equally manifested in the welcome reception they were to give to men, pretending to the honors of Messiahship, but exhibiting no satisfactory evidence of their divine mission. “If another shall come to you in his own name, him ye will receive.” There is here a prediction of the false Messiahs, by whom the Jewish people were to be deluded: These men in pretence, came in God’s name; but in reality they came in their own. They ran, He did not send them. They could exhibit no satisfactory evidence of their divine mission. They could not point, like Jesus, to the blind seeing, and the deaf hearing, and the lame walking, and the dumb speaking, and the dead living, and say, “The works which I do, bear witness of me.” None could say of them, “We know that ye are

15 Rev. ii. 23. John ii. 25. 16 John v. 43. 17 “Since the advent of Christ, there have appeared among the Jews sixty-four false Messiahs, by whom they have suffered themselves to be deceived.”—Thorock.
teachers sent of God, for no man could do these works which ye do, except God were with him." They could not point to a series of fulfilled ancient oracles, and say, "The spirit of prophecy is our testimony." Nor could any one say of any of them, with even the slightest appearance of truth,—"This is he, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write." In the carnality of their views, and in the wickedness of their conduct, many of them gave evidence, that they could not possibly be divine messengers; and yet, such pretenders to Messiahship were readily received, just because their carnal views corresponded with the carnal views of their countrymen.

Our Lord goes on to state, that with their present views, it was not to be expected, it was indeed morally impossible, that such a teacher as he was, should be cordially received; or that such doctrines as his were, could be readily believed by them. "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"*"" Honor" here, is approbation—good opinion; and our Lord's statement is, that while they made it their leading object to obtain the approbation and good opinion of each other, and remained careless of obtaining the approbation of God, it was not to be expected that they would admit his divine mission, or believe his doctrines. To acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth,—a poor despised man, who declared distinctly that his kingdom was not of this world,—as the Messiah, was to incur the contemptuous scorn, and malignant persecution of the influential classes among the Jews; and was that to be expected from men who, entirely occupied with things seen and temporal, considered the approbation of the wise and powerful as an object of the highest value? If indeed they had had a due impression of the infinite value of Divine approbation, then they would have seen, that though the reception of Jesus as the Messiah, might bring down on them contempt, and scorn, and persecution, still, since his credentials were abundantly satisfactory, it was their duty, it was their interest, to receive him. But in the entire absence of the last of these principles, and while the first of them held undivided sway in their minds, how could they welcome a Messiah who had no worldly preferments to bestow; whose appearance was as mean as his doctrine was humiliating; for whom they must expect to have their names "cast out as evil," and probably be made to "suffer the loss of all things"?

Our Lord concludes by intimating to them, that they must give an account of their rejection of him before the tribunal of God, and that they would meet there as their accuser, the legislator of whom they were accustomed to boast, and in whom they placed their confidence. "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one who accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust."*" These words, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the

* John v. 44.  
* John v. 45.
Father;" may be viewed as a declaration that the design of our Lord's mission was not vindictive, but merciful. He came not to condemn, but to pardon—not to punish, but to save. His office was not that of an accuser, but of an intercessor. When he spoke to the Jews, he plainly told them of their sins and of their dangers; but when he spoke of them to his Father, he lamented their infatuation, and prayed for their forgiveness. "He shall make intercession for the transgressors," said the ancient oracle; and, in the fulfilment of this, our Saviour's last breath was spent in prayer for his murderers. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Or the words may be interpreted on the same principle as the following and similar passages:—"I will have mercy and not sacrifice." "It was not you, but God, who sent me hither." In this case, they are equivalent to 'Do not think that I will be your only or your chief accuse. Though I should not accuse you, your condemnation is certain; accusation will come from a quarter you are little thinking of. Moses, in whom ye trust, will accuse you and condemn you.'

The Jews had a superstitious trust in Moses. They expected him to appear along with the Messiah, and to assist him in accomplishing their deliverance. They also, at least in later ages, trusted in the intercession of Moses for the acceptance of their prayers. For the doctrine of the intercession of saints as mediators seems to have been borrowed, by the apostate Christian Church, from the apostate Jewish Church. The trust our Lord refers to was likely, however, rather a trust in Moses' writings than in his person. They thought that in them they had eternal life. They made their boast in the law. Their language was—"We are Moses' disciples, we know that God spake by Moses." But our Lord assures them that this very Moses would be their accuser.

Moses may be considered as the accuser of the Jews in a variety of ways. His law, of which they were proud, had often been violated by them, and they had exposed themselves to the punishment it denounced against its violators. In his writings, especially in the prophetic song in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, the contemporaries of our Lord are described and condemned. But the manner in which Moses was to accuse them, referred to by our Lord, was obviously this: Moses is a witness to the justness of our Lord's claims, and, of course, a witness against those who rejected them. That this was our Lord's meaning seems plain from what follows: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." 60

Moses wrote of our Lord. In Moses' writings are recorded some very remarkable prophecies of the Messiah, such as the first promise, the promise to Abraham, the dying blessing of Jacob on the tribe of Judah, and possibly also the prediction of Balaam, "Behold a star shall arise out of Jacob." Moses him-

60 John v. 46.
self also uttered a remarkable prophecy respecting the Messiah. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." He instructed them in the signs of true and false prophets. The whole of the sacrificial economy had a reference to the Messiah. Had the Jews believed Moses, they would have believed Jesus. In one sense the Jews did believe Moses—they had no doubt of his divine mission. In another sense they did not believe him—they did not understand his writings; and, therefore, they could not believe them. Had they properly understood Moses' writings, and firmly believed them, the reception of Jesus as the Messiah would have been a matter of course.

"But," added our Lord, "if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" We are not to understand these words as if they intimated that Moses is worthy of greater credit than our Lord, or that our Lord's divine mission is not established on evidence altogether independent of Moses' testimony. They merely intimate that nothing but a rejection of Jesus' claims was to be expected from persons who, through ignorance and unbelief, paid no attention to the declarations of a writer whom they acknowledged as inspired.

It is to be feared that there are too many nominal Christians, who will be found at last involved in a similar condemnation with the Jews. These are weighty words of the judicious Scott: "How many are there who trust in their attachment to some form of doctrine, or to some renowned head of a party, who no more enter into the meaning of these doctrines, or into the views of the persons whose names they bear, than the Jews believed the words of Moses, or entered into his views of the prefigured and predicted Messiah. The creeds and formulae of many sects and establishments suffice for the condemnation of vast multitudes who glory in belonging to them as members or ministers; and it is well if the sermons many preach, and the books which they publish, do not appear in judgment against them to accuse them of not believing and practising what they preached and printed."

Note A, p. 88.

Præteritum, μεταβίβασις, est præteritum propheticum et vim futuri obtinet hic, ut Jo. i. 15. Kuinoel. I demur to this "ut," &c. There can, however, be no doubt that the "enallage temporum" is very frequent with the Evangelist John. We need not go farther than the immediate context to prove this. Some Latin codices render the word "transibit," indicating not how they read, but how they understood it. I am disposed to

"Deut. xviii. 15. John v. 47."
think the declaration refers to an event, future when the declaration was made, yet past, in reference to the future event indicated in the immediately preceding clause. He shall not enter into condemnation, or punishment, and the reason is, "he has already passed from death into life."

The passage in 1 John iii. 14, where the same phrase occurs, though it may be interpreted in the same way as in the case before us, will seem to many more naturally to refer to conversion; and it is not without some hesitation that we come to the conclusion that our exegesis is the more probable.

Note B, p. 99.

Campbell translates this passage thus:—"Did ye never hear his voice, or see his form? Or have ye forgotten his declarations, that ye believe not him whom he hath commissioned?" And he defends his translation in the following able note:—

"The reader will observe, that the two clauses which are rendered in the English Testament as declarations, are, in this version, translated as questions. The difference in the original is only in the pointing. That they ought so to be read, we need not, in my opinion, stronger evidence than that they throw much light upon the whole passage, which, read in the common way, is both dark and ill-connected. See an excellent note on this passage, from Mr. Turner of Wakefield (Priestley's Harmony, Sect. xi.) Our Lord here refers them to the testimony given of him at his baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended on him in a visible form, and when God, with an audible voice, declared him to be his beloved Son, and our lawgiver, whom we ought to hear and obey. What has chiefly contributed to mislead interpreters in regard to the import of this sentence, is the resemblance which it bears to what is said, ch. i. 18, οὐδεὶς ὁμοιότατος πάντως, no one ever saw God; and ch. vi. 46, οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα τις λόγηκε, not that any one hath seen the Father. There is, however, a difference in the expressions; for it is not said here, οὐδεὶς τὸν πατέρα, but οὐδεὶς eidos αὐτοῦ ἐφήσετε. This, it may be thought, as it seems to ascribe a body to God, must be understood in the same way; for we are told, Deut. iv. 12, that, when the Lord spake to the people out of the fire, they saw no similitude. Of this they are again reminded, verse 15. But the word in the Septuagint is, in both places, not eidos, but ὁμοιόμα, which, in scriptural use, appears to denote a figure so distinct and permanent, as that it may be represented in stone, wood, or metal. Now, though this is not to be attributed to God, the sacred writers do not scruple to call the visible symbol which God, on any occasion, employs for impressing men more strongly with a sense of his presence, eidos autou, which (for want of a better term) I have rendered, his form. Thus the Evangelist Luke says, ch. iii. 22, in relating that singular transaction here alluded to, that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, σωματικῶς eidos, in a bodily form. Thus, also, the word eidos is applied to the appearances which God made to men under the Mosaic dispensation.

"His appearance in fire upon Mount Sinai, is called by the Seventy, Ex. xxiv. 17, τὸ εἴδος τῆς δόξης τοῦ κυρίου; in our Bible, the sight of the glory of the Lord. In like manner, the word eidos is applied to the symbol of the Divine presence, which the Israelites enjoyed in the wilderness; the cloud which covered the tabernacle in the day-time, and appeared as fire in the night, Num. ix. 15, 16. And, to mention but one other instance, the display which he made to Moses, when he conversed with him.
face to face, is, in the English translation, said to be apparently, Num. xii. 8; but, in the Septuagint, ἐν εἰδώλι, that is, in a form or visible figure. Thus, in the language of Scripture, there is a manifest difference between seeing God—which no man ever did, he being in himself a pure spirit—and seeing his form, τὸ εἰδος αὐτοῦ, the appearance which, at any time in condescension to the weakness of his creatures, he pleases to assume. Another evidence, if necessary, might be brought to show that there was no intention here to express the invisibility of the Divine nature, and is as follows: the clause which appears to have been so much misunderstood, is coupled with this other, οὕτε ρ µαν ἐξειρώσεσθε πάντες. Can we imagine that the impossible would have been thus conjoined with what is commonly mentioned as a privilege often enjoyed by God's people, and to which their attention is required as a duty? For, though we are expressly told that no man ever saw God, it is nowhere said that no man ever heard his voice. Nay, in the very place above quoted, Deut. iv. 12, where we are informed that the people saw no similitude, ὑμὼν, it is particularly mentioned that they heard the voice.

To conclude: there is the greater probability in the explanation which I have given of the words, as all the chief circumstances attending that memorable testimony at his baptism, are exactly pointed out—the miraculous voice from heaven, the descent of the Holy Spirit in a bodily form, and the declaration itself then given. Dr. Clarke seems to have had some apprehension of this meaning; for though, in his paraphrase, he explains the words in the usual way, he, in a parenthesis, takes notice of the two striking circumstances, the voice and the form, at our Lord's baptism.” Dr. Campbell is not singular in this view: Trinius and Moldenhauer have given the same interpretation.
EXPOSITION IV.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Matthew v. vi. vii.

INTRODUCTION.

We come now to that admirable discourse, or series of discourses, commonly termed “The Sermon on the Mount.” It is a question with harmonists and interpreters, whether the discourses recorded in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, and those in the 6th and 7th chapters of Luke, are two relations of the same discourse, or distinct discourses delivered at different times. There are difficulties connected with either mode of answering the question; but, upon the whole, I am disposed to think that the preponderant evidence is on the side of their being different discourses delivered at a considerable distance of time from each other. 1

There is indeed, a strong similarity; but still there is a marked difference, both in the discourses, and in the circumstances in which they were delivered. There are many things in the sermon recorded by Matthew, not to be found in the sermon recorded by Luke, and some things in the sermon recorded by Luke, not to be found in the sermon recorded by Matthew. Statements, that at first view seem very similar, when examined, are found so different, that you cannot suppose them to be different reports of the same statement. The sermon recorded in Matthew, was delivered before the healing of the leper. The sermon recorded by Luke, seems to have been delivered after that miracle. The sermon recorded in Matthew was delivered before Matthew’s call to be a disciple. The sermon recorded in Luke was delivered after the twelve apostles were called to their peculiar office. The sermon in Matthew was delivered on a mountain; the sermon recorded in Luke was spoken on the plain. Instead of eight beatitudes, as there are in the sermon recorded by Matthew, there are only four in the sermon recorded

1 Doddridge is of this opinion, which is supported too by Venema, Whitby, Blair, M'knight, Hess, Ferf, Greswell, and very lately by Lange, whose writings Archdeacon Hare pronounces “among the most valuable in modern German theology.”
by Luke, and these not by any means of equivalent meaning with those which they most resemble. The only circumstance which appears to me a weighty one in the opposite scale is, that the account of the healing of a centurion's servant follows immediately the delivery of both discourses. Some interpreters have supposed that the two narratives refer to two different events; and there are, without doubt, not only circumstances mentioned in the one narrative, that are omitted in the other; but there are circumstances in the one narrative which there is some difficulty in reconciling with circumstances detailed in the other. It is just one of those cases which not unfrequently occur in our attempts to harmonize the gospel history; that is, to place in one consistent successive series, all the events recorded by the four evangelists; there are difficulties on both sides, and all we can do, is to choose the side which has the fewest, and the least considerable ones. Judging on this principle, we are disposed to think, that as our Lord, like his apostle, found, that for him "to say the same thing was not grievous, while for his auditors it was safe," so the discourses, though having much in common, were delivered at different times, and in different circumstances.

Our Lord had before preached in the synagogues; but as probably no house could contain the multitudes which had assembled on this occasion, he "ascended a mountain," and being elevated above the people, he sat down, according to the ordinary custom of the Jewish teachers, and in that posture taught the people. His disciples seem to have sat next to him, and the crowd around them. The scenery of the Sermon of the Mount has been very graphically described by Tholuck, who has much of the genius of the poet, as well as of the learning and acumen of the interpreter.

"And now let us try to figure to ourselves the charms of this Galilean landscape, o'er-canopied by an oriental sky, in order to reproduce, while we are reading them, the same impression which was made by the words when they were heard. While, on every other occasion during his abode upon earth, the Son of God preferred the unostentatious and obscure, he seems to have selected the most beautiful and enchanting spot in nature, as the temple in which to open his ministry. Travellers are wont to liken the mountain scenery of Galilee to the finest in their native lands, the Swede Hasselquist to East Gothland, and Clarke, the Englishman, to the romantic dales of Kent and Surrey. The environs of the Galilean sea have been compared with the banks of the Lake of Geneva. This is said in the present day, when the weight of the Turkish sceptre, like the curse of heaven, oppresses that once blooming land. What then must it have been when the Saviour of the world made it the scene of his presence! Even Josephus, in speaking of Galilee, rises into a poetical mood. 'Marvellous,' he says,² for natural beauty is the country around

² De Bello Judæo, iii. 10, 8.
the Sea of Gennesaret. Such is the fertility of the soil, that it produces, spontaneously, all shrubs. But, besides this, the husbandmen have planted the most various sorts, for there is none which the temperature of the climate does not suit. In other regions the nut tree requires cold, but there it grows in the richest luxuriance; there also flourishes the palm, though usually it delights in heat, and there, side by side, the fig and olive, which agree with a milder air. There seems to be an emulation in nature endeavoring to bring together the contending parties. The seasons also carry on a beautiful rivalry, each struggling with the other for the possession of the land. But, charming above all must be the beauty of the region where it presents itself in one view, precisely at the spot on which our Saviour delivered his discourse. Korte informs us, that the mountain, standing as it does, apart, commands the same prospect which is seen from Tabor. Far off the rich and blooming landscape of Galilee; to the north, the snow-crowned Hermon; to the west, the woody Carmel. Maundrel even saw from Tabor the Mediterranean. At the distance of a stone cast the cheerful sea of Galilee, encircled with mountain and forest. Add to this picture, the cloudless sky of southern regions, and the solemn silence of the early morn. ‘The whole scene,’ says Hess, ‘is of a character familiar and grave, attractive and dignified. The clear sky above him, and the rural district around, formed a natural temple. No synagogue, not even the temple of the metropolis itself, could make so deep and solemn an impression. There were to be seen here none of the formalities which would have accompanied the ordinary lecture of a Jewish teacher. He sat down upon the rising-ground, and fixing his eyes on the disciples, who stood next to him, began, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit.’’

I apprehend that the great design of our Lord in this discourse, was to show the Jews, by an induction of particulars, what he meant when he called on them to “repent,” or change their minds. This, if I mistake not, is the true key of this discourse. There is throughout a direct reference to the false notions generally entertained by the Jews respecting the Messiah’s kingdom; but as their prejudices originated in principles common to unregenerated human nature, though taking a peculiar form and color from their circumstances, the statements made are calculated to be “profitable to mankind in all countries, and in all ages, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

3 “The emotions of a warm adorer of Christ upon this spot, under a deep impression of the beauties of nature, and remembering the words that once were heard at the place, have been described by Rae-Wilson. ‘Travels in the Holy Land,’ 3d Ed., 1831, ii. p. 6.”

4 2 Tim. iii. 16.
I. THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

Matth. v. 3 12.

Our Lord begins with describing who are the truly happy
who are the true citizens of the heavenly kingdom. It is a re-
mrk of importance, that our Lord is not in these words speak-
ing so directly, if at all, of the manner in which men are to ob-
tain happiness, as of the characters of those who are really happy.
It is the faith of the truth with respect to the redeeming charac-
ter of God, that gives true happiness; and it is this, too, we shall
see as we proceed, that alone can, and that certainly will, form
the characters here described, in the possession of which consists
in a great measure true happiness.

The dispositions which are here represented as necessarily
connected with the enjoyment of true happiness, are not amiable
natural temper. They are modes of thought and feeling pro-
duced by the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the
faith of the truth; and they are all of them, though no doubt
with a great variety of degree, to be found in every man who,
being born again, has entered into the kingdom of God.

§ 1. The Poor in spirit—possessors of the kingdom.

The first class of persons pronounced “blessed,” are “the poor
in spirit.” “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the king-
dom of heaven.” Some interpreters connect the phrase “in
spirit,” not with the word “poor;” but with the word “blessed.”
“Blessed in spirit”—spiritually happy are the poor; but this is not
in accordance with the genius of the language; nor would the
same principle of interpretation at all apply to the benediction in
verse 8, “Blessed are the pure in heart.”

It is quite plain that the descriptive appellation “poor in
spirit,” refers not to external situation, but to disposition and
character. Extreme poverty is not favorable to religion any
more than extreme opulence. The most depraved of mankind
have been generally found among the opposite extremes of so-
ciety; and it is equally true that it is “a hard thing for” a very
poor, and a very “rich man, to enter into the kingdom of God.”

The phrase “poor in spirit” may, taken by itself, signify
mean-spirited. This obviously is not its meaning here, for
mean-spiritedness is no christian virtue, and is inconsistent with
real happiness. The Christian is a man of a generous mind.

* * * * *
He "provides things honest," honorable, "in the sight of all men." He accounts it more "blessed to give than to receive." He "thinks on the things which are honest, lovely, and of good report." 8

The phrase "poor in spirit," taken by itself, might also signify 'spiritually poor,' as in Rev. iii. 17, that is, destitute of spiritual blessings—the favor of God—conformity to his image—the well-grounded hope of eternal life. I need scarcely say, that cannot be the meaning, for he who is thus poor in spirit, is wretched indeed.

The phrase "poor in spirit" has been interpreted as equivalent to 'destitute of mental wealth, simple, unlearned.' Many such do belong to the kingdom of God, while "the wise and prudent" shut themselves out. 9 But it is not as weak or ignorant that they enjoy that privilege. They inherit the kingdom, not because of, but notwithstanding, their mental deficiencies.

To be "poor in spirit," is, I apprehend, just synonymous with to be humble. This is the meaning Chrysostom attaches to the phrase, and he is followed by the great body of the best interpreters, ancient and modern. To be "poor in spirit" is to think of a person's self "not more highly than he ought to think." 10

When a man is made to see the truth, with regard to the character and law of God, with regard to his own character and conduct, and especially with regard to the way of salvation, through the obedience unto death of the incarnate Only-begotten of God, he obtains such views of himself, both as a creature and a sinner, as are calculated to repress everything like the risings of pride. He knows himself to be an entirely dependent being; he knows himself to be an inexcusable sinner; he knows himself to be a righteously condemned criminal; he knows that "in him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing;" 11 he knows that he has, that he can have, no hope, but in the sovereign mercy of God; that he has no righteousness to glory in, but the obedience unto death of the Son of God; and that whatever is right and holy in his sentiments and character, is owing entirely to the influence of the Spirit of God; and the knowledge and faith of all this, naturally produces deep habitual abasement of spirit. He feels himself "dust and ashes," guilty dust and ashes. A saved sinner, a sinner saved by grace, is the highest character he can lay claim to. Man is poor, entirely dependent on the Divine bounty; in his fallen state utterly destitute of everything good; and the spirit which becomes such a being is the spirit of humility.

This is the poverty of spirit here spoken of, and he who possesses it is "blessed." 12 He is blessed in the possession of such a temper, for it naturally makes him patient under affliction, grate-

---

9 Matt. xi. 23. 1 Cor. i. 16, 17. 8 Rom. xii. 3. 11 Rom. vii. 18.
ful for every blessing; and, leading him to rest his hope entirely on something out of himself, secures a steadiness and permanence of peaceful piety and joyful expectation, which can in no other way be enjoyed. But this is not, I apprehend, our Lord's principal idea, for he assigns a particular reason why he pronounces the poor in spirit "blessed," and that is, that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"The kingdom of heaven," as I have already shown you, is the order of things introduced by the Messiah; and when it is said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit, the meaning is, they are the persons who enjoy the peculiar blessings of that order of things. The privileges and immunities of citizens of the heavenly kingdom, are their exclusive property. They are happy, for, though poor in spirit, they are—probably in reference to the enjoyment of the heavenly happiness, which is called their "inheriting the kingdom"—said to be "rich in faith," rich in expectancy, and "heirs of the kingdom." The Jews were generally of opinion that the rich, in the literal sense of that word, were to enjoy the principal honors and benefits of the Messiah's kingdom. But, says our Lord, ye must "repent," ye must change your mind. The true citizens of the heavenly kingdom are not the rich in this world, but "the poor in spirit."

§ 2. They that mourn—they shall be comforted.

The next class of persons pronounced blessed by our Lord are those that mourn. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." It is natural for man to count the gay and the prosperous happy; and the Jews expected nothing but festivity and gladness under the reign of the Messiah. It is as if he said, 'Repent, change your mind: in your mode of thinking, happiness and mirth are indissolubly associated, but they only are happy who mourn.'

It is plain that it is not every species of mourning that is here referred to. There is "a sorrow of the world which worketh death." Affliction is not at all necessarily connected with holy character, or spiritual privilege. Those who mourn are, I apprehend, those who, in consequence of obtaining just views of the holiness and benignity of the Divine character, and of the guilt of their own conduct, and the depravity of their own natures, are habitually sorrowing for their own sins after a godly sort, and who also "sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land," and "when they behold transgressors are grieved," who sympathize deeply with the afflictions of others, and "weep with them who weep." It is also probable that our Lord refers to the undoubted fact, that all his peculiar people are, in some form or other, visited with affliction—some of them with very severe

---

12 James ii. 5. 13 Matt. v. 4.
14 "Qui non gemit peregrinum, non gaudebit civis." 14 August. Epp. 248.
15 2 Cor. vii. 10. 16 Ezek. ix. 4.
16 Psal. cxxix. 108.
17 Rom. xii. 15. * See Note A.
and complicated affliction:—"For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." 19

These mourners are blessed. In filial penitence, in sorrow for the dishonor done to God, in generous sympathy, there is much real present satisfaction, and even enjoyment—satisfaction and enjoyment infinitely superior to any which the impenitent and selfish can taste; and the afflicted mourning Christian is happy, inasmuch as his affliction is contributing to his improvement—is "working patience, and experience, and hope" 20—is producing "the peaceable fruits of righteousness" 21—is "working out for him a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory." 22

But the reason particularly assigned for his pronouncing these mourners blessed, is, "they shall be comforted." Mourning over their sins, they shall be comforted, by the plain declarations of a free and a full forgiveness, which, by the influence of the good Spirit, they shall be enabled to believe, and, "believing which, they shall rejoice with joy unspeakable:" 23 mourning over the dishonor done to God, they shall be comforted by the assurance that a period is hastening onward, when the excellences of the Divine character and government shall be universally acknowledged: mourning over the calamities of their fellow-men, they are comforted by knowing that God is bringing good out of the evil which they deplore, and that, yet a little while, and suffering shall be entirely unknown in the universe of God, except among the irreclaimable rebels against his holy government: mourning over their own afflictions, they are comforted by knowing that they have the sympathy of their Lord and Saviour, that all these afflictions result from paternal kindness, and shall all promote their improvement and happiness. And not only shall they be thus comforted while they mourn, but ere long the days of their mourning shall be ended; they shall obtain complete and everlasting consolation:—"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." 24

§ 3. The meek—they shall inherit the earth.

We proceed now to the consideration of the third beatitude—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." 25 "The

18 Heb. xii. 6.
20 Rom. v. 3, 4.
21 Heb. xii. 11.
22 2 Cor. iv. 17.
23 1 Pet. i. 8.
24 Rev. vii. 13-17.
25 Matt. v. 5.
meek,” is an appellation which describes the temper of mind under suffering. The persons here spoken of are viewed, not as enjoying unbroken prosperity, but as exposed to affliction in a variety of forms; and, when thus exposed to affliction, they are not fretful, and discontented, and resentful, but meek, quiet, resigned, cheerful sufferers. Patience and meekness are nearly allied. The difference seems to be this—patience is expressive of the sufferer’s temper in reference to his sufferings; meekness is expressive of his temper in reference to those who are the authors or occasions of his sufferings. Our afflictions may be viewed as coming from God, or as coming from our fellow-men; and meekness is the name of that disposition which we should cherish, and which every Christian, so far as he is under the influence of christian principle, does cherish, both in reference to God and man, viewed as the cause or the occasion of suffering to us.

Like all the other holy tempers described in this passage, meekness originates in right views of the Divine character, and our own. An enlightened conviction of the infinite greatness and excellency,—the sovereignty, and wisdom, and holiness, and righteousness, and condescension, and kindness of God, and of our own insignificance as creatures, and demerit as sinners, lies at the foundation of that meekness which forms an essential part of the character of a genuine Christian. The man who really believes that God has a right to do with him, as his creature, whatever he pleases; that, in the exercise of that right, he is uniformly guided by righteousness and wisdom, and influenced by benignity; that anything, short of the severest punishment which he is capable of enduring, is mercy to him, viewed as a sinner; that God is rich in mercy—“in Christ reconciling the world to himself”—his father and friend, who has given for him his only Son, and given to him eternal life, and has promised to “make all things work together for his good.”26 the man who really believes all this with regard to God, though he may deeply feel the afflictions with which God may visit him, cannot be fretful and impatient—cannot question either the righteousness, or the wisdom, or the kindness, of the Divine procedure to him. The language of his heart is, “Here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto him.” “The will of the Lord be done.” “Hath not the potter power over the clay?” “Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?” “It is of the Lord’s mercies that I am not consumed.” I will “consider in my heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord my God chasteneth me.” “I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him;” nay, I will be thankful to him who treats me, not as a “bastard,” but as a “son.” I will “hear the rod and him who hath appointed it.” Thus does the meek man “hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord,” that is, for deliverance from affliction, from him

26 2 Cor. v. 19. Rom. viii. 28, 32.
who hath sent affliction. Thus does he "sit alone, and keep silence; thus does he put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope;" for he believes that "the Lord will not cast off forever: for though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."  

Meekness is most severely tried when our fellow-men are the direct causes of our sufferings, and when these sufferings originate in their injustice and malignity. But, even in these cases, the well-instructed Christian in meekness possesses his soul. He knows that, though men may have had a guilty agency in his sufferings, God has had a righteous agency; that "this also has come forth from the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working:" that the wicked are but "God's hand and rod;" and that, while righteous judgment is God's province, humble, quiet suffering is his. Besides, he knows that the unjust and malignant conduct of his enemies, is but the native result of that corrupted nature, of which he is a possessor as well as they, under whose uncontrolled dominion he, like them, once was, and from whose thriftom, if delivered, he owes his deliverance entirely to free, sovereign mercy.

The influence which these views of Christian truth have in forming the disposition of meekness, is most beautifully illustrated by the apostle, when he calls on Christians to be "gentle, showing all meekness unto all men; for we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour to man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

This meekness, in its manifestations both towards God and man, was most illustriously exemplified in the character and conduct of our Lord and Saviour. When exactation was made, and he, on whose head was made to meet "the iniquity of us all," became answerable, he was "wounded, and bruised, and chastised, and smitten to death" by his Father. Yet he was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers, was dumb." He uttered no complaint, displayed no fretfulness—"Not my will, but thine be done." And then, with regard to mankind: "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously;" and, so far from cherishing resentful feelings towards his enemies, he wept when he thought of the miseries they were drawing down on their heads, and died with this prayer

---


on his lips—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If we would rightly understand what Christian meekness is, we must study his character, and "learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart.";

Now, our Lord pronounces those who are thus meek, blessed:—"Blessed are the meek." It is as if he had said, "Ye call the proud happy:" you think there is the greatest probability of the prosperous man having a good share in the blessings of that temporal kingdom which you are expecting the Messiah to establish; but you must "repent," you must change your minds. According to the maxims of the spiritual kingdom, of which He is to be the founder, it is not the proud, prosperous man, but it is the meek sufferer, that is the happy man; it is he who shall be accounted great in the kingdom of God.

The meek may be pronounced happy, for the disposition which characterizes them is one of the essential elements of happiness. Humble, cheerful resignation to the will of God, is happiness; proud, self-sufficient dissatisfaction, is misery.

But our Lord here, as in the other beatitudes, assigns a particular reason why he pronounces the meek blessed:—"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

In these words of our Lord, there is a plain reference to the words of the Psalmist:—"The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." "Such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth." "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.";

The words before us have been variously interpreted. By many interpreters, they have been considered as equivalent to the statement, that "godliness has the promise of the life that now is;" as an assertion that the meek are those who really have the greatest enjoyment of the good things of the present state. They are the persons most likely to enjoy such things as are needful and convenient, with the greatest security, and to have the most undisturbed enjoyment of them. As the apostle Peter says, "Who will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good," gentle, kind, beneficent?. The meek man makes few enemies to himself; and does not bring himself into hostile collision with those among whom he lives. He may not be so likely as others to get a great deal of the world, but he is likely to have a great deal more enjoyment in his little, than a man of an opposite temper in his abundance:—"The little which the righteous man lieth, being more and better than the riches of many wicked.";

Others lay the emphasis on the word "inherit," and consider our Lord as saying, "The meek have a covenant right to the good things of this world, which men of an opposite character are destitute of." Both these interpretations state truths, and

---

42 Luke xix. 42; xxiii. 34.
43 Matt. xi. 29.
44 Deut. xix. 14. Psal. xxv. 13; xxxvii. 11, 18, 29.
45 1 Pet. iii. 13.
46 1 Tim. iv. 8.
47 Psal. xxxvii. 16.
important ones; but still, I apprehend, they do not bring out the meaning of our Lord."

We are to recollect that our Lord was speaking to Jews, and that he uses phraseology familiar to them, and accommodates himself to their mode of thinking. His words, literally rendered, are, "they shall inherit the land," i.e., Canaan,—"the land of promise." He speaks of the blessings of the new economy, in the language of Old Testament prophecy. Israel, according to the flesh,—the external people of God, under the former economy, were a figure of Israel according to the spirit,—the spiritual people of God under the new economy; and Canaan, the worldly inheritance of the former, is the type of that aggregate of heavenly and spiritual blessings which form the inheritance of the latter. In reference to the state of things under the Messiah, it is said, "Thy people also shall be all righteous;" none but the truly righteous are members of the true spiritual church; subjects of Messiah the prince: "they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." To "inherit the land," is to enjoy the peculiar blessings of the people of God under the new economy; it is to be "heirs of the world," "heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ Jesus." It is to be "blessed with all heavenly and spiritual blessings in Christ;" to enjoy that true peace and rest,—of which the rest of Israel in Canaan was a figure,—which a man enters into on believing the truth, and which will be perfected in heaven.

Such, I apprehend, is the true meaning of the phrase, "they shall inherit the land," so that our Lord in this beatitude, materially says: 'You call the proud and the prosperous happy, and you suppose they are likely to inherit Canaan under the Messiah. I tell you, the truly happy are the meek sufferers; they, and they alone, shall be possessors of that spiritual inheritance, of which Canaan was merely a figure.'

§ 4. They that hunger and thirst after righteousness—they shall be filled.

I think it is not at all unlikely, that one reason why our Lord immediately added,—"Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," was to prevent his audience from supposing that he had used the words—"inherit the land" literally, and to lead them to his true meaning. They were "hungering and thirsting," eagerly desiring, after what they supposed were the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom,—de-

39 Calvin combines these views, and something more, in his exegesis: "Etiam si nusquam pedem in suo figere quaent, terras domicilio quiete fruuntur. Neque imaginaria est hae possessio, quia terram inhabitant quam sibi divinitus concessam esse norunt. Deinde adversus malorum intemperiem et furias opposita Dei manu teguntur . . . atque hoc illis satis est, donec mundi hereditatem ultimo die adeant."

40 Isa. lx. 21.

41 Matt. v. 6.
liverance from a foreign yoke, wealth, dignity, honor, dominion. They who were cherishing these desires were dreaming, and would soon awake to disappointment. These desires would not be gratified; they who cherished them would not “be filled.” The Messiah came with no intention to bestow such blessings.

But, “blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Some interpreters understand the words “hunger and thirst” literally, as equivalent to ‘are exposed to great straits and sufferings,’ and translate the succeeding words—“on account of righteousness”—“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst on account of righteousness, for they shall be filled.” It is clear that the idiom of the language would permit such a translation;\(^4^4\) but that given in our version is the more natural rendering, and prevents the tautology which otherwise would be found in the paragraph, as the words before us would in this case be precisely the same in meaning as verse 10th.

Hunger and thirst are, I believe, in all languages, used to express vehement desire.\(^4^5\) It is not very easy to fix the precise meaning of the word “righteousness.” In the Apostle Paul’s writings, it ordinarily signifies ‘justification,’ or ‘method of justification.’ I apprehend that here, as in the former case, we are to find its true meaning by attending to the manner in which the phrase is used in the Old Testament, especially in the prophecies with regard to the Messiah. I shall quote a few of these:—\(^4^6\) “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.”\(^4^7\) “Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.”\(^4^8\) “My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth; and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.”\(^4^9\) “Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.”\(^5^0\) From these passages, it seems evident that the phrases “righteousness,” “God’s righteousness,” when used in reference to the new economy, describe the same thing as “salvation,” “God’s salvation.” To hunger and thirst after righteousness, is earnestly to desire that spiritual deliverance which the Messiah has come to accomplish, and which

\(^4^4\) “\(\delta\alpha\) being supposed to be understood.”—Clem. Alex. Strom. vi.

\(^4^5\) Psal. xiii. 3; lxiii. 1.

\(^4^6\) Dan. ix. 24.

\(^4^7\) Isa. xlv. 12, 13.

\(^4^8\) Isa. ii. 5, 6.

\(^4^9\) Isa. lvi. 1.
consists "in righteousness;" in the exercise of "grace reigning through righteousness unto everlasting life;" in pardon dispensed in consistency with, and in glorious illustration of, righteousness; and in bringing the whole inner man, in all his sentiments and feelings, into conformity with the righteous mind and will of God. The persons here described are those who, in contrast with the great body of the Jews, who were earnestly expecting a temporal deliverer and a temporal deliverance, were eagerly desiring a Saviour from guilt and depravity, and their fearful consequences.

Such our Lord pronounces happy; for, while they who were looking for a temporal Messiah and worldly blessings would be disappointed, they who were desirous of heavenly and spiritual blessings would be abundantly satisfied; they would be "filled." They would obtain "abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness;" they would obtain "in Christ the redemption" that was "through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of Divine grace." "Justified freely by God's grace, his blood would cleanse them from all sin, and they would be washed, and sanctified, and justified in his name, and by his Spirit." In the knowledge and faith of the truth respecting the Saviour, they would obtain the gratification of their desires; and, in the fulness of their grateful and happy hearts, they would exclaim—"Surely in the Lord have we righteousness;" we are "complete in him;" "of God are we in Christ Jesus (who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption)"—justified, sanctified, and redeemed.

§ 5. The merciful—they shall obtain mercy.

I proceed now to the illustration of the fifth beatitude—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." According to the views generally entertained by the Jews, the persons most likely to obtain a large portion of the blessedness to be enjoyed under the Messiah's reign, were men of fierce warlike dispositions, fired with resentment for the wrongs done their country; who should, under the victorious banners of their Prince, inflict a severe and merited vengeance on their gentle oppressors; and as the well-earned reward of their valorous exploits, be enriched by the spoils of their spoilers, and raised to dominion over those who had enslaved them. How different is the truth! These are not the blessed ones under Messiah's reign; this is not the happiness he confers. "Blessed are the merciful," and their happiness consists in this—not that they are enriched with spoil, or invested with dominion, but that "they shall obtain mercy."

Let us shortly consider, in succession, the character which is here represented as belonging to the subjects of the Messiah, and

---

43 Eph. i. 7. 1 John i. 7. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 44 Isa. xiv. 24. Col. ii. 10. 1 Cor. i. 30. Comp. 2 Cor. v. 21. 45 Matt. v. 7.
PART I. CHARACTERS AND PRIVILEGES OF CHRISTIANS.

then the happiness to be enjoyed by them. They are "merciful," and being merciful, they are "blessed, for they shall obtain mercy."*3

Mercy may be viewed in reference either to guilt or misery. Mercy, viewed in reference to guilt, is opposed to resentment or revenge, and is a disposition to forgive, and deal leniently with an offender. Mercy, viewed in reference to misery, is opposed to insensibility or cruelty, and is a disposition to relieve or to prevent suffering; a compassionate tenderness of heart, which makes us weep with those who weep, or who have cause to weep, though ignorant or insensible of their wretchedness. The disposition to forgive seems as naturally included under meekness, as under mercy, and in the following remarks I shall confine myself to the delineation of that distinguishing feature of christian character, which consists in a disposition to pity and relieve the miseries of mankind.

The mercy which our Lord represents as one of the characteristics of that people whom he pronounces blessed, is something very different from a naturally affectionate and kindly temper. This is a mere instinctive feeling, and, though amiable, no proper object of moral approbation. In its movements there is no reference to the Divine authority; and it is frequently found in conjunction with principles and habits, most decidedly condemned by the Divine law.

The mercy spoken of by our Lord, like all the other dispositions here specified as characteristic of the subjects of the Messiah, is the result of the truth as it is in Jesus, understood and believed; and can be produced in no other way. It is the feeling which a man has, who knows and believes that, in the exercise of sovereign kindness on the part of God, through the mediation of his Son Jesus Christ, he is delivered from evils infinite in their number, and inconceivable in their severity, to which he had rendered himself justly liable by his violation of a law most holy, just, and good—it is the feeling which such a conscious debtor to Divine mercy naturally cherishes towards those who are involved in sufferings, of whatever kind, especially in that worst species of suffering, from which, through the grace of God, he has himself obtained deliverance.

This mercy is wide in its range. It regards both the bodies and the souls of men: both their temporal and eternal interests. This is one of the features which chiefly distinguish it from that instinctive kindliness to which I have just been adverting. The good-natured generous man of the world, pities and relieves the

*3 Much of the train of thought, and not a few of the expressions, in the following illustration, are borrowed from Dr. Wardlaw's excellent discourse "On Christian Mercy," though so much altered and mixed up with other matter, as not easily to admit of more distinct acknowledgment. A strong resemblance will be found, also, to the exposition of "Be Pitiful," in the Expository Discourses on the First Epistle of Peter. This exposition was first written; and, when used as materials for an illustration of Peter, the author had no idea of publishing either.
temporal wants of his fellow-creatures; but he thinks not of their spiritual state, their everlasting prospects. He feels tender compassion for naked, starving, diseased bodies. He feels compassion, it may be, for minds uninstructed in that information which is requisite to enable men to obtain a creditable subsistence for themselves in this world, but he feels no pity for souls perishing in ignorance of God, and under the condemning sentence of his holy law. This cannot indeed be expected; for how should he feel for others, when, in reference to such subjects, he has no feeling for himself?—though there is something monstrously absurd in men's being so exceedingly concerned about the removal of the sufferings of a few years, and altogether careless about the prevention of the intolerable miseries of eternity. Christian mercy is not thus inconsistent. It looks on mankind, chiefly in their relation to God and eternity; it regards them both as mortal and immortal; and it is chiefly affected by their spiritual state, and their everlasting prospects.

In this respect it resembles that Divine mercy, in the faith of which it originates. The Divine Being pities all the miseries of man; but it is immortal man—the sinner—that is emphatically the object of Divine mercy. The mercy wherewith He remembers man in his lost estate, is great mercy, "for it endureth forever." It stretches onward to eternity, and it delivers its objects from the lowest hell; and such, according to his capacity, is the mercy of every one who has found mercy.

But while chiefly affected with the miseries of man as a sinner—with the ignorance, and error, and guilt and obduracy, and depravity, which mark his character, and with the painful, extreme, and irremediable wretchedness which, if he repent not, awaits him in the world to come—the Christianly merciful man is not affected by these alone. He is far from being insensible to their temporal calamities and wants. He cherishes a sincere sympathy for all the calamities and evils to which men are exposed in their bodies, in their minds, in their connections with each other; from whatever causes these evils may have arisen, whether from the immediate visitation of God, from the injustice and cruelty of their fellow-men, or from the folly and crimes of the sufferers themselves. Like Job, "he weeps for them who are in trouble," and his "soul is grieved for the poor."

But this mercy is something more than a feeling; it is an operative principle. It is not "a well shut up, a fountain sealed," but a copious source of acts of beneficence—streams of blessings. This mercy does not evaporate in unprofitable words. It is not satisfied with saying to those who are naked and destitute of bodily food, "be ye fed, be ye clothed;" but to the limits of its ability it gives "the things necessary for the body." It is not contented with deploring the ignorance, and vice, and spiritual wretchedness, of mankind; but exerts itself for the instruction of

59 Job xxx. 25.
the ignorant, the reclaiming of the profligate, the conversion of sinners, the salvation of the perishing.

And here, too, this mercy resembles that in the faith of which, as we have already remarked, it originates. The mercy of God to a fallen world, was operative mercy. "God so loved the world," that he "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." And in the character of him who is the image of the invisible God, active mercy is the prominent feature. He not only pitied, but saved. Though "in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." With what indefatigable activity, what disinterested self-denial, what patient endurance of suffering, did he seek to promote the true happiness of mankind! It was "his meat to do the" benignant "will of his Father, and to finish his work" in "preaching glad tidings to the meek," comforting all who mourned, healing diseases, and "giving himself a ransom for all." He did not wait, on many occasions, for application on behalf of the miserable; he imparted unasked relief; he went in quest of objects on whom to show mercy; and thus will christian mercy, which is just the mind of Christ dwelling in us, lead all who are under its influence, to abound in acts of substantial kindness to the poor and the miserable.

It is this influential, operative mercy on which the blessing of God is pronounced. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not." Such was the mercy which characterized the ancient patriarch. "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that
was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth."

The external act of beneficence may exist where the inward principle of christian mercy is wanting, and may be useful to man though it cannot be acceptable to God. But wherever the principle of christian mercy exists, it will manifest itself by corresponding fruits, wherever there exists ability to do good; mere professions of sympathy, however fervent, must be hypocritical, and however they may impose on men, which they seldom do in any great degree, they must be regarded with abhorrence by Him who desireth truth in the inward parts.

It scarcely requires to be remarked that the form and degrees of the manifestations of the principles of mercy, must depend on the circumstances in which we are placed; and that "a cup of cold water" may be as genuine and as acceptable a display of mercy, as the most costly pecuniary offering.

This merciful disposition is not confined in its exercise to any particular class of men. The Christian, no doubt, feels a peculiar interest in the afflications of those who are connected with him, whether by the ties of nature or of grace—those who are of his own household, and those who are of the household of faith; but wherever he sees misery, there does he feel compassion, and there, too, if it be in his power, does he give relief. It is not the merit of the sufferer, but his misery, that he looks at; and here again christian mercy resembles that mercy, in the faith of which it originates.

The Christian, under the influence of this principle, "loves his enemies, blesses them that curse him, does good to them that hate him, and prays for them that despitefully use him and persecute him;" and thus shows himself to be a "child of his Father in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Thus have I endeavored shortly to delineate that christian mercy, which is an essential ingredient in the character of all the true subjects of the Messiah.

Let us now turn our attention for a little to the happiness which our Lord represents as possessed by them. They are "blessed;" and they are "blessed, for they shall obtain mercy." The happiness of the followers of the Messiah, as described by our Lord, is as different from what the Jews were generally anticipating as the characters themselves. Fierce relentless warriors were the persons they conceived as likely to be greatest in his kingdom. But our Lord tells them that not they, but "the merciful," are to be his favorites; and as to the happiness enjoyed under him, it is not to be that of brave warriors receiving the

57 Job xxix. 11-17. 58 Matt. v. 44-47.
merited reward of their sanguinary labors; it is to be that of merciful men receiving mercy.

The merciful man is blessed in the possession of this disposition. There is an inward satisfaction in the exercise of benevolence and pity, to which the highest gratification of the selfish man is not worthy to be compared. It must, indeed, be of a very high character, for it is a source of happiness to God and his Son. It is a delight to Jehovah to show mercy; 59 and we have no reason to doubt that our Lord Jesus referred to his own experience in that memorable saying recorded by the Apostle Paul,

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." 60

But our Lord fixes our attention on one circumstance, as peculiarly illustrative of the happiness of the merciful man: he "obtains mercy." Here let us inquire what it is to obtain mercy; and what is the connection between being merciful and obtaining mercy. There is, however, a previous question: Of whom do the merciful obtain mercy? It is obvious to remark, that the display of a merciful disposition is calculated to excite kind feelings on the part of all who witness such displays; and the man who pitys others is likely himself not to be unpityed when he is brought into circumstances calculated to awaken compassion. But there can be no reasonable doubt that the mercy here referred to is the mercy of God. The pity which man can show man, was not very likely to be represented by our Lord as that which entitled its possessor, or him who might certainly count on it, to be called blessed. It must be the pity of God which can lay a foundation for pronouncing him who is its object blessed. 61

What is it, then, to obtain mercy from God? It is obviously not to obtain merited reward. An innocent and happy creature is never said to obtain mercy. The exercise of mercy supposes guilt and misery in its object. When God shows mercy, he pardons the guilty and he blesses the miserable. To obtain mercy is for a sinner who deserves everlasting destruction to obtain pardon and salvation, as tokens of the benignant pity of God.

The second question will require a somewhat more extended answer. "What connection is there between being merciful and obtaining mercy? It must be very plain to every person who will allow himself to think at all, that our merciful disposition is not the ground on which we obtain mercy. The truth on this subject is very clearly stated in Scripture. Divine mercy is free sovereign mercy; it is not purchased at all; not purchased even by Christ's work, far less by our own. Christ's mediation is not the price of mercy: it is the channel through which mercy finds its way to the sinner in consistency with justice. And faith is

59 Micah vii. 18. 60 Acts xx. 35.
61 "Not even as an adjunct, can the idea of mercy shown us by our fellow-men be connected with ἐλπιδοντας, as Calvin, Piscator, and others suppose. Παρὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ δηλαδὴ, says Euthymius."—Tholuck.
not the price of mercy either; it is the appointed way in which
the sinner enters on the enjoyment of mercy. Whatever the
words before us mean, they cannot signify what many would
have them mean, "that the gift of God may be purchased with
money," or obtained as a recompense for what they call deeds of
charity. To speak of obtaining mercy in this way is contradic-
tion and absurdity. Mercy, when shown by God to his creatures
—especially to his sinful creatures—must, from its very nature,
be free. It is bestowing pardon on a rightfully-condemned
criminal; conferring happiness on one whose desert is misery;
giving life where death is due.

But is it not said, "Charity covereth a multitude of sins"? 62
Without doubt it is. But in that passage there is no reference
to alms-giving, nor to what is ordinarily termed the pardon of sin.
Attend to the words of Solomon, which Peter quotes—"Hatred
stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins" 63—and you will at
once perceive how strangely they pervert the Scriptures, who
draw from that passage any support to the notion that our sins
may be pardoned on the ground of our good works, or that mercy
may be bought by pecuniary sacrifices.

But while they who obtain mercy obtain it entirely from the
sovereign kindness of God, through the mediation of his Son,
yet all who, through the faith of the truth, trust in the Divine
mercy, are distinguished by a particular character, the result of
this faith produced in the soul by divine influence; so that no
one, whatever may be his professions, who does not possess this
character, will be found at last to have had any personal interest
in the saving virtue of the Redeemer's sacrifice, nor, of course,
in the saving mercy of God.

In the whole of the paragraph which we are at present en-
gaged in explaining, as I have more than once already had occa-
sion to remark to you, our Lord's design is not to explain the
foundation on which the hope of mercy is to rest, but to delineate
the character of his genuine disciples. Of this character, mercy
is one of the prominent features; and what our Lord says is just
this:—"Mercy is a necessary part of that holy character which,
according to his most benignant purpose of grace, he has insepa-
rably connected with the enjoyment of that happiness which is
the result of his free sovereign kindness.'

Of the justness of the views we have now given, we have a
very striking illustration in reference to one of the modes of the
exercise of mercy enjoined on the disciples of Jesus Christ. In
the form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, we are in-
structed to say, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our
debtors;" and our Lord enforces the use of this petition by add-
ing, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly
Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their
trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." 64
Is our forgiving one another, then, the meritorious cause of our

PART I.] CHARACTERS AND PRIVILEGES OF CHRISTIANS. 129

being forgiven by God? One might have supposed so, nad it not been that such an idea is entirely subversive of the gospel method of salvation, and that in other places of Scripture our being forgiven by God is held out as the grand motive why we should forgive. That which is the effect, cannot, at the same time, be the cause of that which produces that effect. But our not forgiving one another is a plain proof that we are not under the influence of the faith of the forgiving love of God; and if we continue in that state, we shall not be among those who shall "find mercy of the Lord at that day."

§ 6. The pure in heart—they shall see God.

We proceed now to the consideration of the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The first thing to be done here is to ascertain the true import of the appellation "pure in heart." The term is plainly figurative, and, like most figurative terms, admits of being variously interpreted. In opposition to a dishonest deceitful man, a man of unsound heart, a man of integrity may be said to be sound or pure in heart; or, in opposition to a sensual lustful man, a man of a polluted heart, a man whose thoughts and desires are regulated by the law of chastity may be said to be pure in heart; or, viewing all error and all sin as polluting the mind and heart, purity of heart may be considered as synonymous with holiness, conformity of mind and will to God; or, in contradistinction to the man of clean hands, the person whose external behavior is unimpeachable, the man of a pure heart may be viewed as the person whose inward principles, whose sentiments and affections, whose modes of thought and feeling, as well as his external conduct, are in accordance with the holy law of God.

I cannot help thinking that our Lord, in using the terms before us, had a tacit reference to that character of external sanctity or purity which belonged to the Jewish people, and to that privilege of intercourse with God, which was connected with that character. They were a people separated from the nations polluted with idolatry; set apart as holy to Jehovah; and, as a holy people, they were permitted to draw near to their God, the only living and true God, in the ordinances of his worship. On the possession of this character, and on the enjoyment of this privilege, the Jewish people plumed themselves. They accounted themselves blessed, because they were thus "holy to the Lord," and were thus permitted to draw near to him.

A higher character, however, and a higher privilege, belonged to those who should be the subjects of the Messiah's reign. They should not only be externally holy, but "pure in heart;" and they should not merely be allowed to approach towards the holy place, where God's honor dwelt, but they should "see

67 "Mundum cor simplex (i. e., sine plica) cor = ὕσπαλμος ἀπλως."—Trench.
68 "Non sufficit puritas ceremonialis."—Bengel.

VOL. I.
God,” be introduced into the most intimate intercourse with him. Thus viewed, as a description of the spiritual character and privileges of the subjects of the Messiah, in contrast with the external character and privileges of the Jewish people, the passage before us is full of most important and interesting truth.

The subjects of the Messiah are “pure in heart”—spiritually purified. Their bodies may not be purified by the lustrements of the Mosaic law, but “their hearts are purified by faith.” To use the apostle’s language, their hearts are “sprinkled from an evil conscience.” The man whose conscience is polluted with guilt, cannot be happy, and is altogether unfit for communion with God. Every man’s conscience is naturally polluted with guilt, for every man is a sinner, and, to a certain extent, every man knows that he is a sinner. While he regards God as his enemy,—and while he considers himself as under guilt, he must regard God as his enemy,—he must be a stranger to true holiness and to true happiness, for true holiness and happiness arise out of the knowledge of God, and favorable intercourse with God as our Father and our Friend. The only way in which the heart can be purified from the evil conscience, which prevents holiness and happiness, by shutting us out from God, who is the source of both, is by the sprinkling of the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, who bears, and bears away, the sin of the world. It is the belief of the truth respecting Jehovah, as well pleased in his Son, “reconciling the world to himself” in him, “seeing he has made him, who knew no sin, to be sin in our room;” it is the belief of this truth, which cleanses the conscience, which purifies the heart, which gives us confidence in the sight of God, and enables us to go boldly to his throne, as the throne of mercy. This “love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to us,” produces love to God; for “we love him who hath so loved us,” and this love to God is the prolific seed of all holiness, both of heart and conduct.

The pure in heart, or the spiritually purified, are thus those who, through the faith of the truth respecting the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, are fitted for spiritual intercourse with the holy Jehovah. These are the blessed ones; not those who have been “sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, by the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer,” but they who have had “their conscience purged from dead works, to serve the living God, by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God” a “sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor.”

Such persons are blessed in the enjoyment of this spiritual purification, “for they shall see God.” They who were “sanctified to the purifying of the flesh,” were permitted to enter the sacred gates of the temple, and, in the appointed rites of worship, to approach to Jehovah. This was an important and valuable

---

69 Acts xv. 9.  
70 Heb. x. 22.  
71 Rom. v. 5.  
72 Heb. ix. 13, 14.  
Eph. v. 2.
privilege. But far higher is the privilege enjoyed by those whose "hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience"—whose "consciences are purged from dead works." "They shall see God," that is, they shall obtain clear and satisfactory views of his character, and they shall be admitted into intimate and delightful fellowship with him.

In the truth, the faith of which purifies the heart, they see God; for what is that truth but a manifestation of the glory of God in the face of his Son—an illustrious display of the combined radiance of divine holiness and divine benignity. The veil which covers the Holy of Holies is, as it were, rent asunder, and the believer sees, with the eye of his mind, Jehovah as "the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, not clearing the guilty without satisfaction to the injured honors of his character, and the insulted rights of his government; "yet setting forth his Son a propitiation through faith in his blood," and proclaiming himself to be "the just God and the Saviour;" "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." And he not only obtains clear satisfactory views of the Divine character, but he enjoys intimate and delightful communion with God. He is brought very near God; God's mind becomes his mind; God's will becomes his will; and his "fellowship is truly with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." They who are pure in heart "see God" in this way, even in the present world; and in the future state their knowledge of God will become far more extensive—their fellowship with him far more intimate; for though, when compared with the privileges of a former dispensation, even now "as with open face we contemplate the glory of the Lord," yet, in reference to the privileges of a higher economy, we yet see but "through a glass darkly"—we "know but in part"—we understand but in part—we enjoy but in part. But "that which is in part shall be done away," and "that which is perfect shall come." "We shall," to use the apostle's language, which we know is accurate, for it was taught him by the Holy Spirit, though the full meaning of it we shall never understand till we get to heaven,—we "shall see face to face," we "shall know even as we are known;" or to borrow the words of the Psalmist, we "shall behold his face in righteousness: we shall be satisfied, when we awake, with his likeness." Then, and not till then, will the full meaning of these words be understood,—"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

§ 7. The peace-makers—they shall be called the children of God.

We proceed now to consider the seventh beatitude. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of

---

73 Exod. xxxiv. 6. Rom. iii. 25, 26.
74 John i. 3.
75 1 Cor. xiii. 9-12.
76 Psal. xvii. 15.
77 See Note B.
The Jews, in general, regarded the gentile nations with bitter contempt and hatred, and they expected that, under the Messiah, there should be an uninterrupted series of warlike attacks made on these nations, till they were completely destroyed, or subjugated to the chosen people of God. In their estimation, those emphatically deserved the appellation of happy who should be employed under Messiah the prince, to avenge on the heathen nations all the wrongs these had done to Israel. How different is the spirit of the new economy! How beautifully does it accord with the angelic anthem which celebrated the nativity of its Founder: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

This is one of the distinguishing characters of the subjects of the Messiah, that they are peace-makers. Through the knowledge and belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, they are brought into a state of peace. "They have been reconciled by God to himself, by the death of his Son." By him "they have received the reconciliation;" the war which raged within is also brought to a close; and being at peace with God, and at peace with themselves, they are at peace with the whole world, regarding all mankind with a sincere benevolence, and desirous of promoting their best interests, both in this world and in that which is to come.

This naturally induces them to become peace-makers. It makes them desirous that all men should become partakers of the peace, which has been obtained through the ransom paid on the cross; and that, for this purpose, all "men should" acquaint themselves with God, as revealed in "Christ crucified," and thus be at peace. They know that "there is no peace for the wicked," and therefore, as peace-makers, they use the means which lie in their power, that "the wicked should forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and turn to the Lord, who will have mercy on him, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon." They know, and believe, that this "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," lies at the foundation of peace with ourselves; and that these two lay the only solid foundation for peace, in all the extent of that word, with one another. They believe, that if men were but generally "reconciled to God through the death of his Son," then man, the brother, would live the friend, of man; and till this is gained, in their estimation, little progress can be made towards this most desirable consummation; and that which receives the name of peace, is only a suspension of combat, or an armed truce. Under the influence of the faith of the truth, by means of which they have obtained peace, Christians, happy in themselves, endeavor to diffuse happiness around them. They carefully abstain from injuring any one; knowing that mutual injury is the great cause of mutual quarrels. Not easily provoked, they endeavor not to provoke others, except "to love and to good works;" kind

---

77 Matt. v. 9. 78 εἰρηνοτοι, not merely εἰρηνικοί or εἰρηναῖοι.
79 2 Cor. v. 18 Romans v. 10, 11. 80 Isa. iv. 7.
81 Heb. x. 24.
offices. They "follow peace with all men," so far as this is consistent with that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "As much as lieth in" them, they endeavor to "live peaceably with all men." In all the relations in which they are placed, whether domestic, civil, or ecclesiastical, their object is to prevent, allay, and extinguish anger, debate, strife, and division. In order to obtain peace, they will not sacrifice truth or duty, because they know that to be only a false peace—not deserving the name—which can be secured in this way; but they will sacrifice everything but truth and duty, in order to obtain peace. They carefully avoid whatever they have reason to think will give offence, or create disunion; and readily bear even with men's weaknesses and follies when they are not criminal, rather than disturb peace. They count it their duty, not only to avoid carefully whatever may break the peace, but just because they love peace, though cautious of interfering in "strife that does not belong to them," they do not shrink from exertion and sacrifice, when they perceive that these, on their part, may conduct to the extinguishing of the fire of discord, though it may not have been kindled by themselves.

This peaceable and peace-making disposition, is by no means to be confounded with that indolent good nature which is but a modification of timidity and selfishness. He who, in order to secure what he terms peace, sacrifices truth and duty, will frequently fail in the object he has in view; and even should he succeed, he will find at the great day of accounts, that not the blessing of the peace-maker, but the curse of "the fearful and unbelieving," shall rest on him; and instead of being permitted to "enter through the gates into the city," he shall be shut out among "dogs, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all that love and make a lie."

The peace-makers are pronounced happy by our Lord: "Blessed are the peace-makers." They cannot but be happy. Next to the enjoyment of peace in our own minds, must be the delight of knowing that we are the means of diffusing peace and love around us. But the particular reason which our Lord assigns for pronouncing them happy is, "they shall be called the children of God." Such persons are the children of God, and they shall be called or acknowledged to be his children. Both these ideas are suggested by the words.

To be a child of God, is a figurative expression, descriptive of intimate and peculiar relation to God, and of moral conformity and resemblance to God. These peace-makers are the objects of the peculiar and favorable regards of God; and indeed their possession of this disposition is a clear proof of it, for, in consequence of "the great love wherewith he loved them," he has by his Holy Spirit, delivered them from the dominion of those "lusts striving in their members," "from whence come wars and fightings;" and from being "hateful and hating one another,"

\[\text{Heb. xii. 14. Rom. xii. 18.}\]
has enabled them "to put on bowels of mercies," "to forbear one another in love," and to "forgive one another, if any have a quarrel against any."^83 The clearest evidence of individuals being the children of God, the objects of his peculiar love, is their possession of those holy dispositions which he alone can confer, and which he confers only on those whom it is his purpose to bless with final salvation.

The peace-makers are the children of God, not only as being the objects of his peculiar favor, but as being conformed to his image. He is "the God of peace."^84 His great object in the wonderful scheme of redemption, is to "gather together in one all things in Christ," whether they be "things in heaven, or things on earth."^85 And all those who, under the influence of Christian truth, are peace-makers, show that they are animated with the same principle of action as God, and "as obedient children," are co-operating with him in his benevolent design of establishing "peace on earth." As of all who delight in strife, and debate, and war, it may be said, "They are of their father the devil"—who was "a murderer from the beginning—and the works of their father they do;" so it may be said of all who, as the Psalmist expresses it, "seek peace and pursue it,"^86 they are of their "Father in heaven," "the God of peace," and the works of their Father they do. What greater happiness can a created being enjoy than to be the object of the Divine favor? what greater honor than to wear the impress of the Divine image?

The peace-makers shall not merely be, but they shall be "called," acknowledged to be, "the children of God." God calls them his children, even in the present state, distinguishing them by tokens of his peculiar regard; and at last he will publicly avow his relation to them in the presence of an assembled universe. Their fellow-saints recognize them by this distinguishing mark to be their brethren, children of their common Father. Many, even of that world which is blind to some other of the characteristics of the children of God, who know not the younger brethren, as they knew not the first-born when he was among them, are constrained by the manifestation of this temper to say,—'these are the sons of God'; and there is a period approaching, when the peace-makers, however humble their situation may have been in the present state, and however much their characters may have been misapprehended or misrepresented, shall "shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Then will be "the manifestation of the sons of God."^87

This concludes the statement of the distinctive characters of the subjects of the kingdom of God.

---

^83 James iv. 1. Col. iii. 12, 13.
^84 Rom. xv. 33; xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. 1 Thess. v. 23. Heb. xiii. 20.
^85 Eph. i. 19
^86 John viii. 44. Psal. xxxiv. 14.
^87 Matt. xiii. 43. Rom. viii. 19. 1 John iii. 2, 3.
§ 8. Appendix.—Persecuted yet blessed.

The beatitude in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth verses, may be considered as a kind of appendix. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."88

The Jews expected that all of them were to enjoy the blessings of the Messiah's reign; and that these blessings were to consist in a great measure in freedom from external evils, such as poverty and oppression, and in the enjoyment of external good, such as peace, wealth, honor, and in one word, prosperity. Our Lord had already distinctly intimated, that the subjects of the Messiah were not to consist of the Jewish nation as a body, but of men possessed of a peculiar character; and in the words before us he clearly states, that his peculiar people, instead of being distinguished by worldly wealth and honor, were to be a poor, despised, and persecuted race. They were to be "persecuted for righteousness' sake."

The phrase, "for righteousness' sake," is just equivalent to, for the belief and profession of Christian truth, and for the performance of Christian duty. To suffer for righteousness' sake, is synonymous with suffering for Christ's sake; suffering "for the Gospel's sake;" "suffering as a Christian."

The term, "persecuted," is descriptive of all the variety of evils to which the followers of our Lord were to be exposed for their attachment to him and his cause, for their allegiance to his authority, and their observance of his laws. How varied and severe these evils were, is to be learned from the history of the church of Christ. The apostles, who occupied the highest place in the kingdom of heaven, were distinguished not less by their sufferings, than by their honors. "I think," says one of them, speaking in the name of them all, "that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ: we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we en-

88 Matt. v. 10-12. "Of these verses it is curious to find, what certainly was not accidental, a reminiscence, 1 Pet. iii. 14, 'Ἄλλα' εἰ πάγκοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνης μακαρίων; and iv. 14, εἰ δοξάσεσθε εἰς ονόματι Χριστοῦ μακαρίων."—Tholuck.
88 The want of the article need occasion no difficulty. "Nomina abstracta velut quæsæ, αὐθέντης similique, perinde sunt, utrum addito an detracto articulo diecantur."—Fritzsche.
treat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-
scouring of all things unto this day.” And, speaking of his
own individual experience, he tells us that, as a christian apostle,
he had been “in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure,
in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.” “Of the Jews,” says
he, “five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I
beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck,
a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often,
in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own
countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in
perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false
brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in
hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”
The description of the sufferings of the people of God under the
Old Testament economy, is equally applicable to the primitive
followers of Christ. Some, many of them, “had trial of cruel
mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprison-
ment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted,
were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins
and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: (Of whom
the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in
mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

Comparatively few of the followers of Christ have been exposed
to persecution in so violent a form; but all his genuine followers
are, in some form, and in some degree, “persecuted for righteous-
ness.” “All who will live godly, must,” and do, “suffer persecu-
tion.” It has been justly remarked, that “the wicked hate the
holy image of God, and those who bear it; his holy truth, and
those who profess and preach it; his holy law, and those who
obey and stand up for its obligation and authority; his holy ordi-

cinations, and those that attend on them.” The particular form
of the opposition which wicked and worldly men make to the
cause of Christ, will depend on circumstances; but in all coun-
tries and in all ages, it exists, and the followers of Christ should
count on being exposed to derision, reproach, slander, and it may
be evils of a more formidable kind, from ungodly men.”

It deserves and requires notice, that when our Lord pro-
nounces his people “blessed” amidst, and on account of, perse-

90 1 Cor. iv. 9-13. 91 2 Cor. xi. 23-27.
92 Heb. xi. 38–38. 93 Scott.
94 When modern divines refer all that Scripture declares about the persecution
of Christians on the part of the world, to the circumstances of those times, and
to the discrepancy betwixt Heathen and Hebrew, and explain, on the same prin-
ciple, the sayings before us, they proceed upon a no less carnal view of the church
of Christ than that which the bulk of the Jews entertained of the Messiah’s king-
dom; for it implies, that whatsoever lives within the precincts of the church is, on
that very account, sundered from the ἱερός. The persons whose characters are
drawn here, are such as have received into their hearts the Spirit of Christ. They
are described as persecuted for his, and for righteousness’ sake. The ground of
the persecution accordingly lies in that natural enmity between light and dark-
ness, of which John speaks, ch. iii. 20; and hence, wherever there is a dark-
ness which Christ hath not lightened, there that enmity is also found.”—
Tholuck.
cation, it is not suffering in general he speaks of, but "suffering for righteousness' sake." It is not every sufferer, no, nor every sufferer for religion, that can legitimately claim the consolation with which our Lord's declarations are so replete. He alone can be pronounced blessed, who suffers because he will not deny the truth, because he will not violate the law of his redeeming Lord. It is, as Augustine says, "not the punishment, but the cause which makes the martyr." He who is persecuted in this cause, however severely, is blessed. It is an honor and a privilege conferred on him. "It is given to him on the behalf of Christ to suffer for his sake."

The particular reason our Lord assigns for pronouncing those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake happy, is, that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." I have already had occasion to explain these words in illustrating the first of the beatitudes. The phrase is commonly considered as equivalent to, 'they shall enjoy the celestial blessedness.' I have no doubt this is included in it, but this is by no means all that is included in it. It is not, 'theirs shall be the kingdom of heaven,' though that is true, but "theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" even while suffering for righteousness' sake, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven is the new economy, the order of things under the Messiah. A person enters into this kingdom when he "repents towards," or changes his mind with regard to, "God," believes the Gospel, and is born again, "being transformed by the renewing of his mind." The privileges of this kingdom are spiritual. They are not meat and drink, or riches, or honors; they are "righteousness,"—justification,—"peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These are the privileges of the kingdom, and every one who enters into it, is invested with them. These men, however despised and persecuted by their fellow-men, are happy, for they are kings and priests, or "a royal priesthood," a sacred kingdom; they have "received the kingdom which cannot be moved." They are already in the enjoyment of privileges and immunities, compared with which, earth's highest honors and enjoyments are but as the dust in the balance; and they are assured of, in due time, obtaining in heaven the full "inheritance of the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

It is obvious that, in all that our Lord had said, he had a particular reference to those who had believed on him, and that they were the persons whom he had described "as poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peace-makers, and persecuted for righteousness' sake." But he now makes a change in the form of his discourse. From general statements he turns to direct address; and fixing his eyes benignantly on his disciples, who appear to

55 "Martyres non facit penna sed causa." Enarr. in Psal. xxxiv. 28.
56 Phil. i. 29.
57 Rom. xiv. 17.
58 "Mens regnum bona possidet."—Seneca.
59 Rev. i. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Heb. xii. 28.
have been seated nearest to him, he says:—"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Perfect integrity was a leading feature in the character of our Lord. He never excited false hopes; nay, he never availed himself of false hopes which, irrespective of any statements he had made, men had formed. "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," said a scribe. Our Lord, instead of allowing the man to do so, till he should discover that He was not the kind of Messiah he expected, immediately replied: — "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." And here, in the very commencement of his ministry, he tells his disciples, "what great things they must suffer for his name's sake." He tells them that they were to be reviled and persecuted, and that all manner of evil was to be spoken against them; and their future experience taught them that the Faithful Witness did not lie.

But, while he tells them that "in the world they would have tribulation," he assures them also that "in him they should have peace." They would be happy, blessed, when all these things should come upon them, if their sufferings were brought upon them by their attachment to Christ and his cause; and, if the charges brought against them were indeed false charges, amid all their sufferings they would be supported by the peace of God, and the hope of glory; their "tribulation would work patience, and experience, and hope—a hope which would not make them ashamed." The assurance that "if they suffered along with Christ, it was that they should be glorified together with him," would support their heart, and enable them to "count it all joy when," on account of Christ, "they were brought into manifold temptations."

Our Lord not only pronounces them "blessed," but calls on them to "rejoice"— "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad." It is a strange exhortation—when persecuted and reviled, not merely be patient and resigned, but joyful and glad. This seems "a hard saying"—an impracticable precept. But our Lord's commands are "not grievous." He requires from his people nothing that is unreasonable. When the whole of the case is taken into view, the command appears in the highest degree reasonable, and the duty not only practicable, but easy: "This is the victory which overcometh the world," all difficulties, "even our faith."

Let a man but believe what Jesus reveals to him, and he will not feel it difficult to do what Jesus commands, or endure what Jesus appoints. The man who believes that his reward shall be great in heaven, will have no difficulty in rejoicing and being exceeding glad amid those afflictions which, however heavy, he will in this case feel light; and which, however long continued, he will

regard as but for a moment; and which he knows are "working out for him a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory."  

The celestial blessedness is, in one point of view, a free gift:—"The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—not merited by man, but freely bestowed by God. But, in another point of view, it is a reward, as it is only in the way of doing and suffering the will of God that it can be attained, and as the measure of enjoyment in the heavenly state will be regulated according to the degree of labor and suffering in the service of Christ. How great that reward will be, we cannot tell; but a window has, as it were, been opened in heaven, and through it we have been allowed to contemplate those who have suffered for Christ, enjoying their reward:—"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall neither hunger any more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." This is the state, in the period between death and the resurrection, of those who have suffered for Christ. At that period, still higher rewards shall be bestowed on them. They "shall be brought with him" in glory, when he comes; they shall, in a manner of which we can form no distinct conception, take a part with him in "the judgment of the world;" they shall "sit with him on his throne, as he has overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne;" and they shall for ever, in the highest degree which is competent to created beings, be participants of his joys and sharers of his honors.

The full assurance of hope, respecting the recompense of re-

---

2 2 Cor. iv. 17.  
3 Rom. vi. 23.  
4 "The reward is vouchsafed, not κατ' ἄφειλημα, but κατὰ χάριν. It is a χάρισμα, not an ἰδρύμαν. Rom. vi. 23."—TULLECK. "Gratia dicitur, quia gratis data est illa, cui datur."—August.  
5 Rev. vii. 9-17.  
6 1 Thess. iv. 14.  
1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Rev. iii. 21.
ward, was not to be the only source of support, and consolation, and joy, to our Lord’s disciples, under the sufferings to which they were to be exposed for his sake. The consolation that the treatment they were meeting with, was just what the most distinguished servants of God, in former ages, had experienced, was well calculated to sustain and comfort them. “The same afflictions had been accomplished in their brethren, who had been in the world.” The path to heaven has always been replete with sufferings of some kind or other, which called for the exercise of faith and patience. It was consolation to the primitive Christians, to think that they were only meeting with the same afflictions as Moses, and David, and Elijah, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and the other prophets, and meeting with them in the same cause. In such company reproach becomes praise, and dishonor glory.

Our Lord’s primitive followers, through the effectual operation of his Spirit, were enabled to yield obedience to this apparently hard command. They experienced the truth of their Lord’s declaration, that when persecuted for righteousness’ sake, they were blessed—and feeling themselves blessed, they rejoiced. Hear how one, who in sufferings as in labors seems to have held the first place, describes his feelings, “For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.”

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed: always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which

7 “What a treasure of comfort must the apostles have found in this allusion! How does it steel the courage to have comrades, such comrades, in the war of afflictions! What, although it was not to the present, but to the past, they required to look for them; is not the combat, is not the triumph in which it is at last to terminate, the same? The little timorous band of the Nazarene may join the ranks of that cloud of witnesses (Heb. xii. 1) who, in the struggle for an invisible world, have sacrificed all that men value upon this earth. How animating the consciousness of fighting in fellowship with so great a company of the children of light!”—Tholuck.

8 Rom. viii. 18, 35-39.
are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

“For we know, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

And we find the Hebrew Christians, taking joyfully “the spoiling of their goods,” “knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a more abiding substance.” And the same principle will produce the same mode of feeling and acting, in all countries, and in all ages.

II.—THE POSITION AND DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS IN REFERENCE TO THE WORLD.

The sentences which follow were addressed by our Lord, not to the multitude indiscriminately, but to his disciples, and they are descriptive of the important and salutary change which was to take place among mankind, through their instrumentality.

The truth on this subject is presented to the mind under two very significant emblems; and appropriate practical instruction is connected with each of these emblematical representations.

Let us inquire into the meaning of these emblems, and seek to feel the force of the practical instructions connected with them.

We are not less interested in them, than those were to whom they were originally addressed.

§ 1. The Salt of the Earth.

“Ye are the salt of the earth.”

The earth here plainly symbolizes the human inhabitants of the earth, or the earth viewed as their residence, and affected by their moral state. The use of the figure indicates that the earth needs salt.

It is in a state of spiritual decomposition—moral putrescence. The world, mankind, are in a state of ignorance and error, of guilt and depravity—a state of which animal matter, tending to, undergoing, the process of dissolution, is a striking figure: offensiveness and danger to other sentient beings, and destruction of the putrifying substance itself, are the significant parts of the figure.

Mankind, under the influence of ignorance and error, guilt and depravity, are the proper objects of the disapprobation and loathing of the Divine Being, and of all the wise and good beings in the universe. They are perishing, and—continuing under these influences—they must utterly perish—“perish in their

9 2 Cor. iv. 8-11, 16-18. 10 2 Cor. v. 1.
11 2 Cor. xii. 10. 12 Matt. v. 13-16.
13 Matt. v. 13.
14 “Της stands — κόσμος, ‘the world,’ v. 14; and implies mankind in general, with the accessory notion of the φθαρτόν, ‘corruptible,’ which must be preserved by means of ἄλας, ‘the salt.’”—Olmhausen.
own corruption." The seeds of disorganization, the elements of ruin, are within, and at work; their operation is discoverable by all who, in any measure, have "their senses exercised, to make a distinction between good and evil," just in proportion to their spiritual perspicacity and sensibility; the process, as it goes forward, makes the world an uncomfortable and unsafe residence for human beings; and the miserable subjects of the malady, unless restored to health, becoming every day more loathsome, must soon be thrust into the mystical valley of the son of Hinnom, the charnel-house of the universe—the horrid receptacle of that spiritual filth, the accumulation of which would, in no long period, make our world not only without an inhabitant, but uninhabitable.

At the period our Lord uttered these words, the whole world, with scarcely an exception, was a mass of moral rottenness. The unutterable abominations of the impure and bloody systems of paganism—manifested not only in their infamous orgies, miscalled religious rites, but in the general prevalence of vices, which ought not even to be once named among Christians—overspread the earth; and Judaism, which, even in its state of purity (having in but a very small measure the power of diffusing itself), had done little to counteract the growing corruption of mankind, had now, except in a very few individuals, not only lost its savour, but become the seat and the source of an offensive pestilential disease. The language employed by the sacred historian, respecting the state of mankind immediately before the deluge, is equally applicable to the state of the world at the time our Lord uttered these words:—"The earth was corrupt before God."

"When God looked on the earth, behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."

Now, of this corrupted and corrupting earth, this mass of decomposing spiritual organization, our Lord pronounces his disciples "the salt:"—"Ye are the salt of the earth."16

In these figurative words, our Lord announces the wonderful truth, the full import of which is, even yet, after eighteen centuries, but imperfectly unfolded, that, through the instrumentality of his disciples,—then so few in number, so humble in circumstances, so utterly destitute of all the forces, physical and political, by which changes among great bodies of men are usually effected,—an important and salutary alteration was to take place on the characters and circumstances of mankind. The pestilence was to be in some measure arrested, the nuisance abated; the earth made a safer and more comfortable dwelling for moral agents, beings connected with God and eternity; many individuals resorted to a healthy state; and their ruin—their utter ruin—as spiritual beings, which was so certainly in pro-

15 Gen. vi. 11, 12.
16 "Salt denotes proverbially one of the most indispensable necessaries of life. 'Nil sole et sale utilius,' says the Roman proverb. Plin. H. N. xxxi. 9. Eccles. xxxix. 32."—Trollope.
PART II.] THE POSITION AND DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS.

gress, prevented. "Ye are the salt of the earth," is equivalent to, 'You are to be the means of improving the world, and of saving its inhabitants. By your instrumentality the ignorant are to become enlightened, the guilty are to be brought to seek and obtain pardon, the depraved are to be made holy, the unprofitable useful, the miserable happy; men are to be made fit for presenting themselves a sacrifice to God—"holy, acceptable, rational worship." You are to be the grand instrumental means by which God is to renovate the earth, to make it a wholesome, pleasant residence for men to dwell in, and superior beings to visit—to regenerate society, and to save men."17

It is never to be forgotten, that the immediate instrument of these blessed changes is truth, divine truth—truth from God, truth about God, operating on the minds of men, influencing and guiding all their active energies, according to the principles of their rational and moral nature; and that, in man's depraved state, a special divine influence is absolutely necessary, so to bring the mind, and keep it in contact with this saving truth, as that these blissful consequences may be realized. Men are "transformed by the renewing of the mind;" and it is the good Spirit that, by the truth, creates "the new mind," and puts "the right spirit" within men.

But that truth is not immediately revealed to every one in whom, when believed, it effectually works in arresting spiritual putrefaction, and restoring to spiritual health. Our Lord taught his disciples, personally and by his Holy Spirit, the saving truth. He transformed them by its instrumentality. He made them holy and happy beings. But this was by no means all. He not only stopped the plague in them, restoring them to health, but he constituted them his agents in healing others. Not only were they the recipients of the water of life, but out of them flowed rivers of these healing waters. The truth preached by them, and rendered permanent in their divinely-inspired writings—confirmed by those miracles of which, in their writings, we have an abiding, authentic record, and illustrated by their holy lives, which, in the sacred narrative, are still held up to us—was the grand means by which the Holy Spirit, not only in their own age and country was, but in every succeeding age, to the end of the world, and to the remotest borders of the earth, is, to prove himself "Jehovah Rophi—the Lord that healeth."18

The words, "Ye are the salt of the earth," as they were primarily applied to the apostles, and the other inspired teachers of Christianity, so they have obviously an exuberance of meaning—and

17 "The course of the human race, apart from Christianity, is always downward: all its civilization ends in barbarism."—Neander.
18 Exod. xv. 26.
19 Thomas Aquinas says that the apostles are called salt, "ratione virtutis:" and he thus expands this thought. They have first "virtutem saporativam:" then they have "virtutem areactivam:" then they have "virtutem restrictivam:" then they have "virtutem mundificatam:" and, finally, they have "virtutem sanativam:"—then they are called salt, "ratione originis," water and heat—the
in reference to them; but they may be employed as strikingly descriptive of the position and duty of christian teachers in all countries and in all ages. Nay, we do not rightly apprehend our Lord’s meaning, if we do not consider them as referring to the place which his people, whether holding official situations or not in his church, occupy with regard to the world, and the purpose which he means to serve by them. “Jacob,” the spiritual Israel, is intended to be “in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass,” for refreshing and fructifying the nations. All who know the truth are bound by their obligations, both to their Lord, the author of the truth, and their fellow-men, to make known the truth by which they themselves—slaves as they lately were—were made free, and by which alone others can be made “the Lord’s freemen.” In their character, as the salt of the earth, they must bring themselves into contact with the corrupting substance. Every Christian, however limited his sphere of influence, must still, within that sphere, exert the influence which he possesses. He must exhibit truth in its meaning, and evidence, and influence: he must be a living epistle of Jesus Christ, seen and read of all men.

In the language of our Lord to his primitive disciples, “Ye are the salt of the earth.” I cannot help thinking, that there is an intentional intimation, that the benignant influence of his religion, producing a favorable moral change, through the instrumentality of those who embraced it, was not to be confined within the narrow limits of the promised land, but was to pervade the whole earth—the world—reaching “to every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation.” The whole earth was corrupt before God; and, as the divine counteractive of corruption was needed by all, it was ultimately to be extended to all lands. The prophets and the pious Jews were the salt of Judea; but the apostles and their followers were to be the salt of the earth.

It is an intimation of what is the undoubted truth, that all true holiness and happiness among mankind is the result of christian truth known and believed; that the knowledge and belief of christian truth, so far as they depend on created agency, are diffused through the instrumentality of christian men; and, that it is the will of Christ that christian men should diffuse this knowledge and faith as extensively as possible. The earth—the whole earth—is laboring under moral putrefaction, and, therefore, throughout the whole earth, is the divine counteractive to be diffused. There are two or three very important practical conclusions, which come out of this statement of the case.

In the first place, there can be no doubt of the propriety and obligation, as there can be no doubt of the necessity, of christian missions to heathen and infidel nations. They are wide-extended,
putrifying marshes, and can only be healed by that spiritual salt, of whose healing virtue, the salt thrown by the prophet into the bitter empoisoned waters is a striking figure.\(^{21}\) Christians who take no part in such undertakings, seem to deny either the need of the heathen world or the power of christian truth, or to disclaim at once the possession of the knowledge, and the obligation of the duty, implied in the words, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Their conduct seems to say, the earth does not need salt, or Christianity is not salt, or we are not Christians.

In the second place, it seems equally beyond doubt, that Christians must mingle themselves with society, in order to serve the purpose of their being constituted the salt of the earth. It is not the will of our Lord, that we should be monks or hermits. It is his will that christian churches should be select bodies, "a people taken out from among the Gentiles"—"a peculiar people"—"a people dwelling alone."\(^{22}\) It is his will that his people in their most confidential friendships, should follow the law of the elective affinities of their new nature. But while all this is true, it is not only not their duty to go out of the world, but in all ordinary circumstances they cannot do their duty unless they are in it. The world is surely the place for the salt of the world. Christians must mingle with society, and in mingling with society, they must, in the various ways which may seem best fitted to gain their object, apply to their fellow-men that truth by which alone they can be saved.

And in the third place, it seems a natural conclusion from what has been stated, that the capacity of a Christian to produce saving good, and his obligation to attempt it, correspond with the closeness of the relation in which he stands to the individuals who are the proper objects of his christian benevolence. The closer the salt can come to the body that needs it, the more intimately it can insinuate itself into the substance, the greater probability of its serving its purpose. He does not act like a Christian, who does not do what lies in him, that the whole earth should be salted. But he acts very like a fool, who makes great exertions to put down moral putrescence among the antipodes, while he allows it to exist and increase in his own country, his own city, his own neighborhood, his own family. Home attempts to put down spiritual corruption, should not supersede foreign enterprise for the same purpose. But since the pestilence is universal, while I will do what I can to send remedies to the inhabitants of Calabar or Japan, I will especially look after my own country, my own city, my own relations, my own family. My securest way of extending the influence of Christianity, is first to influence those I am most intimately connected with, and then, through them, those with whom I have a comparatively remote connection. I expect to find the best missionary agent in the man who is most diligent and conscientious in attending to the spiritual concerns of his own, especially those of his own house.\(^{23}\) I shall come to doubt

whether that be salt at all, if what is constantly in contact with it be not salted.

The whole of our Lord's statement goes on the supposition, that, to be successful in making others Christians, and in thus making them holy and happy, we must be ourselves Christians, we must ourselves be Christianly holy and happy. We must "have salt in ourselves," if we would be the salt of the world. To be really useful as foreign or home missionaries, or christian-instruction agents, or sabbath-school teachers, men must be Christians indeed; not merely men who have learned a system of theology by rote, and are fluent enough in imparting it to others, but men who know, and believe, and experience the truth as it is in Jesus. How can men teach what they do not know? How can they exemplify what they have never experienced? It is Christian truth under divine influence, that makes men Christianly good and happy; and it is just in the degree in which we find in a man Christian truth embodied, and Christian influence exemplified, that we find him a fit agent for advancing Christianity. "Let the dead bury their dead," but let them not pretend to be fit agents for promoting their spiritual resurrection.

If the professed followers of Christ, instead of holding the truth, embrace error—if, instead of leading holy lives, they live in conformity to the present evil world—it is plain they cannot serve the high and holy purposes for which they are separated from the world. Unconverted members of Christian churches are plagues to the church, and plagues to the world. And however active such persons may be made, in a species of promoting the cause of Christianity, by such motives as they can alone feel the force of—and it is astonishing what exertions they can be brought to put forth—little good is to be expected, and much evil is to be feared, from their exertions. Worldly-minded, untender-walking, while, at the same time, loud, noisy, bustling, professors of Christianity, are among the worst enemies of Christ and Christianity, of the church and of the world. Instead of being such salt of the world as counteracts and even cures putrescence, they are like salt of another kind, which, when brought into contact with putrifying substances, accelerates the progress of decomposition. These men may well make the world worse, but they will never make it better. As true consistent active Christians are the greatest of all benefactors to mankind, so there are not worse enemies to society than worldly, wicked, professors of the religion of Christ. They are "to every good work reprobate"—useless to others—and in a situation even more deplorable and less hopeful than that world, obviously lying in wickedness, of which, from their profession, they should be the active efficient reformers.

These sentiments are stated with terrific plainness, though, in appropriately figurative language, in the words that follow:—"But if the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It

20 Mark. ix. 50. 21 Matt. viii. 22.
is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast forth and to be trodden under foot of men."

The salt used by the Jews, was by no means so thoroughly purified as that which we employ. It was native salt, mixed up with earthy substances, which formed a considerable portion of the whole mass. With us salt cannot lose its savor or taste, without being itself lost. With them the compound substance called salt, when long exposed to the atmosphere, had the saline particles exhaled or wasted away, and there remained an insipid, useless, earthy mass. An old but singularly trustworthy oriental traveller states, that in passing through the Valley of Salt, near Aleppo, in Syria, he took up a piece of salt, and breaking off portions of it which had been exposed to the sun, and air, and rain, found that though they had all the external appearances of salt, they had entirely lost its taste. This insipid substance is good for no purpose. It is entirely useless. It does not even serve the purpose of manure. We are told that as vast quantities of salt were employed in the temple, as condiment for the sacrifices, that which became vapid by exposure to the atmosphere, being useful for no other purpose, was strewn, as we do sand or gravel, in the courts of the temple, to be trampled under foot. Let us endeavor to discover the meaning of this figurative representation.

Some interpreters consider the phrase "wherewith shall it be salted?" as equivalent to, "Wherewith shall the earth be salted?" As if he had said, 'If those who should be the instructors and reformers of the world become ignorant and wicked, what is to become of the world? must it not be consigned to hopeless corruption?' This is an important and impressive thought, but it does not seem to be our Lord's thought.

From what follows—"It," i.e., the salt—"is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men," it is obvious that the sense is, 'If the salt lose its taste, how is it to recover it?' The sentiment intended to be conveyed seems to be this: A professed Christian, especially if he has seemed to be distinguished for the knowledge and experience of the saving truth, and by being so, has seemed to be useful in making the world wiser and better, who becomes careless, and ignorant, and worldly, and irreligious—who loses the hold he seemed to have of truth—who ceases to manifest anything like its native influence on his temper and conduct—is in a state peculiarly deplorable. There is less probability that he shall be reclaimed than that the grossly ignorant, the openly profligate, should be converted. An ignorant wicked heathen, is in a less hopeless condition than an apostate Christian, whether the apostasy be avowed or silent.

This is a sentiment very strongly expressed by the inspired apostles, who had the mind of Christ:—"It is impossible for

---

15 "Nil est trivium quam qui vult divinus haberi, ac non est."—Bengel.
16 Maundrell.
17 Luther.
those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers, is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 

28 "If after" men "have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, 'The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'"

29 Such individuals are in all but a desperate state, in reference to their own salvation. They may be saved; but it will be as by fire. They may be saved; but the probability is, they shall perish, must perish, because they will perish. They serve no good purpose. They pollute the church if they are allowed to continue in it. They have disgraced it in the estimation of men, even though they leave it, or are expelled from it. Such men are viewed in the passage as retaining the name of Christian. They are still called salt. But they bear a name they do not deserve; and it is not the better for them, while it is the worse for others, both in the church and the world, that they do bear so worthy a name.

A professed Christian, who does not serve the avowed purpose of his being a Christian, making men wiser and better, who is not in some measure the salt of the earth, is the object of contempt, even to worldly men. They are compelled to respect the man, though they may smile at his enthusiasm, who acts a consistent part as a Christian, in endeavoring habitually that all men with whom he is brought into connection, may become, not only almost, but altogether, such as he is, Christians, with the exception of—what he is very sensible of—his defects and his faults; but they can have no respect for the man whose profession proclaims one thing, while his life declares another.

The man who, in order to secure the approbation of the men of the world, abstains from taking that part in endeavors to promote the improvement of mankind on christian principles, which his conscience tells him he ought to do, falls into a very serious mistake. Contempt, not respect, is the sentiment his conduct excites. And as this is true of individuals calling themselves Christians, so it is true of bodies calling themselves

28 Heb. vi. 4-8. 29 2 Pet. ii. 20-22.
churches. It is a fearful sight, but it has often been witnessed, when those "whose high vocation is to save the world around them from ruin, curse that world with the insipidity, on which it will contemptuously trample, when they should have blessed it with a savory of life to rescue it from moral corruption—from eternal death." 39

But what is all the disgrace which the useless professor of Christianity (the savorless salt) can draw upon himself here, in comparison of the shame and everlasting contempt which awaits him in the other world? How fearful will be the doom of the unprofitable servant—"cast into utter darkness," where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth!" 391

It is quite possible that our Lord may have a reference to the use of salt in sacrifice; 'It is by you the Gentiles shall be prepared for being laid as a sacrifice on the altar of God; and if you do not serve this purpose, instead of being laid on the altar, you will be cast out to the outer courts, and trodden on by all who frequent them." 392

§ 2. The light of the world.

The same truths which are taught us by Christians being termed the salt of the earth, are brought before the mind under a different figurative representation in the words that follow, "Ye are the light of the world." 393

"The world," that is, the inhabitants of the world, are supposed to be in a state of darkness. Darkness, in Scripture, is the emblem of ignorance, of error, of sin, and of misery. Mankind are here then represented as in a state of ignorance, error, guilt, depravity, and misery; and the disciples of our Lord are held forth as the instrumental means of dispelling this darkness, of bringing men to the knowledge and faith of the truth, and, under the influence of that truth, making them truly holy and happy. Our Lord himself, in the highest and fullest meaning of the term, is "the light of the world," "the light of men," 34 the true sun of the moral world, the source of knowledge, holiness, and happiness to man. But it is through the instrumentality of his people, that he communicates these blessings to mankind. They themselves were once "darkness," ignorant, depraved, unhappy; but through the knowledge and belief of the truth, under the influence of the Spirit, they are become "light in the Lord;" 395 and being enlightened by him, like the moon and planets, though in themselves opaque bodies, when illuminated by the sun, they shine by the reflection of his light. "They hold forth the word of life." 396 In their profession, character, and conduct, they live

39 Bennet.
391 "Non itaque caelestur ab hominibus qui patitur persecutionem, sed qui persecutionem timendo infatatur. Calcari enim non potest nisi inferior, sed inferior non est, qui quamvis corpore multa in terra sustineat, corde tamen fixus in colo est."—Augustin.
392 Eph. v. 8.
393 Matt. xxv. 30.
395 John viii. 12; i. 4.
396 Phil. ii. 16.
to the world a representation of true Christianity. Like mirrors, they reflect the glory of the Lord, as manifested in the person and work of him, who is "the image of the invisible God"—"the Father of lights." 37

These words are, no doubt, peculiarly applicable to the apostles, and to the public teachers of Christianity, but they are by no means to be confined to them. Every Christian out to consider himself as laid under obligations to communicate the blessings of Christianity, to diffuse the light with which he himself has been enlightened.

This duty is strongly enjoined by our Lord in the words which follow, and the propriety and reasonableness of it are strikingly illustrated by two appropriate figures. "A city set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

The general idea intended to be conveyed by these words seems to be this, 'The design of my calling you to be my disciples, is not only your own advantage, but the advantage of others; and if you do not sedulously endeavor to gain that end, you do not act in character. You act an anomalous and absurd part. It would be an absurd thing to attempt to conceal a city, built on a hill, from the view of the inhabitants of the surrounding country. If it had been meant to be hid, it would not have been placed there. It is built on a hill that it may be seen. It would be an absurd thing to light a lamp (so the word should have been rendered, for candles, properly so called, were not in use among the Jews,) and then cover it with a large vessel, which, though it might not extinguish it, would prevent it from answering the purpose for which it was lighted. When a lamp is lighted, common sense dictates that it should be placed on the lamp-stand, that it may give light to all who are in the house. If you do not diffuse the knowledge and blessings of Christianity around, you do not serve one great—the great—purpose for which I have called you to be my disciples. You act as absurdly, as if you were, after building a city on a hill that it might be seen, to enclose it with a high wall that it might not be seen; after kindling a lamp that it may give light, covering it with a vessel that it may not give light.' Such, I apprehend, is the force of the two figurative illustrations.

Let us now attend a little more closely to the injunction which they are intended to illustrate and enforce. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

What are we to understand by the Christian's "light"? and what by his making it "shine before men"? The Christian is naturally, like the rest of mankind, entirely destitute of true light.

37 Col. i. 15. James i. 17. "Joannes lumen illuminat; Christus lumen illuminans."—August., Ser. clxxii. 5.
"Ye were sometime darkness," says the apostle, "but now are ye light in the Lord." "Christ" gives him "light." The word of the truth of the Gospel is light; when it is understood and believed, it becomes the light of him who understands and believes it. Till he understands and believes it, it is not his light. It shines around him, but all is dark within; but when, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he understands and believes it, "it shines in his heart," anddiffuses its purifying, cheering influence over the whole inner chambers of the soul, producing holiness and peace; nor is this all, so subtle and penetrating is this heavenly light, that, though dwelling within, it pervades the man, and, as it were, invests his whole exterior, that which his fellow-men can see, his conduct, with a holy radiance. The holy happy character formed by the truth understood and believed, discovers itself in a great variety of appropriate manifestations. This is the Christian's light: the truth dwelling in him producing holiness and peace.

If this is the Christian's light, it is not difficult to perceive what is meant by his "letting his light shine before men." The injunction obviously implies, that Christians are not to retire from the active scenes of life, but are to continue to associate with their fellow-men. The salt could not serve its purpose, unless scattered over the putrifying mass. The lamp, when lighted, must be placed amid the darkness which it is intended to dispel. To "let our light shine," is just to make a plain distinct profession of the truth which we have received,—to do all that lies in our power to bring clearly before the minds of all with whom we are connected, that truth in its meaning and evidence, that they may believe it; and then, what is not less important, and—what, as it would appear from what follows, our Lord had primarily in view—exhibit in our temper and behavior the native effects of that truth on our own minds in making us holy and happy. It is equivalent to a command, never to shrink from the avowal of Christian truth, nor from the performance of Christian duty.

"Hold forth the word of life." Let men see what real Christianity is.

The great end to be sought by Christians in thus making their light shine before men is, that these men "may see their good works," and may "glorify their Father which is in heaven," that is, that by seeing their good works, they may be led to glorify their Father who is in heaven. The necessary consequence of letting the Christian light shine, that is, of yielding to the influence of Christian truth on the mind and the heart, is the production of good works. "The grace of God," which is the great subject of Christian truth, teaches men to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

38 Eph. v. 14.
39 ἡμῶν ἐργα. Vesta opera. Opera, non vos,—splendorem, non lychnum."
—Bengel.
40 "The Lord says not here, Let your light shine before men that they may glorify you; but that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven."—TRWCH.
in this world." Christian truth, when really understood and believed, moulds the character and guides the conduct. In the degree in which men are influenced by it, and manifest its influence, they are harmless, and useful, and happy. When others see their "good works," and see that they are the result of christian principle, notwithstanding the natural enmity of the human mind and heart to christian truth, a conviction is lodged in their minds, that that must be good which produces such peculiarly excellent effects. The holy examples, and the abundant good works of genuine Christians, soften men's prejudices, win them to attend to the truth, and are instrumental to their conversion, by which they glorify God, and become his worshippers and servants. The exhortation of the Apostle Peter, "Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation," expresses the same sentiment as the injunction of our Lord which we have just illustrated.

When professed Christians do not let their light shine before men, do not manifest the native practical influence of the truth, but, on the contrary, act in a manner inconsistent with their profession, then men seeing their evil works, "blaspheme that worthy name by the which" they "are called," and thus those who should be the means of their fellow-men's salvation, become instruments of their perdition. There is no class of men who have a more fearful weight of guilt lying on them, than worldly, inconsistent, unholy professors, especially if teachers, of Christianity.

The command of our Lord in this verse, may seem inconsistent with what he says respecting prayers, and alms, and fasting, in the sixth chapter, 1–6, and 16–18. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they

41 1 Pet. ii. 12. 42 James ii. 7.
have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." The inconsistency is, however, merely apparent; our Lord does not condemn the Pharisees for doing in public such duties as are of a public nature, but for publishing and proclaiming what ought to be secret. He does not find fault with them for going up to the temple to pray, but for choosing the most public part of the street for their secret devotions; and even in the case of public alms, it is not so much the circumstance of their publicity, as the object in view, which he censures. It is "the doing alms before men, that they might be seen of them." The seeking publicity in order to obtain a selfish and unworthy object, is obviously a very different thing from giving alms under the influence of christian principle, and while not coveting public notice, yet by no means sedulously avoiding it, that "men," seeing our "good works," may "glorify our Father which is in heaven."

III. THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE ANCIENT REVELATIONS.

The duties of a public instructor of mankind in Christianity are multifarious and difficult. He must state the truth clearly and fully, and he must guard against those misapprehensions which the statement of truth, however clear and full, not unfrequently occasions in ignorant, half-informed, prejudiced minds.

If he content himself with merely stating the truth, he may unintentionally become the propagator of error, and his authority may be set up, and his words quoted, in support of a system, materially different from, or even diametrically opposite to, that which he meant to establish.

Our blessed Lord in this, and in every other department of the art of public teaching, has set his ministers an example, and they should follow his steps. His statements with respect to the nature of the blessings to be bestowed by the Messiah, and the character of those who were to enjoy these blessings, were equally opposed to the doctrines of the Jewish teachers, and to the sentiments almost universally entertained by the Jewish people; and he most distinctly taught, that a complete change of mind must take place in order to a participation in the advantage of that heavenly economy, which was just about to be established in the world. It was not unnatural for those who were firmly but mistakenly persuaded, that the views they entertained on these subjects were warranted by, and founded on, the Old Testament revelation, the writings of Moses and the prophets, when they heard our Lord's discourses, to come to the conclusion, that his intention was to subvert the authority of these inspired writers, and substitute his own in its room—to
destroy the ancient religion, and to establish a new one on its ruins. Such a notion was entirely unfounded in truth, and its prevalence was calculated in various respects to throw obstacles in the way of our Lord's success. We find him, therefore, in the passage which follows, strongly disavowing every hostile design in reference to the ancient Scriptures, and placing in a true point of light the reference which his doctrines and laws bore to the previous manifestations of the mind of God by Moses and the prophets. "Think not," as some of you are apt to suppose, "think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

He thus states his object both positively and negatively.

§ 1. Negative—not destructive.

"The law" is here, as in many other parts of the New Testament, employed as a designation for the five books of Moses, as distinguished from the other inspired writings of the Old Testament, here termed the prophets. "The law and the prophets," is just equivalent to, the Old Testament Scriptures.

The phrase "to destroy the law or the prophets," is peculiar, and there is some difficulty in fixing its precise signification. It is obvious that the word "destroy," is not to be understood in its literal meaning. Our Lord, in these words, does not mean to disclaim any intention to treat the sacred books as the converted Ephesians did their books of magic, when they "brought them together, and burnt them before all men." The word is plainly used figuratively. But when figuratively used, the word has various significations, and therefore it is necessary to inquire which of these it bears in the present instance.

The word "destroy," in its figurative acceptation, may mean to abrogate, or to violate, or to invalidate. Many interpreters understand the word in the first sense, and consider it as a declaration, that it was not our Lord's intention to abrogate the moral law. There are, however, insuperable objections to this mode of exposition. We have no right to restrict the term "law," to the moral part of the Mosaic institute; and there can be no doubt with a careful reader of the New Testament, that our Lord did come to abrogate the law of Moses. It belonged to a temporary, as well as a typical economy. "It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come, in reference to whom the promise was made," and then, having served its purpose, it was to cease; and, accordingly, we are informed, that our Lord has "taken it out of the way," that he has "blotted out the handwriting" which was against the Gentiles, that he has nailed it to his cross," so that his people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are no longer under that "pedagogue," having been introduced by him into a state of mature sonship. Besides, it is

plain that our Lord does not so much speak of the law properly so called, as of the five books of Moses, of which the law was a principal, but by no means the only subject. It also deserves to be noticed, that the sense of abrogation does not apply to predictions as it does to laws, and still less to books containing predictions.

It does not appear to me that a more satisfactory sense is brought out by understanding the word "destroy," in the sense of violate. 'I am not come to violate, or to teach others to violate, the law.' For here, as in the former case, the term applies rather to the law itself, than to the books which contain an account of it, and it is not at all applicable to the prophetical writings.

I am disposed to consider the term as equivalent to invalidate.* 'I am not come—as some of your teachers may surmise, and as some of you may suppose, from my teaching being so very unlike any teaching you have ever heard, while your teachers profess to derive their doctrines and precepts from the sacred writings—I am by no means come to invalidate, to represent as of no authority, or of diminished authority, these former revelations of the Divine will.'

I think it not improbable, that in mentioning, not the sacred writings generally, but "the law or the prophets," and saying, not "the law and the prophets," but "the law or the prophets," our Lord refers to the dishonor done to the different portions of the sacred writings, by the two dominant sects among the Jews. The Pharisees explained away many of the precepts of the law, making "void God's commandment by their traditions;" and the Sadducees do not seem to have admitted the divine authority of the prophetical writings; the one invalidated the law, and the other the prophets. But our Lord says, I am not come to explain away, or to deny, any part of the ancient revelation: my object is directly the reverse,—"I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

§ 2. Positive—completive.

The phrase "to fulfil the law and the prophets," is fully as obscure as "to destroy the law or the prophets." It has been common to explain the phrase, as if it meant that the object of our Lord's mission was to obey the precepts of the moral law in its covenant form, and endure its curse in the room of his people—to verify the various types of the ceremonial law—to introduce that spiritual system of government of which the judicial law was an emblem, and to accomplish all the various predictions in the books of the prophets respecting the Messiah. All this is truth, and important truth; but it is truth dressed, most of it, in

*  "καταλείπει idem quod καταργήσει."—Cameron.
49 ἢ is never precisely equivalent to καί. In some cases they may be interchanged; but this is not one of them. Chrysostom repeats the ἢ thus—ἦ τῶν ἰδίων, ἢ τῶν ποιητῶν.
comparatively a very artificial and very modern garb; truth put into our Lord's words, rather than brought out of them. Besides, it is plain that the term "fulfil," according to this interpretation, is made to signify, not one thing, but a great many things.

It has been supposed by some very judicious interpreters, that the word "fulfil" here means fully to expound, to bring out the true meaning, in opposition to the false glosses of the Jewish teachers. That the word is used in this sense is plain from a passage in Rom. xvi. 19: "I have fully preached"—literally, I have fulfilled, clearly and completely unfolded—"the Gospel of Christ;" and they have thought that there is here a reference to what they consider as the expositions of the law which follow. There can be no doubt that our Lord, both personally and by his disciples, did unfold the true meaning of much that was concealed, and much that had been misrepresented, in the Old Testament Scriptures; yet, still, I scarcely think this formed so great a part of his teaching, as to be represented as the design of his coming as a teacher; and I more than doubt if the statements which immediately follow are, strictly speaking, expositions of the law.

I apprehend the word "fulfil" is used in the sense of 'complete,' 'fill up,' 'perfect.' This is so common a use of the term, as to make it unnecessary to quote examples of it.61 It is as if he had said, "my design is not to invalidate the Old Testament revelation, but to complete it. It is but the first part of a great divine manifestation; I come to give the remaining and the most important part of it." Our Lord came to complete divine revelation, both inasmuch as he came to do and suffer those things, which were to form the subject of that part of the divine revelation which yet remained to be given, and inasmuch as, by his Spirit, through the instrumentality of his apostles, he actually made that revelation. Revelation seems viewed as an unfinished building. 'Now,' says our Lord, 'I do not come to demolish it; I do not come to remove one stone of it; my purpose is to carry forward, and complete, the divine edifice.'62

In these words our Lord sanctions the divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, and at the same time holds himself up as the person appointed by God to finish the work which they had left incomplete, and therefore entitled certainly to not less reverence and faith, than Moses and the prophets:—The "God who at sundry times and in divers manners," had spoken "in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," was now to speak to them "by his Son."63

In the verse which follows, our Lord, who was to complete the work of divine revelation, declares the inviolable authority of the law, until all be fulfilled or completed:—"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."64

59 Πεπληρωμένον ή τη Ευαγγέλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
61 "Rabbini, agnoecunt, Messie esse, Legem perficeat."—BENGEL.
62 Heb. i. 1.
63 Matt v. 18.
These words have often been considered as a declaration of the perpetual authority and obligation of the moral law. That the moral law,—which is indeed just another name for the duties which necessarily rise out of the relation in which a rational and accountable being like man stands to the all-perfect Being, his creator, his preserver, his benefactor, his moral governor,—must forever remain unrepealed and unrepealable, there can be no doubt. While man continues a rational being, and God continues an all-perfect Being, it cannot change; and this is not only an indubitably true, it is also an infinitely important, principle.

At the same time, I do not think that it is the principle our Lord states here. “The law,” is a phrase which, to a Jew, conveyed the idea of the Mosaic institution, the peculiar order of things under which the Israelitish people were placed at Mount Sinai. That is the law to which our Lord seems to refer; and I apprehend interpreters would not likely have supposed that the reference was to anything else, had it not been that they found difficulty in explaining words, which seemed to them to imply a declaration of inviolable stability to a system which was temporary as well as local, and which has in fact long ceased to exist.

If the words, however, are carefully examined, they will be found to contain in them, not an indefinite declaration of the inviolable authority of the law, but a declaration of its inviolable authority till a certain period, till certain events had taken place, —“till heaven and earth pass,”—“till all things be fulfilled.” ‘Heaven and earth passing away,’ understood literally, is the dissolution of the present system of the universe; and the period when that is to take place, is called the “end of the world.” But a person at all familiar with the phraseology of the Old Testament Scriptures, knows that the dissolution of the Mosaic economy, and the establishment of the Christian, is often spoken of as the removing of the old earth and heavens, and the creation of a new earth and new heavens. For example—“For, behold I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” “For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.”55

The period of the close of the one dispensation, and the commencement of the other, is spoken of as “the last days,” and “the end of the world;” and is described as such a shaking of the earth and heavens, as should lead to the removal of the things which were shaken.56 The phrase in the end of the verse, “till all things be fulfilled,” seems to refer to the typically prophetic character of the law, and to be equivalent to 'till all the things figured in it be—take place, really exist,—till the true priest, and the true altar, and the true sacrifice, come.'

In these words there is an allusion to the language used in the

55 Isa. lxv. 17; and lxvi. 22. 56 Hag. ii. 6. Heb. xii. 26, 27.
previous verse. "I am not come to destroy," that is, to invalidate, the Old Testament Scriptures, but to complete them. Now the period referred to, is the period when Divine revelation was completed by the Son of God. That period, I apprehend, was the pouring out of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, the giving that Divine instructor who was to "teach the apostles all things—lead them into all the truth." From that period "the law," the Mosaic institution, ceased to be of obligation;—it had served its purpose; it entirely, as a system, passed away. "The middle wall of partition" was completely taken down. But, till that period, not the slightest freedom must be used with regard to requisitions: every one of them must be religiously observed.

The Jewish teachers professed a great regard for the law, yet they tampered with its authority. They explained away some of its most important requisitions—for example, the command to provide for parents—and by instituting unauthorized distinctions, they enabled men to violate it without directly outraging their consciences, as in the case of oaths. 58 It is said to have been a common doctrine among them, that their eminent teachers, and the high council, the Sanhedrim, at Jerusalem, had full power to set aside any part of the law.

Our Lord condemns such impiety, and, as it were, says, 'I have a much greater respect for the law than those men who would represent me as its destroyer: I declare to you "not one iota or tittle shall pass from the law, till heaven and earth shall pass away, till all be completed."' 59 The "iota" or jod is the smallest of the alphabetical characters used in the Hebrew language, being little more than a point, and the word "tittle" is expressive either of the little flourishes which were made in writing at the end of the Hebrew letters, or rather of the minute and almost indiscernible marks by which some of the Hebrew letters, which are remarkably similar, are distinguished from each other. 60 The phrase, "a jot or tittle shall not pass away," is just a strong mode of expressing this truth: 'No change, not even the smallest, can take place with regard to "the law,"—a divine institution,—till it has fully served the purposes for which it was intended, and till the period appointed for its termination by him who instituted it has arrived. 'Till then, every one of its minutest regulations is binding on the conscience.

I think it likely this was said, not only with a reference to the impious freedom which the Jewish doctors, notwithstanding all their professions of reverence for the law, were in the habit of using with regard to many of its requisitions, but also to prevent his disciples from supposing that they were immediately to be delivered from the yoke of ceremonial bondage. He carefully

59 It is a saying of the Rabbins, "si quis Daleth in Deut. vi. 4 mutaret, conceuetet totum mundum." The effect would be to change one God into another God, וָיִש into שָׁי.
observed the law himself, and required his followers to observe it so long as its authority continued; and, in the verses which follow, he states that a neglect of any of its institutions, would be anything rather than a recommendation of a person to a high place in that kingdom of God which was about to be established.

"Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of the least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." These words have generally been interpreted as if they meant, 'Whosoever shall wilfully and habitually transgress any of the requisitions of the moral law, even those which may appear the least important, that person shall be considered as the least, the most contemptible, in the Christian church; while, on the other hand, the person who shall fully and honestly expound all these requisitions, and illustrate his expositions by his example, that man shall be highly esteemed, greatly honored, in the Christian church.' Viewed in their connection, our Lord's words appear to me to be intended to convey a somewhat different meaning.

The Jewish doctors were held in estimation, and admired for the dexterity with which they "rendered void the commandments of God by their traditions." "But," says our Lord, "the teacher who explains away any of the requisitions of the Mosaic law, and who encourages others in their violation of them by his example, that teacher shall be little thought of; he shall be despised and condemned in the kingdom of heaven,"—under the new dispensation which the Messiah is to introduce; while, on the other hand, the teacher who fully and faithfully expounds the law of Moses, and pays a strict attention himself to its statutes, that man shall be called great—he shall be highly honored and esteemed—in the kingdom of heaven,—under the New Testament dispensation. Instead of encouraging his followers to disregard the law of Moses, our Lord insists on the most scrupulous adherence to it, "till all things should be fulfilled;" and when all things should be fulfilled, and not only an iota and a tittle, but the whole law, should pass away, and the kingdom of heaven should be introduced, not the neglecter or violator of the law of Moses, but the person who had strictly and conscientiously observed it, would be accounted truly honorable, worthy of all respect; so that, instead of requiring less from his disciples than the Scribes and Pharisees did from theirs, so far as the law of Moses was concerned, our Lord required more.

---

66 Campbell's rendering is preferable, "were it the least of these commandments."

67 Matt. v. 19.
IV. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRISTIANS SUPERIOR TO THE
RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE Scribes AND PHARISEES.

§ 1. Introductory statement.

"For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall ex-
ceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in
no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." 162

These words in the 20th verse are not only deserving of
our most considerate attention, as embodying a most important
practical truth, but as being, so to speak, the text of a large por-
tion of the remainder of the discourse, occupied in illustrating,
by examples, how the righteousness of the citizens of the king-
dom of heaven was to exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and
Pharisees.

To understand a discourse, nothing is of greater importance
than a clear apprehension of its object and design. If this be
not distinctly understood, the most perspicuous statements may
appear obscure, the most conclusive arguments unsatisfactory,
and the most apposite illustrations irrelevant. A great deal of
the obscurity which, in most men's minds, rests on very many
passages of the holy Scriptures, is to be accounted for on this
principle. They do not distinctly perceive, or they altogether
misapprehend, the object of the inspired writer; and while they
do, it would be wonderful if they should clearly understand his
particular statements, arguments, and illustrations. The object
of the inspired writers, in any particular part of their writings,
may generally, without much difficulty, be discovered; and when
it is found out, it is the best key for unlocking the treasures
of wisdom and knowledge therein contained. It is often dis-
tinctly stated in so many words, and when it is not so, it may
usually, by a heedful perusal of the context, be satisfactorily as-
certained.

I apprehend a good deal of misinterpretation has prevailed in
reference to that paragraph of our Lord's sermon on the Mount,
in the exposition of which we are about to engage, in consequence
of mistakes as to its object or design.

It has been supposed by some, that our Lord's object is to ex-
pound the law of the ten commandments, and to show, by a few
examples, its exceeding breadth and spiritual reference. They
suppose that our Lord asserts that the sixth commandment for-
bids not only murder, but malignant feeling; and the seventh
not only adultery, but impure desire. That the divine law does
take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart, there
can be no doubt, and that malignant feeling and impure desires
are sins in the estimation of Him who looks on the heart; but
whether the sixth and seventh commandments, strictly speaking,
do forbid anything but what, in plain terms, they prohibit, is

162 Matt. v. 20
totally different question, and one which, I apprehend, our Lord's statements do not furnish us with the means of answering. There is nothing, either in the way of direct statement or otherwise, to lay a foundation for the conclusion that our Lord, in the remarks which we are about to illustrate, had it for his object to show that the law of the ten commandments had a hidden, recondite, spiritual meaning, besides the literal signification of the words in which it is couched.

Others have supposed that our Lord's design is to contrast the morality of the law with that of the Gospel, the morality of Judaism with the morality of Christianity. But the morality of the law, and the morality of the Gospel, the morality of Judaism, as Judaism is taught in the Old Testament, and the morality of Christianity, as Christianity is taught in the New Testament, are substantially the same. Moses requires supreme love to God, and disinterested love to man, and Jesus Christ requires no more. The details of religion and moral duty, in the two volumes of inspired Scriptures, are, no doubt, modified by the circumstances in which the church, under the old and new dispensations, was placed; but the principles of religious and moral duty appear in both to be what they are, what they cannot but be, unchanged and unchangeable, like him in whose nature they originate, and whose will they express, "without variableness or shadow of turning." "That which is of the Old Testament can never be un-christian, it is only proto-christian." 63

The object of our Lord seems to us very distinctly and clearly stated by himself, in the twentieth verse. That object was to show that the system of religious and moral duty, which was to be taught and exemplified in "the kingdom of God," the new economy, was to be greatly superior to that system of religious and moral duty taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the Pharisees; and, as the system of duty taught by the Scribes and Pharisees was generally accounted by the Jews the right one, that object was farther to impress on their minds the great truth, which the whole discourse seems to be intended to illustrate and enforce, that they must "repent," change their minds, now that "the kingdom of God was at hand; for unless they, by this change of mind, were "born again," they could not "see it," nor "enter into it;" they could not understand its nature, nor enjoy its blessings. All that follows, from the 20th verse down to the 18th verse of the next chapter, is an illustration by example of the principle here stated. Our Lord's object, then, is not to contrast the true meaning of the ten commandments with the limited signification ascribed to them by the Jewish teachers; still less is it to contrast the morality of the law with the morality of the Gospel; but it is to contrast the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees with the righteousness of the kingdom of God, that is, the system of religious and moral duty taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the Phari-
sees, with the system of religious and moral duty to be taught and exemplified by the true followers of Messiah the Prince.

"The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees" is just the system of religious and moral duty taught and exemplified by the Scribes and Pharisees. That this is the meaning of the phrase is plain from the specimens of this "righteousness," which our Lord refers to in the succeeding context.

"The Scribes," so often mentioned in the gospel history, were the same class who are termed "masters in Israel," and "doctors of the law," expounders of the Old Testament Scriptures. They did not form a separate sect, though they seem generally to have been of the sect of the Pharisees. The origin of this sect is involved in great obscurity. Their distinctive appellation is equivalent to separatists, and was likely assumed by them to indicate that they were distinguished from other Jews by the greater strictness of their manner of life. At the time of our Lord's appearance, they were the most numerous—and, when compared with the infidel Sadducees, and the mystical and enthusiastic Essenes, the most respectable—of the Jewish sects.

The Scribes were looked up to by the Jewish people as the teachers of religious and moral duty; and the Pharisees were considered as the class which, in the most exemplary manner, reduced their lessons to practice. The highest idea which a carnal Jew could form of a religious man, was a person who, in his behavior, conformed himself to the teaching of the Scribes, and to the example of the Pharisees. The first were considered as the best expounders of Scripture; the latter as the most illustrious patterns of holiness. It was a proverb among them that, if but two men were to enter the kingdom of heaven, the one would be a Scribe, and the other a Pharisee."

Our Lord's doctrine of the necessity of repentance, or a change of mind, could scarcely be put in a form more calculated to astonish his countrymen, than that which it wears in these words. They expected that all Jews were, as a matter of course, to enter into the kingdom; they expected that Scribes and Pharisees would occupy high places of distinction and honor in that kingdom. How must they have been amazed to hear it proclaimed that, unless a man's righteousness exceeded that taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the Pharisees, he could not be a subject of that kingdom at all! The general idea is, 'The religion and the morality which is to distinguish the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, is to be of a far more exalted character than that taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the Pharisees.'

The prevailing doctrines among the Jewish teachers, in the age of our Lord, respecting religion and morality, seem to have been very corrupt. They are said to have maintained, that the doctors of the law, and the high council at Jerusalem, had a power to dispense with Divine requisitions: we are certain that, by unauthorised traditions, and by false interpretations of Scrip-
tured, they "made void the commandments of God." And the
conduct of the Pharisees was not better than such a course of
instruction might be expected to produce. Under an appear-
ance of devotion, they were strangers to the spirit of piety; and,
pretending to uncommon worth, they were deficient in ordinary
integrity.65

The righteousness taught by the Scribes and exemplified by
the Pharisees, was almost entirely external, and often hypocre-
tical. It consisted almost exclusively in a round of bodily obser-
vances, and even these were often performed to serve a purpose
very different from that which was avowed:—"Woe unto you,
Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses,
and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive
the greater damnation." "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharise-
es, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and
of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.
Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup
and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe
unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto
whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but
are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.
Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but
within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.66

It was extremely partial. They made a selection among the
Divine precepts; and, while they scrupulously obeyed some, and
those chiefly of secondary importance, they systematically vi-
olated others, and those of prime importance:—"Woe unto you,
Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and
anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of
the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have
done, and not to leave the other undone."67

It proceeded from principles defective or unsound—not from
the fear and love of God—from respect to his authority, and a
desire to please him—from disinterested benevolence, or even
from enlightened self-love; but from low, confined views of self-
interest—from a wish to obtain human applause, and secure
wealth and honor for themselves. "But all their works they do
for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and
enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost
rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greet-
ings in the markets, and 8 be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.68

And, while in their religion and morality there was thus so
much wanting, and so much wrong, they yet plummed themselves
on them, as if they gave them a title, not merely to the respect
of men, but to the favour of God; not only to the good things
of earth, but to the joys of heaven. They thanked God that

65 For many of the thoughts and expressions in this sketch of the righteousness
of the Scribes and Pharisees, I am indebted to Dr. Brewster.—Lectures, pp.
I21-164.
they were not as other men. They "trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and contemned others." They said, in exact correspondence with the appellation they had assumed to themselves, "stand by, we are holier than you."

Such was the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; and our Lord's assertion is, that the subjects of the kingdom of God must be characterized by a much more elevated kind of religion and morality. Their righteousness must be spiritual and sincere; it must be universal; it must originate in, and be sustained by, pure motives; and it must never be made a ground of confidence before God, or an occasion of self-gratulation, or vain boasting.

The righteousness or religion which characterizes the true subjects of the Messiah, is not, like that of the Scribes and Pharisees, merely external; nor is it, as very generally in the case of the latter, hypocritical. What is external in it, is the expression of thought and feeling, and the genuine expression of thought and feeling. Its principle is, "God is a spirit; and they who would "worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth." "I serve God with my spirit," says the apostle Paul; "we are the circumcision"—that is, the true people of God, the spiritual Israel—"who worship God in the spirit."[56]

Universality, in opposition to partiality, is another distinguishing feature of the righteousness by which the true subjects of the Messiah are characterized. Knowing that every part of the Divine law wears the stamp of supreme authority, they "account its commandments concerning all things to be right, and abhor every wicked way."

In opposition to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the righteousness which distinguishes the subjects of the Messiah, originates in, and is sustained by, motives rising out of the character and will of God, and our duty and happiness as connected with these. The rule is, "Whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men."[57]

And, finally, the righteousness of the subjects of the Messiah, unlike that of the Scribes and Pharisees, must never be made a ground of confidence before God, or an occasion of boasting. The man who is under the influence of the views which the Gospel unfolds, cannot place confidence in anything but in the mercy of God manifested in consistency with his righteousness, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. His obedience, even though it were perfect, could not afford him who has already violated the law, and incurred its penalty, any reasonable ground, for hope of pardon and salvation; and knowing, as he does, that his best services are defective and sinful, he sees that they never can deserve to be rewarded, for their own sake, but need to be graciously accepted, for the sake of his Saviour; and well aware that, if his heart and life be more in accordance with the mind and will of God than those of some of his fellow-men, it is owing

---

[56] John iii. 24. Rom. i. 9. Phil. iii. 3. [57] Col. iii. 23.
entirely to the operation of divine influence,—he sees that he has great cause of gratitude, but no ground of pride, for that it is "by the grace of God, that he is what he is." This characteristic feature of the righteousness of the subjects of the Messiah's kingdom, is beautifully delineated in the following words of one of the holiest of these subjects;—"Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."\(^11\)

To prevent mistakes—mistsakes of vital importance to the interests of the soul—it is necessary again to remark that the design of our Lord is not to state the terms on which men may obtain the Divine favor, but to delineate the characteristics of the religion of those who are in possession of the Divine favor. It is not our Lord's intention to say, 'You must first obtain possession of this righteousness, so far superior to that of the Scribes and Pharisees, and then, as the reward of your exertions in making this acquirement, you shall be made partakers of the blessings of the kingdom of heaven,' but it is his intention to say, 'You have not entered into that kingdom; you are not possessed of its privileges and immunities, whatever may be your external professions, if you are not characterized by this righteousness.' The truth is, that the faith of the gospel, by which a man enters into the kingdom, at the same time introduces to the enjoyment of the privileges of the kingdom, and forms the character of a willing, obedient, happy, subject of the kingdom. The answer to the question, How is this righteousness to be obtained? is, Through the faith of "the truth as it is in Jesus."\(^3\)

That truth, believed, "purifies the heart;" the manifested "grace of God" through Christ Jesus, and that alone, effectually "teaches to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly."\(^2\)

§ 2. The righteousness of Christians, and that of the Scribes and Pharisees compared, in reference to the life and happiness of others.

Having stated the general principle, our Lord proceeds to illustrate it by a variety of particular instances, in which the righteousness of those who enter into the kingdom of heaven, must exceed that taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the Pharisees. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment."\(^12\) This is the first specimen of the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees; and it is very good, so far as it goes.

\(^11\) Phil. iii. 8-9. \(^12\) Acts. xv. 9. Tit. ii. 11, 12. \(^2\) Matt. v. 21.
The words rendered "by them of old time," are susceptible of various translations. They may be rendered "in ancient times," or "to the ancients;" or, as our translators have rendered, "by the ancients," or them of old time. It does not matter very much which of these modes of rendering is adopted: though, upon the whole, we consider that of our translators as the preferable one.

By "them of old time," some understand Moses, in whose writings, no doubt, the words, "thou shalt not kill," are to be found; but it seems unnatural to call Moses "them of old time;" we rather think our Lord here quotes the very words of the Scribes and Pharisees, when teaching their disciples. "Ye have heard," is just equivalent to—"The Scribes and Pharisees are accustomed, when explaining human duty, to use this language—"It is said by them of old time," that is, by the elders in their traditions, "Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment."

In teaching this department of human duty, they confine their attention to the overt act of violence and murder; and they fix the mind on the temporal punishment awarded by the law for this crime, as that which should chiefly or solely operate on the mind as a motive against committing it. The Scribes and the Pharisees teach that men should not take away one another's lives; and, as a motive to induce them to comply with this law, they say that he who violates it is "in danger of the judgment;" or rather, is liable to, is exposed to, the judgment. "The judgment" is here the name of a criminal court. In every city in Judea, according to Josephus, there was a court, consisting of seven judges, who had the power of life and death. That court is here termed "the judgment."

The statement of the Scribes and Pharisees, then, is just as if a person in this country were saying, 'It is the law of the land, that no man commit murder; and if any man violate this law, he is liable to be brought before the High Court of Justiciary, and tried; and, if found guilty, to be punished with death.'

In this specimen of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we see that it is the external conduct only for which they legislate, and that it is temporal punishment alone by which they represent the law respecting murder to be sanctioned.

But let us hear our Lord explain what, on this particular head of moral duty, is that righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and without knowing and exemplifying which, a man cannot be a subject of the Messiah's kingdom:—"But" I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire."

75 "Εγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν. Εἴη ἐγὼ acutem pronuncandum."—PRAESENS. 76 Matt. v. 22.
The general meaning of these words is plain enough: "The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees" speaketh on this wise—"Thou shalt not kill, and if thou dost, thou must be tried for thy life;" but "the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven" says—"Thou shalt not cherish malignant feeling towards any man, nor manifest it in any way: and if thou dost, thou wilt offend God, and expose thyself to severer punishments than any which man can inflict on man." But let us look at the words somewhat more closely. Let us see what the righteousness of the kingdom forbids, and then let us see what are the punishments which it denounces on those who commit the crimes it forbids.

It forbids our being "angry with our brother without a cause," that is—it forbids all unreasonable anger,—anger without a sufficient reason; and it, moreover, forbids all immoderate anger, that is, anger in a higher degree, and for a longer time, than is lawful. The lawfulness of anger has been questioned by some christian moralists, but on very insufficient grounds. The very words before us seem to imply, that if it be forbidden to be angry "without a cause," it is, at least, permitted to be angry with a cause. The apostle Paul commands us to "be angry and sin not"—words which seem to intimate, not only that it is possible to be angry without sinning, but that there are circumstances in which we would sin if we were not angry. The apostle James seems to teach us the same truths when he bids us "be slow to wrath;" and we know that the perfect Exemplar of holiness in human nature was not incapable of this emotion; for we read, on one occasion, that he was not only "grieved for the hardness of the hearts" of his audience, but "he looked round on them with anger."

It is obvious, however, that the principal, if not the only occasion when anger is lawful, is, when it is directed against sin; and then the strong feeling of disapprobation is expressive of zeal for the Divine honor, and is quite compatible with, and ought always to be accompanied by, a sincere wish for the true happiness of him with whom we are angry. Whenever it proceeds from pride and selfishness—whenever it is accompanied with malignant feeling towards its object—it is, undoubtedly, sinful; and when we think of the difficulty of regulating this passion, and the great hazard of its hurrying us into offences against the law of love, we surely should have very good cause, before we venture to indulge in it. It is obvious that all causeless anger is sinful—all anger without a good reason, and all anger which, in degree or continuance, exceeds the reason which may exist.

A second thing forbidden by "the righteousness of the king-

---

77 Eph. iv. 26  James i. 19.
78 Mark iii. 5. "Merito zelò additum. Neque enim irascendus est quisquis irasci solet, sed qui ois ôi òei, kai êi ois oû òei, kai μάλλον ह òei, ut Aristoteles loquitur."
dom,” is the calling our brother “raca.” In the dialect generally used among the Jews in the time of our Lord, “Raca” was a word of contempt and displeasure which angry persons were in the habit of applying to the objects of their displeasure. It means an empty, insignificant, worthless fellow. The qualifying phrase, “without cause,” seems intended to extend to all the three statements made here. We are not, without a cause, and without a very sufficient cause, to say of another person, “He is a worthless fellow;” nor to say to him, “You are a good-for-nothing miscreant.” There may be a good reason, however, for saying this, and a great deal more than this, both of and to men. Our Lord uses worse words than raca both of and to the Scribes and Pharisees; but he does not do it “without a cause.” All abusive language is forbidden by the law of the kingdom—all language expressive of malignity and of undue anger or contempt.

A third thing forbidden by this law, is the saying to a brother, “Thou fool,” or rather Mōreh; for, I apprehend, the word is not a Greek, but a Hebrew one, and, like Raca, should not have been translated—a word expressive of still greater contempt and detestation—signifying a rebel and apostate. This was the worst thing a Jew could say of a Jew. This part of the law of the kingdom prohibits all rash reflections on our neighbor’s character, and especially all harsh judgments respecting his spiritual state. There may be cases in which the law of love absolutely requires us to say to a man that he is an apostate, while we use every means in our power to reclaim him. But what is forbidden here is the using such terms without sufficient reason, and as an expression of malignant feeling.

Let us now attend to the punishment to which, according to the law of the kingdom of God, these offences expose him who is guilty of them. “He who is angry with his brother without a cause is in danger,” is liable to be exposed to “the judgment.” I have already stated that “the judgment” was the name of those inferior law courts, one of which was to be found in every Jewish city, which took cognizance of ordinary crimes, such as murder, and had the power of life and death. These words are not to be interpreted literally, for certainly Messiah the Prince has not erected any court similar to that which the Jews termed “the judgment,” by which persons who are guilty of causeless anger are to be tried and punished. The meaning is, “He who is causelessly angry with his brother is, in my estimation, not less worthy of punishment than he who, on account of a crime committed by him, is dragged before “the judgment,” and is by the assessors condemned.”

79 “The word יָנוֹפָךְ, here used by the evangelist, differs only in number from יָנוֹפְךָ, the compellation by which Moses and Aaron addressed the people of Israel, when they said (Numb. xx. 10), with manifest and indecent passion, as rendered in our English Bible, ‘Hear now, ye rebels;’ and were, for their punishment, not permitted to enter the land of Canaan.”—Vide Campbell, Pref. to Matthew’s Gospel, § 25. Paulus, a respectable authority on such a subject, adopts this exegesis, and refers to Psal. xxviii. 8. * See Note C.
He who calls his brother "raca" is in danger, or is exposed to "the council." The council here means the Sanhedrim—the highest court of judicature among the Jews, both political and ecclesiastical, consisting of seventy judges. The seat of this court was at Jerusalem. This court took cognizance only of the more flagrant crimes, and had the power of condemning, not only to death by the sword, but by stoning, which was accounted a more severe and disgraceful mode of punishment. The meaning of our Lord's statement, then, is—"He who not merely cherishes unreasonable anger against his brother, but uses reproachful and contemptuous language towards him, is guilty of a still greater crime than he who is only "angry at him without a cause," and is exposed to a punishment proportionally more severe.'

He who calls his brother "fool," or rather "mordeh," rebel, apostate, miscreant, he is "in danger of hell-fire." The phrase "hell-fire" is literally "the gehenna of fire." "Gehenna" is the Syro-Chaldaic word for the valley of Hinnom, or of the son of Hinnom, called also Tophet. This was a fertile valley, lying to the south of Jerusalem, which had been the scene of some of the most abominable rites of idolatrous worship. Here it was customary, during the prevalence of idolatry, to burn children alive, in honor of Molech or Baal; and the name of Tophet, which signifies a drum or tabor, was borrowed from the custom of attempting to drown the cries of the victims by such noisy music. After the return from the captivity, the Jews showed their abhorrence of the transactions of which this place had been the scene, by making it, after the example of Josiah, the receptacle of dead carcasses, and other filth cast out of the city; and fires were kept constantly burning in it to consume this refuse. Hence the Jews came to use the word "gehenna" as the name of the place of punishment after death." In this sense, it is generally used in the New Testament. In the passage before us, we understand it literally. Our Lord's meaning seems to be: 'He who not only is angry with his brother without a cause; who not only, without a cause, speaks to him contemptuously and reproachfully; but who, without a cause, charges him with apostasy, calls him not only foolish, but wicked, holds him up not only to the contempt, but to the hatred, of mankind,—his guilt is still greater, and he deserves still severer punishment. If he who is angry without cause deserves to be tried and punished by the judgment, and he who calls his brother "raca" deserves to be tried or punished by the Sanhedrim, he who calls his brother "mordeh" deserves to be cast out as refuse into the valley of Hinnom, and there to be consumed.'

The general idea is, 'The law of the Messiah's kingdom is much more strict in its requisitions, and terrible in its sanctions, than the Mosaic law as expounded by the Scribes and Pharisees.

---

80 2 Kings xxiii. 10.
Under the Jewish law, murder is punished; but under the Christian dispensation, unreasonable anger will be esteemed as black a crime, and punished as severely as murder is among the Jews, and all malevolent affection and the expression of it, will expose to punishments, the least of which will be more severe than that awarded by the Jewish law to him who deprives his fellow-man of life."

Let us remember, my friends, that we live under this dispensation, and that if we enjoy its advantages, we are exposed to its hazards. Let us never forget the declaration, that "he who hateth his brother is a murderer, and we know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Let us remember that none who are characterized by "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, envyings, murders"—that none who do these things—"shall inherit the kingdom of God." Let us remember that it is the law of our Lord, that we love one another, as he hath loved us:—"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you with all malice:" and "put on, therefore, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, long-suffering: forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.""

In the words which follow, our Lord draws some important practical conclusions from the statement he had made, the substance of which may be thus expressed:—"Religious worship cannot be acceptable, while he who offers it continues under the influence of malignant principle; and as malignant principle exposes to the displeasure of God, and will be punished by him, it is the interest of all to rid themselves of its bondage, before they stand at his judgment-seat, where a final and irreversible sentence will be pronounced on them."

Such is, I apprehend, the general meaning. Let us now examine the words somewhat more particularly:—"Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.""

It was the doctrine of the Scribes, and the practice of the Pharisees corresponded with it, that anger, hatred, and the expression of these, if they did not go so far as overt acts of violence, were among the minor faults; and that God would not severely judge men for these, if they were but regular in presenting their sacrifices, and observing the other external duties of religious worship. In opposition to this, our Lord teaches, that, according to the righteousness of the kingdom, having one's mind not subject to the law of justice and love, would render all external religious services unacceptable to God.

---

63 1 John iii. 15.  

63 Matt. v. 23, 24.
Under the law of Moses, various gifts and sacrifices were presented, some of these were absolutely obligatory, and the occasions on which they were to be offered are very particularly described, others, though not expressly prescribed, were considered as becoming tokens of religious gratitude. These were denominated “free-will offerings,” as their being presented was left to the option of the worshipper. Some have supposed that there is a particular reference to this last species of religious gifts in the passage before us; we rather think that the word is to be understood in its general sense, and that “when thou bringest thy gift to the altar,” is just equivalent to, ‘When thou art about to perform a solemn act of religion. If at that time the individual remembered that his brother had ought against him, he was to leave his gift before the altar, and go his way, and be reconciled to his brother, and then come and offer his gift.

A “brother,” here, is equivalent to a fellow-man. For are we not all brethren? Hath not God “made us all of one blood?” “Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?” To “remember that our brother has ought against us,” is to recollect that we have done some injury to him, that we have treated him in some way or other unsuitable to the relation in which we stand to him, not as a brother—to be conscious that we have wronged him.

In this case the person, instead of offering his gift, is to go immediately to his brother, and to be reconciled to him; dismissing all malignant feeling from his mind, he is to repair the injury he has done to his brother. If he has deprived him of his property, he is to restore it; if he has calumniated him, he is to do all that lies in his power to counteract the effect of his calumny, and acknowledge his regret for having acted so unbrotherly a part. In this way he is likely to be reconciled to his brother, that is, to be restored to his brother’s favor.

And here I may remark by the way, that, in the New Testament, to be reconciled to another does not signify so much to cherish kindly feelings towards one with whom we have been offended, as to be restored to the favor of one whom we have offended. This throws light on one of the most important exhortations in the word of inspiration, addressed to sinners:—“Be ye reconciled to God,” that is, ‘not lay aside your dislike of God,—though that too is a duty—but it is “Be restored to the Divine favor, which you have forfeited.” “Receive the grace,” the free favor, “of God.” In the faith of the Gospel, enter on the possession of the blessing of having for your God “Him, who is in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses.”

“On being reconciled to his brother, the officer is to return to the temple, and then present his gift. The general principle is this, the person who is conscious of an unrepaired wrong to his fellow-man, cannot be an acceptable worshipper of God.

It is necessary here, however, to guard against mistakes. The man who rests his hope of the acceptance of his religious services, on the consciousness of his brother having nothing against him—on the consciousness of his having wronged no man—is leaning on a broken reed. The only ground of hope for the acceptance of our persons or services is the free grace of God; but it is a plain proof, that that grace is not believed by me, and therefore cannot be the ground of my hope, if it is not influencing my temper towards my brethren of mankind. The man who wilfully injures a brother, and persists in that wilful injury, gives plain evidence that the love of God is not shed abroad in his heart, and he cannot be an acceptable worshipper, till he has obtained mercy himself through the faith of the truth. That faith, working by love, will immediately lead him to repair all injuries which he is aware of having done to his brother.

This passage is strangely supposed by many to have some peculiar reference to the Lord’s Supper, and is often grossly abused, as if it furnished a reason for neglecting the observance of that ordinance, when any of our fellow church members has done anything to displease us. These persons seem to act as if the words ran, not ‘If thy brother have ought against thee,’ but ‘If thou hast ought against thy brother.’ If any of my fellow church members do anything that offends or displeases me, the first question I ought to ask myself is, Ought I to be offended or displeased? And if I am convinced on good grounds that I ought, then my duty is to go to my offending brother, and tell him his fault alone; and if this does not reclaim him, then I am to go with one or two brethren to remonstrate with him; and if this is ineffectual, then I am to bring the matter before the proper ecclesiastical assembly; all this is my duty;” but in no step of the process can this form a proper reason for my neglecting to do my duty in obeying our Lord’s command—“Do this in remembrance of me.” But the passage has no peculiar reference to the Lord’s Supper; it teaches the general doctrine, that religious worship, performed by a person under the influence of an unjust and malignant disposition, cannot be acceptable to God, and this is just as applicable to secret prayer, as to observing the Lord’s Supper.

Our Lord proceeds to urge the duty of being immediately reconciled to the brother whom we have injured, lest, dying under the guilt which unrepented of and unrepaired injuries to our brother necessarily involve, we should be plunged into hopeless destruction. For this does seem to me the force of the words in the 25th verse, “agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.”

Some very good interpreters, I am aware, consider this verse as containing a counsel of prudence with regard to the manage-

67 Matt. xviii. 15, 17. 68 Matt. v. 25.
ment of differences, an advice to avoid as much as possible going into law-courts to have them decided. Such a counsel will be readily admitted by all to be a wise one; and it could scarcely be couched in more appropriate terms. But still I cannot help thinking, that such a mode of interpretation strangely breaks the train of our Lord’s illustration, and weakens the force of his argument, besides making the explication of this verse itself exceedingly perplexed. The language of these verses is evidently too strong to be confined to the effect of an unsuccessful litigation; and, accordingly, those who explain them in this way, commonly suppose that they have an ultimate reference to the last judgment, thus giving at once a literal and metaphorical sense to the same words.

“Agree with thine adversary” is the same as “be reconciled to thy brother,”—“Seek restoration to his favor by repairing the injury you have done him. For you and he are like two litigants going to the judgment-seat. You are as certainly going forward to the tribunal of God, where your injury against your brother will become the matter of judicial inquiry,—as if the man you have injured were dragging you before a human court of law. There is no time to be lost. Should you die while malice rankles in your bosom, and the wrong you have done is unrepaid, then you are as it were finally delivered into the hands of the judge; there is no longer room for reparation.” “Should you die in such a state, what would be your portion? Dying under the influence of malignity, you must be utterly unqualified for joining the blessed assembly above, where all is peace and love. If you die in a state of mind unfit for worshipping God on earth, will you not be still more unfit to worship him in heaven? You are in danger then of being cast into a prison from which you will never escape, of being called to make a reparation which you will never be able to pay, of being delivered over to a punishment which will never come to an end.”²⁹ “Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”³⁰

§ 3. The righteousness of Christians and that of the Scribes and Pharisees compared, in reference to chastity.

In the verses which follow, our Lord brings forward another example of the superiority of the righteousness of the kingdom of God, to “the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.” It is borrowed from that department of moral requisitions which has a reference to chastity; “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”³¹

In the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the man

who was guilty of the crime of adultery, was considered as unchaste; anything short of this, seems by them to have been considered as not inconsistent with the character of a good man; but in the righteousness of the kingdom the desire of sin is sin; and he who allows himself to cherish, in any degree, a wish after what is forbidden, is considered as a transgressor. The wanton look, the impure imagination, the irregular desire, are, in the estimation of the one Lawgiver, violations of the law of purity.

No sin is more strongly prohibited in the law of Christ than impurity. "Fornication and all uncleanness," says an apostle, "let it not be once named among you."99 No species of sin is more degrading to the intellectual and moral nature of man. "Fleshly lusts war against the soul." They obscure the mind, they harden the heart, they pervert the affections. They unfit the mind for the exercises and the pleasures of religion, and in their unhappy victim all the emotional part of our nature seems strangely converted into one depraved feeling of brutal selfishness.95

This species of sin is in direct opposition to the design of God in the gospel economy. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; and not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."94 Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people."96

Impurity is utterly inconsistent with fellowship with God, and, if indulged in any of its forms, will assuredly exclude from the enjoyment of the celestial blessedness:—"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"98 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"97 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor

92 Eph. v. 3.
93 Burns—one who unhappily could speak from experience on this subject—one never to be named but with admiration, and pity, and strong moral disapprobation,—says, most strikingly:—

"—— Oh, it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling."

94 1 Thess. iv. 3-7.
95 1 Cor. vi. 13, 15, 18, 19.
96 Titus, ii. 14.
97 1 Cor. iii. 16.
adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with man-
kind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor
 extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”"* "For this ye
 know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous
 man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom
 of Christ and of God.”** “The fearful and unbelieving, and the
 abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers,
 and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which
 burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”***

To temptations to impurity in some of its forms, we are con-
 stantly exposed, and it requires constant vigilance to avoid fall-
ing before some of them. There are a few advices which, on
 this subject, I would affectionately urge on the attention of the
 young. Be on your guard against loose and unprincipled com-
 panions. “Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good
 manners.” It is impossible to associate intimately with the pro-
 fligate without danger. Abstain from the perusal of books
tainted with impurity. These are scarcely less mischievous—in
 many cases they are more so—than the company of the wicked.
The deliberate perusal of such books is a plain proof that the
 mind and conscience are already in a deeply-polluted state.
Keep at a distance from all indecent and even doubtful amuse-
 ments—I allude chiefly to theatrical amusements—where the
 mind is exposed, in many instances, to all the evils at once of de-
 praved society and licentious writing. Seek to have your minds
 occupied, and your affections engaged with “things unseen and
 eternal.” Habitually realize the intimate presence of that God,
 who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Never forget that
 his eye is on your heart, and that “all things are naked and
 opened” to him; and, as one of the best and most effectual
 methods of mortifying your members which are on the earth—
crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, “Set your
 affections on things above;” “Seek the things which are at God’s
 right hand.” Never tamper with temptations, but “flee youth-
 ful lusts;” watch and “pray that ye enter not into tempta-
 tion.”

With a particular reference to sins against purity, our Lord
 lays it down as a general principle, applicable to all violations of
 the Divine law, that there is no degree of self-denial to which we
 ought not readily to submit, in order to secure ourselves from the
 commission of sin, the natural result of which is unqualified and
 everlasting destruction:—“And if thy right eye offend thee,
 pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee
 that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole
 body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend
 thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee
 that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole
 body should be cast into hell.”

" 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.  "  Eph. v. 5.  "  Rev. xxi. 8.
* Col. iii. 2-6.  2 Tim. ii. 22.  Matt. xxvi. 41.  3 Matt. v. 29, 30.
The meaning of the word "offend" here is not to 'displease,' but to 'make to stumble,' to 'become an occasion of sin.' The general meaning is, 'We are resolutely to part with everything, which has proved, or is likely to prove, the occasion of sin to us, however valuable and pleasant it may be, and however much, in the way of painful feeling and strenuous exertion, the sacrifice may cost us.' Take a familiar illustration. A person is fond of wine: it is agreeable to his taste; it is useful in refreshing him after severe exertion. But he finds that this taste has seduced him into intemperance; he finds that there is constant danger of its doing so. He has fallen before the temptation again and again. What is such a person's duty? According to our Lord, it is obviously to abstain from it entirely,—on this plain principle, that the evil he incurs by abstaining, however keenly felt, is as nothing to the evil to which the intemperate use of wine subjects him—even everlasting punishment in hell: and to make this abstinence his duty, it is not necessary that he should know that he will fall before the temptation: it is enough that he knows that, as he has repeatedly fallen before it, he may fall before it again.

Our Lord supposes the alternative to be, on the one side, the parting with a right hand or a right eye; and, on the others, the body being cast alive into the fire of the valley of Hinnom, and there consumed to ashes. Who would not part with a right hand, or a right eye, to save life, much more to avoid the horrors of such a death? Were men acting on the same principle with regard to the interests of the immortal soul, they would not hesitate for a moment to part with any present pleasure or advantage, which they were conscious, as a temptation or occasion of sin, exposed them to the hazard of spending an eternity amid degradation and torment, of which the pollutions and fires of the valley of Hinnom are apt but most imperfect figures.

This passage has been by some understood too literally, and they have thought it their duty absolutely to mutilate their bodies in order to save their souls. The members of the body are but the instruments of sin: if the evil principle be mortified, the members of the body will not be abused; and, if it remain unmortified, the cutting off a right hand, and the plucking out a right eye, will be of no use.

Our Lord's statement proceeds on the principle, that the mortification of sinful passions may be exceedingly painful; but if men consent to lose their limbs, by most excruciating operations, to save their lives, what ought they to shrink from, if it be necessary, in order to the salvation of the soul? The reason why men are so backward to give up what is pleasant and useful to them, when it exposes their soul to hazard, is their not really and firmly believing that the loss of the soul is that tremendous evil which the Scriptures represent it; or that, what they love and value, does indeed tend to lead them into sin, and thus expose them to this tremendous evil. No man will part with his right hand or his right eye if he is not persuaded that this is necessary to save
him from suffering incomparably greater than its loss can occasion. But let him once be persuaded of this, and he will count him a benefactor who deprives him of them; nay, rather than run the risk, he will himself cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye; and, it is equally true, that there is no advantage or pleasure which a man will not immediately abandon, if, under the power of the world to come, he is convinced that his abandonment is necessary, in order to his being saved from everlasting destruction. Any possession, or pursuit, or amusement, or enjoyment, however useful, however agreeable I may find it, must be rejected and renounced forever, if it be to me, though it may not be to others, a necessary source of temptation or occasion of sin. "Though it should be a source of pleasure, though it should be a means of gain, though it should be a step to honor, though it should, by habit and use, have become a part of myself, dear as a right eye, useful as a right hand, I must count it as nothing when compared with the hazard of losing the life, the happiness, of my soul."

Men are very apt to think and feel, though they may not say it, that this part of our Lord's law is a hard saying; but let it be tried in the balance of sound common sense, and say if it is not in the highest degree right and reasonable. Is it hard to require men to do for their souls, what they readily admit they ought to do for their bodies? If the body is not more valuable than the soul, and if time is not longer than eternity, and if death is not more dreadful than damnation, the words of our Lord are "words of truth and soberness."

Are we, my brethren, acting as if they were so? Are we as careful to keep out of the way of temptation, and to avoid every kind of unnecessary intercourse with the wicked, as to keep out of the way of evident danger, and to avoid every infectious disease? Would we rather go into a fever hospital than into a theatre? Are we as readily touched with penitence, when we have fallen into sin as we are filled with regret when we discover that we have caught a dangerous distemper? Are we as diligent in using the means of restoration to spiritual health as to bodily? Are we as grateful to a friend for caution against a sin he thinks us in danger of committing, as we would be to him for a hint not to take a path where he suspected we were likely to be robbed or murdered?

Alas! how very different, how directly opposite, is the real state of matters with the great body of mankind. They carefully avoid unwholesome food, and keep at a distance from every infected habituation; but they recklessly mingle with the wicked, and engage in ensnaring amusements. They are alarmed by the first symptoms of bodily disease, and use every method for obstructing its progress, and effecting its cure; but they treat the strongest symptoms of spiritual disease as matters of little importance, and obstinately refuse to employ the means which the Great Physician has appointed, as requisite in order to a cure.
They thankfully receive cautions in reference to the health of their body, if they think it really in danger; but they often indignantly spurn at every hint given them in reference to the salvation of the soul, and seem to count him an enemy who speaks to them of the snares amid which they are walking, and points out to them the manner in which they may escape being entangled to their everlasting destruction.  

This is not an unjust representation of the character and conduct of many who would be offended, were we to call in question their faith in Christianity. Yet, no inconsistency can be more glaring than this. Ere long it will be seen to be so. The miserable victim of his own obstinacy, in the regions of hopeless misery, feels now—alas! that he could not be brought sooner to believe it—that it would have been better for him to have parted with what he felt to be dear as a right eye, and useful as a right arm, than to be cast, as he has been, into hell-fire.

§ 4. The righteousness of Christians and that of the Scribes and Pharisees compared, in reference to divorce.

In the 31st and 32d verses, our Lord gives a farther illustration of the superiority of the righteousness of the kingdom of God, to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."  

Every one who has read the 1st verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, to which our Lord seems here to refer, knows that divorce was permitted by the law of Moses. This permission was granted, however, only to prevent greater evils. It was found to be necessary for the hardness of the hearts of the Jews. Had they not been allowed to separate from their wives when they had taken a dislike to them, they might, by the violence of their tempers, have been led to treat them with cruelty. It deserves notice, that they were not commanded to divorce their wives in the circumstances specified, they were only permitted to do so; and to prevent them doing it hurriedly, and without consideration, they were required to give the wife a bill of divorcement written out in due form, and the separation, when thus effected, was final. By thus requiring divorce to be a solemn, and making it an irrevocable transaction, provision was made, as far as was practicable, for preventing its being done under the influence of passion, or for a trivial cause.

4 Brewster.  
5 Matt. v. 31, 32.

"The Mosaic law, intended for a rude people, placed restraints upon unlimited wilfulness. Political legislation must adapt itself to the materials on which it has to act. The permission—for it was no more—was owing to σκληροκαρδία τοῦ λαοῦ. Matt. xix. 8."—Neander. "The law of the kingdom" is not a state-law
The expounders of this law, however, disregarded altogether its object. They even considered permission as a precept, and taught that 'men might put away their wives for every cause.' If the Scribes taught in this way, the practice of the Pharisees corresponded with their teaching. Every opportunity was seized for putting away their wives and marrying others. The great intentions of marriage were in a good degree frustrated. Full encouragement was given and taken to furious passions, and irregular desires. Many cruelties were committed, and great misery was produced.\(^7\)

This was the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees with respect to marriage. But the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven was of a higher order, and "speaketh in this wise:"

"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, comitteth adultery.\(^8\)" According to this law, adultery is the only sufficient reason of divorce. He who for any other cause puts away his wife, is to be held an adulterer if he marry another woman; and she, by marrying him, commits adultery; while, at the same time, he becomes the guilty occasion of adultery, if the woman, who is still his wife, marry another man; for in this case she commits adultery, as he also does who marries her.

Our Lord, in another place (Matt. xix. 4, 5), shows very plainly that the indissolubility of marriage, as well as the propriety of that relation being confined to one man and one woman, were intimated in the circumstances in which it was instituted.

"God created them at first, a male and a female,"\(^7\) one man and one woman, "thus putting it beyond their power to be united to more than one, or to separate from each other to join another connection. He thus taught them, that any other arrangement would neither be conducive to their happiness, nor agreeable to his will, and intimated that they should continue through life wholly devoted to each other."\(^7\)\(^9\)

Few things have done more to promote the happiness and the moral improvement of man, than our Lord’s re-establishing the principle, that the conjugal relation is indissoluble save for one cause. Let all who stand in this relation to each other seriously consider the nature of their relation, and the importance of their duties. Let them reflect, that since they form as it were one body, they ought also to have one mind and heart. Let them reflect, that as they are so intimately connected, they ought to cherish each other with the same attention and affection, as they do their own bodies. Let them strive to have the same inclinations, as they have the same interests, and guard against all disputes and disagreements. Let them beware of all irritating language or disrespectful treatment, and always show each other every becoming token of civility and kindness. Let them bear with each other’s infirmities; study each other’s tempers; en-

---

\(^7\) Brewster. \(^8\) Matt. v. 32. \(^9\) Campbell. \(^10\) Brewster.
deavor to correct each other's faults. Let them always conduct themselves with gentleness, and perform their respective duties faithfully, though they may not receive the return they have a right to expect. Let them suppress every dislike which might produce in their mind even a wish to be separated, or which might render them more remiss in the duties which they owe to each other. Let them forbear, and forgive, and conciliate, and comfort, and cheer one another. Let them consider themselves as bound to promote to the utmost of their power, not only the present prosperity, but the future felicity of each other. Let them often together draw near to the throne of their common Father, and pray for one another, mutually exhorting, instructing, and comforting one another. Let them, in fine, live together as heirs of the grace of life, as those who know that death, the only lawful cause of separation, will ere long cut the otherwise indissoluble bond; and let them seek to be bound together by a tie, which even death itself cannot dissolve,—even the faith of the same truth, the love of the same Saviour, the hope of the same salvation. Thus will they spend a happy lifetime together on earth: thus will they spend a happy eternity together in heaven."

§ 5. The righteousness of Christians and that of the Scribes and Pharisees compared, in reference to oaths.

Our Lord now brings forward a fourth illustration of the superiority of the righteousness of the kingdom to that of the Scribes and Pharisees, not less striking than any of those which we have considered. "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne; nor by the earth; for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Let us first inquire into what the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees teaches on the subject of oaths; and then into what the righteousness of the kingdom teaches on the same subject, and in the course of this inquiry, it will become very evident that the righteousness of the kingdom greatly exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The sum of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, was a prohibition of perjury. They taught that oaths, solemnly uttered in the name of Jehovah, were binding, and that he who violated them was guilty of a great sin. So far all was right. The righteousness of the kingdom teaches the same thing. He

11 Brewster. 12 Matt. v. 33-37. See Note C.
who can deliberately declare a falsehood, under the sanction of an oath, or refuse to perform what he has not only promised, but sworn to, is obviously guilty of a shocking complication of impiety, falsehood, and injustice. It is impossible too strictly to prohibit, or too strongly to condemn, this crime.

But the Scribes, in their doctrine with respect to oaths, while in words they held that perjury was sinful, did much to lessen the solemnity of an oath, and to smooth the way for this worst form of falsehood. They made a distinction among oaths. According to them, some were binding, others were not. The obligation of an oath depended upon the nature of the object by which the person swore. Oaths to or by God, which are particularly specified in the text, were obligatory, and all oaths taken before a magistrate were of this kind. But, with the exception of oaths by the gold of the temple, and by the sacrifices of the altar—which, for some selfish or superstitious reason, they held to be binding—they appear to have taught, that to swear by any created thing was of very little consequence, created no obligation, and might be done in common conversation without sin; and the practice of the Pharisees seems to have been such as might have been expected from such teaching of the Scribes. They prohibited false swearing by God, but they did not prohibit unnecessary, and therefore profane, swearing, even by God; and they considered oaths, where the Divine name was not mentioned, with the two exceptions above referred to, as harmless expletives, and destitute of obligation.

Such was the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. But what saith the righteousness of the kingdom?—"I say unto you," says the one Lawgiver of that kingdom, "swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."14

The contrast between the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the righteousness of the kingdom of God, has been variously stated. Some interpreters have supposed that our Lord meant to say, 'The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees condemns false swearing; but the righteousness of the kingdom proscribes swearing altogether. The first prohibits perjury; the last aims at making perjury an impossibility, by prohibiting swearing.'

These interpreters seem, however, to have misapprehended our Lord's meaning. There is plainly nothing in the nature of the thing which makes an oath criminal. If there had, it never could have been enjoined at all by Divine authority, as it obvi-

13 Matt. xxiii. 16. Oaths by the gold, i.e., the treasure of the temple, were binding. "The παράγων thought the oath by their god mammon had the greatest force. Luke xv. 14."—Olahem.

14 Matt. v. 34-37.
ously is:—“Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.” An oath is simply an appeal to the Omniscient One who searches the heart, and the just Governor of the world who punishes fraud and falsehood, as to the truth of our testimony, and the sincerity of our promises. It is merely expressing in plain terms what ought to be present in the mind in all our declarations. We find the Apostle Paul repeatedly making affirmations, under the solemnity of an oath:—

“Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.” “For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness.” We find our Lord answering to the high priest’s adjuration, which was the Jewish mode of taking an oath. We find an angel represented as “swearing by him that liveth for ever and ever;” we find God himself introduced as swearing.” All this seems quite unaccountable, if our Lord’s meaning here was that, under the New Testament economy, swearing in every form was unlawful. While, then, I cannot consider these words as an absolute prohibition of “the oath,” it is very obvious that the call to use it must be very plain and distinct, to make it safe to have recourse to it. The greater part of the oaths which prevail in society do nothing but mischief. The requiring them is a temptation to sin, in one of its most heinous forms, before which multitudes fall. They do not prevent the evil which they are intended to guard against. They increase it. If oaths were never imposed, and never taken, but with an enlightened and pure conscience, there would be but little swearing.”

I apprehend that our Lord himself limits the reference of what he says to ordinary conversation, when he says, “Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay.” He does not refer to judicial transactions at all, but to the ordinary intercourse of life.

The contrast between the law of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the law of the kingdom, is this—The first prohibits only

15 Deut. vi. 13. 16 2 Cor. i. 23. 1 Thess. ii. 5.
17 Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. 18 Rev. x. 5, 6.
20 Bengel’s note is good. “Multi veterum Christianorum simpliciter hanc literam acceperunt, eoque facilius juramenta ethnicae declinarunt: vide tamen Ap. x. 6; Jer. xxiii. 8; Es. xlv. 23, qui locus tempora N. T. spectat: Contra bodie periculum est ne paucissima in tot juramentis vera sint; et in veris paucissima necessaria; et in necessariis paucissima libera, fructuosa, sancta et lesta. Multa ad pompam, ad calamitam, ad compescendas suspiciones justas, comparata sunt.”
21 Μὴ ἄμεινον sponte, ulter, abaque necessitate, in omni omnino casu, in communibus rebus.—Euripides.
22 Calvin has hit the point of contrast. “Deus non modo perjuriam damnavit, sed jurando levitatem que nominis ejus reverentiam derogat. Neque enim in solum acceptionem Dei frustra, qui pejetar, sed qui in rebus frivolis, vel in communi sermone teneat, et contemplationem nominis Dei arrogat.” “The Saviour forbids absolutely such oaths only as are hostile to the reverence that is due to God.”—Tatian, whose note deserves to be consulted.
false swearing in judgment by the name of God—the latter prohibits all vain unnecessary swearing in ordinary conversation, not only by the name of God, but "by any other oath," as the Apostle James expresses it. —"I say unto you," says our Lord, "in your communication, swear not at all," use no oaths, no approximation to oaths, in your ordinary conversation—not merely do not swear by God, but do not swear at all, for all oaths, if they have any meaning, are in reality addressed to God. "Swear not by heaven, for heaven is the throne of God," and he that swears by heaven, if his words are not empty sounds, swears by that throne, and him who sits on it. "Swear not by the earth, for the earth is God's footstool," and he that swears by it, swears by the God whose footstool it is. "Swear not by Jerusalem," for if the oath have meaning, it is an oath by the God who has chosen Jerusalem as the seat of his worship. "Swear not by the temple" for that is to swear by Him who dwells in it.

"Swear not by your own head," for that too belongs to God; it is his far more than yours—you did not, you cannot, make one of its hairs—you cannot, by your will, even change the color of one. An oath by your head, if it be not absolutely unmeaning, is an oath by the universal Creator and Proprieter. Every oath, just because it is an oath, is an ultimate reference to Deity. Carefully avoid everything like a profane or irreverent reference to God; and abstain from all such unmeaning, or worse than unmeaning, asseverations.

"But let your communication," your ordinary conversation, "be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay." These words, taken by themselves, seem most naturally to convey this idea—"Speak the truth at all times." Even when not called solemnly to swear by God, let your yea be yea—let your nay be nay—according to the Jewish proverbial mode of describing a mahn, whose word and promise may be trusted—"His yess is yes—and his no is no." The apostle uses the phrase in this sense when he states "the promises of God in Christ are yea and amen," certain, infallible, truths.

At the same time, viewed in contrast with what goes before, and with what follows after, it seems plain, that this is not our Lord's idea here. The meaning is, "Be content with simply stating the truth, whether you are affirming or denying, and if any person question the truth of your assertion, just repeat it,

23 James v. 12.
24 "The δὲ λέγει 'at all,' which perplexes Augustine so much, and has perplexed so many, is doubtless to be interpreted and limited by what immediately follows. All these kinds of oaths which I specify are forbidden you. You do not, by using them, avoid taking God's name in vain. For why have these oaths anything binding? It is God's presence in these created things which gives them any hold over your consciences. Every oath is an awful thing, and, in its ultimate ground, rests upon God, though the lightness and frivolity of men cause them willingly to conceal this fact from their eyes."—TRENCH.
25 "His yea in word is a yea in deed, and his nay in word is a nay in deed." The word corresponds with the thought, and feeling, and purpose, and the deed will correspond with the word.
but do not confirm your assertions with anything in the form of an oath or asseveration. If you have any assertion to make, or a denial to make, do so simply, without any oath, or anything approaching to an oath.'

"For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." These words may be rendered "cometh of the evil one," but we prefer the rendering of our translators as more comprehensive. 77 The use of strong asseverations, oaths, or approximations to oaths, can proceed from no good cause. It may proceed from the person’s knowing that what he utters is false, and therefore stands in need of confirmation. He is conscious that he is saying what is not true, and therefore concludes that he may not be believed, as he knows he deserves not to be believed. For this reason he seals his word with his oath, in order to secure for it the credit he knows it does not merit. Surely, when it cometh from this cause, it "cometh of evil;" it were better to retract his word than to support it with an oath. To swear to a lie is a double sin—it is adding perjury to falsehood. Or it may proceed from a person’s being suspected of falsehood. If the person is justly suspected of falsehood, then it cometh of evil. If he is justly suspected, it must be because he is addicted to falsehood; and the only way of getting a better character is not to make strong assertions, but henceforward scrupulously to speak the truth. Indeed, with all reflecting men, the use of unnecessary oaths and asseverations, will only make a man’s testimony more and more suspected. If the person is unjustly suspected of falsehood—then in justice to himself, to discredit such uncharitable suspicions, he should positively refuse to confirm his declarations by an oath. To swear in such a case, is an admission that his word is not sufficient. He who is known to be a liar, will not get credit even by his oath; and he who is a man of truth, voluntarily exposes his character to suspicion when he condescends in ordinary conversation to confirm his word by swearing. 78 Or the practice may proceed from a principle of irreverence, a want of a due fear for that great and terrible name, the Lord our God; and I need not say this is evil—the root of all evil—the want of the fear of God. It cannot proceed from anything better than a reckless disregard of the Divine declaration, that "for every idle word that men speak, they must give an account in the day of judgment." 79 It must be plain to every person, that all profane swearing, and even what are ordinarily termed minced oaths, are completely forbidden by the law of the kingdom of heaven. Such is our Lord’s fourth illustration of the superiority of the righteousness of the kingdom of God, to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. 80

77 "I consider it as a maxim, in translating—when a word is, in all respects, equally susceptible of two interpretations, one of which, as a genus, comprehends the other, always to prefer the more extensive. ‘The evil one’ is comprehended under the general term ‘evil.’”—Campbell.

78 Matt. xii. 36.

79 Since writing the above, a somewhat different exegesis has suggested itself.
§ 6. The righteousness of Christians, and that of the Scribes and Pharisees, compared in reference to retaliation.\footnote{21}

We are presented with a fifth illustration in the 38th and succeeding verses. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away."\footnote{22}

In the law of Moses we meet with the following enactments:—
"And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him."\footnote{23} "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."\footnote{24} "And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you."\footnote{25}

It is evident, however, that this law was intended to guide the magistrate, and to show him how far he might go in inflicting a penalty, or granting a compensation, for acts of cruelty and injustice. This lex talionis is the rule of justice which naturally suggests itself to every man, and is the basis of the ancient Greek and Roman legislation. As Tholuck well says, "it is an elastic law," in the good use of the term. It is not a rule or precept for the conduct of injured individuals. They were not authorized to take such vengeance themselves, nor were they required to insist on such strict retaliation in the laws of justice. It was intended, not to foster the spirit of revenge, but, on the contrary, to prevent that spirit from breaking out into violations of law and order, by putting it in the power of the injured person to obtain legally an exact requital, so far as was possible, for what he had suffered.

But the Scribes had in this case, as in many others, perverted to my mind, and though not so fully satisfied with it as to substitute it for the common one adopted in the text, I think it right to indicate it here, for the consideration of scholars. I have always felt it as odd to apply "these" to the particles "yes and nay." May the pronoun not refer to "oaths"—the subject of the whole paragraph? May not the clause be translated "for the superabundance of these comes of evil"? and may not the statement mean—All unnecessary oaths are wrong—the undue multiplication of oaths is a great evil? As Bengel, with his characteristic conciseness, says, "Nimietas viciosa."—Surely, if in anything, in solemn appeal to God—especially, as in oaths, with imprecation of his vengeance—there should be "NEQUIT NIMIS." It is a good advice though coming from a heathen:—δημος παρατιθηται ει μεν ολου τε εις επαν, ει δε μη, ει των εαυτων. "Avoid swearing altogether if you can; but if not, then as much as possible."—

\footnote{21} Lex talionis.\footnote{22} Matt. vi. 38-42.\footnote{23} Exod. xxi. 24, 25.\footnote{24} Deut. xix. 18, 19, 20.\footnote{25} Lev. xxiv. 19.
the Divine law. Its language meant, in their "righteousness," something very different from what it did in the law of Moses. The words were viewed by them as recommending, or even requiring strict retaliation; and it has been supposed that they went so far as to intimate, that individuals were at liberty to avenge their own wrongs, and that it was their duty to do so, provided they did not exceed the measure of punishment prescribed in the law. The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, permitted and cherished a spirit of resentment, and sanctioned the desire of retaliation and vengeance.

How different, how far superior, was the righteousness of the kingdom of God, But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

To "resist evil," is very much the same thing as to avenge ourselves; it is to set ourselves, as it were, in an attitude of opposition to our assailant, to show him that we are determined to repel his threatened violence, to resent the mischief he may occasion us, to render back evil for evil, and to avenge ourselves for our losses and sufferings.

Now our Lord informs us that all this is wrong according to the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven. Its subjects are not, either by personal violence or by vindictive legal prosecution, to manifest a revengeful spirit. That there are cases in which a man may be not only authorized, but required, to protect his own life, liberty, and property, at the peril, and by the punishment, of the illegal assailant, there can be no doubt; but in every such case, the animating principle must not be vindictive. It has been very justly remarked, "that in the present state of human nature, there is but little need to enumerate exceptions and limitations to such general rules as that before us. Self-love will suffice, and more than suffice, to prevent us from going too far in such a direction. In all ordinary cases it is better to give way, and yield to insult and injuries, than to repel them by force or by legal process. It certainly does not accord with the spirit of Christianity, to put the life and the soul of a man in competition with a sum of money, however great, when there is no reason to fear further violence to ourselves or to others. In smaller matters, however, from which our Lord selects his examples for the illustration of the general precept, there is no room for hesita-

36 Matt. v. 39-42. 4 See Note D.
37 It matters little whether τῷ πως be considered as masculine or neuter, as the evil doer or the evil deed, the injurer or the injury. The latter, for reasons likely to occur to every mind, is, however, the preferable exegesis. It includes the former. Most certainly they err who refer the word to him who is emphatically "the wicked one." We are expressly bound to "resist him." James iv. 7.
38 Brewster.
tion or doubt. If a man give a disciple of Christ a contemptuous or painful blow on the cheek, it is his duty and wisdom to imitate his Master, and to take it patiently, nay, to turn the other, and expose himself to a repetition of the insult or injury, rather than to begin a contest, by returning the blow, sending a challenge, or commencing a process at law—even although he should be ridiculed for his want of manly spirit, in consequence of his obedience to the law of his Lord. If a man be sued at law, and be unjustly deprived of his "coat," or inner garment, which, though not of great value, he yet might be ill able to spare, he had better suffer himself to be defrauded of his "cloak," or upper garment, than be involved in the temptations and evils of seeking legal redress. "Under many pretences, unreasonable men make demands on our time and our labor; and, in many cases, it is better quietly to comply with their demands than to resist them. If a man insist on my going a mile out of my way to serve him, I had better go two than quarrel about it." From the use of a word borrowed from the Persic, descriptive of compulsory labor performed in the service of the State, "the compeller" here is to be understood as some official, requiring the person referred to, to serve as a guide or messenger.

This command of our Lord, thus illustrated by the examples he brings forward, plainly does not forbid us to defend ourselves when we are in danger. To do so is one of the strongest instincts of our nature, the law of God written on our heart. But with regard to personal injuries, when there is no hazard of life, as in the case specified, it is our duty to repress resentment, and to abstain from violence. In like manner, there are cases in which it is plainly a man's duty to avail himself of the protection which the law gives to property. Justice to his creditors, to the public, to his family, may require him to defend his estate, though even this must not be done under the impulse of private revenge. But we ought to have resort to the tribunals of justice, only when the cause is important and the call urgent; we are to prosecute our claims with humanity, moderation, and a spirit of peace; we are to be content with reasonable satisfaction, and embrace every opportunity of terminating our contests.

In reference to personal liberty—there can be no doubt, that, next to the blessings of a good conscience, and the hope of eternal life, it is one of the most valuable privileges. Every Christian and every man should be ready to do much and suffer much, in

39 "Why is the right cheek specified, although, when we strike—striking with the right hand, we strike the left cheek? Maldonatus (one of the best of the Roman Catholic interpreters) correctly answers: 'Non cedendi consuetudinem, sed legem secutus est'; it being always the custom to mention the right first." —Tholuck.

40 ἴκραυ is the under-coat made of linen or cotton, which folded closely to the body—the Roman "tunica."

41 Ἰπάρθων is the cloak worn outmost, made of various stuffs, according to the fortunes of the wearer—from camel's hair to the richest silk. It hung loose about the body, corresponding with the Roman "toga," or rather "pallium."

42 Scott.
order to secure it and retain it for himself and others. Yet at the same time, he will not only “patiently submit to every necessary burden, and constitutional restraint,” but, in obedience to our Lord’s precept, he “will bear much of the insolence” of men “dressed up in a little brief authority,” “overlook many stretches of power, and endure even a variety of acts of oppression, rather than have recourse to violence and tumult.”

The injunctions in the 42d verse are a farther illustration of that noble, generous spirit, which the righteousness of the kingdom requires in the subjects of the Messiah—which prevents a man from standing on every point of right, and induces him, instead of insisting or rendering evil to all who have deserved it at his hand, to do good to those who have no particular claim on him. The words are plainly to be understood with very considerable limitations. They cannot possibly mean, that we should give and lend to all persons, without considering what they need to receive, or what we are able to bestowed. To do this, would be equally inconsistent with the dictates of Scripture, justice, and common sense:—“A good man showeth mercy, and lendeth;” but then, it is added, “he will guide his affairs with discretion.” “Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.” “For I mean not that other men be eased, and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want; that there may be equality.” “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea.” “He answered and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” From these passages, it is plain that we are to give or lend, with discretion, to those who have need—out of our abundance, as God hath prospered us—according to our ability; and that we are to impart to another, not the whole, but a portion of

43 Brewster.—Tholuck has, with great felicity, in a few words summed up the true meaning of these precepts. “Christ, with indefinite generality, declares in what way the Christian is to act when he happens to be subjected to violence. The application of the precept, however, is in many ways conditional upon a regard to God’s glory, the good of the injurer, and the good of the community.” Olshausen’s idea as to this, and the paragraphs about marriage and oaths, that they are applicable ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν θρόνων but not ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, is most unsatisfactory, and absolutely amazing, coming from so good a man. Jerome would limit the precept to spiritual things; but this is quite arbitrary. And what is it to lend and borrow in these? There is much good sense, however, in his remark—“Et divites si semper dederint, semper dare non poterunt.”

44 Eph. iv. 28. 46 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14. 47 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. 
45 Acts xi. 29 48 Luke iii. 11.
what we possess more than he. Our Lord recommends a kind and liberal spirit, inciting a man to do good to the utmost of his power. Such was the spirit of Christ to an impoverished world, and such is the spirit of his religion. It has been finely said, "Selfishness is in every shape and form antichristian."

To all to whom God has given the means of beneficence, we proclaim the law of the kingdom; and that it may make the deeper impression, we proclaim it in the express terms of the Divine statute-book:—"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." 51 "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." 52 "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." 53 54 "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." 55 And, as motives which must be found irresistible by every christian heart, we put them in mind of "the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and of his work, in which his grace so marvellously displayed itself, in that, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." 56


A sixth, and certainly no less striking and conclusive, illustration of our Lord's principle, that the righteousness of the kingdom exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, is contained in the verses which now come before us for explication:—"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." 57 This is "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees"—"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven

---

50 Brewster. 51 Prov. iii. 27. 52 Gal. vi. 10. See also 1 Tim. v. 8.
53 Phil. ii. 4. 54 Heb. xiii. 16. 55 Acts xx. 35. 2 Cor. viii. 9.
56 Maurice is the only interpreter I have met with who considers these words as the utterance of Divine law. "So long as Israel was a nation, so long as it owned God and God owned it, the maxim, 'Thou shalt hate thine enemy,' expressed a duty as real, as binding, as the other to which it was appropriated, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor.'" A man is far gone in an attachment to a hypothesis, whether hermeneutical or dogmatical, who, rather than abandon it, can take up a position such as this.—Maurice, iii. 60.
is perfect."—Surely there is a superiority, an infinite superiority, in the righteousness of the kingdom above the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees!

But that we may be the more impressed with this superiority, let us consider somewhat more closely the respective requisitions of the two contrasted moral systems. The passage before us is a very satisfactory confirmation of the general view which we have taken of our Lord's object in this section of the discourse, that it is not to contrast the Jewish false commentaries on the law of God with the true meaning of that law; that it is not to contrast the morality of the law with the morality of the Gospel, the morality of Moses with the morality of Christ; but that it is to contrast the system of religious and moral duty taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the Pharisees, with the system of religious and moral duty to be taught and exemplified under the new economy about to be established by the Messiah. The first part of the moral precept, in this particular dogma of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, is, so far as the words are concerned, to be found in the Pentateuch, though bearing a very different meaning from that which the Scribes attached to it; the second is, neither as to language nor as to sentiment, to be found anywhere in the Old Testament Scriptures, and is, indeed, in direct opposition to the spirit of the morality taught by Moses and the prophets. In Leviticus xix. 18, we meet with this injunction—"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In the estimation of the Scribes, the persons who, under the designation of neighbors, are represented as the proper objects of love, are exclusively their compatriots— their fellow Israelites, those who belonged to their nation, or who professed their religion. If they had carefully studied their sacred books, they would have found that the Egyptians are represented as the neighbors of the Israelites; and that in the very chapter where the words referred to occur, the following words are also to be found: "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Strangers, equally with neighbors, are represented as the proper objects of such a love as we bear to ourselves; and though there are passages in which "neighbor" signifies one with whom, by common origin or vicinity of residence, we are peculiarly connected, in contrast with a foreigner or stranger, yet the manner in which it is employed in the Decalogue, is sufficient of itself to show that the term is often used to denote mankind at large, with all of whom every individ-

57 Matt. v. 43-48. 58 Exod. xi. 2.
59 Lev. xix. 33, 34. See also 1 Sam. xv. 28. 1 Kings xx. 35.
6 See Note F.
ual is connected by a variety of ties. When they were prohibited from bearing false witness against their neighbors, they were certainly prohibited from bearing false witness against any one; and when they were prohibited from coveting the wife as the property of their neighbor, surely the prohibition had a universal reference. The command to love their neighbor, properly understood, was a command to love all mankind; and, by consequence, absolutely prohibited malignant feeling—for, “if we love all our neighbors of mankind, there will remain none to hate.”

But if the first part of this dogma of the Scribes, though expressed in scriptural language, was utterly unsupported by Scripture, rightly understood, the second part of it is directly opposed equally to the letter and spirit of scriptural morality. There is no such command in the Old Testament, as “Thou shalt hate thine enemy.” There is no such sentiment expressed under any form of words. On the contrary, the opposite sentiment is clearly and frequently taught. As proof of this, we appeal to the following passages of the Old Testament Scriptures:—“If thou meet thine enemy’s ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him; thou shalt surely help with him.” Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth; and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth; lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.” “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.”

It is true, indeed, that the Israelites, as the executioners of the Divine righteous judgments on the enormously wicked inhabitants of Canaan, were required to destroy them. The language used on this subject is very strong. “Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.” “And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.” “Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.” Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.” These injunctions, however, laid no foundation for the general principle that it is lawful to hate enemies. These nations were criminals, righteously appointed to extermination on account of their re-

62 Breaslet.
63 Prov. xxv. 31.
64 Exod. xxiii. 24.
65 Deut. xxiii. 6.
66 Deut. xxv. 19.
67 Prov. xxiv. 17, 18.
68 Deut. vii. 2, 3.
markable crimes; and the Jewish people were appointed to carry the sentence into execution. Even in this case, they were not warranted, far less commanded, to hate the unhappy criminals whom they were yet appointed to punish; and to suppose that these injunctions justified them in hating their enemies, and in ranking among their enemies all who did not belong to their nation, and adopt their religion, was altogether an unwarranted assumption; and was, indeed, a making void God's commandment by man's tradition.

The substance of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees on this point, seems to have been—'Jews are bound to love and do good to Jews; but they are not only permitted, it is a part of their duty, to cherish dislike towards the Gentiles.' Their statement is faulty in three important respects: They gave an unduly limited sense to the word neighbor; they reckoned all who were not neighbors, in their sense of the word, as enemies; and they considered themselves as allowed to hate their enemies.68

The doctrine of the Scribes was but too well suited to the malignant and selfish principles of human nature, and we find the Pharisees, and the Jews generally, acting under its influence. A heathen historian, speaking of the Jews, says, "They readily show compassion to their own countrymen, but they bear to all others the hatred of an enemy;"70 and the apostle Paul describes them as "contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved."

We find the same malignant and selfish principle manifesting itself among other nations as well as the Jews. The Greeks and Romans looked on foreign nations with sentiments of malignant contempt, and treated them with the greatest injustice and cruelty, and there is but too much of the same spirit to be traced even in our own times, both in public transactions and in private life.

"Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other—mountains interposed,
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one."70

In opposition to this righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, our Lord declares the righteousness of the kingdom: —"But I say unto you, Love your enemies."71 This precept is equivalent to a prohibition of malignant feeling towards any human being; a command to cherish kind wishes towards all mankind. Instead of warranting us to confine our benevolent regards to those whom we may consider our neighbors—our kindred or countrymen—our benefactors or friends—men of our own sect, or even religion—our Lawgiver commands us to embrace, in the wide-spread arms of our benevolence, all mankind,—strangers, foreigners, heathens, even enemies. Every human

68 Brewster. 69 Tacit. Hist. v. 5. 70 Cowper's Task. 71 Matt. v. 44.
being is to be regarded with good will; and, as we have opportunity, to be treated with kindness. It is quite obvious, that we are not required to regard with precisely the same kind of feelings a Christian brother, and an openly profane and profane person—a generous benefactor and a malignant inveterate enemy. It is not possible—and, if it were, it would not be proper—to cherish the same tender regard for strangers, as for "our own, those of our own household," the same gratitude to enemies as to benefactors, the same esteem for the bad as for the good. But we are to regard all men, even our enemies, with love, that is, we are sincerely to wish them well; we are to desire their good; we are, as we have opportunity, to promote their happiness.

In the clauses which immediately follow, our Lord illustrates what he means by loving our enemies:—"Bless them that curse you." To bless a person, in Scripture, often means to implore blessings from God on him, and had this clause stood alone, I should have been disposed to interpret the phrase in the passage before us—"Implore blessings on the head of him who is imprecating evils on yours." But in this case, the injunction would be quite synonymous with pray for them. To "bless," here, I apprehend, signifies to speak in a civil and friendly manner, so far as truth will permit, both to and of those individuals who speak to and of us in a very different way. It is, I think, quite parallel to the apostle's injunction, not to "render railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing." 'Be civil and kind to those who are rude to you, and be ready, when you can do so with truth, to speak to the advantage of those who have, by malignant and untrue statements, endeavored to injure your reputation.'

"Do good to them that hate you." 'Your benevolent regard to your enemies, is not to be confined to kind wishes and civil speeches: where you have an opportunity—and you ought readily to avail yourself of every opportunity that offers, you ought to seek such opportunities—you should be ready to do a good office to him who has proved his hatred of you by doing you an ill office.'

"Pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you." 'Knowing that you can do but little to make them happy, call in the aid of Omnipotence. Instead of imprecating vengeance, pray for forgiveness, and for all heavenly and spiritual blessings, to them; and do this for your most inveterate foes—"for them who despitefully use you and persecute you."'

A most powerful motive to the discharge of these difficult duties is suggested by our Lord in the words that follow:—"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." These words may either mean, 'that you may clearly show that you are the children of God—that ye stand in a peculiar, close, and endear-

Matt. v. 45.
ing relation to him, and that ye have been formed to a peculiar character in reference to him; or 'that you may resemble God, as children resemble their parents.' I apprehend the last is our Lord's meaning. Cherish these sentiments, adopt this conduct, in reference to enemies, for it is in this way that you are to imitate him whom you, under the new dispensation, are enabled to call Father, with a peculiar emphasis. He is good to the unthankful and evil; he makes His sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. He is merciful even to those who resist his will, and rebel against his laws. They share the bounties of his providence. They are invited to participate in the blessings of his salvation. He has no pleasure in their death. He is not willing that any should perish. He is long-suffering towards them, that his goodness may lead them to repentance. Surely this must be felt by every Christian as a very powerful motive, especially when he considers what must have become of himself,—what must have become of the whole race of man,—had not God loved his enemies, and "commended his love to men, in that while they were enemies, he spared not his own Son, but gave him up, the just in the room of the unjust." The man who hates his enemies is not like God—cannot be a child of God. A child of God!—he is of his father the devil, and the works of his father he does. The more we love our enemies the more we resemble God, and the more evidence do we exhibit that we are really his children.

The whole of our Lord's exhortation goes on the principle that, from "the children of the kingdom," it is reasonable to expect such a conformity to the character of their Father; and that if this is not manifested, they who profess to be children of the kingdom, disgrace at once their profession and themselves. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" 73 'If your kind regards are confined to those who regard and treat you with kindness, you do no more than the worst and most despicable class of men are in the habit of doing. Wicked and unprincipled men readily express their gratitude to those who have befriended them. The most barbarous and savage nations generally return kindness for kindness. Even the brute creation show attachment to those who treat them well. Will you take credit to yourself for having acted like a Christian, when you have only acted not worse than a heathen, and not worse than a brute? If you would show that you are the children of God, you must love not only him whom the Scribes call your neighbor, but him also whom they call your enemy. You must be "perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."'

These words are to be limited by the context,—'your love is not

73 Beautifully does Bengel say, "Magnifica appellatio. Ipse et fortis et potestas." 74 Matt. v. 46, 47.
to be partial, but universal, like that of your heavenly Father. You are to love not some only, but all, even those who seem the least suitable objects of benevolent regard. That this is the meaning is plain from the parallel passage in Luke, "Be ye merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful." While I have no doubt this is the meaning of the words, it is an important truth, that the Divine moral excellence is the copy and rule of the Christian, and that nothing short of as complete a conformity to this, as the limited capacities of our nature admit of, should satisfy our ambition.

To love enemies is not natural to man; and the only effectual method of implanting such a disposition in the mind, is the shedding abroad in the heart of the love of God and his Son. The man who really believes, that when he was an enemy of God, God so loved him as to give his Son to be the victim for his sins, cannot deliberately cherish resentment against any human being, but, constrained by God’s love, he will become a follower of him as a dear child, and reason in this way:—‘If God for Christ’s sake, has forgiven me, surely I should forgive my brethren.’ There is something peculiarly touching in the manner in which the Apostle Paul enforces the duties here enjoined, in his Epistle to Titus. “Speak evil of no man, be no brawlers, be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

§ 8. The righteousness of Christians, and that of the Scribes and Pharisees, compared in reference to the duties of beneficence and piety.

In the sixth chapter, our Lord prosecutes his illustration by examples, of the principle stated at the 20th verse of the preceding chapter, ‘that the righteousness of the kingdom greatly exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and of the Pharisees;’

75 “Perfecti in amore, erga omnes.”—Bengel.
76 “Ipse secundum naturam suam, nos secundum nostram.”—Augustin.
77 “A love such as this, man cannot appropriate to himself, through a resolution of will, or by means of endeavor, because this love is a divine love; he can only obtain it through a spiritual communication by faith.”—Olshausen.
78 Tit. iii. 2-8.
that is, that the system of religious and moral duty, to be taught
and exemplified under the new economy, was to be greatly
superior to that taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the
Pharisees. The instances already brought forward refer to that
system as taught by the Scribes; the instances which follow
refer to it as exemplified by the Pharisees.

"Take heed," says our Lord, "that ye do not your alms before
men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your
Father which is in heaven." 100 It is generally admitted, by the
best critics, that the original reading of the passage before us is,
"Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be
seen of them," etc. This first verse is a statement of a general
principle in reference to religious and moral duties, which, in the
succeeding verses, is applied to the three particular duties of alms,
prayer, and fasting.

To "do our righteousness" is just, in other words, to perform
those duties which we owe to God and to man. Now, our Lord
prohibits his disciples from imitating the conduct of the Phari-
sees in doing these duties before men to be seen of them. These
words are not to be understood as a prohibition of the perform-
ance of religious and moral duty in the presence of other men;
for many duties, both of religion and morality, are of a public
nature, and, therefore, if performed at all, must be performed
before men; but they are to be understood as a prohibition of
giving an unnecessary publicity to our performances of duty; and
especially, of our performing any duty in public in order to attract
attention to ourselves, and secure applause for our conduct.
There are cases in which we not only may perform, but ought
to perform, certain duties publicly, and perform them with the
wish and purpose that they may attract notice; we are to "pro-
vide things honest," that is, honorable, "in the sight of all
men;" 101 we are to "make our light shine before men, that they
may see our good works." 102 But while we do so, we must have
an ulterior object. If we do our good works before men that
they may see them, the object must be, not that they may ap-
plaud us, but "that they may glorify our father which is in
heaven," not that we may show off ourselves to advantage, but
that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.
The words of our Lord are equivalent to,—"Beware of giving an
unnecessary publicity to your performance of duty; and beware
of making the approbation and applause of men your ultimate
object in the performance of duty."

This injunction is enforced by a very powerful motive:—
"Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven."
that is, "If you perform your duties merely in order to obtain
the praise of men, you cannot obtain the approbation of God,

72 Matt. vi. 1.
90 "δικαίωσιν, instead of ἔλεημοσύνη."—Vide Tholuck. "Justitiam generaliter
nominavit, deinde particulariter exsequitur; est enim pars aliqua justitiae, opus
quod per eleemosynam fit."—Augustin.
91 Rom. xii. 17.
92 Matt. v. 16.
or those manifestations of his approbation in which the reward of duty consists.' This statement proceeds on a principle which pervades the whole of the system of duty enjoined by our Lord—that actions take their character from their principles—and that nothing is an act of duty to God but what springs from a regard to his authority, and from a desire of his approbation. A number of men perform the same external act—an act required by the Divine law—but they perform it from different principles. One does it merely because it is customary, and thus proves that he has the principle of imitation. The act with him is little better than a mere manifestation of instinct. Another does it to increase his influence or power,—in him it is a display of ambition. Another does it to advance his worldly interests,—in him it is a manifestation of "covetousness." Another does it to acquire applause,—in him it is a display of vanity. Another does it to alleviate or remove the sufferings of his fellow-men,—in him it is a manifestation of humanity. Another does it, because he knows it to be the will of God, to which he is desirous of being in all things conformed,—and in him alone it is an act of religious duty. He alone does what God requires, which is not only to do some external act, but to do that act from a regard to the will of God; and, of course, he only can obtain God's approbation, and those manifestations of God's approbation in which the reward of duty consists. For a man doing righteousness, doing what is in itself good, merely in order to obtain the approbation of men—for such a man to expect God's approbation, is in the highest degree unreasonable. He is not seeking it; and not seeking it, most assuredly he never will obtain it.

In our Lord's words there is involved, not only the principle, that acts in themselves good, if proceeding from unworthy motives, cannot obtain the approbation of God, or the manifestation of that approbation which is the proper reward of duty; but also the converse principle, that acts in themselves good, if they proceed from right motives, must meet with the Divine approbation, and be rewarded by suitable manifestations of that approbation. Nothing we can do can merit reward; but it is the natural and necessary result of the infinite holiness and benignity of the Divine nature, that every act of real allegiance to God, every expression of love, esteem, veneration, and obedience, is regarded by him with complacency, and draws forth, in some form or other, a display of this complacency, in conferring a gracious reward.

Against the practice of performing duties from a vain-glory principle, our Lord exhorts his disciples with peculiar urgency:—"Take heed," says he, "that ye do not your righteousness to be seen of men." Our Lord's emphatic language intimates, that what he warns them against is an evil of great magnitude, and an evil which they were in great hazard of incurring; an evil, to borrow the quaint language of Matthew Henry, that they were "in great danger by, and in danger of." Making a regard for

"Brewster."
human approbation and applause, the great motive of our conduct, is utterly inconsistent with the very being of religion. It degrades the character, and ruins the soul. He who primarily seeks the praise of men, by doing so excludes himself from the praise of God; and he who finds the reward of his conduct in the applause of short-sighted and misjudging men now, will find his punishment in the everlasting contempt of all truly wise intelligent beings forever. As it is an evil of great magnitude, so it is one from which we are in great danger. The love of the approbation of our fellow-men is a principle natural to us; and, when kept within its proper bounds, it is a very useful and praiseworthy principle; but it is ever in danger of passing these limits, and usurping to itself supremacy, as a motive to action. It has been justly said, that "The love of human praise is a very subtle and deceitful desire. It imperceptibly creeps into the heart, and ere we are aware, becomes the animating and regulating principle of conduct."  

To prevent mistake, it may be proper to observe, that nothing which our Lord's says here, is at all inconsistent with the doctrine of his apostle, who teaches us that "every one should please his neighbor for his good to edification." 86 We are to avoid offending those with whom we are connected; we are to seek to stand well in their estimation. We are to do so, however, not from the desire of their praise, but because God has commanded us so to act, and because, without being esteemed by them, it is not likely we shall have it in our power to be really useful to them. It is to be done less for our own sake than for theirs—not that we may have their approbation, but that we may promote their welfare. What our Lord condemns, is not the wishing to stand well in the estimation of our fellow-men, but the ostentatiously performing religious or moral duties for the purpose of securing their admiration or applause; in one word, the placing a regard to the opinion of man in the room of a regard to the will of God. 87

It may also not be without its use, to guard against an undue contempt of the opinion of man. There is a great tendency in the human mind to run into extremes. That man is in a serious

84 Brewster  
85 Rom. xv. 2.  
86 "The" excessive "love of men's admiration and applause is a most dangerous and pernicious principle. It leads to all the vanities and follies of this world, to fawning and flattery, to cunning and deceit, to envy and calumny, to ostentation and hypocrisy, to ambition and murder, to infidelity and irreligion. It fetters the faculties of the mind, and perverts the feelings of the heart. It sets conscience aside, makes the word of God of none effect, and gives to man another rule of life—the opinion of the world: an uncertain rule, always changing according to the fancies of men—an insufficient rule, leading him only to put on the appearance of righteousness—a dangerous rule, as likely to lead him to evil as to good—a sinful rule, substituting the will of man in the room of the will of God; and the individual's own honor in the room of God's glory—in fine, an unchristian rule, opposing the whole spirit and design of the Gospel; filling the man with the thought of his excellencies rather than with the sense of his deficiencies; flattering his pride instead of humbling his heart; teaching him to live to himself rather than to his Maker and Redeemer."—Abridged from Brewster.
error, who thinks he has attained true dignity of character, merely because he sets at defiance public opinion. In very many cases, he who does so, is in reality only courting public admiration, by pretending to despise it. He wishes the world to admire him as a person superior to its smiles or its frowns. The man who attends to the duties of life, from a regard to human opinion, may, to a certain degree, be a useful member of society. The man who is neither animated by the love of praise, nor restrained by the fear of contempt, if a stranger to higher and holier motives, is likely to be one of the most mischievous members of society.

Having laid down this general principle, that, unlike the Pharisees, his disciples should not allow a regard to the opinion, and a desire of the applause, of men, to be their leading motive in the discharge of religious and moral duties, our Lord proceeds to apply this general principle to particular uses. He applies it, in succession, to alms, to prayer, and to fasting.

(1.) Alms.

Our Lord applies the principle first to alms:—"Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly." 87

It is obvious that our Lord goes on the supposition, that his disciples would give alms. At this time our Lord’s disciples were comparatively few, and the great body of them belonged to the laboring class, and yet he takes for granted that they would give alms. True religion always teaches men to be merciful; and it is the duty of all who have more than what is absolutely necessary for their own support, and that of their families, to give what they can spare to those who need. I do not think Christ Jesus would have acknowledged any person as a disciple who did not give alms, unless he was himself absolutely indigent.

Our Lord gives directions, both negatively and positively, as to the manner in which alms should be given. Let us look at his negative directions:—"When thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

It has been supposed by interpreters, that in this passage there is a reference to a custom among the Jews, of which we have no particular record. It is well known that, among some of the ancient nations—the Romans, for example—it was a custom for the rich to distribute at their doors, at stated times, money and

87 Matt. vi. 2-4.
provisions among their poor dependants; and it has been sup-
posed that this custom had been introduced among the Jews. It has also been supposed, that on such occasions a trumpet was sounded, professedly to assemble the poor, but really to give public notice that the rich were engaged in a work of generosity. This is, however, merely a conjecture, though not an improbable one. We have good evidence that, in oriental countries, mendicants often carry a trumpet along with them, which they sound on receiving alms, in honor of those who bestow them; and it has been supposed that the Pharisees selected such mendicants as the objects of their alms, that their liberality might be duly cele-
brated. It is quite possible, however, that the word may be merely a proverbial way of expressing the sentiment:—’Make no unnecessarily ostentatious display of your liberality in almsgiv-
ing.

Our Lord terms the persons who were in the habit of acting in this way, “hypocrites.” There can be no doubt the reference is to the Pharisees, to whom he often gives this name. The word signifies stage-players—actors—persons who assume a char-
acter. The great body of the Pharisees seem to have been of this description. They assumed the appearance of great sanctity, while they were, in reality, the slaves of worldly and selfish pas-
sions. They, in doing their alms, made an ostentatious display in the synagogues and in the streets.

The word “synagogue” is usually, in Scripture, employed as a distinctive name for the houses in which the Jews used to meet for instruction and devotion. The word, however, just means a meeting. The English word meeting is often used in the south to signify a dissenting place of worship; but still it is also often used without this particular reference; and, in the same way, I apprehend “synagogues” are here to be understood generally of places of public concourse, as we have no reason to think that it was the custom among the Jews to give alms in the synagogue. These hypocritical Pharisees chose the most public situations for bestowing their alms—where there was to be found the greatest number of spectators and admirers.

Their object in doing so was, “that they might have glory of men.” In giving publicity to their alms, their object was, not that others might be led to imitate their example—and thus God might be glorified, and the poor relieved—but that they might secure for themselves a large share of public estimation, and thus

83 We may safely say so, since the learned, and laborious, and honest Lightfoot has said—“Non inveni, quaeiverim licet multum serioque, vel minimum tuba vestigium in prestandis Eleemosynis; a doctioribus (where were these to be found!) libentissime hae discerem.” Ikenius, another most learned man, makes the same acknowledgment.

89 Harnier’s Observations, vol. i.

90 The state of Greek learning, previous to the age immediately before the Refor-
mation, may be judged of from Lyra’s account of the etymology of ὑποκρίτης: “Dictur,” says he, “ab hypos quod est sub et crisis, aurum, quia sub auro, vel sub honestate exterioris conversationis habitu absconditum plumbum falsitatia.”

91 Erasmus, Grotius, Elseter, Wolfius, Kuinzel, and Wahl.
be placed in more favorable circumstances for gaining their own interested objects.

Our Lord most emphatically adds—"Verily they have their reward." They obtain what they seek, and they shall obtain no more. The praise of men is their reward—all their reward. They have the admiration of men, and the disapprobation of God; and they are to the full rewarded. Indeed, their ostentations and selfish ends rendered them even unworthy of the praise of men. They have obtained more than they deserve, and it would be unreasonable in them to expect any farther recompense.

Our Lord now proceeds to give positive directions as to the manner in which alms should be given. "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."92

It is an ingenious remark, that there is probably here an allusion to the fact that the chest for receiving alms was placed at the right hand entrance into the synagogue, so that, in passing it, the right hand was employed in putting into it contributions for the poor."93 Whether there be a reference to this custom or not, the meaning of the words is plain:—"Let your almsgiving be as private as possible—let not those at your left hand know what you are giving in charity with your right—let not even your nearest relatives, who are most at your hand, be told of your works of mercy, unless there be some good reason for their knowing them;—or 'Endeavor to conceal them even from yourself. Do not dwell on them in your mind as a source of self-complacent reflection.'94

The first clause of the 4th verse should be read in connection with the 3d, thus: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret." 'Use every proper method to avoid ostentation in giving alms. In this case, the praise of men cannot be expected; but if the alms be bestowed from a regard to the Divine authority, as one of God's appointed methods for promoting the happiness of his children and our brethren, we shall obtain a much richer reward. Our Father,95 who seeth in secret, is the witness of our alms; he sees what we do, and he sees the principle from which we do it. He approves of our conduct, and he will manifest his approbation of our conduct. That manifestation of his approbation shall be public. He will reward you openly.'

The best illustration of this is to be found in Matthew xxv.

92 Matt. vi. 3.  
93 Henry.  
94 The exposition of Luther is original. According to him, such a giving by the right hand is meant—as that the left, knowing nothing of the matter, cannot stretch itself out, in order, by the reception of the honor, to make up the loss. "That is called givers haves, as children joke with each other."—Trollop. Thence very happily gives the meaning—"Let your alms be given so secretly, that, if that were possible, no part of yourselves, save that actually engaged in the giving, should know of the gift—not even the brother hand."—Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 85.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."
"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Our best works deserve no recompense at his hands. If we think of them as we ought, we shall see so much wanting and so much wrong, that we will not presume to think them worthy of his notice. Yet he will notice the least and the most secret of all; he will openly approve them; he will abundantly reward them. "God is not unrighteous to forget the work, and labor of love, which they show to his name." But it must be the work and labor of love, and it must be showed to his name. It deserves notice, that, in the Divine administration, it is so ordered that the selfish person is disappointed in the end, while he who seeks the good of others shall find his own. No works of man can deserve reward from God. If any man think, by a series of beneficent actions, to atone for his sins, and purchase heaven, he shall find himself awfully disappointed. But every manifestation of love to God, and love to men for God's sake, is an object of the Divine approbation, and that approbation shall be suitably displayed.

In this passage, as in a number of others in this discourse, we must beware of an over-literal interpretation. In condemning public almsgiving—or rather in condemning those who give all their alms in public—it is not so much the act as the principle which our Lord condemns. Were we understanding the words in all the extent of meaning which they will bear—it would follow, that nothing ought to be given in public subscriptions or collections for the poor—for in this, concealment would be improper, if not impossible. It is obvious from Acts xi. 29, 30, that the primitive Christians did not always conceal their donations. To do so in every case would be inconsistent with the command, "Let your light shine before men." Indeed, it is quite possible, that affected secrecy may be a cloak to avarice, and it is a fact that many by pretending to be very private in their charities, have contrived to keep their money to themselves, and at a very cheap rate obtain the reputation of remarkable generosity."
 Yet, on the other hand, the remarks of the judicious Scott deserve to be seriously pondered, "Though there are many charities which can scarcely be promoted without some degree of public notoriety, and frequently a leading person may be called to excite others, who are backward, by a useful example, yet no duty is more liable to be made an occasion of vain-glory than this, and many designs, very praiseworthy in themselves, and beneficial to others, are supported by a liberality which springs almost entirely from this corrupt principle. The

---

# Matt. xxv. 31, 40, 46.  
# Heb. vi. 10.  
# Fuller.
heart is deceitful, and when men love to have their names among the subscribers to public charity, but are not equally liberal in private, while they love to speak and hear of their own beneficence, and are not willing to do much without the credit of it, it is too plain how the case stands with them. In general, private charities, if not most useful, are most unequivocal, and the less reward we receive from man, the more may we expect from our gracious God."

(2.) Prayer.

We proceed now to the application of the general principle laid down in the 1st verse, to the duty of prayer. The sum of what he says in the preceding verses is—'My disciples, the children of the kingdom, are to give alms, but they are not to give them as the Pharisees do: their righteousness is in this point to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees.' And the sum of what he says in the words now before us—'My disciples, the children of the kingdom, are to pray, but they are not to pray as the Pharisees: in this point also, their righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees.' How it is to do so will appear more distinctly, when we have examined somewhat more minutely our Lord's statements.

1. General directions about Prayer.

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."98

There are two preliminary remarks, to which I would call attention, before entering on the explication of these words. The first is, that our Lord does not here condemn public worship or social prayer.99 It is plain, both from reason and Scripture, that both of these are duties, and from their very nature they cannot be performed in secret. They must be performed before men, though our object in performing them must not be, that we may be seen of men. The reference plainly is to personal individual prayer.

The second preliminary remark is, that our Lord takes for granted, that all his disciples would be distinguished by the performance of secret prayer. What he says is not to persuade men to prayer, but to direct them in it. "Infidels may imagine that God does not concern himself with the affairs of mortals, and may excuse themselves by pretending that it would be presumption in them to solicit the Supreme Being to do this or that.

98 Matt. vi. 5.
99 That learned and honest, but very unsound-minded man, Gilbert Wakefield, maintained that there was no divinely-appointed or sanctioned christian public worship. He was satisfactorily replied to by Dr. Priestley and Mrs. Barbauld, of his own denomination, as well as by others of a more orthodox creed.
Formalists may say their prayers, and be glad when the task is over; but Christians cannot live without communion with God. As soon as Saul is converted—turned from a Pharisee into a Christian—‘Behold he prayeth.’ 51 He formerly “said prayers” in public, now he prays in good earnest in secret. Prayer has with much propriety been called the breath of the new creature; and it has justly been said, you will as soon find a living man who does not breathe, as a ‘living Christian who does not pray. “Every one that is godly,” says David, “will pray to thee.”

Taking it for granted, then, that our Lord’s object is to show how, in the performance of the duty of secret prayer, his disciples were to exceed the Pharisees, the disciples of the Scribes, let us see in what this superiority was to consist:—“When they prayed, they were not to be as the hypocrites;” that is, the Pharisees who were hypocrites, men who assumed a character which did not belong to them, who pretended to be very religious, when in truth, in the just acceptance of the word, they were not religious at all. Hypocrisy characterized the general conduct of the Pharisees; but in nothing was it more disgustingly exhibited than in the manner in which they performed the duty of individual personal prayer. They “loved to pray standing” in the synagogues,—that is, I apprehend, not the place of public worship, but any place of public concourse—and “in the corners of the streets,” 53—at the crossing of the streets, where there generally is a crowd, and where they could be seen from all quarters. These were the places and circumstances in which the hypocritical Pharisees loved to perform their personal devotions.

This seems very strange to us, but it quite accords with what is still customary in oriental countries, especially among the Mohammedans. There are stated times for prayer, and whenever these times arrive, the more devout—wherever they are, in whatever company, and in whatever employment they are engaged—immediately perform their devotions. 4 A similar custom prevails in Spain, not improbably borrowed from the Moors.

We know that among the Jews there were appointed hours for prayer, the third hour, or nine o’clock; the sixth hour, or mid-day; and the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon. 5 How this appointment originated we do not know. We find David saying, 1 Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray;” and we find Daniel praying three times a day, probably at these seasons. Now it would appear that it was a common thing for the hypocritical Pharisees, instead of retiring at these seasons for devotion, rather to arrange matters, so as that they might be found in a very public situation when these times came; and there, in the

1 Fuller.
2 “The usual attitude of the Jews in prayer, as also of the ancient Christians, was standing.” Maimon. constit. de precat. 6 Tholuck. 1 Kings viii. 22. Dan. vi. 10. In the Greek church also, “standing” is the prayer posture.
4 Brewster.
5 Prideaux, Connect. vol. i.
presence of an admiring multitude, with all the external appearances of remarkable devotion, they said their prayers. Their object was not that they might be heard by God, but "seen of men." The act of personal prayer, in itself a dutiful one, was in their case, not so much an act of worship of God, as of worship partly of themselves, and partly of those whose applause they coveted.

Here, as in the case of alms, our Lord warns his disciples, not so much against the external act, as against the principle which it implies. They mistake his meaning who think that he here prohibits the posture of standing in prayer, or prohibits in every case the performance of personal devotion in public. A Christian may be placed in circumstances in which he cannot retire for secret prayer, but he is not therefore to neglect it, nor is he studiously to conceal from his companions that he performs it. Paul "gave thanks to God in the presence of the ship's company;" nay, Christians may be placed in circumstances in which it is their duty to make it known, that they regularly attend to the duties of personal devotion. Daniel is not to be blamed because he opened his window when "he kneeled on his knees, and prayed to God in his house," as a testimony against the impious decree, forbidding all prayer for a month.

That which Christ means to censure was the loving to pray in public places "to be seen of men." "His object was not to appoint the place, or the posture of prayer. These, in his estimation, were matters of very inferior moment; but to detect the vanity of the mind; to direct his followers to seek, not the applause of men, but the approbation of God." The person who loves to officiate in social worship, because he may thus obtain for himself a character for remarkable piety among his brethren, is equally condemned by the spirit of our Lord's prohibition, as the Pharisee who performed his private devotion in public for the same purpose.

In reference to such persons our Lord solemnly declares, "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward." The word "reward," is of ambiguous meaning, nearly equivalent to recompense. It seems to have been our Lord's intention to intimate, that these men's conduct would be followed by its natural consequences, both from men and from God, in time and in eternity. They obtain man's applause, and God's disapprobation, because, for a pretence, they make public and long prayers; they are honored by men who look on the outward appearance, and from him who looketh on the heart they receive "greater damnation."

The man who can designedly make the solemnities of religion the instrument of gratifying his own vanity and ambition and covetousness, may obtain what he does not deserve, and what he would not receive if the truth were known, the admiration of men; but he richly deserves, and he certainly will receive, if

6 Acts xxvii. 35. 7 Dan. vi. 10. 8 Fuller.
repentance do not intervene, his part among the hypocrites, where there is “everlasting shame and contempt,” as well as “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

Instead of seeking the greatest possible publicity for our personal devotions, we should seek the greatest attainable privacy. “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”

Some have considered the words of our Lord in the beginning of the verse as figurative. To enter into the closet, and to shut the door before prayer, is considered as a metaphorical expression for withdrawing the mind from all external objects, shutting out all but God and ourselves, remembering that in prayer it is with Him, with Him alone, that we have to do. This is an important truth, and is equally applicable to social as to personal prayer. But it seems quite obvious, from entering into the closet, and shutting the door, being contrasted with standing in places of public concourse, that the words are to be understood literally. “When thou prayest,”—“when, as an individual, thou art about to present personal addresses and private petitions before the throne of God, instead of going into a crowd that men may observe thee, withdraw, whenever it is practicable, from all human society.’

“Enter into thy closet,” ‘retire by thyself.’ We are not to dwell on the word closet. A field, a garden, a mountain, may be as retired as a closet, and have all been sanctified by the Saviour’s example, as proper scenes for secret prayer. “And when thou hast shut thy door,” that is, ‘when thou hast secluded thyself from observation, and secured thyself from interruption, then perform thy personal devotions.’

“Pray to thy Father in secret.” There are none of your fellow-men there, but He with whom you have to do is there. Lay open to him your minds and your hearts, your wants and your wishes, your fears and your sorrows. “Worship him who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth.” Such prayers will not secure you human applause, but they will draw down on you the approbation of your heavenly Father, and such testimonies of his approbation as will be an exceeding great reward.

“Thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” Secret prayer does not, cannot, in the proper sense of the term, merit anything; but it is, it must be, the object of the approbation of Him who desireth truth in the inward parts. Even now, he richly rewards the sincere secret worshipper, by manifesting himself to him in a way he does not to the world; and ultimately

9 How foolish, how wretched a thing to speak to God, and to look to men.” —Leighton. “Pray to the gods, but would have mortals hear.” —Young.

10 Matt. vi. 6. 11 Augustine.

2 Ταμίεων = ὑπεράφω — the upper part of the house, to which the pious Jews used to retire for devotional purposes. Acts x. 9. “ταμίεων = ἀπόκρυφα αἰκίματα.” —Phavorinus, Hesychius.

12 Scott.
these secret intercourses with God shall be openly declared before men and angels, as evidences of humility, and faith, and unfeigned piety; and in uninterrupted intimate fellowship with God, throughout eternity, shall obtain an abundant, gracious recompense.

The prayers of our Lord’s disciples were to be contradistinguished from those of the Pharisees, both by their originating in a desire, not for human applause, but for God’s approbation, leading them to the greatest practical privacy, instead of the greatest possible publicity, and also by being more rational in their substance and form. The Pharisees acted as if they thought that the merely repeating over and over again the same words, and protracting the service to a sufficient length, would secure the acceptance of their prayers.

Against the foolish and superstitious usage originating in this mistake, our Lord warns his disciples: “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions,” as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

It is plain that our Lord does not mean to forbid either the repetition of the same request again and again in the same prayer, or the continuing for a considerable time in devotional exercises. In Daniel’s prayer for the restoration of the Jews, the same words, or words of the same import, are frequently repeated. In the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, the petition, “teach me thy statutes,” recurs seven times. In the hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm, the words, “his mercy endureth for ever,” are repeated twenty-six times. On a most interesting occasion, when the fervor of his devotion was certainly as great as human nature is susceptible of, our Lord three times presented the same petition, in the same words. When a person is very deeply impressed with the sense of the value of a blessing, and of his need of it, it would be a most painful constraint to be prevented from expressing it again and again.

As we cannot consider our Lord’s words as a prohibition of all repetitions in prayer, neither can we consider them as an unqualified condemnation of long prayers. The prayers of Solomon, Nehemiah, and Daniel, although uttered under the inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit, are of considerable length; and we know that our Lord himself, on one occasion, continued all night in prayer to God. It is plain, too, from the number of

14 There can be no doubt this is a fair translation of the original word ἐβαθύσθη, the origin of which has given so much exercise to the learning and ingenuity of critics. “Quantum sufficit,” on this subject, may be found in Tholuck, v. ii., p. 114-123.

15 Matt. vi. 7.

16 Brewster.

17 It is reported of Augustine that he prayed over, for a whole night, “Noverim te, Domine, noverim me.” “There is no prayer,” says Leighton, “too long to God, provided it be all enlivened with affection; no idle repetition where the heart says every word over again as often and more often than the tongue.”

18 “He who himself spent nights in prayer, and spake a parable that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, does not find fault with prayer which is long drawn out, if only it be prayer.”—Trench.
persons whom Paul remembered in his prayer, that his devotions could not be very short.

Our Lord himself teaches us what are the limitations with which we are to understand his words. His disciples are "not to use such repetitions as the heathen," and as "the hypocrites,‖ the Pharisees, did: they were not to protract their prayers as the heathen and the hypocrites—the Pharisees—prolonged theirs. The repetitions referred to are such as those of the priests of Baal, who cried from the morning till the evening, "O Baal hear us!" such as the Ephesian mob uttered, when, for the space of two hours, they cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Such repetitions and long-continued prayers proceeded, on the part of the poor heathen, from an idea that they would be heard for their much speaking. Their notions of their divinities were very low. They thought that they were very nearly such as themselves. Such notions and such practices still exist. The Indian devotees spend whole days in shouting out the sacred monosyllable, Om; and the Mohammedan dervises turn round in a circle, repeating He, or Alla, till they drop down from giddiness.

The Jews, who ought to have been better informed, seem to have adopted similar absurd notions and practices. The following are maxims of the Talmudical doctors:—"Every one who multiplies prayer shall be heard," and, "The prayer that is long shall not return empty." The Pharisees made long prayers, and this was considered as a proof of their uncommon devotion.

It is curious to observe the identity of the character of false religion in all its forms—Heathenism, corrupted Judaism, and corrupted Christianity. The poor deluded Romanists are in the habit of repeating the Lord's prayer, and the salutations of the Virgin, in a language they do not understand; and of expecting that, by the frequent repetition of these, which they number by counting a string of beads, they are to obtain deliverance from the greatest evils, and the possession of the most important blessings. In a popish prayer, addressed to Jesus, the word Jesu is repeated fifteen times, with only the words, "Have mercy on us, and help us;" and ending thus, "Give me here my purgatory!" In opposition to these false notions, our Lord instructs us that words are not essential to true devotion, and that prayers must not necessarily be long, in order to their being effectual:—"Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." Our Lord forbids

19 "In omnibus rebus vitandus mos hypocritarum; in precibus etiam ethnorum."
—Bengel.
20 1 Kings xviii. 26. 21 Acts xix. 28.
22 "Ohe! jam desine Deos, uxor, gratulando obtundere,
Tuam esse inventam gnatam: nisi illos ex tuo ingenio judices,
Ut nihil credas intelligere, nisi idem dictum sit centes."—Tzetze.
23 For full accounts of the "battology" of the Roman Church, consult Voëtii Disput. S. Thol. tom. iii.
24 Matt. vi. 8.
here, all unmeaning and unnecessary repetitions. When repetition is the natural result of earnest desire, it is more than allowable; but when it is the effect of carelessness or ostentation, or when it proceeds from the idea that the merely repeating certain words is to produce some beneficial effect, it is sinful and forbidden. A prayer is not by any means necessarily a bad one because it is long, any more than it is necessarily a good one because it is short. In general, it is proper to avoid long prayers, especially in the family and in the church, which are not only wearisome to men, but offensive to God. A proper sense of the majesty of the Supreme Being would cure this evil. "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few." 278 It is worthy of observation, that whenever our Lord or his apostles were long in prayer, it was in private. It has been shrewdly remarked, that "if many, who pray for an hour or longer in public, and with tedious repetitions, were as circuitous in the closet, whether he should commend their discretion or not, we might hope well of their sincerity. But when the reverse is true, it certainly has the appearance, to speak it gently, of the very spirit which it was our Saviour's intention to condemn." 279 The reason which our Lord assigns for his disciples avoiding the needless repetitions and the tiresome protraction by which the prayers of the heathens and Pharisees were characterized, is a very satisfactory one:—"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." So far from many words being necessary, strictly speaking, no words at all are necessary to prayer. To most of us I believe, even in secret prayer, the employment of words is useful, and in social prayer it is absolutely necessary; but it is not needful in reference to God. He needs not to be informed by words what we want, nor urged by words to afford us the requisite supply. He is not ignorant of our necessities, nor indisposed to supply these "according to his glorious riches." 277 But it may be asked, if such be the truth, what is the use of prayer? Is it not altogether unnecessary? To this question I reply, in the well-considered language of a most useful practical expositor of the Sermon on the Mount. "Prayer is necessary by the Divine appointment. We are expressly commanded to ask, that we may receive. If we refuse to seek the Divine bounties, as he has ordained, we have no reason to expect that he will bestow them upon us. Prayer is also, in its own nature, necessary before we can experience the blessing of the Almighty. It is intimately connected with the first principles of true religion.

23 Eccles. v. 2. 28 FuUer.
27 "Superstition ascribes the reason for the granting of a prayer, not to the mercy of God, but to its own godless work. Unbelief infers from the omniscience of God (in which it does not believe) the uselessness of prayer. Faith founds upon this same holy, gracious, divine omniscience, its poor prayer. Thus our Lord teaches us to pray in faith, because God knows, before we ask him, what things we stand in need of; and, therefore, he can inspire the (to him) acceptable prayer, and grant it accordingly."—Olsenæen. Rom. viii. 26-28.
It is impossible to cherish these in the heart, without the soul rising in adoration of the Divine excellencies, and feeling a desire of the Divine favor; and what is this but prayer, in its simplest and purest form? It is likewise a becoming act of worship on our part, an acknowledgment of our dependence on God, and an expression of our obligations for his goodness. It is a useful means of disposing us rightly to receive and improve the gifts of Heaven, and is thus a kind of indispensable preparation before we can receive them. It is itself the exercise of our best feelings, and by the very act of praying aright, we are made to possess many of the blessings which we ask. It is, in fine, naturally connected with the use of means for attaining what we seek in our petitions, and should thus dispose us to employ these means with renewed diligence. But though prayer is thus necessary and useful to us, it is not in the smallest degree necessary for informing or persuading the Almighty.28

2. Pattern of Prayer.

To place in a still clearer point of view, the kind of prayer by which his disciples were to be characterized, and contra-distinguished from the Pharisees, our Lord gives us a specimen of it in that wonderful composition commonly termed the Lord’s Prayer, a composition of which it has been justly said, that it probably contains in it more important instruction than can anywhere else be found in so few words.

"After this manner pray ye," that is, ‘Instead of the vain repetitions and the tedious protraction which are the leading characters of the prayers of these hypocrites, the Pharisees, let your prayers be distinguished for the simplicity, comprehensiveness, rationality, and brevity, which are the distinctive qualities of the following form.’

It has been a question among interpreters and divines, which has given origin to a good deal of acrimonious controversy, whether the Lord’s Prayer is to be considered as a form to be used, or as a pattern to be imitated. The right answer to the question is, it is to be considered as both. In the case before us, it seems plainly brought forward as an example or pattern of the prayer which was to prevail under the new economy. In the gospel by Luke, we find our Lord, on another occasion, as we apprehend, using, in reference to the same formula, these words:— "When ye pray, say Our Father which art in heaven,"29 words which seem obviously to intimate, that it is the duty of his disciples in their prayers, not only always to use it as a pattern, but sometimes also to employ it as a form.

28 Brewster.—“Utrumque teneadum est, vota nostra a Deo sponte praeveniri, et tamen non precibus impetrare quod potimus.”—BENGEL. It does not require a very deep philosophy to see the consistency of these two equally certain principles. Some wise men of this world cannot, however, discern it.

29 Luke xi. 2.
It has been very well remarked, that "it may be often very proper to use the very words, but it is not always necessary; but we ought always to pray after the manner of it, with that reverence, humility, confidence in God, zeal for his glory, love to mankind—submission and moderation in temporal, and earnestness about spiritual things, which it inculcates—avoiding vain repetitions, and using grave and comprehensive expressions."

Let us now proceed to examine this divine pattern and form of prayer. As it stands before us, it consists of three parts—In vocation, Petition, and Doxology.

The invocatory part of the prayer consists in these most comprehensive words—"Our Father which art in heaven." This "Father," like every other word properly expressive of human relation, when applied to the Divine Being, must be considered as bearing a figurative or analogical meaning. When God is represented as the Father of those who worship him, we are taught that he stands in a relation towards them similar to that in which a father stands to his children; and that he regards them, and acts towards them, in a manner similar to that in which a father regards and acts towards his children.

It has sometimes been made a question, on the resolution of which the true meaning of the appellation "father" in the passage before us depends, whether this prayer is intended for all men, as the rational creatures of God; or only for those who are become the "children of God through faith in Christ Jesus." I apprehend it is the duty of every man to pray to God; but it is the duty of every man to pray to God in his true character; and it is only when one does so, that he can pray acceptably. God is the kind Father of all mankind, not only as he is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, who "hath made one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," and who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things," but also, inasmuch as, though they have acted the part of most undutiful children, and exposed themselves to the most dreadful evils from him as the righteous Governor of the world, he still regards them with pity and love, having no pleasure in their death, but willing rather that they turn from their evil ways and live; and having, by a wondrous device of infinite wisdom, made the exercise of his compassion towards them perfectly compatible with the demands of holiness and justice, he exhibits himself as "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," seeing he has "made him who knew no sin, to be sin for them," that "they might be made the righteousness of God in him;" and proclaiming, "Return to me ye backsliding children, for I have redeemed you;" for the "great love wherewith he loveth" men, through the mediation of his Son, he blesses them with all heavenly and spiritual blessings, saving.

32 Rom. v. 19-21.
33 2 Cor. v. 19-21.
34 Jer. iii. 14, 22.

# See Note G
them in him, with an everlasting salvation. This is the truth as to the relation in which God stands to men; this is the way in which he regards them, and is disposed to treat them. Every man who hears the Gospel, may, should, believe these truths; and whatever has been his previous character, from that time he may, he should, he will, call God his father. He will "set to his seal that God is true," and in his own experience, he will obtain satisfactory evidence, that, "as a father loveth and pitieth his children," so God loves and pities him. Our Lord could not do—whatever some of his mistaken servants may have done—he could never instruct any man to pray in unbelief; but he does here instruct all men to pray in faith. Every man—the greatest sinner breathing—may, ought, to call God father, but he never will really call God father, till he believe the truth about him; and then he will not be able to refrain from calling him father.

"Father," is just equivalent to 'the Being from whom we have derived existence and every blessing—on whom we are entirely dependent—who really loves us, and is disposed to bestow on us everything which is necessary to our true happiness, in the widest extent of meaning which belongs to that comprehensive word.'

"Father in heaven," or "heavenly Father," is an appellation intended to bring before our mind, that He who stands in so intimate a relation to us, and who regards and treats us so benignantly, is infinitely exalted above us. He is high above us, as the heaven is high above the earth. He is at the head of the universe—the great Sovereign whose throne is in the heavens, the region of immutable purity and happiness.

"Our Father," or "our heavenly Father," suggests the thought—He is not only the Father of other intelligent beings, but he is my Father; he regards me with pity—he desires my happiness—and he is not only my Father, but the Father of all my brethren in Christ, the Father of all my brethren of mankind.

The important practical instruction suggested by this solemn invocation, is obviously this.—That, believing the truth respecting the infinite grandeur, and excellence, and amiability of the Divine Being—believing that he stands to us in the relation of a father, and cherishes towards us the dispositions of a father—we should approach him with a mingled sentiment of veneration and love, awe and confidence, in the full assured belief that he is both able and willing to answer the prayers we present to him, agreeably to his will; and that it is our duty, when God gives us opportunity, to pray with others, and at all times to pray for others. This invocation forms, as it were, the preface to the prayer.

The petitionary part of the prayer divides itself into six

32 Eph. ii. 4; i. 3. 35 John iii. 33. Psal. ciii. 13, 14. 37 Fuller.
34 "Every believer hath a share in all the prayers of all the rest; he is a partner in every ship of that kind that goes to sea, and hath a portion of all their gainful voyages."—Laudov.
parts." There are six different petitions or requests; the first three of which have a direct reference to the Divine glory, and the last three to the petitioner’s happiness.

The first petition is, “Hallowed be thy name.” The “name of God,” as our heavenly Father, is God himself, as manifested in his works, and in his word, especially in this character of “our Father.” The word “hallowed,” is nearly synonymous with ‘sanctified’ or ‘glorified.’ The petition is equivalent to, ‘May the manifestation of thine infinitely-venerable and amiable excellencies, excite universal attention, and call forth corresponding sentiments and conduct, in all intelligent beings. May God, as our Father in heaven, be universally known and honored. May we be enabled to “sanctify thee in our hearts, and to make thee our fear and our dread;” may we be enabled to “love thee with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind;” may we be enabled to “trust in thee at all times,” to seek and to find happiness in thee, and in thee alone; may we be enabled to “glorify thee in our souls, and in our bodies, which are thine,” to think, feel, speak, and act, in every case, in a manner becoming thine infinite excellence, and the relation in which we stand to thee; and may this be the case, not only with us, as individuals, but with all the children of men. May they all know, and fear, and love, and trust in and obey thee, as their heavenly Father.’

It is thus a most extensive petition. It is a prayer that all atheism, and infidelity, and ignorance, and error, and superstition, and false religion, and impiety, may be banished from the world, and that the only living and true God, “our Father in heaven,” may be worshipped and honored all over the earth, and by every individual of the human race.

The second petition is, “Thy kingdom come.” Some, by “the kingdom of God,” understand here the new economy, both in its external and internal administration; that is, the introduction, and progress, and universal establishment of true religion in its most perfect form—Christianity. Others think that “the kingdom” of the Father is to be considered as here contrasted with the kingdom of the Son, and that the reference is to that final economy, when, “the end being come, the Son shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father,” and “God shall be all in all.” I am disposed to think the first view the correct one. The kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, ordinarily signify the new economy; and the phrase, “The delivering up the kingdom to the Father,” seems to me to refer not to the Mediator resigning his kingdom, but to his restoring or bringing back to the Father the kingdom which had revolted from him.

---

39 Divines of the Lutheran church generally consider the petitions as seven—dividing what we call the sixth into two.
40 Matt. vi. 9.
42 Matt. vi. 10.
43 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.
and which revolt the mediation of the Son is intended to quell and put down."

"Thy kingdom come," is a prayer that we ourselves may be made loyal subjects to God, through the instrumentality of the word and agency of the spirit of Christ—that we may be made thoroughly loving, faithful, and obedient—that this may be the case with all with whom we are connected, by whatever tie—that the word of the kingdom may be preached in all nations—that it may be "preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven"—that Christian churches may be established in every region of our earth—that "men may be blessed" in Christ Jesus, and that "all nations may call him blessed"—that "the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ"—that every opposing power may be put down, and God be all in all.

The terms of this petition have given rise to the opinion, that this prayer is only suited to the commencement of the christian dispensation: and that as the kingdom, which was then at hand, has long ago come, it is absurd to pray for what has already taken place. But as the coming of the kingdom, is a phrase which as naturally refers to the progress as to the introduction of the christian religion; till that religion be universally known in our world—till its doctrines be universally taught in their primitive purity—till its ordinances be universally observed in their primitive simplicity—till all men be made to experience, in the highest possible degree, its power to sanctify and to bless—the prayer can never be an unseasonable one. "May the kingdom of our Father in heaven come; may his supreme authority be universally acknowledged; and may all unite in ascribing the majesty to him of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things!"

I apprehend, however, that those interpreters unduly confine the meaning of this petition, who would exclude the full development of the kingdom of God in the celestial state. To avail ourselves of the division of the Shorter Catechism, it refers not only to "the advancement of the kingdom of grace," but to the "hastening of the kingdom of glory."

The last petition, in the first division of the prayer, is, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." "The will of God" is a phrase which, taken by itself, may express either that which God has determined to do, or that which God has commanded to be done, and appointed to be submitted to. With regard to

---

44 See "The Resurrection of Life."
46 Matt. vi. 10.
the will of God, in the first sense, it is already done on earth, as it is done in heaven. "His counsel stands, and he does all his pleasure." Neither infernal nor human power or policy, can frustrate the purposes of God. It is our duty to acquiesce in the Divine determinations, as infinitely wise and righteous, and to rejoice that "he worketh all things according to the counsel of his will;" but the doing of the will of God, in this sense, is not so properly a thing to be prayed for, as a thing to be acquiesced, to be rejoiced in; at any rate, for the reason already assigned, that it is already done on earth, as it is in heaven, it cannot be the subject of the petition now under consideration.

It is not God's will of purpose, but God's will of precept and of providence that is here referred to." It is a prayer that our will, and the will of every human being, may be brought into a complete accordance with the will of God, as made known in his written word, or in his providential dispensations; that we, and all men, may desire and do as he wills and directs; that we may be made to know his will, to do his will, to submit to his will—to believe what he has revealed, because he has revealed it—to choose, and do what he has commanded, because he has commanded it—to submit to what he appoints, because he has appointed it. We do the will of God when, from a regard to his authority, we regulate our hearts and lives according to his law, and when, from the same principle, we acquiesce in the arrangements of his providence, resting satisfied with the manner in which he disposes of our concerns, and submitting, without doubting and murmuring, to all his dispensations. We not only pray that God's will may thus be done by ourselves and others on earth, but that it may be done "as it is done in heaven;" that is, by the angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, universally, cheerfully, harmoniously. We pray, in other words, that we may, and others may, be made "perfect in all the will of God."

To be so is our duty, and ought to be at once our desire and endeavor. The knowledge of the fact, that in this life we never shall do the will of God in the same absolutely perfect way as it is done in heaven, is no reason why we should lower the object of our desires, or the aim of our endeavors. What an amount of blessings is wrapped up in this petition! Were this petition fully granted, earth would almost become heaven; for what makes heaven what it is, but that there the will of God is the will of all intelligent beings? Perfect holiness, and perfect happiness, are necessarily implied in perfect conformity to the will of God.

These three petitions are most intimately connected. The great object of desire is the glory of God—"the hallowing his name." The grand means for securing this is "the coming of his kingdom;" and the manifestation that his kingdom is come,

47 Beza considers the reference here as to the "voluntas decrenens" rather than to the "voluntas jubens." His venerable and sounder-minded, though not more acute, friend, Calvin, is of an opposite opinion.
and his name therefore hallowed, is "the doing of his will on earth, as it is done in heaven."

The first of the petitions which have for their direct object human happiness, is, "Give us this day our daily bread." Interpreters have found much difficulty in fixing the precise meaning of the epithet rendered in our version "daily." The reason of this difficulty is, that the words nowhere else occurs in the New Testament, and is not to be found in any of the profane Greek writers, so that we have no means of ascertaining its true sense, save the connection and the etymology. I apprehend that the most probable meaning is, 'bread that is necessary and suitable to our subsistence,' what Agur calls "food convenient for us."

Some have interpreted the words figuratively. They consider them as a prayer for spiritual blessings, under the figure of bread. They view them as equivalent to, 'Give us the supersubstantial bread—the bread of life—the true manna whereby we may be nourished up to eternal life;' some have even strangely supposed that there is a reference to the bread in the Lord's supper.

There can be no reasonable doubt, that this petition is intended as a prayer for whatever is needful for the body. Bread comprehends all the necessaries, but none of the superfluities, of life. If God gives us the latter, we should be thankful for them, and employ them as a trust committed to us, to be managed so as to promote the glory of the munificent owner; but we are not warranted to ask them as what God has promised to give us. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." We are to ask every day, "day by day," our necessary bread; we are not warranted to ask even of the necessaries of life, very large supplies, which may serve for weeks, and months, and years to come, but as children entirely dependent on, and completely confiding in, our heavenly Father, we are to ask the supply of our present need, and to expect that to-morrow, when we require to make the same request, we shall obtain the same display of fatherly care.

It has been ingeniously remarked, 'We are to ask our own bread. Give us our bread,—we are not allowed to ask the bread of others,—we must not covet our neighbor's goods, but must be contented with what God gives us in the way of honest industry, or by the kindness of our friends.'

In this petition we acknowledge our dependence on God for all we have, and for all we need. "Our talents and industry cannot succeed without his concurrence. Our friends and benefactors are entirely dependent on him. Our riches and stores

45 Matt. vi. 11.
46 ἐπιθύμησιν. "Crux non Theologorum duntaxat sed etiam Grammaticorum."—
        AMYRAUT.
50 Prov. xxx. 8. The fullest and most satisfactory discussion of this question I have met with is that by Tholuck, vol. ii., 172-196. It is, indeed, quite a masterpiece, and, but for its length, I should have transferred it into the notes.
51 1 Tim. vi. 8.
cannot continue without his will. Our health and strength cannot be preserved without his power; and even though we had the necessities of life in abundance, they cannot support or nourish us without his blessing."

The spirit which this petition breathes is very different from the temper natural to depraved man. "Man naturally aspires to be independent of God, and to raise himself out of the reach of want and adversity. He cannot trust God to provide for himself and his family, but desires to take this charge on himself. Unlike the sheep of Christ's pasture, who go in and out as he leads them, and look to him to feed them, he emulates the wild beasts who roam through the forests in quest of prey for themselves and their young ones. Ever anxious to accumulate, he has neither time nor inclination to think of anything else, till, in some unexpected hour, he is obliged to spare time to die. Christian, canst thou envy such a man, even when he succeeds to his heart's desire in accumulating wealth,—Wilt thou learn of his ways? It is really better for thee, and for thy children, to receive, as you need it, the supply of your wants. It is better He should provide for you in answer to your prayers, than that you should try to provide for yourself in opposition to his command. 'The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.'"

The first three petitions in the Lord's Prayer suit perfectly holy beings. They breathe the very spirit of heaven. Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, may, we have no doubt they do, join in them. They are the expression of their habitual wishes. "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." The fourth is one which Adam in innocence might have offered. It is an expression of entire dependence on God, and a desire to receive from him what he sees necessary and sufficient for the supply of those wants which rise out of our connection with a body of organized animated matter. But the two concluding petitions speak of guilt and depravity. They could not be offered by the inhabitants of heaven. They could not have been offered by Adam in innocence. They are the cry of the guilty for pardon, and of the morally imperfect and depraved for sanctification.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."\(^{56}\) It has sometimes been said that "debts" here, mean sins. I do not think that this is an accurate interpretation. To "forgive debts" in the passage before us is plainly a figurative expression. Man, as a subject of the Divine government, owes God a debt of obedience. "All that God requires is due by man. It is plain, however, that debts do not here mean duties, for, in this sense of the word, to remit our debts would be to excuse us from doing our

\(^{53}\) Brewster. \(^{54}\) Fuller.

\(^{55}\) Matt. vi. 12.—How strikingly and strangely does this petition for pardon contrast with the pagan's prayer, or rather demand of blessings as things due to him,—'Εν Θεού δοξῃ μοι τη ὀρθολογίαν! This, according to Philostratus, was the usual prayer of Apollonius Tyanaeus. Phil. Vit. Ap. i. 11.
duty, to emancipate us from the law of God. This is what it were unworthy of God to do, and therefore impossible for him to do; and if it were practicable, it would not be benefit but ruin to man. But when man does not discharge the debt of duty, he contracts another kind of debt, the debt of punishment. The sinner owes satisfaction to the law for the wrong he has done it, and this debt can be discharged only by adequate punishment.

These responsibilities are the "debts" referred to in the words before us, and to "forgive us our debts," is to release us from the obligation to punishment; or in other words, not to exact the debt of satisfaction which we have incurred by neglecting to pay the debt of duty. "Forgive us our debts," is just, 'Punish us not for our sins.' 'We are sinners—our sins deserve punishment—but in thy fatherly mercy remit the punishment which our sins deserve.' "Deal not with us," either now or hereafter, either in this world or in the world to come, "according to our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities;" let not those penal evils which are the deserved, and the natural, consequences of transgression, be inflicted on us? "Cast us not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from us." Cast us not into hell.'

The saints, under the Old Testament economy, were encouraged to present this petition, by "the name of God," so solemnly declared to Moses:—"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." though they must have been greatly perplexed to reconcile the one part of that name with the other: "And that will by no means clear the guilty." We have much more abundant encouragement to present it, in consequence of God having, in the word of the truth of the Gospel, "set forth his Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," and proclaimed himself "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

From this petition it is plain, that all Christians, while they are on the earth, have sins, daily sins, to be forgiven. "It is no doubt to their shame," as Mr. Fuller says, "that it should be so; but so it is, and to disown it does not make the matter better, but worse." That man is a sad self-deceiver, dreadfully ignorant of God's law, and of himself, who does not see that there is much, very much, both wanting and wrong in him, and that he needs to say every day, "Forgive me my debts." 'The debts of this day, if not remitted, would require me an eternity to pay.

56 Psal. li. 11. 57 Exod. xxxiv. 7, 9. 58 Rom. iii. 25, 26. 59 2 Cor. v. 19, 21.
Had I no sins to answer for, but the sins of this day, I would be undone forever, but for the free sovereign mercy of God, manifesting itself through the mediation of Jesus Christ. It teaches us, too, that the shedding of Christ's blood, as the price of our redemption, is perfectly consistent with the free love of God, not only in providing the Saviour, but in pardoning the sinner for his sake. Forgiveness is not demanded as a due, but requested as a favor. Had we fully paid the penalty in our own persons, the debt would have been discharged, and, therefore, would not have needed to be remitted; and if our Lord's sufferings had been what some very good, but not very judicious men have represented them, just precisely what the sins of the saved deserve, neither more nor less, whatever gratitude we might owe to God for admitting a surety, and finding a surety, there would be no room for forgiveness of the debt; for in this case, too, the debt had been fully paid. In the Scriptures, and the representation is quite in accordance with sound reason, the sinner is always considered as deserving punishment. Punishment is a debt which he owes. The atonement has made the remission of that debt consistent with, ay, gloriously illustrative of, the Divine righteousness. In seeking forgiveness from God, we are never to lose sight of this atonement, as the only medium of forgiveness; yet still we are to ask forgiveness as a free favor. To the very end of life, the Christian must come for forgiveness, just as he did at first; not as a claimant of a right, but as a supplicant for a favor.

The daily coming to God, and requesting him for Christ's sake not to punish us for the sins which we have committed, is perfectly consistent with the important doctrine of the perfection, and the perpetuity of justification. It is certain that "he that believeth in Christ shall never come into condemnation;" but that, instead of leading to the conclusion, "I need not pray for the remission of my debts," suggests the strongest encouragement to present such a petition, just as the Divine assurance that a believer shall persevere to the end, instead of laying a foundation for carelessness, is a most powerful motive to continue "steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

There is a very important addition to this petition—"As we forgive our debtors."69 Our "debtors," here, are not solely or principally, if at all, our pecuniary debtors. They are persons who stand to us in some measure in the relation in which we stand to God; persons who have failed to perform to us the debt of duty, and who have incurred the debt of punishment; persons whom, in strict justice, so far as they are concerned, we might punish; in one word, persons who have done us an injury. To forgive these persons their debts, is just not to insist on our

69 "ως indicat non paritatem sed similitudinem rationis."—Maldonatus. It is a Jesuit that states the distinction; but it is not a Jesuitical distinction. As high as the heaven is above the earth, so is His way of pardoning above ours. Many interpreters consider ως here as equivalent rather to since than to as.
right. It refers not so much to our not harboring ill-will towards persons whom we may have fancied to have injured us, as to our freely forgiving, our not exacting, even if we have it in our power, punishment from a man who has injured us really, it may be deeply.

Regard to public justice, which must be maintained to secure the interests of society, may make it my duty to do all that lies in my power to get a man who has injured me adequately punished; but that is perfectly consistent with my having no resentment against the man,—perfectly consistent with a feeling, that, but for the interest of society, I should greatly prefer that the man should not be punished at all.

These words certainly cannot be considered, as some, I am afraid, do consider them, as stating a meritorious ground on which we may claim forgiveness from God; yet they not only teach us, that all who need forgiveness from God, should be ready to extend forgiveness to their fellow-men, but also that no man can rationally expect that this prayer, as presented by him, will be heard, if he is disposed to punish to the utmost all who injure him.

Some have said, and said truly, that, under the influence of such a temper, men cannot have the comfort of forgiveness; but, assuredly, that is not all. Our Lord's words here, and elsewhere, make it plain that he cannot have the thing itself. For a man, indulging in implacable resentment, to expect that, continuing in that temper of mind, he shall be ultimately saved, is gross presumption; the only rational expectation in that case is, that he shall "die in his sins," and perish for ever.

It is a very striking consideration, that this petition is so framed, that, if presented in an unforgiving spirit, it is indeed an imprecation of Divine vengeance. He who does not forgive his neighbor his trespasses, when he uses this prayer, in effect asks God not to forgive him his trespasses; and, if he continue in his present temper, there is no doubt that his prayer will be answered.

The last petition of the Lord's prayer is, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." "Temptation" means 'trial,' and is often used in Scripture, especially in the New Testament, to signify affliction generally. This is not its meaning here. Affliction, in some form or other, is the lot of all men; and it were folly to expect to be completely exempted from it—it were worse than folly to pray to that effect. Affliction seems a necessary part of moral discipline; and, to be subjected to it when we need it, is a great blessing. "Behold," says Eliphaz, "happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty." "Blessed," says David, "is the man whom though chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been

---

afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.” 64 “Rejoice,” says our Lord, when ye are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, “and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.” 65 The apostles felt suffering to be good, when “they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” 66 This is the apostle Paul’s judgment on this point: “We glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us;” 67 and this, the apostle James’ judgment, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience.” 68 If these things are so, it would not be wise to pray that we may never be afflicted.

“Temptation” more properly means, whatever is calculated to lead us into sin—the propensities of our depraved nature—the seductions of the world—the suggestions of Satan. In this way, both the affictions and the comforts of life may be temptations. In the strict sense of the words, God cannot tempt any man:—“Let no man say, when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God.” 69 When God is said to lead men into temptation, the meaning is, “In the course of his providence they are placed in circumstances, in which, from their own depravity, or from the depravity of others, they are solicited to sin.”

This is a prayer that God would graciously prevent us from being brought into circumstances of strong temptation, that he would not leave us to struggle with temptation in our own strength; that he would instruct us to avoid, that he would enable us to overcome, our temptations.

He who would honestly and acceptably 70 present this petition, should guard against going into temptation. There are some fool-hardy persons, who seem glad of an opportunity of having their spiritual strength tried by temptation. They discover great ignorance of themselves, and a great want of a just sense of the evil of sin. It has been justly said, “He who carries about with him much inflammable matter, would do well to keep at the greatest possible distance from the fire.” A person knows that he is very irascible, yet he voluntarily places himself in circumstances, in which he is likely to be put into a passion: a person feels that the love of the world is growing on him, yet he earnestly seeks after a situation, where that principle is likely to be greatly strengthened: a person knows that he has an undue liking to intoxicating liquors, and has often yielded to it, yet, instead of putting himself in circumstances in which that liking cannot be indulged, voluntarily exposes himself to constant temp-

---

64 Psal. cxix. 67, 71.  
65 Matt. v. 12.  
66 Acts v. 41.  
67 Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.  
68 James i. 2, 3.  
69 James i. 13.  
70 Psal. lxvi. 18.
tation. For persons, acting in this manner, to say, 'Lead me not into temptation," is to mock God. They "tempt God." Oh, that such persons would remember that God is not deceived, and that he will not be mocked with impunity; that, as he is never tempted of sin, he will not always allow himself to be tempted by the sinner!

It is a striking remark of Mr. Fuller: "There is no necessary connection between entering into temptation, and coming out of it. Both Judas and Peter went in, but only one of them returned. Those who go in on a presumption of coming out again, are often fatally mistaken. They are 'snared and taken.'"

It is added, "But deliver us from evil." That may mean, either from that which is evil, or from him who is evil—from the evil thing," or from the evil one." I prefer the first sense as the more comprehensive one, and as including the second. It is a prayer to be preserved from everything that is really prejudicial to us, especially from sin, that evil in which there is no good. It matters very little whether this is considered as the positive part of a petition, the negative part of which is, "Lead us not into temptation," or as a separate petition, for deliverance from everything that is really evil,—i. e., from sin and its fruits. I am rather disposed to go along with the Lutherans, and make this the seventh petition.

The concluding doxology does not appear in the prayer, as recorded by Luke; and the best critics are, with great unanimity and decision, of opinion that it was not originally included by Matthew. It seems early to have been introduced into some MSS., in consequence of its having been added to the prayer, when used in public worship."

It consists of an ascription of the "kingdom, the power, and the glory" to God." It contains a reason both why we ask these things, and why we hope to obtain them. The practical instruction furnished by it is very comprehensively stated in our Shorter Catechism. It teaches us "to draw all our encouragement in prayer from God only," to connect thanksgiving and adoration with petition. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the concluding word, "Amen," is an expression of desire and expectation—'so let it be—so shall it be—I earnestly desire it—I firmly expect it.'

The 14th and 15th verses are a kind of explanatory note on the concluding clause of the fifth petition. The meaning of the words is quite plain. 'The man who is habitually of a forgiving disposition, proves himself to be one of those whose sins have been forgiven by God. The man who is habitually unforgiving, shows with equal clearness that his sins have not been forgiven.'

We cannot suppose that the forgiveness of those who injure us can, in any degree, merit forgiveness of God, or that he will

72 Matt. xiii. 19 38. Eph. vi. 16. 1 John iii. 12; v. 18.
73 Matt. vi. 15.

* See Note H.
pardon the impenitent and unbelieving, because, out of a natural facility of temper, without any regard to God, they forgive others.

The persons addressed are *professed disciples*. When their hearts do not condemn them in this respect "they have confidence towards God," though conscious of much unworthiness; but if their hearts condemn them, their confidence will be abated, and if they utterly fail in this, their hypocrisy will be manifested. The best illustration of this passage, is to be found in our Lord's own words: "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents: but forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou diddest me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

(3.) *Fasting.*

We proceed now to make a few explicatory remarks on our Lord's account of the difference between the duty of fasting, as

74 Matt. xviii. 21-35.—"The carnal sense, which can never rise to the comprehension of the organic relation of a doctrine, has stopped short at this isolated saying; and, in strict literalness, has regarded the assigned condition of the forgiveness of sins as the only condition at all. It is natural that, by this mode of handling the Scripture, it should swarm with contradictions."—TOLLECK.

75 "The rule of christian ethics, in regard to fasting, is, that it is neither enjoined nor recommended, but only justified as the natural expression of certain states of feeling, analogous to those of the disciples under the sense of separation.
performed by the disciples of the Scribes and Pharisees, and by his disciples, the children of the kingdom.

"Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward."

In speaking of fasting, our Lord makes use of the same sort of language, as he employs in reference to alms and prayer. "When thou dost alms," "when thou prayest," "when ye fast." He does not enjoin these exercises, but he proceeds on the principle, that the children of the kingdom were to perform them. He takes for granted, that they would do alms, pray, and fast.

The first thing to be done here, is to ascertain the true meaning and reference of the word "fast." To fast, means to abstain from food: but as it is plain, that it is a religious duty that our Lord refers to, the word must be understood as expressive of abstinence from food for a religious purpose, and in connection with, and in subservience to, religious exercises.

There is no general injunction, either in the Old or in the New Testament, of abstinence from food, whether partial or total, as connected with, or subsidiary to, religious duties. The only fast of direct divine appointment, was that to be observed by the Jews on the tenth day of the seventh month,—the great day of expiation;" and even with regard to it, we do not find abstinence expressly commanded: if observed, it must have been merely because found subservient to the great purpose of that day, which was mental humiliation on account of sin,—the affliction of the soul.

In the later ages of the Jewish commonwealth, there was a number of other public fasts observed annually, but we have no reason to think they were of direct Divine appointment. The true account of the matter seems to be this: The use of a full, and especially of a luxurious diet, is inconsistent with that clear, calm state of thought and feeling which devotional exercises require. When the mind and the heart are very much engaged with any subject, especially if that subject is of a serious and mournful kind, there is an indisposition to take food; and in that state of mind produced by a deep sense of the evil of sin, and of the supreme importance of things unseen and eternal, to refrain from food seems a natural expression of our sense of our own unworthiness, and the comparative insignificance of all earthly things. These seem the principles on which the practice of fasting is founded, and though, like kneeling or prostration in prayer, not of express Divine appointment, it may be, it has been found, useful as a help to the right performance of those spiritual

from their Master. In such states of the interior life, all outward signs of peace and joy—all participation in social intercourse and enjoyment—are unnatural and repugnant. Luke v. 33."—Neander. Vide Vereneo, iii. Ser. xxiii.

exercises in which, under every dispensation, all really acceptable religion consists.

"Fasting,"—abstinence, either total or partial, from food, seems in all ages of the world to have been connected with seasons of peculiarly solemn devotion. The inhabitants of Nineveh connected fasting with their deprecation of the Divine vengeance, denounced by the prophet Jonah.\(^7\) In circumstances of remarkable danger, the pious kings and prophets of Israel called on the people to engage in fasting as well as in prayer.\(^7\) And indeed so closely associated were the ideas of fasting, and a season for extraordinary prayer,—especially for deliverance from threatened judgments, that the ordinary name for such a season seems to have been, a fast.\(^7\) A season of extraordinary devotion was called a fast, on the same principle, that we describe a very pious man, as much in his closet, often on his knees.

It was the practice of the pious, under the Old Testament dispensation, not only devoutly to observe the public fasts, but to set apart periods of time, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, for extraordinary religious exercises, and with these they seem to have usually connected abstinence, partial or total. David tells us, that he "humbled his soul with fasting." Daniel "set his face to seek the Lord by prayer, and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." Nehemiah "mourned certain days, and fasted." And Anna, the prophetess, "served God with fastings and prayers."\(^7\)

The natural course of things,—the tendency in the depraved mind of man to rest in what is external, and to substitute what was originally the means or the sign, for the end and the thing signified,—manifested itself with regard to fasting, and in the days of our Lord, a great part of the religion of the Jews, especially of the Pharisees, seems to have consisted in literal abstinence, total or partial. The Pharisees fasted often; "I fast," says the Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray, "I fast twice a week."

Our Lord did not prohibit fasting as a means or an expression of religion. Whatever he says on the subject is rather favorable to the practice. In the passage before us, he takes for granted that his disciples would fast. Elsewhere he defends his disciples for not fasting while he was with them; but says that after his departure, they would fast; and he mentions fasting along with prayer, to describe that extraordinary devotion which was the appointed means of obtaining that faith which was necessary to cast out demons of the most malignant kind.\(^8\)

We find our Lord's primitive disciples fasting and praying, or praying with fasting, on occasions peculiarly important and sol-
emn; and the Apostle Paul seems plainly to hint that it was the ordinary and proper practice of Christians in general, occasionally to "give themselves to prayer and fasting," that is, to observe seasons of extraordinary devotion, and to use abstinence, total or partial, as a subsidiary to the religious exercises engaged in on these occasions."

In the degenerate Christian, as in the degenerate Jewish Church, fasts were put out of their place; and, instead of a means or expression of devotion, were constituted principal parts of religious worship. The fasts appointed by the Roman Catholic Church are very numerous. This abuse has led to an opposite extreme among Protestant Christians, and I apprehend that abstinence from food, as a means or expression of devotion, is exceedingly little known among the professors of Christianity in our country and age.

Fasting, in connection with religion, is plainly entirely instrumental—a means in order to an end. It is a well-known fact that abstinence produces different effects on different constitutions; that a measure of abstinence, which might be useful to one, would be injurious to another; that what might fix attention in one would distract it in another; and, as there is no express statute in the case, "wisdom is profitable to direct;" but, at the same time, I am afraid many of us are blameworthy in having left altogether untried, a means of giving greater intenseness to our attention, and greater fervor to our devotion, which nature seems to dictate; and which has been employed with success, by many of the wisest and best men in all ages, in those seasons of extraordinary religious service in which, it would appear, the saints, both under the New and Old Testament dispensations, engaged. Indeed, I am afraid these seasons are themselves much more unfrequent than they might be. It appears to me that fasting, in our Lord's use of the term, is just equal to observing a season of extraordinary devotion with which abstinence from food was connected as at once the means and the expression of devotion.

The fasts referred to are not the public fasts, just as the prayers referred to are not the public prayers. The fasts referred to are seasons of extraordinary devotion which the individual observes for his own spiritual improvement. Having shown his disciples how, in the ordinary exercises of devotion, they should exceed the Pharisees, he proceeds to show how they should exceed them in their extraordinary exercises of devotion.

And, you will observe, he does not say that their fasts are to be more frequent or more rigid than those of the Pharisees; but he does say, they are not to have that character of ostentation which belonged to the fasts of the Pharisees. In fasting, as in prayer, they are to seek, not man's applause, but God's approbation; and, in the manner in which they conduct their extraordinary, as well as their ordinary devotions, they are to show this.

83 Acts xiii. 2. 3. xiv. 23. 1 Cor. vii. 5.
We are now ready to enter on the exposition of our Lord's words; and, after these preliminary remarks, we will not require to devote much time to their exposition. "When ye fast," that is, 'when ye devote a portion of time to the purpose of extraordinary devotion, especially to the exercises of penitential confession and deprecatory supplication, accompanied by abstinence,' "be not as the hypocrites," that is, 'act not in the manner in which these hypocrites, these stage-players, the Pharisees, behave.' Then he proceeds to give us an account of the manner in which they conducted themselves: "They put on a sad countenance, and disfigured their faces, that they might appear to men to fast." It was the custom of the Jews to begin their fasts as they began their Sabbaths, at sunset, and to continue them to the same time of the following day. During that period, they not only abstained from food, but from bathing, from perfumes, from anointing, from pleasure and recreation of every kind. They generally fasted twice in the week—on Monday and Thursday—from regard to a tradition of the elders, that Moses went up to Sinai to receive the law on the last of these days, and returned on the first of them. They considered these fasts as a great part of their religion, and were anxious to make the most of them in the way of levying a tax of admiration upon their superstitious countrymen.

Instead of keeping at home on these days, and devoting the time to those exercises of which fasting was but the means and the sign, they went abroad, and, like true stage-players, exhibited, in an extravagant degree, all the symptoms of a state of mind which they did not feel, but which they wished others to believe they experienced. They assumed a sad countenance, and disfigured their faces. "They employed all the usual tokens of deep affliction and mental distress." They covered their heads with dust and ashes, veiled their countenances, neglected their dress, and deformed their features, by contracting them into the most gloomy and dejected looks. They studiously exhibited all the external appearances of humiliation, while their hearts were lifted up in spiritual pride;"** and they did this, that they might appear to men to fast—that they might be taken notice of as remarkably religious persons. "Verily," says our Lord, "they have their reward." They have it now in the admiration of men; they will have it by and by in the disapprobation of God.

Our Lord does not here reprove the very natural practice of allowing the countenance to express the sentiments and emotions of the heart. "A sad countenance, if it is expressive of a sad heart, and, in our secret approaches to God, has nothing in it improper. The evil consists in counterfeit sadness and in ostentatious grief."**

Here, as in the case of alms and prayer, our Lord not only shows his disciples how they were not to fast, but also how they were to fast. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head,

---

84 Brewster.

85 Fuller.
and wash thy face;" that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

The general meaning is quite obvious: 'When you devote a portion of time to extraordinary private devotion, let there be nothing in your dress or in your general appearance to indicate this to others. It is not necessary—it may not be proper—in every case, sedulously to conceal the fact that you do observe such seasons; but make no ostentatious display of your performance of this religious duty, which, from its nature, ought to be secret; make no show of your feelings; claim no notice from men at these times of peculiar devotion.' This exhortation certainly does not mean that, on these occasions, men should assume a cheerfulness they do not feel, but that there should be nothing in the dress or in the appearance calculated to attract notice; that there should be no abatement in the ordinary attention to cleanliness of person or propriety of apparel; and that, when having brought the solemn services of the closet to a termination, they go out to society, there should be nothing to tell the world how they have been engaged."

In these solemn services, it is with God you have to do, and not with men. To him let your views be directed; to him let your hearts be unfolded; "weep and make supplication before him." It is his pardon and favor you are soliciting. Such exercises, when engaged in from right principles, are at once salutary to the soul, and acceptable to God. Your Father who seeth in secret—he marks your humiliation of spirit—he accepts of the sacrifice of a broken heart—he "looks to, and he will dwell with, the man of a humble and contrite spirit, who trembles at his word"—he graciously approves now of such a fast, and on the most eventful day of the world's history "he will reward you openly."

From these injunctions of our Lord, we may warrantably draw the conclusions, that Christians while they ought to manifest a habitual seriousness, should carefully avoid everything like affected solemnity of manner; and that "if, even when engaged in those religious services which, from their nature, are most fitted to sadden the countenance, they are to guard against all external display of melancholy, surely much more is it their duty to manifest, in their general deportment, the natural symptoms of a cheerful, contented, happy mind." Few things injure religion more than the moroseness and apparent inward unhappiness of its professors. Wherever the religion of Jesus is understood and believed, it sheds over the mind a peace which passeth all understanding, and gives to the whole manner the air of quiet.

88 The ascetics give a mystical meaning to these words. They explain the anointing the head and washing the face to mean the putting away of sin. With a principle of interpretation like this, "black" may mean "white," and "anything" may mean "anything," "everything," or "nothing."
87 Matt. vi. 17, 18. 99 Browster.
satisfaction and tranquil happiness. We do not call on professing Christians to assume the appearance of a peace and happiness they do not possess; but we do call on them to open their minds to the blessed influence of the truth they profess to believe; and by a natural display of the effects of this influence on their hearts and characters, to "adorn" and recommend "the doctrine of God our Saviour." Oh, it ill becomes a Christian so to yield, it may be, to the power of a constitutional tendency to melancholy, or it may be, to mistaken apprehensions and unbelieving fears, as to give plausibility to the calumny of the infidel and scoffer, that Christianity, after all its boasting, is at least as incapable as anything else to make men happy.

Let us all, my brethren, who in any measure know the truth, make it evident that the truth has not made us slaves, but "made us free," and that when we "keep God's commandments," we then "walk at liberty." Let us show that "in keeping these commandments we have indeed a great reward," that our Saviour's yoke is "an easy yoke, and his burden a light burden," that "his ways are pleasantness and his paths peace," and let the rational happiness, "the rest and the refreshing," we obviously enjoy from our religion, not proclaimed in words, but exhibited in our mien and conduct, form as it were an invitation to all around us, to "come and taste" with us "that God is good." Even while we are silent, let our holy, happy lives, say to the worldly and the wicked around us, "Come with us and we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

V. THE OBJECT OF SUPREME DESIRE TO CHRISTIANS, AND THE MEANS OF OBTAINING IT.

Matthew vi. 19-34.

I have had occasion to remark repeatedly to you, since I began these expository discourses on the "Sermon on the Mount," that the key to it is to be found in the word "repent"—change your mind—that it is an extended illustration of the general exhortation which held so prominent a place in our Lord's preaching, as well as in that of his forerunner. The Jewish people expected in their Messiah a temporal prince, and the happiness which they anticipated under his reign was merely a very high degree of worldly prosperity. They expected to enjoy in abundance riches, and honor, and pleasure. In the passage before us, our Lord informs them that such anticipations were founded in error—that the happiness to be enjoyed under the Messiah is spiritual, not carnal, in its nature—that it is to be found in perfection, not on earth but in heaven—that just views on this subject are of infinite importance—that the attainment of this happiness ought to constitute their chief end—that this end could be gained only by strenuously prosecuting it—and that in making the pursuit of
this happiness their principal employment, there was no ground
for anxiety about things seen and temporal, to those who “seek
first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” for everything
they need shall certainly be given them. Such is the outline of
this interesting paragraph, which commences with the 19th verse,
and reaches to the end of this chapter.

Let us proceed more minutely to examine its various parts:—
"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth
and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and
steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where
neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not
break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will
your heart be also.”

Some have interpreted the command, “Lay not up for yours-
elves treasures on earth,” literally. One class of these inter-
preters understand the command, without any limitation, as a
prohibition of accumulation in any measure, as a declaration that
in no case it is lawful to add to our property, but that our expen-
diture should keep pace with our gains, and that no man should
ever allow himself to become rich.

This, however, does not seem to be its meaning. It has been
very justly said, that they who condemn all accumulations, to be
consistent, “should not stop here, but go on to ‘sell all that they
have and give it to the poor,’ for the one is no less expressly
enjoined than the other. But this were to overturn all distinc-
tions of rich and poor, and all possession of property; which is
as contrary to the whole current of Scripture as inconsistent with
the welfare of human society.”

The other class of interpreters who understand the words
literally, consider our Lord as saying merely, ‘Do not bestow
your principal attention on the accumulation of earthly trea-
ures, but on the attainment of heavenly happiness,’ as when he
says—“Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for the
meat which endureth unto eternal life,” that is, ‘Let not the
attainment of material bread which nourisheth the dying body,
occupy so much of your time and attention, as the attainment of
spiritual food which sustains the never-dying soul. Be not so
anxious to heap up wealth as to secure heaven.’ This idea is, I
have no doubt, contained in the words, but it is contained in
them merely because they are expressive of a much more com-
prehensive sentiment.

The phrase “lay up treasures” in the first injunction, is, I
apprehend, figurative, as it obviously is in the second. To “lay
up treasure in heaven” cannot mean, to make heaven, not earth,
the repository of the wealth we may accumulate. It means
obviously to seek for, and expect, happiness in heaven. In like
manner, to “lay up treasures on earth” is to seek, or expect,
happiness on earth, or in earthly objects, in the wealth, in the
honors, in the pleasures of the present state. It is as if our

91 Fuller.
PART V.] HAPPINESS, AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

Lord had said, 'I know you are looking for happiness on the earth under the Messiah's reign, that you are expecting it in a state of worldly prosperity; but you must "repent," you must change your mind, or you will be miserably disappointed. The happiness which the Messiah brings is spiritual happiness. It is to be enjoyed in perfection not on earth, but in heaven, and it is of a far higher, and more excellent, nature than that earthly happiness which you are making the chief object of affection and pursuit. "Lay not up treasures on earth," do not attempt to build a permanent residence for yourselves here. Do not set your hearts on anything seen and temporal as worth your supreme attention, or capable of satisfying all your wishes.'

The reason our Lord assigns for this injunction is appropriate and forcible: "All things material are liable to change and destruction; they may be wrested from us by the arm of violence, or they may moulder away in our possession."

There is a peculiar beauty and propriety in the figurative language used by our Lord: "Moth and rust corrupt—thieves break through and steal." In oriental countries, and in an age when commerce was comparatively in its infancy, the rich were distinguished from the poor, chiefly by large wardrobes of costly garments, by hordes of the precious metals, either in small pieces for the purpose of exchange, or formed into vessels of curious workmanship, and by richly-stored repositories of grain and fruits, and similar provisions. These treasures were peculiarly liable to be consumed by the moth, and by rust, and in danger of being carried off by the thief or the robber.

The idea intended to be conveyed is, 'All happiness of a worldly kind is uncertain, all earthly enjoyments are at once perishable in themselves, and in danger of being lost by innumerable accidents.' All the possessions and pleasures that are to be found in this life, are unquestionably, in their own nature, liable to decay, and "perish in the using." Even when they are not taken from us, how often do they lose the qualities which originally fixed our regard, and though they do not cease to exist, cease to please! Like faded flowers, they become offensive, instead of pleasant. Even if they were more satisfying and less corruptible than they are, how difficult—in many cases, how impossible—it is to retain them long! "They take to themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle towards heaven;" and though they continue, how easily can the stroke of disease render us totally incapable of enjoying them, and how suddenly may,—how certainly must,—the stroke of death separate us at once and for ever from them, and send us away "naked as we came."

The uncertainty of worldly treasure, in one of its most coveted forms, wealth, is most graphically described by our Lord. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and
there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.\[92]\n
Is it not folly, then, to seek for happiness in earthly things? Let us thankfully receive, let us temperately enjoy, that portion of the good things of this life, which our Father who is in heaven is pleased to bestow on us. But let us not set our affections on them. Let us not seek our happiness in them. Let us not take up with them as if they could be a satisfying portion to our rational immortal natures.

Instead of seeking happiness on earth, let us seek it in heaven. \"Lay up,\" says our Lord, \"treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.\" As to lay up our treasures on earth, is to expect and seek for happiness in earthly things, so to lay up our treasures in heaven, is just to expect and to seek happiness in heavenly things, things unseen and eternal. The happiness of a being like man, spiritual and immortal, and intimately related to God, consists in as perfect a knowledge of God, as complete a conformity to God, as close an intercourse with God, as his capacities admit of, and this maintained throughout the whole eternity of his being. This is man\'s true happiness. This is to be obtained only in heaven. God is in heaven, and \"with him is the fountain of life.\"\[93]\n
This happiness is placed beyond the reach of accident or change. Force cannot wrest it from us; fraud cannot beguile us of it. It forms part of the very nature, intellectual and moral, of him who possesses it, and he can no more lose it, than he can lose himself. The inheritance above is \"incorruptible, and undefiled, and fadeth not away.\"\[94\] There is nothing in its own nature to cause decay, and it is secured from all external violence. It is at once incorruptible and eternal. It is thus suited to the immortal spirit. Instead of weakening and wearying our powers, it exalts and strengthens them. \"The appetite grows with what it feeds on.\" The satisfactions rising out of these celestial enjoyments are not lessened by repetition, nor disturbed by the fear of their coming to an end. They shall endure for ever, and shall not merely never be diminished, but shall grow with the enlarging capacity for excellence and happiness, throughout eternity. Surely, then, our Lord\'s exhortation is a most reasonable one. \‘Seek for happiness, not on earth, but in heaven.\’\n
It is of the utmost importance, that we form a just estimate of what is necessary to true happiness, a just judgment as to where true happiness is to be found, for the whole tenor of our thoughts, and affections, and active pursuits, will be regulated by \[that\n
\[93\] Psal. xxxvi. 9.  
\[94\] 1 Pet. i. 4.
estimate and judgment. "Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." Whatever we consider as our chief good,—that which is at once necessary and sufficient to make us happy,—will, from the very constitution of our nature, employ our principal thoughts, draw forth our most earnest desires, fix our fondest affections, stimulate and guide our most active and persevering pursuits. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, that we form a just judgment where our treasure lies. If we think happiness is to be found in wealth, or in honor, or in power, or in worldly pleasures, whether sensual, intellectual, or social—if we think it is to be found in anything earthly—then our whole character will be "of the earth, earthly;" our thoughts, our affections, our desires, our pursuits, will all correspond with the object of our supreme estimation. And, on the other hand, if we be persuaded happiness is to be found in heaven, and only in heaven, in knowing God, in loving God, in being loved by God, in knowing that we are loved by God, in being like God—thinking along with God, willing along with God, choosing what he chooses, finding enjoyment in what he finds enjoyment, then our whole character will be spiritual and heavenly, our thoughts, and affections, and desires, and pursuits, will correspond in their nature to the object of our supreme esteem. Of so much importance is it to place our treasure right, that is, in other and plainer words, to have right views of what is necessary and sufficient to make such beings as we are truly happy.

This truth our Lord illustrates by a very significant figure. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" 52

The meaning of these words will be plain, if a slight alteration in the rendering—which, I apprehend, is not only warrantable, but necessary—be adopted. "The light of the body is the eye, if then thine eye be sound, the whole body is full of light; but if thine eye be distempered, then thy whole body is full of darkness: and if even the light in thee is darkness, how great will be that darkness!" 53 The eye is not the source of light,—that is, the sun; but it is necessary to the man deriving any advantage from the sun. It is, as it were, the window of the body. If the eye be sound, the whole body is full of light; that is, all the members of the body enjoy the advantages of the light—the hands and the feet know, as it were, what they are about—the man knows what he is doing, and where he is going; but if the eye be distempered,—if the man be blind altogether, or if his eyes be

52 Matt. vi. 22, 23.
53 Αποκόσμιος ἐστίν, κακός ἐστίν, are the opposite of ἐγκαίνιον. Απλοῦς is the translation of the Hebrew, צֶּר, which is also rendered by ἄλογος, a word equivalent often to healthy, whole, and sound. Theophylact expounds ἀπλοῦς by ἐγκαίνιον. Hosted by Google
so distempered as to mistake one object from another, the whole body is full of darkness; his hands and his feet can be of comparatively little use to him; he is in constant hazard of stumbling and falling, and when he thinks himself in perfect safety, he may be in extreme danger. He stretches out his hand to lay hold of something that he accounts valuable, and grasps the empty air; he moves forward, thinking himself on level ground, and he falls over a precipice."

If that which is the light of the body be darkness, if the eye be quenched, or darkened, how great is the darkness thus produced! The only access which light can have to the body is closed, and of course all is darkness. This seems the literal meaning of our Lord's words. Now, for their figurative signification.

Truth is the light of the mind; and the faculty which apprehends truth, howsoever it be denominated, is the eye of the mind. If this mental eye be sound, the whole inner man is full of light. If we have just views, if we have a clear perception, and a firm belief of the truth, then all the powers of our nature will be influenced by this, and perform their various functions properly—our desires, our affections, our active exertions, will be what they ought to be; but if the mental eye be blinded by ignorance, and distempered by error, then the whole inner man will be full of darkness. If we do not know and believe the truth, we cannot be influenced by it. If we believe error, we shall be influenced by it. If we do not know God as the fountain of excellence and happiness, we will not love him, we will not seek after his favor, and image, and fellowship, and enjoyment. If we suppose that the world in any of its forms can make us happy, then our thoughts, and our desires, and our affections, and our pursuits, will all take a wrong direction; and if that which is the light of the mind be darkened, "how great is that darkness!" If we mistake error for truth, the whole of our affections and pursuits must be misplaced and misdirected.

This is most important general truth; but it is brought forward by our Lord with a peculiar reference. It is as if he had said, "True happiness is of a spiritual, not of a carnal nature. It is to be found in perfection, not on earth, but in heaven. A firm conviction of this is absolutely necessary to your thoughts, and affections, and pursuits, taking that direction which is necessary, in order to your obtaining true happiness. You are expecting happiness from the Messiah, but it is worldly happiness you are expecting: while your minds are occupied with this delusion, you can never obtain the happiness which the Messiah has to bestow. Indeed, while your minds are occupied with this delusion, you have no proper notion of its nature, and all the

\[\text{p.} \]

"Οταν γὰρ ὁ κυβερνήτης ἐποιήκη χένηται, καὶ ὁ λόχως σκέψθη, καὶ ὁ ἡγομένων αἰχμαλωτὸς γένηται, ποιά λοιπὸν ἐστιν τοις ὑπηρετοῖς ἔλεις?—CHRYSOSTOM. "When the pilot is drowned, and the light extinguished, and the captain taken prisoner, what more hope is there for the crew?"—Quoted by TRUÈC.
PART V.] HAPINESS, AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

doctrine of the kingdom is "foolishness" to you. But, when you come to see plainly that your treasure is in heaven, your heart will soon be there also: as soon as you apprehend the true nature of the happiness which you need, and the Messiah has to bestow, then a flood of light will be poured on every other subject—your affections will go forth towards this happiness, and all the active powers of your nature will exert themselves, according to the appointed method for obtaining it.

A Jew, with his carnal views, could not possibly obtain the happiness which the Messiah came to bestow. He must "repent," he must change his mind, he must be "born again," in order to his "seeing," in order to his "entering into the kingdom of God." And the same thing is true still. While men labor under the notion, that happiness is to be found in "things seen and temporal," everything in Christianity must be confusion and darkness to them. Its doctrines must appear uninteresting, unintelligible, and incredible; its precepts hard sayings; its duties burdensome observances; but, let a man be deeply persuaded that his happiness is in God, then the doctrine of the atonement, as the means of restoring him to God's favor, and that of Divine influence, as the means of fitting him for God's fellowship, which were formerly "foolishness," appear to be "the wisdom of God;" and reading the Scriptures, and prayer, and other religious exercises, are attended to, and delighted in, as, in their own nature, fitted for communicating, in some measure, true heavenly happiness even here, and for preparing for the full enjoyment of it hereafter. When the eye becomes sound, the whole body becomes full of light.

I conclude my observations on this subject, with the judicious and forcible remarks of Mr. Scott:—"The words in the text immediately relate to men's practical judgments of earthly and heavenly things. The worldly man mistakes, in his first principle, and therefore all his reasonings and calculations must be erroneous; and the farther he goes the more fatally is he bewildered. But it is equally true in reference to false religion. When that which a man deems extraordinary illumination, whether from philosophy or enthusiasm, is a mere delusion, his very light is thick darkness from the bottomless pit—all his inferences and proceedings lead him farther from God, from truth, and from holiness, and plunge him still deeper into error, prejudices, spiritual pride, and the snare of the prince of darkness."

It is not only necessary that the mind be enlightened in the fact that happiness is of a spiritual nature, and to be found in perfection only in heaven, but the desire and pursuit of this happiness must be supreme, and cannot be conjoined with an equal intensity of desire and pursuit of happiness in things seen and temporal. The impossibility of making both worldly and heavenly happiness the object of supreme affection and pursuit, is the sentiment expressed in the next declaration of our Lord:—"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love
the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 93

There is an obscurity cast on these words, from their seeming to indicate a contrast between loving a master, and holding to him—between hating a master, and despising him. It is difficult to see in what the contrast lies. Some interpreters have endeavored to remove the difficulty by rendering it thus: "Either he will hate the one, and love the other; or, at least, he will hold to the one, and despise the other." But this is not satisfactory. I apprehend, the particle rendered either, and or, is not here disjunctive at all, but, as it often is, interrogative, or affirmative. 99 I think our Lord’s meaning may be given thus: ‘No man can serve two masters; for will he not love the one, and hate the other—will he not cleave to the one, and despise the other?’ or thus: ‘For surely he will love the one, and hate the other—surely he will cleave to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 100

The object of our Lord is plainly to illustrate, by a figure, the impossibility of making, at the same time, earthly and heavenly happiness, the objects of esteem and pursuit:—“No man can serve two masters.” To understand the force of our Lord’s illustration, two things must be observed. First, That the word “serve” does not signify to do an occasional act of obedience, but to be a bond-servant, a slave, the property of his master, and entirely subject to his will: no one can be thus a servant to two masters; and, secondly, That the two masters are plainly presumed to be of different and opposite characters; and, consequently, that course of conduct, which would be accounted service by the one, would not be accounted service by the other.

With these explications, as the meaning of our Lord’s statement is plain, so its truth is indubitable. A man may be a servant to two masters in succession, even although they should be of very different and directly opposite characters. A man may serve two masters of opposite characters—the one in profession, the other in reality. A man may serve two masters unequally—occasionally doing an act of service to the one, while he usually, habitually, serves the other. A man may serve two or more masters, if they are all on one side, all subordinate to one another: a soldier may serve his king, and, at the same time, his commanding officer, and his inferior officers, for, in obeying them, he is obeying his prince; but no man can be at the same time, in reality, habitually the servant of two masters, who are hostile to each other, and whose interests are entirely incompa-

100 Fritzsche, after Erasmus and Beza, gives a somewhat different exegesis, which is plausible:—“Sensus hic est ‘aut enim unum illum speraret, alterum curabit, aut unum illum curabit, et alterum speraret.’ Si et ceterum dicere ‘aut amo O, et odi X, aut amo X, et odi O,’ absurde anteam blateres: ‘Aut amo O et odi X, aut odi X et amo O.’”
ble. In this sense our Lord says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

To serve God, is the same thing as to "lay up treasures in heaven." By a Divine appointment true happiness is to be found only there, and he who has made this appointment, has also ordained certain means, by the use of which man may attain this happiness. He who makes the attainment of this happiness, by these means, the great object of life, is the servant of God: he does the will of God.

To serve mammon, is the same thing as "to lay up treasures on earth." Mammon is a Syriac word, signifying riches or gain. It is seemingly equivalent to the word "world," as it is often employed in the New Testament—"things seen and temporal." These are often personified, and represent a God whom men worship, or a master whom they serve; and their influence over our minds and affections in leading us to seek happiness in them, and to use the appropriate means of obtaining that happiness, is the power of this prince and master, and our yielding to that influence is the service we render him.

The general truth here stated is, "that the course of sentiment and conduct which is necessary, by Divine appointment, to obtain the heavenly happiness, and the course of sentiment and conduct that is necessary to secure what is ordinarily termed earthly happiness, are quite incompatible; and cannot be conjoined, at the same time, in the same individual."

The Jews had some indistinct notions of happiness in a future world, under the Messiah; but their minds were chiefly occupied with dreams of carnal prosperity on the earth; and they thought the expectation of worldly prosperity and future happiness perfectly consistent. But our Lord informs them they are in a mistake—they must "repent"—they must change their minds.

And so it is in every age. There are many men who hope that, while they are seeking their happiness in earthly objects, it may be possible, at the same time, to secure the enjoyment of the heavenly felicity. But, no!—there is no serving, at the same time, two such masters—there is no serving God and Mammon.

There is a possibility of serving them in succession. Indeed, all who serve God, once served Mammon. They once "served divers lusts and pleasures;" but now, "being made free from sin, they are become the servants of righteousness"—the servants of God.

There is a possibility of serving the one in pretence, and the other in reality. Alas! how many call Jehovah Lord, and yet, in reality, worship Mammon; how many professors of Christianity, as to their hearts, are thoroughly worldly—completely

---

1 Jay.

2 "The word occurs frequently in the Targum and among the Rabbins, and also in Syriac authors, and in the Samaritan version. Augustine says, "Lucrum Funie mammon dicitur.""—Tholuck. Vide Clem. Alex. Strom., lib. vii.
secular in all their affections and desires, and schemes and pursuits! Their very religion is worldly. Such persons are, however, not the servants of God. Men may suppose them to be so, though generally even men are not imposed on in such cases. But, however this may be, God is not deceived, and he will not suffer himself to be mocked with impunity.

There is a possibility of a man doing occasionally what is in itself agreeable to the will of God, while habitually he disobeys God in serving Mammon; but such occasional acts are not service—they are not obedience—they are not done because God requires them, nor as God requires them.

There is a possibility of obeying parents, and earthly masters, and lawful magistrates, and obeying God at the same time. In obeying those whom God commands us to obey, we obey himself; but Mammon is not God’s vicegerent. He is the usurper of his throne; and, therefore, cannot be obeyed, without treason against our legitimate sovereign.

The thing is perfectly plain: God says, “Give me thine heart;” and the world says, “Give me thine heart;” and we have but one heart to give. God says, “Give me all thy heart—thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul;” and though the world, or Mammon, often pretends that a share of the heart will satisfy his demands, he well knows that, if he gets a part of the heart, he is sure of the whole of it; and his having, in a single department, the supremacy, totally unfitts the person for being a servant to his divine rival, if I may use the expression.

Indeed, as has been strikingly remarked by a living writer, “Their orders are diametrically opposed. The one commands you to walk by faith, the other to walk by sight; the one to be humble, the other to be proud; the one to set your affections on things above, the other to set them on the things that are on the earth; the one to look at the things unseen and eternal, the other to look at the things seen and temporal; the one to have your conversation in heaven, the other to cleave to the dust; the one to be careful for nothing, the other to be all anxiety; the one to be content with such things as ye have, the other to enlarge your desires as hell; the one to be ready to distribute, the other to withhold; the one to look at the things of others, the other to look only at one’s own things, the one to seek happiness in the Creator, the other to seek happiness in the creature. Is it not plain there is no serving two such masters? ‘If you love the one, you must hate the other; if you cleave to the one, you must despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon.’ To serve Mammon, to lay up treasures on earth, is to make present, sensible, worldly things, the great subjects of our thoughts, the great objects of our affections. To serve God, to lay up treasures in heaven, is just to make things divine and heavenly the great subjects of our thoughts, and the great objects of our affections. The two things are obviously incompatible.
PART V.]

HAPPINESS, AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

The covetous man is an idolater. The friendship of the world is enmity with God; "whosoever will be a friend of the world, must be an enemy of God.""

The words of our Lord, while they distinctly state that the service of the world, and the service of God—the seeking of happiness on earth, and the seeking it in heaven—are quite incompatible, obviously imply, that all must either serve the world or God; all must seek happiness, either on earth or in heaven. Man is not, cannot be, independent; he is not self-sufficient, he must seek for happiness, and seek for it out of himself. Those who will not serve God, must serve mammon. Such persons often think themselves truly free, and regard with contempt the loyal subjects of Jehovah, as a set of mean-spirited slaves; but "while they promise themselves liberty, they are indeed the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he held in bondage." He who is not the subject of humility, must be the vassal of pride; he who is not the servant of meekness, must be the slave of passion.

The following picture of the vile slavery, and the degrading service, in which mammon holds and employs those who will not submit to the divine law of liberty and love, is very striking. May God render it effectual for making some of these miserable vassals feel the weight of their chains, and long for the liberty of God's children. "O ye votaries of the world, think of your privations, and sacrifices, and submissions; think of the numerous and arbitrary laws you have to obey,—the laws of opinion, the laws of custom, the laws of extravagance, the laws of folly. Yes, I sometimes think if religion were to require of me such services, as the world imposes upon its enslaved followers,—if it required me to turn day into night, and deprive me of seasonable repose,—if it required me to embrace indecent and injurious fashions, and to expose at once my modesty and my health,—if it required me to adopt expensive modes of life, which devoured my substance, and involved me in pecuniary disgrace,—if it required me to spend my evenings from home, and to resign domestic enjoyments, in order to rove from one insipid amusement to another,—if it required me to give up all that is easy and simple, and natural, for ceremonies, and visits, and crowds, where all is artificial, and studied, and forced,—if it required me to convert my dwelling into the confusion of a rout, to stoop to the absurdity of a masquerade, to hazard my own life and the life of my fellow-creatures, because I had received an offence, it may be, unintentionally given, and allowed me not the choice of a refusal,—then I should conceive a disgust, then I should sigh for liberty. You tell us our Master requires us to deny ourselves. Does your master require no self-denial? As to self-denial, we are nearly on a level; but here is the difference,—Our Master requires us to deny what is false and vain, yours what is solid and true; ours requires us to deny what would make us miser-
able, yours what would render you happy; ours requires us to
deny the craving of passion and appetite, yours the demands of
reason and of conscience; ours requires us to deny the body for
the sake of the soul, yours to deny the soul for the sake of the
body; ours requires us to give up nothing but what we are the
better for wanting, and for which he will richly recompense us,
yours to part with what will make you poor indeed, for ever and
ever."

To make the attainment of earthly happiness, and of heavenly
happiness at the same time, the objects of supreme esteem, affec-
tion, and pursuit, is in the nature of things impossible. To at-
tempt it, is to attempt to serve at the same time two masters of
different, of opposite characters, and with different, opposite, in-
terests. It is thus not only foolish and wicked to attempt, but it is
impossible to accomplish, the conjining of the service of God, or
laying up treasures in heaven, and the service of mammon, or
laying up treasures on earth.

But if the service of God is to be exclusively our business; if
we are to seek for happiness, not on earth, but in heaven; if the
attainment of this is to be our supreme object,—if everything is
to be subordinated, if everything is to be sacrificed to this,—then
what is to become of us, in reference even to the necessaries of
the present life, without which, we not only cannot exist in com-
fort, but cannot exist at all?

To meet this thought, which was very likely to rise in the
minds of those who, dreaming of carnal happiness under a tem-
poral prince on earth, were now told, that if they would share in
the advantages of the Messiah’s reign, they must seek a spiritual
happiness, to be enjoyed in perfection in heaven, and that to the
attainment of this everything else must be sacrificed, our Lord
adds the striking and beautiful statements which follow:—

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life,
what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body,
what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the
body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow
not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heav-
enly Father feedeth them? Are ye not much better than they?
Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his
stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the
lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they
spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory,
was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe
the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into
the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?
Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat? or What
shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For
after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly
Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But
seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and

*Jay.
all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

The particle "therefore" generally looks backward, and indicates that what follows it is an inference from what has gone before. Understood in this way, its import in the passage before us is—"Since happiness in heaven ought to be the supreme object of your esteem, affection, and pursuit—since it is impossible at one and the same time, to make both earthly and heavenly things the principal subject of our thoughts, and the principal object of our affections—all anxiety, even about what may be termed the necessaries of life, must be at once improper and useless."

In the New Testament, however, the particle here rendered "therefore," sometimes looks forward, and indicates that the reason of what is said is just about to be given. In this case it is equivalent to, "For the reasons I am about to state, you ought not, while devoting yourselves supremely to the attainment of heavenly happiness, to be anxious about the supply of your earthly wants." It is not a matter of much consequence in which of these ways the import of the connective particle be here understood.

Food is necessary to the support of life—clothing, in most climates, is necessary to the comfort of life—and in many climates not only to its comfort, but to its continuance. Our Lord is plainly speaking of the necessaries of the present life, and of the temper which his disciples, who were laying up treasures for themselves in heaven, should cultivate in reference to these necessaries. That temper is briefly described in one word—"Take no thought!" about these things.

The English words, here, do not accurately convey the meaning of the original terms. The necessaries of life are, in ordinary cases, to be obtained either by bodily or mental labor; and in either case, a certain degree of thought must be exercised in reference to them. The simplest mechanical employment cannot be performed without some measure, "taking thought." The not taking thought about the proper means of providing for themselves and their families, is one principal cause of the vice and misery which prevail so extensively among mankind; and it is an important duty, in a Christian, to "provide for his own, especially for those of his own household," and to "provide things honest," honorable, respectable, "in the sight," in the estima-

2 Matt. vi. 25-34.
3 "Μέριμνα must not be confounded with a well-regulated care for τὰ ἐπιτήδεια τοῦ σώματος (James ii. 16), such a care being without μέριμνα."—Tholuck.
4 It is remarkable that the Vulgate, which the English and all the modern European versions all but slavishly follow, very happily translates the word here "solliciti sitis." But, at verse 27, it strangely changes the rendering for "cogitans." The English translators have taken the wrong translation, and kept by it. It is a very just remark of Chrysostom, οὐ ταῦτα ἐστὶ μέριμνα καὶ ἔργασια. Carefulness and diligence are not the same thing.
tion "of all men." It was not our Lord's design to make men thoughtless, in any sense of the word.  

The word translated, "Take no thought," properly signifies, "Be not anxious." 'Be not overwhelmed with perplexing cares, and painful fears. While making the attainment of heavenly happiness your great object, and subordinating everything to this, indulge no unbelieving doubts—nor harassing cares—nor tormenting fears—with regard to the obtaining what is necessary for the present life.' Our Lord does not forbid, here, what his apostles elsewhere enjoin—the use of lawful means to obtain for ourselves, and those who depend on us, the necessaries of life—nor that exercise of thought which is requisite for this purpose; but he does forbid us, while we use these means, or after we have used these means, to be anxious and fearful as to their being effectual for the purpose for which they are intended.

"Be not anxious for your life."—for what is necessary for the support of life, that is, food—"what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink." "Be not anxious for your body."—for what is necessary for the comfort of your body, that is, clothing—"what ye shall put on."

Our Lord's meaning is not—what the words taken by themselves might mean—'Do not allow food and dress to occupy many of your thoughts,' though I may be allowed to remark, by the way, that for any person to do so, is to act a part not only incompatible with genuine Christianity, but unworthy of a rational being. Such conduct is contemptible as well as criminal. But our Lord's meaning is,—'When, in prosecuting your great object—the heavenly happiness—the attainment of the necessaries of life for yourselves and your families may seem to be difficult or even impossible, be not anxious; God will provide for you. He has given you life; He has given you a body; and, while it is his will that you should continue to possess this life, and this body, he can and will take care of them. "Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?"

'He can take care of you. Surely he who gave life can give food; surely he who gave you a body can give you clothing for that body. To give life, is obviously more difficult than to give food; to create a body, is obviously more difficult than to furnish clothing for it. He who has done the greater can do the less.

'But he not only can, he will. To give life, is a far greater favor than to give food; to give a body, than to give clothing. Is not the breath of life a more valuable blessing than the bread of every day? is not the formation of the body a greater favor than a garment for its covering? He who has given the more valuable blessing, will not withhold the less.

'Food is necessary for the prolongation of life—clothing is necessary, in ordinary cases, to the body's health and activity. While God means you to live, he will furnish you with food; while he means your bodies to be employed in his service, he

8 1 Tim. v. 8. Rom. xii. 17.
wilt furnish you with clothing; and when he sees fit that your mortal life should terminate, you will have no more need of food; and when he separates your bodies from your souls, they will no longer have need of clothing.

'"The power of God, as manifested in giving you life and bodies, makes it evident that he can provide you with food and clothing; and his kindness and wisdom, manifested in giving you life and bodies, make it evident that he will provide you with these necessaries, so long as you stand in need of them.'

Our Lord now proceeds to point out, somewhat more in detail, the unreasonableness of anxiety, with respect either to life or to the body, to food or to raiment.

And first, with regard to life or food:—"Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are ye not much better than they?" Nothing can be more beautiful in description, nothing more conclusive in reasoning, than this. Few things are more satisfactory to a reflecting mind, as evidence of the constant superintendence of a Being of infinite power, wisdom, and benignity, over the universe, than the unerring certainty with which the lower animals are directed to their proper food. Destitute of reason,—unprovided with, and to a great extent incapable of, instruction,—they are yet enabled, by what we call their instincts, to provide for their security, and to supply their wants with a foresight, regularity, and perseverance, which, in many cases, shame man's boasted intelligence." To an enlightened mind, these instincts of animals appear just the settled regular way in which God supplies their wants.

The statements of the psalmist are as philosophical as they are pious:—"The eyes of all wait on God, and he giveth them their meat in due season. He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the raven that cry."

It is probable that our Lord borrowed this illustration from what was before the eyes of his audience: 'Look at these birds, now flying in your sight, how active, how healthy, how cheerful they are! How free from care, and fear; and, though incapable of providing for themselves, how well, how surely are they provided for! Your heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not his creatures? shall ye not also care for you? nay, are ye not better, much better than they, and shall he not much more feed you?'

The question, "Are ye not much better than they?" admits of a twofold interpretation. The words taken by themselves, might mean, 'Have ye not greatly the advantage of them? They cannot sow, they cannot reap, they cannot gather into

---

9 Hilary explains the fowls, of the unclean spirits; the lilies, of the good angels; and the grass, of the heathen destined to perdition.

10 Brewer.

11 Psal. civ. 21, 27; cxlv. 15, 16; cxlvii. 9.
barns—you can. If the birds of the air are supported, without any means used by themselves, is it not reasonable to expect, that He who has qualified you for employing suitable means for securing your support, will render the use of these means effectual by his blessing?” This is a good argument, but it does not seem to be our Lord’s.

The question, viewed in its connection, is obviously equivalent to, “You are much better than they: as men, you occupy a far higher place in the scale of being. You are creatures of a nobler order than they, and designed for a higher destiny. You are created in God’s image—you are acknowledged as “his offspring.” He has taught you more than the beasts of the field, and made you “wiser than the fowls of heaven.”” And if we consider our Lord as addressing those who are laying up treasures for themselves in heaven, the argument is still more forcible, as such persons are the objects of his peculiar love; and he has bound himself by promise that they shall want no good thing. Will the God who cares for and feeds these birds, overlook you, and allow you to perish for want of food?”

The 27th verse is an argument against anxiety about our life, drawn from the utter powerlessness of anxiety to prolong life. It does not wear this appearance to an English reader; and, I am sure, the more intelligent among you must often have wondered, in reading this verse, what bearing the statement it seems to contain has on our Lord’s exhortation, which he is enforcing,—“Be not anxious about your life.” With the exception of children, in the very dawn of reason, there are few people anxious about extending their stature; and it is not easy to see, how the incapacity of persons, by anxiety, to increase their height—a thing very little connected with their happiness in any way—is a reason why they should not be anxious about what is absolutely necessary for the continuance of their life. A cubit too is out of proportion; for it is plain that our Lord’s design called for the mention of a very minute increase. He is a tall man who is four cubits high. The addition of a cubit, even to a dwarf, would make him a giant. The truth is, the word rendered “stature,” signifies also “age,” or length of life.” I shall give you an example or two of this use of the word:—“But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him; he shall speak for himself. Therefore said his parents, He is of age, ask him.” “Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.” I have little doubt that this is its meaning here, and that our Lord’s question, rendered literally, is, “Which of you, by your anxiety, can add a cubit to his age, or life?”

“A cubit of time” seems to us a very odd expression, though it

11 John ix. 21, 23. 12 Hebrew. xi. 11.
is to be found in an old Greek poet, to denote a very short space. It is by no means uncommon for us to apply measures of length to time, and to human life particularly. We speak of the span of human life, and of lengthening or shortening that span:—"Behold," says the Psalmist, "thou hast made my days an handbreadth." 16 Human life is often, in the classical poets, represented as a thread spun by the Fates, the cutting of which terminates life.

Our Lord's meaning, then, seems to be, 'Which of you, by anxiety, can add to your life a single hour?' Understood thus, these words contain a strong argument why we should not be anxious about life or food. It serves no purpose; no anxiety of ours can protract life. If we cannot, by all our anxiety, secure that object, for which a supply of food is chiefly desirable—the lengthening out of life—why should we be anxious for that which is valuable, only because it is fitted to gain this object? As long as it is the will of the Most High that you should remain in life, and be possessed of its comforts, he will render your endeavors effectual to provide for your wants. But when the hour comes when he has determined that you shall cease to live, all your anxieties will not protract your life a single moment. Though you had all the means of life in abundance, they would not, in these circumstances, in the slightest degree avail you. 17

Our Lord now goes on, by a similar illustration, to show the uselessness of anxiety about clothing:—"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" 18

Here, as in the former case, our Lord seems to have drawn his illustration from objects which presented themselves to the senses of his audience. Turning their attention to the green earth on which they sat, enamelled with flowers of every hue, he says: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." They neither practise the labors of husbandry, to procure the materials of clothing, nor engage in the processes of art, to form them into raiment, and yet they are clothed in garments of beauty, far surpassing anything which the wardrobe of royalty can display. Solomon—in the estimate of a Jew the most illustrious of sovereigns—Solomon, in all his glory—decked out in purple, and gold, and jewels—was not arrayed like one of these. "If God so clothe" such short-lived, and such comparatively useless vegetables; if God so clothe "the herbage of the field"—for the word rendered "grass" signifies herbage

16 Psal. xxxix. 5.  
17 Tholuck rather thinks the image is borrowed from life conceived as a race-course.—Job ix. 25. 2 Tim. iv. 7. A cubit bears a small proportion to a race-course.  
18 Brewster.  
19 Matt. vi. 25, 28, 30.
THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. [EXP. IV.

generally, including the lilies of the field—the flowers which grow up among the grass; if God so clothe this herbage, "which to-day is" flourishing in all its beauty, and by to-morrow, "cut down," and withered, is employed as fuel—for, in eastern countries, where fuel is scarce, herbage is often employed to heat the ovens and baths—"shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

These words require no explication. From the appellation, "O ye of little faith," it is obvious that our Lord's address was made to those who were in a state of mind like that of Nicodemus, when he came to Jesus by night—persons disposed to admit his divine mission, yet afraid of the consequences of acknowledging this, and delivering themselves entirely up to be guided by him—disposed to lay up treasures in heaven, yet not quite sure about abandoning all hope of the treasures on earth, which they had long so fondly anticipated. It is as if our Lord had said, "Why should you, while seeking the heavenly happiness, be anxious about worldly happiness? You are secured of all you need in this world: he who feeds the birds can, and will, feed you; he who clothes the lilies can, and will, clothe you."

"Therefore take no thought," that is, be not anxious, "saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

In these words, our Lord gives two additional reasons why they should not be thus anxious. Such anxieties were characteristic of the heathen. They had very obscure and incorrect views of the Divine character and government. Some of them believed that all was fixed by fate; others, that all was left to chance. The one considered the gods themselves as subject to fate; the others thought that they took no interest in the concerns of mortals. With such views, how could they trust in these gods? Of a future world, they had no distinct knowledge. This world was everything to them, and it was not wonderful that they should be anxious about obtaining its necessaries and comforts, and making the most of them all. But it is unworthy of a Christian to be distinguished by a mode of thinking and feeling which is emphatically heathenish.

21 "The lily, with us usually white, in the East more frequently red, orange, and yellow, grows there in the open field. The broad and fertile pasture-lands of the plain of Sharon were covered with that flower. It grows wild—it soon withers. The splendor of the dress of the flower is the more striking, the more its existence is precarious. Let the reader only think of the East, where a wind from the south often makes everything fade in twenty-four hours. Horace calls the flower 'breve lilium.'"—CARM. i. 36, 16. Jerome's note on Lam. v. 10, illustrates this passage: "Solebant furni incendi non tantum ramalibus arborum, sed et florisibus, postquam exaruerunt, quemadmodum et palea et lilio."

22 "The leading feature of heathenism, according to Goethe, in his Life of Winkelmann, is 'living for the present;' or, as Chrysostom expresses it—'Τὰ ἐννοιά, αἱ δὲ σάμοι άπαυ άνα τῶν παρών έπιειτ, αἱ δὲ σάμοι τῆς ολοκληρωμένης, ούδέ έννοια τῶν αφετέρων.'—THOLUCK.
The other additional reason is, “Your Father knows that ye have need of these things.” He has made us; he knows our frame; and if we regard him as our Father, who, we know, is able to bestow them, can we imagine that they shall be withheld from us, when he knows that we need them?

“But,”—that is, “instead of being anxious about these things,”—“seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

“The kingdom of God,” is the new spiritual economy. To seek it, is to make the attainment for ourselves and others, of the holy spiritual happiness which it secures to all its genuine subjects, our great object, to lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven. The “righteousness of God,” is obviously neither the justice of the Divine character, nor the Divine method of justification, but the righteousness of the kingdom required by God; that righteousness which far exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. To seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, is to make the attainment of that holy happiness for ourselves and others, which is to be perfected in heaven, and the cultivation of that spiritual religion and morality, which is indisolubly connected with this holy happiness, our great, our principal business, to which everything else is to be subordinated, to which everything else is to be sacrificed.

In doing this, everything really necessary and useful shall be secured for you; “all these things shall be added:” whatever is really good for you, you shall receive. “The Lord is a sun and shield; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Godliness is profitable for all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. All things shall work together for our good.” You shall have food and raiment, of the kind, in the degree, and during the period, which seems meet to your Father in heaven, who knows what is really good for you, who loves you, and who has power to do whatever his wisdom sees to be for your benefit, and his parental affection disposes him to bestow on you. “It is, indeed, quite a possible thing, that one who seeks first the kingdom of God may perish of hunger from want of food, or of cold from want of raiment. In this case, it must just be considered as the appointed manner of his death. He

[24] It is not improbable that δικαιοσύνη, like χάρις and ἀλήθεια, is a general description of the kingdom of God, and that καὶ is exegetical. To seek the kingdom is to seek to promote the reign of God both in ourselves and others. In that case, the sense is, in Fuller’s words, “Take care of God’s interests, and he will take care of yours.”
[25] 1 Kings iii. 11-13.—Solomon had riches and honor “added” to what he sought—“wisdom.” The kingdom is the great thing—all the rest is προσθήκη—supplement “appendix,” as Bengel says, “vita et corporis, v. 25, ae potius regni.”—Luke xii. 32. 1 Tim. vi. 8. Mark x. 30. Origen's paraphrase is good: “Seek the great things—the little things will be added; seek the heavenly things—the earthly will be added.”
must die by some means or other, and his death by hunger or cold would be no more an objection against the care of God over him, than his death in any other way. It is substantially the same thing, whether God take a man out of the world by some disease, or by withdrawing the necessary supports of life; and we have no more cause to be anxious in providing against want, than in guarding against any other cause of death. 379

Our Lord concludes this section of his discourse with these emphatic words:—"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." 380

'Be not anxious about future events. To-morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.' These words are often considered as equivalent to, 'When to-morrow comes, to-morrow's necessities will be provided for. If new wants arise, new supplies will be furnished; if new difficulties occur, new direction will be granted. To-morrow will look after its own concerns; let to-day be devoted to to-day's duty.'

This is excellent sense, but I cannot bring it out of our Lord's words. The two clauses in this verse, according to the Hebrew idiom, express the same general idea. "To-morrow will care for the things of itself."—is equivalent to—"To-morrow will bring along with it its own anxieties." 'Do not then unnecessarily anticipate them. Every day has enough to do with itself; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.' Do not double the burden of to-day, under the idea of lightening the burden of to-morrow. The evils we apprehend may never arrive; but by anticipating them, we suffer as much from them as if they were present: or if they do arrive, by feeling them before they come, we, as it were, suffer them twice, and double our distress. Instead of anticipating future evils, let us perform present duty. Let us not perplex ourselves, especially with thinking about the probable events which may result from our "seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Let us fearlessly obey God, and leave the consequences to him, certain that the path of duty is the path of safety; and that in opposition to all contrary appearances, everything of a worldly kind that is really good for us, will be bestowed on us while thus engaged." Oh, how happy might we be, if we would but avail ourselves of the kind invitation. "Be careful"—be anxious—"for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." How exceeding great and precious is the promise that is connected with this invitation! "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." 380

27 Brewster.
28 Matt. vi. 34. Vide "Howe on Thoughtfulness for the Morrow."
29 Phil. iv. 6, 7.
VI. DETACHED EXHORTATIONS.

Matthew vii. 1-12.

The great leading design of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount is still clearly recognizable. That was to show that his religion was something radically different from what passed for religion among the Jews, and that a man must undergo a thorough change of mind—he must "repent," he must be "born again," he must become "a new creature," if he would "enter into the kingdom of God." The whole frame of his thoughts and affections must be altered. Old things must pass away, and all things must become new. The idea which binds together the miscellaneous and apparently unconnected remarks contained in this section, is—"There is an essential difference, a strong contrast, between the character of a disciple of the Messiah, and the nominal religious character of that age"—between "the righteousness of the kingdom and that of the Scribes and Pharisees."
The Pharisees were the sect which held the highest places in public estimation among the Jews for religion. They were the strictest sect of their religion; and to be a Pharisee, or as strict and exemplary as a Pharisee, was about as high a character as, in the judgment of the great body of the Jewish people, could be given to an individual. But our Lord distinctly states that, unless a man's righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees, he can, by no means, enter into the kingdom of God. Nothing seems to have been more characteristic of the Pharisees than a very high esteem of themselves, and a malignant contempt of others. They "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and contemned others." They were very sharp-sighted to other men's faults, and very dim-sighted, if not altogether blind, to their own; and they took credit to themselves for their severe judgments of others, as if these were evidences of their own piety and zeal. In this respect, as in almost every other, the character of a disciple of Christ must be the exact opposite of that of a disciple of the Scribes. The Pharisee was fond of judging, and rash and severe in judgment; tender to his own faults, and harsh to the failings of others. The Christian, on the contrary, with a far higher standard of judgment, was not to pronounce judgment on the state and character of men without being called to do so; and when called to do so, was to judge candidly, and as favorably as the circumstances would admit, influenced by that charity which "hopeth all things, believeth all things; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"—more disposed to be a reformer of himself than a censor of his neighbors. Such is the conduct which our Lord enjoins and enforces in that portion of the Sermon on the Mount, at which, in the course of our exposition, we have now arrived.

30 Luke xviii. 1
§ 1. With respect to judging others.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."\textsuperscript{31}

It is scarcely necessary to remark that this prohibition, like many others in our Lord’s discourse, is not to be interpreted in its utmost latitude. The capacity of judging, of forming an estimate and opinion, is one of our most valuable faculties, and the right use of it one of our most important duties. "Why do you not of yourselves judge that which is right?" says our Lord. "Judge righteous judgment." If we do not form judgments as to what is true and false, good and evil, how can we embrace the one and avoid the other?

The judgments here referred to obviously respect personal actions and characters; and the command is as plainly addressed to the disciples of Christ as private individuals. It is one of the first duties of civil magistrates to form, and pronounce, and act on, just judgments respecting all matters which come before them for determination; and it is one of the first duties of ecclesiastical rulers to form judgments regarding all who apply for admission to the communion of the church, and, like Paul and Silas, in the case of Lydia, to admit only those whom they "judge to be faithful," or believers; and also to censure and exclude those who disgrace their profession. It cannot be supposed that our Lord here forbids his disciples to form a judgment of the state and character of men from their avowed principles, and their visible conduct; for, in a subsequent part of this chapter, he directs them to judge by this rule.\textsuperscript{32}

We are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;"\textsuperscript{33} but, in order to this, we must exercise judgment as to what are unfruitful works of darkness. We are to "withdraw ourselves from every brother who walks disorderly;"\textsuperscript{34} but, in order to this, we must judge as to what is disorderly walking. We are to "mark them that cause divisions and offences, and avoid them;"\textsuperscript{35} but to do this, we must judge what is calculated to cause division and offence.

When our Lord calls on his disciples not to judge, he calls on them not to be officious, rash, presumptuous, severe, or partial in forming their judgments, nor hasty in declaring them.

We are not to be officious in intermeddling with what we have no concern with—it is a Christian’s duty to "mind his own business."\textsuperscript{36} There are many subjects on which we are not called to have any judgment at all.

We are not to be rash in our judgments. Even when called to judge, we are not to decide till we have carefully examined

\textsuperscript{31} Matt. vii. 1, 2. \textsuperscript{32} Matt. vii. 20. \textsuperscript{33} Eph. v. 11. \\
\textsuperscript{34} 2 Thess. iii. 6. \textsuperscript{35} Rom. xvi. 17. \textsuperscript{36} 1 Thess. iv. 11.
the subject—"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

We are not to be presumptuous in our judgments, pronouncing on things beyond our reach—such as the views and motives of another, and acting as if our conjectures were infallible truths.

We are not to be severe in our judgments. We are surely not, as some people seem to think, bound to believe that an avowed infidel or an open profitee is a good Christian; but we are bound to put the best construction on doubtful actions; and never, without full proof, to trace apparently good actions to bad motives.

We are not to be partial in our judgments; we are not to condemn in one what we approve, or at any rate pass by, in others. We are not to condemn in our neighbor, what we overlook in ourselves.

And as we are not to judge officiously, rashly, presumptuously, severely, or partially, so neither are we to be hasty in proclaiming our judgment. An official judge, whether civil or ecclesiastical, is commonly bound to declare his judgment. But a private individual should, in every case, have a very obvious call before he proclaims an unfavorable judgment. Indeed, I apprehend the command, "Speak evil of no man," absolutely requires us steadily to avoid giving an opinion to a man's disadvantage to any one but to himself, except when duty demands it. To be fond of judging, savors of pride; to be prone to condemnation, savors of malignity. It is very difficult to obtain possession of all the materials that in any case are necessary to form a correct judgment; and to pronounce judgment without this, is to run the hazard, at least, of doing cruel injustice. What I hastily condemn, if I knew all, I might only pity, perhaps approve. To pronounce on motives and principles, is an invasion of His prerogative who searches the heart. In a being so liable to error himself, to condemn with rigor and apparent self-complacency, is unseemly and inhuman; and to be harsh and severe in their judgments of each other, is peculiarly unbecoming in those who must equally stand before the judgment-seat of God, each one to give an account of himself; and all of whom, if strict justice is the only principle attended to, must be condemned in that judgment. Such seems to me the import of our Lord's words "judge not," and so reasonable and right is the prohibition they contain.\(^2\)

Our Lord expresses this prohibition by a most weighty consideration, "Judge not that ye be not judged." It is plain that the word "judge" is here, as in some other passages of the New Testament, equivalent to judge unfavorably—that is, to condemn. In the parallel passage in Luke, "Judge not that ye be

\(^2\) Prov. xviii. 13.

\(^3\) Tit. iii. 2.

\(^4\) "Nolite judicare, sine scientia, sine amore, sine necessitate. Tamen canis pro cane, porcus pro porco est habundus."—Bengel.
not judged," is explained by "Condemn not that ye be not condemned."

Some have supposed that these words, and those that follow in the 2d verse, refer to what a man may expect in the ordinary intercourse of human life. One who is a severe judge of others, is likely to be severely judged by others. He who condemns very generally, is likely to be very generally condemned. But I do not think it at all probable, that in a discourse, one design of which is to show the spiritual character of Christian morality, in contrast with the worldly character of Pharisaic morality, a merely secular motive would be brought so prominently forward. It refers not to the judgments of men, but to the judgments of God; not to the judgments of time, but to the judgments of eternity.

We are not, however, to suppose that the idea is,—"If you are lenient in your judgments of your fellow-men, God will be lenient in his judgments concerning you. If you are severe in your judgments of your fellow-men, He will be severe in his judgments concerning you." Whatever our judgments of each other may be, his judgment of us all will be according to truth. The sentiment seems to be this,—"Beware of wrong judgments, especially false and hasty judgments, of your fellow-men, for all your judgments are to be reviewed, and by these judgments you are yourselves to be then judged." Not that the judgments we form of each other are to be the only, or the principal test by which our character is to be tried and our doom fixed, any more than our words are to be the only test, though it is said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;" but our judgments shall be one of these tests, and our words shall be another. "Take care that your judgments be such as will bear judgment, for if they will not, they must lead to condemnation."

"By what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; by what measure ye mete, it shall be measured out to you again." Your judgments of others shall afford materials for your being judged, and the measure you have dealt to others shall be employed, in part, as the ground of determining what measure should be awarded to you." It is just as if our Lord had said,—"Judging is a serious matter, it brings after it fearfully important consequences." What the apostle James says of teachers, is true of judges:—"Be not many" judges, "knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation," or rather, the severer judgment.

The impropriety of rash and severe judgments, is peculiarly glaring in the case of those who are guilty themselves of the same faults, or greater, than those which they censure in others. Most demonstrably is he inexusable who "judges another, if he himself do the same things." "In judging another he condemns himself." This is very strikingly taught us by our Lord in the

40 Matt. xii. 37. 41 James iii. 1. 42 Rom. ii. 1.
3d, 4th, and 5th verses. "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." 44

Let us first endeavor distinctly to apprehend the emblem, and then inquire into its meaning. Two men are represented as laboring under a disorder in the eye. Each has a disordered eye, but the one is much more severely affected than the other. The respective degree of disorder corresponds with the cause. The one has a mote, 45 or rather a splinter, a small portion of woody matter in the eye; the other has a much larger portion of woody matter, which, when compared with the other, may be termed a "beam," 46 or rafter. The one has a disordered eye; the other has one much more disordered. The sight of the one is slightly impeded; the sight of the other is all but destroyed. He who has the principal obstruction, instead of seeking to get rid of it, employs his almost extinguished vision in peeping into his fellow's eye, and proposes to do, what it would require a very perfect vision to enable a person to do rightly—to extract the small, almost imperceptible, mote which is to be found there. Can anything be more preposterous and absurd? That is the emblem.

Now for its signification: A person is supposed to be characterized by some minor fault, it may be an irritable temper, or a talkative disposition. Another is distinguished by some decidedly immoral habit, intemperance, dishonesty, or falsehood. The last of these sets up to be the censor, and the reformer of the first. Can anything be more absurd than his fixing his attention on his neighbor's infirmity, while he turns away his attention from his own sin? How would the murderer or the thief become the judgment-seat, especially if the pannels be tried for minor offences against mere statute law! How incongruous for Satan, as an angel of light, to commence reproving the world for sin! 47

But the thing is not merely incongruous and absurd. Such reprovers cannot, in ordinary cases, be at all successful. How can the man who is all but blind perform the delicate operation of removing a mote out of his neighbor's eye? To reprove for sin, with effect, requires, on the part of the reprover, that the sarcastic proverb should be inapplicable,—"Physician, heal thyself." 48 A mind under the influence of gross sin, has its spiritual perspicacity obscured, and its spiritual sensibility blunted. Such a person is no fit judge on moral subjects, and is peculiarly unqualified for acting the part of a censor of the minor faults of temper and conduct. His opinions are not likely to be correct;

---

and most people will be disposed to disregard them, just because they are his opinions.

The course for such an individual, if he will reprove, and wishes to do so with success, is perfectly plain. First, let him get free of his intemperance, or dishonesty, or falsehood, and then let him try to cure his neighbor of irritability or loquacity. While he acts otherwise, he proves himself a "hypocrite"—a stage-player—the actor of a fraud. He pretends to be zealous in the extreme for religion and morality, while he is living in the neglect, or in the violation, of its plainest laws. The caustic remonstrance of the apostle Paul, in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, precisely suits such characters, which, alas, are to be found in our days as well as in those of our Lord and his apostles. "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are most excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which has the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?"

"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds."

We must not conclude from this passage, that it is not our duty to reprove sin, of whatever form or aggravation, and to endeavor to rid our neighbors of every moral infirmity. It is our duty "not to suffer sin on our brother, but surely to rebuke him." Even that brother, who has acted so disorderly, as that we are not familiarly to associate with him, we are not to count an enemy, but to admonish as a brother. But we are taught by it that the indulging in any sin unifies us for the discharge of this duty, and that if we would be useful as reprovers, we must endeavor to keep our "conscience void of offence towards God and towards man."

This instruction is peculiarly applicable to ministers. The re-

---

"Ergo tacibus et neminem omnino corripiemus! Corripiamus plané, sed prius nos. Proximum vis corripere: nihil est tibi te ipso propinquus."—Augustin.
marks of Mr. Scott are weighty and powerful. "How unfit must unconverted men be for the ministry, yet how many such enter into that arduous office, and attempt to take motes out of the eyes of others, without considering the beam that is in their own eye! The ministers of Christ must rebuke with all authority. It is peculiarly necessary, therefore, that all who aspire to that office, should cast out the beam out of their eye, before they attempt to pull the mote out of their brother's eye; and all engaged in the work should be very careful not to expose themselves to the retort,—'Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.' It should, however, be observed, that a discernible mote in a man's eye, does not disqualify him from casting out a beam out of another man's eye: Yet many harden themselves in gross sins, or wholly neglect the cautions and reproofs of these ministers, because they see that they also are liable to imperfections."

§ 2. With regard to instruction and reproof.

The 6th verse is one of those passages which are somewhat obscure, not because we cannot perceive their meaning, but because we cannot fix their reference. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." The literal meaning of these words is obvious. "It is an incongruous and foolish thing to give the sacred food of the priests—the flesh which has been sanctified by being laid on the altar of God—to dogs, unclean animals, which, after devouring it, may very probably turn on you and rend you; or to lay pearls, beautiful and precious as they are, before swine, which, totally incapable of estimating their beauty or their value, will trample them under their feet."

Some have supposed that these words have no connection with what goes before, but are a general advice given to the apostles, as teachers, not to obtrude their instructions on those impious persons, who clearly show that the only effect would be to drive them to greater extremities of impious madness and outrageous blasphemy. There can be no doubt that such was the duty of

---

51 Matt. vii. 6.
52 This interpretation goes on the principle that there is here an instance of the figure termed "hysteresis," according to which, of two verbs coupled together, the first relates not, as usual, to the first of the two preceding nouns, but to the second, and the second verb to the first. It is, however, not unnatural to refer both the verbs to the "swine!" for the wild sow is a ferocious animal, and is likely not only to trample a pearl under its feet, but, disappointed in not finding in it something to eat, to turn, and, by a side snatch, wound and rend the unwise giver. The "turning" is picturesque. "Veres obliquant mediant is icatum."—Horat. "Obliquo dente timendus aper."—Ovid. The pearl is mentioned not only for its preciousness, but, as the learned Jesuit Maldonatus remarks, for its resemblance to the acorn on which the sow feeds. A semicolon put after "dogs" brings out the sense.
the apostles, and they acted accordingly:—"But when the Jews saw the multitude, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."  
And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."  
But there is nothing to lead us to think that these words have any exclusive reference to the apostles. They seem naturally connected with what goes before. We are not only to take care that we be qualified for reproving, but that the persons we reprove be such as there is at least some probability of our reproof not being worse than lost on them. There are persons who, like Nabal, are such sons of Belial, that a man cannot speak to them. Warning, reproofs, or counsels, are resented, as if they were injuries and insults. Such men are so enraged at them, that they not only trample them under foot, but they are ready to turn again and tear their friendly reprover. In the case of reproof, "wisdom is profitable to direct," and to show the prophet medium between sinful timidity, and foolish rashness.  
The dog has been considered as the emblem of the profane persecutor, the sower of the impure lover of sensual indulgence. Whatever there may be in this, the general character of the persons referred to is, that they cannot be reproved without the hazard of subjecting both truth, and him who speaks it, to outrage.  
It is plain, from this passage, that there are such persons as are no proper subjects of reproof. It may injure, but it cannot do them good, while they are in their present temper: we may weep for such persons in secret, we may pray for them, we may warn others against them, but we cannot, with advantage to them, and without danger to ourselves, reprove them. Let us, my brethren, cherish another spirit. Let us receive with gratitude the reproof of pious friendship. It is one of the most

53 Acts xiii. 45, 46.  
55 1 Sam. xxv. 17.  
56 Τὸ ἄγιον has been interpreted of church fellowship. Τὸ δὲ ἄγιον was the cry of the deacons in the ancient church, before the communion.  
57 "The witness for the truth must needs be zealous and courageous, but he need not be (he ought not to be) imprudent or indiscreet."—Neander.
certain tests of true friendship. Many, who call themselves our friends, do not love us so well and so wisely as to reprove us, even when we need reproof. The proper temper, when reproof is needed and received, is that expressed by the psalmist:—"Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil." As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold; so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear."  

§ 3. With regard to Prayer, as the means of obtaining Blessings.

The object of our Lord in that beautiful paragraph which follows, is, I apprehend, to show his hearers how the righteousness, without which a man cannot be a subject of the Messiah's kingdom—the righteousness, so far superior to that taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the Pharisees—was to be obtained. If an obedience, so spiritual and so extensive, be necessary in all who would enter into the kingdom of God, can any of the family of frail and depraved man ever become its citizens? "Who is sufficient for these things?" How shall conformity be obtained to that law of the Messiah, which forbids an opprobrious word, a malignant wish, an impure desire, a revengeful thought—which requires a devotion so rational, so spiritual, so unostentatious—which demands the entire surrender of the whole man, obedience the most explicit, submission the most profound? To these questions, which must naturally have arisen in the minds of our Lord's hearers, the answer is to be found in the words before us. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

In order to 'do good things,'—things in conformity to the laws of the Messiah,—we must obtain 'good things,' that is, as it is explained in our Lord's discourse on the same subject, recorded in the eleventh chapter of Luke, we must receive "the Holy Spirit," the enlightening, enlivening, guiding, strengthening, comforting influences of the Holy Spirit, from our heavenly Father; and if we would obtain these good gifts, which are absolutely necessary to the right discharge of our duty as Christians, we must seek them by frequent, fervent, persevering prayer; and, if we do thus seek them, we shall assuredly find them, and in them we shall find the effectual means of being all that the law of the kingdom

Ps. cxli. 5.  
Prov. xxv. 12.  
This is the view of the connection given by Chrysostom and Luther.  
Matt. vii. 7-11.
of God requires us to be—of doing all that the law of the kingdom of God requires us to do. Such, I apprehend, is the general design and meaning of this very interesting passage.

What lies at the foundation of the whole train of thought, is the principle, that the Holy Spirit—that divine influence which, in the economy of salvation, is always represented as exerted on the mind by the Holy Spirit, the divine person who, along with the Father and the Son, exists in the unity of the Godhead; that this divine influence is absolutely necessary, in order to man's yielding obedience to the law of the kingdom of God, and exemplifying that righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Just views on this subject are of the last importance. Man labors under no such inability to obey the spiritual and exceeding broad law of the kingdom of heaven, as can lay any foundation for excusing him from obedience, or for vindicating, or apologising for, his disobedience. No physical faculties different from, or superior to, those possessed by men in their present state, are at all requisite in order to that obedience which the law of the new economy requires. Its first requisition is faith in Christ, or a belief of the testimony which God has given us concerning his Son. To believe this testimony, no other faculties are necessary than to believe any other testimony. The testimony is a plain statement, which any man possessed of reason may understand; and a statement, accompanied by such evidence, that any man, who makes a right use of his reason, must believe.

And all the other requisitions of the law of Christ are equally reasonable, as this primary and fundamental one. There is not one of them that man is unable to comply with, if he were but disposed to comply with it. Examine carefully all the particular injunctions of the law of the kingdom, contained in the preceding part of this discourse on the Mount, and say if there be one of them, that a man can reasonably refuse to obey, on the ground that it is physically impossible; that is, on the ground on which the lame man might justly refuse to obey a command to run a race, or the blind man to read a book, or the dumb man to make an oration. The law of the kingdom is a just law; it requires of men nothing that is impossible—nothing that should be difficult—nothing but what is practicable—nothing but what ought to be easy.

But while this is truth, and not only truth, but most important truth, which ought to be "affirmed constantly," as that which alone affords firm footing for establishing in the conscience a charge of guilt against the man who neglects or refuses to yield obedience to this law, yet it is not less certainly true, and it is of equal importance, that this should be distinctly stated, that man, left to himself, never will yield obedience to the law of the kingdom, never will be what he ought to be, never will do what he ought to do. Human nature, as it now exists, left to the operation of its own propensities and impulses, as called forth by the
objects and events of the present world, is so utterly indisposed to that mode of thinking, and feeling, and acting, prescribed in the law of the kingdom, that it is just as certain as the operation of any physical law, that it will never be conformed to that law. There is nothing to prevent any man, to whom the claims of the new dispensation and its author are presented, from complying with these claims, but his own depravity, his own carnal mind, his own wicked heart; but that depravity, that carnal mind, that wicked heart, will, if not counteracted and overborne by an opposite influence, most certainly prevent him from complying with these claims.

It is this depravity—this depravity alone—which renders such an influence as we are speaking of necessary; and it does render such an influence absolutely necessary. To the question, Can man do any, can man do all, of the things which our Lord here enumerates, as included in the righteousness of the kingdom? the true answer is, He can: who, what hinders him? To the question, Will man, left to himself, do all, or any, of these things, in the manner in which they are required to be done? the answer is, No: he will not, “For his carnal mind is enmity against God;” “his depraved heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” This spiritual, moral weakness or inability, is man’s calamity, but it is also his fault—it is guilt as well as misery. It thus affords no shield from the fearful denunciations of righteous vengeance for wilful transgression; but it does render us absolutely dependent on divine influence, in order to our obtaining that righteousness, without which no man can enter into the kingdom of heaven—that “holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.”

To yield obedience to these commandments, all right and reasonable as they are, we must receive “good things,” “good gifts,” “the Holy Spirit,” from our Father who is in heaven; and this is one of the great characteristic excellences of the new economy, that it is “the ministration of the Spirit” to men. It makes known to us “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” If it includes in it by far the clearest, and the most extensive revelation of the Divine will, as to what men should be and do, it also includes in it the revelation of the efficient means of making them what they should be, and enabling them to do what they should do.

The atoning sacrifice of Christ was intended to open a channel through which this influence might find its way to man, in a manner consistent with the holiness of the Divine character, the honor of the Divine law, the stability of the Divine administration. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,” by becoming “a curse” in our room, “that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,” that is, the promised Spirit, by believing. And while the atonement of Christ thus opens up a way for the communication of that divine influence which is

62 2 Cor. iii. 8. 61 Rom. viii. 2. 64 Gal. iii. 13, 14.
necessary to induce man, in his present state, to yield true, acceptable, obedience to the law of Christ, it forms a part of the new economy that the communication of this influence is usually made in answer to prayer.

From its very nature as divine influence, it can be obtained only from God, and there is an obvious propriety in the arrangement, that he who needs this influence should ask it of Him who has it, and who is always far more ready to bestow it, than we are ever desirous of receiving it. Hence, says our Lord to those who, on hearing his illustrations of that righteousness which so far transcends the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and without which, no man can be a citizen of the kingdom of God, might be disposed to say, “How shall we work this work of God?”—“Your heavenly Father will give good things, he will give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him.” “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.” If you would be citizens of the kingdom of heaven, you must have the righteousness of the kingdom; if you would have the righteousness of the kingdom, you must have the Holy Spirit; if you would have the Holy Spirit, you must ask him from your Father in heaven; and if you ask him from your Father who is in heaven, you shall most assuredly obtain him.

In order to your thus asking this Holy Spirit, whose influence is at once absolutely necessary and abundantly sufficient, to your obtaining the righteousness of the kingdom, do you not see most clearly, that a faith of the truth with regard to the fatherly character of God is essentially requisite—a belief that he is “rich in mercy,” “ready to forgive;” that he is “in Christ reconciling the world to himself”—his Father, and our Father—his God and our God; who has “not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, and who, with him, will assuredly give us all good things,” if we will but give him credit for the kindness which is in his heart, and which he has proved to be there, and show this by asking him, “nothing doubting,” for the blessings which he has promised to bestow? There cannot be acceptable prayer for divine influence, nor, indeed, for any blessing, where this faith of the truth respecting the fatherly character of God is wanting.

But then why should it be wanting in any of us? Has not God given us most satisfactory evidence that he is our Father—our loving, forgiving Father, after all our most unnatural and wicked behavior? and why then should any of us not say, “Abba Father!”

The first communication of divine influence is not in answer to our prayers, but in answer to the prayers of him whom the Father heareth always. The first communication of divine influence is not to faith, and the prayer of faith. It produces faith, and leads to the prayer of faith. But in the economy of
grace, the established order is, and it is plainly founded on the
goal reason of things, on what is true and right, that further communica-
tions of divine influence are granted in answer to believing
prayer,—are communicated to him who, feeling his want comes
to Him who alone can supply it.

The words "ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened to you"—require little explication.
Three different words are employed to designate prayer, "ask,"
"seek," "knock;" and three different corresponding words are
employed to describe the answer of prayer, "ye shall receive,"
"ye shall find," "it shall be opened." This triple representation
obviously teaches us the high importance of the sentiments here
taught, which are these,—that the divine influence necessary in
order to our yielding obedience to the law of Christ, is not to
be expected without prayer; and that by prayer this influence
will most certainly be obtained.

There is something like a climax in the phraseology—"seek,
" seems stronger than "ask," and "knock," than "seek." It is
probable that our Lord means thus to intimate, that to secure
those aids of the Holy Spirit, which are absolutely necessary to
the formation of the christian character, and the performance
of christian duty, our prayers must be frequent, fervent, persever-
ing; we must be "instant in prayer," we must "continue to be
instant in prayer," we must "pray and not faint."

The injunction to frequent, fervent, persevering prayer for the
good gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are at once absolutely
necessary, and completely sufficient, to enable us to yield obed-
dience to the law of the new economy, is enforced by the declara-
tion—"For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh
findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

These works may be considered as a statement of the general
truth—That asking is the natural means to be employed if we
would receive; seeking, if we would find; knocking, if we would
have the door opened. 'In religion, use the means you would
in ordinary life; if you wished for a favor from your father,
would you not ask it?—if you needed something you had lost,
would you not seek for it?—if you wished the door opened,
would you not knock at it? Use your common sense in religion
as in everything else; and if you do, you will abound in prayer.'
This is fitted to meet a common but absurd idea, that prayer is
a meritorious exercise—a work by the performance of which we
are to propitiate God, and secure his favor—instead of being
the natural means of expressing our wants, and having them
supplied. Prayer, or rather saying prayers, with very many who
not unfrequently engage in it, is not at all the means of obtai-

63 Operse quidem, tria ista quid inter se different, exponendum putavi, sed
longe melius ad instantissimam petitionem omnia referuntur.—Tertullian. Ennar.
in Psal. cxviii. (exix.) 48. This is certainly much better exegesis than when
δ 'παρω expounded it thus: "Petite, orando; querita, disputando; pulsate,
rogando; id est interrogando."
ing what they feel they need, and wish to obtain. They have often no feeling that they need, no wish to obtain, the things asked for in the words they utter. They are merely doing something which they have been taught to believe is right, pleasing to God, the neglect of which would interfere with their good opinion of themselves, and the performance of which keeps them on good terms with themselves, and makes their conscience comparatively easy as to their religious duties. What monstrous absurdity—what fearful impiety—is this! and yet this is the religion of a large body of men, who pass, not only with others, but with themselves, for being religious!

Or, the words may be considered as an express promise that such prayers—prayers to our Father in heaven for good gifts, for the Holy Spirit—shall assuredly be answered; as if he had said, ‘Rest assured that, if you use the appropriate means for obtaining the Holy Spirit, you shall not employ them in vain. He that asks, shall receive; he that seeks, shall find; he that knocks, shall have it opened to him.’

From this passage, and a number of similar passages in the New Testament, ill understood, some have deduced the absurd principle, that we may have anything we please from God for the asking, if we but ask it in faith; and, asking in faith, in their estimation, is just working ourselves up to the persuasion, that we shall obtain what we ask. The passage before us teaches us no such absurdity. It teaches us, that if we ask of God, as our Father in heaven, “good things,” that is, “the Holy Spirit,” to enable us to do his will, we shall not be disappointed. The other passages, often quoted in support of such irrational expectations, are equally ill fitted to serve that purpose. Whate\textsuperscript{ever} we ask “in faith,” we are sure to obtain sooner or later; but we can ask nothing “in faith,” without a reference to some Divine promise, in which the blessing we solicit has been pledged to us. To “pray in faith,” is not to pray, expecting that God will give us whatever we may wish or ask, but that he will give us whatever he has promised us. The duty of praying in faith rests on the plain principle that, “if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.”

To encourage his hearers to apply to God for these good gifts of that Holy Spirit, which were at once necessary and sufficient in order to their exemplifying the righteousness of the kingdom, our Lord makes an appeal to their paternal feelings, and reasons from what an earthly father, with all his imperfections and faults, would, or would not do, to what might be expected from our all-perfect and all beneficent Father in heaven:—“Or what man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?”

67 “If contrarium designat: ‘an contrarium accidere solet?’”—Farrar.
68 “It is more picturesque, and equally accurate, to render ἄρτος, a loaf: there is a similarity between a loaf and a stone. On the same principle, ἄρτος, in Matt. iv. 3, should be rendered loaves.”—Campbell.
ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Parental affection, by the wise and kind arrangement of God, is one of the most powerful of all the active principles of the human mind. It is absolutely monstrous for a father not to supply the wants of his children, when he has it in his power: it would be more monstrous still, were he not merely to refuse to comply with their entreaties for what is beneficial and necessary for them, but to give them, in its place, what is useless or noxious. The man who could act in this way, would justly be considered as a disgrace to the species. Even though in many respects evil, though hard-hearted and close-handed in reference to others, fathers are commonly kind to their children. Their being fathers, in ordinary cases, secures kind treatment of their children.

Now, says our Lord, what may not be expected from the infinitely excellent and amiable Divinity towards those, in reference to whom he is pleased to take the appellation of Father?

In knowledge, in wisdom, in kindness, in wealth, in liberality, our heavenly Father infinitely surpasses all earthly fathers, and therefore we may ask him, with the absolute certainty of obtaining our request, that he would give us “good things,” “good gifts,” “the Holy Spirit.” He knows that the Holy Spirit, in his saving influences, is as absolutely necessary for our souls, as food is for our bodies, and he never will, he never can, without denying his fatherly character, refuse this to those who ask him. This is most conclusive reasoning—most persuasive exhortation—well calculated to shame into annihilation the jealousies of guilt, the fears of unbelief: “And is it possible that, after all this, we should ever feel reluctant to draw near to God? Oh, what must be that alienation of heart, which can make light of such a privilege—that guilt and shame, which make it seem almost a duty to stand aloof—and that distrust of God, which gives to our approach before him an appearance of presumption?!”

It is plain, however, that this is an argument which can have no effect on a mind which does not believe the truth with regard to the fatherly character of God. So long as men look on God

69 Matt. vii. 9-11.—We have a specimen—certainly not a favorable, and, taken by itself, not a fair one—of patriotic exegesis, yet one full of serious import to all, in these times of growing admiration of “ancient,” not “primitive” Christianity, in the following passage from Augustine, “facile princeps” of the Latin fathers:—“The ‘fish’ means faith in the ocean billows of the present life; the ‘bread’ the nutritive power of love; the ‘egg’ is believing hope, which anticipates the future.” What a refreshment to turn from these “aniles nuge” to such a pregnant interpretation as that of Bengel—Tois airoian, “ubi vera rogatio, ibi divina replicatio.” See Note I.

70 “This comparison is, in the highest conceivable degree, opposed to all pantheistical and deistical notions of the relations between God and creation.”—Neander.

71 “Though we had no motive or incentive to prayer, except this kind and precious saying, it should be enough of itself.”—Luther.

72 Fuller.
merely as a righteous-displeased Judge, they cannot come to him "in the full assurance of faith." They must believe his own declaration, that he is "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty;" who hath "set forth" his Son "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"—"God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, seeing he hath made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us." As I have already remarked, it is strange, after all that God has said and done, that there should be any doubt on that subject, among those to whom the word of the christian salvation has come. Has he not declared that "He willeth all men to be saved"? Has he not sworn that "He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked"? Has he not glorified his grace, in that he "hath not spared his Son, but delivered him up for us all"? Is he not proclaiming, "Return to me, ye backsliding children, for I have redeemed you"? "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" Is it not strange, that, after all this, we should doubt whether God be our Father? Till we believe this—the love which God has to worthless, self-ruined man—till we know him, as "God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself," our prayers cannot be the prayers of faith, and therefore cannot be acceptable; and the more clearly we perceive, the more firmly we believe, this truth, the more readily shall we go to God for the supply of all our need, and the more abundant evidence shall we have, in our own experience, that he indeed gives liberally, and upbraids not. The reason of our being so destitute of the Holy Spirit, is not to be traced in any degree to the backwardness of God to confer the Holy Spirit, but entirely to our "not asking," or to "our asking amiss." We thus arrive at the point to which, in all our illustrations of christian doctrine and duty, we so often find ourselves brought—the necessity of the faith of the Gospel. The importance of the knowledge and belief of the truth, respecting the character of God, as rich in mercy, ready to forgive—in other words, the faith of the Gospel—cannot be overrated. It lies at the foundation of all acceptable duty, of all true holiness, of all

73 Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. 74 Rom. iii. 25, 26. 75 2 Cor. v. 19.
76 1 Tim. ii. 4. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Rom. viii. 22. Jer. iii. 22.
77 Calvin's words are beautiful:—"Paternus amor vitium (philauria) superat, ut homines sui oblitæ se in filios plus quam liberaliter effundat. Unde autem nisi quia Deus, a quo descendit omnis paternalitas, particular suæ bonitatis eorum cordibus instillat? Quodsi tantum ad beneficentiam valent guttulæ, quid ab ipso mari inexhausuto sperandum est? An restrictus esset Deus, qui hominum corda sic aperit? Intercess tendendum est illud Jesu: 'Etiam mater filios ejus obliviscatur,' Dominum tamen fore simul, ut se Patrem semper exhibeat." 78 James iv. 3.
solid consolation, of all permanent happiness: "Lord, show us the Father;" "Lord, increase our faith."


Interpreters have found some difficulty in apprehending and unfolding the connection of the beautiful practical maxim which follows, with what precedes it in our Lord's discourse. That there is connection, seems plain from the particle rendered "therefore;" but what that connection precisely is, it is not so easy to discover.

Some would connect it with what immediately precedes it, the command to ask, and seek, and knock, under the assurance that if we do so we shall receive, and find, and have it opened to us. The train of thought seems to them to be the following,—All unkind and injurious treatment of our fellow-men, is ultimately to be resolved into inordinate and mistaken self-love, an excessive attachment to worldly good in some form or other, and this has its root in ignorance and distrust of God. If we were seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and, in the faith that all other things would be added, asking, and seeking, and knocking, assured that we shall not ask, and seek, and knock in vain, then we should be freed from the inordinate desire of worldly good, freed from all inclination to covetousness or injustice,—confident of the care of the Lord our Shepherd, we should be anxious about nothing. But when, "like beasts of prey, we set off as it were to forage for ourselves, and learn to grudge at the good of our neighbors, when that seems in any way to interfere with our interest; and make it our great object to secure what we think useful or necessary to ourselves, though it should be at their expense—such conduct is utterly unworthy of those who are the children of our Father in heaven. Since we have One who knows what we need, who can give us what we need, who is disposed to do so, who has promised to do so, let us not conduct ourselves as those who are seeking a portion on earth for themselves, and who therefore scruple not to use the means that seem most likely to secure that for them, however much this may trench on the comforts, and rights, and interests of their fellow-men; but let us show our confidence in our heavenly Father, by treating all our fellow-men with that equity and kindness with which we could wish ourselves to be treated by them."

This is ingenious, but it does not seem to me satisfactory. I am disposed to consider the words before us not so much connected with what immediately precedes them, as with the general scope and purpose of the preceding part of the discourse. I

79 Fuller.
consider them as a farther illustration of the difference of the righteousness of the kingdom from, and its superiority over, the righteousness taught by the Scribes and exemplified by the Pharisees. The word rendered "therefore," 50 does not by any means necessarily imply that what follows is, strictly speaking, an inference from what goes before. It merely implies connection of some kind; it intimates, in the most general way, coherence of thought, and might be rendered, "whatsoever then ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." 51

The morality taught by the Scribes and exemplified by the Pharisees, seems to have been—"Do to others as they do to you—Love your neighbor, hate your enemy—Love them that love you, do good to them that do good to you—Lend to them from whom you hope to receive again; and as to those who do you injuries, the rule is, An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.' But our Lord, the great Legislator of the kingdom of heaven, gives forth a very different statute:—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." 52

Some excellent men, in their zeal for strict literal interpretation, have, I apprehend, entirely misconceived the meaning of this maxim of our Lord. They have considered him as saying, 'Every man is bound to do to or for another person, whatever he wishes that other person to do to or for him.' This is, no doubt, the literal meaning of the words, strictly interpreted; but the language is plainly what may be called proverbial or apothegmatical language, which is very generally to be interpreted with limitations, not specified, yet obviously understood. To interpret it in the way proposed, is to deprive the maxim of the character of a general rule of conduct towards our neighbor, which it seems obviously intended to bear, and makes it a check on unreasonable expectation, instead of an injunction to equitable and beneficent conduct. Our Lord's design is to say, 'Be kind and just to all,' and to furnish men with an easy method of finding out, in any particular case, what the law of kindness and justice requires;—whereas this mode of interpretation makes him in effect say, 'Take care not to expect too much from your fellow-men, for your obligations will necessarily rise with your expectations.' Besides, the injunction, understood in this strict mode of interpretation, implies the gross absurdity, that if I wish another to do what is sinful, in order to gratify or serve me, I am bound to do what is sinful in order to gratify and serve him. 53

It is obvious that the words are to be interpreted with the

50 ovi.
51 Matt. vii. 12.
52 Neander considers the "ovi here as connecting this verse with verse 5, and that, in it, our Saviour gives a criterion to distinguish true from pharisaistic righteousness."
53 For many of the thoughts in the remaining part of the exposition of this verse, I am indebted to Dr. John Evans' sermon on it, in his "Discourses on the Christian Temper"—one of the best books on christian ethics that we have,
latitude in which proverbial language is usually interpreted. They are to be understood with certain conditions and limitations. What these are, it is by no means difficult to discover. The words are equivalent to a command to do to others whatsoever we could in reason and justice wish them to do to us, on the supposition that our position to each other were reversed—that we were in their place, and they were in ours.

The limitations are plainly of two kinds,—first, such as rise out of the nature of the actions to be performed; and, secondly, such as rise out of the relative situation in which men stand to each other. It does not by any means follow, that I am bound to do, or to abstain from doing, anything to my neighbor, merely because I may wish him to do, or to forbear from doing, the same thing to me. I may wish my neighbor to violate the law of justice, or truth, or chastity, or temperance, to please me; but that is no reason why I should violate any of these laws to please him. I may be very well pleased that my neighbor should not reprove me for sin; but that is no reason why I should not reprove him for sin. My unreasonable and wicked wishes can surely never render conduct, in itself unreasonable and wicked, reasonable and right. It is only whatsoever is reasonable and right, which I wish from another, that I am bound to do to another.

The other limitation is just as easily drawn with distinctness, A father is not bound to do to his children the very same things which he reasonably expects from his children. A master is not bound to do to his servants the very same things which he reasonably expects from his servants. To say this were to confound all the relations of society. But a parent is bound to do to his child, what, if he were a child, he could reasonably expect from his father. A master is bound to do to his servant, what he, if he were a servant, could reasonably expect from his master. The maxim before us is plainly to be understood in the same way as the apostle's injunction to masters. After having stated the obligations of servants, he adds, "And ye masters, do the same things unto them;" that is, not precisely the same actions of cheerful and conscientious obedience, but as they are bound to do their duty to you, you are equally bound to do your duty to them. Such is the meaning of our Lord's maxim—whatsoever you can reasonably expect from another, you are bound to do to another, were he in your place, and you in his.

No precept can be more obviously equitable than this. It is

81 Eph. vi. 9.
82 Gibbon remarks, with a sneer, in reference to this maxim, "I read it in a moral treatise of Isocrates, written four hundred years before the publication of the Gospel—Ἀ πάντων ἐν φρονίμῳ ἁγιάζατε, ταύτα τοις ἄλλοις μη ποιεῖτε." It is finely said by Trench, "This is an old precept, as old as the creation itself, written originally on the heart of man; which, when men, fugitives from themselves, and from the knowledge of their own hearts, had lost the power of reading, Christ came in the flesh to read to them anew."—Exp. of the Sermon on the Mount, pp. 143, 144.
just requiring a man to act in every case according to what is reasonable and right. It is founded on the principle, that all are equally bound to regulate themselves by the dictates of sound reason and the law of God; and that, of course, whatever would be the duty of any one, in particular circumstances, to us, must be our duty to him, if he were in our circumstances, and we in his. The law of God—the reason of things—is immutable. Duty remains the same, though the individuals be different. Our changing places with our neighbor cannot alter the eternal obligations of truth and justice—cannot make that evil which before was good—cannot make that wrong which before was right—cannot destroy, cannot even lessen, the obligations of what was duty. The thing is so plain, that, in illustrating it, I feel as if I were holding up a taper to enable you to see the sun.

The words of our Lord are not only a general summary of our duty to our neighbors, but they are a rule admirably fitted for enabling us, in particular cases, to discover and to perform this duty. The rule is this: Suppose yourself in the case of an individual, and then ask yourself what you would or might reasonably expect from him, were he to bear the same relation to you that you do to him. This is a rule easily understood, easily remembered, easily applied. The person of the most ordinary faculties and education can turn this rule to use, if he is but disposed. He has but to consult his own convictions and feelings:—How should I desire to be treated, if I were in the situation of this individual? What should I think my claims on an individual in my situation? It may be applied even on a sudden emergency, when we have no time nor opportunity for much consideration—when we are required immediately to act. It may well be said of this law, "It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off: it is very near thee; it is in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

This rule has this great advantage: it shows both what we should do, and what we should not do. It holds both negatively and positively. Though it wears only the positive form in the passage before us, we are as much bound not to do others, what we would not have others to do to us; as to do to them what we would have them to do to us. To neglect to do what we would expect from others, is equally wrong in nature, though it may not be equally wrong in degree, as to do to them what we would not wish them to do to us.

As this rule is well fitted to be a universal directory, it may serve a good purpose to go a little into detail here. In the ordinary intercourse of life, our conduct ought to be regulated by this maxim. We ought to treat others with the same respect, courtesy, and kindness, as we would wish to be treated by them. We must not subject others to those slights and neglects, which, were we in their circumstances, and they in ours, we should feel to be undeserved and unpleasant. How much is the happiness

86 Brewster. 87 Deut. xxx. 11-14.
of domestic life, and of general society, embittered by forgetting to apply this rule, even when none of the more obvious requisitions of truth, or equity, or even love, are violated? What a happy world would it be, if this were the great regulating principle of social intercourse!

In the management of the business of life, we cannot have a better rule. It would lead to the most exact justice in all our dealings. There would be no dishonest debtors, no hard-hearted creditors. The light weight, the scanty measure, the adulterated commodity, would be unknown. The rich would not take advantage of the necessities of the poor, nor the poor impose on the ignorance or good nature of the rich. What a vast number of practices, which obtain in commerce, and which, from their commonness, have ceased to be considered as improper, when touched as by the Ithuriel spear of this maxim, would stand forth in all their moral deformity and loathsomeness!

It is not only fitted to guide us in matters of strict right, but also in claims made on our compassion and assistance. It would prevent the poor man from becoming, without absolute necessity, a burden on his wealthier neighbors, and it would prevent the wealthy from hardening his heart, and shutting his hand against his poor brother.

It is well calculated to show us our duty with regard to the reputation of our neighbors. It would not only prevent all malignant and false statements, but it would make men take heed how they take up and circulate a bad report respecting a neighbor. It would put down all busy intermeddling in matters which do not concern us, all speaking evil of another, even when he deserves to be spoken evil of, unless duty plainly calls on us to make the disclosure.

In the ordinary relations of life, this rule may be of the greatest use. Were husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, often applying this rule, how full of peace and happiness would be the domestic scene! Husbands would love their wives, and wives love their husbands. Parents would not provoke their children to wrath, and children would not be disrespectful and disobedient. Masters would give to their servants the things which are just and equal, and servants would identify their masters' interests with their own. Governors would never be tyrannical, and subjects never turbulent.

I shall mention only one other case in which this rule, if honestly applied, would lead to the happiest results: I refer to differences in religious opinions. Had this principle been acted upon, persecution in all its forms would have been unknown. For where is the man who thinks that it would be right to punish him for his conscientious convictions, or for that conduct which is the necessary result of them? Religious controversies must be agitated so long as men differ in their views, and feel that truth is valuable; but they would wear a very different aspect from what they do, were those who engage in them to act according to
this golden rule. Imputation of unworthy motives, opprobrious language, personal abuse, malignant insinuations, with all the other poisoned weapons, with which the armory of polemic discussion is so abundantly furnished, would be thrown aside for ever; and clear statement and fair argument take their place.

It is a peculiar excellence of this rule of our Lord, that it not only shows us our duty, but its obvious tendency is to persuade us to perform it. It brings duty before the mind in a peculiarly inviting form. It not only enlightens the mind, but inclines the heart. Self-love is the great obstacle in the way of our doing our duty to our neighbor. Our Lord makes even self-love become, as it were, the hand-maid of justice and charity. Having led us to change places with our neighbor, to feel what are our rights, and how unreasonable it would be to withhold them, he then says, ‘These are his rights, and will you be the unreasonable person to deprive him of them?’ We are made, as it were, to declare what is our neighbor’s due, when we suppose we are only considering what was our own; and we cannot, without the shame of conscious inconsistency, refuse to him what we clearly see, were we in his place, we should account it unreasonable and unjust to be deprived of.

Our Lord enforces this comprehensive precept by the declaration,—“For this is the law and the prophets.” “The law” here, is the Pentateuch,—the five books of Moses. “The prophets,” are the rest of the inspired books of the Old Testament. When our Lord says, “This is the law and the prophets,” he does not mean that the whole information contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, is summed up in this maxim; but he does mean, that all which these divine books teach respecting the duty of man to man, is included in this maxim. Just as the apostle says, that “love is the fulfilling of the law.”

98 He who does to all, in their various relations, that which he could reasonably expect from them, were their situation exchanged, has obviously performed all relative duties.

I think it not improbable, that our Lord meant to convey, too, this idea, ‘This is not the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, but it is the righteousness of Moses and the prophets.’

Let us examine ourselves. Have we conducted ourselves according to this rule,—this most righteous and reasonable rule? Who does so? Is not every one constrained to say, “who can understand my errors?” Does not every one feel how much has been wanting, how much wrong? Were we under no obligations to God at all, or had we strictly discharged them, our shortcomings and wrong-goings, with regard to our neighbor, are enough to condemn us; “every mouth must be stopped and all the world must become guilty before God.” We need pardon. Pardon may be obtained, and the faith of the same truth by which pardon is obtained, is the grand, the only effectual, cure of inordinate selfishness, and means of making man both love

98 Rom. xiii. 10. 89 Rom. iii. 19.
PART VII.] APPLICATION OF THE DISCOURSE. 271

God whom he has not seen, and his brother whom he has seen.

Let all who habitually neglect or violate this law recollect, that whatever be their profession, they are not Christians. Even now, Christ is saying to them, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" And by and by he will, if they remain in iniquity, say to them before an assembled world, "Depart from me, I never knew you, ye that work iniquity." 90

VII.—APPLICATION OF THE DISCOURSE.

MATTHEW vii. 13-23.

The concluding verses of this chapter may be considered as the applicatory part of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. They are not to be viewed, as they very generally have been, as unconnected advices or statements, but they naturally rise out of the previous part of the discourse. One leading design of that discourse is to show the spiritual nature, and the wide extent, of that obedience which is characteristic of the true subjects of the Messiah, and which is absolutely necessary in order to the enjoyment of that state of ultimate blessedness which is provided for them—to show that the righteousness of the kingdom far exceeds "the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees."

To Jews, who expected that they all were to be subjects of the Messiah,—that all the descendants of Israel would, as a matter of course, be heirs of the kingdom, and who considered "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees"—that system of religious and moral duty taught by the Scribes, and exemplified by the Pharisees—as fully embracing and answering all the requisitions of the Divine law,—the statements of our Lord must have appeared hard sayings. It was natural for men, with these views, to say within themselves, 'Who then can be saved? This is indeed "a strait gate;" this is indeed "a narrow way."

Our Lord, who often speaks to the thoughts of his audience, meets this state of mind by saying, in effect, 'The gate is strait, the way is narrow; yet it is your wisdom, your interest, as well as your duty, to enter by that strait gate, to walk in that narrow way. There is, indeed, a wide gate, soliciting your entrance,—there is a broad path, inviting your steps to walk in it; and multitudes are passing through that gate, and walking along that way; but that gate is the gate of perdition, that road is the road to hell. The strait gate is the only gate of life; the narrow way is the only way to heaven. Few indeed, comparatively, enter by that gate, and walk in that way. But that is just an additional reason why ye should seek that ye be among that little flock; for to them alone "is it the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom."

§ 1. This is the only way of escaping perdition, and securing salvation.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."91 These words consist of an exhortation, "Enter in at the strait gate,"—enforced by two considerations. "Enter in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction." "Enter in at the strait gate, for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life:" that is, 'Enter in at the strait gate, for the wide gate, through which so many enter, leads to destruction. Enter in at the strait gate, through which so few pass, for it alone leads to life."92

To "enter in at the strait gate," is to embrace those views of truth, and duty, and happiness, which our Lord unfolds, and of which we have an admirable specimen in this discourse; and to walk in the narrow way, is habitually to regulate our temper and conduct by these views. To embrace these views, is represented as entering through a strait gate, through which the person with difficulty presses, finding it impossible to take anything along with him, because these views are naturally, in the very highest degree, unpalatable to the human mind and heart, and cannot be embraced without a relinquishment of sinful pleasures, connections, pursuits, and interests—without that sacrifice of former habits of thought and feeling, which our Lord elsewhere represents as a man’s "denying," renouncing, "himself;" and to regulate our temper and conduct habitually by these views, is represented as walking in a narrow encumbered path, because this implies our steadily prosecuting a course of implicit faith in, and obedience to, our Lord and Master, whatever opposition, and whatever temptations, we may meet with.

Our Lord’s exhortation is, 'Embrace these views, however opposite to preconceived opinion—follow this course, however inconsistent with your worldly interest. It is no doubt much easier, much more agreeable, to hold fast fondly-cherished prejudices—to indulge natural propensities—to follow a course which promises to secure for you worldly honor, wealth, and pleasure. This is a wide gate, this is a broad unencumbered way. It is easy to enter on this way, and few obstructions are

91 Matt. vii. 13, 14.—The figure has been thought that of a narrow way, leading through a strait gate to a fortress or palace—eternal life. The similarity of this figure to that in the famous πίναξ of Cebes is striking:—οὐκόν ὁρᾶς θανάτον τινὰ μικρὰν, καὶ ὁδὸν τινὰ πρὸς τὴν θάνατον, ἡς οὐ πολὺ ὑγιέσταται, ἀλλὰ πώς ὄλγοι πορεύονται αὐθή ἐκείνῃ ὡς ὅδον, ἡ ἄγωνα πρὼς τὴν ὑλήθηνα παιδιάριον. Bengel, however, seems right in his remark—"Пίναξ ρητορίτων ὄδος." The gate is the entrance; the way, the prosecution, of a religious course.

92 "The Hebrew repeated his "when we would use and, especially in impassioned diction. See Gesenius, in which are cited as examples:—Isa. vi. 5; i. 29, 30; iii. 1-6; ix. 3-5. Job iii. 24, 25; viii. 9; xi. 15, 16."—Tholuck.
to be expected in prosecuting it. The transition from sin to sin, from occasional transgressions to habitual indulgences, is easy, and in this way you will be in no want of company. The old and the young, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, walk there. It is "the course of the world," in which all men naturally walk, "fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind." But this path, inviting as it may seem, frequented as it is, is indeed ruinous. It "leads to destruction," it terminates in hell. "The end of these things is death." If you are wise, then, "enter not in at this gate, walk not in this way."

The other course, however repulsive to natural inclination, is incomparably the more eligible one. "Enter in at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life." This way of implicit faith and obedience certainly conducts to life, to true, satisfactory, permanent happiness. This is the onward way of well-doing, which leads to "glory, honor, and immortality." The glories and felicities in which it terminates, will far more than compensate for the sacrifices made in entering on it, and for the difficulties met with in prosecuting it.

To heighten the force of the motive, our Lord adds, "Few there be that find it." Comparatively few men are religious. Many neglect religion altogether—others rest in external forms and empty notions—others are deluded into some of those more soothing, flattering, fashionable species of religion, which Satan, transformed into an angel of light, and his servants transformed into ministers of righteousness, propose to them when they are roused to a state of alarm in reference to the interests of their souls. They are deterred by the difficulties of entering through the strait gate, and walking along the narrow way; they are terrified at the idea of being counted precise and singular. They hope to get to heaven at an easier rate, and they do not know that this narrow way has its peculiar supports, and consolations, and joys, that far more than counterbalance its toils, and difficulties, and discouragements."

Stripped of its figurative dress, and expressed in plain language, our Lord's exhortation is—'Be religious, by embracing my doctrine and obeying my law; for irreligion, in all its forms, necessarily ends in everlasting ruin, and vast multitudes in this way perish. Be religious, for religion is at once the only, and the certain, way to everlasting happiness; but ah, how few are there, comparatively, who in this way obtain this happiness!'

These awfully solemn words of our Lord are as applicable to us as they were to those to whom they were originally addressed. The two gates, the two ways, still stand before us,—the one leading to destruction, the other to life. The broad road, with all its endlessly diversified tracks of irreligion and false religion, apparently quite distinct, yet in reality all leading in the same
direction, down to the chambers of eternal death, continues to be crowded by travellers. The narrow path, often beset with snares, often rugged with difficulties, but always onward and upward, continues to be trodden by only a small and despised group of pilgrims. These are the only two paths, and one of them we must choose.

There has been always a very earnest wish—a very eager endeavor—to avoid the necessity of making this choice, by joining the two roads into one, or by forming a third road which should have the recommendations of both,—or, at any rate, by so combining them, as that the traveller may have the comforts of the broad path during his journey, and the safety of the narrow one at its close. Men would fain escape the pains of self-denial here, and of hell hereafter. They would fain have the enjoyments of self-indulgence in time, and of heaven in eternity. They often seem to succeed in deluding themselves, so far as to persuade themselves that they have accomplished this impossibility. But it is a delusion; and, if persisted in, it will prove a fatal delusion. A religion which requires no self-denial, is not the religion of Christ. If the gate be not strait, if the road be not narrow, it is not the gate of life, it is not the road to heaven. In all ages of the world, the way that leadeth to life is narrow. It is not, it cannot be, easy or agreeable to our corrupted nature. It requires attention to find it, self-denial to enter upon it, and labor and resolution to persevere in it.

And in all ages, too, the broad way is the way that leadeth to destruction. A period may come, we trust a period shall come, when the majority of mankind shall be truly religious, but that period has not yet come; and in every past age to think, and feel, and act in religion, along with the multitude, has been the same thing as to think, and feel, and act wrong. The truly religious are, and ever have been, a minority—comparatively a very small minority. That man has great reason to fear he is fatally wrong, who finds nothing in his religious principles and feelings to separate him from the great body of mankind, and who can approve of the pursuits, and partake of the pleasures, of almost all around him. He is "of the world," and continuing to be of it, he must perish with it.

The announcement, "Few there be that find it,"—that is, find life by entering in by the strait gate,—has often been misapprehended. It has been supposed to teach the doctrine, that a very small minority of the human race are to be saved. Our Lord did not see fit to answer the inquiry, "Lord, are there few that shall be saved?" when the question was put to him; but from other passages of Scripture we know that there are to be "nations of the saved," and that they are to form "a multitude whom no man can number." Scripture leads us to a joyful hope respecting all who die in infancy, and in the age of millennial glory the converts to true religion will be very numerous. But in our Lord's time, in our time, in every intervening age, there
PART VII.] APPLICATION OF THE DISCOURSE.

can be no doubt, few comparatively have found life by entering in through the strait gate.

These words have also been supposed to intimate that many who are very anxious to be saved may, notwithstanding, come short of salvation. But if men do not find eternal life, it is because they do not seek it in the way in which God has appointed it to be sought. No man who thus seeks it shall seek it in vain. You will observe that, in the parallel passage in Luke, the persons here spoken of, and who are there represented as seeking to enter in, but not able, are persons who become desirous of eternal life when it is too late—"When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are." "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Few find life, for few seek it. None seek it aright but they who are entering through the strait gate, and walking in the narrow way. None who thus seek it shall come short of it.

§ 2. Caution against false teachers, and the means of discovering them.

Our Lord now proceeds to warn his hearers against those teachers whose doctrine might prevent them from entering in at the strait gate, and walking in the narrow way. "Beware of false prophets." The word "prophet," in its literal etymological signification, denotes one who predicts future events. It is frequently, most frequently perhaps, employed in Scripture to signify an inspired teacher,—one divinely commissioned and qualified to make known the will of God. It sometimes, however, seems used to describe a religious instructor, even though he lays no claim to supernatural qualifications. This, we rather apprehend, is its meaning here. False prophets do not here seem to mean persons making a false pretension to a divine mission, but persons teaching false doctrines in religion. I can scarcely doubt that our Lord directly refers to the Jewish Scribes, who not only would not enter in themselves into the kingdom of the Messiah, but, by their false doctrines, did all in their power to hinder from entering in those who were inclined to do so. The object of their teaching was to prevent men from becoming disciples of Jesus,—to keep them in the broad way, by making them believe it was the way to life,—and to prevent them from entering in through the strait gate, and walking in the narrow way.

They "came in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they were ravening wolves." "They had the appearance and the profession of being humble, harmless, disinterested and devout,—but they were

---

56 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 John iv. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 13.
in reality under the influence of some unworthy principle, actuated by a selfish love of profit or of praise."

Our Lord gives his hearers a mark by which they might know these false prophets—"Ye shall know them by their fruits."

The fruits of the false prophets are commonly considered as referring to their moral dispositions and behavior. This appears to me unduly to restrict the meaning of the phrase, which, I apprehend, refers to their doctrines, as well as to their tempers and actions. "Do not give implicit credit to their professions: examine their doctrines by the test of inspired Scripture; and observe, too, what influence their doctrine has on their own character and conduct." This is the common-sense plan of judging: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" It is the vine from which men gather grapes—it is the fig-tree which alone produces figs. Sound doctrine, and a holy life, are the best proofs that a religious teacher is worthy of the name; and, on the other hand, unsound doctrine, and an unholy life, are sufficient to discredit all pretensions to a claim on our attention, and belief, and obedience: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit."

Every really trustworthy religious teacher teaches sound doctrine, and exemplifies the influence of that doctrine in a holy life. "A corrupt tree bringeth forth corrupt fruit;" an unprincipled, selfish, time-serving, religious teacher, will discover his character in the doctrine he teaches, or in the manner in which he teaches it, and also in the prevailing tenor of his disposition and behavior. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

"Every teacher, who really knows and believes the truth himself, cannot but, in his teaching, declare that truth, and, in his character and conduct, exemplify its influence. And, on the other hand, "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit;" a false teacher cannot but, in his teaching and conduct, exhibit what, to a careful observer, will be found a sufficient proof of his true character. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

"Every religious teacher who does not publish the truth, and exemplify it, shall, sooner or later, be punished by God."

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." It is not by their profession, but by their doctrine, and by their conduct, that you are to judge of the claims which religious teachers have on your attention, faith, and obedience.

These words, as uttered by our Lord, had, no doubt, a peculiar reference to the circumstances of those to whom they were originally addressed; but, like every other part of this admirable discourse, they are replete with important instruction to his followers, in all countries and ages. "As there were false prophets among the people of Israel," so, says the apostle Peter, under the influence of the Spirit of prophecy, "there shall be false teachers among you." In every age of the church, this prediction has been fulfilled. Men, bearing the name of Christian ministers,
"Have brought in damnable heresies; and have not only brought on themselves swift destruction," but have "drawn many after them, in their pernicious ways." It is the duty and the interest of all Christ's followers to be on their guard against these false teachers, and to apply, in every case, the Saviour's rule: "By their fruits shall ye know them." "By good words, and fair speeches, these men have often deceived the hearts of the simple," and men have been made to think themselves safe, while they were walking in the broad way which leads to destruction. The command of our Lord, by his apostle, exactly corresponds to the maxim here laid down:—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Try them by their fruits, by their doctrines:—"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." Try them by their spirit and conduct:—"They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.\textsuperscript{1716}

The rule furnished by our Lord is substantially this: 'Receive no one as a religious teacher, whose doctrine does not harmonize with the declarations of the word of God, however apparently devout and holy he may be; and receive no one as a religious teacher, however rigidly orthodox he may profess to be, who in his temper and behavior is worldly or wicked.'

There is no doubt that there may be difficulties in applying this rule, like all general rules. We may be mistaken, both on the favorable and the unfavorable side; yet, as a general direction for those who sit, not as final judges, but merely for the practical purposes of the present life, it is admirably fitted to answer the end for which it was given.\textsuperscript{17} If a man oppose, in his teaching, the principles of inspired Scripture, he cannot be a teacher of truth; and he can scarcely be reasonably supposed to be leading men to heaven, who is manifestly himself walking in an opposite direction. False teachers endeavor to give their errors the appearance of truth; but the man, whose eye is single, will seldom find it difficult to see through the disguise; and the virtue, and amiableness, by which teachers of error are not unfrequently distinguished, when carefully examined by the touchstone of the Divine word, will be found to consist chiefly of such things as are highly esteemed in the sight of men, and to be connected with the habitual disregard of many duties, and the habitual indulgence in many practices, which, though the world approves of them, are indeed abominable in the sight of God. He who conscientiously applies our Lord's rule, will run very little risk of being imposed on by false teachers.\textsuperscript{1709}

The times in which we live are characterized by a great dis-

\textsuperscript{1716} 1 John iv. 1 2, 3, 5. \textsuperscript{17} Fuller. \textsuperscript{1709} Scott.
position, on the part of many professors of Christianity, to "give heed to seducing spirits," to attend to every one who assumes to himself the character of a Christian teacher, either from the pulpit or the press, if he but bring forward something new or strange. With regard to these self-constituted teachers, it may very justly be said, that whatever is true in their doctrine, is not new; and whatever is new, is not true. The command has seldom been more seasonable: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. Be not tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and cunning craftiness of men, who lie in wait to deceive." And seldom has the wisdom of our Lord's rule been more strikingly exemplified, than in what has occurred, and is occurring, in reference to those men, who, by their strange opinions and wild pretensions, have drawn upon themselves so unenviable a notoriety: "By their fruits shall ye know them."

§ 3. Caution against self-deception.

Our Lord proceeds to caution his disciples against self-deception, and to impress on their mind that nothing short of repentance, proving itself by its appropriate fruits—nothing short of a real change of mind, producing a real change of conduct—would serve the purpose; that a mere acknowledgment of the truth of his doctrine, a mere profession of obedience to his authority, would be utterly profitless in the way of obtaining a portion in the peculiar blessings of the new economy.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

In explaining this passage, the first thing to be done, is to ascertain the meaning of the phrase, "To enter into the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven, as I have often had occasion to remark, is the new order of things introduced by the Messiah. This new order of things may be contemplated as begun in the present state, and perfected in a future state; and the phrase, "kingdom of God," or "of heaven," sometimes has a direct reference to the one, and sometimes to the other, of these two aspects of the same economy. Many, perhaps most, interpreters consider the phrase here, as referring to the last of them, and as an equivalent to the state of celestial blessedness. "Not every one shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," is, in their estimation, just equivalent to, 'Not every one shall get to heaven, and enjoy that state of perfect holy happiness which is reserved for the subjects of the Messiah, in the world to come.' They consider the entrance into the kingdom, and the entrance into life, as the same event; and this event is to take place in "that day" of which our Lord speaks in the verse that immediately follows, which seems plainly to refer to the day of judgment.

1 Matt. vii. 21.
PART VII.] APPLICATION OF THE DISCOURSE.

I am disposed, however, to understand the phrase in what appears to me its ordinary meaning, as equivalent to, participating of the peculiar blessings of Christianity, whether these are enjoyed on earth or in heaven; blessings which, from their very nature, can be enjoyed only by the man who repents, who is converted, who is born again,—and who proves all this, by exhibiting in his temper and conduct, the fruits of this repentance, conversion, and new-birth.

The expression, 'to call a person lord,' is equivalent to 'to acknowledge him as master.' If there be any emphasis in the repetition of the word "lord," it is intended to express, not merely profession, but a decided, open, habitual profession. Our Lord's declaration, then, is, that a profession of embracing his religion, however explicit, public, and often repeated, does not open the way to the enjoyment of the peculiar blessings of his kingdom, unless it is proved to be the result of true repentance, a real change of mind,—by a corresponding course of conduct in doing the will of his Father in heaven.2

The words before us obviously imply, what is very distinctly stated in other parts of Scripture, that a profession of discipleship, an acknowledgment of our submission in mind and heart to Christ Jesus, is absolutely necessary in order to our enjoying the privileges of discipleship. No person who does not call Christ "Lord, Lord," can "enter into the kingdom of God:" no man who is ignorant of His claims, who treats these claims with neglect, who rejects these claims, or who, though he may be all but persuaded that these claims are just, yet from worldly motives does not acknowledge them,—no such person can participate in the peculiar blessings of His disciples, either on earth or in Heaven.

While this important truth is plainly implied in our Lord's words, the truth which they directly teach is, that profession, however necessary in connection with faith and obedience, cannot of itself secure a participation in the peculiar blessings of the new economy. The man who says "Lord, Lord," while he does not "do the will of our Lord's Father," shall not "enter into the kingdom of God."

Many of the Jews, struck by our Lord's miracles, were disposed to become his disciples, while ignorant of, and strongly opposed to, that manifestation of the Divine will respecting the salvation of men, which formed the doctrine and the law of the kingdom of God. To prevent such men from supposing, that their merely acknowledging him as a teacher sent from God, or even as the Messiah, in the sense in which they understood that word, would secure for them the blessings he came to bestow, seems to have been the object of our Lord in making this declaration; and it affords a fine illustration of his determination to take no unfair advantages of men's prejudices,—of that thorough

2 There is a calling Christ, Lord, that is necessarily connected with salvation.
2 Cor. xii. 3. Rom. x. 13.
plain dealing which is so strikingly characteristic of the whole of his transactions with his countrymen.

The declaration, though primarily addressed to his countrymen, is full of important instruction to all, in every country and in every age, where his religion is presented to the examination and reception of men. It is still true, it will always be true, that "not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of his Father who is in heaven," — that some, that many, professors of Christianity, will come short of the enjoyment of the blessings of Christianity.

There are many persons who may with propriety be denominated mere "nominal" Christians. They bear the name of Christ, and that is all. They have been born in a country where Christianity is the prevailing religion; they have received probably some kind of instruction in what are considered as the elements of that religion; they may belong to some religious society bearing the name of a Christian church. If questioned respecting their faith, they readily declare that they are Christians; but that means little more than that they are not Jews, Pagans, Mohammedans, or professed infidels. Such persons often are grossly ignorant of the doctrines of Christianity; they often live in habitual neglect of the institutions of Christianity. They would be greatly puzzled to give an answer to the question, What is it to be a Christian? and, if possible, still more so, to the question, Why do you profess to be a Christian? Surely such persons cannot enter into the kingdom of God. They cannot participate in its spiritual blessings, either on earth or in heaven. The blessings would not be spiritual if these men could enjoy them.

There is another numerous class who may be styled "formal" Christians. They are able to repeat some catechism, and can give something like an intelligent account of the doctrines and the laws of Christ. They profess submission to his authority, and with it, they may be, exemplary regularity, observe all the external acts of worship which characterize his followers; but their religion is just a system of speculative opinions and external observances. They have a form of Christianity, but they know nothing about its power. They have no wish to experience its governing influence on their affections and pursuits, and indeed, very generally view as deluded enthusiasts or canting hypocrites, all who seem to consider an experimental Christianity as the only genuine Christianity. It is equally plain, that these persons shall not enter into the kingdom of God. They do not understand and believe that truth which, when understood and believed, influences the whole nature, and transforms the whole character; and which, by doing so, puts the individual in pos-

3 For this division of those who call Christ "Lord, Lord," I am indebted to Dr. Brewster.
session of the heavenly and spiritual blessings which are in Christ Jesus.

There is a third class included in the general declaration of our Lord, who may be termed "hypocritical" Christians. Like the formal Christian, the hypocritical Christian acknowledges the truth, and observes the ordinances, of Christianity; and, in addition, is usually zealous, even to rancor, in the defence of the one, and exact, even to scrupulosity, in the observance of the other. Not content with a dull formal round of duties, he assumes the appearance of a deep interest in religion, while all the time, his object is to obtain the honors of supposed saintship, or to pacify his conscience while living in the neglect of known duty, and the commission of known sin. This is incomparably the vilest of the three characters I have sketched; and surely it needs no proof nor illustration that such a person, notwithstanding the loudness and frequency of his protestations that Christ Jesus is his Lord, cannot be recognized by him as a genuine disciple, and cannot, while he continues what he is, participate in the privileges of genuine discipleship.

To all who belong to these three classes, it may well be said by our Lord—"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say to you?"

To the mere nominal Christian it may be said,—"Your conduct is utterly unworthy of a rational being; what can be more absurd than to bear a name, of the meaning of which you are ignorant,—to pretend to believe a revelation, of the contents and the evidence of which you are equally ill-informed? If you will not yield that attention to Christianity which is necessary in order to understand and believe it, it would be an act of respect for yourself, and of justice to that system which you degrade by pretending to be its adherent, to renounce the name, which in your case is a mere name.'

To the formal Christian it may be said,—"How inconsistent it is to profess to believe doctrines which, if true, are infinitely important, and yet remain unimpressed by them; how absurd to observe ordinances, and yet be altogether careless about the sentiments of which these acts of worship are intended to be the expression,—the habits of thought and feeling which they are intended to produce and strengthen! How foolish to take up with the husk instead of the grain; the shell instead of the kernel; with a dead carcass instead of a living body!'

To the hypocritical Christian it may be said,—"Your conduct as it is more contemptible, so assuredly it is not less irrational and absurd, than that of your nominal and formal brethren. Know ye not "that all things are naked and opened before Him with whom you have to do," and that few affronts will be more severely punished by him than dishonor done to his omniscience. "Be not deceived, He is not mocked." Instead of being admitted into the kingdom, the hypocrite's portion will be in
“outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

When a person looks, with an observant eye, through what is but too appropriately called the christian world, what vast multitudes appear to arrange themselves under these three classes; and how awfully emphatic do the words of our Lord appear to be, “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven”?

While our Lord thus declares, that a profession of belief in his doctrines, and of submission to his authority, unconnected with subjection of mind and heart to him, manifested in disposition and conduct, will be utterly ineffectual in the way of obtaining for a man a participation in the blessings of the heavenly kingdom, he with equal plainness asserts, that the man whose profession is verified by his behavior, shall be made a partaker of these blessings. “He that doeth the will of my Father in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

The designation is plainly equivalent to, ‘He that not only calls me Lord, but does the will of my Father in heaven.’ The “will of God,” as the Father of our Lord and Saviour, is “that men should be saved through the knowledge of the truth,” and “to do” the will of God, is just to seek for salvation through the knowledge of the truth. It is his will that men, believing the truth respecting Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation through him, should rely entirely on his atonement and grace; and, acknowledging his supreme authority, “walk without fear before God, in all his commandments and ordinances blameless.”

The fundamental part of the will of God is revealed in these words:—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.” When this is complied with, everything else follows. Without it, sinful man cannot in any degree do the will of God. From the time that a sinner, by believing the truth, relies on the Saviour’s atonement, embraces his salvation, and submits to his authority, his habitual employment is to do the will of God. He is far from yielding a perfect obedience to that will, but it is the prevailing bent of his mind, the constant object of his endeavor, to be “perfect and complete in all the will of God;” to have his mind brought into complete accordance with God’s mind, his will into complete accordance with God’s will. The person who, in the faith of the truth, habitually seeks conformity to the will of God, in heart and in life, whose aim it is to make the will of God the rule of his thoughts, and feelings, and actions,—that man, and that man alone, is a true subject of the Messiah; he, and he alone, enjoys the peculiar immunities and privileges of the kingdom of God, both on earth and in heaven.

This awfully interesting truth is presented in a form peculiarly impressive in the words which follow, in which our Lord unfolds the principle according to which the final states of men shall be

*Scott.
fixed, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?" and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

In these words our Lord obviously goes on the principle, that he was the appointed Judge of all,—that, according to his sentence the final state of men was to be fixed. By "that day" we are to understand what is ordinarily termed the day of judgment—"the day in which every man's work shall be made manifest, being tried by fire."

I do not think that we are to consider the words before us as a literal description of what is then to take place. It seems impossible that the persons referred to should continue, during the period of their separate existence in the unseen world, under the delusion that they were so connected with Christ, as to have reason to expect on the judgment-day, that they are to share in the happiness which he is then to bestow on his people. The hope of the nominal, formal, hypocritical professors of Christianity, must perish at death. We are to consider the words just as a striking and picturesque statement of the truth, that multitudes of men, who made a profession of Christianity, and who were even possessed of the supernatural gifts by which the primitive age of that religion was distinguished, and who flattered themselves to the last that they would be saved, shall, in consequence of their not having done the will of Christ's Father in heaven, be shut out from all participation in the happiness of the genuine followers of Christ, and a clear demonstration then given that he never considered them as belonging to that class. Many who have prophesied in his name, who in his name have cast out devils, and done many wonderful works, shall, in the day of judgment, be rejected by him, as persons whom he had never acknowledged as his disciples.

That miraculous gifts did not necessarily infer the true christian character of those who possessed them, is quite evident, and, in itself, does not seem more wonderful than the undoubted fact, that uncommon intellectual endowments are by no means necessarily connected with moral worth. We have no reason to doubt that Judas performed miracles as well as the rest of the apostles.

All who have not done the will of God, though they may have been members of the christian church, though they may have have

5 "Addo: Commentarii et observationes exegeticae ad libros et loca N. T. scripsimus, homilias insignes habuimus," &c.—BENGEL.
6 δαιμονία, demons. There is but one Devil, & δαιμονία, but many demons, δαιμονία.—Vide CAMPBELL'S Diss.
7 Matt. vii. 22, 23. 8 1 Cor. iii. 13.
9 "Hypocrisy here appears, at the same time, in the light of self-delusion. That a bandying of words on the day of judgment is out of the question, must be understood as a matter of course."—OLSHAUSEN.
10 There is no room for Augustine's question, Whether this is not an additional lie!
been ministers in it, though they may have been singularly gifted, and even miraculously endowed, shall, in the day of judgment, be rejected and condemned.

Their rejection and condemnation is described by the Judge saying to them, “Depart from me: I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity.” The word “knew” here is used in a somewhat peculiar sense. In the ordinary sense of the word, our Lord knew them all along. They imposed on others—they imposed, perhaps, on themselves; but they never imposed on him, he was “not deceived,” he was “not mocked.” From the first, “all things were naked and opened before him;”—he searched their hearts, he tried their reins, he knew what was in them. “Knew” is here equivalent to acknowledged, or approved,—a sense of the term of not unfrequent occurrence in Scripture. “The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous,” he approves, and gives tokens of his approval, of their way. “You only have I known of all the nations of the earth,” acknowledged as my peculiar people."12 “I know”—acknowledge—“my sheep, and am known”—acknowledged—“of mine. As the Father knoweth”—acknowledgeth—“me, even so know”—acknowledge—“I the Father."14

It will be made evident, then, that whatever place these persons held among his people, he never recognized them as his; for while “in words they acknowledged him, in works they denied him.” Their being workers of iniquity,—that is, their habitually doing anything inconsistent with the will of God,—has far more weight, as evidence that they did not belong to Christ, than all external privileges, and miracles, and mighty works have, that they did belong to him.

The general truth taught in these words is one of the most awfully impressive in the word of God. Let us allow it to sink into our ears, into our minds, into our hearts. Let us beware of concluding ourselves Christians—let us beware of supposing that the interests of our eternity are secure, because we belong to a christian church, however pure—because we even hold office in it, however high—because our attainments in religious speculative knowledge are extensive, and we can display them so as to secure the good opinion, and even command the admiration, of our fellow church-members. Let us do the will of our Father in heaven. In a firm belief of the truth, let us rely on the Saviour’s atonement, submit to the Saviour’s authority, seek the aid of the Saviour’s Spirit; and while we gladly and gratefully receive eternal life as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, let us, in a “constant continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality.” Oh, let all of us who profess to have “received the Lord Jesus, walk in him;” and, professing to love him, let us “keep his commandments.”

11 The words that are added, Luke xiii. 25, ποῦ ἐστιν ἡτέρο, rendered in our translation, “Whence ye are”—should be given interrogatively, “Whence are ye?”—

12 Psal. 1. 6. 13 Amos iii. 2. 14 John x. 14, 15.
VIII. PERORATION.

Matthew vii. 24-27.

§ 1. General illustration.

These impressive words form the peroration of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. The statement they convey is deeply important, and the language in which it is expressed is remarkable alike for its beauty and its force. The different, the opposite, fates of those who do, and who do not, regulate their characters and their hopes according to the principles contained in this wonderful discourse, are represented under images, calculated to strike universally, but peculiarly fitted to make an impression on the minds of those to whom they were originally presented, as being borrowed from natural phenomena with which they were familiarly acquainted.

In Judea, as in other oriental countries, the rains are periodical. When they descend, they often descend in torrents, and continue to do so, with unabated violence, for a number of days. In consequence of this, the most trifling mountain brook becomes a mighty river—a deluge rushes down with dreadful impetuosity from the high grounds to the plains, converting them into one wide waste of waters. The huts of the inhabitants, generally formed of clay hardened in the sun, are exposed to great danger. They are often literally melted down by the heavy rains, or overturned by the furious gusts of wind; and, when not founded on the solid rock, undermined and swept away by the resistless torrent. In such a country, it is the part of a wise man to take good care that the foundation on which he builds his habitation be solid. He who attends to this precaution, is likely to find the advantage of doing so; and he who neglects this precaution, is likely to pay dear for his folly. Such are the facts to which our Lord refers, and from which he draws an illustration of the wisdom of the man who "hears and does his words," and the folly of him "who hears them, but will not do them." Let us examine that illustration a little more particularly: "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them," I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine,

15 "I enjoyed yesterday a delightful prospect of the whole plain and the surrounding scenery under a glorious sun, with a most serene atmosphere; but, today, I beheld it in the wildest and most terrific grandeur. I was unluckily overtaken by a storm, as if the flood-gates of heaven had been set open, which came on in a moment, and raged with mighty fury, conveying a just idea of the end of all things: during this time, there was a solemn gloom, and darkness spread over the whole land."—RAE WILSON's Travels in the Holy Land, p. 310; quoted by Tholuck.

16 The construction is peculiar. The nominative case seems put absolutely.
and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

The connective particle translated “therefore,” does not necessarily imply, that what follows it is a logical inference from what is previously stated. It very often merely marks transition of thought; but, in the case before us, it seems to import more than this. For, surely, if “Not every one who calls Christ, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he only who does the will of his Father who is in heaven,”—if, to all workers of iniquity, even although they should have “prophesied, and cast out devils, and done many wonderful works,” in the name of Christ, it shall at last be said by our Lord, determining by his judgment the final state of men, “Depart from me; I never knew you,”—then it certainly follows, that he who hears and does our Lord’s sayings, is a wise man, and that he who hears them, and does them not, is a fool. The one secures, the other loses, the salvation of the soul, the happiness of eternity.

The first thing, then, to be done here, is to ascertain what our Lord means by “hearing and doing,” and by “hearing and not doing, his words.” Our Lord obviously refers to the discourse which he was concluding, and of which, I apprehend, as of most of his discourses, we have only an imperfect account; but what he says of these words of his, is equally true of all his words, whether spoken by himself personally, or made known through the medium of his inspired apostles.

To “hear” is often, in the New Testament, used in a very extensive sense, as equivalent to,—to listen, attend, believe, obey. Such is its meaning in phrases like the following:—“This is my beloved Son, hear him.” “They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.” “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” In the case before us, it seems used in a more confined sense. To hear our Lord’s sayings, is just to have them addressed to us, to have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with them.

To “do” our Lord’s sayings, is often interpreted as if it meant merely to perform those actions which our Lord requires. This is, however, very improperly to limit its meaning. To do our Lord’s sayings, is just to conform the whole inner and outward man to these sayings—to form our whole character by them—to fashion our habits of thought, of feeling, and of action, in accordance with them. The man, then, who “hears and does these sayings” of our Lord, is the man who not only has them addressed to him, who not only listens to them, who not only understands their meaning, but who, believing them, learns to think, and feel, and act, according to them: who through these sayings, understood and believed, repents, changes his mind, is “converted,” is radically changed, is “born again,” becomes “a new creature,” being

"transformed by this renewing of his mind." This is the one character.

The other is described as hearing, but not doing, these words of our Lord. Under this description, a variety of characters are included, having all, however, one distinctive mark,—that, while they hear the words of our Lord, they do them not. One class, to whom our Lord's words are addressed, pay no attention to them—they make light of them. Another class listens with some degree of attention, profess to inquire, and, after a very partial inquiry, refuse to believe and obey them. Another class profess to believe his words, and declare their determination to obey them; but while they "call him Lord, Lord, they do not the things which he says" to them. It is not unlikely that our Lord had a special reference to this last class, when he used these words.

All these classes have this in common, that, while they have the means of obtaining acquaintance with our Lord's words, they refuse that subjection of mind, and heart, and conduct to them, to which they are entitled, and without which, from the very nature of the case, saving advantage cannot be derived from them.

Having thus ascertained who they are who hear and do our Lord's sayings, and who they are who hear and do them not, let us inquire into what our Lord says in reference to these two classes of men:—"I will liken the man who hears these sayings of mine, to a wise man," who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." And "I will liken the man who hears these saying of mine, and doeth them not, to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

These words obviously imply this general truth, 'The first class of men, notwithstanding all the trials and dangers to which they may be exposed, shall assuredly obtain final happiness; the second class of men, shall no less assuredly involve themselves in complete and everlasting destruction.' In other words, there is no other way of being saved but by repenting, and being converted,—no "entering into the kingdom of God," without being "born again." Nothing different from, nothing short of, a surrender of the mind and heart, to the authority of Christ Jesus, speaking in his word, can secure salvation. If, on hearing his word, you refuse to attend to it, or reject it as false, or while you profess to consider it as true, you in consequence of not really understanding and believing it, continue strangers to its transforming efficacy, you must perish. If, on hearing his words, you understand and believe them, and yield yourselves up to their influence, you shall assuredly be saved. This is the great general truth which these figurative representations are intended to convey.

21 φρόνυμος. The σοφός has the right end in view, the φρόνυμος chooses also the right means for gaining the right end. Matt. xxv. 2. Luke xvi. 8. Matt. x. 16.

But I apprehend, that in the present case, as in most others, even the minuter parts of the figurative illustrations employed by our Lord are replete with instruction, and it may serve a good purpose to inquire, in reference to both the wise and the foolish builder, What is the foundation? What is the superstructure? What is the trial to which it is exposed? and, What is the result of the trial?

(1.) The wise builder and his fate.

First, then, What is the foundation of "rock" on which the wise builder—that is, "the man who hears and does the sayings of our Lord,"—places the edifice he is about to raise? I apprehend the foundation is just the sayings of our Lord, understood and believed. These sayings are the dictates of eternal truth and righteousness; and the everlasting mountains shall be sooner rooted up than any one of them shall be falsified. This is the foundation on which the wise builder places his edifice; not his own conjectures or reasonings, not the conjectures or reasonings of other men, but "the true and faithful sayings of God."

Now, what is the building which he erects on this foundation? The building, I apprehend, shadows forth either the character which he cultivates, or the hopes he cherishes.

By character I understand the whole frame of a man's sentiments, and affections, and active habits. The wise builder having, by the faith of the truth, found the only sure foundation, erects on it an edifice of thoughts, and feelings, and actions. He is moulded according to "the form of doctrine into which he has been delivered."

The building, in the figurative representation now under consideration, may have a special reference to the hope which the hearer and doer of the sayings of Christ cherishes. That hope is entirely founded on these sayings. He has a "hope of eternal life"—a "good hope through grace"—but that hope rests entirely on what Christ has said to him. It is indeed an essential part of that spiritual character, which we consider as the edifice which the wise builder raises on the rocky foundation.

The next inquiry is, What is the trial to which this building is to be exposed? "The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house."

Some interpreters seem to think that these are emblematical of the afflictions of life, or of the temptations of Satan. I cannot help thinking they are intended to represent the final trial at the general judgment. The whole of the paragraph points the mind to the transactions of "that day." The solstitial rains were the severest trial to which a Jewish house could be exposed, and

---

21 Rom. vi. 17.  
22 2 Tim. i. 18.
they seem to shadow forth the severest trial to which human character and human hopes can be subjected. Sometimes to denote the same idea, the final judgment is represented as a trial by fire. Men's characters and hopes must all undergo an examination before the judgment-seat of God.

This is, I apprehend, the trial; and what will be the result, when the edifice of the wise builder is thus tried? “The house fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.” That spiritual character which was formed under the influence of the sayings of Christ, understood and believed, will meet with the Divine approbation. There will be found much wanting and much wrong, and that will be freely forgiven for Christ's sake; but the frame of character, of thought, feeling, and action, formed by the faith of the truth, will meet the unqualified approbation of God; and the hope founded on these sayings will prove to be a “hope that maketh not ashamed,” a hope which He who is faithful and just will completely fulfil. The building stood firm, for the foundation was firm. The spiritual character of the believer will meet with the approbation of God at last, just because it is in accordance with that revelation of perfect truth and righteousness, which was made by Jesus Christ. The hope of the believer will be realized, just because he hoped for what God, who cannot lie, had promised. Such, I apprehend, is the full import of the figurative representation of the hearer and doer of Christ's sayings, as a wise builder.

(2.) The foolish builder and his fate.

Let us now institute a similar inquiry, in reference to him who hears, but does not do, the sayings of our Lord, and who is represented as a foolish builder. What is his foundation? What is his building? What is the trial it must be exposed to, and what will be the result of that trial?

What is the foundation of the foolish builder? If our general apprehension of the figurative representation be correct—his foundation is whatever is the basis of his character, and the ground of his hopes for eternity. This is not the true and faithful sayings of the Saviour, for though he hears them, he does not conform his mind to them—he does not believe them. His foundation is that sect of false principles, whatever they may be, or wherever they may have been got, which regulate his temper and conduct, and are the basis of his character, the ground of his hopes. These vary in different individuals. In the case of those whom our Lord was addressing, the traditions of the fathers, the doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees, were probably the foundation on which they were building.

The edifice itself is just that character, that mode of thinking, feeling, and acting, which such false principles naturally produce, or those hopes which they naturally inspire. That character has often a great degree of plausibility, and gains in no ordinary measure the esteem and approbation of men. Those hopes are
often very confidently entertained. But the stability of the edifice must be tested.

Both the character and hopes must be subjected to the test of the Divine judgment. Weighed in the balances, they will be found wanting. "That which was highly esteemed among men," will be found to be "abomination in the sight of God," and all the fondly-cherished expectations of happiness will vanish in the darkness of everlasting despair. The house will fall, and dreadful will be its overthrow. No character will stand the Divine judgment, but that which is formed in accordance with the sayings of Christ. No hope will in that day be "gladness," but the hope which these sayings warrant.

From this passage, ill-understood, some false and dangerous conclusions have been drawn. "It appears from this," say some, "that it is by doing, and not by believing, that we are to be saved." They do not observe, that what our Lord contrasts, is not believing and doing, but hearing and doing; nor, that in the doing of Christ's sayings, believing these sayings is necessarily implied; nor, that our Lord is not here discoursing on the ground or mode of justification, but on the principles and procedure of the final judgment.

"It appears from this," say another class, "that it matters but very little what doctrines we believe, if we have a good life." It would not be very easy to show how a man is to live a really good life, if he does not believe true doctrine; and in the passage before us, Christ's sayings, understood and believed, are plainly represented as the only foundation on which a character and conduct pleasing to God can be reared.

The discourse of our Lord produced a strong impression on the minds of those who heard it. The people were astonished at his doctrine.

The word "doctrine" may be considered as descriptive both of the matter and of the manner of his teaching. The people were astonished, both at what he taught, and the mode in which he taught. What he taught bore the impression of truth and importance. Nothing was doubtful, nothing trivial. And his doctrines were perspicuously and energetically expressed. We can have no doubt they were also delivered in a natural, dignified, earnest, and pleasing manner; and besides, they were in many instances attended by the divine energy of his Spirit, and thus secured of their appropriate influence over the mind and heart.

What particularly excited the astonishment of the people, was the contrast between his doctrine, or teaching, and that to which they had been accustomed, the doctrine of the Scribes,—"he taught them" as with authority, and not as the Scribes.²⁵

²² Luke xvi. 15.
²⁴ "Ἡ διδασκαλία αὐτοῖς—periphrasis Hebraica, Græcis etiam familiaris, eunias tamen interdum ea vis inest, ut moram significet et perseverantiam in aliquo re facienda."—Beza.
²⁵ "The Scribes frequently spake truths, but they wanted the ἐξουσία πνευματική."
The teachers among the Jews, having the law and the prophets, might therefore have taught certain and important truth, and had they been themselves influenced by it, must have taught it in a manner somewhat impressive, and ought to have taught it authoritatively as being a revelation from heaven; yet they in fact employed themselves more about the traditions of the fathers, than about the doctrines of Moses and the prophets; and when they made the Scriptures the subject of their discourses, did not dwell on the great principles of religious truth and duty, but on the lesser matters of the law. "The tithing of mint, and anise, and cummin"—the comparative obligation of an oath by the temple, and the gold of the temple—by the altar, and the gift on the altar”—these seem to be a fair specimen of their subjects of teaching. In speaking of these things, they did not speak with authority. In one sense, they spoke with too much authority, for "they taught for doctrines the commandments of men"—they required men to believe what they could give no sufficient reason for their believing. They did not manifest the authority of God, and truth, and duty. They appealed chiefly, if not solely, to the traditions of the elders, and the opinions of the Rabbis.

Our Lord, on the contrary, taught with "authority." They were accustomed to introduce their teaching with, It was said by the ancients: He introduced his with, "But I say unto you,"—"Verily, verily, I say unto you." In all he said, he taught as one who had full authority from God to teach. His whole manner was that of one who spoke in the name of God, and who well knew that what he uttered was eternal truth,—what he enjoined, eternal righteousness.

Let us recollect, my brethren, that to us these words of authority have come, as well as to those to whom they were originally addressed. We are very stupid if we are not astonished at them. But we must not only be astonished at them,—we must believe them if we would be saved by them. To us, they come if possible with more authority, than to those to whom they were originally addressed. He spoke to them on earth. By inducing his apostles, under the influences of his Spirit, to record these doctrines in a permanent revelation of his will, He "speaks to us from heaven." Let us take good "heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto

Their discourses were pictures painted on the air, without being possessed of any essential or life-bestowing power. This the words of Jesus breathed forth; and, by means of them, he laid hold of the hearts of his hearers in their innermost depths; hence, wherever there was dormant in the interior of any person an echo for truth, there this echo was necessarily awakened."—Olahseren.

20 Matt. xxiii. 18.

27 Matt. xv. 9.
us by them that heard him.” "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him speaking on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him speaking from heaven." 798

Let us consider his words as, what they indeed are, "the will of our Creator, the commands of our Sovereign,—the laws of our Judge, the counsels of our Father, the entreaties of our Saviour." 799 Let us turn this wonderful discourse to its appropriate purpose. Let us employ it as an instrument for promoting that "repentance," that "conversion," that entire change of mind and of heart, without which we cannot be saved, and in which so much of salvation consists.

Let us seek the Divine Spirit, that the sentiments which it teaches, and the affections which it breathes, may, through that faith which is of his operation, be so engrafted into our minds and hearts, as to form a part of ourselves; so that we may not be among those who say, "Lord, Lord," but do not the things which he says to them, to whom he will at last say, "Depart from me;" but that, conjoining consistent conduct with open profession, cheerfully doing and suffering the will of our Father in heaven, we may at last receive the transporting invitation, "Come ye blessed of my Father," "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of our Lord." 800

---

**Note A, p. 115.**

"The βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ,—in Matthew always βασιλεία τῶν εὐφαντών,—is again mentioned in the sequel of the sermon on the Mount, at verses 10, 19, 20; vi. 10; vii. 21. To discuss, on all the sides which it presents, an idea so pregnant in meaning as this, calls for a separate work. But as the phrase here requires no very detailed investigation, we content ourselves with stating the leading traits; nor can we refer to any book where the subject is handled in a manner in every respect satisfactory. Fleck has amassed a variety of materials, it is true; but with great proximity, he mixes what is foreign, and is deficient in the talent for combination and arrangement. If C. Gottfried Bauer had executed the whole plan, of which he made a commencement in the essay 'De Causis quibus nititur rectum super ratione Regni Divini in N. T. passim obvia judicium,' something satisfactory might have been expected; at least no modern author who has handled the subject has equally weighed it on all sides. Much excellent matter is also contained in the Treatise of Sartorius, 'Ueber den Zweck Jesu bei Stiftung eines Gottes-Reiches.' Amidst all that the doctrinal works of modern times have said upon the subject, the hints thrown out in Baumgarten Crusius' 'Biblische Theologie' p. 149-157, seem to me to merit particular consideration. For the most:

21 Heb. ii. 1; xii. 25. 22 Brewster. 23 Matt. xxv. 21, 34, 41. 24 Commentationes Theol. ed. Rosenmüller et Maurer, i. p. 2.
part, writers have been taken up with pointing out the connection of the New Testament doctrine with that of the Rabbins, which, however, is, at all events, a task of less consequence, the moment it is conceded that the Saviour connected with the expression different ideas from theirs.

"Two kinds of defects are to be found in the usual treatment of this doctrine. At one time the different sides and allusions of the basileia tou Theou are ranged together as diverse significations of the phrase, without any attempt to show their identity, by discovering the fundamental idea; and, at another, what is still worse, one single aspect of the idea is exclusively seized, and all the rest disregarded. To mention an ancient commentator, the first defect is exemplified in Euthymius, who, upon Matt. iii. 2, after having previously said that Christ himself is here called the basileia ton oφρων, remarks: ἡ basileia oφρων λέγει τὴν πολιτείαν τῶν ἁγίων, ἤν ὁ Χριστός βοήσει τῆς ἐν κοινωνίᾳ τῶν κοινωνίων ἐκτόκων λέγεται δὲ basileia oφρων καὶ ἡ ἀπόλυσις τῶν ἐν σώματος ἐγκαθίσταται. ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πλείονα τὸ ὅντον τῆς basileiaς τῶν oφρων, πολυπληρωσίαν ἀνεποίηται καὶ, ὡς προηγοῦσιν εὑρήθομεν.92 From the expositors of the middle period, we may here quote the note of Zwinglius upon John iii. 3: 'Capitum hic regnum Dei pro doctrina celesti et praedicatione Evangelii, ut Lucæ xviii. Capitur aliquando pro vita aeterna, Matt. xxv. Luc. xiv. Qua quando pro Ecclesia et congregatio fidelium, ut Matt. xii. 24.' Even the later lexicographers, Schleusner and Bretschneider, however, have not advanced beyond these indefinite statements; and the article on the subject by the latter is particularly defective. He sets out with the Rabbinical idea, which he also finds in the New Testament, and enumerates a multitude of texts, from which it is impossible to make out in what sense the term is used! Matt. iv. 17; v. 10; xix. 23; vii. 21; xvi. 19, 28; xviii. 3, 4, 23; xii. 28, et passim. He farther states the meaning, 'Felicitas Christianorum post resurrectionem,' and then, with a ceterum, the very diverse meanings of, 'res Christiana, vocatio ad regnum Christi, Christus ipse, nutiī Regni divini.' How the word comes to have all these significations he does not explain.93 Wahl is much more correct, when he comprises all the significations of the word in the following formula: 'Felicitas nunc et olim per Iesum obtinenda.' But although the unity of the idea is thus preserved, the particular sense of basileia is lost. The second of the faults we mentioned, which consists in giving undue prominence to one side of the subject, and neglecting the rest, appears, to cite examples in the Tresises of Koppe and Keil, according to whom the word refers only to the future kingdom of the Messiah, which has still to be erected; in Storr, who says it is to be understood solely of the reign of the glorified Christ; and in Teller, who makes it the constitution of the Christian religion. In explaining this name, we shall begin with basileia tou Theou, by

92 Or by the kingdom of heaven he means the commonwealth of the angels, which Christ was about to rule, as never was done before, by gospel precepts. The fruition of celestial blessings is also called the kingdom of heaven; and many other things besides does this name, the kingdom of heaven, imply; for it is very significant, as we shall find in the sequel.

93 'Both Bretschneider and Schleusner seem to have entertained the idea, that Christ merely employed the expression by way of accommodation. But thus to disregard so much that is comprised in it, is a crying injustice, of which Semler was first guilty, and against which Baumgarten Crusius rightly says (Bib. Theol. s. 152), 'It was no mere accommodation, but the only term suitable for the thing and system in question.' The Wolfenbüttel fragments, however, have treated the expression worst of all, and audaciously assert that Jesus used it in no other sense than the ambitious Jews, and thereby betrayed his own aspiring designs.'
which the variations, βασιλεία τῶν ούρανῶν, and βασιλεία τοῦ Χριστοῦ, will also be explained. According to my view, none have brought forward the fundamental notion more correctly than Origen among the ancients, and Calvin among the Reformers. The particular aspect of the idea which the several Fathers of the church seized and stated, can be best seen in their explanations of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer; Augustine especially develops the subject with great depth and fulness. Most of them understand by it the kingdom of glory, the future revelation of Christ, Origen alone (in the book peri eghes) endeavors more specifically to unfold the idea of βασιλεία: δηλούσε γι' αὐτόν εἴσχηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, περὶ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀκατελείαν καὶ καρποφορησάν καὶ τελειώθησαι, εἰδότος ἐξίσοι, πιστὸς μὲν ἄγιον ὑπὸ Θεοῦ βασιλευσάντος καὶ τοῖς πνευματικοῖς τόμοις τοῦ Θεοῦ πεποιημένου, οἷον εἰ ἐλευθερωμένην πάλιν αὐτόν ἐκείνου: παράνοια αὐτῷ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ αμβτοποιήσατο τὰ πατρὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ τελείωται πνεύματι κατὰ τὸ εἰρήμενον, οἷον πρὸς βουκεχοῦς ἐκμηδενεύων πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ μονῆς παρ' αὐτῷ παννήμονα.34

"After some intermediate illustrations, he proceeds: The more the hallowing of God's name takes place, the more also will his kingdom come, and that be fulfilled which is written, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10; and then he adds, Τῇ ὁνὶ ἐν ἕκας βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ ἀκατελεία του ἐν εἰρήμενοι εἰσαγαγείη, ὥσπερ πληρωθῇ τὸ παρὰ τῷ Ἀποστόλῳ εἰρήμενον, ὅτι ὁ Χριστός, πάντων αὐτῶν τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐποιεῖτο, παραδόθη τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ πατρὶ, ἔστε ὁ θεός τὰ πάντα ἐν πάσι.35 With these admirable words let the reader compare what he says upon the same subject in another place, Hom. xiv. in Matt.,36 where he calls Christ in his own person, viewing him as the principle by which sin is to be vanquished, the βασιλεία; for of the βασιλεία in our text he says, 'That properly it is Christ himself who is promised to the poor as the αὐτὸ βασιλεία' In accordance with these views of the ancient fathers, Calvin, in the Commentary to his Harmony upon Matt. vi. 10, has the following words: 'Regnare enim dicitur Deus inter homines, quum carne sua sub jugum redacta et suis cupiditatis valere jussis illi se regendos addicere et tradunt. . . .
Quare summa hujus prelectionis est, ut Deus verbi sui luce mundum irradiiat, Spiritus sui affluat corda formet in obsequium justitiae sua, quicquid est dissipatum in terra suis uspiciis in ordinem restitutum, exordium vero regnandi faciat a subiugandi carnis nostrae cupiditatis. Jam vero, quia regnum Dei per continuos progressus augetur usque ad mundi finem, necessae est quotidie optare ejus adventum.' With this is to be compared his comment upon Matt. iii. 2, and John iii. 3, where, among other things, he says: 'Falluntur qui regnum Dei pro celo accipiant, cum potius spiritualem vitam significent, quae fide in hoc mundo incohatur, magisque in dies adolescet, secundum assiduos fidei progressus.' What Calvin, guided by a systematic consideration of texts of Scripture, here expresses, Luther,

34 "It is clear, that whoever prays for the kingdom of God to come, prays by due inference for that kingdom to be set up, and bear fruit, and reach perfection in himself: Inasmuch as every saint who is under the dominion of God, and obeys his spiritual laws, dwells, as it were, in the well-governed city of himself, the Father being present with him, and Christ giving counsel with the Father in the perfect soul, according to that text, of which I cited a little ago, 'We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'"

35 "For those who incessantly advance, the consummation of the kingdom of God within us shall commence when that saying of the apostle has been fulfilled, 'That Christ, having put all enemies under his feet, shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.'"

36 Ed. de la Rue, T. iii., p. 929.
following the dictates of his pious heart, handles in the beautiful sermon, *On the Kingdom of God*, of the year 1524, with which we may compare his exposition of the eighth Psalm, § 22, 23. We lay down, accordingly, as the fundamental notion of the kingdom of God: *A community in which God reigned, and which, as the nature of a right government involves, obeys him not by constraint, but from free will and affection; of which it follows, as a necessary consequence, that the parties are intimately bound to each other in the mutual interchange of offices of love.* To establish a community of this kind, was the purpose for which the Saviour appeared upon the earth; and forasmuch as it can only exist in perfection after the defeat of all his enemies, 1 Cor. xv. 28; Heb. x. 13, the chief seat of this kingdom of Christ is, doubtless, in the world to come; and it is a gross error, when Usteri, in the 4th edition of his Paulinischer Lehrbegriff, follows Rosenkranz, and would persuade us, that the kingdom of Christ belongs only to the world that now is. The prophets, whose glance, it is true, took in the whole extent of the Messiah's kingdom, but was chiefly fixed upon the period of its completion, were thereby led to place it at the end of time, and, in like manner, most of the texts of the New Testament promise it as something beyond the grave. See this done, for example, by the Evangelists, Matt. xiii. 43; xxv. 34; xxvi. 29; Mark ix. 47; Luke xiii. 29; and equally so, though many call this into question, by the apostles, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 21; Eph. v. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 50; 2 Thess. i. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 18; 2 Pet. i. 11; Acts xiv. 22. Those expositors, accordingly, who, like Koppe and Keil, understood by the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, Christ's kingdom in the world to come, take what is certainly a partial view; still, however, they have more truth on their side than their opponents. But it was a very awkward evasion of the contrary texts to which they had recourse, when they, moreover, added that 'sometimes the term denotes the institutions preparatory to God's kingdom in the world to come,' and expounded such passages as Mark xii. 34, as follows: 'Thou art upon the right way to the kingdom of God hereafter.' They would have done much better to allow that the βασιλεία is unquestionably represented in the New Testament as already come, although but in its commencement. The kingdom of God has hereafter in fact become existent in time, by the appearance in human nature of him, who could say of himself, 'I always do the things that please the Father.' He who is the king is likewise the first citizen of the kingdom of God; and if we interpret the ἐν οἴκοις in the text Luke xvii. 21, among, which is the right way, then Christ himself declares, that with his person God's kingdom in eternity first became a kingdom in time. He commands us, moreover, daily to pray that his kingdom may come; and the more that that life which is in him is diffused among mankind, the more do they cease to be disobedient subjects of God. As now present, the kingdom of God is represented in Matt. xi. 12; xii. 28; xvi. 9; Mark xii. 34; Luke xvi. 16; xvii. 20; and in the Epistles, Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 20; Col. i. 13; iv. 11. Heb. xii. 28. Now, when we consider that thus both the first Gospels and Paul represent the kingdom of God as future, and yet at the same time speak of it as having already come, we perceive a remarkable point of coincidence between them and John with respect to the doctrine which has ever been regarded as peculiar to that apostle viz., That life eternal commences here in time.
"After thus defining the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, we learn how the βασιλεία τοῦ Χριστοῦ and the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ in Matthew are to be explained. The kingdom of Christ denotes just the reign of God, conceived as carried on through the mediation of Christ. Hence the more power God acquires over us, and the more we become his children, the more does the Son deliver up the kingdom to the Father, until that full delivery, whereof St. Paul speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 28. Οἰκονομικός is not, according to the Rabbinical usus logendi, synonymous with God, but denotes the world that lies beyond, and is elevated above the present sphere of time and sense. Some passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews are explanatory of this, particularly c. xii., and the expression of St. Paul, ἡ ἀνάστασις Θεονομική.

"In order fully to elucidate the idea, we should now necessarily require to enter upon a similar consideration of the terms which are in various respects analogous: αἰών μελλόν, ὁκουνομένη μέλλονα, ἔκκλησια. This, however, would carry us too far."—Tholuck.

Note B, p. 131.

The following remarks on four of the beatitudes are just and beautiful. "Happiness or rest of soul, our Divine Saviour well knew, was the great object of man, and to this, therefore, he ever applies himself. 'Happy,' says he, 'are the poor in spirit; happy are the meek; happy are the merciful; happy are the pure in heart.' The plainness and simplicity of these sayings may lead the superficial to overlook their force and fulness. But if ever there was weight of sentiment and language it is here; or if ever truth was rendered attractive by the mode of exhibition, it is in these instances. It is common to inculcate good temper and right conduct, as matter of duty; but here they are pressed upon us as the ingredients of inward happiness. And on a moment's calm reflection, we do not ourselves see them to be so? Humility is the parent of contentment, because it restrains all arrogance of demand, all exorbitance of desire. It fits a man to his situation, and makes him content with what he hath. Meekness consists in equability of temper, in gentleness of mind, in immovable self-possession. Is not this itself a security for happiness? for how many of the miseries of life do we clearly see arising from the want of this invaluable temper? Mercifulness, too, is another great component of happiness. We are made for action and for society; and what can so secure to us the happiness of active and social beings, as a taste for, and a delight in, doing good? 'It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes,' says a great master of human nature. But a far greater master has carried it still higher. 'It is,' said he, 'more blessed to give than to receive.' Purity of heart implies a superiority of soul to everything low and brutish, to everything selfish and mean, a freedom from little views and sinister ends, and, on the contrary, a relish and love of everything really great

iii. 3; xviii. 36, have been usually referred to the life hereafter, but unjustly; the latter merely affirms that the dominion of Christ did not take its rise from the relations of the present life—Ὄν ἐστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου—and hence is not in its appearance like an earthly government. Luke xixi. 29 is a parallel." 41 J. Gerhard's Loc. Theologici, tom. xx. p. 122, 123. 42 παραδος, restore, bring back. Vide "Storr, De not. ent. reg." Opusc. i, 274, 275.—J. B.

43 Baumgarten Crusius, Bib. Theologica, p. 151.
and good This our Redeemer places next after mercy, because it is necessary to the reality, as well as the duration, of mercy: a wrong end spoiling the temper as surely as it warps the principles; on which St. James has given the noblest comment, when he says, that 'the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; ' a sentence which deserves to be written in letters of gold.'—Alexander Knox, Remains, III., 386, 387.

Note C, p. 168.

"'Puxû from the Syriac, נער, which is from the Hebrew נער, meaning an empty, insignificant, worthless fellow. Muqî, from the Hebrew מוע, which signifies a rebellious man—an apostate; a more bitter term of reproach than the former. Both these terms should be preserved in a translation, as they were used in a general and indecisive acceptance. The latter word, Muqî, from being rendered in an expression by no means equivalent, has occasioned embarrassment to some, as our Saviour himself calls the Pharisees 'fools;' Matt. xxii. 17, 19; and employs the word on other occasions, and so does his Apostle Paul." "In a treatise of Maimonides, 'concerning offences of ignorance and inadvertency,' iii. 7, 'the man who commits a sin in direct violation of the law of God, and in perverse opposition to his express will, is called מוע, a rebel or an apostate—a term implying the highest enormity, and most aggravated guilt. What a mortal antipathy the Jews bore against an apostate from their religion, may be seen from the conduct of Mattathias, as related in the first book of Maccabees, and Joseph. Antiq. Jud. xii. 8.'"—Wakefield.

"It seems odd, that when the Jews had been just before reprimanded for calling any one Raka, a Syriac term of reproach, they should here be warned against calling him μουκσ, thou fool, as more aggravating. There is not the same scale in the crime as in the punishment. Nay, μουκσ in Greek, does not signify so much as Raka in Syriac; and therefore should not be interpreted at all any more than Raka, or at least should not have been interpreted by the Greek word μουκσ, thou fool. It is properly Syriac, and comes from the Hebrew מוע, which signifies rebellious, stubborn, apostate. Deut. xxi. 18, 20; Numb. xx. 10; Psal. xxviii. 23."

—Sykes. "This observation is certainly just."—Dr. Henry Owen. Bishop Pearce also accords with this exegesis.

Note C, p. 180.

Swear not at all.—'Let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay.' "Not one of the oaths which our Lord chooses as an illustration of his prohibition, is a judicial oath. Every one of them is just the kind of oath which, from the analogy of other nations, we should suppose would be used in familiar discourses. The communication (ληστες), which is to be 'yea, yea; nay, nay,' cannot, without a most strange use of language, include a formal legal procedure."—"There are some of you who think that you must be very careful of using the word God in your familiar talk, because God hath set apart that for solemn purposes; but you do not think much of swearing by heaven, or by earth, or by Jerusalem, or by your head,—you do not care how lightly you use these oaths. Now, whether you knew 't; or not, this arises from want of reverence of God.
You think it is just the name that is sacred. Oh, no! Everything is sacred. God is in everything. Look up to the wide heaven over your head, God is there; the sun speaks of him; the firmament speaks of him. Look at the earth, God is there; every tree, and plant, and flower speaks of him. Go into Jerusalem, there is the temple in which God has promised to dwell. Think of your head, there is a witness for God; it is he who preserves every hair of it. I say, then, ‘Swear not at all.’ If you trifle with an oath, you trifle with God, in whose presence you are living, and moving, and having your being.”—Maurice, iii. 34, 35–42, 45.

Note D, p. 186.

"The question, whether a really absolute universality and literal fulfilment pertain to these words, must be determined, first, from the whole Christian doctrine, then from the connection, and in fine, from other declarations of Scripture, especially Christ's own behavior, and that of his disciples.

"In regard to the first of these topics, it may be said as follows:—The Christian, in the perfected state, is the child of his heavenly Father; and, consequently, ξανθοῦς ἡ ὅθεν; φίλος ᾧς ὄφελος; 2 Pet. 1. 4. Goodness in him must hence resemble that of his original, and thus his love bear the character of the love of God. The love of God, however, is always accompanied with holiness and wisdom, and being so, it stands in its relation to evil, not merely in attitude of defence, but also of restraint and punishment, partly according to the inward necessity of the Divine nature, partly for the good of the sinner himself, and partly for the advantage of human society. In the same way, then, the love of the Christian in relation to evil must not manifest merely passive submission, except in such measure as not to compromise the honor and holiness of God among men, in the first place; the good of the sinner in the second; and, in fine, the interests of human society. On the contrary, when this is the case, even the Christian's love in relation to evil, must become restraining and punitive. Considering, however, that in a community, the exercise of this restraining and punitive love cannot be conceded to every individual, inasmuch as the individual wants the power, or, by reason of excited passion, the wisdom requisite, the office of punitive love has, by Divine appointment, been devolved upon the magistracy, in which those qualities necessary for its exercise are united, and has continued with individuals, as e. g., with the father of a family, only in such measure as the magistracy invests them with. Thus, viewed with reference to the whole system of Christian truth, our saying acquires the following import: 'To such an extent ought ye, my disciples, to be free from the desire of revenge, as that, except where the honor of God, and the good of your injurer and the community, exact of you the contrary, you ought, in patient self-denial, to do more than even what insolence demands from you.'

"To this restriction, the context is at least not opposed, for the aim of the precept is not to limit the punishment of the wicked, but the desire of vengeance in Christ's disciples. Nay, that the restriction much rather emanates from the spirit of Christianity, will be established by other Biblical declarations. Here we have chiefly to consider the kind of way in which the apostle Paul expresses himself, in the particular passages

44 See ver. 45, and p. 145, &c. 45 This is a questionable theory.—J. B.
where he delivers admonitions referring to the commandments of Christ. At 1 Cor. vi. 7, he does not call it a παράτιμον of the Corinthian Church, that they had gone to law with one another, but a ήγεμον. Αἱ δὲ εἰς, says he, οὐχὶ μηλον ἀδικεῖτο. . . . άλλα ήμεῖς ἀδικεῖτο. . . . καὶ ταῦτα ἀδίκησον. Here the precept of Christ appears, in that less harsh form in which every reader of sound sense takes it up at the first approach, with an οὐχὶ μήλον. With this we have to conjoin the well known dict. prob. in Paul and Peter, respecting the magistracy: θεοὶ διάκονοί εστιν, ἐκάκοις εἰς οὐρανοῦ τό τε καθό πρόστασις; and moreover, the passages where Jesus permits his followers to withdraw from persecution by flight.

"As regards Christ's own behavior, and that of the apostles, we have, John xviii. 23, the example, that when he was smitten upon the cheek, he does not literally fulfill the precept; but, on the contrary, asks of him who did the violence, 'If I have spoken well, why smitest thou me?'

Paul, too, everywhere acts in such a way, as to recognize the punitive office of the magistrate, and when exposed to injustice, in place of suffering patiently, appeals to them, Acts, xvi. 35-40; xxii. 23-29; xxv. 9-11."—Tholuck.

Note F, p. 190.

Chrysostom's view of the course of thought in this paragraph is finely conceived, and most felicitously expressed. "Εἰδες ὅσος ἄνεθη βασιλεύς, καὶ πῶς εἰς αὐτὴν ἠμας τὴν κοινωνίαν ξετοιρα πῆς ἀφεις; αὐτός δὲ ένεβεν ἄρεθαμεν προύνω εύπερ βασιλέα, μη δρακειν ἀδικίας δεικτερας, μετά το το αμεθολε, τὸν αναλυσάς τοις θυσε μη άλλον θυσιν τρίος, καὶ θρασεις τὸν εὐθυμῶντα ταῦτα άν ἔπαθεν, άλλο θυρύζους τεταρτας, το και παρασχεσας εαυτον εις το παιδιν καθον, το και πλούς παρασχεις, έκεινος θυσις δεικνυς άν, το και μισης τον ταυτα έγαζομεν έζιδομεν, το και άμητος δρος, το και άφεν τεταρτος έναντος, το και Θεον έπερ αυτον παρακαλειν ειδες οψις φιλοσοφιας;" "Do you observe the scale he has ascended, and how he has placed us upon the pinnacle of virtue? Contemplate the enumeration from the beginning. The first step is, not to begin injuring; the second, after injury has been done, not to retaliate like for like upon the injurer; the third, not to inflict the same on the offender that one has suffered, but to be quiet; the fourth, to yield ourself to suffer evil; the fifth, to yield more than he who did the evil wishes; the sixth, not to hate him who did such things; the seventh, even to love him; the eighth, to do him good; the ninth, to pray to God for him. Do you mark the summit of philosophy?"

Note G. p. 211.

"On the richness of the contents of this prayer, Tertullian, in his day, expresses himself with great force, 'De orat.' c. 1: 'Brevitas ista . . . magnae ac beatae interpretationis substantia ful ta est, quantumque sub-stringitur verbis, tantum diffunditur sensibus, neque enim propria tantum orationis officia complexa est, venerationem Dei, aut hominis petitionem, sed omnem pene sermonem Domini, omnem commemorationem disciplinae, ut revera in oratione brevarium totius Evangelii comprehendatur.' "We must beware of underlaying with logical schemes, according to the forms of the school, the discourses of the Lord and his apostles. In the language of God to mankind, sounding from the kingdom of grace,
equally with that which addresses us from the kingdom of nature, an order of a loftier kind than the formally logical prevails. Just at the point where the square of our logic will no longer fit, commence the confines of a higher realm. The discourses of men of God do not need to be dressed into French gardens by the scholastic shears of a Lampe and a Baumgarten, in order to acquire order and connection. They are like an English park, where grove and meadow variously alternate, but where, through all the seeming confusion, the law of beauty and order of a higher sort is yet maintained. It would, however, be running into extremes on the opposite side, were we to discard every proof of a strict logical arrangement.

"This prayer contains a sacred heptad of petitions, which separate into two halves. The first expresses God's relation towards us, the latter our relation towards God. The three opening petitions unfold gradually one thought: 1. God must be acknowledged to be what he is; 2. Then does he reign over man; 3. Thereby will the earth be at last glorified into the kingdom of heaven. In like manner, the four last petitions contains a progression which runs parallel. Supplication begins with what is inferior, entreaty first for earthly necessaries, and then for spiritual blessings: 1. for the removal of past guilt; 2. for protection from guilt to come; 3. for final deliverance from all sin and evil. Hereupon is appended an epilogue, belonging, indeed, to a later period, but exceedingly well suited to the place it occupies, and which, once more in a triad, states the grounds of the Christian's assurance of faith. This train of ideas is set forth, still more strictly arranged, in the following scheme by Dr. Weber, in the program of 1828, to which we have referred.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Пролоgos</th>
<th>Логоs</th>
<th>Επιλογος</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) πατερ</td>
<td>1) ἀγιασθητω το ὄνομα σου</td>
<td>1) ἵνα συν ἔρχηται ἡ βασιλεία</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) ήμων</td>
<td>2) ελθετω ἡ βασιλεία σου</td>
<td>2) καὶ ἐστιν ἡ δόξα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) ὁ ἐν τοις οἰκονομισ</td>
<td>3) γενηθητω τὸ βασιλεῖα σου</td>
<td>3) συν ἐστιν ἡ ἀγία</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θελημά σου</td>
<td>κτλ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first εὐχή and the first αἰτία, Dr. Weber refers to theology, the second εὐχή and αἰτία to Christology, the third εὐχή, with the third αἰτία, to pneumatology, or angelology and demonology. It is more correct to say, that the disposition of these petitions is founded in the economy of Father, Son, and Spirit, which economy here, as is also often the case elsewhere, appears as the deeper basis of our logical order of the triad. The acknowledgment of the nature of the Godhead as holy, relates mainly to the Father, as the αἰτία. His reign in mankind is carried on through the mediation of the Son. It attains its completion through the Spirit, in which the Father and Son preside in the church, so that the Divine will is executed upon earth as it is in heaven. In the same way, the support of the bodily existence relates to the 'opus creationis et conservationis,' consequently, chiefly to the economy of the Father, the

46 Bengel: "Tres relicque rogationes spectant vitæ spiritualis in mundo initium, progressum, exitum, rogantesque confuentur non solum de sua indigentia, sed etiam de rebus, periculo et augusto. Quam hae omnes sunt, Deus est illis omnia in omnibus, per rogationes tres primas." Compare Augustine and Calvin.
doing away of the guilt of sin, to the economy of the Son, protection from the power of temptation, and ultimate subjective redemption from evil, to the economy of the Spirit."—Tholuck.

"Considered as a whole, our Lord's prayer contains only one thought, or idea, the longing after the kingdom of God." to which all the prayers of the children of God (as those whom Jesus here teaches to pray) aspire. But this one idea must be viewed as having two references; first, with regard to the relation of God to men, which is expressed in the three first petitions, which represent the kingdom of God as still perfecting itself, wherein that which is God's highest object is uttered in the form of a wish; secondly, with regard to the relation of men to God, which is expressed in the four last petitions, in which are reviewed the obstacles to the progress of the kingdom of God. In the first part, therefore, the discourse begins with the riches of God.

"Thy name be hallowed,
"Thy kingdom come,
"Thy will be done.

"In the second part, on the contrary, it commences with the poverty of man.
"Give us this day our daily bread,
"Forgive us our debts,
"Lead us not into temptation,
"Deliver us from evil.

"In the very significant doxology is expressed the certain hope that the prayer will be heard, a hope which is founded on the nature of the unchangeable God himself, who, as the highest good, will realize the good at his appearance (the kingdom of God)."—Olshausen.

It is impossible to express in too strong terms, pity and disapprobation at the want of spiritual perspicacity and sensibility, and the impious arrogance, manifested in the judgments given of this prayer, by two rationalist German theologians, Schulz and Moller.

The former theologian is of opinion that "The want of all coherence and all natural connection between the several petitions, which could scarcely be excused in a suppliant praying with the most unbridled fancy, far less in one so reflective and considerate as Jesus, makes it impossible to suppose that the prayer forms a connected whole." And Moller says, "In short, the moment we regard the prayer as connected, we perceive in it so many defects, that one does not understand why Jesus did not deliver something more perfect."!!

The best expositions of this prayer we are acquainted with, are to be found in "Chrennitii Harmonia Evang." Tom. I.; "Amyraldi Exercit.;" and "Witsii Exercit. Sac.," of which we have, what is a very uncommon thing, a really good translation by my esteemed friend, the Rev. William Pringle. Augustine's short commentary, and Nosselt's notes in his "Exercitaciones," are worth consulting. Stapfer's and Brunning's

47 Luther, therefore, justly says: "The true Christian says an everlasting 'Our Father,' namely, in so far as all his longing is concentrated in the idea of the kingdom of God."

48 "Schulz supposes that the prayer is to be taken up as follows—'When you want to make a prayer of adoration to the Father of universal nature, thus speak: O thou, who art our Father, and the Father of all thy creatures, highly exalted, let thy praise be our continual employment.' Or when you wish to pray for the acceleration of the commencement of my religion, speak . . . .

3. 'Or when you wish to pray to God for the utmost happiness of mankind, consisting in the willing observance of his precepts, say . . . ."
NOTES.

learned and ingenious dissertations, in the first and second volumes of the "Tempe Helvetica," are curiosities of their kind. These good men find all the minute particulars of a very artificial system, and all the leading events of the future history of the Christian church, in this simple prayer. I am afraid, they have rather put them into, than drawn them out of it. The brief exposition of the Lord’s prayer, in the Westminster Assembly’s Shorter Catechism, is admirable. That in their Larger Catechism is excellent also, only not a very few sincere Christians would rather deprecate than supplicate, as they direct us to do under the second petition, that "the church should be maintained by the civil magistrates." The Rev. David Duncan’s little volume deserves to have for its motto, "Multum in Parvo."

Some learned interpreters—among the rest Lightfoot, in his "Horne Hebraicæ et Talmudice;" Witsius, in his "Exercitationes Sacre;" Schöttgen, in his "Horne Hebraice;" Vitringa, in his work "De Synagogue;" and Wetstein in his "Commentary,"—have endeavored to show, that in his prayer are many forms of expression, which the Jews of that age were accustomed to use in their prayers. Some have even gone so far as to hold, that the whole of the petitions are to be found word for word nearly in the liturgies which it is supposed the Jews about this period began to use in their synagogues. With regard to this question, I am much disposed to acquiesce in the opinion of the judicious and eloquent Vernece.—Divers scuavans ont sentou qu’il juge a propos d’en emprunter tous les articles des anciennes liturgies des Juifs, ou des écrits des docteurs de cette nation. Mais d’abord on aurait de la peine à prouver que dès lors il y eut des liturgies universellement reçues dans cette eglise. De plus, il est certain que plusieurs des ouvrages, auxquels on en appelle, sont postérieurs à l’ère chrétienne: Et les passages qu’on en produit en preuve n’ont rien moins qu’une conformité exacte et frippante; quelquefois n’ont qu’un rapport assé éloigné avec ceux qu’on prétend en avoir été deduits. Ainsi nous ne scaturions adopter cette hypothèse.—Sermois sur le discours sur la montagne.—Vol. III., Ser. XXII., pp. 42, 43.

Note H, p. 222.

"The Epilogue,* Οἱ σοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία κ.τ.λ. The authenticity of these words has been strongly assailed by criticism. Taking the data as they at present lie before us, we, too, can do nothing else than decide against their genuineness, inclusively of the ἡμερ. Were we, however, to proceed entirely upon internal evidences in answering the question, our verdict would certainly be very different. Nothing could be a greater mistake than for Wetstein to think of demonstrating the spuriousness of the epilogue from the circumstance, that it puts the 14th verse too far from the first petition, which, however, it should help to elucidate, as if the sixth and seventh petitions did not intervene to separate them—and further, by saying, that, when coupled with the sixth petition, the words appear inapposite, and, when referred back to the three first, tautological. Much more does this epiphoma finely express the foundation of hope, on which all the prayers of the suppliant rest, so that we acquiesce entirely in the opinion of Calvin, who says of the clause: ‘Tam apte quadrat. Neque enim,’ he proceeds, ‘ideo solum addita est, ut corda nostra ad expetendum Dei gloriam accendat.
et admonenat, quisnam esse debeat votorum nostrorum scopus, sed etiam ut doceat, preces nostras, quae hic nobis dictatae sunt, non alihi, quam in Deo solo fundatas esse, ne propriis meritis nitamur.\textsuperscript{7} Bengel, however, comes to the aid of the Latin codices, which omit the words, with the observation drawn deep from the spirit of Christianity: "Celebramus eum (patrem cœlestem) talie fora modo, quo peregrinantes et militantes contenti esse debemus. Ubi ad metam pervenerit universitas filiorum Dei, mera fiet in cœlo doxologia; venit regnum ejus, facta est voluntas ejus, remisit nobis peccata, &c.; præsertim tempori illi, quod Dominus hanc formulam discipulis prescrispit, conveniuntur erat rogatio, quam hymnus. Jesus nondum erat glorificatus, &c. But in this observation, the point is overlooked upon which most depends, viz., that we have here, according to Heumann’s correct remark, the doxology under an aitiological form. It is not a burst of emotion swelling over into a hymn. It is much more an intensified ὡς ἐκ, specifying the basis upon which the suppliant places his confidence. The internal evidences, accordingly, could not make us at all dubious of the authenticity of the words—barring the single circumstance, that the order of the three predicates βασιλεία, δόμινος and δόξα would correspond better with the three triads of petitions, if the δόμινος stood before the βασιλεία. It is evidence of an external kind which determines the point.

\textsuperscript{7} The critical proofs of the spuriousness of the passage are to be found developed in Bengel, Appar. crit. p. 459, Jac. Breitinger, Museum Helvet. XI. 370. XVI. 591. XVIII. 719, in Wetstein and Griesbach’s Comment. crit. d. 68, sqq., from the two last of which Rödinger has collected them, enlarged by some remarks, in the third appendix to his Ed. of Griesbach’s Synopsis. We confine ourselves here to a statement of the main results. 1. To be sure, a very few, but these the most eminent Greek codices, as the Cod. Vat. and Cantab., omit them. The Cod. Alex. is defective just at this place. The most of these codices are of western origin. That the words were wanting in them, is corroborated by the Latin translation, and by the most ancient Latin fathers. Neither Tertullian nor Cyprian, nor Jerome (who yet retains the Amen), nor Augustine read this doxology. Tertullian expressly calls the sixth petition the clausula of the prayer. 2. The Alexandrine codices, moreover, did not contain the words, and they are wanting in Origen and in the Coptic version. 3. In other authorities they are also missing, in the Arabic translation of the ed. Rom. of the four Evangelists, of 1591, from which the Paris and London Polyglott has borrowed them, and in the Persic translation, edited by Whelock from three Persian codices in 1652, in Cyrill of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus and Cæsarius. Euthymius reproaches the Bogomilians with rejecting the ἐπιφάνεια of the Lord’s prayer, appended by the fathers of the church: τὸ παρὰ τῶν θείων φωτιῶν καὶ τῆς ἐκκλήσιας καθηγήσεως προστεθήν ἡ αὐτοκλήσεως ἐπιφάνεια—τὸ δει σῶ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δόξα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ νόμο καὶ τοῦ ἀγίου πνεύματος, οὔτε ἀκούσαι ἀνθρώπου. 4. As the practice gradually crept in of supplementing the less, from the more complete, reports of Christ’s sayings, what Matthew contains over and above what is given by Luke, was likewise added to the text of the Lord’s prayer in the latter evangelist. Nevertheless, the doxology is wanting in it, according to all the codices. 5. It is, moreover, easy to make it appear how the addition could have arisen. Even among the Jews responses were customary. In the public recitation of prayers, the people pronounced either an amen, or a doxology similar to that which we find, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. This practice of antiphonies was trans-
lated into the Christian church, and, what is very remarkable, we are even able to point out the progressive steps by which the epilogue attained its present form. In one passage of the Constit. Apost. I. VII. c. 24, we find the Lord's prayer with the shorter doxology, ὅ τι ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ωρίμ, whereas in another, I. III. c. 18, the formula is complete. Thus the Sahidic, or Upper Egyptian version, reads the abbreviated formula ἡ δόξαν μας καὶ τὸ κύριος. See Cramer's Beiträge zur Beförderung, &c. Th. III. p. 60. The doxology underwent a still greater enlargement, after the fifth century, at which time, the allusion to the Trinity that became ever more and more frequent in liturgical formulas, appears. Thus cod. 157 and 225, in Griesbach have, after δόξα, the addition τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ τοῦ Ἀνίματος, and it is to this that Lucian's Philopatris, c. 27, seems to allude, where it says, τὴν εἰς ἐπίπτωσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ πάτρος ἅγιον, καὶ τὴν πανσώματον φῶν εἰς τέλος ἑπιθείς. Hence the ed. Complut. in its day, and afterwards Erasmus and Beza, express the conjecture, that the formula has passed over into the text of the New Test., from the usage of the liturgies. In the same way, in the 'Ave Maria,' the 'quia perperisti servatorem animarum nostrarum,' was appended to the 'benedicta tu in mulieribus.' In the same way, too, do our ministers extend, in a variety of modes, the Mosiac benediction; and thus, in the Romish church, 'per ius Christum dominum nostrum,' was frequently annexed to the 'libera nos a malo' of the Lord's prayer itself. Besides those we have already specified at p. 303, the following older authors have regarded the words as spurious:—Zwinglius (not Calvin), Κολλαπανιδες, Pellicanus, Bucer, Melancthon, Camerarius, Drusius, Schultetus, Walton, Grotius, Mill, Grabbe, M. Paff, whom almost all follow. Luther, too, has passed over the doxology in both of his Catechisms.

Among the advocates for the authenticity of the formula, we have to name Wolf, Olearius, Witsius, Heumann, S. J. Baumgarten, 'De auth. doxol.' Halae, 1753, Heinr. Benzenberg in the 'Symbole Deub.' 1784, T. II. P. 1, p. 97, Matthäi in the Ann. zu s. N. T., Weber, in the dissertation already referred to. All that they produce in favor of their opinion, however, can never be brought into comparison with the facts already stated. Benzenberg enters most minutely into the subject; but the shifts to which he has recourse, some of them of a very violent character, have already found an opponent in the editor of the 'Symb.,' the learned P. Berg. The witness of greatest weight in favor of the authenticity, is doubtless the Peschito. The three Syrian translations, viz., the Peschito, the Philoxenian, and the Jerusalem, contain the doxology. The two last as belonging to a later date, cannot here be taken into consideration. With regard to the authority of the Peschito, however, even it is not above the suspicion of certain interpolations or additions by the Lectionaries. The passages in it, by which this is evinced, have been collected by Griesbach, 'Meletemata de vetustis textus N. T. recensionibus,' p. li. The ᾿Ethiopic, Armenian, and Gothic versions, along with the Arab. Erp. and the Persic in the London Polyglott, did not take their origin prior to the fourth century, and hence possess no force as evidence. Matthäi insists that it was Origen who first introduced the depravation into the text, for which assumption, however, there is a total want of plausible proof; and he fancies he can annihilate the authority of the Vulgate by I John v. 7. For just as at that passage, the Latins have, for doctrinal reasons, made an addition, so, on grounds liturgical, did they proprio Marte banish the words in question from the Greek Text. 'Nov. Test. Graece,' T. I.
p. 23, ll. p. 297. Whereas, on the contrary, Bengel found in our passage no slender confirmation of the partial opinion he entertained of the Latin version, in order the more powerfully to justify his favorite text, 1 John v. 7. But even were Matthai successful in setting aside the authority of the Vulgate, that is by no means the sole evidence for the omission of the passage. Benzenberg goes still more arbitrarily to work, endeavoring to raise a suspicion that all the ecclesiastical fathers who omit the words have been corrupted by the Paris editors into conformity with the Vulgate.

"Now, even although we should, on the grounds advanced, discard this doxology from the text, it will still maintain its place undisputed in the use of the church. For, if we only have not, as above shown, to restrict ourselves scrupulously to the precise words of the prayer, as if it were a magical formula, we are at liberty to extend it. Now, that the extension here presented to us in the doxology, has been made entirely in the spirit of the Lord, is what can in nowise be called in question."

—Tholuck.

Note I, p. 263.

"Augustine observes how those who are addressed here as 'being evil,' are the very same into whose mouths but just now the Lord has put that word, 'Our Father;' to whom he has made the promise, 'Ask and it shall be given you;' so that every faithful, i.e., believing man, has a double aspect, he is 'evil' through his old nature, he is good through participation with him who is the highest good, who is in some sense the alone good (Matth. xix. 17), the good in himself, and altogether good, while others are good through him, and only as they are sharers of his life. So that we may perceive here, that he has seized the right interpretation of the 'being evil,' which they fail to catch who take the epithet 'evil,' not as the designation of all men, of human nature in general (Gen. viii. 21), as it is opposed to the goodness and holiness of God, but of some particular men deeper sunk in corruption than the rest; as if Christ would say, even the worst among you (even the ἑννησιοί), do not extend their malignity to their children, but in their relations to them show themselves bountiful and good. But the other is the truer and deeper explanation, embracing the whole race of man under this charge of evil, who, being such, have yet natural affections, the yearnings of a parent's heart towards their children, and, according to their ability and knowledge, impart unto them good gifts, which, if not in the highest degree deserving the title of 'good,' are yet good for the necessities of the present life. How much more certainly will the heavenly Father impart the true goods of his kingdom, for it is those that the Lord has prominently in his eye, as is plainly shown by a comparison with the parallel passage in St. Luke (xi. 13), where, instead of 'good things,' it is his 'Holy Spirit,' which is promised to them who ask. This view of the reference and meaning of ἑννησιοί will come clearly out, if we note how τις ἐκ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος is not pleonastic, as we make it, 'What man of you;' but there is a silent opposition between the ἄνθρωπος here, and the πατήρ ὃ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς of verse 11; "Who of you, though he be but a man, &c.; and the being but a man will plainly appear equal to ἑννησιοί ὤν."—Trench.
EXPOSITION V.

FAITHFUL DENUNCIATIONS.


MILDNESS of disposition and gentleness of demeanor were striking features in the character and conduct of Jesus Christ. No malignant passion disturbed the tranquillity of his bosom, no intemperate rudeness ruffled the even tenor of his behavior. Affectionate to his friends, forgiving to his enemies, condescending to the poor, compassionate to the miserable, courteous to all men, he exhibited a perfect pattern of those amiable virtues, which, if generally cultivated and exemplified, would produce so happy a transformation on the state of human society. He did "not strive nor cry, neither was his voice heard in the streets. A bruised reed he did not break, and the smoking flax he did not quench." To instruct the ignorant, to warn the unwary, to comfort the sorrowful, to relieve the afflicted, were the employments most congenial to his dispositions; and in these and similar exercises did he spend the period of his residence among mortals. Malignity was a feeling to which he was entirely a stranger. The unparalleled sufferings to which he was exposed excited in him no desire of revenge. Instead of hating his enemies, he pitied them; and their grossest insults, and most outrageous cruelties, but drew forth from him sighs for their folly and wickedness, and prayers for their pardon and salvation.

The gentleness of the Saviour's character was, however, no way akin to that weak undistinguishing good nature, which seems to survey all mankind with an equal and inactive goodwill, without reference to their moral qualities. It was associated with an unconquerable detestation of moral evil in all its various forms, and an unquenchable zeal to promote the cause of holiness and of God. Accordingly, we find him unfolding, not merely the consolations, but the terrors of religious truth; we find him speaking in alarming, as well as in soothing accents; we find him not only promising peace, and pardon, and salvation, to him who will gladly and gratefully receive what is "freely given him of God," but declaring that a miserable eternity must be the portion of the finally impenitent, unbelieving, and disobedient.
It is one of the peculiarities of our Lord, that he unites in himself qualifications, not only different, but apparently opposite. The man, the leading feature of whose character is gentleness, is generally deficient in the sterner virtues; while, on the other hand, he who is remarkably endowed with unbending integrity, not unfrequently seems a stranger to the softer feelings of our nature, and is distinguished by a severity of deportment which goes far to make his undoubted excellencies unamiable and useless. But in the character of the Saviour, the amiable and estimable qualities, the lovely and the venerable virtues, so supported and softened each other, that his gentleness never degenerated into weakness, nor did his integrity ever assume the appearance of repulsive severity. While he pitied men’s miseries, he condemned their sins; while he reproved their faults, he commiserated their sorrows.

Of the compassionate kindness of our Lord, both in word and deed, there are recorded, by the evangelists, many beautiful examples. In the passage which now lies before us, we have a striking display of that holiness which "cannot bear them that are evil"—that integrity which knows not how to palliate sin, or flatter the sinner. The severe reproof, and indignant reprobation, of men distinguished for their wealth, their rank, their learning, and their reputation for sanctity, which these words breathe, may, on a cursory view, appear scarcely compatible with the declaration of our Lord, that he was "meek, and lowly in heart." The incongruity is, however, merely apparent. These words are not the ebullition of mortified pride, or disappointed ambition, cloaking personal malignity under the pretence of zeal for truth and holiness. They are the expression of the loathing, which the contemplation of moral evil, in some of its vilest forms, excited in a perfectly holy mind; and a declaration, by a divinely-authorized revealer of the purposes of God, of the signal punishment which is awaiting such as habitually and willfully oppose truth, from unworthy motives, and for unworthy ends.

The Pharisees were a numerous and influential body among the Jews. Their rulers or leading men, to whom our Lord’s remarks have a primary and principal reference, were possessed of a large portion of the learning of their age and nation. They were characterized by a remarkably strict attention to the ritual of the Mosaic religion, as explained and enlarged by the traditions of the elders, and by a high degree of external decorum, and apparent sanctity of deportment and manners; and they occupied many of the most important and dignified offices connected with the teaching of the laws of their nation, and the administering them both in the supreme and municipal judicatories. Owing to these circumstances, they possessed an extensive and powerful influence over the public mind; and, generally indignant at the subjugation of the holy people to a foreign, a Gentile yoke, they were disposed to use that influence in procuring for

1 Rev. ii. 2.
them emancipation from that yoke, in the hope of bringing them more completely and securely under their own dominion.

These men seem to have hoped when John the Baptist, and Jesus appeared, that they might be converted into instruments for promoting these objects. With the fervid eloquence, and overawing severity of the former, and with the winning manners, and miraculous powers, of the latter, what might not be expected in rousing the prostrate energies of the nation, and in realizing the long fondly-cherished dream of the sovereignty of the holy people over the Gentile nations, under the Messiah, while the existing rulers secured a large share of the power and dignity connected with the administration of this new and better order of things?

But when John repelled all their advances, addressed them as "a generation of vipers," and, with unsparing fidelity, exposed their hypocrisy, and denounced their doom; when Jesus declared that, "except a man be born again, he cannot see," or enter into "the kingdom of God;" when he proclaimed that that kingdom "came not with observation," and that "except men's righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they could not enter it," they were not only constrained to relinquish all hopes of turning such men into tools for accomplishing their object, but, perceiving that the prevalence of such sentiments must be the annihilation of their own influence, and the disappointment of their own hopes, they regarded them with the most inveterate dislike, and, without being at all scrupulous as to the means employed, labored to accomplish their destruction. John had already fallen a victim to the malignity of a profligate woman, practising on the easy temper of her princely paramour; and all danger from him was, of course, at an end. But, from the commencement of his ministry, these crafty men seem to have discovered that Jesus was a still more formidable opponent than John; and, believing it impracticable to bend him to their purposes, they determined, if possible, to effectuate his ruin, by making him the object of odium to the Jewish people, or of suspicion to their Roman rulers, that so, by popular tumult, or by public execution, they might free themselves from one, who would not co-operate with them, and whose growing influence could only be established on the destruction of theirs. In consequence of this, we find the agents of this powerful body dogging our Lord wherever he went. Whoever may be absent from his discourses and miracles, some of the Pharisees are sure to be there, and there with the intention to cavil and entrap, to throw suspicion upon his objects, and to misrepresent his doctrines—"Urging him vehemently, and provoking him to speak of many things, laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him."

In prosecution, it would seem, of this systematic endeavor to ruin him, after a vain attempt to raise a prejudice against him,

as a degraded instrument of infernal power in the miraculous works which he performed, one of these Pharisees, pretending respect for him, invited him to partake of the hospitality of his table; but with the design that, alone in the midst of his crafty opponents, he might be the more readily entangled in their toils; or if, as lately, he should tear to pieces their cunningly woven nets, they might, at least, be saved from the infamy of a public exposure. With a thorough knowledge of their intentions, our Lord accepted the invitation; and it was in these circumstances that he uttered the striking words which lie before us for consideration. Let us recollect they are the words of one who knew the heart—of one immaculately holy—of one who clearly saw all the guilt these miserable men were incurring, and all the danger in which they were involving themselves. Let us not forget the numerous and varied methods he had employed to bring them to a better mind—"How often he would have gathered them, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." Let us recollect all these things, and any appearance of an undue severity, little according with the general mildness of his disposition, and gentleness of his demeanor, will entirely vanish.

How far we are to consider our Lord's conduct as an example, in thus going into the company of the wicked and worldly, is a question of considerable interest. It is quite certain he did right in whatever he did; but it is not quite so certain that we would do right, were we in every case to imitate, to the letter, his conduct. He knew that, whether these men were or were not the better for his company, he could not be the worse for theirs. That is more than, in similar circumstances, we can usually be sure of. There is more probability of a Christian getting harm than doing good, when, without a very plain call in providence, he mingles in convivial intercourse with the decidedly worldly and wicked. There can be no doubt, however, that a Christian may have such a plain providential call; and, when it is so, it is his duty to obey it, trusting that He who brings him into trying circumstances, will enable him to act such a part as will secure him from damage, and religion from reproach, and as may be useful to those with whom he is called on occasionally to associate: "If any of them that believe not bid" a Christian "to a feast, and" he be "disposed," for sufficient reasons, "to go," let him go, only let him take care that he conduct himself there like a Christian."

Generally speaking, however, familiar association with the worldly and the wicked is to be avoided by Christians: "Enter not in the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men." If we would not "practise wicked works with them who work iniquity," it will be wise in us not to "eat of their dainties." 1

It was an ordinary custom among the Jews to wash the hands before meals:—"For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except

\[1\] Cor. x. 27-33. \* See Note A. \* Prov. iv. 14. Psal. exli. 4.
they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not." This, as a matter of convenience and cleanliness, was unobjectionable and proper; but they, following the traditions of the elders, seem to have considered it as a religious rite. They thought well of themselves for observing it, as if they had performed a duty; and they found fault with those who did not observe it, as if they had committed a sin.

Our Lord never manifested a diseased scrupulosity of mind—he never affected an unnecessary singularity of manners. But when he saw men elevating what is indifferent into a matter of duty, he would not, by his conduct, give countenance to any such unwarranted addition to God's law; and, accordingly, when the other guests were all performing their ablutions, according to the tradition of the elders, he, without going through any such ceremony, took his place at the table. His host, the Pharisee, observed this with surprise and displeasure, and probably manifested this by looks, or by words. Our Lord seized the opportunity of attacking the principle which lay at the foundation of this over-estimate of the importance of washing the hands before meat.

THE PHARISEES CONDEMNED.

The Pharisees were characterized by their attaching the greatest importance to observances, which were either altogether unsanctioned by Divine authority, or, though commanded of God, were obviously of a secondary or subordinate kind, while they altogether omitted, or very negligently performed, the most essential duties of religion and morality. They preferred the little to the great, the external to the internal, the extrinsic to the essential; and worse than all this, they substituted the one for the other, and considered their sedulous attention to uncompromised usages, and mere instrumental duties, as giving them a dispensation from the most sacred obligations of religion and morality.

Our Lord's illustrations of truth and duty, were generally distinguished by a character of great familiarity; and were frequently borrowed from, and, as it were, suggested by, the objects which were before him at the time. Looking at the nicely clean vessels which covered the dinner-table, he said, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.""

The meaning of the whole passage depends on the manner in which you explain the phrase, rendered "your inward part.""

---

6 Mark vii. 3, 4.
8 ἔσωθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν. "By ἔσωθεν, we are to understand the contents of the dish as required by acts of wickedness."—Osiander. ἔσωθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν. "Omnès quos vidi interpretètes exponunt hæc verba quod intra vos eat, i. e., animus vester; verum id, si quid video, emu scopo Domini, orationisque structura, omnino minus convenient."—Segar.
Most interpreters have supposed it to mean, the ‘inward part of the Pharisees,’—that is, their minds and hearts, their thoughts and their desires; as if our Lord had said, ‘Ye are very careful of your outside, but very careless of your inside. Your bodies are very clean, but your souls are very impure; or, in appearance you are very good, but in reality you are very bad.’ This was truth; and truth which, at other times, our Lord very plainly told them,—as, when he termed them, “whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.”

But it seems quite plain, that the contrast here, is between the outside and the inside of the vessels now on the dinner-table; on the physical purity which characterized their outside, and the moral turpitude which was connected with what was in them. This is obvious from the parallel passage in Matthew. “Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

“Your inward part,” here, is either equivalent to “the inside of your cup and platter,” or the word “your,” may be joined with the following clause, thus, “the inside is full of your ravening and wickedness.”

The meaning of our Lord seems to be, ‘You are very attentive to external cleanliness, but very careless of moral purity. These vessels are very carefully cleaned, but what is in these vessels? abominable pollution. They are full of “your ravening and wickedness”; that is, the provisions which fill these vessels have been procured by improper means. Our Lord accuses the Pharisees, generally, of “devouring widows’ houses”; of getting gain by dishonest means. ‘You are very scrupulous about the cleanliness of your vessels, but you are not so scrupulous about the means of having these vessels filled.’

The absurdity of their conduct in being so superstitiously scrupulous about the physical purity of their vessels, while they were so careless as to the moral purity of the means by which they were filled, is strongly asserted by our Lord in the words that follow, “Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?”

From misapprehending the object of our Lord, these words have generally been misinterpreted. They have been considered as equivalent to, ‘God made both the body and the soul; and if it be right to keep the body physically clean, it is still more obligatory to keep the soul morally pure. Both the body and the soul are God’s work, and they ought, according to their respective natures, to be kept in good order.’ But it seems obvious, that what
is without, and what is within, in the 40th verse, refer to the same thing, as the outside, and the inward part, of the 39th verse. Indeed, in the original, they are precisely the same words; and we have seen that, in the 39th verse, the outside, is the outside of the dinner vessel, and the inside, their contents.

The true interpretation appears to depend on the somewhat peculiar sense which the word “make” has here. It is equivalent to ‘put in proper order;’ that is, in the case before us, ‘to make clean.’ We find the word used in this way in the Septuagint. Mephibosheth is said not to have “trimmed”—literally “made,”—his beard from the time David left Jerusalem.” We use the word make in a somewhat similar way,—to make a bed is to put it in proper order for sleeping in."

The meaning seems to be, ‘How foolishly do you act in being so much taken up about the cleanliness of material things, and so little about the propriety of moral actions! Does not he who makes clean the outside, make clean the inside also? Is not a man of ordinary sense fully as careful about the cleanliness of what is put into the vessel, as about the cleanliness of the vessel itself? It is to little purpose that the vessel is clean, if the provision be polluted. If you would act consistently, and like men possessed of reason, you would be much more concerned that what fills your vessels should be free from the contamination of injustice, than that the vessels themselves should be free from physical impurity.’

The words that follow in the 41st verse, “But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you,” are, perhaps, still more difficult of interpretation than those in either of the verses which precede it. It is necessary to remark, that the phrase rendered “such things as ye have,” literally signifies, “the things which are within,” and, when looked at in its connection, is obviously descriptive of that which is in the cup and platter, that which our Lord pronounces unclean, because procured by “ravening,” that is, rapine and wickedness. It is the difficulty of making satisfactory sense out of the passage, which has led our translators to give what is, at any rate, a very unusual meaning to the phrase. Some have supposed our Lord to say, ‘You may ask me, how are the things within the cup and platter to be made clean? I answer, give your ill-gotten gains in alms, and then what remains of your property, will enable you to

14 2 Sam. xix. 24.
15 This is a common classical use of the word, as Elane, Kypke, Michælis, and Eichhorn have shown. The Hebrew word, of which pote is the representative, תַּעַיְרָה, is used in a similar way. Gen. xvi. 7; xxx. 3; xxxi. 8. Judges xvii. 15. 1 Sam. xxv. 18. 2 Sam. xii. 14; xiii. 10. Esther v. 12. Deut. xxxii. 12. Vide Gesenius Thesaur.—2 d.
16 Luke xi. 41.
17 τὰ ἐκατόρ. “Plerique inter quos et al. L Bos, τὰ ἐκατόρα explicant, quantum res, sine facultates ferunt, pro facultatibus. Ego cern Belgis, alisque malo, quae in pœculis patinisque sunt, i. e. potum cibumque. Tam solide hoc mihi probasse videtur Raphelius ut extra controversiam alem positum sit.”—Sessa. Raphelius’ note (vol. i., p. 312-18) is well worth reading.
fill your vessels with food free from pollution.' It is not, however, at all probable that our Lord would have expressed such a sentiment. He would rather have said, 'Give back to their proper owners what you have obtained by dishonest means,' than, 'give it in alms.' He would certainly never haveidden men give what was not their own to give. He hates robbery for alms, as well as for burnt-offering.

I apprehend the word sare spoken in grave irony by our Lord. It is as if he had said, 'But you have an easy way of purifying what is in your vessels, however polluted it may be by the way in which it has been acquired. Give a portion of it to the poor, and "to you"—that is, in your estimation,—"all will be pure." You will sit down with an easy conscience then to the enjoyment of your ill-gotten property.'

The Pharisees had the most extravagant notions as to the merit of alms. One Talmudical writer says, "Alms preserve from sudden death, and deliver from the condemnation of hell;" and another says, "If an impious man object to you, 'If God loves the poor, why does he not feed them?' answer him, 'That by giving alms, we may be delivered from the condemnation of hell.'"

The Pharisees have not been alone in supposing, that ill-gotten wealth may be purified by giving to religious, falsely so called, and charitable purposes. How many churches and hospitals, in the dark ages, were endowed on this principle; and is there not reason to fear, that there are still not unfrequent instances of men's attempting thus to bribe their conscience to silence, that they be enabled to enjoy their morally polluted possessions in peace!

Such seems to me the meaning of this somewhat obscure passage. The train of thought appears to be this, 'You are very careful about the external cleanliness of your vessels, but ye little consider that your daily food, which fills these vessels, is polluted, in consequence of its being procured by unworthy means—rapine and wickedness. You are fools; making clean the outside will not make clean the inside, which is the principal matter; and when you do set about purifying what is within, you foolishly suppose that giving a part of your ill-gotten property to the poor, will sanctify the rest.'

Our Lord proceeds to expose, still farther, the wretched inconsistency of the Pharisees by another instance. "But wo unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." 19

In the article of paying tithes, they were minutely exact. They not only paid tithes of corn, and wine, and oil, but of "mint and rue, and all manner of herbs." It is worthy of remark in passing, that this is one of a number of passages in

18 This is the view taken by Drusius, Erasmus, Lightfoot, and others. "Verse 41 is evidently only to be understood ironically."—SCHLEIERMACHER.

19 Luke xi. 42.
Scripture, which go to prove, that the payment of tithes, though obligatory by a divine law, was yet not compulsory, but voluntary.⁵⁰ But whilst so strict in these little matters, they were very loose in great matters. They "passed over," they neglected, they transgressed, the great laws of religion and morality. "Judgment," is just equivalent to 'righteousness' or 'justice.' 'You are guilty of fraud and dishonesty, you do not render to every man his due. You are strangers to the love of God, "with the heart and the mind, the soul and the strength." "These,"—that is, the great duties of religion and morality,—"ye ought to have done;"—they ought to have been first attended to; while, at the same time, the others, the paying tithes of "mint and rue, and all manner of herbs," "ye ought not to have left undone"—they are duties too, though duties of a far inferior order.

The elements of human character are in all ages the same, and the more striking combinations of these elements are the same also. How often do we still find men admitting, generally, the obligation of God's law, yet habitually strict in some points, and habitually loose in others, and apparently cherishing the hope, that their attention to one set of duties will compensate for their neglect of others. Wo, everlasting wo, will be to all such persons. The whole law has the same authority,—the authority of the "one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy."⁷² What he has not commanded has no authority at all, and obedience in such a case is not duty; but whatever he has commanded is equally obligatory; and he who trifles with such obligation, in any case, does it at his everlasting hazard. His partial obedience is an acknowledgment of the authority of the law and the Lawgiver, and will be adduced in evidence against him in judgment. The partial payment will be employed as proof of the whole debt. Out of his own mouth he will be judged. Why did he pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin? The answer is, God commanded it;—well then, why did he neglect judgment and the love of God? Did God not command these also? Men attend public ordinances, and say it is because they are of Divine appointment; but why do they live in the neglect of secret prayer? Has he not commanded that also? This they ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Want of consistency is the fatal fault of the religion of vast multitudes besides the Pharisees. Happy is that man who can, with an enlightened mind and a safe conscience, say, "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." Let this be the sincere and fervent prayer of us all. "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed."²²

⁵⁰ "It seems that the people were left to their own consciences in regard to the just payment of these tithes."—Kirk's "Cyclopædia."
⁷² "This admonition was given, while yet the Mosaic laws were not all expired by the 'Consummation est.'"—Selden. Vide Matt. v. 18.
²² James iv. 12.
²³ Psal. cxix. 128, 80.
Our Lord now proceeds to reprove the Pharisees, and to declare, that a wo rests on them for their extreme desire for worldly distinction and honor. "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets." The idea is more fully brought out in the parallel passage in the twenty-third chapter of the gospel by Matthew, where a discourse of similar import, but delivered at another time, is recorded. "They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi."  

The uppermost seats in the synagogue were appropriated to the rulers, so that "to love the uppermost seats in the synagogue," may be equivalent to—"to have an eager desire to possess spiritual power, honor, and authority." The synagogues were fashioned in imitation of the temple, with a central erection supported by pillars, and a space surrounding it. In the centre of this, a place was prepared for reading the law and the prophets—an elevated platform, next to which were the seats for the rulers, which were raised above the other seats. There can be no doubt that the words, thus understood, were very descriptive of the Pharisees. But as it is not improbable that the Pharisees our Lord was addressing, were all rulers, perhaps "the uppermost seats" here may refer to the highest of the seats appropriated to the rulers—the highest of the uppermost seats. For those who were rulers to occupy the seats set apart for them was in no degree wrong, but to be eager to get the most honorable of these seats showed a vain-glory mind. This is self-idolatry, which, as Mr. Henry says, is "bad anywhere, but especially in the synagogues. There to seek honor to ourselves, where we come to give glory to God, is to mock God, instead of to serve him. It savors much of pride and hypocrisy, when people do not care to go to church unless they can look fine, and make a figure there."

"By greetings or salutations in the streets or market-places," we are to understand the tokens of respect generally given to men of rank and reputation by the great body of the people. In receiving these there was nothing wrong; but to "love" them, to court them, to put a person's self in the way of receiving them, to be mortified if they are withheld, and to be elevated by their being bestowed,—all this showed a mind which unduly estimated the value of human approbation or applause. Such a temper is not only contemptible, as the token of a weak, ill-judging mind, but it is, in a moral point of view, condemnable. It is a radical defect and fault in a character, and, in a high degree, is utterly inconsistent with the very elementary principle of a truly good character—supreme regard to what is true and right, whether it pleases men or not. Accordingly, our Lord traces to this, as to one of its causes, his rejection by the Jewish rulers. "How can ye believe," says he, "which receive honor

21 Luke xi. 43.  
22 Matt. xxiii. 6, 7.
one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?\[26\]

The ruling disposition of the mind may be manifested in trifling actions; and actions, in themselves very insignificant, become important when they indicate character. The general truth intended to be conveyed in these words is of general and everlasting importance. The man who makes the approbation of his fellow-men his great object, and who subordinates everything else to the attainment of this, acts not only a very contemptible, but a very criminal part,—is an object of the Divine disapprobation,—and, if he does not repent, will assuredly be an object of the Divine vengeance.

In the next verse, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."\[27\] Our Lord charges those whom he was addressing with at once great moral depravity and great hypocrisy, and represents them, on account of the union of these two qualities, as peculiarly dangerous members of society. We are not to think of the Scribes and the Pharisees as two distinct classes of men. "Scribes and Pharisees" is just equivalent to pharisaic Scribes—Scribes who are Pharisees. Pharisee is the name of the sect,—Scribe, of the profession. A scribe,\[28\] a lettered man, was the distinctive appellation of those whose employment it was to interpret and administer Jewish law; and many of this profession belonged to the sect of the Pharisees.

Our Lord represents these pharisaic Scribes as "like graves," receptacles of corruption and loathsomeness. The words are equivalent to—"You are as morally abominable and polluting in a moral sense, as the putrifying remains of a dead carcass are in a physical sense."

But he represents them, farther, as "like graves that are not seen." Walking over, or touching a grave, was considered by the Jewish doctors as equivalent to touching a dead body; and, therefore, as inferring ceremonial pollution. To prevent persons from incautiously incurring this, which exposed them to many inconveniences, the stones which marked graves were generally whitened. When this was not the case, a person might incur ceremonial pollution, and the inconveniences connected with it, without being aware.\[29\] Now, says our Lord, 'you resemble such unwhited, and therefore unseen, graves. With all your inward depravity, you make the profession, and wear the appearance, of sanctity; you are not openly profligate, you conceal your true character, so that men are in peculiar danger from you. The poor widows, whose houses you spoil, are deluded by your pretensions to wisdom and worth. Many, deceived by your assumed sanctity, resign themselves to your guidance, and are led by you

\[26\] John v. 44.
\[27\] Luke xi. 44.
\[28\] γραμματευς.
\[29\] Numb. xix. 16.
into error and ruin, who, if they knew your real character, would
choose safer guides.'

The same, or at least a very similar truth, is illustrated by
another, and in some measure an opposite figure, in the gospel
by Matthew:—"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocre-
ties! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed
appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones,
and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear
righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and
iniquity." The general sentiment is, that those persons are
peculiarly criminal and dangerous, who, while they are under the
influence of the most depraved principles, yet maintain a decent
exterior, and that, however they may impose on their fellow-
men, they are regarded with disapprobation, and will, if they
repent not, be visited with punishment by Him who "requires
truth in the inward parts," and who, as he "searches the heart,
and tries the reigns of the children of men," "all things being
naked and open before him,"—cannot be deceived, and will not
be mocked.

It also follows, from what is said here, that he who, in doing
his duty, is the means of unmasking the hypocrite, and making
him appear in his true colors, performs an important service to
society. By making the seat of moral pollution apparent, he
diminishes the risk of extending moral contamination.

II.—THE LAWYERS CONDEMNED.

On hearing these remarks by our Lord, one of the Pharisee's
guests, who is denominated a "lawyer," addressed our Lord.
"Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master,
thus saying thou reproachest us also." These words may be
understood either as a question, or as an assertion. To under-
stand them aright, we must first endeavor to discover to what
class the speaker belonged. It has been the opinion of some
learned men that the "Scribes" were public expounders of the
law, and that "lawyers," or "doctors of the law," were private
expounders of the law. Others have supposed that the Scribes
were teachers of the law belonging to the sect of the Pharisees,
and lawyers, or doctors of the law, teachers of the law belonging
to the sect of the Sadducees. But such a distinction is unsup-
ported by any satisfactory evidence; nor is it at all probable,
from the inveterate dislike existing between the sects, that a
Sadducee should be found at a Pharisee's table. The terms
"scribe" and "lawyer" seem to have been synonymous, or, at
any rate, to have been given to the same class. The person
who, in Matt. xxiii. 3, is termed a "lawyer," is, in Mark xii. 28,
termed a "scribe;" the persons who are called, at Luke v. 17,

\[\text{Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.} \]
\[\text{Luke xi. 45.} \]
"doctors of the law and Pharisees," are, at the 21st verse, called "Scribes and Pharisees."

The facts seem to have been these:—One of the company, who had in silence heard our Lord censure the manners of the Pharisees generally, lost his temper when he brought home his accusation to the doctors of the law, to which class he belonged, and exclaimed, 'In making that statement, you cast a reproachful stigma on the order to which I belong;' or, as a question, 'Do you mean, by this statement, to cast a reflection on our order?' The appellation, "Master," or Teacher, was used, probably, sarcastically. The man seems astonished that he should be so daring as to throw out a reflection against an order so venerable as the clergy—if I may use the phrase—of the dominant sect.

Jesus had spoken only the truth, and he was not the person to eat his own words. He immediately replied, "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers;" as if he had said, 'My remarks do apply to your order with peculiar force.' To "lade men with burdens grievous to be borne," signifies, that in their interpretations of the law, which, as the apostle says, was "a yoke" which neither his contemporaries nor their fathers were able to bear, they were very rigorous; and, in addition to what was enjoined in the law, they required that all the traditions of the elders should be strictly complied with. But while they were strict in enjoining, they were lax in performing. They said, but did not. Perhaps the words refer to their rigor in those impositions which were of mere human authority. However they made void God's laws, they insisted that their traditions should be attended to. How different from the conduct of our Lord! The burden he laid on his followers was light, and his apostles followed his example.

How these men excused themselves from many of the onerous observances they exacted from others, our imperfect acquaintance with the history of the times puts it out of our power to give a definite explication by well-authenticated examples. Perhaps the best illustration we can give of it is to be found in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans:—"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law, Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou

22 Camero, Trigland, and Hoffmann in his Notes to Pictas, may be consulted as to the meaning of the term ὑμικός. It is remarkable that Luke alone, of all the evangelists, connects νομικός with φαρισαίος. Ch. vii. 30; xiv. 3.
23 Luke xi. 46. 24 Acts xv. 10. 25 Acts xv. 28; 1 Cor. vii. 28.
steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written."

An inconsistent public teacher of religion, whose practice does not correspond with his teaching, is one of the most contemptible and criminal of men. "What greater hypocrisy can there be than to press that upon others, to be believed and done, which they themselves live in unbelief of, or disobedience to? who pull down in their practice, what they build up in their preaching; who, when they are in the pulpit, preach so well that it is a pity they should ever come out; but when they are out of the pulpit, live so ill that it is a pity that they should ever come in; like bells that call others to church, but hang out of it themselves; or like direction posts that point the way to others, but stand still themselves?" To him the words of our Lord apply with awful emphasis. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant." What will such a one say when God punishes him? Ah, he must be speechless!

What follows is rather of difficult interpretation:—"Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres." The difficulty does not originate in the obscurity of particular words or phrases, for in this respect all is easy enough, but in the apparent want of consecutiveness and coherence, in the thoughts and argument.

On a cursory reading of the words, it would seem that our Lord pronounces a woe on the Pharisees, because they erected splendid monuments to those prophets who had in former ages died martyrs to the truth, and victims of the irreligion of their contemporaries; and that he adduces the fact of their thus building magnificent tombs for these prophets, as evidence of their approbation of the conduct of those who put them to death.

Now, though building monuments to the prophets was by no means so meritorious a work as the Pharisees seem to have considered it, yet, in itself, it does not appear to deserve so severe reprobation; and instead of proving that they thought their ancestors right in putting the prophets to death, it seems a very decided proof that they thought them wrong. It looked like an endeavor on their part to compensate the wrong done to the persons of these martyred saints, by doing justice to their memories. Their fathers put them to a disgraceful death, and they place them in an honorable tomb. We should not think of accusing Joseph of Arimathea, of allowing the deeds of the Jews in crucifying Jesus, and adducing as evidence of this, that he gave him an honorable burial in his own sepulchre.

Various plans have been fallen on by interpreters, to get rid of these difficulties. One of the most ingenious of these is grounded on the supposition, that ‘to build sepulchres,’ is equivalent to the expression, ‘to dig graves,’ in the sense of plotting the death of the persons referred to. ‘Woe to you, for you are preparing graves for the prophets, the divinely-inspired and commissioned teachers, such as John and myself, and my apostles who are sent to you, just as your fathers killed the prophets, the divinely-inspired and commissioned teachers who were sent to them. You give very satisfactory evidence, that you are of the same opinion with your fathers, and approve of their conduct. They killed the prophets of their age, and you dig the graves, you prepare the tombs, of the prophets of your age—you are, both literally and figuratively, the children of the murderers of the prophets—you are prosecuting the same course—you are filling up the measure of their iniquity—you are completing the work they began.’

This is no doubt ingenious, but, like many such interpretations, it is too ingenious. Had this been the only place where our Lord expressed the sentiment uttered here, we might have been less indisposed to admit this interpretation; but in the discourse recorded by Matthew, in the twenty-third chapter of his gospel, we find our Lord using the following language, and we can have no doubt that his object was to express the same idea as the words before us are intended to convey:—‘Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.’ Now it is quite plain that in the phrases, “building the tombs,” and “garnishing the sepulchres,” the reference is to the ancient prophets, whom their fathers wickedly put to death, and that the erecting and embellishing these structures were intended as tokens of respect for them, and of disapprobation of their murderers.

I apprehend the difficulty has originated principally in overlooking the great object of our Lord in the whole paragraph, which is to expose and denounce the hypocrisy of the pharisaic Scribes. It is on account of their impious hypocrisy, that he pronounces a wo on them; and the particulars referred to are not so much the crimes that exposed them to this wo, as the evidence proving that hypocrisy, which made them the objects of the peculiar abhorrence of that God who “desireth truth in the inward parts,” and which, if repentance intervened not, would certainly draw down on them the most fearful proofs of his displeasure. Of their hypocrisy he had already given striking proofs. ‘You are very careful about the physical purity of your

30 Storr. 40 Matt. xxiii. 29-32.
vessels, while you care not for the poisonous taint of God's curse which defiles their contents, from the unlawful means by which they have been filled. You tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, but pass over judgment and the love of God. You are very strict in enjoining duties on other men, and very lax in performing them yourselves.' He now adduces an additional evidence of their hypocrisy—'You profess great respect for the memory of the martyred prophets, and great disapprobation of your ancestors who put them to death, and yet you cherish the same malignant dispositions, and are about to imitate the very conduct which you so loudly condemn. How does your conduct contradict your professions? Here is another proof of your hypocrisy. Ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them; that is, as if he had said,—'You build the sepulchres of the prophets whom your fathers killed—you profess a great reverence for their characters and doctrines, and high disapprobation of their persecutors and murderers. That is the natural meaning of building and adorning their tombs, and that is the meaning you wish to put on these actions. For ye say,—"If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." Yet, notwithstanding this, ye truly bear witness that ye approve of the deeds of your fathers.'

This witness does not refer to their building and adorning the tombs of the prophets, but to the manner in which they had treated John, and were treating himself, and were to treat both him and his inspired messengers. 'You persecute, and ere long will imbrue your hands in the blood of men possessed of the same characters, invested with the same authority, and teaching the same doctrines, as those on whom you heap posthumous honors, and of whose murder and murderers you profess so strongly an abhorrence.'

The only difficulty connected with this mode of interpretation, is the connective particle "for," which joins the two clauses in the 48th verse together. The building the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers had killed, appears to be adduced as the evidence that they allowed the deeds of their fathers, when in reality it seems in its own nature, as well as in their intention, evidence of the very reverse. The true way of getting rid of this difficulty is by adverting to the fact—that the particle rendered for not unfrequently, like the Hebrew particle which it represents," is equal to although. I shall give a few examples of this; "And this is the condemnation, that," although, "light is come into the world, and," yet "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." "And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for," although, "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done."
"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." 46

"Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." 47

"And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou restest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life." 48 The meaning, then, seems to be this, 'Although you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers put to death, yet do you, by your conduct, witness that you allow, that you approve of, their conduct;' as if he had said, 'Your conduct to me, in devising my death as you are doing just now, can be vindicated only on principles which would vindicate the conduct of the opposers, and persecutors, and murderers, of the ancient prophets.'

In following up this charge, our Lord proceeds to say:—

"Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, 49 and some of them they shall slay and persecute, that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation." 50 To the satisfactory exposition of this passage, the first question that must be answered is, 'Are these our Lord's words, or are they a quotation?' There can be no doubt that the words do not resemble our Lord's ordinary style, and that they do very much resemble the style of the Old Testament prophets. The only word that does not suit them is "apostles," but we know that that word is just equivalent to 'messengers,' and might have been so translated. The prefatory clause, too, "Wherefore also said the wisdom of God," looks very like the introduction of a quotation.

Indeed, had it not been for the want of some corresponding phrase, such as, "Said the Lord," or, "Said the Lord by the prophet," in the parallel passage in Matthew, and the difficulty of saying whence the quotation is taken, I rather think there would never have been any doubt on the subject. To suppose that our

43 Exod. xiii. 17. 46 Deut. xxix. 18, 19. 47 Jer. iv. 30.
44 "It appears remarkable that, according to Matthew, the Redeemer designates some of those to be sent γραμματεῖς = the Hebrew כָּמָץ. The expression is used in contrast with the pharisaic Scribes, q. d., 'I will send you men truly acquainted with the word of God.'"—Olshausen.
Lord here speaks of himself as "the wisdom of God," and that the words, "Wherefore, the wisdom of God said to you," are equal to, 'Wherefore, I say to you,' seems to me a very harsh and unsatisfactory way of getting over the difficulty. I think it far more likely, that the usual formula of citation, "saith the Lord," has been omitted in the corresponding passage in Matthew. Such omissions occasionally occur in Scripture:—Mal. iii. 1 (where the phrase, "saith the Lord," is obviously to be supplied, as it is expressed in chap. i. 2, 13); Matt. xvii. 11; and xviii. 16. I am, therefore, disposed to consider the words before us as a quotation.

But the question naturally occurs, 'A quotation from whom, or from what?' Some have supposed that "the wisdom of God" is the name of a book, now lost, from which the quotation is made. I think it more likely, that "the wisdom of God" is used here for the wise God. We say of a wonderful event, "That was the work of the power of God—nothing but the power of God could have done that;" when the meaning obviously is, "The powerful God has effected it." We say of a valuable blessing, "It is the gift of the goodness of God," when we mean, "The bountiful God has given it;" and here "the wisdom of God said," is just 'the all-wise God had said'—he who knows the end from the beginning.

Calvin, who was a judicious interpreter, as well as a profound theologian, considers the phrase as equivalent to, "Long ago God, by the prophetic spirit, declared the truth with regard to your character and doom." He adds, "I acknowledge that you will not find this sentence, in so many words, in any of the ancient prophets; but everywhere, in the Old Testament Scriptures, God declares the contumacy of his rebellious people, and our Lord collects, in one short sentence, as it were, an epitome of what God, by his prophets, had said of the wickedness of that incurable people."

There is a passage in one of the Apocryphal books, somewhat like that now before us:—"I sent unto you my servants, the prophets, whom ye have taken and slain, and torn their bodies in pieces, whose blood I will require at your hand." But there is no reason to think that book so ancient as the days of our Lord. It seems plainly the forgery of a later age; and the passage I have quoted, as well as others—especially the beautiful passage about gathering the Jews together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, —appears to have been borrowed from the New

59 These words are not to be found, either in the Old Testament or in any Apocryphal book. There are, however, some very kindred passages: for example, 2 Chron. xxiv. 19. The similarity between our Lord's words, and the version of the LXX., is striking. Oehlhausen remarks that, "As the account of Zacharias immediately follows 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, it is still a question whether our Lord had not the citation of the Old Testament in view, and merely expanded it a little." The strongest objection to this is, that the passage in Chronicles is history. That quoted here is prophecy.

60 2 Esdras i. 92. 61 2 Esdras i. 30.
Testament. We must, then, acquiesce in Calvin’s view, or consider it as like Enoch’s prophecy; in the epistle of Jude, either as an unwritten prophetic oracle, or an oracle contained in some book no longer extant, but of undoubted, and, at the time, generally admitted, authority.

Let us now inquire into the meaning of this prediction, and its bearing on our Lord’s object. The connective particle, “therefore,” does not seem intended to intimate that this is an inference from what had been stated before, for, on looking carefully at it, it does not appear to be this. It is equivalent to, “With reference to this thing.” This is not an uncommon meaning of the term. In reference to this thing, the all-wise God has made a declaration—I will send them prophets and apostles, or messengers, and some of them they shall slay and persecute.

The 50th verse describes, not the purpose for which God was to send these prophets and messengers, but the consequence of the Jews slaying and persecuting them. It is as if he had said, “So that the blood of all the prophets, that has been shed from the foundation of the world, shall be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the temple.”

Interpreters are divided as to who this Zacharias is, of whom the ancient oracle spoke. The most probable account of the matter is, that it is the Zechariah of whose death we have an account in 2 Chron. xxiv. 17-22. It is not unlikely that Zechariah’s father had two names,—Jehoiada, and Barachiah,—as to have two names does not seem to have been an uncommon thing among the Jews; or he might be the grandson of Jehoiada, by a son called Barachiah. The reason why he is mentioned as the last of the prophets that had been killed probably is, that the oracle quoted was published soon after this event. The general meaning is, that the Jewish nation, by persisting in disobeying God, and in maltreating his inspired messengers, would, at last, draw down upon themselves a punishment so awfully severe, that it might be considered as the concentrated vengeance due for all the murders of martyred prophets and holy men in all ages.

The concluding words of the 51st verse seem to be spoken by our Lord in his own person. They are an emphatic confirmation of the awful oracle: “Verily, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.” The accumulated guilt of ages was, as it were, to become theirs, by the murder of the Messiah and his apostles; and awful was the retribution which awaited them. How accurately the event corresponded with the predic-

53 ὥσιν τοῦτο. 54 Matt. xiii. 18, 52; xviii. 23; xxi. 43. John xix. 11.
55 “The Eclectic sense of λόγος has been called in question by Fritzsche and others, but has been abundantly established by Titmanna, in his admirable work, ‘De usu Particularum in N. T.” Hermann’s note to Vigerus, and Winer’s Grammar, may be consulted.”—Robinson, in verb.
56 Zechariah was stoned at the command of King Joash [νησως] εκεινω κυριον. The θεοερείου referred to is the great altar of burnt-offering, that stood in the open air, at the entrance of the buildings properly called the Temple—ὁ ναός.
57 Vide Wetstein and Kuinoel.
tion, who does not know? Never was there a generation so guilty, and never was there a generation so punished. Read the history of the last days of the Jewish republic, as recorded by their own unbelieving historian, Josephus, and then say, if the judgments executed on the Jewish nation were not such as to fill, to the full, human nature's capacities of suffering, and if our Lord's own emphatic words were not literally fulfilled:—"For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be?"

The best illustration of these words is to be found in the parable of the vineyard and husbandmen, and in the words of the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians:—"A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandman a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others." The Jews "both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."  

Our Lord brings still another charge against the pharisaic Scribes:—"Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." He charges them with taking away "the key of knowledge"—that is, knowledge, which is the key. "The key" here is the key of the kingdom; this is plain from the parallel passage in the gospel by Matthew, where they are said to "shut up the kingdom of God against men," and from what is said to follow from their taking away the key. They locked the gates of the kingdom, so that there was no entrance. The key of the kingdom is knowledge—knowledge of the truth in reference to the design of the Messiah's advent, and the nature of his kingdom. That knowledge was to be got in

- Mark xiii. 10.
- Luke xi. 52.
- Mark xii. 1-9.
- 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.
the Old Testament Scriptures. But the pharisaic Scribes misinterpreted these Scriptures, and taught their countrymen to expect in the Messiah a temporal prince, and worldly honor, power, and pleasure, as the blessings of his reign. By their false views, they excluded themselves from the blessings of the new and better economy; and, so far as these views prevailed, they prevented others from participating in these blessings. They thus became the authors of destruction, both to themselves and to others.

These faithful statements, instead of reclaiming, irritated our Lord’s opponents:—“They began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.” But their insidious arts were vain. He opened his mouth in wisdom; and, while he fearlessly spoke the most unpalatable truth, he carefully avoided everything which might give them an advantage over him, by affording them the means either of exciting the multitude to destroy him by violence, or of drawing down on him the vengeance of the Roman government, as a seditious disturber of the public peace.

I conclude, in the words of a respected elder brother:—“Let us not turn away from this benevolent severity unprofited. Let us shun that pharisaic religion, which was, and still is, the ruin of the Jews. Let us view the law of God as the rule for the heart, as well as for the life; and as it is too broad, and strict, and spiritual to give justification or life for our imperfect obedience, let us learn by it to flee to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.’ At Christ’s bidding, let us beware of lofty pretenders to sanctity, who arrogantly assume authority over the souls of men. Meekness, modesty, mercy, and active benevolence, are the characteristics of genuine religion, in every age, and under every dispensation. Let us counteract the cruelty of those who would shut the kingdom of God against such as are desirous of entering; promote the free circulation and use of the Holy Scriptures; and unfold the grace of the Gospel, in opposition to the insufferable law of works; and having well improved the key of knowledge for ourselves, let us act in the spirit of the purest and loftiest zeal for the universal diffusion of the word of God.”

Note A, p. 310

The remarks of Alexander Knox on the subject appear to me singularly just. Speaking of a Christian of a higher order of spiritual at-

64 Dr. Bennet, the friend and biographer of the venerable Boga.
65 Lectures on Christ’s Preaching, p. 231.
tainment, he says, "The man I speak of has separated himself from the pollutions of the world, without withdrawing from its common intercourse. This, however, requires much discriminative wisdom, and unremitting watchfulness, as well as tenderness of conscience: but when the habit is gained it is invaluable. He will not go into worldly company for pleasure, because his taste is of another kind; but he will not shrink from calls of duty or propriety, because he scarcely fears the world more than he loves it. He fears it enough to make him ever watchful against its seductions, and ever solicitous to take to himself 'the whole armor of God.' But with this safeguard, he has no dread of any of its scenes; except when he should be, in any respect, a partaker 'in the unfruitful works of darkness.' When, therefore, such a person does mingle with the people of the world, he knows why he does so. It is no stealthy advance beyond the limit of his conscience, no widening of the circle which he once prescribed to himself. It is, as concurring circumstances have fully shown him, an actual part of his duty. 'In the calling,' merely, 'wherein he was called, therein he abides with God.' Acting in this simplicity, he finds frequent opportunities for useful conversation, of which he avails himself with the wisest management he can use. Being accustomed to view religion itself as in the most harmonious agreement with nature, providence, and all the higher tastes of man, he can graft wise and pious observations on subjects that would leave no opening whatever to the theological dogmatist; and, not having caught religion by the means of any party, he speaks of it solely in the language of plain sense, without danger of exciting their risibility or disgust, by any unsmoothness of phrasology. But if he should find it expedient even to be wholly silent on religious subjects (in which case he will make his stay as short as decorum or duty will allow), he will still have comfort in reflecting that he has shown by his behavior, that what the world deems over-strictness, does not necessarily contract the brow, or damp the spirits, or cramp the intellect, or blunt the mental taste, or make a man less capable of holding his place among mankind (as far as he himself judges it proper), with ease, with respectability, with courtesy, and yet with an independence of mind which no mere man of the world ever did or could exemplify."—Remains, Vol. I., pp. 152, 153.
EXPOSITION VI.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY; AND THE CHARACTER AND DESTINY OF ITS OCCUPANTS—WORTHY AND UNWORTHY.

Luke xii. 35-47.—"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." * * * * * "Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidsens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."

A distinct apprehension, and a deep impression of the varied and awful responsibilities of the christian ministry, in all who are aspiring to that office, and in all who fill it, are of the greatest importance to the general interests of Christianity, as well as to those individuals themselves, and to those portions of the christian church with which they are more immediately connected.

The want of, or the deficiency in, such apprehensions and impressions, in ministers and candidates for the ministry, may be justly considered as one cause, and a powerful one, of the low state of religion in our own country and in the christian world at large, and the general prevalence of an opposite state of thought and feeling would be at once a symptom of begun, and a security for continued, revival. At all events, just views and corresponding feelings on these subjects would prevent men from entering into the christian ministry with inadequate preparation, or from worldly or selfish motives, and would also prevent those who have entered it, from disgracing their high and holy calling, and bringing on themselves “a double destruction” by their error or immorality, their indolence or unfaithfulness.

A most impressive view of the responsibilities of the christian
minister, in an account of the nature and design of his office, and of the character and destiny of its occupants, worthy and unworthy, is presented to our minds in the words of our Lord, which I have just read. That these words have a direct reference to Christian ministers, seems obvious from an attentive examination of the context. They were spoken in the presence of a promiscuous crowd, but they were plainly addressed to a very small and a completely distinct section of that crowd. When our Lord had come out of the Pharisee's house where he had dined, "there was gathered together an innumerable multitude of people," but he did not begin to address them; he began to speak "to his disciples" (ver. 1); and from the nature of the statements made to them, there can be little doubt that the term disciples is to be understood in its restricted sense, as equivalent to his apostles, or as at farthest including along with them "the other seventy whom he had appointed to go before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come." On "one of the company" (ver. 13) interrupting him by a very unreasonable request to act the part of a civil judge, in a dispute about property, he seized the opportunity thus present of addressing the whole multitude (ver. 15) on the extreme folly of expecting real happiness from the possession of wealth, however abundant; and then turning himself again to his disciples (ver. 22), he gave them a variety of exhortations, including those which form the first part of our subject of discourse. As some of these exhortations seemed to be of a general character, Peter put the question to our Lord (ver. 41), whether they were to be considered as addressed to him and his brother disciples, or to all the multitude, and received an answer which distinctly enough intimated that they directly referred to those who stood to him in the relation of confidential servants. We conceive ourselves then not merely warranted, but obliged to consider the whole passage before us as referring to the Christian ministry.

The officials of the church of Christ are represented as the confidential servants of a prince or nobleman, who having gone from home, without informing them of the period of his return, has entrusted to them the management of his household during his absence. One class of these servants are "faithful and wise:" they regularly perform their duty to the household, giving to them their portion of meat in due season, and are constantly employed as persons expecting and preparing for their master's return. Such servants shall receive from their returned master the most substantial proofs of his approbation. Another class of these servants are unfaithful and unwise: they become during their Lord's absence careless of his will, and destroyers of that peace and good order of the family of which they were constituted guardians, smiting their fellow-servants, and eating and drinking with the drunken. Such persons shall be by their indignant master, ignominiously discarded from his service, and severely punished for their self-indulgence, oppression, and breach of
It is not my intention to give a minute exposition of the
interesting paragraph I have read, nor to illustrate all the im-
portant principles which are contained in, or may be deduced
from it, but merely to take a cursory glance of the great truths
thus figuratively taught us respecting the Christian Ministry,
and the character and destiny of its occupants—worthy and un-
worthy.

I.—THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

With regard to the Christian Ministry as an order in Christ’s
church, they are represented under the figure of a set of servants,
constituted by the master, stewards, and rulers over his house-
hold, during his absence.

They are “servants,” not lords. “We preach,” says the
apostle, “not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves
your servants for Jesus’ sake.” 1 We do not announce ourselves
to you as your masters. We proclaim Christ Jesus to be the
Master, and mindful of his words, “One is your Master, even
Christ,” we announce ourselves to you not your masters, but
your servants for his sake. We seek not to make you our prop-
erty that we may rule over you, by dictating to your faith, and
controlling your conduct; but considering you as his unalienable
property, which he “purchased with his own blood,” 2 and which
having so dearly bought he highly values, we wish to serve Him
by ministering to your improvement. This is a view of the
sacred office with which they who fill it cannot be too deeply im-
pressed. They are Christ’s servants. They have no authority,
separate from his authority. To promulgate and administer his
laws, not to make and execute laws of their own, is their legiti-
mate province.

But while they are, in all the extent and emphasis which can
belong to the term, Christ’s servants, and also in a limited and
important sense of the word, the church’s servants, for his sake,
yet they are here represented as servants who, by the Lord of the
household, have been made “rulers” in the family. They are
entrusted by him with the subordinate management of the church.
They are not princes, but they are “stewards;” they are not
“lords,” but they are guides; they must not prescribe new ways,
but they are to direct to and in “the old path, and the good
way;” they are not to appoint the work, but they are to instruct,
as they have been instructed, in the right performance of the task
which the Master has prescribed.

This subordinate rule is all derived from Christ. It is the
Lord who makes them rulers in his household. In that family
none has authority in the strict sense of the term but Hs. No
king, no parliament, no man, no body of men, has any right to
constitute men stewards over the family of God. That belongs
to Him who is by Jehovah “set as his King on the holy hill of

1 2 Cor. iv. 5. 2 Matt. xxiii. 8. 3 Acts xx. 23.
Zion,”

to Him who is set as “a Son over his own house.”

All church power comes forth from Him. He directly appointed the first office-bearers in the spiritual society which he established, and none are rightly constituted but those who are so in accordance with the principles laid down in the apostolic epistles, and exemplified in the practice of the apostolical churches.

It is of importance, however, to remark, that though called to office by the instrumentality of their brethren, their authority is derived, not from them, but from their master: by him, not by them, are they to be directed in the performance of their duties, and to him, not to them, are they accountable for the manner in which they discharge them. It is his doctrine they are to teach—his laws they are to administer. The steward or overseer, though chosen, if such be the appointment of the Master, by his fellow-servants, is to be guided in managing the household, not by their will, but by the will of their common Lord. The minister of Christ who forgets this, and seeks in his official proceedings primarily to please those who have been committed to his charge, has lost sight of his high character as a servant of Christ. A fitter object of mingled blame, contempt, and pity, does not exist, than a man, bearing the name of a Christian minister, who instead of fearlessly proclaiming and impartially administering the laws of Christ, is the slave and the executioner of the prejudices of his people.

But though the Christian minister is not to be ruled by those whom he is appointed to rule—is not to take laws from those to whom he is appointed to declare the law, he is never to forget—what the very names of his office are all intended and fitted to keep constantly before his mind—that he holds office in the church, not for his own aggrandisement and selfish interests, but for the benefit of his brethren—not to gratify his own ambition or love of ease, but to promote their spiritual improvement, to secure their ultimate salvation; and under the influence of this conviction, like the steward who finds that in promoting his master’s interest, and the happiness of his fellow-servants, in the good order of the household, it is of great importance to be on good terms with those under his care, he will endeavor to “please his brethren to edification;” nay, he will seek to “please all men in all things, not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” Such is the view here given us of the general nature and design of the Christian ministry.

II.—THE CHARACTER OF THE OCCUPANTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Let us now turn our attention to the view which the text gives us of the character of the occupants of the Christian ministry—worthy and unworthy. The two characters are placed in contrast. They have one thing in common: They “know their Lord’s

4 Psal. ii. 6. 3 Heb. iii. 6. 1 Cor. x. 33.
will." They have the means of ascertaining what he requires of them. In everything else, the one is just the reverse of the other. The characters are so drawn in the passage before us, as that to have a full view of either we must look at both. What the one wants the other has—what the one has the other wants. The negative assertions respecting the one must be converted into positive assertions respecting the other, and the positive assertions respecting the one must be converted into negative assertions respecting the other. The two characters then stand thus: The worthy occupant of the christian ministry, "knowing his Lord's will, prepares himself, and does according to his will." So far as the household is concerned, he does not "smite his fellow-servants, beating the men-servants and the maidens," but he "gives them their meat in due season." In reference to his Lord, he does not "eat and drink with the drunken," but with "loins girded about and lamp burning, he watches for his return," he continues in the discharge of his duties till the appointed period of his official service—in all this approving himself "a faithful and wise" servant. On the other hand, the unworthy occupant of the christian ministry, though "knowing his Lord's will," does not "prepare himself," neither "does according to his will," but instead of "giving to the household their meat in due season," "beats his fellow-servants," and instead of standing "with loins girded about and lamp burning," waiting his Lord's return, having "said in his heart my Lord delayeth his coming," "eats and drinks with the drunken," thus showing himself as a servant to be both unfaithful and unwise. These are the outlines of the two contrasted portraits. Let us attempt in some measure to fill them up.

§ 1. Worthy.

The worthy occupant of the christian ministry "knows his Lord's will." Though the Master of the household is absent, he has left full and particular directions for the conduct of all his servants, and especially of his stewards. These are not to be found in "the traditions of the elders," in the canons of councils, or in the decreets of popes. They are to be found in "the Scriptures of truth,"—"the word of Christ." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Possessing this repository of the doctrine and law of his Lord, the good minister endeavors to make himself master of all its stores. He "searches the Scriptures," and becomes "a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." This is requisite to his being "like unto a man who is a householder, which bringeth out of his treasure things new and old."

Thus knowing the will of his Master, the faithful servant "prepares himself." These words may either mean "gets ready

7 2 Tim. iii. 10. 8 Matt. xiii. 52.
to meet his Lord,' or, 'makes preparation for doing the will of his Lord.' We apprehend the last of these phrases brings out our Lord's meaning. The will of the Lord is the good order and happiness of his household, and, in order to secure this, the stewards must "prepare themselves." The minister who would be useful must prepare himself for usefulness. He must not act extemporé, trusting that the circumstances of the case will suggest the proper mode of conduct on any particular occasion. The good minister is a devoted student. He "gives himself to reading, meditation, and prayer," thus making himself acquainted thoroughly with the great truths he is to teach his people, the great principles which are to regulate him in his conduct towards them, and the specific laws of his Master, so that when a crisis occurs he knows what is to be done. To borrow the language of the wise son of Sirach, "he gives his mind to the laws of the Lord, and he is occupied in the meditation thereof; he seeks out the wisdom of all the ancients, and he is occupied with prophecies; he seeks out the secrets of grave sentences, and is conversant in dark parables; he gives his heart to resort early to the Lord who made him, and prays before the Most High."

And thus preparing himself, "he does according to his Lord's will." He is not a mere student. His lamp trimmed and fed with the pure oil of the sanctuary, carefully prepared in the recesses of his closet, burns brightly, and is not "put under a bushel," but "placed on a candlestick." He turns to account his secret acquisitions in the conscientious discharge of the private and public duties of his function, his duties to the household, his duties to the Master of the household.

With respect to his duties to the household, he does not "beat his fellow-servants." He does not usurp an authority over them which he does not possess. He does not attempt to impose on them his private opinions as law, and, on their refusing to pronounce his "shibboleth," apply to them "the scourge of the tongue," or beat them with the rod of a tyrannical discipline. On the contrary, he devotes himself to the humble duty appointed him by his Lord, "he gives to the household their meat in due season." The direct reference here seems to be to the communication of Christian truth to the members of the church. That is the proper nutriment of the immortal mind. It is by "the words of faith and sound doctrine" that Christians are "nourished up" and "strengthened to every good work." The good Christian minister endeavors to bring before the mind of his people pure Christian truth, and all Christian truth so far as he knows it; "not the poison of false doctrine, not the stones of unprofitable doctrine, but the wholesome nourishing food of sound doctrine." And he endeavors to bring this before their mind in as clear and impressive a manner as possible,—desirous that the food may be palatable as well as nourishing,—presenting the "dainties" of divine doctrine, if not "in a lordly dish."

* Eccles. xxxix. 1, &c.
a clean vessel," and, like the ancient "Preacher" while teaching
the people knowledge, "seeking to find out acceptable words." 10
Farther, he takes care that the food shall not only be wholesome
but seasonable.—He "gives them their meat in season;" clear
exposition for the ignorant, satisfactory evidence for the doubt-
ing, cogent persuasion or strong stimulus for the indolent, abun-
dant consolation for the afflicted. He "preaches the word, is
instant in season and out of season," 11 and, though he will not
"beat his fellow-servants," yet does he not spare "to reprove and
rebuke," to "warn them that are unruly," as well as to "comfort
the feeble-minded and support the weak." 12

While the direct reference is to instruction, I have no doubt
that is mentioned as the leading duty to the household, to intimate
that the good steward attends to all his duties, that he looks to
the order and peace of the household as well as to their comfort-
able maintenance. And indeed the most effectual way in which
a christian minister can promote these, is by endeavoring to
bring his people under the sanctifying, pacific influence of "the
truth as it is in Jesus."

With respect to his duties to his Master, the christian minister
is like a servant who does not "eat and drink with the drunken,"
but who stands "with loins girded about and lamp burning,"
waiting the return of his Master. His spirit is not the spirit of
self-indulgence, which leads a man "to please himself;" it is his
Master’s spirit—a self-sacrificing spirit. He is a true disciple, and
has well learned the first lesson of discipleship, "to renounce him-
self." 13 It is not a worldly spirit, leading him to find his happiness
in secular pursuits, pleasures, and associations; on the contrary,
doing violence to the natural desire of ease, "mortifying his mem-
bers which are on the earth," 14 and yielding himself up to the
"powers of the world to come,"—the influence not of "the things
that are seen and temporal, but of the things that are unseen and
eternal," he stands in an attitude of expectation and preparation.
He believes that his Lord is coming, and that "his reward is with
him;" and he performs all his duties with a reference to his com-
ing. The Judge is in his estimation "before the door;" the Re-
deemer is "on his way," and though his arrival may be at the
distance of many an age, Faith’s piercing eye beholds the prepared
triumphal procession already marshalled, and proclaims incessantly
in his heart, "Behold, he cometh." He knows that if he be a
steward, then will be his reckoning; if he be a husbandman, then
will be his harvest; if he be a soldier, then is he to receive his
crown. Whoever then may doubt "as to the coming of the
Lord," and ask, "Where is the promise of his coming? for, since
the fathers fell asleep, all things remain even to this day," 15 he re-
sists the suggestions of "the evil heart of unbelief," and, under
the power of that principle which makes future things present,
and unseen things visible, he "holds fast the confidence and re-

10 Eccles. xii. 10. 11 2 Tim. iv. 2. 12 1 Thess. v. 14.
13 Matt. xvi. 24. 14 Col. iii. 5. 15 2 Pet. iii. 4.
joicing of his faith,” that “He who should come will come, and will not tarry.”

And this expectation of the Lord leads to preparation for the Lord. He faithfully delivers his Master’s message, and performs all the duties assigned him, for he knows that when the Lord comes, fidelity will be abundantly rewarded, and unfaithfulness severely punished. He is diligent as well as faithful, knowing that when He cometh “he will give to every man according to his work;”—that “he who hath sowed sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he who hath sowed bountifully shall reap bountifully.” He is not “weary in well doing,” but is “steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;” knowing that when the Lord comes, “his labor” shall be found not to have been “in vain.” He is not moved from his duty either by the fear of human censure, or the hope of human applause, for he feels that “it is a very little thing for him to be judged of man’s judgment: there is one that judgeth him, that is the Lord.” He cherishes a cordial regard for all his brethren in Christ. He dares not “grudge” against any of them. “The Judge standeth before the door.” He is not impatient amid the trials and afflictions—some of them, it may be, very annoying—to which he is exposed; but “as the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for it, till he receives the early and latter rain”—so he also is “patient and establishes his heart, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

Such was the conduct of Paul and his apostolic brethren. “We labor,” says he, “that whether present or absent we may be accepted of Him, for we must all appear”—we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. It was this which gave so deep a pathos to their exhortations to perishing sinners. “Knowing the terrors of the Lord,” “when he shall come in flaming fire,” “they persuaded men.” It was this which made them so indefatigable in their labors for the salvation of the elect of God. “Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you;” “for which cause we faint not.” With the coming of the Lord constantly before the mind, they “renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, not handling the word of the Lord deceitfully,” but cheerfully “spending and being spent” in their Master’s service, desirous above all things that they might be “found of him in peace at his coming,” and receive his approving smile and cordial welcome—“well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

The good minister continues in the discharge of his duty till

---

18 Heb. x. 37. 19 1 Cor. xv. 58. 20 James v. 7. 21 2 Cor. v. 11. 22 Rev. ii. 23. 23 1 Cor. iv. 3. 24 καὶ αὐτίκα ἐγρήγορε. 25 2 Cor. iv. 14, 16. 26 2 Cor. ix. 6. 27 James v. 9. 28 2 Cor. v. 10. 29 2 Cor. iv. 2.
the appointed period for the termination of his service. When
the Lord comes, he finds the faithful servant working and watch-
ing “with his loins girded and his lamp burning.” The good min-
ister does not abandon his post, nor relinquish his work, nor in-
termitt his watching. He not only “gives himself wholly” to his
duties, but he “continues in them.” “He endures to the end.”
His spirit is finely expressed in the reply of the great reformer of
Geneva, when urged by his friends to remit somewhat of his
ministerial labors—“What, would you have my Master find
me idle?”

In all this the good minister of Christ acts the part of “a
faithful and wise steward.” The word “faithful” is used in two
senses in the New Testament—“full of faith,” and “distinguished
by fidelity.” In both senses it is applicable to the good minister.
He “believes, and therefore speaks:” and he is not only a be-
liever, but “full of faith;” he has clear extended views of divine
truth, and its evidence. His mind is full of the Gospel—and his
heart penetrated by its influences. He is also distinguished by
his fidelity. He is “faithful” like his Lord, “to Him who ap-
pointed him”—“He keeps the faith.” The two things are
closely connected; the first produces the second, and both are
strongly manifested in the consistent conduct of the good min-
ister of Christ, for in the course of his ministry, both faith and
faithfulness are strongly and variously tried. “It is required of
stewards that they be found faithful,” and the worthy occupant
of the christian ministry is faithful. In the well-chosen words
of an old divine, “He seriously designs the honor of Jesus
Christ, and not his own—delivers ‘the whole counsel of God,’
and not his own fancies and conceits, follows Christ’s institutions
and adheres to them; regards the meanest, reproofs the highest,
and is no respecter of persons.”

But he is not only faithful, but also wise. He manifests much
wisdom in the manner in which he performs his duties. There
are very few situations in which a higher degree of wisdom is
required, than in teaching the doctrine and law of Christ, and
discharging the various duties of the pastoral office; and many
a humble christian pastor shows a depth of penetration and a
soundness of judgment, which, exercised in other circumstances,
might have made him celebrated as a philosopher, a judge, or a
statesman. “In guiding the flock of Christ,” as Mr. Henry says,
there is need of “skilfulness of the hands” as well as of “in-
tegrity of heart.” Honesty and diligence may be enough in
some situations, but wisdom is necessary in a good steward.
The good minister also proves himself to be wise in preferring
the laborious, self-denying, course which he follows. He has
made a just calculation. The proverb is true in reference to
him, “He that is wise shall be wise for himself.” It often ap-
ppears even now, it will be made very evident hereafter, that

28 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16.
29 1 Cor. iv. 2.
30 Heb. iii. 2.
31 2 Tim. iv. 7.
32 Henry.
33 Prov. ix. 12.
in preferring the toils and anxieties of a faithful, to the comparative ease and enjoyment of an unfaithful ministry—he has chosen the good part. Those are "wise who win souls,"* and their wisdom, though often questioned in a world of fools, shall be universally acknowledged in the regions of perfect knowledge. "Those who are" thus "wise shall shine as the firmament"—"they who have" proved their wisdom by "turning many to righteousness, as the stars in the firmament for ever and ever."**

§ 2. Unworthy.

Let us now turn our attention to a less inviting, but not less interesting and important, subject of contemplation,—the character of the unworthy occupant of the Christian ministry. He, too, "knows his Lord's will." By this expression, we are not to understand that unfaithful ministers are always, or usually, well informed with regard to the will of Christ as revealed in his word. The reverse is generally the truth. They are, for the most part, men of very limited attainments in biblical and theological knowledge; and where it is otherwise, their views of divine truth are generally dangerously mistaken. They are often, usually, "blind leaders of the blind;"*** though there are not wanting instances of men distinguished for their acquaintance both with Scripture and theology as a science, maintaining orthodox views, too, and zealous, even to rancor, in their support, who have exhibited in their temper and conduct an exact counterpart of the description here given. In every case they have the means of knowing their Master's will. They have the Bible in their hands. Their previous training gives them peculiar advantages for understanding it. They have time for studying it, and, indeed, their leading duty is to seek to know their Master's will, that they may teach it to others. At any rate, they all know that this is his will, that they should "occupy till he come,"** "feed the flocks over which they are made overseers,"*** and "make full proof their ministry."****

With this knowledge, which he cannot but have, the unfaithful minister "does not prepare himself." He is generally negligent in his studies; his mind is occupied with pursuits which do not well harmonize with literary occupations; or, if he be given to study, the objects of his research are not such as are fitted to prepare him for doing his Master's will,—they generally lead in an opposite direction. And not "preparing himself," he does not do his Master's will. He neglects his public and private duties, or performs them in so perfunctory, deficient, or positively improper a manner, as makes them useless, or worse than useless.

Instead of giving meat to those of the household under his care, he beats them. He assumes an authority to which he has no claim. Instead of administering the law of their common Lord,
he insists on giving law himself; and if his fellow-servants will not submit to his dictates, he calumniates them as heretics and schismatics; applies to them the scourge of the tongue, "even sharp and bitter words;" prostitutes the ordinance of Christian discipline by excommunicating "those who are of the household of faith;" and, when circumstances permit, calls in the aid of the civil power to attack the property and injure the persons of those who will not submit to his usurped authority. It is most humbling to think that men calling themselves christian ministers should have acted such a part. But there can be no doubt of the fact. Witness the persecutions of the Waldenses and Albigenses by the Popish clergy; witness the persecutions of the Puritans and Nonconformists by the prelatic clergy in England; witness the persecutions of our Covenanting ancestors by the same clergy in Scotland. Alas! how exact a picture does the following passage in ancient prophecy exhibit of what has often taken place,—of what is at this moment taking place in nominally christian churches:—"Wo to the shepherds that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost: but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." The cases referred to in the text are extreme ones, but wherever there is a heady, high-minded, overbearing, unforgiving spirit, persecuting spirit breaking forth in malignant inhumanity, railing accusation, and contemptuous abuse against brother ministers and fellow-Christians, there is "beating the fellow-servants;" and this forms a very common feature in the character of the unfaithful minister.

As he acts inconsistently with the will of his Master in his behavior towards the household, so he equally disregards those duties of which the Master himself is the direct object. Instead of "standing with girded loins and lamp burning," he "eats and drinks with the drunken." For self-denial there is self-indulgence, and instead of subjection to "the powers of the world to come," there is entire subjugation of mind and heart to "the present evil world." A minister not under the influence of the religion he professes, naturally seeks for associates among worldly men. He is "of the world;" he "loves the world," and "the world" loves him, for it "loves its own." Nothing more decidedly marks the character of a minister as unfaithful, than habitual, exclusive, chosen, association with worldly men.

But he not only associates with them, he goes along with them in their criminal pursuits. "He eats and drinks," ay; "is drunken with the drunken." He feasts and carouses with them. This statement has often been literally verified. In the worst

40 Ezek. xxxiv. 2, &c.
41 John xv. 19.
ages of the Roman Catholic Church, the intemperance and impurity of the clergy were a proverb; and it cannot be denied, though it must be spoken with sorrow and shame, that it is by no means impossible, in our own favored country, Great Britain, and in churches calling themselves reformed, to find in the ministry men of whose character and conduct the words before us exhibit but too accurate a portrait. The character here sketched in bold relief belongs, however, to many whose exterior deportment in no degree trespasses against decorum. Every minister, though neither persecutor, nor glutton, nor drunkard, in the ordinary sense of the words, incurs the guilt here described, who is overbearing and tyrannical, who is intoxicated with the love of the world in any of its forms, and who spends that time and devotes that attention to the pursuits of worldly literature, ambition, or pleasure, which ought to be dedicated to the "feeding the flock of Christ," and preparing for meeting with him as "the chief Shepherd."

By acting in this manner, the unworthy occupant of the sacred office makes it plain that he is neither "faithful nor wise." He is "not full of faith;" he is an unbeliever, not it may be an infidel, in the ordinary sense of the word, but a man to whom the realities of the Gospel have never been anything else than mere words or abstract notions, to whom "the words of the truth of the Gospel" has never "come with demonstration of the Spirit and with power." He is not faithful. No, his whole character and conduct is a lie to God and to man. He is unfaithful to him whom he acknowledges as his Master, and equally unfaithful to the solemn pledges which he has given the Church and the world by assuming the sacred profession. And he is not wise. Oh! it must be fearful miscalculation which can bring such a man into, or keep such a man in, the Christian ministry. Contempt is very often the sentiment which his conduct draws forth even here, to an extent that he is little aware of; and of all the victims of everlasting shame in the regions of retribution, the most pitiable, and the least pitied, is likely to be the unfaithful minister of Christianity. Double will be the perdition of the false Christian, —tenfold the perdition of the false Christian minister.

III.—THE DESTINY OF THE OCCUPANTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

It only remains now that we shortly attend to the view given in the text of the destiny of the occupants of the Christian ministry, worthy and unworthy. The faithful servant shall be "blessed when his Lord comes." His Lord shall "gird himself and make him sit down to meat, and shall come forth and serve him." "He will make him ruler over all that he hath." The unfaithful servant shall be "cut asunder," "have his portion

42 1 Cor. ii. 4.
appointed him with the hypocrites and unbelievers,” and be beaten with many stripes.” The reward and the punishment here referred to are represented in the parable as conferred and inflicted at “the coming of the master. There can be no reasonable doubt that “the coming of the master” represents “the coming of our Lord.” By some, “the coming” referred to has been considered as the destruction of the Jewish polity: by others, the death of the individual minister. There are insuperable objections to the first mode of interpretation, and I do not think that the death of individual saints is ever represented in the New Testament as “the coming of the Lord.” They go to be with Him then. The coming of the Lord here, as usually in the gospels and epistles, is His final coming to judge the world, and put a solemn termination to the present order of things. At the same time, as no change of character takes place in the intermediate state—as judgment finds men as death leaves them, the Saviour is represented when coming, as finding his servants just in the attitude in which they left the world. The descriptions apply in all their extent to the state of things consequent to the resurrection; it is then that the reward will be fully conferred—then that the punishment will be fully inflicted; but immediately on death, the faithful servant is rewarded, and the unfaithful servant punished; and the reward and the punishment in the intermediate period between death and the resurrection, and after it, differ rather in degree than in kind. Keeping these observations in view, let us attend to these two most impressive statements.

§ 1. Worthy.

And first of the destiny of the faithful minister. “He is blessed”—emphatically “blessed.” “Blessed are” all “who die in the Lord; yea saith the Spirit”——but peculiarly blessed is the minister of Christ who dies at his post—“with his loins girt” as a servant—or with his shield on his arm, and his sword in his hand, as a soldier. “Next to the honor,” as Mr. Henry says, “of those who die on the field of battle, is the honor of those who die on the field of labor.” To die for Christ’s cause is the highest glory; the second is, to die in Christ’s service. The faithful minister is blessed, for he shall not only “rest from his labors,” but be abundantly rewarded. His reward is described in a manner suited to the whole parabolical representation. His Lord shall “gird himself and make him sit down to meat, and shall come forth and serve him.” Who can read this, and remember who that Lord is, who acts so condescending and kind a part—“the Only-begotten of God,” “the brightness of the Divine glory, “the King of kings, the Lord of lords,” “the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ,” without in devout astonishment exclaiming, “Is this the manner of men, O Lord God?” The general idea is

45 2 Sam. vii. 19.
plain enough, that they shall be introduced into a state of complete repose, high honor, and rich enjoyment, that this will be the obvious work of their divine Master, and that in the manner of doing it, he will give the most astonishing manifestations of condescension and love. "This promise," says the learned and pious Bengel, "I regard as the greatest of any in the Bible, and I take the words in a kind of literal meaning, that is, as a bridegroom on his wedding day scruples not to wait on his guests, and to converse in affectionate familiarity with them all, so will Jesus act in the world to come, 'when the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.' 44

Another figurative representation of the reward of the good minister, is that of the faithful servant being, as a recompense for his fidelity, made ruler over the whole of his master's estate. "He will make him ruler over all that he hath." Here, as in the former figure, the minute details are hid from us by the dazzling cloud of brightness, which even to the eye of faith, covers the paradise of God; but the general meaning is not difficult to apprehend. The words certainly indicate that faithful ministers shall receive peculiar and appropriate rewards—rewards of a kind which shall strongly mark the regard the Lord has for them, and the confidence he reposes in them—rewards resembling those bestowed on a faithful servant by a grateful master, when he raises him to a station of higher responsibility and greater honor.

We are much in the dark respecting the economy which is to be introduced at the coming of the Lord. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be;"45 but there can be no doubt, that in "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 46 there will be the most perfect order and happiness, and that his faithful servants may be employed in a manner we cannot distinctly understand, as instruments in producing and maintaining this harmony and felicity.

I cannot conclude this part of the subject without placing before you a finished picture of the happiness of the rewarded faithful minister, by the hand of a master. "Such is the mysterious condescension of divine grace, that although it reserves to itself the exclusive honor of being the fountain of all, yet by the employment of human agency in the completion of its designs, it contrives to multiply its gifts and to lay a foundation for eternal rewards. When the church, in the perfection of beauty, shall be presented to Christ as a bride adorned for her husband, the faithful pastor will appear as the friend of the bridegroom, who 'greatly rejoices because of the bridegroom's voice.' His joy will be 'the joy of his Lord'; inferior in degree, but of the same nature, and arising from the same sources; while he will have the peculiar happiness of reflecting that he has contributed to it—contributed as a humble instrument to that glory and felicity of which he will be conscious he is utterly unworthy

44 Burk's Mem. of Bengal, p. 397. 45 1 John iii. 2. 46 2 Pet. i. 11.
to partake. To have been himself the object of mercy, to have been the means of imparting it to others, and of dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ, will produce a pleasure which can never be adequately felt or understood, until we 'see him as he is.' From that oneness of spirit, from that inseparable conjunction of interests which will then be experienced in its utmost extent, will arise a capacity of sharing the triumph of the Redeemer, and of participating in the delight with which he will survey his finished work when a new and fairer creation shall rise out of the ruins of the first. 'And is this the end,' he will eclaim, 'of all my toils and watchings, my expostulations with sinners, and my efforts to console the faithful! and is this the issue of that ministry under which I was often ready to sink! and this the glory of which I heard so much, understood so little, and announced to my hearers with lisping accents and a stammering tongue!' Well may it be styled 'glory to be revealed.' Auspicious day! on which I embarked in this undertaking, on which the love of Christ, with a sweet and sacred violence, impelled me to 'feed his sheep, and to feed his lambs.' With what emotion shall they, who being entrusted with so holy a ministry, shall find mercy to be faithful, hear that voice from heaven—
'Rejoice and be glad, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready!' With what rapture shall they recognize amid an 'innumerable multitude,' the seals of their ministry, the persons whom they have been the means of conducting to that glory!"—"To have co-operated in any degree towards the 'accomplishment of the purpose of Deity,' 'to reconcile all things to himself,' by reducing them to the obedience of his Son, which is the ultimate end of all his works; to be the means of recovering, though it were but an inconsiderable portion of a lapsed and degenerate race, to eternal happiness, will yield a satisfaction exactly commensurate to the force of our benevolent sentiments, and the degree of our loyal attachment to the Supreme Potentate. The consequences involved in 'saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins,' will be duly appreciated in that world, where the worth of souls and the malignity of sin are fully understood; while to extend the triumphs of the Redeemer, by forming him in the hearts of men, will produce a transport which can only be equalled by the gratitude and love they shall feel towards the source of all their good.'"

§ 2. Unworthy.

Let us now for a little turn our thoughts to the destiny of the unworthy occupant of the christian ministry. Deep has been his guilt, and dreadful will be his punishment.—He shall be "cut asunder." By some interpreters there has been supposed

to be a reference here to a horrible mode of capital punishment occasioning extreme suffering,—the cutting or sawing the living body into pieces;" others have considered the phrase as equivalent to 'he shall be destroyed.' We are disposed to think that this figure, like all the rest, is in keeping with the parable of which it forms a part. The servant is spoken of as alive after he has undergone what is termed "cutting asunder." It consists with the rule and usage of the language to interpret it of his being "cut off," "dissolved" from the family in which he has acted so unworthily a part.—He is "cast out," publicly and disgracefully discarded. His indignant Master says, "Depart, I know you not." He now feels the true import of that "excommunication" with which he attempted to punish better men than himself. He is "Anathema Maranatha.""22

While cast out of the family "his portion is appointed him with the hypocrites,""23 with false pretenders, a class peculiarly hateful to him who "desires truth in the inward part,"—"with the unbelievers," rather with the perfidious," who have broken their engagements both to God and to man. And it is his fit place; for the honor of God, the cause of truth, the interests of souls, were put into his hands; he accepted these trusts, and basely betrayed them all. In the prison of hell, classed with "the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, most underfoot and down-trodden vassals of perdition""24 must he have his everlasting abode. "This pertaineth to him as the portion of his cup."

And there "he is to be beaten with many stripes." His damnation shall be no ordinary damnation, and especially his punishment shall be much more severe than that of those who, through his unfaithfulness, have "also come into that place of torment." His conduct in the house of his Master necessarily led to disorder and disobedience. Those whom he ought to have taught the will of the Lord remaining ignorant of it, or being led to form fatally incorrect views of it, have neglected to do His will, and have been involved in the dreadful consequences of disobedience. Nor is this at all unjust; they ought to have known their Lord's will; they had the means of knowing the Lord's will; it is therefore meet that they should be beaten. But they will be beaten with comparatively "few stripes;" while many and unabated shall be the strokes of Divine vengeance on the man on whom lies the foul guilt of the blood of the souls of unwarned or deluded sinners. They must "die in their iniquity, but there blood will be required at the hand" of the faithless watchman."—Such is the doom of the unfaithful minister.

The reflections which force themselves on the mind after thus

22 Heb. xi. 37. 2 Sam. xii. 31. Sueton. Calig. xxvii.
23 Suenec, Beza, Bonnet.
24 1 Cor. xvi. 22.
25 Matt. xxiv. 51.
26 Exek. xxxiii. 8.
contemplating the Christian ministry, and the conduct and destiny of its occupants, worthy and unworthy, are numerous and interesting. I shall content myself with merely noticing a few of them.

1. With what solemn caution should the holy ministry be approached and entered on! Oh, how heavy are its responsibilities! how difficult are its duties! how tremendous are its results! The words of the apostle James should be constantly sounding in the ears and pressing on the hearts of all who are preparing for the sacred office:—"Brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive greater condemnation."56 In this apostolical injunction the word masters is opposed not to servants, but to scholars or disciples; condemnation means judgment, and the force of the whole exhortation may be thus given:—"Be not many teachers, knowing that we—we that are teachers—shall be subjected to a stricter scrutiny, a severer judgment, than those who occupy a private station in the church." The caution seems to have been drawn forth by certain novices—late converts to Christianity, more zealous than considerate, more forward than wise, aspiring to or even assuming the office of teachers, when, to say the least, they were but very imperfectly qualified for discharging its duties; but, like all inspired exhortations, though rising out of, and peculiarly suited to, an existing conjecture of circumstances, it embodies a great general principle, applicable in all countries and in all ages,—the principle that the Christian ministry has awful responsibilities. And it is meet that it should be so. The honor of the great Master, and the interests of eternity—of the eternity of numerous—innumerable men, are most deeply involved in the right or the wrong discharge of its functions.

The station of a Christian minister is an honorable one; the most honorable, likely, in the estimation of an angel, that man can be invested with; but it is proportionally difficult and hazardous. It is dangerous to undertake it rashly, as it is ruinous to occupy it unfaithfully. Ministers, as well as their people, must be subjected to a solemn investigation, to an impartial judgment. Both the work and the workmen must be tried. "Every man's (i.e. plainly every minister's) work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved as by fire."57 Thus even among ministers, on the whole faithful, there will be a difference: "Every man receiving his own reward according to his own labor."58 Solemn as are the feelings which the anticipation of such a trial of the work, and of its results, is calculated to awaken, still more overwhelmingly awful is the prospect of the judgment of the work-

56 1 Cor. iii. 13-15.
57 1 Cor. iii. 8.
man, and its consequences. The secrets of their hearts will be disclosed, their principles of action will be scrutinized, and according as they meet the approbation or disapprobation of the Judge, shall they "enter into the joy of their Lord," to possess "a greater degree of glory than common Christians are made partakers of;" or have their "place appointed with the hypocrites" and "the perfidious," the most degraded portion of lost immortals.

2. How powerful are the motives and encouragements to diligence and fidelity in discharging the christian ministry! No office, as we have seen, can be more dignified. None affords opportunities for a higher kind, or for a greater measure, of usefulness. In none is failure more disgraceful and ruinous. In none does success end in equal glory and felicity. Let the minister be unfaithful, and he will ruin himself, and those who hear him—ruin them for ever. Let the minister be faithful, and he will "save himself, and those who hear him,"—save them for ever. Oh! the withering look of disapprobation and contempt with which "the Chief Shepherd, when he appears," will regard the faithless pastor. Oh! the fulness of esteem and affection that will beam in his countenance when he turns himself towards those "whose hearts were honest in the sacred cause." How awful to have lost immortals accusing and cursing us as the authors of their destruction for ever! How transporting to be gratefully recognized as the instruments of conveying to our fellow-men blessings, the true nature of which can be known only by enjoyment, and the full value of which cannot be fully estimated by the most enlarged faculties throughout eternal ages! What christian minister, allowing these realities to exercise their due influence on his mind, does not "rejoice with trembling" in occupying an office so holy—so big with happiness or misery—with glory or with shame to himself, and, it may be, to innumerable immortal beings? Looking merely at its difficulties and hazards, well might he despondingly say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and be tempted to exclaim, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name;" but when he looks at the power and grace of his Master, and at the glorious results of faithful service, should he not say, "Having received such a ministry, I faint not?" Should he not resolve to "give full proof of his ministry,"—to "be instant in season and out of season,"—to "count not even his life dear to him that he may finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he has received from the Lord Jesus to fulfil it,"—"to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection, lest, having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway,"—to "be faithful to death, that he may obtain the crown of life"?

3. How strong are the claims which christian ministers have on the prayers of their people! The importance and difficulty of the ministerial duties, the innumerable immeasurably good or

60 1 Cor. ix. 27.  
61 Rev. ii. 10.
bad consequences which must result on earth, in heaven, or in
hell—in time and throughout eternity, and the deep interest
which they and their families, as individuals, have in the right
and efficient discharge of these duties; all call on the members
of christian churches to be frequent and fervent in prayer for their
ministers, that they may be preserved from every degree of—
every approach to—unfaithfulness, and that they may be enabled
to act every part of the faithful affectionate pastor—the intrepid
and skilful soldier of Christ Jesus. The apostles frequently re-
quest the prayers of their christian brethren. Ministers in these
later ages surely stand as much in need of the prayers of their
people as the apostles did. I present a claim for myself and for
my brethren, of which I am sure you must feel the justice, and
which, I trust, you will readily grant—when I say, "Brethren,
pray for us. Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience,
willing in all things to live honestly. Pray for us that utterance
may be given us, that we may open our mouths boldly, to make
know the mystery of the Gospel as we ought to speak." Nay,
"I beseech you brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and
for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with us, in your
prayers to God for us"—"that the word of the Lord may have
free course and be glorified," "and that we may be delivered
from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not faith."

EXPOSITION VII.

FIGURATIVE VIEWS OF THE PURPOSE OF OUR LORD'S MISSION: OF THE MEANS OF GAINING IT; AND OF HIS FEELINGS IN REFERENCE TO BOTH.

Luke xii. 49, 50.—“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”

A careful reader of the New Testament cannot fail to observe that many of our Lord’s statements respecting future events, especially in reference to the design of his mission, and the means by which that design was to be accomplished, could, at the time they were made, from the figurative, and often enigmatical, language adopted by him, be but very imperfectly, if at all, understood by those to whom they were addressed; while, at the same time, this very figurative and enigmatic style which occasioned the obscurity, was fitted to excite attention and secure recollection, so that, when the events predicted actually occurred, not only was the meaning of the predictions clearly unfolded, but the supernatural knowledge and the divine mission of him who uttered them were satisfactorily established. I refer to such declarations as the following:—“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” “When the Son of man is lifted up, then shall ye know that I am he.” “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me.”

These things our Lord spoke “in proverbs.” He knew that those whom he addressed were not at the time able to bear the truths couched under these figurative expressions, had they been stated in plain terms. He did not mean such sayings to be fully understood at the period they were spoken; but he did mean, that, though not understood, they should be remembered. He meant that his sayings should sink into the ears and into the hearts of his disciples, that when the light of fulfilment made the meaning of the prediction palpably obvious, they might recollect

1 John ii. 19; iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32, 24; xvi. 19.
what he said to them, and, instead of being stumbled at events
very different from, in many cases directly opposite to, what
their national prejudices, and misapprehension of Old Testament
prophecy, had led them to anticipate, might find in these events
a corroboration of his claims, and a confirmation of their own
faith. "In this they partook of what may be considered as a
general character of our Lord's teaching,—the impressing indelibly,
by parable, proverb, maxim, or seeming paradox, truths but very
imperfectly understood, but which would grow clearer as the
divine life was formed within, and become an ever-increasing
source of spiritual light."

To this remarkable class of passages referred to, our text
obviously belongs. "I am come to send fire on the earth; and
what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be
baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"
These words must have excited eager attention, they must have
been heard with deep interest, by those to whom they were origin-
ally spoken; but they could convey to their minds no very dis-
tinct meaning. The disciples must have felt equally that they
could not understand them, and that they could not forget them.
It was not long till the mystery was unfolded, the enigma solved.
The event explained the prediction; and it then became evident
at once why the prediction had been given, and why it had been
given in so peculiar a form.

Let us endeavor, in the light of accomplishment, to ascertain
the meaning of this very remarkable oracle. It naturally divides
itself into two parts: the first referring to the design of our Lord's
mission, and his feelings in reference to that design,—"I am come
to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?"
the second, to the means by which this end was to be accomplished,
and his feelings with regard to these means,—"But I have a bap-
tism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be
accomplished!" I shall turn your attention shortly to these two
parts of the divine oracle in their order.

1.—OF THE DESIGN OF OUR LORD'S MISSION, AND HIS FEELINGS
IN REFERENCE TO IT.

Let us first, then, consider the view here given us of the design
of our Lord's mission, and of his feelings with regard to this de-
sign. "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if
it be already kindled?"

And first, here, of the design of our Lord's mission,—"I am
come to send fire on the earth." The design of our Lord's mission
is often stated in plain terms by himself and his disciples. The
substance of all these statements is, that he came to destroy igno-
rance and error, sin and misery—those works of the Devil, and

2 Neander.
3 "Ignis ille non est nativus terrae. Elg non in ut in versu 51."—Bengel.
make men wise, and good, and happy, by restoring them to the
knowledge, and favor, and fellowship of God.

The description of the design of our Lord's mission contained
in the text is highly figurative. The first step towards obtaining
possession of any truth intended to be conveyed by a figure, is a
distinct apprehension of the figure itself. Let us inquire, then,
what is the literal meaning of the words rendered "I am come to
send fire on the earth." It may mean—"I am come to cast fire
on the earth, to strike the earth with lightning, to call down fire
from heaven to consume its guilty inhabitants;' or, 'I am come
to kindle a fire on earth.' Neither of these senses seems to be
satisfactory. The first would naturally enough describe what shall
be one design of our Lord's second coming, when he shall come
"in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God,
and that obey not his gospel." But whatever misery, through
man's unbelief and impenitence, may be occasioned by our Lord's
first coming, its design is wholly benignant; —"God sent not his
Son into the world to condemn" or punish "the world; but that
the world through him might be saved;" "I came not," says our
Lord, "to judge;" i. e., to condemn and punish, "the world, but
to save the world." The second sense, that of kindling a fire on
the earth—i. e., somewhere on its surface, whatever mystical meaning
might be given to the words—seems at once too indefinite and
too limited, to answer the exigencies of the passage.

I am disposed to think that the true literal meaning of the
words is, 'I am come to set the earth on fire; I am come to pro-
duce a general conflagration.' If this be admitted to be the literal
meaning of the terms, there can be very little difficulty in fixing
on their spiritual signification. They indicate that his religion,
his doctrine, accompanied by his Spirit, should rapidly, and at
length universally, overspread the world, diffuse itself among
mankind, and either thoroughly impregnate with its own spirit,
or utterly consume, all human institutions,—purifying whatever
will submit to purification, and destroying what is incapable of
purification.

"Fire" is, in Scripture, the emblem both of the word and of the
Spirit of God. "Is not my word a fire and a hammer, breaking
the rock in pieces?" The cloven tongues of fire, the forked light-
ning flames, which sat on the heads of the apostles on the day of
Pentecost, were appropriate representations of the rapid dissem-
ination of the doctrines they were to propagate, and the powerful
destructive energy, with which they were instinct, against all the
varied forms of evil. In an Old Testament oracle, giving an ac-
count of the Father "bringing in his first-begotten into the world,"
—in other words, of Jesus Christ establishing, by divine power,
his kingdom among men,—it is said, "Fire goeth before him."
"His lightnings enlighten the world." And in the Apocalypse,
fire is said to proceed out of the mouth of the mystic witnesses,

4 2 Thess. i. 8. 5 John iii. 17; xii. 47.
6 Acts ii. 3. 7 Psal. xcvii. 3, 4.
who speak his truth under the influence of his Spirit, and to consume their and his enemies. The words before us, then, seem just equivalent to, 'My religion shall rapidly and irresistibly diffuse itself among mankind; and wherever it does so, it shall, like a consuming fire, destroy ignorance and error, depravity and misery—those works of the devil—and utterly annihilate every thing which countersacts its influence and opposes its progress.'

How remarkably has our Lord's declaration been accomplished! How striking is the fulfilment which even now is taking place! How rapidly did the sacred fire diffuse itself in the primitive ages! how did it purify! how did it consume! Where is 'over-dated Judaism,' and its magnificent temple? Where is pagan philosophy, with its groves and porticoes? Where is idolatry, with its innumerable shrines, and altars, and temples? Where is imperial Rome, with her invincible armies, and all but unbounded empire? They have been burnt up by this fire of the Lord,—they have been "consumed by the brightness of his coming."

For a season—long, as we count duration, but short with Him with whom "a thousand years are as one day,"—the holy fire seemed arrested in its progress, and even in hazard of being extinguished. But the dark, bleak middle ages passed away, and at the period of the glorious Reformation, blown on by the breath of God, it burst forth with new vigor, and in an incredibly short period, throughout the best portion of Europe, consumed the errors and superstitions of Papal Rome.

In our own age we have seen, with delight, the progress and the power of this heaven-lit conflagration. We see it kindled up in numerous widely-scattered regions of our earth, and everywhere manifesting its energy in destroying what is evil. And its fire must be lighted up in, say, it must be diffused over—every land, trying, purifying, destroying,—and it must glow with intenser ardor, till every human institution, civil, literary, or ecclesiastical, which embodies false principle and cherishes depraved feeling,—which in its character and tendency opposes the truth, the purity, and the benignity of the Gospel of Christ, become fuel to its flames. This conflagration must become universal. This deluge of holy lustral fire must cover the whole earth; and all human systems of government, philosophy, and religion, must, by it, be either purified or consumed.

The same great and glorious event is predicted by the prophets Daniel and John, under different sets of emblems. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands strikes the stately image on the feet; and the iron and the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, are broken in pieces, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and the wind carries them away, and no place is found for them; while the stone which smote the image becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. The kingdom set up by God in the days of the fourth great Gentile

* Rev. xi. 5.
PART I.] ITS PURPOSE.

kingdom shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and shall stand for ever." "I saw," says John, "heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself: and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." And what shall be the result of this celestial war against the powers of evil? "Voices in heaven" shall ere long proclaim it: "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

So much for the illustration of the view here given us of the design of our Lord's mission,—to kindle a conflagration which shall pervade the earth, assimilating all things to itself—purifying or destroying them.

The feelings of our Lord in reference to this design, are expressed in the words, "what will I if it be already kindled?"

Some consider these words as expressive of a feeling of exultation. They consider our Lord as exulting in the hold which his word had already got of some human hearts; he saw in the faith of the little flock, that the heavenly flame in his bosom had caught on kindred material, and though it was but a little spark, knew that it was inextinguishable, and that that smoking flax would yet kindle a blaze which would wrap the whole earth in flames. He sees the unquenchable element, as it were, bursting forth, and exclaims, "What will I more? the object of my ministry on earth is so far accomplished." Just as when the Greeks were introduced to him, seeing in them the first fruits of the fullness of the Gentile nations, he exclaimed, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

Others, with whom we are disposed to agree, consider the words as expressive of desire, rather than of exultation. "What will I?"—or 'what do I wish? but that it were already kindled'—or 'what do I wish? O, that it were already kindled.' The word rendered "if," is sometimes used to express desire; thus Balaam says, "I would there were a sword in mine hand," literally, 'if there were a sword in my hand.' In Isaiah, the word very properly rendered by our translators, "O, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments," is literally, 'If thou hadst
hearkened.' And our Lord's words, "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!"16 are obviously equivalent to, 'O, that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace.' The meaning then seems to be, 'I am come to set the earth on fire—O, that the conflagration were begun.' When we consider how clearly this was connected with the glory of God, and with the happiness of man, we cannot wonder that it should be an object of intense desire to him of whom it is said, "The zeal of thy house hath even consumed me;" and who so loved men, as not to love his own life to the death, in order to obtain their salvation.

The intensity of his desire for the accomplishment of the great design of his mission, is strikingly expressed in the manner in which he speaks in reference to the means by which it was to be accomplished; means which involved an amount of exertion and suffering to him, which no created mind can estimate. "But," in order to that fire being kindled, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?"17 'I so intensely desire it, that I am willing to undergo all that suffering, which I know must be endured, in order to the kindling this salutary purifying fire. I am indeed restless till I have sustained it.'

II.—OF THE MEANS OF GAINING THE DESIGN OF OUR LORD'S MISSION, AND HIS FEELINGS IN REFERENCE TO THESE.

This brings us to the second part of our subject: the view given us, in the oracle, of the means by which the design of our Lord's mission was to be accomplished, and of his feelings in reference to these means. The means are described in these words,—'I have a baptism to be baptized with,'18 the feelings are described in these words,—'How am I straitened till it be accomplished!'

And first, of the means by which the design of our Lord's mission was to be accomplished. "I have a baptism to be baptized with." "But"—the force of this particle plainly is, 'These intense desires cannot immediately be gratified. In order to my doing what I am come to do, I must suffer, severely suffer.' That the baptism or submersion that our Lord speaks of refers to his sufferings, there can be no doubt. His own words to James and John explain it, when they through their mother requested to be allowed to sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his kingdom. "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"19 i. e., 'Can ye endure the sufferings I must endure, in order to my entering on my kingdom?' There are two things we must

17 "Accensionem praecessit lucta. Accensus est Act ii."—Bengel.
18 Luke xii. 50.
19 Mark x. 38.
do here. We must show what truths with regard to our Lord’s sufferings, are indicated by their being termed his baptism, and we must show how this baptism of sufferings was necessary in order to his kindling that conflagration; which was the object of his intense desire.

In calling his sufferings a “baptism,” our Lord may refer either to the origin, to the nature, or to the degree of his sufferings.

He may refer to their origin. The baptisms under the law, to which no doubt there is a reference, were Divine appointments. In this respect our Lord’s sufferings were a “baptism.” “Truly,” said our Lord, “the Son of man goeth as it was determined.” He “was fore-ordained,” says the apostle Peter in his Epistle, a propitiatory sacrifice “from the foundation of the world.” “When,” said the apostles in their solemn song of thanksgiving and triumph, “When Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together” against “God’s holy child Jesus,” it was “to do whatsoever His hand and His counsel had determined before to be done.”

In using the word baptism as descriptive of his sufferings, our Lord may refer to their nature. Baptism marked the person and thing baptized as sacred, devoted to God. Our Lord’s sufferings marked him out as the “elect, righteous servant of God,” employed by him in the great work of man’s redemption. When we contemplate him as the absolutely innocent, all-righteous one, treated as if he had been a sinner, the chief of sinners, we, as it were, hear Jehovah proclaiming—“Behold my servant whom I uphold, my beloved in whom my soul delights.” “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.”

Finally, in using the word baptism in reference to his sufferings, our Lord may intend to indicate their severity. Some, though not all, the legal baptisms, were immersions, submerisions. When we consider the nature, the number, the variety, the severity, the early commencement, the close succession, the strange complication, the long continuance, of his sufferings, we may well say, he was plunged into an abyss of sufferings. He “came into deep waters, where the floods overflowed him.” You see, then, what are the qualities of our Lord’s sufferings, indicated by their being termed “a baptism;”—they were divinely appointed;—the sufferings of a sacred person—severe sufferings.

But how were these sufferings necessary as means to our Lord’s effecting the design of his mission, which was the object of such intense desire to him? This a wide field, but I must content myself with a few hints. Without any suffering on the part of the Son of God, he might have “kindled a fire in his anger, which would have burned unto the lowest hell, which would have consumed the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.” This would have been.

---

but the execution of righteous judgment against man the sinner. But to kindle a fire, which should purify and save man, and destroy only what is hostile to his best interests, this required something more than a mere act of power. It had to be made a righteous thing in God to forgive sin, and save the sinner. It was only through expiatory suffering, in the room of man, that our Lord could ascend the throne of the universe, as the divinely-appointed deliverer from sin and its consequences. He must redeem by price before he can redeem by power. Purchase must precede conquest. The foundations of the mediatorial throne can be laid only in the blood of Him who is to sit on it. He must be lifted up on the cross, in order to his being lifted up on the throne, so as that the world may be judged by him, the prince of this world cast out by him, and all men drawn to him. It was because he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death—the death of the cross, in the room of men, that the Father "highly exalted him," giving him "power over all flesh," —"all power in heaven and on earth."

It only remains now, that we say a few words respecting our Lord's feelings, as expressed in the text, in reference to his sufferings as the means of gaining the great design of his mission. These are described in the very emphatic exclamation, "How am I straitened till it" (that is, my baptism of suffering) "be accomplished!"

The word rendered "straitened," when applied to mental affection, is descriptive of that internal struggle, that mingled emotion of aversion and desire, fear and hope, which is produced by the contemplation of some situation of extreme difficulty and suffering, in which we foresee we must be placed, and in which, from the important advantageous consequences likely to arise from our occupying it, and not otherwise attainable, we cannot help wishing ourselves to be placed. It expresses the feelings with which we look forward to an event, in itself extremely disagreeable, absolutely inevitable, and which, when taken in connection with its consequences, we do not wish to avoid. This is a state of mind more easily conceived than described. We may be assisted in forming a conception of the Saviour's state of mind, at the moment he used the words under consideration, by endeavoring to realize the feelings of an advanced christian in the immediate prospect of dissolution,—dissolution likely to be the result of agonizing suffering. He looks forward to death, and the sufferings which are to produce it, as in themselves most undesirable. He instinctively shrinks from pain, and death,—dissolution. He cannot choose "strangling and death" for their own sakes. Had he it in his option, he would prefer getting to heaven by a painless translation; he would rather be "clothed upon," than "unclothed;" instead of life being swallowed up of mortality, he would wish that "mortality were swallowed up of life." But he knows that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the
kingdom of God." He knows there is no entrance for him into life, but through death; and that that presence with the Lord which he so ardently longs for, can be obtained only by that divorce from the body which he cannot but regard with aversion and fear. To be where Christ is, to be with him there, to behold and share his glories, are, in the estimation of such a one, the highest of blessings, blessings well worth dying to obtain; and the assured hope of obtaining these, as the result of dying, makes him more than willing to die, desirous "to depart, to be with Christ, which is far better." Still this desire has a very peculiar character, easily distinguishable from the desire of unmixed good. He is, as the apostle says, using the same word as that before us, "in a strait betwixt two," even when desiring to depart. 22

Let us remember, that our Lord's bloody passion, in all its strange complication of bodily agony and mental anguish, was viewed by him as at once inevitable and at hand, and that, at the same time, the glorious results of that passion—results which could be secured in no other way—were fully before his mind, that he had a clear distinct idea, both of the sufferings he was to undergo, and of the glory that was to follow them to him and his; and then we shall have some apprehension, necessarily a very imperfect one, of that painful struggle of antagonist emotion, which stirred to its depths the Saviour's heart, and probably gave a very peculiar expression to his countenance, and tone to his voice, when he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

The Captain of our salvation surveyed the opposing host of the enemies of God and man,—their number, their power, their craft, their malignity, were fully apprehended by him. The decisive struggle was at hand. He knew that it would be arduous and mortal. But he equally knew, that final success was not doubtful, and that the agony of the conflict would be richly compensated in "glory to God in the highest," "salvation with eternal glory" to millions of redeemed men. In painful, eager expectation, he waited the signal from Him who appointed him to enter the field of toil, and blood, and victory.

The words intimate a full conviction that he must suffer. Not that his sufferings, absolutely considered, were necessary,—he suffered because he chose to suffer—but, hypothetically, they were altogether necessary to gain the end he had in view, the finishing transgression, making an end of sin, bringing in an everlasting righteousness, bearing, and bearing away, the sin of the world. They intimate, too, a clear apprehension of the magnitude of his approaching sufferings. In many cases, it would be an alleviation of our suffering, could we but distinctly define the dimensions of approaching evil. Those ill-defined, gigantic shadows, which they cast before them, often excite an alarm altogether disproportioned to their real magnitude. It was, how-

21 1 Cor. xv. 50.     22 Phil. i. 23.
ever, otherwise with the Saviour. The sufferings awaiting him, far exceeded anything which the human imagination, even when excited by fear, could have pictured. Finally, these words intimate an invincible resolution, an unquenchable desire, to finish "his strange work in righteousness." "He did not fail, nor was he discouraged." The path lay straight before him, and he pressed onward with a steadiness of movement, which calls up to the mind the making of the tide towards the shore, or the course of the sun through the heavens.

It is but a little while, and the baptism is accomplished: Gethsemane—Calvary—are at hand. The mysterious cry, "It is finished!" is heard; and when the baptism is accomplished, the conflagration commences. Raised from the dead, he proclaims to his chosen messengers, "All power is given to me in heaven and earth: go disciple all nations—go preach the Gospel to every creature"—apply the lighted torch to the prepared fuel. Soldiers of the cross! take possession of the world—it is the purchased property of your Lord. The battle then began, which has ever since lasted, and which shall not cease, till the shout of victory peal through the universe: "Halleluiah: the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ; halleluiah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

What a glorious consummation! The fire of christian truth, and holy spiritual influence, has burnt up the thistles and thorns, the nightshade and upas trees of ignorance, and error, and depravity: "The heavens drop down righteousness, the earth opens, and brings forth salvation;"* and a renovated creation smiles under the benignant eye of Him who, sitting on the throne, proclaims—"Behold I have made all things new."

Let us, my brethren, remember that, though it is the work of our Lord and King to send fire on the earth, it is a work which he accomplishes through the instrumentality of his people. His people act very much out of character, when, in the ordinary sense of the term, they are fire-brands in society, whether ecclesiastical or civil. But it is their duty—their great primary duty—to keep the fire of holy truth and love which he has kindled in their hearts, burning brightly, and consuming in them every false principle, every unholy desire; and it is equally their duty to endeavor to propagate the sacred fire—to bring all individuals, all societies, all institutions, under its purifying or consuming power. What was the object of such intense desire to our Lord, should draw forth our most earnest wishes. The mind is not in us which was in him—his spirit is not in us, and, therefore, we are none of his—if we do not take a deep interest in the progress and triumph of truth and holiness. Wherever divine truth lays hold on the heart, like fire, it manifests a tendency to communicate itself. Fire naturally spreads: christians cannot but speak the things they have heard. They "believe, and therefore speak." When they seek to repress this natural impulse, Jere-

* Isa. xlv. 8.
miah's experience is in some degree likely to be theirs. If they say, from false shame, fear, or any other cause, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak of his name, his word is in their heart as a burning fire shut up in their bones; they are weary with forbearing, and cannot stay." Oh, that there were more of this felt necessity among christians, to communicate what they have received, to spread abroad that fire that burns within! If there is no such disposition, can it be doubted there is no fire within to spread abroad?

And as our Lord proved the intensity of his desire by cheerfully doing and suffering all that was necessary to the accomplishment of the glorious object, so must we. We never could have done what he did; we never could have suffered what he suffered; and without his doings and sufferings, our doings and sufferings in such a cause would have been impossible; and, if possible, would have been unavailing. But we too must labor, we too must suffer, in order to the gaining of the great object of his mission—the purifying of the earth through the fire of his word, animated by his Spirit; and let us never think we can labor nor suffer too much in such a cause.

Let us learn from him never to fail or be discouraged, never to be weary in doing or suffering, in promoting the great object for which he so labored and so suffered. Let us, like him, seek to finish the work which the Father gives us to do, and think nothing done, while aught remains to do. Let it be a constant subject of desire, and prayer, and labor, that the sacred fire may be universally diffused, and that the whole earth, purified by it, may be presented as a sacrifice to Jehovah.

His labors were not in vain in the Lord, and neither shall ours be. He has seen of "the travail of his soul," and is "satisfied," and "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."[7]

Let all who live under the gospel dispensation remember, that the fire of christian truth cast among a people as it has been cast among us, must produce effects—important effects—effects, the full importance of which eternity only can develop. If it do not melt the stone, it will rend it; if it do not purify, it will destroy. It is no neutral element. It is "the savor of death unto death," if it be not "the savor of life unto life." It is "a quick and powerful word;" and, as received or rejected, it will manifest its power in complete salvation, or in aggravated destruction. A neglected, despised Gospel, will, in the regions of hopeless misery, be a fire that cannot be quenched, burning, without consuming, the very vitals of him who has neglected and despised it. These are weighty words of our Lord: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him"—that shall judge, condemn, and punish him—"the word that I have spoken,

[7] 1 Cor. xv. 58.
the same shall judge him in the last day. 28

Ay, it will punish him through eternity; and one of the most earnest, hopeless wishes of a lost soul, throughout unending duration, will be, 'O that I could forget the Gospel which I heard, but believed not!' But it cannot be; the recollection is burnt in to the very centre of his being. In addition to the fearful voice sounding unremittingly and endlessly in the ears of all the lost, 'You knew your duty, and you did it not,' 29 a still more heart-rending announcement will be constantly forced on the attention of the Gospel neglecter and despiser—'Salvation, free, full salvation was offered you, and you refused it. It might, it would, have been yours, had you but received what was sincerely proffered. It can be yours no more for ever.' Unbeliever! take warning in time. If you persist in unbelief, it must come to this. You cannot escape this—are you prepared to endure it?

28 John xii 48. 29 Pollok.
EXPOSITION VIII.

TRUE HAPPINESS, AND THE WAY OF SECURING IT

John vi.

The discourse, on the consideration of which we now enter, was, like most, if not all, of our Lord’s discourses, occasional, rising out of the circumstances in which he was placed when he uttered it, and from them taking its particular form, and deriving its peculiar illustrations. Its subject is the most important and interesting which can engage the attention of the human mind. It contains a discussion and decision of two questions, which, in all countries and ages, have occupied the thoughts of reflecting men, but to which unassisted reason, though applying all its energies to the task for a long course of centuries, had failed to find a satisfactory reply—What ought to be the object of man’s supreme pursuit? and, How is he to secure the attainment of this object?

I.—INTRODUCTORY NARRATIVE.

John vi. 1-25.

The circumstances which led our Lord to deliver the discourse now before us, and suggested the instructive and beautiful imagery by which his doctrines are at once illustrated and adorned, may be shortly stated.

Our Lord, on the return of his apostles from the evangelical itinerant labors in which he had employed them, having heard of the anxiety which Herod the Tetrarch had expressed to see him, had left Capernaum, a city on the west side of the sea of Galilee, belonging to that prince’s dominions,—where he had chiefly resided for a considerable period, and where his time and attention had been continually occupied by the crowds who came from all quarters to hear his doctrine, and to experience or witness his miraculous power;—and had crossed over to the opposite side, to a retired spot, in a somewhat thinly-inhabited district, apparently with the intention that the disciples might have that repose which their fatigue required, and that he might be out of the way should Herod show a disposition to use force in order to have his
curiosity gratified, and his remorseful fears either confirmed or removed.

Our Lord’s departure, though private, soon became matter of notoriety, and a vast multitude from Capernaum and the neighboring country and villages, made a hasty journey round the north end of the sea of Galilee, and were ready to welcome him, on his disembarking on the eastern shore. Ascending a mountain, followed by the multitude, whom he regarded with melting compassion, “as sheep scattered without a shepherd,” he spent the day in performing beneficent miracles, and uttering heavenly instructions; “teaching them many things,” “speaking to them of the kingdom of God, and healing them that had need of healing.”

As the evening drew on, his disciples proposed to him to dismiss the multitude, that, dispersing themselves among the villages and throughout the adjacent country, they might find refreshment and lodging. Far from acquiescing in this proposal, our Lord replied, “They need not depart; give ye them to eat.” His disciples, astonished at these words, stated that the expenditure of two hundred denarii, (between six and seven pounds of our money,\(^1\) which probably constituted all their store,) in buying food, even if such a quantity of it could have been procured in so retired a situation, which was not probable, would scarcely suffice to furnish a mouthful to such a crowd; and on inquiry, it was found that the stock of provisions which they had with them, was only “five barley loaves, and two small fishes.” This information in no degree shook our Lord’s determination to provide with bodily refreshment, before dismissing them, the multitude, fatigued by their journey, and faint from long-continued abstinence.

The confused mass of human beings, amounting to five thousand men, besides woman and children, was soon, by his orders, transformed into fifty orderly companies of guests. Standing up and holding in his hands the slender stock of provisions, he invoked the Divine blessing, which so miraculously increased them, that he filled the baskets of the twelve apostles, and they distributed them to the multitude, and the multitude handed them from one to another, till the vast assembly had eaten to satiety, and “twelve baskets full of fragments” remained from the wondrous feast.

The miracle produced on the multitude a deep and general impression, that he who performed it could be no other than Israel’s promised deliverer, and many of them were disposed to employ every means in their power to induce him to assume immediately those royal honors, to which, in that case, he was entitled, and which he had shown he could so easily maintain.

\(^2\) “This sum, rating the denarius at 7½d., would amount to £5, 5s.; or reckoning the denarius, as is more usual, at 7½d., it would amount to £6, 9s. 2d. of our money.”—Bagges, “Comprehensive Bible.”
\(^3\) John vi. 9.
Aware that such a proposal be made, his disciples, from their remaining prejudices, were very likely to second it, he prevailed on them, somewhat reluctantly, to embark without him for the opposite shore, and he remained behind, probably because he knew that had he offered to go, the multitude, in their present temper, would have attempted forcibly to detain him, and certainly because he contemplated making a new trial of his disciples’ faith, and giving them a new demonstration of his divine knowledge, and power, and kindness.

The multitude, finding that our Lord had not accompanied his disciples, and concluding that, as there was no other boat on that side of the sea, he could not leave that neighborhood without their being aware of it, were induced peaceably to disperse, with the intention no doubt of coming together early next morning, and pressing on their chosen leader the acceptance of the honors and allegiance they were ready to yield him. On the multitude departing to find lodging in the villages and country around, our Lord retired into the recesses of the mountains, and spent the greater part of the night in devotional communion with his Father and God.

Meanwhile his disciples encountered a storm in their passage across the lake, and had spent a great part of the night in laboriously struggling, against a strong wind and a stormy sea, to gain the opposite shore. While they were about the middle of the lake, a human form appeared to them, walking on the troubled waves, as on a solid pavement. The surprise, not unmixed with terror, with which men have always regarded intercourse with the inhabitants of the invisible world, was their first emotion; but, on ascertaining that it was indeed their Lord, their fear was turned into joy. Peter, with his characteristic forwardness, requested permission to come to meet his Master on the waters. His request was complied with, and he met with a very impressive demonstration of the weakness of his own faith, and of the omnipotent kindness of his Lord. On Jesus coming aboard the vessel, the tempest instantaneously ceased, and in a very short period, if not “immediately,” in the strictest sense of the word, they gained the western shore. On arriving there early in the morning, it is probable that both our Lord and his disciples, who stood much in need of rest, retired for a season to repose.

It is obvious, however, that in this case, the season for relaxation and rest was but brief. The multitude, whose hearts were set on making the miracle-worker their king, collected early in the morning to carry their purpose into effect. But on seeking for Jesus, he was nowhere to be found. This threw them into a state of great perplexity. They knew that the only boat which, the day before, was on that side of the sea, was that in which Jesus and his disciples had crossed from Capernaum. They knew that the disciples had departed without him. They seem to have conjectured that he who could miraculously multiply five loves and two fishes, so as to constitute an abundant meal for
more than five thousand individuals, might also, in some miraculous manner, transport himself across the lake, and, availing themselves of boats which that morning had arrived from Tiberias, they crossed over to Capernaum, in the hope of finding Jesus there, where they knew he had for some time chiefly resided.

Nor was their expectation disappointed. They found him (as appears from the 59th verse) "about his Father's business," in the synagogue teaching the people. On entering the synagogue, they accosted him, and inquired as to the time of his return, hoping, no doubt, that in telling them when, he might also inform them how, he had crossed the lake. To this question our Lord gave no reply.⁴ The information they wished for might easily be got from the disciples, or from others who had witnessed the miraculous circumstances of his passage.

Our Lord's object plainly was to disabuse them of their false views and expectations,—to show them that he was not the kind of Messiah they anticipated and wished for,—that it was in vain for them to expect from him the sort of benefits on which they had set their hearts, but that he was ready to bestow upon them benefits of a far higher order,—benefits which he only could bestow,—benefits at once necessary and sufficient to secure their true happiness. He shows them that he was perfectly aware of the real state of their minds, and preaches to them that "repentance," without which they could not enter into that spiritual kingdom that he had come to establish,—a kingdom altogether different from that earthly kingdom which they were dreaming of establishing by force.

II.—CONVERSATIONAL DISCOURSE TO THE JEWS.

John vi. 26-65.

§ 1. Misconceptions corrected.

Probably much to the mortification of these inquirers, our Lord addressed them in these words,—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."⁵ The object of these men in seeking for Jesus, was, that they might induce him to become their king, and to employ the miraculous powers of which he was possessed in realizing their ideas respecting the secular wealth, dignity, and enjoyment which the chosen people were to obtain under Messiah the Prince; and what induced them thus to seek him, was, not so much the miracles they had witnessed, as the particular kind of miracle he had last performed;

⁴ "Non respondit Jesus ad Judaeorum quando; et sic scripsit in sermonibus eorum opusculum et status animorum requirit potius spectat, quam interpellationes loquentium aliis."—Bengel.
⁵ John vi. 26.
it was not so much the conviction, that he was a divine messenger, of which these miracles were a confirmation, as the conviction that he who could feed five thousand men on five loaves and two fishes, was qualified, if he would but exert his powers, to be their leader in revolting against their Gentile oppressors, and to secure for them victory, conquest, universal dominion.

The words of our Lord, when viewed in their connection, seem to be equivalent to this declaration,—"You profess, and indeed you feel, a great eagerness to find me; but that does not spring from an enlightened conviction that I am a divinely-accredited messenger, to prove which is the great design of my miracles. Had it been so, you would have come to learn of me the truth with regard to the kingdom of God; but instead of that, you seek me as your instrument for erecting a kingdom of this world, which, you perversely think, would be the kingdom of God. Had not the miracles performed been such as to suggest the idea that I might be turned to account in obtaining the gratification of your carnal, selfish wishes and expectations, you would never have sought me. You have no just conception of my true character, or of the nature of the kingdom I am come to establish, and of the blessings which I am come to communicate. It is not because I am a well-accredited divine messenger, but because I am in your estimation a person possessed of powers which, if exerted in your behalf, might secure for you those secular blessings for which alone you have any relish, that you have come here in quest of me. You need to change your minds, to "repent and believe the gospel." You must change your minds, else you can derive no benefit from me. If you change your minds, you will find that I can, and that I will, bestow on you blessings infinitely preferable to those, the hope of obtaining which from me, alone induces you now to seek me.'

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father" (rather, the Father, God) "sealed." The first thing necessary to the right interpretation of this very interesting passage, is to ascertain what are the two things here contrasted as objects of desire and pursuit. "The meat which perisheth," and "the meat which endureth unto everlasting life;"—the food which, perishable in its own nature, ministers only to a mortal life,—and the food which, imperishable in its nature, supports an immortal life.

By some, the contrast has been supposed to be between the food of the body—material nutriment, such as the loaves and fishes,—and the food of the mind, immortal truth: q. d., 'Let not the attainment of the satisfaction of the appetites, the supply of the wants of the body, by material food, but the filling of the capacities of the mind by heavenly knowledge, be the great object of your desire and pursuit.' This brings out a good sense, but it seems unduly to limit our Lord's meaning. It seems to go, too,
on the mistaken notion, that the leading object of these Jews was
the getting their food furnished them miraculously, which does
not seem to have been the case.

We rather think the contrast is between earthly, and therefore
short-lived, enjoyments—such as wealth, honor, and pleasure—
figuratively termed “meat that perisheth”; and spiritual and im-
 mortal blessings—such as the possession of the Divine favor, con-
 formity to the Divine image, fellowship with God—figuratively
termed “meat which endureth unto everlasting life.” Such a
figurative use of the word “meat,” or “food,” is common in all
languages. This mode of interpretation, which is equally natural
as the former, better suits the connection. It was these earthly
blessings the Jews were seeking after. It was these heavenly
blessings which our Lord would have them to make the great
object of their pursuit.

“Labor not,” says our Lord, “for the meat that perisheth.”

“Labor,” or severe exertion, is the natural expression of strong
desire to obtain anything. “Labor,” here, is just equivalent to—
make the object of desire and pursuit.’ As if he had said, ‘Do
not make “the meat that perisheth,”—that is, do not make any-
thing that has a reference merely to this frail, mortal, perishable
state—anything that is peculiar to this world, “the fashion whereof
passeth away,”—do not make secular science, wealth, power, digni-
unity, fame, or pleasure, in any of their forms, the grand object of
your desire and pursuit; but, on the other hand, “labor for the
meat which endureth unto everlasting life,”—make the attain-
ment of those blessings which are spiritual in their nature, and
immortal in their duration—such as the knowledge of Divine
truth, the possession of the Divine favor, the love of God, perfect
holiness in an entire conformity of mind and will to the mind and
will of God—make the attainment of these blessings the great
object of your desire and pursuit.’

With regard to the latter class of blessings, our Lord states to
them that the Son of man would give these to them. The “Son
of man” is, as you know, a descriptive denomination for the
Messiah. It is borrowed, as I have already mentioned, from
Psalm lxxx. 17, “Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right
hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thy-
self.” Our Lord’s statement is thus equivalent to a declaration;

‘These are the blessings the Messiah has to communicate. It is
not “the meat that perisheth,” it is not secular benefits—it is
“the meat which endureth unto eternal life;” it is heavenly and
spiritual blessings—that the Messiah comes to bestow. You
have declared that you consider me the Messiah, the Son of
man; for, no doubt, that was the import of the declaration,
“Of a truth this is that Prophet who should come into the
world.” ‘But in coming to me in the hope of obtaining the
meat that perisheth—worldly good things—you are indulging an
unfounded expectation. These are not the blessings I am come
to confer. But there are better blessings, which I am ready to
bestow on you. And this is no vain boast. I bring along with me my credentials—"Him," the Son of man, "the Father, God, has sealed."

It is not very easy to say what is the particular figurative allusion here: whether the reference be to the practice of authenticating deeds by affixing a person's seal, or to that of impressing a mark on the body, to distinguish those devoted to the service of a divinity, or whether to the fact of the high-priest having on the front of his mitre, a gold plate engraved as with the engraving of a signet, "Holiness to the Lord." But whatever the particular reference may be, the meaning is plain, "Him hath God accredited, as divinely appointed to bestow these blessings." How the Father sealed the Son of man, we are particularly informed by our Lord, in a passage which has already been explained.

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that these words are not to be considered as condemning the making of worldly good things, in any degree, the objects of desire and pursuit. What is condemned, is the making them the supreme objects of desire and pursuit, to the neglect of heavenly and spiritual blessings. These words, though addressed originally to the Jews, and bearing a speciality of meaning as referring to them, are full of important instruction to men in all countries and in all ages. So to labor for the meat that perisheth, as to neglect the attainment of the meat that endureth to eternal life, is the extreme of folly. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "To labor for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life," is the height of wisdom, not only as it is wise to devote our best desires and energies to the prosecution of the most valuable and worthy objects, but also as this is the surest way of obtaining that measure of "the meat that perisheth," which is really best for us. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

This statement of our Lord suggested to the leaders of the multitude an important inquiry:—"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"

If we look attentively at the passage, there can be no doubt, that the object of those who put this question, was to inquire how "this meat that endureth to eternal life," was to be procured. The question is, substantially, 'How are we to obtain this pre-eminent valuable and desirable meat of which you speak?' That is the question we naturally look for in the circumstances of the case, and that is the question which our Lord answers in the following verse. But the phraseology in which the question is expressed is very peculiar, and requires elucidation. "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" The question is elliptical. In its complete form, it

---

8 John v. 31-32.  
John vi. 28.
obviously is, 'What shall we do, that we might work the works of God, by which this meat, which endureth to eternal life, is to be obtained?'

By "the works of God," it has been usual to understand, works commanded by God, works acceptable to God; but in that case, the question would not have been, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" but, 'What are those works commanded by God, which we must do in order to obtain this meat, which endureth to eternal life?' The difficulty was to discover, not what the kind of works were, but how they should obtain the capacity of doing them. I cannot help thinking, that "works of God," by which the meat which endureth unto eternal life was, in the estimation of the Jews, to be obtained, are here opposed to "works of man," by which the meat that perisheth is to be obtained, and are equivalent to 'superhuman works;"—"works which no man can do, except God be with him;"—in one word, miraculous works. I apprehend we see here the first symptoms of that disposition to cavil, which afterwards becomes so manifest, on these men beginning to perceive that Jesus was, after all, not their man,—not the kind of Messiah they expected and wished for. He had said, "labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." 'Seek not meat which can but temporarily support a life, which at best will soon terminate, but seek meat which will permanently sustain an immortal life.' Their question is, 'But how is such meat to be obtained?' The ordinary faculties of man, in their ordinary exercise, can enable him to procure "the meat that perisheth," but it must be by some superhuman operations, such as that by which the five loaves and two fishes became a feast to five thousand, that meat enduring unto everlasting life can be obtained. 'How are we to do such works? You bid us seek this wonderful food,—will you tell us how we are to do the wonderful works by which alone such food can be obtained?'

To this question, which, as is plain from what follows, did not originate in a sincere desire to obtain instruction, our Lord replied, "This is the work of God," that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.'

The general meaning here plainly is, 'It is by believing my doctrine, that you are to obtain those spiritual and eternal blessings, which I have represented under the metaphor of meat enduring unto everlasting life.' But the manner in which this meaning is conveyed, deserves attention. Our Lord's statement seems to be, 'There is indeed no miracle or mystery in the way in which this "meat, which endureth to eternal life," is to be obtained. If you will but credit the testimony of him whom the Father hath sent and sealed, you shall obtain it. This is the

12 The expression, τὸ ἐργα τοῦ Θεοῦ, is used with an entirely different reference, Rom. xiv. 20. Even John iii. 21, is not a strict parallel.
13 John vi. 29.
only way of obtaining it. This is the certain way of obtaining it. You speak as if there must be superhuman works performed by you, in order to gain this end. This is the superhuman work,—this is the miracle: Credit the plain well-attested declaration of him whom the Father hath sent. Do but this, and “the meat which endureth unto eternal life” is yours. This is just a summary of the Gospel, ‘Believe and live.’ There is no laborious, no miraculous, work to perform,—no need of ascending into heaven,—no need of descending into the deep. The revelation of truth and grace,—a plain, a well-accredited revelation—is before you. Believe it, and you are saved. This faith is the great commandment of the new economy. This faith, though it is the most reasonable thing in the world, and though, to a rational being like man, it ought to be the easiest thing in the world, is never exercised by a single partaker of our fallen nature, except under divine influence, so that it is really “the work of God,” though not in the sense in which the Jews seem to have employed the phrase. It is not at all miraculous. It is not even supernatural, except in the influence under which man acts when he performs it. But in that sense it is supernatural.

“‘No man,’ says the Saviour, ‘can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.’ ‘Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.’ ‘By grace,’ says the apostle, ‘are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.’

It is very questionable how far the Jews understood our Lord’s metaphorical discourse about “the meat that perisheth,” and “the meat which endureth to eternal life;” but it is plain that they perceived, that in the words which he had just uttered, he laid claim to being sent of God, and to their implicit faith and obedience on this ground. Yesterday, these men had declared themselves fully satisfied respecting the divine mission of Jesus as the Messiah. “This is of a truth,” said they, “the Prophet that should come into the world;” and had he concurred in their sentiments and wishes, had he consented to become their king, and exerted his miraculous powers in accomplishing the work which they expected the Messiah to perform, they were not likely to have demanded any farther evidence of his divine mission. But in their case, as in many others, dissatisfaction with the nature of our Lord’s doctrines, manifested itself in a

14 Reza’s illustration is an apt one. “For what sum of money will you cure me?” says the patient to the physician. The only thing I demand, says the benevolent physician, is confidence in me. I sincerely wish your recovery; and if you will but confide in me, your cure is certain. What should we say of the patient’s understanding, if he drew the conclusion,—confidence is money, and he who confides in the physician pays him for his skill and labor? Are they wiser who conclude from this passage, that faith is a work, in the ordinary sense of that word, and that he who is justified by faith is therefore justified by works?
15 1 John iii. 24, 45. Eph. ii. 8.
16 1 John vi. 44, 45. Eph. ii. 8.
17 ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἔρχεταινος, a designation of the Messiah derived from Deut. xviii. 15.”—Tholuck.
TRUE HAPPINESS—WAY OF SECURING IT.  [EXP. VIII.

complaint, a very unreasonable one, that there was a deficiency of proof for their divine origin.

"They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?"* The principles on which these questions proceed, are true and important—that no person has a right to expect that he shall be received as a divine messenger, without producing appropriate and adequate evidence that he is what he professes to be; and that the appropriate and adequate evidence in such a case, is the performance of miracles. But these unquestionably true principles, were misapplied in this case. The evidence had been presented in the most unexceptionable form, and in great abundance. The works which our Lord had done, had born most distinct evidence, that the Father had sent him. These men, only the day before, had seen him do what no man could have done, except God had been with him. The conclusion they had drawn then, was the just one; and nothing had occurred to shake its foundation. But when they drew it, they supposed that he and they were of one mind, respecting the design of the Messiah's mission, and the nature of his kingdom, and now they more than doubted that their opinions and his were essentially different, and altogether incompatible, and they found it easier to question the validity of his claims, than to yield the implicit submission of mind which, as "the sent of God," he demanded from them.

The miserable shifts to which men in these circumstances have recourse, are very various. Here the Jews seek refuge in the assertion, that our Lord had not proved his Divine mission in the same satisfactory manner in which Moses, their great legislator, had accredited his. "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."* That is, as if they had said, 'The miracle by which Moses' divine mission was confirmed, when our fathers were fed for forty years by manna which came down from heaven, was a far more remarkable sign than that given by you, when yesterday you fed the multitude. Work such miracles as Moses did, and then we will admit that God has sent you, and yield you the implicit belief which is due to one sent by him.'

To this cavil, for it deserves no better name, our Lord does not deign to give any direct reply. He knew that those who were not convinced of his divine mission by the miracles he had already performed, were not likely to be convinced by any that could be wrought; and as his object, at this time, was less to vindicate the evidence, than to unfold the substance, of his doctrine, respecting "the meat which endureth unto everlasting life," he goes on to state, that the benefit which was conferred on the Israelites, in giving them manna to eat in the wilderness, was not to be compared with the benefit of which he had

16 John vi. 31.
spoken, under the name of "the meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

§ 2. The true spiritual provision, and the mode of obtaining it.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he" (rather that,) "which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Some have supposed that our Lord meant to state here, that it was not Moses, but God, who gave the Israelites the manna; and that the manna did not properly come down from heaven, in the highest sense of the term; but though both these statements are true, and both may be brought out of the words, considered by themselves, yet, when the whole passage is looked at, and when our Lord's object in making the statement is kept in view, there can be no doubt that the sentiment intended to be conveyed, is this, 'The blessing of which I have been speaking, as "meat enduring to eternal life," which the Father, by the Son of man, whom he has sent and sealed, is ready to bestow on all who believe in him, is a far more valuable benefit than that which God by Moses conferred on the Israelites, when he supernaturally supported them on manna during their sojourn in the wilderness. That manna was not the true heavenly bread. The true heavenly bread is that which my Father now giveth you, now freely offers for your acceptance. That bread, in the strictest, highest, sense of the words, "comes down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.""

I do not think that our Lord, in these words, meant to state plainly to the Jews that, in employing the phrases, "the true bread from heaven," and "the bread of God," he referred to himself, which our version represents him as doing. He does this in the 35th verse, after the Jews, by their request in the 34th verse, had made it evident that they imperfectly, if at all, had penetrated through the veil of figurative representation in which he had clothed his sentiments. Our Lord's meaning is more exactly given by those interpreters who render the passage, "For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world."

The Jews seem to have given the name of "the bread of God," and "the bread of heaven," to the manna, in allusion to a passage in the book of Psalms:—"And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angel's food: he sent them meat to the full." Our Lord's assertion, then, is, 'The phrase, "bread of

20 Lücké justly remarks the difference between καταδίωκε here, and καταδιώκε, verse 41. The latter indicates a fact, the former rather a property."—Olschause.
21 John vi. 32, 33.
22 "τῷ κόσμῳ, Non modo uni populo, uni etati, ut manna cibavit unum populum unius etatis, verse 51."—Bengel.
23 Psal. lxxviii. 24, 25.
God," is far more applicable to what I am now speaking of than to the manna.'

From this passage many have drawn the conclusion, that the manna was a type of Christ. This is a conclusion certainly unwarranted by this passage; and I am not aware that it has a satisfactory scriptural foundation anywhere else. Much ingenuity has been displayed in tracing analogies between the manna and our Lord. Its miraculous production has been supposed to foreshadow his miraculous conception; its pearly figure to point him out as pure and lovely, "the pearl of great price;" its sweet taste, to show, that "to them who believe he is precious;" its falling on the outside of the camp, to foreshow, that they who would be saved by him, must "go to him without the camp;" its falling early in the morning, to typify the first promise; its being given daily, to show that Christ should be his people's daily food; its not being seen on the ground on the Sabbath, to indicate that Christ should be hidden under ground on the Jewish Sabbath. These are but a few out of the many correspondences which fancy has discovered between the manna and our Lord. To indulge in such imaginings, appears to me something worse than ingenious trifling. It is using a most undue freedom with Him who says, "Add not to my words;" and its tendency is to lead the mind away from the truth which the Holy Spirit does mean to teach us, and which is always, when clearly perceived, and rightly improved, "profitable for doctrine, and reproof, and correction, and instruction in righteousness," to the mere figments of the human imagination. Of the persons who indulge in such an abuse of the Holy Scriptures, it may well be said, "They feed on ashes; a deceived heart has turned them aside."

Instead of occupying our time with these human fancies, let us attend to what our Lord here says of this true heavenly bread. It comes down from heaven, in a far higher sense than the manna came down from heaven. The manna was formed in the atmosphere—the aerial heavens—this bread comes down from the heaven of heavens, the true holy place; and it not only, like the manna, supports life, but it gives life to those who are dead, and supports life in those whom it has made alive; and this life, which it at once communicates and sustains, is not that mortal life which the manna, perishing food, temporarily supported, but a divine life, an immortal life; and this bread of God is not, like the manna, restricted to one nation. God gives it "for the life of the world." It is fitted and intended to make truly happy mankind of every kindred, people, and nation, not in one age, but in all the ages of time, and through all the ages of eternity.

These ideas, which are all obviously wrapped up in our Lord's words, were probably but imperfectly and indistinctly discerned by the Jews; but they saw plainly that, under the name of "bread of life," he was speaking of something which he wished to represent as very valuable, and they therefore asked him to
bestow on them a gift so precious:—"Lord, evermore give us this bread."\footnote{24}

It is impossible to say with certainty whether these words were the expression of serious desire, or of sarcastic scepticism. Even if they were the expression of the first, the desire was obviously a very unenlightened one. It amounted to little more than this, 'If you have so valuable benefits to bestow, we should like to be sharers of them.' When taking the whole circumstance of the case into consideration, I cannot help thinking it more likely that these words, as well as the words of the woman of Samaria on a similar occasion,\footnote{25} were uttered in a spirit of indefatigable levity; as if they had said, 'Indeed! that is bread worth wishing for.' Taking this view of it, how wonderful is the patience of the Divine Saviour, who, instead of punishing these contemners of his grace, proceeds to tell them, in plain words, what he means by the heavenly, life-giving bread, and to exhibit himself as the divinely-appointed, divinely-qualified Saviour of the world!\footnote{26}

In either view of the words of the Jews, they stood in need of farther information, and our Lord proceeds to give it them:—"And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."\footnote{27}

"The bread of life" is a phrase equivalent to, 'The life-giving bread.' "Life," in the language of our Lord, implies happiness. When he calls himself, then, the "life-giving bread," he intimates that he is the author of true happiness; that he, that he alone, can make men truly and permanently happy. Some good interpreters have supposed that our Lord, in these words, refers solely to his character as a teacher,—\textit{q. d.}, 'My doctrine, understood and believed, is the appropriate nourishment of the rational, immortal mind. It, and it alone, can make men truly wise, truly good, and truly happy, for ever.'

This is, no doubt, important truth, and it is truth included in our Lord's words; but we very improperly and unnecessarily limit their signification, if we confine it to an assertion of the salutary nature and effects of our Lord's doctrine. It is not only, it is not chiefly, as a teacher, that Jesus Christ is the author of salvation; and it is plain that it is not only, it is not chiefly, as a teacher, that he takes to himself the figurative appellation of the "bread of life."

His primary reference is to what he was to do and suffer for the salvation of men. This is plain from what he says at the 51st verse; "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." When our Lord, then, says, "I am the bread of life," the meaning obviously is, 'I—I alone—am the Saviour of men: I—I alone—can make them happy. Without me, all must die of spiritual hunger; that is, must be forever miserable, for the want of those spiritual blessings, which are necessary to make such a being as man really, permanently happy."

\footnote{24} John vi. 34. \footnote{25} John iv. 15 \footnote{26} John vi. 36.
By me, from me, all may obtain, in rich abundance, these blessings; and, in the enjoyment of them, find a happiness, in variety, extent, and duration, every way corresponding to the capacities of their nature, and the immortality of their being.

In the words that follow, our Lord brings the same supremely-important and delightful truth, that he—that he alone—is the author of true happiness, before the mind, by two expressive figures; while he at the same time shows how that true happiness, which he only can bestow, is to be obtained by men: "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

To "hunger," and "thirst," are here obviously used figuratively, for that restless and dissatisfied state, which rises out of the want of what is necessary to our happiness—a sense of that want—and a craving desire to have that want supplied. That is the state of all men in their natural condition. They want what is necessary to satisfy their understandings, their consciences, and their affections. They are, in some measure, conscious of these wants, though, in many cases, but ill-informed of their nature and extent; and they are restlessly anxious to find something that will quiet the cravings of the appetite for enjoyment.

Nothing, in the wide range of the material universe, can satisfy this hunger, or quench this thirst; on the contrary, the appetite grows with what it feeds on; and the man who has had the largest share of worldly enjoyments, is generally the farthest removed from real satisfaction. Life, with most men, is a series of unsuccessful experiments to obtain satisfaction to that appetite for enjoyment, which is the very soul of their souls—the principle, end, and aim of their being.

That satisfaction, which never has been, never will be, never can be, found in the world, is to be found in Christ: "He who comes to me shall never hunger; he that believes on me shall never thirst." That is, 'He who comes to me—he who believes on me—shall obtain true permanent happiness; he shall have all his wants supplied, and shall be equally delivered from the wretchedness which these wants, and the consciousness of them, must produce, and from the painful restlessness, which the blind desire of having them supplied must occasion."

But what is it to "come to Christ"? what is it to "believe on Him"? The first is a figurative, the second a literal, description; and it has been common to consider them as quite synonymous—the literal expression being intended as the interpretation of the figurative one. There can be no doubt, that he that comes to the Saviour as the bread of life—the author, that is, both the procurer and the bestower of salvation—and he who believes on him, are substantially the same person. He who comes to the Saviour, believes on him; and he who believes on the Saviour, comes to him. But it does not, by any means, follow, that "coming" and "believing" are, therefore, precisely the same thing; that the figurative and literal expressions,
though referring to the same individual, are expressive of the very same mental affection or exercise."

To "believe" on the Saviour as the bread of life, is to believe the truth about him in this character. Now, in the following passage, it seems very plain, that "coming to God," and believing the truth about him, though they must meet in the same individual, are not the same but different things—the one the means by which the other is produced. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him." "To come to God," in this passage, is descriptive of that enlightened reverential love, and confidence in God, which constitute spiritual, acceptable worship, in which the mind as it were goes forth to him; this state of mind is not the same thing as faith; it is the consequence, the effect, of faith—the result of the truth believed on the mind—and hence the apostle says,—"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He cannot otherwise come to him. This is the way, the only way of coming to him.

In the same way, to come to Christ as the bread of life—the procurer, and the bestower of true happiness—is descriptive of all those mental affections and exercises, which may be termed the movement of the mind towards him in this character—especially reliance on his atonement as the only expiation of guilt, and implicit submission to his authority as the great teacher of truth and holiness. Now these mental affections and exercises are not properly faith, but the consequences of faith. He that cometh to Christ, as the bread of life, must believe on Christ as the bread of life. I must believe the truth respecting him as the author of salvation, in order to my mentally going to him under this character. I must know who the physician is, and believe in his skill, in order to my going to him to obtain a cure.

It may here be remarked by the way, and I apprehend that the remark is of considerable importance, not only to the right interpretation of Scripture, but to the right understanding of the christian plan of salvation, that the case before us is by no means a solitary one, in which figurative descriptions of states of mind originating in faith, have been confounded by expositors, with faith itself. It is common to say that, "receiving Christ" —"looking to Christ"—"fleeing to Christ"—"laying hold on Christ"—"eating his flesh, and drinking his blood," are all figurative expressions for faith, while the truth is, every one of these figurative expressions is descriptive of a state of mind, in some way analogous to the bodily action referred to, including a variety of sentiments and emotions, all of them, however, originat-

27 It is curious to see what a strange non sequitur the acute Calvin has given us, in his exegesis of these two terms, which, indeed, is the common one; "Venire ad Christum, et credere, idem in hoc loco valent, sed in priore verbo fidel effectus exprimitur." Surely faith, and the effect of faith, are not "idem," the same thing. Surely here—"bonus dormitat Homerus."
28 Heb. xi. 6.
ing in the faith of the truth respecting Christ; so that it would be more accurate, in every view of the subject—whether philo-
logical, philosophical, or theological—to consider these figurative expressions, not as synonymous with each other, and all of them as expressive of faith, but as each expressing the state of mind of which it is naturally descriptive, all of which are the result of faith; to say, not that “receiving Christ,” “looking to him,” “fleeing to him,” “laying hold on him,” “eating his flesh and drinking his blood,” are faith, but that it is by faith, by faith alone, that men receive Christ, look to him, flee to him, lay hold on him, eat his flesh and drink his blood. The compilers of our Shorter Catechism seem to have perceived this, when they chose to say, not what many seem to suppose they have said, that faith is “a receiving and resting on Christ alone for salvation;” but that faith is that “whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation.” This distinction is, if I mistake not, much more than a mere metaphysical nicety. A distinct apprehension of it will be found of great use in the right interpretation of Scripture, in the right understanding of the christian plan of salvation, and in the right guidance of those exercises of the mind and heart which constitute the essential elements of that spiritual religion, which is “our reasonable service”—“our rational worship.”

To return from this short digression, our Lord’s declaration, then, is this—‘He who, believing the truth respecting me, as the author of salvation, exercises towards me those sentiments and affections which naturally grow out of the faith of this truth, shall be saved by me. He shall obtain that happiness which I, which I alone, can confer. “He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”’

Some interpreters have supposed that these words have a direct and sole reference to the heavenly blessedness, to the christian salvation, in its most perfect form, and that what our Lord says is this—‘He who believes the truth respecting me, as the author of salvation, and believing that truth comes to me in the exercise of the appropriate sentiments of mind and heart, shall ultimately obtain from me a happiness which shall completely satisfy all his capacities of enjoyment, and leave him nothing to wish for.’ They look forward to that state where all wants are supplied, where all wishes are gratified, where “they hunger no more, neither thirst any more, where the sun does not light on them, nor any heat, but the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne feeds them, and leads them to fountains of living waters, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes.”

They have been led into this view, probably by the considera-
tion, that even true Christians, those who by believing on the Saviour have come to him, are, while in the present state, far from having all their spiritual wants supplied, far from being relieved from all painful sense of their spiritual wants. Yet I cannot doubt, that our Lord’s promise refers to a blessing which he
who in faith comes to him, obtains immediately on his coming to him, and enjoys just in proportion to the measure of his faith. What our Lord substantially says is, ‘I am the author of happiness, and it is by faith in me, as the author of happiness, that individual men are to be made happy.’ Our Lord is “full of grace and truth,” and if we will but come to him, we shall receive “out of his fulness abundance of grace.” If we are straitened, it is in ourselves, not in him. If we “hunger and thirst,” it is not because he is not able, nor because he is not willing, to satisfy our hunger and to quench our thirst; but because we, being “of little faith,” do not come to him “that we may have life, that we may have it abundantly.” The idea intended to be conveyed seems to be this—‘Every one that believing comes to me for happiness shall obtain it. After having tasted the happiness which I have to bestow, he will not expect to find it anywhere else. He will find in me, in me alone, that truth which will satisfy his understanding, that atoning righteousness which will pacify his conscience, that sanctifying influence which will transform his character, that soul-satisfying portion which will fill his heart. By restoring him to God’s favor, and image, and fellowship, I will impart everything that is necessary and sufficient to make him truly wise, and good, and happy for ever. No one who comes to me will ever have reason to complain, that he could not find in me what was necessary, what was sufficient, to constitute his happiness.’

These words of our Lord, bring before the mind in a very impressive manner, at once the three important ideas of the magnitude, the abundance, and the duration, of the happiness, which he, and he alone, can confer, and which every one who in believing comes to him, shall assuredly obtain and enjoy according to the measure of his faith. Such was the happiness which our Lord had to bestow, and such the way in which men were to obtain a personal interest in this happiness.

But this happiness did not belong to those whom our Lord was addressing, and the cause of this was to be found in their unbelief, which, considering their advantages, was altogether inexcusable. This seems to be the import of the statement which follows:—“But I say unto you, that ye also have seen me and believe not.”

The particle rendered “also,” should probably be rendered, “although,” as in Luke—“And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?” In the 30th verse, the Jews had expressed a wish to have signs, that they might see and believe. Our Lord here says to them, ‘If ye do not believe, it is not for want of seeing.’ ‘Ye have seen me.’ ‘I have been for a considerable time in the midst of you, teaching the truth, and confirming it by my miracles. I have exhibited myself to you as the divinely-appointed, qualified, accredited Saviour; yet though you could not but see my claim, you have disregarded it.’

Our Lord seems plainly to refer to something that he had formerly said to these persons. 22 "I say to you." Some suppose our Lord to refer to something he had said to them on a former occasion. Others to something that he had said at this time, which the evangelist has not recorded. Others to the 26th verse, which is substantially the same charge which is contained in the words before us. It matters very little which of these references is considered as the true one.

The connection of these words with what follows may be thus stated:—"But though you should reject me, I shall not want followers; though you should shut yourself out from the enjoyment of that happiness which I come to bestow on mankind, and a participation in which can be obtained in no other way than by believing in me, the object of my mission shall not be frustrated. You may,—if you continue in unbelief you must, perish, in consequence of your refusing "the true heavenly bread;" but multitudes—multitudes of the Gentiles, who are the objects of your malignant contempt—will, in the faith of the truth, gladly receive "the bread of life," and eat, and live for ever. You came to me, and yet you did not come to me; for, in coming, you supposed me to be a very different person from what I really am. When you but suspected me of being what I really am, you would have none of me. I declined accepting your offered allegiance. You are not the followers I wish, as I am not the leader you wish. But followers of the kind I wish will not be wanting, and they shall be sure of meeting with a kind reception—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." 23

Let us examine these words carefully. We have at least as deep an interest in them as those had to whom they were originally addressed. The first point to be inquired into, is the meaning of the phrase, "All that the Father giveth me,"—literally, "Every thing which the Father giveth me." 24 Now, what does the Father give the Son? He is in Scripture represented as giving him many things. He "gave him the Spirit without measure." He gave him "words to speak," "a commandment to obey," and "a work to finish." He gives him "to have life in himself, even as He has life in himself." He gave him "authority to execute judgment." He gave him "glory." He has given him "all judgment," or rule, and government. He has given him "power over all flesh." He has given him "all power in heaven and earth." He has given him "a name above every name." 25 But it is quite plain that, in the passage before us, our Lord is speaking of persons, not of things.

Who these persons are, it is not difficult to discover.—They are all those who come to Christ by believing in him, and are

22 ἠρχεῖ ἵνα denotes quotation.—Tholuck.
23 John vi. 37.
24 πᾶν ὁ δὸςοις μοι ὁ πατὴρ. Ἡαὶ for the masculine, as in 1 John v. 4. Heb. ii. 9. Eph. v. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 27.
25 John iii. 34; xiv. 31 xii. 49; xvii. 4; v. 26, 27; xvii. 22; xviii. 2. Matt. xxviii. 18. Phil. ii. 9.
saved by him,—those who come to Christ, who are not cast out by him, the accomplishment of whose salvation is that benignant will of the Father, which the Son came from heaven to earth to perform—none of whom are to be lost,—all of whom are to be raised up at the last day, and to enjoy everlasting life. These are they whom the Father gives the Son. We have thus ascertained who the persons are who are here spoken of: they are all who shall be saved by Christ Jesus; but the question still remains to be answered, What is meant by their being given by the Father to Christ?

In the language here, as in so many other parts of the New Testament, there seems to be an allusion to modes of expression in the Old, and we must ascertain its origin in order to our satisfactorily discovering its meaning. In the preceding context, our Lord had spoken of himself as the true celestial bread, which, coming down from heaven, giveth life to "the world," that is, to mankind, without reference to the distinction of Jew and Gentile. The manna was intended for the bodily support of the Jews,—this heavenly bread, for the spiritual nourishment of mankind, of every kindred, and people, and tongue. The liberal, unexclusive character of the salvation which the Messiah came to procure and bestow, is again, we apprehend, referred to in the words before us. The Father had promised to give certain persons to the Son; and all these, without exception, our Lord says, shall come to him. Now, who are the persons whom the Father has promised to give to the Son? The answer is in a passage to which I can scarcely doubt our Lord mentally referred when he used the words: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Nor is this promise at all a singular one. "He shall have dominion," says David, speaking in the spirit of his Son and Lord—the King, and the King's Son, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." "I will give him," says Jehovah by Isaiah, in reference to his righteous servant, "I will give him the many as his portion, and he shall have the strong ones as his spoil." "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The "root of Jesse shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek." "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles." "Behold, these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim."
"Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." Viewed in reference to these promises, the words express this idea, 'Vast multitudes of men of all nations, according to the purpose and promise of God, and by the agency of his Spirit, and the instrumentality of his word and providence, shall be given to me, delivered into my hand, so as to acknowledge my claims, believe my doctrines, and enjoy my salvation.'

Still, however, we have not obtained an answer to the question, What is the precise import of the Father's giving those multitudes of men of every nation to Christ? By the greater part of evangelical interpreters, the Father's giving of men to Christ has been considered as equivalent to his eternal purpose of mercy in reference to these individuals,—his committing them, as it were, in charge to his Son, in the covenant of peace, to be delivered by him from all the evils in which sin was to involve them. I have no doubt of the truth of this doctrine. It is based on the first principles of religion—those which refer to the Divine character, as the infinitely wise and powerful Author and Governor of the universe,—it is most explicitly taught in Scripture, especially in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and it is necessarily implied in the words now under consideration. Yet I cannot help thinking that the direct reference is not to the Divine purpose, but to its execution. The ancient oracles, to which there seems a reference, are promises. They refer, not to what was past, but what was future. The words, if I mistake not, are intended to be descriptive of that divine influence of which the Father, by the Spirit, is the Author, which is put forth according to the purpose which God has ‘purposed in himself,’ by which men are induced to believe the Gospel, and, in the belief of the Gospel, to come to the Saviour. The being given to Christ by the Father, seems to be the same thing as what, in the 44th verse, is called the being “drawn” or conducted to him by the Father; and that is represented, in the 45th verse, as equivalent to the being “so taught of God,” “hearing and learning of the Father,” as that they come to him. Men are given by God to Christ, when they are brought to him, united to him, by that faith which is the gift of God, when, under the influence of his Spirit, they are made to come to him—that is, are led, in the belief of the truth, to exercise towards the Saviour all those sentiments of mind and heart which correspond to the different views given, in the Gospel, of his person and work.

42 Isa. lv. 4, 5.
43 To “give” and to “deliver to” are plainly synonymous, as used Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 18: And “to deliver to,” in its full form, “to deliver into the hands of,” is equivalent to “to commit to the care of”—“to subject to the authority of.”
44 Calvin seems to refer the word “give” rather to regeneration than to election; “Donandi’ verbum perinde valet ac si dixisset Christus ‘quos eligat Pater, 
PART II.] CONVERSATIONAL DISCOURSE TO THE JEWS.

Though in this view of the phrase, which appears to me better to suit not only this place, but the other places where it occurs in this gospel, it does not directly express the doctrine of personal election; it necessarily implies it. It ascribes faith to a divine benignant influence, which indicates distinguishing love towards him over whose mind it is exercised, in contradistinction to him over whose mind it is not exercised, and which love, just because it is the love of Him who is eternal and unchangeable, must be itself eternal and unchangeable. To the question—What induces God to exercise on the mind of one man rather than on the mind of another this influence, which is at once necessary and sufficient to bring the sinner to the Saviour? there is only one satisfactory reply—sovereign love. "He has mercy, because he wills to have mercy; he has compassion, because he wills to have compassion." 45

"All whom the Father giveth me," is, then, just equivalent to "all who through divine influences are led to understand and believe the truth with regard to me, and are, in this way, put under my care as the Saviour; and these are, according to the ancient promises, "a number which no man can number, out of every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue." "All these shall, at the appointed season, "come" to the Saviour, that is, shall exercise towards him all those sentiments of mind and heart to which he is entitled, and which the belief of the truth is calculated to produce, and which nothing else can produce."

"And him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out." 46 The words, "I will not cast out," express two ideas: "I will not refuse to receive him;" and, "having received him, I will never abandon him;" but they obviously suggest, and seem to have been intended to suggest, much more than they directly express. It is a phrase of the same kind as, "why do you spend money for that which is not bread,"—which will do anything rather than nourish you—"and your labor for that which doth not profit,"—which will ruin instead of profiting you? "I will not cast him out," is equivalent to, "I will give him a kind reception, a hearty welcome. He shall find in me all, and far more than all, he expects; and, so far from ever banishing him from my presence, "he shall never perish, but shall have everlasting life." The manner in which the prodigal son was welcomed by his father is a beautiful, but still an imperfect, representation of the manner in which every one who comes to the Saviour will be received by him. 47

eos regenerat et mihi in obedientiam Evangelii addicit—suà quasi de manu in manum tradit." "The word 'give' has the same meaning as if Christ had said, 'Those whom the Father hath chosen, he regenerates and gives to me, that they may obey the Gospel—he hands them over, as it were, to his Son."—Mr. Pangur's translation.

45 Rom. ix. 18.
46 Tholuck supposes the ἐκβάλεται ἐκνα refers to the figure of the kingdom of heaven—Matt. viii. 12; xxii. 13. Oehler remarks that the phrase indicates an enclosed, bounded community of life which the Redeemer came to establish.—Matt. xxv. 10.
48 Isa. iv. 2.
"He that cometh to me," especially when viewed in connection with "all whom the Father giveth me shall come to me," is equivalent to, 'whosoever cometh to me, be he Jew or Gentile, whatever has been his previous condition or character.' This passage, with equal plainness, teaches that nothing short of divine influence will ever bring any man to Christ; and that nothing but a man's refusing to come to Christ can exclude him from participating in the blessings of his salvation.

Every one who is brought under this influence will come. It is absolutely certain he shall; but there is no compulsion. The man is not driven, he is led: he is not dragged, he is drawn by "the bands of love and the cords of a man's"—conclusive arguments and cogent motives. The discovery, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, of the sinner's guilt, and depravity, and danger, and of the certain and only mode of deliverance from this guilt, and depravity, and danger, and misery, makes them glad to come, and to renounce every hope and interest that interferes with coming to him for salvation.

And nothing can prevent the salvation of those who thus come to the Saviour. He will refuse none, he will reject none. None coming to him will he refuse to receive into the number of his people; none who have come to him will he exclude from that number, as Hagar and Ishmael were expelled from the holy family. "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." No degree of previous guilt, no former habits of sin, no secret decree of God, no involuntary mistake, no feebleness in attempting to come to him, will induce him to reject a single individual who, in the faith of the truth, comes to him for salvation.

The complete and everlasting salvation of all who, led by the Father, come to the Son, is represented by our Lord as absolutely certain. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing," but should raise it up again at the last day. It is the will of God that all who come to Christ should be saved,—and the great design of his coming from heaven to earth was just to accomplish this benignant purpose of God the Father. "I will not," says he, "cast out any who come to me." 'My sole object in coming from heaven to earth was to execute what is the will, the benignant good pleasure of the Father. I have no selfish objects to prosecute. I am not come—as you suppose your Messiah is to come—to raise myself to earthly grandeur, and to bestow peculiar external advantages on

50 Hos. xi. 4. 51 John x. 28, 29.
52 The construction is defective. Instead of πῶρ, strict syntax would require ἐκ παραβολῆς, and also that μυθὸν should be supplied to ἐκ αὐτῷ. The construction is Hebraistic.
53 John vi. 38, 39.
men of a particular nation. I am come to execute my Father’s will, and that is the salvation of men of every nation, whom he gives to me—whom he, by the influence of his Spirit, brings to me. It is his will that of these—a goodly number—"the nations of the saved"—far more numerous than Abraham’s natural descendants, who were to be as the stars of heaven, or as the sand on the sea shore—not one should be lost. It is the Father’s will, who hath sent me, that I should lose nothing—that is, that I should suffer nothing to be lost—not merely none of them, but nothing of them—nothing that really forms a part of them—not even their body, which, mouldering into dust in the grave, might seem to be lost—even that will be raised up again at the last day.

Not merely is "the spirit to live,"—to be happy "because of righteousness,"—but "the mortal body" is to be "quickened because of the spirit of Christ which dwelt in it." "What is sown in corruption, and weakness, and dishonor, is to be raised in incorruption, power, and glory." "The last enemy, death, is to be destroyed;" and when "the Saviour, whom we look for from heaven, comes, he shall change the vile bodies of his people, and fashion them like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."54

To mark the great importance of the statement which he had just made, our Lord repeats it with some slight changes and additions. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."55 This is equivalent to, ‘Yes, this is the will of him that sent me;’ or, ‘I repeat it, this is the will of him that sent me.’ It is obvious he is speaking of the same persons, and of the same blessings. Every one that the Father has given the Son is obviously descriptive of the same class—as, ‘every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him;’ and the not being lost—and the having everlasting life—are just two different ways of expressing the same thing. The principal additional truth brought forward is, that it is through seeing the Son, and believing on him, that a personal interest is obtained in the blessings of the Christian salvation.

To ‘see the Son, and believe on him,’ is to apprehend the meaning and evidence of the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, as his Son—the divine, the divinely-appointed, the divinely-accredited, the divinely-qualified, Saviour of the world. The will of God, then, as unfolded by the Saviour, is, that all men, of whatever nation, or of whatever previous character, who, under the guidance of the Father—that is, under divine influence—by the belief of the truth, come to Jesus Christ, shall be saved from that endless perdition which they have deserved, and be put in possession of a holy happiness, suited to their compound natures, and enduring throughout the ages of eternity.

In these statements, our Lord gives a satisfactory answer to

54 1 Cor. xv. 26, 43, 44. Phil. iii. 20, 21. John vi. 40.
the two most important questions which can interest the attention of mankind—In what does true happiness consist? and, How is it to be obtained? The answer to the first is—'True happiness consists in nothing material, earthly, and perishing; it consists in spiritual, heavenly, eternal blessings.' The answer to the second is—Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ alone, is the procurer and bestower of these blessings, and individual men can obtain an interest in them only by believing the truth respecting their Author.

Instead of acquiescing in these statements of the great Teacher, the Jews were dissatisfied with them, and showed their dissatisfaction by murmuring and cavillings:—"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven." They probably attached but indistinct ideas to much that he said. They were, however, generally dissatisfied with it, because it was totally different from what they had anticipated. They had hoped that he would speak to them of raising armies, fighting battles, taking cities, driving the heathen out of the holy land, erecting the throne of David, restoring the kingdom to Israel. Instead of this, to hear only, what must have appeared to them mystical statements, about his being the bread of life which came down from heaven—about those who came to him never hungering, and those who believed on him never thirsting—naturally enough, in their state of mind, produced dissatisfaction.

What particularly dissatisfied them was, his having said that he was "the bread which came down from heaven." From the terms in which they expressed their dissatisfaction, it is obvious that what especially offended them was, his saying that he had "come down from heaven"—that, personally considered, he had a divine origin. It is obvious that this was the sense in which the Jews understood our Lord's declaration; for, if they had supposed that his words referred merely to the celestial origin of his doctrine, his being the son of Joseph, even although that had been the case, could have been no reason for calling in question his divine mission. And it is equally obvious that the Jews did not misunderstand him. If they had, he would have corrected their misconception, by stating that, when he called himself "the bread of life," he spoke of himself, just as a teacher of salutary doctrine; and that, by his coming down from heaven, he meant only that he was a divine messenger, and, by necessary consequence, that his doctrine was not so much his, as the Father's who had sent him. Such remarks we have no hesitation in saying, our Lord would have certainly made, had the Jews misconstrued his meaning. But, instead of this, he goes on to say, that he had "seen the Father," in a sense in which no other person ever had seen him; that "he came down from heaven," and that "the bread of life" he referred to, was his flesh—himself as incarnate—"which he was to give for the life of the world."

56 John vi. 41.
There can be no reasonable doubt, then, that, in saying he "came down from heaven," our Lord meant to teach the divine origin, not so much of his doctrine, as of himself—to assert, that he personally existed in heaven before he appeared among men, and that, when he came to earth, he came from heaven. The reference is not so much, if at all, to his miraculous conception, as to his personal pre-existence. It deserves notice, that, though the prophets were ready enough to assert the divine origin of their oracles, not one of them ever used such language, as our Lord so often used, of having been in heaven, and having come from heaven.

Understanding our Lord's words in this way, the Jews said: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" They were ignorant of the facts respecting our Lord's supernatural human origin. They had always understood that he was the son of Joseph and Mary, with whom, as residing in the same district of country, many of them probably were acquainted; and it seemed to them presumptuous and absurd in such a person to lay claim to divine origin—to say, "I came down from heaven."

On hearing these murmurings, "Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." The substance of our Lord's reply may be thus stated: "Murmur not; I have stated only the truth, of which I have given you abundant evidence. Ye ought not to murmur, but to believe; and yet, your murmuring, unreasonable as it is, does not surprise me. It is just what, with your mode of thinking, might have been expected; and it is just what may continue to be expected, till you "repent," change your mind—till you are brought to another and better mind by divine truth—under divine influence—producing its appropriate effects upon you: "No man can come to me, except my Father, who hath sent me, draw him." By your murmuring, you make it evident that you have not come to me—that you are not disposed to come to me. With your present views, you will never come to me; you must be born again—you must be converted and become as little children. No man entertaining the views you do of the design of the Messiah's mission, and nature of his kingdom, can come to

57 John vi. 42. 58 John vi. 43-50.
me—can embrace me as the Messiah. He must be drawn by
him who sent me—the Father, God—in order to his coming to
me.' The Jews, under the influence of carnal motives, had come
to Jesus the man, wishing to obtain from him temporal blessings;
but, entirely destitute of a spiritual knowledge and sensibility,
which God the Father alone could give them, they had not come
—they could not come—to Jesus the Messiah, for the spiritual
blessings which they really were in need of, and which he had to
bestow. They had not been led, or drawn, of God, to Capernaum.
Their own carnal views and expectations had brought
them thither.

The language is figurative, but the meaning is not at all
obscure. By divine truth, understood and believed, under divine
influence, he who is most indisposed—so indisposed as to be
morally incapable of embracing Jesus Christ, as the divine, and
divinely-appointed, and qualified, and accredited, Saviour of
men—will become capable (by being made willing) of most cor-
dially coming to him, receiving him, trusting in him, loving him,
submitting to him. No Jew, blind to the true meaning of the
divine oracles, with regard to the Messiah, could acknowledge
Jesus as the Messiah. No Jew, the eyes of whose mind, by
divine influence, were opened to the true meaning of these
oracles, could help acknowledging him. Our Lord's words,
though used with a direct reference to those whom he addressed,
express a great general truth. No man while he retains the
habits of thought and feeling, that are common to all men—unchanged by divine influence—who is seeking for happiness in
sensible, present things, will ever cherish towards Jesus Christ
those sentiments and affections to which he is entitled. In order
to this, he must be "drawn" to him "by the Father;" that is,
divine truth, under divine influence, must find its way into his
mind, and enlightened, and impelled, and guided by these, he
will come to the Saviour.

A man needs only to reflect on what is the natural state of
human sentiment and feeling, to see the indubitable truth of our
Lord's remark. The salvation of Christ is most exactly suited
to the sinner's necessities, but it is not at all suited to his native
tastes and inclinations. It is too good for him—too spiritual to
suit the carnal heart—too humbling to please the proud heart.
It is too holy for the willing slave of sin—too heavenly for him
who is "of the earth earthy." Indeed, how can one, under the
influence of pride and the love of sin, approve of a method of
salvation which opposes every corrupt bias of the human heart?
How can such a one cordially acquiesce in that plan of redemp-
tion, which implies that he is justly condemned, and infinitely
deserving of blame—that he not only has no claim on justice,
but that his guilt is so great as to render the exercise of mercy
incompatible with the Divine glory, without the mediation and
satisfaction of the incarnate Son of God—and that he could not
be suffered to escape the curse of the law, but through the atone-
ment of Christ? How can a man who has a high conceit of himself, and of his own performances, admit that they are utterly insufficient to counterbalance the guilt of his smallest sin? How can a man, blind to the Divine glory, see his obligations to obedience? or how can one, who does not feel his obligations to love and obey the Most High, see sin to be infinitely evil? And how can a man, who practically denies the evil of sin, truly value the Saviour from sin? Is it possible, that the man who does not believe that he ever did anything worthy of death, should see any propriety, wisdom, or equity, in another's dying for him, even one of infinite dignity? Can an enemy of the law love Him that magnified and made it honorable, and love Him so much the better, on this very account, because he hath most satisfactorily vindicated the Legislator from all suspicion of undue severity in punishing sin, and from all appearance of conniving at sin in pardoning it? How can a man, wise in his own conceit, come to Christ as a prophet, and, sitting down at his feet, receive every one of his words? How can a man full of the spirit of self-justification, come to Christ as a priest, and place all his hope of pardon, and acceptance, and salvation, on his obedience to death, as "the Just one in the room of the unjust"? How can a man, who in his heart, is an utter enemy to God, come to Christ as a king, and endure hardness, as a good soldier, in fighting against all that is opposed to the Divine will and glory? How can a man, who is in love with sin, and idolatrously attached to the present world, believe that it is worth his while to part with all for the Saviour's sake, and to become a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season—esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than any earthly treasure." No man, with an unchanged mind and heart, will ever embrace the christian salvation.

And the change which is absolutely necessary, is a change which God alone can effect. It is by his drawing men that they are induced to come to Christ. By the "drawing" of the Father we are to understand, as is evident from the following verse, the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the cogency of divine truth, understood and believed. It is by being made to hear and learn of the Father, that men are drawn to Christ. It is because men do not understand and believe the truth, that they cannot come to the Saviour, and depraved men never will understand and believe that truth, till the Spirit so fix their minds on its meaning and evidence, that they cannot help understanding and believing it, and when men understand and believe the truth, coming to the Saviour follows as a matter of course—they can

39 I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to a sermon by Dr. Smalley, an American divine, for many of the thoughts in the preceding paragraph. The sermon is entitled, "The Inability of the Sinner to comply with the Gospel; his Inexcusable Guilt in not Complying with it, and the Consistency of these with each other." Dr. Ryland follows a similar train of thought in his sermon entitled, "The Efficacy of Divine Grace Explained and Defended."
no longer help coming to him;" and when any man, whosoever he be, Jew or Gentile, however guilty and depraved, drawn by the Father, by his word and Spirit, comes to the Son, our Saviour declares that the final salvation of that person is secure. He is one of those who are given to him of the Father, and he shall not be lost, nothing of him shall be lost. He shall be "raised up at the last day."

It is plain from this passage, that the inability of coming to Christ, under which men labor, is not physical, but moral. It does not originate at all in a want of those intellectual and active faculties which are necessary to come to Christ, but entirely in an indisposition arising out of wilful ignorance, and the love of sin, and of the world. It is like the inability of the intemperate man to keep himself sober, the inability of Joseph's brethren to speak peaceably to him. If men cannot come to Christ, it is just because they will not come to him. They who under the gospel dispensation "are untaught of God," are so, because they refuse to learn of him. The appropriate means of removing this kind of inability, is the statement of the truth and its evidence. This is all men can do. Divine influence is necessary, absolutely necessary, to fix the mind on the truth and its evidence, so as to produce faith, and the native consequences of that faith; and that influence never was, never will be, refused to him who honestly desires it. What would men have more? Would they have men left to themselves? Then all must perish. Would they have God to compel men to receive salvation? This would be to do violence to man's nature, God's work! Would they have men saved as they are—in sin? This were to require an impossibility, and to do violence at once to the constitution of man, and the nature of God, to disgrace the Divine character, and overturn the Divine throne. The sum of the whole matter is, no man perishes under the gospel dispensation, but in consequence of his own wilful obstinacy: no man is saved, but in consequence of a divine influence originating in free sovereign mercy. Man is his own destroyer, God is man's only Saviour. If we perish, our damnation is entirely of ourselves. If we are saved, our salvation is entirely of God."

The rejection and the reception of Christianity by mankind,

---

60 I am indebted to Dr. Bennet for drawing my attention to a striking passage in Augustine's Homilies on this passage. After quoting Virgil's words, "Trahit sua quemque voluptas," he beautifully says (I quote Dr. B.'s translation):—"It is not necessity, but pleasure; not compulsion, but delight. Have the senses of the body, then, pleasures; and is the mind destitute of its pleasures? You show a green bunch to the sheep, and you draw it. Nuts are shown to children, and they are attracted. Whither we run we are drawn, for it is by love that we are drawn. His own peculiar pleasure draws every one. And does Christ revealed by the Father not draw?" Luther says:—"God allures us by his φιλανθρωπία—

his love of man (Tit. iii. 4). God is set before us as our dearest friend, so loving us, as to give his only-begotten Son for us. It is thus he draws us."

61 Fuller expresses this truth with his usual force and point: "Upon the whole, we see from these passages—John v. 40; vi. 44, 45, 65, taken together—first, that if any man is lost, whom he has to blame for it—HIMSELF; secondly, that if any man is saved, whom he has to praise for it—God.”
will, according to the different views taken of the subject, appear equally wonderful to a conscienciate mind. When we think of the perspicuity of its oracles, the reasonableness of its doctrines, the equity of its precepts, the simplicity of its ordinances, the abundance of its evidence, the benignity of its spirit, and the varied usefulness of its tendency, it seems strange that anything further than the calling on men to make Christianity the subject of considerate thought, should be necessary to secure its universal reception. But when, on the other hand, we think first of that holy spirituality which constitutes the most characteristic feature of that religion, and then reflect on that carnality of mind, that depravity of heart, that secular ungodly spirit, which are the leading attributes of fallen humanity, we cease to wonder that Christianity, with all its recommendations, should be rejected by the great majority of men to whom its claims are presented, and we begin to think it strange that any of a race so corrupt and earthly, should ever cordially embrace a system so pure and heavenly. The depravity of man is quite sufficient to account for the general rejection of Christianity. It can be satisfactorily accounted for on no other principle; and few considerations place the extent and depth of human depravity in a more striking point of view than this, that it does produce the general rejection of such a system as Christianity, and would, unless counteracted by an influence from a higher quarter, and of a more potent efficacy, produce its universal rejection. While the general rejection of Christianity is thus accounted for, without the slightest disparagement of its excellence, its cordial reception in any instance by such a being as fallen man, can be satisfactorily traced to no cause but a divine influence so fixing the attention on the truth and its evidence, as that it finds its way as truth into the corrupted mind and heart, and there, by its own power in producing light and purity, establishes for itself a permanent, and a welcome, and a suitable dwelling-place.

The only satisfactory answer to the questions, Why is the Gospel not cordially received by all who hear it? why does any man reject it? why do the majority of men reject it?—is, 'Man is a depraved being; he "minds earthly things;" he "loves darkness rather than light."' And the only satisfactory answer that can be given to the questions, Why is the Gospel cordially received by any man? why is it not obstinately rejected by all?—is, 'God, in these cases, by a supernatural influence, has counterworked human depravity; the Father has drawn to the Son.' The answer to the first class of questions is, 'Man is evil—wholly evil;' the answer to the second is, 'God is good—infinitely, sovereignty good.' Such is substantially the account which our Lord gives of this most interesting subject in the passage just illustrated. He plainly states that mankind, unchanged by divine influence, labor under such an indisposition to embrace his Gospel, and the blessings which it at once reveals and conveys, as amounts to a moral incapacity,—an indisposition which nothing short of divine influence can remove: "No man can come to me, except
the Father, which hath sent me, draw him;" and with equal plainness he states that this influence, while absolutely necessary, is also fully competent to produce the desired effect,—"All that the Father hath given me shall come to me." Every man that is drawn of the Father, every man that is "taught of God," every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me." Our Lord confirms his doctrine by an appeal to Old Testament Scripture,—"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." 103

It has been questioned whether, by using the phrase, "in the prophets," our Lord meant to convey the idea that the sentiment which he quoted was to be found in that part of the inspired volume to which the Jews gave the general name, "The Prophets," or that this sentiment is expressed by more than one of those inspired men usually denominated prophets. Did he refer to one passage, or to several? It does not matter much how the question is resolved, though it is certain that this formula of citation is sometimes used when only one passage in one prophet is referred to. 104 The precise words here quoted are not to be found in any of the prophets,—the sentiment is to be found in more than one. The probability is, that our Lord's direct reference is to a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah," And all thy children,"—the prophet is addressing the spiritual church, under the administration of the Messiah,—"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord." The same sentiment is to be found in the prophecy of Jeremiah;"—the prophet is plainly speaking of the state of things under the Messiah,—"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,"—that is, I will make them understand, and believe, and love the revelation I make to them; "and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."

Our Lord's object in making this citation, seems to be, to show his hearers that his doctrine, that men must be divinely taught in order to their becoming his genuine disciples, was in exact conformity with the declarations of the ancient prophets. His argument plainly takes for granted, what he had so satisfactorily proved by his miracles, that he was "the Prophet who should come into the world,"—"the Son whom the Father had sealed and sent,"—the promised Messiah. The substance of the quotation and argument is this: 'All the Messiah's subjects are represented by the ancient prophets as taught of God; they become his subjects, not in consequence of natural descent, or mere human teaching, but of a spiritual birth, and divine teaching.' In perfect conformity with these prophetic statements, our Lord in effect says, 'I do not expect any man to become my disciple, except he is taught of God;' and I expect that all who

are taught of God shall become my disciples.’ “Every one that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh to me.” The particle “therefore,” which seems rather to perplex the sense, does not appear to belong to the original text.”

“Hearing, and learning of the Father,” is equivalent to being made by the Father so to understand and believe the revelation of his will about coming to Christ, as to be disposed to comply with it—as to be drawn to him. The Father made known his will by the ancient prophets, who, as our Lord says, “testified of him.” He made known his will by John the Baptist, who stated the truth very plainly respecting not only the divine mission of our Lord, but also respecting the design of his mission, and the nature of the blessings of his kingdom. The great body of the Jews did not understand, and so could not believe, in their true meaning, the Father’s testimony to the Son by the prophets and John the Baptist. In one sense they heard; but they did not “hear and learn of the Father.” But all who, under divine influence, had been made to understand and believe that testimony, gladly and gratefully came to him, that they might receive from him the blessings he was divinely-qualified and divinely-commissioned to bestow.

The doctrine of our Lord in this passage, is quite coincident with that of his apostle. “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” No man who is ignorant of Christ and his salvation, will ever embrace them. No man who knows and believes the truth about them, can reject them. All men are naturally ignorant and unbelieving on this subject. No human teaching will suffice to remove their ignorance and unbelief. God—God alone—can do this; and wherever he does it, men embrace the Saviour and his salvation. The ignorance and unbelief which keep sinners at a distance from the Saviour, are willful, and therefore most criminal. The divine influence which removes this ignorance and unbelief, is sovereignly benignant—might justly be withheld from all, and when exerted on any, proves, not the superior worth of him who is the subject of it, but the infinitely free kindness of Him who is the author of it; so that he who is never the subject of this influence, has no cause to complain, while he who is, has strong reasons for adoring acknowledgment, and powerful motives to grateful obedience.

To prevent his hearers from supposing that some direct communication of information from the Father was necessary to men’s becoming his genuine disciples, he tells them that, in speaking of the necessity of hearing and learning of the Father, he had no reference to such direct communication,—a mode of communication, which he states to be peculiar to himself,—as the sent and sealed Son. “Not that any hath seen the Father,

---

64 Wetstein, Bengel—Griesbach, Tischendorf. 67 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.
save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father;" q. d.,

"When I speak of being drawn by the Father, of being taught
of God, of hearing and learning of the Father, I do not mean
any direct immediate communication from the Father's essential
divinity. He makes himself known in his word. He has spoken
times past by the prophets. He has spoken in these last days
by John the Baptist, and by the Son. That man is drawn of
God who, under the influence of his Spirit, is made to appre-
 hend the meaning and evidence of such revelations as He has
thus made of his character and will. Such direct and immediate
knowledge of God as bears an analogy to seeing visible objects,
has never been vouchsafed to any, save to him " who is of God.
He has seen the Father."

"He who is of God," has been interpreted as equivalent to,
"He who is commissioned of God—he who is sent of God." Tho-
ugh the words naturally enough express this idea, I do not
think that this is the meaning here, for the kind of knowledge
of God spoken of, is not that common to all who have been sent of
God; it pertains to our Lord (for he plainly refers to himself)
not in common with the class of divine messengers, to which he
belonged. It is a distinctive peculiarity of him as "the Only-
begotten of God," as one standing in an absolutely singular
kind of essential relation to the Father. "No man,"—no one,
neither man nor angel,—" hath seen God," neither can see him.
No man has obtained, no man can obtain, a direct and immedi-
ate knowledge of God, "The only begotten Son, he hath de-
clared him." He who is "of God," seems equivalent to, 'He
who is "God's own Son," the Son of himself, his proper Son.' He,
he alone, has seen God. He knows him, not only in the works
of his hand, and the dispensations of his providence, and the de-
clarations of his word, but he knows him directly and immedi-
ately. He sees, not his shadow, which is all that creatures do—
he sees his substance, he sees him as he is. He is perfectly and
intuitively acquainted with the whole truth in reference to his
nature, as well as his will.

All this statement, from the beginning of the 44th verse,
seems introductory to what follows. "The Jews murmured
because he said he was the bread which came down from
heaven." He replied, 'Murmur not. There is no sufficient
ground for murmuring. I have said nothing but what is true,—
though I do not wonder at your murmuring—for not having
been drawn by the Father, not having been taught of him, not
having heard and learned of him, you cannot receive, you labor
under a moral incapacity of believing, my sayings, however true
—of receiving my benefits, however precious. Murmuring,
though highly culpable in you, is just what, with your views,
might be expected from you. Nevertheless, I assure you I have
only asserted the truth,—" Whether ye will hear, or whether ye

62 John vi. 46.—ὁ ἄν pαρα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Chap. vii. 29. 60 oddei. 61 pαρα τοῦ Θεοῦ.
will forbear”—whether ye will believe and rejoice, or doubt and murmur—it is indubitably true. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”” I have everlasting life, real permanent happiness, to bestow on mankind; and the way for any individual to obtain this real permanent happiness, is to believe on me, to credit the truth respecting me, the truth spoken by me; and every one, be he a Jew or a Gentile, who thus believes the truth, shall obtain real permanent happiness.

“This bread of life.” “You did not misapprehend me, when you thought I appropriated to myself the appellation, “the true bread,” “the bread from heaven,” “the bread of God.” I indeed am all that these emphatic figurative expressions imply. I am that life-giving bread, for that is the force of the expression “bread of life,” just as “tree of life,” is life-giving tree; “water of life,” life-giving water; “spirit of life,” life-giving spirit. I am the procuer and bestower of immortal happiness.”

Our Lord goes on to compare or contrast himself with that bread which the Jews were accustomed to call ‘the bread of heaven’—the manna. That miraculous food, highly as they estimated it, was only the corruptible sustenance of a mortal life. “Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.” It could not procure for them the indefinite extension even of natural life. They who were fed with the corn of heaven, as well as they who were fed with the corn of the earth, died, and returned to their earth. But “this,” very probably pointing to himself, “this is the bread”—equivalent to, ‘I am the bread,’—“which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” “I am come from heaven to earth, not for the purpose of protracting for a season this mortal life, but that whosoever eateth me as the bread of life, that is, ‘whosoever exercises towards me as a Saviour those sentiments and affections, which are analogous to the bodily action of eating in reference to food, —he who treats me in the way which, in the nature of things, is calculated, as well as by Divine appointment destined, to drive from me the blessings I have to bestow, he shall never die;’ that is, not ‘he shall be exempted from the ordinary lot of fallen man —in his case “the dust shall not return to the earth as it was,”’ —but ‘he shall obtain a higher kind of life which shall never terminate. “He shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.”’

To mark the importance of the sentiment, he repeats it, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.”” The question of greatest importance here is, “What are we to understand by eating Christ Jesus as the bread of life?” Happily, there is no difficulty in answering the question. Eating is that which, in consequence of the natural constitution of things, is necessary to our deriving the advantage from bread, which it is intended to communicate.

72 John vi. 47. 73 John vi. 48. 74 John vi. 49. 75 John vi. 50. 76 Eccles. xii. 7. 77 John vi. 51.
that is, bodily nourishment. We may look at bread long enough, we may smell it, we may handle it, we may talk about it, it will do us no good. We must eat it, if we wish to be nourished by it. Now, what is it that is necessary and sufficient to our deriving from Jesus, as the Saviour, the blessings we need, and which he has to bestow. We may speculate about him, we may talk about him, we may dispute about him, but unless we believe in him, we shall never be personally interested in his salvation. To "eat" the bread of life is just, by the faith of the truth, to obtain a personal interest in the blessings of Christ's salvation.

Our Lord then proceeds to give them some farther most important information as to the manner in which he obtains for, and bestows on, mankind, real permanent happiness; employing a figurative representation corresponding to the general figurative view he had already given of his saving character as the bread of life. "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The meaning of these words is, 'I am the Saviour of the world; and the manner in which I am to save the world is by devoting myself to death in their room, as the victim for their transgressions.' Let us see how this sentiment can be brought out of these words—"I will give my flesh for the life of the world." "The flesh" of our Lord is plainly just equivalent to his body, or himself as embodied. To "give his flesh," is to devote himself as a sacrifice—voluntarily to lay down his life. This is plain enough. But what is it "to give his flesh for the life of the world." "The world" is just equivalent to mankind, without distinction, Gentiles as well as Jews; and "to give his flesh for their life," is either 'to give himself, to devote himself, in their room—to lay down his life for their forfeited life—to give his soul as a ransom for their souls—to die in their room, in order to save them from the death which they deserved;' or, what comes materially to the same thing, 'to lay down his life in order to obtain life—happiness—for them.' The truth embodied in these words, is that cardinal doctrine of Christianity, that the death of Christ, as the divinely-appointed piacular victim for the sins of men, is the grand means of securing man's salvation.

Now, says our Lord, "This is the bread I will give" to men. 'It is thus that I save them. It is thus I preserve them from destruction. It is thus I secure for them everlasting life.'

This passage very clearly shows how far they are mistaken who consider our Lord as calling himself "the bread of life," merely or chiefly as a teacher of a salutary doctrine, a doctrine which, understood and believed, is calculated to make men truly wise, good, and happy—to nourish them up unto eternal life. It is the truth with regard to his saving character generally, that he intends to bring before our mind; and especially that all-important

---

truth, that he is a Saviour from sin and its consequences, by bearing, and bearing away, the sin, the guilt, of the world.

Such, beyond all question, is the true meaning of our Lord's figurative declarations, that he was the "bread of life;" that "the bread which he gives is his flesh, which is given for the life of the world;" and that he who would live for ever, "must eat of this bread." It may seem strange, at first sight, that our Lord, in stating these primary doctrines, respecting the manner in which he, by his death, was to accomplish the salvation of men, and the manner in which men were to obtain a personal interest in the salvation accomplished by him, instead of unfolding them in plain literal expressions, should have wrapped them up in metaphorical language, and employed figures which, even to us, seem somewhat harsh, and which, to those to whom the discourse was originally addressed, could be only in a very limited degree intelligible. If, however, we judge of our Lord's discourse on the obviously fair principle, "In every work regard the author's end," nothing will seem wonderful here but the wisdom of the divine teacher.

It plainly was not our Lord's design to communicate at this time to these men, clear views respecting the nature of the salvation, which He, the Messiah, was to accomplish, and the manner in which this salvation was to be obtained through him. In the present state of their minds, they were plainly incapable of receiving such information. His object was to show them, that the truth on these subjects was something totally different from what they had been accustomed to consider as the truth, and to convey that truth under the veil of metaphor into their minds, so as to secure its becoming a subject of reflection—truth which, if presented in its naked simplicity, would have called forth such a host of prejudices, as would have prevented its finding entrance into the mind at all. His statements were intentionally enigmatical and startling. They were so framed, as that, while they could not be readily understood, they could not be easily forgotten. The truth was wrapped in these "dark sayings," but it required consideration, and coming events and clearer revelations, fully to unfold it. The present object was to arrest attention, to create interest, to excite inquiry. The more, then, the statements, while containing nothing but truth, could be made to wear the air of paradox, so much the better obviously were they fitted to gain the end in view, to draw forth the question,—"What can he intend by such strange assertions? Surely more is meant than meets the ear." Such was the effect which our Lord's statements actually did produce on the minds of many who heard them.

"The Jews therefore,"—that is, in consequence of his having made the paradoxical declaration that he would give his flesh as bread to men,—"The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 19 It is difficult, or rather impossible, to say what was the precise state of mind which this question indicated on the part of those who pro-

19 John vi. 52.
posed. It is not unlikely that it expressed different sentiments in
different individuals. With some it probably was a contemptuous
expression of utter incredulity, grounded on the alleged obvious
absurdity of the statement made: *q. d.*, 'The man is mad; can
any absurdity exceed this? We are to live for ever by eating the
flesh of a living man!' With others, who thought that neither
our Lord's words nor works were like those of a madman, the
question probably was equivalent to a statement—'These words
must have a meaning different from their literal signification, but
what can that meaning be?'

These "strivings" of the Jews about the meaning of our Lord's
words, were "among themselves." None of them seem to have
stated their sentiments to our Lord, but he was perfectly aware of
what was going on among them. He does not, however, proceed
to explain his former statements. They were not ready for such
an explication. It would have been worse than lost on them.
Instead of illustrating his statement, he reiterated it. He in no
degree explains away what had seemed strange, absurd, incred-
ible, or unintelligible. On the contrary, he becomes, if possible,
more paradoxical and enigmatical than ever, in order that his
statement might be more firmly rooted in their memory, and that
they might the more earnestly inquire, 'What can these mys-
terious words mean?' He tells them that, strange and unintel-
ligible, and incredible, and absurd, as his statements might appear,
he had said nothing but what was undubitably true, and in calculably important.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,
Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood,
ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh
my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last
day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink in-
deed."56 Though those to whom our Lord originally addressed
these words, had not the means of fully understanding them,
when they were uttered to them, we surely ought to find no
difficulty in discovering their meaning. Our interest in them is
as deep as that of those who heard them from the living lips of
the incarnate Saviour; and they are indeed as really addressed
by him to us as to them.

These words are the following out of the figure employed by
our Lord in the 51st verse. "I will give my flesh"—my body
—myself as embodied—a piacular victim, an expiatory sacrifice,
in the room of the forfeited lives of mankind, in order to secure
their happiness; and mankind, in order to be the better of this,
must feed on this sacrifice. The Son of man must undergo a
violent death, in the room of guilty men. His sacrificed body
when spiritually fed upon, is the principle and nourishment of an
eternal life, a never-ending happiness. His "blood shed for the
remission of sins," spiritually "drunk"—received—appropriated
—secures a happy immortality. Every man who does not eat

56 John vi. 53-55
this spiritual food, and drink this spiritual drink, is in a state of 
spiritual death. Every one who does eat of this spiritual food, 
and drink of this spiritual drink, shall immediately enter on the 
enjoyment of a holy, happy state of spiritual being, which shall 
ever terminate, and even the mortal part of his nature shall, 
through the power of the Redeemer's sacrifice, at the close of the 
present state of things, put on immortality.

The question of greatest importance to the satisfactory inter-
pretation of this most interesting passage is, What is meant by 
"eating the flesh," and "drinking the blood of the Son of 
man." We may remark by the way, that our Lord plainly 
admits his Messiahship, by identifying himself with the Son of 
man.

The "flesh and blood" of our Lord, is a phrase equivalent to 
his sufferings and death, as one who gives himself for the life of 
the world; or, in other words, to Jesus Christ suffering and 
dying, the just one in the room of the unjust, that he may bring 
men to God; the Lamb of God whose bleed was shed, and whose 
flesh was consumed, on the altar of Divine justice, as the victim 
for the sins of men.

The sacrificed Saviour is represented as the food of the soul, 
his shed blood as the elixir of immortality. The figure, like the 
emblem in the Lord's Supper, is double, but the signification is 
one. The atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is at once absolutely 
necessary, and completely sufficient, for the salvation of men. 
It is through that atonement, through that atonement alone, that 
any of the guilty, depraved, wretched children of men can obtain 
giveness, and sanctification, and true permanent happiness; 
and through this atonement every guilty, depraved, wretched 
man, may obtain forgiveness, and sanctification, and true perma-
nent happiness.

Now, how is the individual sinner to obtain for himself a per-
sonal interest in this deliverance from guilt, and depravity, and 
endless ruin, for the attainment of which, in the case of any 
man, this atoning sacrifice was necessary—for the attainment of 
which, in the case of every man, this atoning sacrifice is suf-
ficient? The answer to this question, the most interesting cer-
tainly that can engage the mind of a sinner, is, in the figurative 
language of our Lord,—He must "eat the flesh, he must drink 
the blood, of the Son of man." If he does not, "there is no 
life in him;" he continues in spiritual death,—in that state of 
condemnation, and moral pollution, and hopeless wretchedness, 
into which his sin has brought him. If he does, he hath eternal 
life, he enjoys a state of spiritual sensibility, activity, and enjoy-
ment, which shall never end—a state of blessedness in the enjoy-
ment of the Divine favor, of holy conformity to the Divine 
image, of true permanent happiness, and even his mortal, his 
dead body, shall in due time be quickened, and "mortality" in 
him "be swallowed up of life."

But the question comes back on us, What is it to eat the flesh
and to drink the blood of the Son of man, on which the enjoyment of such inappreciable valuable benefits is suspended? Some learned, but certainly not in this case judicious, interpreters, have considered these words as having a reference to the Lord's Supper, and I am afraid that, in very many cases, superstitious notions with regard to the efficacy of that ordinance, have originated in, or been strengthened by, this mistaken view of these words of our Lord. The Lord's Supper was not instituted till long after these words were spoken. The observance of that ordinance is not in every case necessary to salvation. There can be no reasonable doubt that many are in heaven who never participated in the Lord's Supper, and there can be as little doubt that many are in hell who have participated in it. It is not true of every one who has not eaten the emblem of the flesh of the Son of man, and who has not drunk the emblem of his blood, that he has no life in him; nor is it true of every one that has eaten and drunk these emblems, that he has everlasting life. The reference then is not, cannot be, to the Lord's Supper.

But it is not enough that we know what eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man does not mean; it is of infinite importance that we should know what these expressions do mean. Now, I apprehend the most satisfactory way of getting an answer to this question is to propose another. When Jesus Christ, as dying in the room of men to obtain their salvation, is represented as the food of the immortal mind, what is it that, in the economy of grace, serves the purpose of enabling individual sinners to derive from him the personal enjoyment of that pardon, and holiness, and eternal happiness, which his atoning sacrifice is at once necessary and sufficient to procure for men,—a purpose analogous to that which eating and drinking, according to the constitution of nature, serves, in enabling a man to derive nourishment from articles of food? No person, who has read the New Testament with any care, can hesitate for a moment as to the answer that should be given to this question. It is faith. It is the belief of the truth respecting Christ Jesus as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of sinners, in consequence of his having given himself, in the room of the guilty, "a sacrifice and an offering of a sweet-smelling savor to God." It is the belief of this truth which, by Divine appointment, interests the sinner in all the blessed effects of that atoning sacrifice. It is the believer, the believer alone, that by this sacrifice is brought to God—made an inheritor of everlasting life. It is by the faith of the truth that men are justified; it is by the faith of the truth that men are sanctified; it is by the faith of the truth that men are saved: and this truth respecting the atoning death of Jesus Christ is the grand central principle, with the belief of which the

81 Chrysostom, Hackspan, Maldonatus, &c.
82 "Credere in eum, hoc est manducare panem vivum."—Augustin. "Ne syllaba quidem hujus sexti capitis de sacramento loquitur, non modo quod sacramentum nondum est institutum, sed multo magis, quod ipsa sermonis et sententiarum consequentia de fide incarnati Verhi Christum loqui clare ostendit."—Luther.
enjoyment of the blessings of the Christian salvation is so often, in Scripture, represented as indissolubly connected.

This, then, is the fundamental principle of Christianity, so strikingly taught us under these figures: No man capable of believing, who does not believe the great cardinal principle of Christianity, that Jesus Christ, the divine, and divinely-appointed and qualified, Saviour of men, has made atonement for sin by the sacrifice of himself, can be a partaker of the Christian salvation. He is in his sins—dead—condemned already, the wrath of God abides on him; and if he continue and die an unbeliever, he must die the second death. On the other hand, every man who really believes this truth, is, of course, personally interested in all the blessings of the Christian salvation. He shall never perish; he shall have everlasting life; his sins are forgiven him, for Jesus' name's sake; he is made "accepted in the Beloved;" he is "transformed by the renewing of his mind:" he has hope, and joy, and "peace in believing;" his spirit lives because of his justification; and though the body must die because of sin, He who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, shall in due time quicken his mortal body, because of the Spirit who dwells in him. Such are the glorious results of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man—that is, of believing the truth respecting his atoning sacrifice."

Let us beware, however, of supposing that there is some mystical power in the act of believing. There is no more mystical power in the act of believing than in the analogous act of eating. The nourishing power is in the food eaten. The saving power is in the truth believed, or, rather, in the Saviour, whom that truth makes known to the mind. Accordingly, our Lord does not add, 'for eating and drinking are exercises of great potency;' but, 'for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed:'—"My flesh is truly nourishing, my blood is truly refreshing;'—that is, 'My atoning sacrifice secures everything that is necessary and sufficient to make man really, permanently happy, to deliver him from evil in all its forms and degrees for ever, and to fill with an overflow of holy enjoyment all the ever-enlarging capacities of his intellectual and moral nature during the entire eternity of his being.' But as the most nourishing food will not nourish unless it is eaten, so this all-perfect source of salvation will be of no use to us, unless, by believing the truth about it, we drink of its vivifying waters.

There are two very plain but apparently ill-understood principles, on this subject, which, as we value our souls, we ought never to lose sight of. It is the truth respecting Christ's atoning

83 Neander thus paraphrases John vi. 53-58—"Except ye receive my divine-human life within you, make it as your own flesh and blood, and become thoroughly penetrated by the divine principle of life which Christ has imparted to human nature, and himself realized in it, ye cannot partake of eternal life." I am not sure that I quite understand this, but I do not think that the profoundly learned and pious interpreter has apprehended our Lord's meaning so happily here, as in many cases.
sacrifice that must be believed in order to salvation; and, in order to salvation, this truth must be believed.

It is not believing anything that will save us, just as it is not eating anything that will nourish us. If a man eat poison, he will be killed; if he eat in nutritious substances, he will be starved. There are errors respecting the atonement of Christ, which, if a man believe, he must perish; and whatever he believe, if he believe not the truth respecting it, he cannot be saved. There are many very strong believers in hell, and on the road to hell; but they are those who have believed a lie, and not the truth as it is in Jesus.

The second truth referred to is an equally important one. Not only is it the truth that must be believed, if we would be saved, but the truth must be believed in order to our being saved. Knowing it, understanding the terms in which it is stated, speculating about it, talking about it, fighting about it, will not do if it be not believed; just as looking at nourishing provision, smelling it, handling it, talking about it, quarrelling about it, will not suffice for our nourishment: we must eat it, else we must starve. In like manner, of whatever intellectual exercise saving truth may be the subject, if it be not really believed, we can derive no saving advantage from it. Let us never forget these two principles. It is the truth that must be believed, and the truth must be believed, in order to our having a personal interest in the christian salvation.

Our Lord proceeds to state, in language no less enigmatical and paradoxical than any which he had yet employed in the preceding declarations, the intimate and permanent connection which subsists between him and all who believe the truth respecting his saving character and work,—a connection originating in, and maintained by, the faith of this truth, and the important and blissful consequences which result from this connection. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." These words assert the intimate and permanent connection between Christ and believers, and trace it to its cause. The words that follow unfold the blessed results of this intimate and permanent connection. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."58

I have already shown at length, that the phrase "he that eateth me," is equivalent to, "he that believeth the truth respecting me as the bread of life,—as him who has given his flesh for the life of the world." Now, says our Lord, he who does so, "dwelleth in me, and I in him." There are two ideas suggested by these words:—most intimate connection—"he is in me, and I in him;" and permanent intimate connection—"he dwelleth—abideth—in me, and I dwell—abide—in him." The food which nourishes, is incorporated with that which it sustains,—becomes a constituent part of it.

54 John vi. 56. 55 John vi. 57.
The union of Christ and believers, is a doctrine often taught by our Lord and his apostles. This union is of a twofold character. It is, in the language of technical theology, both legal and spiritual; in plainer terms, the expression indicates relation—that is, the legal union; and it indicates, also, community of spiritual life, manifesting itself in community of sentiment, feeling, and enjoyment—that is the spiritual union.

The legal union, or union of relation, may be thus described:—As Jesus Christ was, by a Divine appointment, so identified as it were with those whom he came to save, as to be treated, not as he deserved, but as they deserved—required to pay a debt which they, not he, had contracted—to restore what they, not he, had taken away—wounded, bruised, chastised, crushed to death, in their room—so, by another Divine appointment, all who believe are so identified with Jesus Christ, as that they are treated, not as they deserve, but as he deserves—treated as if they had done what he did, and merited what he merited. This is the fundamental blessing of the Christian salvation, all the rest grow out of it; and its origin, nature, and consequences, are very strikingly expressed in these words of the apostle: “But of God are ye in Christ Jesus (who of God is made unto us wisdom), righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,” that is, “justified, sanctified, redeemed.”

The spiritual union, or the community of spiritual life, of sentiment, and affection, and enjoyment, which exists between Christ and believers, is produced by the influence of the Divine Spirit, and made manifest through the faith of the truth. Christ’s mind and heart are unfolded in his word; when that word is, under divine influence, understood and believed, just in the degree in which it is so, it becomes the mind and the heart of the believer. So far as a man is a believer, he is of the same mind and heart with Jesus Christ. He thinks along with him, he wills along with him; and as the holy state of our Lord’s sentiments and feelings—their entire accordance with the mind and will of the Father—is the principal source of his holy enjoyments, so he who has a community of mind and heart with him, must have a community of enjoyment with him. It is thus that Christ dwells in the hearts of his people by faith—the hope of glory; it is thus that his Spirit is in them, and they are in his Spirit; it is thus, that it is not so much they that live, as Christ that lives in them; for the life they live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God who loved them, and gave himself for them. Every genuine believer is thus, both relatively and actually, united to the Saviour; so that he is in the Saviour, and the Saviour is in him.

But our Lord’s words assert not merely the reality of this most intimate connection, but also its permanence. Believers, according to our Lord, “dwell,” or abide, “in him, and he

86 Bos, Nösselt, Krause.
dwell," or abides, "in them." The relation is an indissoluble relation; and the communion of sentiment, and feeling, and enjoyment, though, in consequence of their limited and ever-improving capacities of knowledge, and holiness, and happiness, admitting of endless enlargement, can never terminate. He and they can be no more separated. The bonds which connect them, are of such a nature as to defy the power of death itself to sever them, and will bind the parties closer and closer in holy happy union for ever.

This blessed result of believing in Christ Jesus, is very strikingly described in the following words—"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." The general thought intended to be conveyed by our Lord seems to be this—The intimate connection between believers and the Saviour is so close, as that his life secures their life;—"because he lives, they shall live also;" and he illustrates this thought, by comparing the connection which subsists between believers and him, to the connection which subsists between him and his Father—and the security which their connection with him affords for their life, to the security which his connection with the Father affords for his life.

It is plain that our Lord here speaks of himself as mediator—the sent of God—not as "that eternal life which was with the Father" "from the beginning." "The living Father," is an expression plainly equivalent to, 'the life-giving Father, the possessor of all life and happiness, the communicator of all life and happiness, the source and fountain of existence, and intelligence, and activity, and enjoyment.' This glorious person, who, in the economy of salvation, sustains the honors of the Godhead, sent Jesus Christ as "the living bread," commissioned and qualified him to be the Saviour of men. "I live by the Father," says our Lord. Our Lord's existence and powers as a divine person, are undervived and independent. They are not different from, they are the same as, the existence and powers of the Father. But our Lord is here speaking of his life as the commissioned and qualified Saviour of men. "I live," seems to be equivalent to, 'I exist as the bread of life; I, as the appointed and qualified Saviour of men, possess and exercise the power of conferring happiness.' And he thus lives, "by the Father."

These words are commonly understood as equivalent to, 'through the agency of the Father; my life depends on him. He constituted me what I am, as the Saviour of men, and he enables me to discharge all the functions connected with this office, enabling me to give eternal life to as many as he hath given me.' This is no doubt the truth, and is quite in accordance with the uniform representations of Scripture, that all that Christ as mediator does for the salvation of men, is done by the power of the Father—that is, the power of the Divinity which the Son is commissioned to exercise.

---

88 John vi. 57. 89 John xiv. 19. 90 1 John i. 1, 2
At the same time, there can be no doubt that the proper meaning of the phrase translated, "by the Father," is, "on account of the Father;" and I rather think our Lord's intention is to say, not so much that his life, as the bread of life,—that is, his saving power,—is dependent on, as that it is secured by, the living and life-giving Father. 'Because my Father who sent me is the living and life-giving One, and he has sent me as the bread of life, to give life to the world, therefore I can give life. His life, as the life-giving Father, secures my life as the life-giving Saviour. Because he lives, I live also. The living Father must cease to live, before I, his commissioned and qualified agent for the salvation of men, lose the power to save.'

In like manner as the Son, in the character of the sent of the living Father, lives by him, "so" says our Lord, "he that eateth me, shall live by me." 'As the Father is the life-giving Father, I, being sent by him, live; so, as I am the life-giving bread, he that eateth me shall live. I live, as the Saviour, because of the living Father who hath sent me. He who eateth me lives because of me, who am the life-giving bread.'

Stripped of the metaphor, the sentiment is,—'He who believes on me shall enjoy real permanent happiness, because I am the divinely-appointed and qualified Saviour; and because believing in me is the divinely-appointed means of obtaining a personal interest in me as the Saviour, and in the blessings of my salvation. I can never cease to be able to save to the uttermost, because He who sent me for the very purpose of saving men, is the independent and exhaustless source of all existence, power, and enjoyment; and he who believes in me, can never cease to enjoy real happiness, for I am the divinely-appointed and qualified procurer and bestower of real happiness on all who believe, in consequence of an irreversible appointment of Him who cannot change; as, because he lives, I must live,—so, because I live, they must live also.' Such, so far as I am able to apprehend it, is our Lord's meaning in these words, which, like so many others on the same subject in Scripture, are "dark by excessive brightness."

Our Lord now repeats a sentiment he had already uttered, the more deeply to impress it on their minds. 'This bread which has come down from heaven, infinitely surpasses the manna of which you are accustomed to speak so highly. They who ate of the manna died. They who eat of this bread shall never die. "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."' 194

In these words our Lord distinctly states, that this bread, which he has again and again asserted was himself, had come down from heaven, claiming obviously pre-existence, and pre-existence in heaven. The manna came down from the upper regions of the atmosphere, not from heaven, properly so called;

91 δε τὸν Παλαθα. 26 92 John vi. 68.
but Jesus came down from the heaven of heavens, from the bosom of the Father, where he had been from the ages of eternity.

It may be said, indeed it has been said, that this argument overthrows itself by proving too much; for surely the flesh and blood of which our Lord speaks, did not come down from heaven. This is, however, by no means implied in the argument. "The Son of man" is here just equivalent to 'the Messiah,' and is used, not in its etymological, but in its conventional, signification. All that it implies is, that the pre-existent divine person who descended from heaven, and, when the object of the descent was accomplished, ascended up where he was before, united himself to human flesh and blood for the most wise and gracious purposes, especially for those sufferings and that death which were necessary to secure the redemption of a lost world.

As this mystical bread far excelled the manna in its origin, so it also, in a corresponding degree, excelled it in its efficacy. It is not with this heavenly bread as with the manna. The ancestors of those whom our Lord addressed, had eaten of the manna, but they had not lived for ever. They were all dead many centuries ago. The manna does not seem to have had any greater power to sustain, or to prolong life, than any other species of wholesome food. It could not counteract the fearful efficacy of the original curse—"Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return;" nor of the additional curse denounced on that unbelieving generation —"Your carcases shall fall in the wilderness."

But this heavenly bread has the power of counteracting a more awful curse than either of these—the curse that dooms the immortal soul of man to eternal death. It has the power of communicating, and sustaining, and prolonging, to all eternity, a better life than that forfeited by sin—a divine, a heavenly life; "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." On eating it, he shall begin to live anew, a higher, a holier, a happier life. That life shall be sustained by the continued eating of this mystical bread, and shall never come to an end.

It deserves notice, that, in the whole of this passage, the enjoyment of eternal life—that is, real permanent happiness—is represented as connected, not with having eaten the bread of life, but with eating it. The faith of the Gospel, by which an individual is interested in the saving benefits which were procured for men by the atoning sacrifice of our Lord, is not a transient act, but a habitual exercise. The bread of life must be our daily food; and just in the measure in which we feed on this heavenly manna, shall we realize the vigor, and activity, and enjoyment, of the heavenly life.

Thus have we arrived at the close of that interesting and instructive discourse, which our Lord delivered in the synagogue of Capernaum.\(^{53}\) It is a discourse certainly not without its diffi-

\(^{53}\) Gen iv 19. \(^{54}\) Numb. xiv. 29. \(^{55}\) John vi 59.
cultivates, but it is richly replete with the most important and delightful principles of the Christian faith.

It may be useful, previously to our finally taking our leave of it, as a subject of exposition, to recall briefly to our minds the occasion, the design, and the manner, of this important discourse. The occasion of the discourse was furnished by the mercenary professions, and pertinacious adherence, of a multitude, who were moved by the hope of his gratifying their national ambition, and perhaps equally by the expectation of being fed, without their own care and cost, by his miraculous power. They sought him because they had eaten of the loaves, and been filled; and they showed what was uppermost in their minds, by hinting that the most acceptable miracle he could perform, would be one similar to that of the manna in the wilderness. The more politic of them, probably, extended their views farther, and contemplated his being able to support armies for the establishment of their expected dominion over other nations. From the appetite of hunger, Jesus, who could with dignity employ any object or circumstance as a vehicle of divine instruction, derived the occasion of this address, and taught them that they were laboring under a deeper necessity, and that God had graciously provided a suitable relief.

The design of the discourse was to break the charm of his hearers' destructive ambition, to wean them from their low sensuous views, to show them the nature of true happiness, and to unfold to them the only method of attaining it.

The manner in which he prosecuted this design, was by showing that man's true happiness consisted, not in sensible and present enjoyments, but in spiritual and eternal blessings; that he had been divinely commissioned and qualified to bestow such blessings, not on one nation only, but on mankind generally, and that faith in him was necessary to the obtaining of a personal interest in these blessings; that to render himself capable of making men really and permanently happy, it was necessary that he should suffer and die as a propitiation for the transgressions of men; and that the belief of the truth on that all-important subject, was as necessary to a man's deriving advantage from His sacrifice, as eating is to a man deriving advantage from nourishing food; that, while they continued under the unbroken influence of their carnal desires and worldly prejudices, they labored under a moral incapacity of receiving and enjoying the blessings he came to procure and bestow; and that nothing short of a divine influence could emancipate them from the power of this present evil world, and enable them to receive what was freely given them of God. With regard to the particular form of the discourse, its principal subject wears the aspect of a prediction, with regard to the manner in which he was to accomplish the salvation of men, and the manner in which they were to obtain a personal interest in that salvation.

* * *

The whole discourse is marked by that mixture of literal and figurative diction which is one of the most characteristic features of the Old Testament prophetic discourses, and by that envelope of obscurity which was necessary to guard the public prediction of any future event. The event predicted in this case, was the extreme sufferings and cruel death of the Saviour. Of this catastrophe it was his manner to speak obscurely to his public and promiscuous audiences, and it was only to his disciples in private, and occasionally, that he, greatly to their surprise, forecast it in plain terms. The keeping in view of these general remarks respecting the occasion, design, tenor, and form of the discourse, will be of use to us in enabling us more readily to call up the important truths to which our attention has been turned in these expositions.

III.—THE EFFECTS OF THIS DISCOURSE ON HIS DISCIPLES IN WORD, AND ON HIS DISCIPLES IN DEED.

§ 1. On his Professed Disciples.

The impression made by this discourse on those who heard it, is described by the evangelist in the 60th verse:—"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" The "disciples" is here plainly a general term, descriptive of all who, under the impression that Jesus was a divine messenger, probably the Messiah, were in the habit of waiting on his ministrations, and of course comprehended under it persons of considerably diversified views respecting the design of the Messiah's mission, and the nature of his kingdom. The great body of these disciples seem plainly to have been looking only for a temporal prince, and a national deliverance. To them the discourse which they had heard must have been anything but satisfactory. Jesus had had a very fair opportunity afforded him of avowing himself, in plain terms, the long-expected deliverer of Israel, and of commencing that career which, as they hoped, was to end in the emancipation of the chosen people, and the subjugation of the world. But instead of doing this, while he had not indistinctly intimated that he was indeed the promised Messiah, he had spoken nothing about raising armies, fighting battles, taking cities, obtaining wealth and honor for his followers; but had delivered to them a mystical discourse, which, so far as they could get a glimpse of its meaning, was altogether inconsistent with their views, fatal to their hopes—a discourse about the superiority of the meat that endureth unto eternal life over the bread that perisheth—about himself being the bread of life—about his coming down from heaven, and giving his flesh for the

97 John vi. 60.
life of the world—about the necessity of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood.

The effect produced by the delivery of such a discourse, to such an audience, was just what might have been anticipated. Many of them, when they heard it, said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" The word "saying" refers not exclusively to the concluding observation recorded in the 58th verse, but to the whole discourse. The words of these dissatisfied disciples admit of a two-fold interpretation. They may mean, 'This is a very obscure discourse—so obscure as to be unintelligible; who can comprehend—who can make sense—of it?' Or, 'This discourse contains in it sentiments quite irreconcilable with our most fixed opinions, and most fondly-cherished hopes; who can believe it?' The last of these is, I apprehend, the true import of the words, as spoken by these disciples. This seems plain from the fact that they were offended at the discourse. They were stumbled by it, that is, it shook their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This seems the meaning of the phrase "offended," when used in such a connection. "Blessed," said our Lord to John the Baptist's messengers—"Blessed is he who is not offended in me."98 And we find they were so stumbled, that many of them went back and walked no more with him. It seems obvious that it was not what was obscure, but what was plain, in our Lord's discourse, that was offensive to them, and that led them to the conclusion, that it was in vain to expect from Jesus the Nazarene, what they had been accustomed to expect from the Messiah. "This was an hard saying," seems not so much, 'These statements are unintelligible,' as, 'These statements are inadmissible;' and "who can hear it?" seems not so much, 'Who can understand them?' as, 'Who can believe them?'99

These expressions of dissatisfaction were not openly made. They only murmured such things "among themselves." But Jesus knew in himself what was the state of their minds. "He needed not that any should testify to him of man, he knew what was in man." He made it plain that he was the searcher of the hearts—the trier of the reins—a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart—and that all things were naked and open to Him with whom they had to do. "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?"100 'Does this stumble you? Do these statements, which, though not fully understood by you, are plainly incompatible with your opinions and wishes respecting the blessings to be obtained and bestowed by the Messiah—do these statements shake to dissolution your half-formed faith in me as the Messiah? Even though they should, I cannot retract them;

98 Matt. xi. 6.
99 The shrewd remark of Archbishop Whately, in reference to the Apostle Paul's writings, is equally applicable to the doctrines of his Master. "There is good reason to believe that the chief objection to St. Paul's writings is not from the things hard to be understood, which they contain, but from the things easy to be understood, the doctrines so plainly taught by him." 100 John vi. 61.
I must reiterate them. Everything I have to say to you, everything that is to happen to me, will more and more confirm the conviction that I am not the kind of Messiah you are expecting, or wish for. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"

These words are somewhat difficult of interpretation. They are elliptical. As they stand in the original, they are just—"and," or even, "if ye see the Son of man ascend up where he was before." There are some things, and some very important things, stated here, which are perfectly plain; let us look at them first. Our Lord asserts here that the Son of man—that is, himself as Messiah—"was about to ascend up where he was before." The Jews, as appears from chapter xii. 34, expected that the Messiah was to "abide for ever," remain permanently among them. Our Lord intimates here, that, instead of remaining on earth to establish the worldly kingdom they were anticipating, he was, after having given his flesh for the life of the world, to return to heaven from whence he had come down.

The pre-existence of our Lord—his pre-existence in heaven—previously to his appearing among men, is as plainly stated in these words as language can state it; and with all the ingenuity which belongs to the opposers of that doctrine—and we readily acknowledge they are possessed of no ordinary degree of it—they have failed, and ever must fail, of bringing any other meaning out of them. Having finished the work which he was sent to do on earth, which was chiefly to "give his flesh for the life of the world," he was to return to the bosom of the Father, and be "glorified with the glory which he had there before the world was."

Our Lord farther intimates, that the Jews should "see him ascend up where he was before." The word "see," is equivalent to "shall know—know on the most satisfactory evidence." Our Lord's apostles beheld with the bodily eye the Son of man ascend from earth toward heaven, and all the varied evidence which supports the truth of Christianity generally assures us that he has sat down on the right hand of God in the heaven of heavens. These statements are plain enough. "The Son of man shall ascend up where he was before, ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before;" but what is the meaning of the words, "and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"

They are plainly, as we have said, elliptical; and it is somewhat doubtful how the ellipsis should be supplied. It may be supplied thus,—"What," that is, "what will you think," "what will you say," "if you see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" or, "Will you still be offended," "if ye see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Those who consider the objection of the disciples as referring to the obscurity of our Lord's discourse, suppose that the import of these words of our Lord is,—"You find these sayings of mine obscure, because you

1 John vi. 62.
are disposed to understand them literally, not figuratively, as they ought to be understood. Surely, when I leave the world altogether, and return to heaven, you will see that my words must be interpreted figuratively, in which case there is no difficulty of understanding them.'

I rather think the import of our Lord's question is this: 'Will ye still be offended with my doctrine with respect to the spiritual nature of the blessings which I, the Son of man, have come to procure and bestow, when, by withdrawing from this world and returning to my native heaven, I have made it quite obvious that I have no design to set up such a temporal kingdom as you are dreaming of?'

The words that follow seem intended still farther to meet the misapprehensions of these murmuring disciples. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." These words must be differently interpreted, according as you suppose the murmurings of the disciples directed against the statements of our Lord's discourse as unintelligible, or as inadmissible—incredible.

In the first case, the words would mean, 'You are occupied with the body of my discourse—its words. You overlook its spirit—its meaning. If you allow your mind to rest on the words and the figures merely, you will get no good from it—it will necessarily appear unintelligible; but if you lay hold of the truth which these words and figures embody, you will find that they have a meaning—a meaning powerful in producing happiness; for my words, rightly understood, are spirit—full of energy, and life—capable of communicating happiness.'

In the second case, the meaning seems to be, '"It is the Spirit that quickens:"—these words, understood literally, looking at the flesh, the body, in which the sentiment is clothed, may, indeed, well appear to be incredible,' but when you discern their spirit, there is nothing incredible in the statement made by me, a divinely-accredited messenger, that men are to be saved by faith in me, dying as a victim in their room.' By other interpreters, the meaning has been thus given—'It is spiritual things—spiritual blessings—that constitute man's true happiness. The flesh profits nothing. Carnal, material, temporary benefits, such as power, and honor, and splendor, which you are desiring and hoping for, do not, cannot, constitute men truly happy. "My words are spirit, and they are life." My doctrine is a spiritual and a life-giving thing. He who understands and believes it, obtains possession of true permanent happiness, to the attainment of which the possession of all secular enjoyment will be found utterly ineffectual.'

Our Lord added, 'But there are some of you that believe

2 John vi. 63.
3 'What could my flesh avail you to eternal life, even if you were carnally to eat of it?'—SLEUTHINGUS.
not;"* g. d., 'I know that some—that many of you—notwithstanding your professions, do not really believe me to be a divine messenger; for you are not disposed to receive as true whatever I declare to be so: you receive my doctrine only so far as it coincides with your preconceived opinions. Did you really believe, instead of saying, "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" you would have said, It is a true saying, and we will hear it?" It is possible, too, that our Lord meant to suggest the important truth, that it is the believer alone who can experimentally know that his words are spirit and life. To the unbeliever, who sees merely the outside of them, they profit nothing; they are not understood, they are not influential.

The evangelist remarks, in a kind of parenthetical note, "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." He was never imposed on. When he called Judas to be an apostle, he knew that he would be the traitor.

After saying "there are some of you that believe not," our Lord adds, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."* Our Lord refers to what he had said at the 44th verse, 'Because I was aware that many of you were not true believers in me, I told you that, unless you were drawn by the Father, unless you were taught of God, unless you heard and learned of the Father, you never could be my disciples indeed.'

The consequence of these statements made by our Lord was, that, "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him:" that is, they withdrew from attending on his teaching; they no longer followed him from place to place; they returned to their ordinary occupations, convinced that he was not the Messiah they expected or wished for. Their secular expectations were disappointed, and their real character disclosed. They saw two things very plainly: He was not the master they wished for, and they were not the kind of followers he wished for.

§ 2. On his disciples in deed.

When those who had professed to be his disciples were retiring in crowds, our Lord turned to the little band of the chosen twelve, who seem always to have kept close to him, and said to them, "Will ye also go away?"*—'Are ye also disposed to leave me?' In these words, our Lord intimates that he wishes no unwilling followers—that they who do not will to stay with him may go.'

With a single exception, which our Lord himself immediately adverted to, the apostles were sincere believers in his divine mis-

---

* John vi. 64.  
* John vi. 64.  
* John vi. 65.  
* John vi. 66.  
* John vi. 67.  
* "Jesus neminem cogit atque hoc ipso aretius sibi suos jungit."—Bengel.
sion and Messiahship. They were in many things prejudiced and mistaken; but they were fully persuaded that their Master was the promised deliverer, and they were expecting from him something better than a mere temporal deliverance.

Peter, with his characteristic forwardness and ardor, replied to the touching question of his Master, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." It is as if he had said, 'We cannot depart from thee, for we know not where else to go to find such a master. We have no wish to depart. Thou, thou only, hast what me so much need—the words of eternal life; thou, thou alone, canst teach us the way to true happiness, and lead us in the way which thou openest up to us. We are fully persuaded thou art the promised Messiah, the Son of God.'

It is difficult, or rather impossible, for us to say accurately what ideas Peter at this time attached to the appellation, "Son of the living God." We know what it means; and that in all its extent of meaning, it is applicable to him to whom Peter applies it.

In reply to Peter's confession in the name of his brethren, our Lord gave the following most impressive warning—"Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" The word devil, in our language, is the distinctive appellation of a particular class of depraved intelligences. The original term is less restrictive. Here it is equivalent either to 'enemy,' or 'false accuser.' 'Even in this little band, in whose name you have professed unbroken attachment, there is one false-hearted person.' The remark was made to put them all on their guard, to make each of them say, "Lord, is it I?'

The reference was to Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed him into the hands of his enemies. It has been supposed, and the conjecture is probable, that Judas, who had originally connected himself with Jesus from worldly motives, in the hope that he would secure a high place in the kingdom to be established, first conceived the thought of betraying his Master on hearing statements so completely irreconcilable with the notion that he was to be a temporal prince.

I cannot conclude my illustrations of this discourse better, than in the pertinent and pious reflections of Dr. Doddridge. "We have, through the Divine goodness, been made acquainted with these gospel truths in their full evidence and mutual con-

10 John vi. 68, 69. 11 John vi. 70. 12 Est. viii. 1.
13 "Non solum sibi malus, sed etiam alius periculosus."—BENGEL.
14 John vi. 71.
15 I take this opportunity of expressing my cordial admiration of what Dr. Doddridge has called the "Improvement" of the various sections of his "Family Expositor." Many have equalled, some have surpassed, Dr. Doddridge as interpreters of the New Testament, but no man seems ever to have drunk deeper into its spirit, or so happily to have expressed the devout and practical reflections which a careful perusal of it is fitted to awaken in an enlightened polished christian mind.
nection, which were more obscurely hinted to those who attended
on Christ's personal ministry. May we hearken to the spiritual
sense of this sublime and excellent discourse, earnestly entreat-
ing the influences of Divine grace, that we may not only be
drawn to Christ, but be so firmly attached to his interests, that
whosoever else forsake him, we may never go. And may in-
stances of apostasy, which, alas, are to be found in our age, as
well as in the primitive one, lead us to serious self-inquiry, and
to humble dependence on Him, who alone can 'strengthen,
stablish, and settle us' in the faith of the truth, and enable us to
'hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of our hope, firm unto
the end.'
EXPOSITION IX.

HUMAN AUTHORITY IN RELIGION CONDEMNED.*

Matthew xv. 1-20.—Mark vii. 1-23.

While our Lord was "teaching in the cities and villages of Galilee," a number of "doctors of the law," belonging to the sect of the Pharisees, whose ordinary residence was Jerusalem, came to him. Whether they were deputed by some public body—or, of their own accord, came expressly for the purpose of hearing the discourses and witnessing the miracles of Jesus—or, being in that remote district of the country at any rate, took the opportunity of obtaining personal information respecting an individual whose character and claims had become a subject of general interest, it is needless to inquire, for it is impossible to learn. From the general character of the body to which they belonged, and from their own conduct on this occasion, there can be little doubt that their object was not to find out the truth but rather to "entangle Jesus in his talk," and, if possible, to obtain some ground of accusation against him, either before the ecclesiastical or civil authorities—the Jewish Sanhedrim, or the Roman Governor.

While they were with him, they seem to have witnessed our Lord and his apostles taking their frugal meal, and remarked, with surprise, that they sat down to meat without observing the ordinary Jewish rite of washing the hands. The Mosaic law required a variety of ablutions; this, however, was none of them. But the Jewish Rabbis—"the elders," as they are called by the evangelist—had added many ceremonial injunctions of their own to those of Divine appointment, and insisted on obedience to these as a necessary part of religious duty. Among these, that of washing the hand and arm up towards the elbow (for that seems the meaning of the word in Mark, rendered by our translators oft') previously to sitting down to meals, was considered

* See Note A.

1 ἐνακριβώς. Olshausen understands it somewhat differently. He says, "Undoubtedly ἐνακριβῶς is to be taken in the usual sense of hand, flat, so that the method in which the Jews washed is pointed out. The hands seem to have been used alternately in washing one another. The Syriac translators would have rendered it 'frequently,' 'generally,' as though they had rendered it πῶς ἐνακριβῶς. Either the translator had heard the word wrong, or he did not know how to translate
of very great importance. "Whosoever," says one of the Rabbis, "despiseth the washing of hands, is worthy to be excommunicated." "He that eats bread," says another, "with unwashed hands, acts as wickedly as if he had committed whoredom." Rabbi Akiba, when in prison, not having water sufficient both to quench his thirst and wash his hands, employed what he had for the latter purpose, saying, "It is better to die for thirst than to transgress the traditions of the elders." "Whosoever," says another Talmudist, "hath his seat in the land of Israel, and eateth his common food in cleanliness, and speaks the holy language, and recites his phylacteries morning and evening, let him be confident that he shall obtain the life of the world to come."

With these views of the importance of keeping the traditions generally, and particularly of washing the hands, as a religious rite, before eating, it is not wonderful that it was with a mixture of surprise and indignation that they saw the followers of a professed religious teacher neglect so important an observance; and, concluding that he approved of their conduct, from his not condemning it, they inquired, "Why walk not thy disciples according to the traditions of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

Our Lord’s reply consists of two parts: a general condemnation of the practice of attending to those unauthorized observances, as if they were religious duties, and a particular exemplification of their mischievous tendency. These two parts are not given by the two evangelists in the same order. We follow the order of Mark, who, after his usual manner, obviously gives the more circumstantial account of the whole matter. According to our Lord, these traditionary observances were both useless and mischievous.

They were useless. They were not, they could not be acceptable as pieces of religious worship; for they were not required nor authorized by the great object of worship. As religious services, they were utterly "vain." They could serve no good purpose. This sentiment our Lord expresses by quoting a passage from the book of the prophet Isaiah, and asserting that it is a prophetic description and condemnation of the very practice which they so highly approved, and for the neglect of which they were disposed so severely to censure his disciples. "Well," said he, "hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites." It is as if he had said, 'Ye are hypocrites;' i.e., 'you assume a character that does not at all belong to you: you profess to be very zealous for the law and honor of Jehovah—and how do you show your zeal? While insisting on observances, as necessary parts of religious duty, which He has never required, and in conforming to which, not His honor, but the honor of you and your Rabbis it." βαπτίσμος—as used by Matthew—according to the same very learned interpreter—"is, as at Heb. ix. 10.—Ablution, washing generally." Campbell would render πνεύμα "with a little water," quasi, "with a handful."
is involved, and at the same time dispensing with what his law
has rendered absolutely obligatory, you profess to acknowledge
his authority; but what do you actually do by these traditions?
You usurp that authority equally by making that a duty which
he has not made a duty, and by superseding the obligation of
that which he has made a duty. "Esaia has prophesied well of
you hypocrites." He has accurately described your character;
he has strongly condemned your conduct.'

The quotation is from Isaiah xxix. 13. The words are not a
literal translation of the passage as it stands in our Hebrew
bibles; but they accurately enough express the prophet's mean-
ing. Many expositors consider our Lord's words as merely
signifying that the terms in which Isaiah described certain per-
songs in his own times, were strictly applicable to those whom he
now addressed. I rather think our Lord meant to say, that they
were the very persons whom the prophet, in the spirit of predic-
tion, describes. I apprehend that both the twenty-eighth and
twenty-ninth chapters of the book of the prophet Isaiah have a
direct and sole reference to the state of the Jewish people imme-
diately before, at, and after, the appearance of the Messiah.
"This people draw nigh unto me with the mouth, and honor me
with the lip, but their heart is far from me." 6 "This people pro-
Fess a great regard for my authority and law; but they are desti-
tute of that regard for my authority and law which they profess.
"Their fear of me"—their religion—"is taught by the precept
of men"—the services they profess to perform to me, are per-
formed from a regard, not to my authority, but to the authority
of men. Their teachers impose their own doctrines as of equal,
as of superior, authority to my commandments; and they submit
to this impious usurpation. What they call the worship of God,
is indeed the worship of men. What they offer to me as worship,
must then be vain—"In vain do they worship me." 5 It cannot
serve the purpose of worship. It cannot be acceptable to me. It
cannot be useful to them. 6 No religious service can be accept-
able to God if he has not enjoined it; and even a religious ser-
vice which he has enjoined, can be acceptable to him only if it be
performed out of regard to his authority, and not from any other
motive.

But our Lord denounces these traditions, not only as useless,
but as mischievous. The hypocrisy of the Jewish doctors, in
pretending a supreme regard to the Divine authority, was mani-
fested, not only in adding to, but in taking from, the Divine law
—not only in making that duty which God had never made
duty, and that sin which he had never made sin—but in making
that sin which he had made duty, and that duty which he
had made sin. They not only placed themselves on a level with
Him by making new laws in religion, but they even placed them-
selves above Him by holding that when His laws and theirs came
into collision, His—not theirs—must give way. "Laying aside

the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men." "Ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition."

Of this our Lord gives a very striking example, introducing it with these words of most severe irony—"Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition."

'With what admirable consistency do you profess such a high regard for God, while you trample on His authority to exalt your own!' "For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father and mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.'

The general meaning of our Lord's words is quite plain. 'Filia duty is most strongly enjoined in the law of God, and the neglect of it is represented as a very great sin; but by one of your traditions this part of the Divine law is frustrated—made void—as it were, cancelled.'

The word "honor," in the fifth commandment, is a general term for that respectful affection, and all proper expressions of it, which a child ought to cherish towards a parent. One of the proper modes of expressing this feeling, is for the child to support the parent, either wholly or in part, when the parent's circumstances require, and the child's permit this. To "curse" a parent—to treat a father or a mother with disrespect or cruelty—is condemned in the strongest terms in the Divine law. Now, it seems the Jews had a tradition of the elders, the tendency of which was to invalidate both what God had enjoined and forbidden on the subject of filial duty; but what was the precise nature of that tradition, and how it had the effect of making void the Divine law with regard to filial duty, are points on which interpreters are not agreed.

Some have supposed that the tradition referred to was this—'The support of destitute parents is optional, not obligatory; it is a gift, not a debt. He who yields it is very praiseworthy, but he who withholds it cannot be justly blamed.' Such a tradition would, no doubt, materially cancel the fifth commandment. But simple, and on that account probable, as this mode of interpretation is, there are insuperable objections to its adoption. We have no reason to think that the Jews had any such tradition; even although they had, they could scarcely be said by it "not to suffer men to do ought for their parents;" and, besides, this interpretation does not account for the word Corban, which properly signifies a sacred gift,—something devoted to God.

Another class of interpreters suppose that this was the tradition:—'If a man declare that he will devote to sacred purposes that which otherwise he would have been bound to devote to the

support of his parents, he is not only freed from the obligation to support his parents, but he would sin if he were employing any of his property for this purpose.’ No doubt this, too, would make void the fifth commandment; and this would indeed be a refusing to suffer the man to do aught for his father and mother. But there is a want of evidence that this was one of the ways in which the Scribes and Pharisees ‘spoiled widows’ houses.’

The following appears to me the most probable account of the matter. There seems to be a reference to the doctrines of the Jewish rabbis with regard to vows. Their doctrine on this subject has been thus stated by the learned Dr. Pococke, one of the most accomplished of our rabbinical scholars:—‘A man may be so bound by vows that he cannot, without great sin, do what God in his law hath required to be done; so that if he made a vow which laid him under the necessity of violating God’s law that he might observe it, his vow must stand, and the law be abrogated.’ The words in the 11th verse, in Mark’s Gospel, are the terms of the vow—‘It is CORBAN’—or ‘let it be CORBAN’—by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me.” CORBAN signifies what is dedicated to God, and what cannot be turned to any other purpose without sacrilege. If a Jew were about to take a vow against the use of wine, he would say, ‘Let this wine be CORBAN; ‘i. e., ‘I vow I shall not drink it; and if I do, I will incur the same degree of guilt that I should by violating the sacredness of anything devoted to God.’ The vow before us is, ‘Let everything by which I may be profitable to my parents be CORBAN. I vow that I will not do anything for the support of my parents; and if I do, may I draw down on myself the punishment due to a violation of sacred property.’

Such a vow, in ordinary circumstances, could only be made in a moment of passion. No man could approve of such a vow. We have no reason to think the Scribes or Pharisees did so. They would readily, I have no doubt, have condemned it; but still, according to their doctrine, the vow, though a rash one, was an obligatory one. To the man who had made such a vow, they would have said, ‘You should not have made it; but, having made it, you must keep it. By keeping your vow, you no doubt expose yourself to the penalty connected with the breach of the fifth commandment; but by breaking it, you will expose yourself to the punishment you have invoked on yourself,—the punishment due to the violation of sacred property,—a much greater punishment than that due for filial undutifulness. There is only a choice of evils; but there is, in this case, a greater evil in breaking the vow than in keeping the vow.’

Such were the absurd refinements of rabbinical casuistry, by which they confounded the plainest moral distinctions, and made sin duty, and duty sin. The plain, scriptural, common sense decision, on such a case, would be, ‘You sinned greatly in
making such a vow, and you would sin still more were you keeping it. Repent of your wickedness in making so rash, profane, and unnatural a vow, and show your repentance by redoubled assiduity in the performance of every variety of filial duty. 

Our Lord concluded his stringent address to these Scribes and Pharisees with these words:—“And many such like things ye do,”10 “This is but a specimen of your traditions; and are my disciples to be censured for disregarding such traditions—which can be of no use—which are so mischievous? and is it for you, hypocrites, to pretend zeal for the Divine authority, and to manifest displeasure at my disciples, as if they disowned it, while you set the throne of human authority not only on a level with, but above, the throne of Divine authority?”

We are all ready enough to condemn these Scribes and Pharisees for “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,” and “making void the commandment of God by their traditions.” But let us remember that this pestilent spirit is by no means extinct, and let us guard against its influence. In every country and age, men have discovered a disposition to mould the doctrines and worship of God according to their own fancy. Whence but from this came the mummeries of popish superstition—its masses and penances, and fasts and festivals, and pilgrimages? and whence come the unauthorized rites, and ceremonies, and office-bearers, that are to be found in churches calling themselves reformed? Whence came the unholy connection between church and state, and all its diversified and innumerable fatal results? whence have come those terms of communion, unsanctioned by the authority of Jesus Christ, that are to be found in so many societies which profess to be his churches? All these spring from one “root of bitterness,” the substituting tradition in the room of revelation—the authority of man in the room of the authority of God.

We have great reason to deplore, and we sometimes think we have reason to wonder, that so little of the Divine blessings rests on the ministers and churches of Christ. We should probably cease to wonder, though not to deplore, were we recollecting that Jesus promises to be always with a ministry who teach men to observe “all things whatsoever he has commanded,” and nothing else; and with churches who “walk in his commandments and ordinances blameless.”

That will be a happy day which sees the empire of human authority within the christian church completely overthrown. “By setting their thresholds by his thresholds, by setting their posts by his posts,” there has been a wall raised between God and his people. When these are cast down, and God’s people made thoroughly “ashamed” of having erected them, a voice will be heard from heaven, “The place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, and my holy name, shall the house of

10 Mark vii. 13.
Israel no more defile,” “and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.”

Whenever human authority has found its way into the church of God, it has not rested satisfied with merely adding to the laws and institutions of Christ; it has always in some measure altered and annulled them. When, in the Roman Catholic church, so many ceremonies were added to the simple rite of the Lord’s Supper, the result was, that the one-half of the original ordinance was abolished, by the cup being denied to the laity. Wherever saints’ days are observed on human authority, the Lord’s day, appointed by Divine authority, is neglected. Whenever the ministers of religion are supported by state endowments, the Divine financial law, “Let him who is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things,” is superseded, and, so far as man can do it, repealed. When men introduce their own terms of communion, Christ’s terms of communion are sure to be disregarded; and when, in the presbyterian churches of this country, a host of unauthorized, or at any rate unappointed, services, were connected with the administration of the Lord’s Supper, then an ordinance, which in the primitive age was observed every Lord’s day, was converted into an annual religious festival.

The christian church is even yet but very imperfectly freed from the unholy influence, and the mischievous operation of human authority. The house requires to be more carefully swept than it was at the reformation from Popery, and a more thorough search must be made for the old leaven, that it may be completely cast out. Let all individual Christians, let all Christian churches, learn to act on the principle, that in reference to Christian faith, and duty, and worship, the question is not, ‘How thinkest thou?’ but, “How readest thou?” not, ‘What is use and wont?’ but, “What is written in the law?” not, ‘How is it to be arranged by us?’ but, “How has it been settled by our Master?” Let us “seek out of the book of the Lord and read.”

However sincere a man may be in a creed or worship of his own invention, or of other men’s invention, it will profit him nothing. “The faithful witness” pronounces such a creed and such a worship “vain.” May God, by the mighty power of his truth, overturn all the altars to human authority erected in Christian churches and Christian hearts; and in the implicit belief of divine truth, because it is divine—the unquestioning obedience of divine precepts, because they are divine—and the cheerful observance of divine ordinances, because they are divine, may “the Lord alone be exalted.”

The pharisaical doctors could make no reply to these words of holy rebuke. They retired silenced, but not convinced—covered with shame, and full of malignity. As they were retiring, and still within hearing, our Lord took the opportunity of endeavoring to lodge in the minds of the multitude, in whose presence the conversation had taken place, an important general principle in the form of an apothegmatic remark, which was well fitted to.

show the absurdity of the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees respecting the uncleanness which they asserted was contracted by violating the tradition of the elders respecting eating food with unwashed hands. Having called the surrounding crowd near him, he said to them, “hearken unto me every one and understand.”

These words are equivalent to—‘Give close attention, and exert to the utmost your faculty of mental perception. I am about to make a statement which at once deserves and requires attention. It is of great importance that you should rightly and fully understand it. Without mental exertion, you cannot do this. With mental exertion, you may do it.’

In endeavoring thus to fix the attention, and to engage in active operation the mental faculties, of his hearers, our Lord sets an example which should be followed by every religious teacher. There is no pouring Christian truth passively into the minds of men. If men will not listen, and reflect, and examine the meaning of statements, the validity of arguments, and the force of motives, the best possible teaching will not make them wiser and better. It is anything but a recommendation to a sermon, that it saves the audience the trouble of thinking.

According to the evangelist Mark, who, as we have already remarked, gives us the most circumstantial account of this discourse, our Lord, after this solemn introduction, proceeded to say, “There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man;” and according to Matthew, “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.”

I think it probable, that our Lord used in succession, first the words recorded by Mark, and then those recorded by Matthew, and that the two statements are not to be considered as the different modes in which two witnesses report the same saying. The words in Mark are the statement of a general principle: ‘It is not anything extrinsic and material, anything which affects merely the outer man—the animal frame—that, properly speaking, makes a man morally impure; whatever does so must be something residing within, proceeding from the inner man—the spiritual—the intellectual—the moral nature.’ The words in Matthew are the application of the principle to the case before them: ‘Food, even although, from being eaten with unwashed hands, not so clean as it might be, cannot make a man morally impure; but such “evil thoughts,” or rather “wicked reasonings,” as come out of the mouths of the Pharisaic Scribes, when they “make void the commandment of God through their traditions,” they indeed make a man morally impure. My disciples, in neglecting a mere human tradition, have incurred no guilt, have done nothing displeasing to God; but these men, with all their pretended sanctity, who would bring them in guilty before God,

unfit for fellowship with him, make it evident, by their wicked reasonings, which "proceed out of their mouth," that in their inner man they are "full of what is abomination" to Him who requires truth in the hidden part."

It is quite obvious that our Lord, in these words, has no reference to the Divine law, prohibiting the use of certain articles of food to the Israelitish people. Our Lord, when he was "made of a woman," was "made under the law," and scrupulously observed every one of its requisitions. He informs us, that "till all things were fulfilled," an iota or a tittle of that law was not to lose its authority; and he condemns the pharisaic Scribes for using unholy freedoms with that law—stating that "whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." For the disciples to have eaten swine's flesh, would, without doubt, have made them "unclean;" but it would have done so, not from any physical quality in the food itself, but in consequence of its showing that the evil thing—indisposition to comply with the clearly-revealed will of God, in an unrepealed code of law—was within. Even in this case it would have been, not so much what went into the mouth, but what came from the heart, which morally defiled the man.

What our Lord says here, however, seems just to be this, 'Food, though physically, not ceremonially, impure, cannot make a man morally impure;' the reverse of which very obviously true remark was implied in the Pharisees' insisting that the use of food permitted by God, unless attended by a usage not appointed by him, did make men morally impure, i.e., guilty, objects of disgust to the Holy, Holy, Holy One.

Having laid down this principle, and applied it to the case before him, our Lord adds, "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." This was a formula of speech often employed by our Lord, and is just synonymous with the words with which he introduced the somewhat enigmatical statement he had made. 'This statement may seem to you strange; but it is true, and it is important. It deserves, it requires, considerate attention; let it receive it.'

Leaving the multitude, our Lord retired with his disciples into the house where he ordinarily resided; and when they were by themselves, his disciples said to him, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?" The Pharisees were a numerous and influential class among the Jews, and the Scribes belonging to the party were their leaders. In the partially enlightened state of the disciples' minds, it must have appeared to them a very desirable thing that these persons should be induced to recognize the validity of their Master's claims; and that, therefore, it was advisable to avoid, as much as

---

possible, whatever was calculated to disgust or displease them. Such seems to have been the state of mind which dictated their address to their Master. Probably they heard the Scribes murmuring as they retired: ‘This can be no true prophet who thus pours contempt on the traditions of the elders;’ and their feeling seems to have been, ‘What a pity that their prejudices were so directly attacked.’ The import of the question appears to be, ‘Are you aware of the effect produced by “the saying” (rather, ‘the discourse,’) you have just uttered? Do you know that these Scribes and Pharisees, who, we hoped, might have become thy disciples, and joined our company, were quite “offended” —quite stumbled at it? However much they might have been disposed beforehand to become thy disciples, it is all over with them now.’

Instead of sympathizing with these views of his disciples,—instead of expressing anything like regret at what he had said, or a wish that he had been more cautious in his language,—he replied, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”

The only question which affects the interpretation of these words is, What does the word “plant,” refer to? Does it refer to the Pharisees, or to their doctrine, which our Lord had been condemning and exposing? In the first case the meaning is, ‘The pharisaic sect, numerous and respectable as it is, is not of divine institution, and therefore is not to be honored by being brought as a body into the number of my followers. It is to be rooted up, or destroyed.’ In the second case the meaning is, ‘The doctrine of the Pharisees respecting human traditions has not the sanction of Divine authority; and it belongs to me, as the Great Prophet like unto Moses, not only to water and cherish the plants which my heavenly Father has planted, and to plant such other plants as it is his will to have planted, but to root up such plants as he has not planted; in plain words, not only to sanction former revelations of the Divine will, and to make new revelations, but also to condemn and expose, and put down, all opinions and usages falsely claiming to be of Divine authority.’ It does not matter much which of the views you take of the subject, though I confess I feel rather disposed to prefer the last.

“Let them alone,” i. e., I apprehend, ‘Have nothing to do with them. Do not desire their patronage or co-operation. With all their sanctimonious pretensions to wisdom and piety, they are the stupid and wicked teachers of a stupid and wicked people. “They are blind leaders of the blind.”

It is a very foolish thought, if such a thought lurks in your mind, that I could make common cause with them. I see clearly—I know whither I am going—and I am the seeing guide of those who see, whose eyes I have opened. I will lead them by the right way to the wealthy place. But these blind guides of the blind will precipitate themselves, along with those who have committed

20 Matt. xv. 13. 21 Matt. xv. 15.
themselves to their direction, into the pit of perdition. Have nothing to do, then, with the Scribes and Pharisees.'

Our Lord's conduct here shows us that we are not, from the fear of giving offence to influential, and, in a worldly point of view, respectable men, to refrain from speaking the truth, especially with regard to doctrines and usages, unsanctioned by Divine authority, which men endeavor to impose as articles of faith and religious ordinances, and by which they cast into the shade doctrines plainly revealed, and substantially make void ordinances clearly appointed by the Lord. It is no uncommon thing when the truth, with regard to the spirituality of our Lord's kingdom—with regard to the danger of building "hay and stubble" on the only foundation—with regard to the only financial law of the church, and the guilt and the danger of neglecting and still more attempting to repeal, that law;—it is no uncommon thing, when the truth on these subjects is spoken, however calmly, for persons of great influence and worldly respectability to be dissatisfied and offended. And some very well-intentioned persons, like the disciples, are disposed to say, 'It is a pity,—would it not have been better to avoid such subjects?' But is the truth to be concealed? This would be, on the part of him who knows it, unkindness to his mistaken brethren, injustice to truth, treason against the God of truth.

To all men, especially to well-meaning though mistaken brethren in Christ, we ought to avoid giving unnecessary offence. We ought to be ready to sacrifice personal comfort, to a great extent, rather than incur this evil. "If meat make my brother to fall, I will eat no meat while the world standeth." But we must not sacrifice a jot or a tittle of Christ's truth to gain this or any other end, however apparently desirable. The "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,"—the "making void God's commandments by men's tradition," we must clearly expose, and strongly condemn, undiverted from our course by the fear of shocking the prejudices even of those genuine Christians who have been entangled in the snare of any of those systems where man holds the place of God, however much we may love their persons, and value what is genuine in their Christian faith and character. This is kindness to them, as well as justice to truth. With regard to everything in the shape of religious doctrine, which we cannot find in the Bible—with regard to everything in the shape of religious institution, unsanctioned by its authority—we must "lift up our voices like a trumpet," and proclaim, whosoever may be offended, "Every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted," should—must—"shall, be rooted up."

If the reference in the figurative maxim of our Lord be not to

22 "With regard to faith, I take for my motto, 'Cedo nulli.' I give place to none. I am, and ever will be, stark and stern; and will not one inch give way to any creature. Charity giveth place, for it 'suffereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;' but faith giveth not place."—Luther.
the doctrine and usages of the Scribes and Pharisees respecting tradition, but to the sect itself—it's bearing on our duty is not less direct and important. God instituted no sects in the Jewish church. Christ instituted no sects in the Christian church. Every church which is sectarian in its constitution is so far unchristian—anti-christian. Alas! how many churches are sectarian more or less in their constitution. Alas! how few are not sectarian in their spirit and practice.

In proportion as we separate ourselves from other Christians, we bear marks of a plant which our Master in heaven has not planted. His design was that his disciples should be one. And those churches give best proof of their being plants of his own right hand planting, who, in their practice as well as their principle, to use the words of our excellent Confession of Faith, "are ever ready, as God offereth opportunity, to extend the communion of saints—that holy fellowship which consists in communion in the worship of God, and in performing such others spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification, as well as in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities, to all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus;" and who cordially, in action as well as in words, say, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The time will come—may the Lord hasten it!—when the sects shall be utterly abolished, when the middle walls of partition, which at such a misplaced expense have been raised and maintained between different churches of Christ, shall be pulled down, and their materials employed in rebuilding the great wall of partition between the church and the world, which has been allowed to fall into ruins; when there shall be visibly, as already there is really, but "one flock," as there is but "one shepherd," and when the united church, feeling the whole emphasis of meaning contained in the 133d Psalm, shall sing it with grace in their hearts to the Lord.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Or in the words of the old Paraphrast:—

"O bless'd estate! bless'd from above
When brethren join in mutual love!
Tis like the precious odor shed
On consecrated Aaron's head,
Which trickled from his head and breast,
Down to the borders of his vest:

23 This is Olshausen's exegesis. "It is a false interpretation to refer σωτερία to the doctrine of the Pharisees. It refers to themselves."

24 Eph. vi. 24.
"Tis like the pearls of dew that drop
On Hermon's ever-fragrant top,
Or which the smiling heavens distil
On happy Sion's sacred hill;
For God hath there his favor plaed
And joy that shall for ever last."25

Note A, p. 411.

This discourse was preached immediately after the disruption in the Established Church of Scotland, which led to the formation of the Free Church, in May 1843. It was published by request, and had prefixed to it the following Advertisement:—

Impurity in doctrine, or in worship, or in discipline, and sectarianism in constitution or in spirit, are the master maladies under which, in various degrees, all the churches of Christ are laboring. A leading cause of those evils is an undue regard to human authority, a principle endlessly varied in its forms, and most malignantly efficient in its operation. The only cure for both these evils, which are more closely connected than is generally apprehended, is to be found in a return to entire submission to Divine authority. That—that alone—will bring back the purity and unity of the apostolical age. To promote this most desirable object, all who in any measure know the truth on this subject, should speak it, and speak it in its own spirit, which is that of love. When thus spoken, it will not be spoken in vain.

These truths are of intrinsic abiding importance; but circumstances may, at particular seasons, give them additional interest. When something like re-organization is taking place in one section of the christian body, the change is likely to be advantageous or otherwise to those more immediately concerned, to the church generally, and to the world, just in the degree in which these truths are understood and acted on, or are overlooked and disregarded. It is by all christian churches acting on these principles themselves, rather than by one christian church exposing, however justly, the deficiencies and faults of another, in reference to this subject, that that union, which to all genuine Christians is an object of earnest constant desire, is to be attained. Let us all get close to the one Master, and we cannot remain far from each other.

The preceding discourse was thought, by some who heard it, likely to be of some use in fixing the mind on the grand secondary cause of impurity and sectarianism, and on the only means of their cure; and it is in the hope that it may, in some degree, answer the purpose contemplated, that it is given to the public.

25 Sandyæ.
EXPOSITION X.

UNLIMITED INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION.

John vii. 37, 38.—"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

What a busy, bustling scene is this world of ours! "All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." The endlessly diversified forms of human activity, which called forth this emphatic exclamation from the Israelitish sage, and which still meet our observation in every direction, are but different expressions of one and the same sentiment—varied shapes which, according to the different constitutions, characters, and circumstances of individuals, are assumed by one great animating and guiding principle—the desire of happiness. It is this which makes the miser hoard wealth, and the spendthrift squander it. It is this which makes the brave court danger, and the timid shun it. The man of business, the man of pleasure, the man of ambition, the man of letters, the man of religion, different as may be their paths, are all moved by one original principle, and are all in quest of one ultimate object. The language of all human pursuit, to the ear of reason, is, "Who will show us what is good?" We need, we desire, we must have—happiness.

How melancholy the thought, that this universal activity produces so little satisfactory result, that, while all seek happiness, so few, so very few, find it! The fact is equally indubitable and deplorable. What can be its cause?

It is not that happiness is a mere phantom, and the attainment of it an impossibility. There is such a thing as real happiness. The Deity is perfectly happy: He is "the ever blessed God." Holy angels are happy; their constant employment is praise. The spirits of the just made perfect are happy; yes, "Blessed are the dead who have died in the Lord."

Nor is it that happiness is placed entirely beyond the reach of men in the present state. As there are men in heaven who are

---

1 Eccles. i. 8.  
2 Rom. i. 25.  
3 Psal. iv. 6.  
4 Rev. xiv. 13.
perfectly happy, so there are men on earth who are really happy—who have "an enduring substance"—a solid peace—an inward and inexhaustible source of enjoyment—"a well of living water in them, springing up unto everlasting life." If the desire of happiness, then, usually leads to useless labor, and terminates in painful disappointment, the cause is in man, not in God.

What then is the reason why, while all wish for happiness, all seek for happiness—so few, so very few, obtain happiness? This lamentable result arises out of mistakes—in many cases wilful, and therefore, criminal, mistakes—respecting the nature of happiness, and the means of attaining it. A very large class of men are employed—some by very appropriate, and others by very incongruous, means—in seeking the attainment of objects which, whatever may be their value and use in their own place, and however fully attained, are unfit, both from the nature of man and the appointment of God, to make men happy; and a smaller class, with juster views of what is requisite to constitute the happiness of such a being as man, under the government of such a being as God, are equally coming short of their great object, in consequence of seeking it in a way in which it cannot be found. And how come men to form these mistaken views, which so fatally misdirect their aims and waste their energies? They rest satisfied with inaccurate and incomplete information on these subjects, while they neglect or repudiate the only source of unerring knowledge. God, the author of happiness, can alone certainly inform us what true happiness is, and how true happiness is to be obtained.

In the passage before us, "God in Christ," "God manifest in flesh," appears unfolding to us the true nature of happiness—informing us that it is in him, in him alone—explaining to us the means by which it may be secured—inviting us to come to him that we may obtain it, and assuring us that if we do come to him for this purpose, we shall not come in vain:—"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." What subject can be more truly, more universally, interesting than this? Oh, let us "incline our ear and come to Him; let us hear that our souls may live!"

The interesting discourse of which our text obviously contains only the outline, was, like most of our Lord's discourses, of an occasional character. It arose out of the circumstances in which he was placed at the time he uttered it. With his usual reverence for Divine institutions, he had gone up to Jerusalem to observe the feasts of tabernacle and ingathering, which, combined, formed one of the most distinguished of the Jewish festival-seasons. The last day, the eighth day, of the feast, was

5 John vii. 37, 38.
come. That is called here, "the great day of the feast." So far as the number of sacrifices was concerned, the last day of the feast had no claim to be thus distinguished, for the oblations on that day were fewer than on any of the preceding days. It seems to be thus characterized, because on that day there was a general solemn convocation of the whole worshippers in the temple. It was what is termed in the Old Testament a "day of assembly"—and it deserves notice that the ancient Greek translator uses this very term, in Isaiah i. 13, for "the calling of assemblies," or the solemnly summoned assemblies. The same phrase is used by our evangelist with regard to the paschal Sabbath—"a high day."76

The feast of tabernacles and ingatherings, which was the last festive meeting in the Jewish year, was celebrated with peculiar pomp and splendor. To the numerous ceremonies appointed in the Divine law, others had been added through the caprice of the Rabbins. To one of the most remarkable of these, it seems, to say the least, highly probable that our Lord has a reference in the words before us.

On every one of the eight days of the feast, at the time of the morning sacrifice, one of the priests brought into the temple a golden vessel full of water drawn from the fountain of Siloah, which sprang up at the bottom of the mountain on which the temple was built, and conveying this water into the inner court, mingled it with wine, and then poured out the mixture as a libation on the altar. The performance of this ceremony was accompanied with solemn instrumental and vocal music,—a party of priests sounding the trumpets and cymbals, and another party singing as an anthem the words of Isaiah, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Whether this impressive, though uncommanded, ceremonial rite, was intended to be commemorative of the miraculous supply of the Israelites with water while they abode in tents during their sojourn in the Arabian deserts, or to be emblematical of the streams of truth and grace—that abundant blessedness of which they expected copiously to partake during the days of Messiah the Prince—we cannot certainly say. This we know, that in no ceremony did the Jews take a deeper interest; so that it was a common saying among them, that "he who had never witnessed the rejoicing at the pouring out of water, did not know what rejoicing meant."78

It seems to have been immediately after the performance of this ceremony, that our Lord uttered the words now before us. The courts of the temple were crowded with worshippers; the impressive rite had been performed; the music of the priests had ceased; the loud plaudits of the multitude had sunk in silence. Occupying some elevated position within the sacred precincts, the mysterious man of Nazareth stood, and drew the attention of the multitude by proclaiming in a loud voice, "If any man thirst,  

---

* John xix. 31. — ἐν γὰρ μεγίστῃ ἡ ἡμέρα Χριστοῦ τοῦ σαβατών.  
* Isa. xii. 3.  
* Succah. v. 1, apud Wetstein. Lakemacher Obs. Sac. Lib. i., p. 18-78.
let him come unto me, and drink.” How full of majesty are these words—how full of mercy! Our Lord here obviously holds up himself as the Saviour of mankind, under the emblem of a copious, ever-full, ever-flowing fountain, open to all. It is as if he had said, 'I am the water of life. I am the source of blessedness, of which the streams that, bursting from the rock struck by Moses' mystic rod, refreshed your fathers in the wilderness, were a figure. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”'

I.—THE INVITATION.

For the right understanding of these "words of grace," it will be necessary to attend to the corresponding figurative descriptions of the persons invited—the thirsty; of the Saviour as a fountain of water; and of the manner in which sinners are to obtain the blessings of Christ's salvation—they are to come to him, and drink; and then to consider the free and unrestricted character of the invitation given to them to accept of the happiness he has to bestow, in the appointed way—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

§ 1. The persons invited—the thirsty.

They who are invited are "the thirsty." Thirst, as well as hunger, is in all languages, I believe, employed figuratively to signify a state of destitution and desire,—deep destitution, intense desire. Some interpreters have considered the words before us as equivalent to—'Whosoever, feeling his ignorance, is desirous of true knowledge,' others, as equivalent to—'Whosoever is desirous of the blessings which are to be bestowed by the Messiah,'—whosoever "hungered and thirsted after righteousness." But both these modes of interpretation unduly limit the signification of the term. "He who thirsts" is just the man who is conscious that he needs something to make him happy, and who is desirous of obtaining it. It does not matter whether he be right or wrong in the estimate he has formed of that, the want of which, he thinks, is the cause of the uneasiness he feels, and the attainment of which, he thinks, would remove that uneasiness. He may be thirsting for that which, instead of quenching, would inflame, his thirst. He may be desiring and seeking that which, were he to obtain it, would make him still more miserable. To bring him within the range of our Lord's invitation, it is enough that he thirsts—that he is destitute, and desirous, of happiness.

A more comprehensive description of human beings, I believe, could not be conceived. "If any man thirst," is just equal to, 'Whosoever wishes to be happy.' If a man can be found who is perfectly happy, or who has no wish to be happy, that man is not invited. Till such a person is found, we must hold that the invitation has no limits.
§ 2. The fountain to which the thirsty are invited—ME.

Our Lord invites the thirsty ones to come to him, as a fountain of living waters, full and flowing, from which they may drink in abundance, and thus quench their thirst. As "thirst," signifies conscious need and earnest desire; so, to have thirst quenched, denotes to be no longer in destitution—to be delivered from a state of painful desire—to have what is necessary to happiness, and to be satisfied with it.

When our Lord represents himself as the fountain which can quench the thirst for happiness of all mankind, he intimates that he is capable of making men, however miserable, truly happy,—that he can supply all the wants, satisfy all the desires, of the human soul. Distinctly to apprehend this thought, our minds must be turned to the various wants which make man the destitute being he naturally is.

Man has a mind, and, as an intellectual being, he is naturally destitute of the knowledge of the truth about God, which is necessary to the true happiness of a being constituted as he is. Jesus is the great revealer of God; he is the truth. No man knows the Father, but he to whom the Son reveals him. He makes them who were darkness, light in the Lord. "Christ is of God made" to such "wisdom."

Man has a conscience; and, as an accountable, guilty being, he needs pardon and acceptance with God. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." "He has brought in an everlasting righteousness." "In him" the guilty sinner finds "the forgiveness of sins," and is "made accepted in the Beloved." "Christ is made of God to him righteousness."

Man has a heart; and he needs a suitable object on which to place the affections of supreme veneration, and love and confidence; and God in Christ.—God in his redeeming character,—manifested in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is the suitable and satisfying portion of the heart, the appropriate object of the supreme esteem and entire confidence.

Man is depraved, and he needs sanctification. Jesus saves us by turning every one of us from our iniquities. "Christ is of God made to us sanctification."

Man is weak, and he needs strength; and Christ can "strengthen, with all might in the inner man," he can make his "strength perfect in weakness."

Man is mortal, and he needs deliverance from death, and the grave; and Jesus is "the resurrection and the life."

Man is immortal, and being guilty, he is doomed to endless misery, and he needs eternal life to make him happy. Now Jesus "delivers from the wrath to come"—"I give to my sheep eternal life"—"Christ is made to them redemption."

Our Lord is thus an all-accomplished Saviour. He has all the merit, power, authority, knowledge, wisdom, kindness,
sympathy, that are requisite for supplying it. the best manner, and most abundant measure, all our need, and for making "all grace to abound toward us." "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." His glory is that of "the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth:" and "out of his fulness" may all the indigent receive "grace for grace,"' abundance of every kind of heavenly and spiritual blessings. There can be no doubt, then, that our Lord is just the kind of Saviour which man needs. He is the fountain of "the water of life," of which, "if a man drink he shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of living water, springing up to eternal life."

§ 3. The double call—"come—drink."

But an important question meets us here, How are men to obtain from this Saviour the blessings they need, and he has to bestow? That question is answered in the words of our Lord. He is not a well shut up, a fountain sealed,—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."10

The whole language is figurative, and therefore it is necessary to inquire, what are those mental exercises with regard to spiritual blessings, which are described under the metaphors of the bodily motion of coming, and the animal function of drinking

(1.) "Come."

It has often been said that to come to Christ, is just the same thing as to believe in Christ, and the following passage is generally quoted as satisfactorily proving this,—"He that cometh to me shall never hunger, he that believeth on me shall never thirst." But these words only prove that he who cometh to Christ, and he that believeth on Christ, is the same individual, not that coming to Christ and believing on him are the same thing. The following passage seems to intimate that they differ as the end does from the means,—"He that cometh to God, must believe that he is." It is by believing the truth about God, that we are enabled to come to him. It is by believing the truth about Christ, that we are enabled to come to him. Coming to Christ, then, is just a figurative expression for those exercises of the mind and heart in reference to him, which naturally rise out of the belief of the truth respecting him, the movement of the thoughts and affections towards him.

To come to Christ as the fountain of living waters for the

9 "Augustine (Ep. cxev. ad Sixtum) has given us the hint, at least, of the right explanation, which so many even now miss, of that difficult χάριν ἀντὶ κάρπων (John i. 16), that it means one grace heaped upon, or a better grace coming in some sort in the room of (ἀντὶ) a preceding:—an uninterrupted stream of God's gifts in Christ, which are ever succeeding, and, so to speak, replacing one another."—Tæncu.

10 "Nova et plausibilis est interpracticio τῶν τῆς διωφής, ἄρρεντῆς πρὸς μέ καί παντὸς —ὁ πιστεύων εἰς καθὼς εἶπεν κτῆτος υἷος θεοῦ, sed χασμὸς durior esset siiens veniat; bibat oredens. Post imperativum imperativus vim futuri habeat."—Bengel.
thirsty soul, is for man, as an ignorant and erring creature, in
the faith of the truth respecting Jesus as the great revealer of
God, implicitly to receive his testimony in his word; it is for
man, as a guilty creature, believing the truth respecting Jesus
Christ as the great sacrifice and High Priest, to place an un-
 doubting reliance on his atonement and intercession; it is for
man, as a depraved creature, believing the truth about Jesus
Christ, as redeeming us from the curse of the law that we may
receive the promised Spirit,—giving himself for us that he might
redeem us from all iniquity,—to depend on his faithful promise,
to shed forth his Spirit on us abundantly, that we may be sancti-
fied wholly in the whole man, soul, body, and spirit; it is for
man, as a dying, yet immortal being, in the belief of the truth
respecting Jesus, as having by death destroyed death and him
who had the power of death, and as He who has the keys of the
unseen world and of death, to exercise a firm confidence in him
for support in death, restoration from the grave, and everlasting
happiness. This is to come to our Lord as the fountain of
blessings.

(2.) "Drink."

Now, what are we to understand by "drinking" of that foun-
tain? The phrase seems to indicate participation of the blessings
which the Saviour has to bestow,—"Let him, under the influence
of the faith of the truth, in the exercise of those mental affections
which naturally grow out of it, become a partaker of those bless-
ings which will supply his need, and satisfy his desire. He will
thus quench his thirst. Coming to Jesus, the great Prophet, he
will obtain relief from the uncertainties of doubt, and find, in the
full assurance of faith, the rest which the mind seeks. Coming to
Jesus, the great High Priest, he will obtain relief from the agonies
of remorse, and enjoy the peace of a conscience sprinkled with
the blood of an all-perfect atoning sacrifice. Coming to Jesus as
a king, he will obtain deliverance from the tyranny of his spirit-
ual foes, and protection, and guidance, and final salvation. Com-
ing to the fountain of all blessedness, he will obtain all he needs,
all grace will be made to abound towards him, and he will be
constrained to say—I have all and abound—I am complete in
Christ Jesus—I need no other Saviour—I want no other salva-
tion."

§ 4. The unlimited extent of the invitation—"If any man."

The free and unrestricted nature of the invitation, now deserves
notice. Not only is the descriptive character of those invited,
"those who thirst," common to all human beings, but the invita-
tion is so fashioned, that no human being can find the shadow of
reason for thinking himself excluded. "If any man thirst—any
human being, however mean, guilty, depraved, and wretched,
wish to be happy—let him, in the belief of the truth about me,
exercise the affections which that truth believed naturally produces, and he shall be happy." It is not, "If any man be deeply sensible of his guilt, depravity, and wretchedness, let him come to me and drink." Such are invited; but if that were all, as some have taught, thus, however unintentionally, clogging with conditions the unhampered offer of a free salvation, men might think that till they had brought themselves, or were in some way or other brought, into a state of deep contrition, and earnest seeking after pardon, and holiness, and salvation, it would be presumption in them to come to Christ, or even look towards the Saviour for salvation. But the invitation is, "Whosoever wishes to be happy, let him come to me, sinful and miserable as he is, and in me he shall find salvation. If thou art not a brute, if thou art not a devil—however like the one in sensuality, or the other in malignity—thou art invited. If thou art on earth, not in hell, thou art invited."  

This is indeed just "the Gospel which was promised afore by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures," many centuries before Messiah's birth. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." What follows plainly that the invitation of the Gospel is not limited to "sensible sinners:" "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

It is quite in accordance with other invitations given by our Lord, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." "I will give to him that is athirst of the water of life freely." "The Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The blessings of the christian salvation are thus exactly suitable to our case, absolutely necessary to our happiness, and so abundant in measure, that there is enough for all, and to spare. The invitation is addressed to us, as well as to those who originally listened to it. Have we complied with it? If we have not, O! let us comply with it now. If we have, let us continue to comply with it—we constantly need to come to him and drink: "all our springs are in Him."

II.—THE CONSEQUENCES OF ACCEPTING THE INVITATION.

Our Lord goes on to say, that they who come to him and drink shall not only have their thirst quenched, but that they

11 Bunyan's Jerusalem-sinner saved.  
12 Rom. i. 1, 2.
shall become secondary fountains for quenching the thirst of others. They shall not only obtain happiness to themselves, but they shall become instrumental in making others happy. “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

There is a difficulty in these words which must be disposed of before we can enter with advantage on the illustration of the sentiment they are meant to convey. There is an apparent quotation of certain words as an excerpt from the Old Testament Scriptures, while no such words are to be found there. This difficulty, which everybody must see, has been met in various ways.

Some interpreters hold that there is no quotation intended here. To prove this, one class alters the division of the words, while another only slightly changes the construction of the sentence. The former class connect the first part of the 38th verse with the 37th—thus: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me,” and, “believing, let him drink, as the Scripture says,” or commands—referring to such passages as, “Hoc every one that thirsteth,” &c. In this case, the following words stand as a sentence by themselves, and are the words, not of the Old Testament Scriptures, but of Jesus himself. This makes good enough sense, and gets clear of the difficulty; but it is at the expense of doing violence to the idiom of the original language. The words could not have suggested these ideas to those to whom they were addressed.

The other class of interpreters, following the ordinary division of the verses, slightly change the construction of the sentence. They consider the words, “as the Scripture hath said,” as modifying the expression, “he that believeth on me,” instead of referring to the words which follow, thus—“He that believeth on me” in the manner which the Scripture requires, “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” In this case, also, there is no quotation—the words throughout are the words of our Lord. This, too, gets rid of the difficulty, and is plausible; but the expression, “as the Scripture hath said,” is never used in the New Testament in this sense; it uniformly introduces a quotation.

Holding, then, that the words are a quotation, how are we to account for the undoubted fact that these words are nowhere to be found in Scripture? Some have rashly maintained, that though these words are not now in the Old Testament Scripture, they were once there; but though it is not at all unlikely that many divine revelations were never recorded, there is not the slightest evidence that any recorded revelation has been lost; and we have all the proof which can well be imagined—certainly more than, with regard to such ancient writings, might have been expected—that everything that was contained in the Jewish canon has come down to us.

13 John vii. 38.
14 καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή.
PART II.] RESULTS OF ACCEPTING THE INVITATION.

Others have supposed that the reference is not to the words but to the sense of the Old Testament Scriptures; not to the express terms of any particular ancient oracle, but to the import of a variety of them. They suppose the reference to be to such passages as Joel iii. 28; Zech. xiv. 8; Ezek. xlvii. 1-12; just as they suppose that the words, "He shall be called a Nazarene," Matt. ii. 23, which are said to be "spoken by the prophets," though these terms are not to be found in any of the prophets, are a general reference to those passages of prophetic Scripture where it is predicted that the Messiah should be an object of general contempt and scorn: such as Psalm xxii. 6; Isaiah liii. 3. But in every other place where the phrase, "as the Scripture says," is used, the reference is to some particular passage.

To what passage, then, is the reference here? Some learned men have supposed that the reference is to Balaam's prophecy, Numb. xxiv. 7, which they render, "Out of his heart waters shall flow forth." But it may be doubted how far the original terms will bear this rendering; and, at any rate, that prediction refers to the increase and prosperity of Israel as a nation, not to the spiritual blessings of the Messiah's reign. I cannot doubt that the reference is to a particular passage, and that that passage is Isaiah lvii. 11, "Thou," Zion blessed with the presence and grace of thy God and king, "shalt be like a spring of water whose waters fail not." This prophetic oracle refers to the days of the Messiah, and intimates that his people should be a source of blessings to mankind. The words are not the same, but the sentiment is identical—"As to him that believeth in me"—the ancient oracle will be fulfilled in Him: He shall be "a spring of water whose waters fail not:" "Out of his belly"—out of him—out of his heart—"shall flow rivers of living water."

These may seem rather uninteresting discussions, but they are necessary. The shell must be broken in order to get at the kernel. We have now got at the kernel here; and I trust we shall find it like that of the cocoa nut, sweet and nutritious—pleasant to the taste, and good for food—yielding milk for babes, and solid food for those who are full of age—even for those "who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." If we do not, I am afraid it must be because we are neither babes nor strong men "in Christ"—neither desiring the sincere milk of the word, nor hungering after that bread of life which came down from heaven, and is the life of the world.

The general sentiment is, 'He who comes to me and drinks, shall not only obtain such draughts as shall quench his own thirst, but,' as our Lord elsewhere says, 'the water which he gives shall be, in him who drinks it, "a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life,"' so that he shall never thirst, and so that from him, as a secondary fountain, shall flow streams to refresh and quench the thirst of others. He who, in the belief

18 Ko'annah, like כֹּהָן, beten, and כַּעַבִּים, kereb, is used for the inward part of man. | Prov. xx. 27. Job xxxviii. 18. Venter interioris hominis, conscientia cordis est.
of the truth, exercises towards me appropriate affections of mind and heart, shall derive from me, in such rich abundance, the blessings of salvation, as that he shall not only be a holy, happy, man himself, but he shall become the means of diffusing holiness and happiness among his fellow-men. Let us look at this important and delightful truth a little more closely. "He that believeth in me," is a phrase plainly descriptive of the same person as the phrase, "He that cometh to me and drinketh." But though the phrases describe the same person, they do not, as we have seen, mean the same thing. Every one who believes in Christ comes to him. No man can come to him who does not believe in him. They are not, however, the same thing: the one is the cause, the other the effect; the one the means, the other the end. He that believes in Christ, is either he that believes that Christ is a divine teacher, and therefore credits his testimony, or, which comes materially to the same thing, he who credits the truth about Christ. He who believes in Christ, is he who, apprehending the meaning of the testimony given in the Scriptures about Christ, is fully persuaded of its truth—knows, and is sure of it—counts it a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance—sets to his seal that God is true. Such a person cannot but come to Christ as the fountain, or great reservoir, of saving blessings, and drink. He cannot but exercise, in the measure of his faith, appropriate affections of mind and heart towards the Saviour; and, in doing so, he cannot but, according to the measure of his faith, and its effects, participate in the heavenly and spiritual blessings of his salvation: according to the ancient oracle, "Out of his belly flow rivers of living life-giving, salutary, "water."

§ 1. He who accepts the invitation obtains abundant permanent happiness.

The first idea suggested here is,—'He who accepts the invitation, obtains large, continued draughts from Jesus Christ, as the fountain of blessings.' There is no setting bounds to the measure of holy happiness any man may obtain from Jesus Christ—'According to his faith it shall be to him.' If he continues to have any spiritual wants, it is not because the fountain is not full and flowing; nor is it because continued access to it is denied him; it is simply because, not believing, he does not come and drink. In a persevering, ever-growing faith, the believer may obtain a

18 This is, as to substance, Luther's exegesis: "'Out of him rivers shall flow, waters that give life.' Whoso comes to me, I will so fashion him, that he shall not only be cheered and refreshed in his own person, so that he may quench his thirst and become free from thirst; but I will make him into a strong stone vessel, will give him the Holy Ghost and his gifts, so that he shall flow forth upon others, shall give them to drink, shall comfort and strengthen them, and shall help many as he hath been helped by me; as Paul saith in 2 Cor. i. 4. Thus our Lord Christ will make another man of him who comes to him than Moses could make."—Exposition of the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Chapters of St. John.
steady, ever-increasing, holy happiness. If he is straitened, it is in himself, not in his Saviour. But this is not all.

§ 2. He who accepts the invitation manifests his happiness.

The second idea is,—'He who accepts the invitation shall not only obtain a constant, abundant, supply of holy happiness, but his holy happiness shall be manifest.' He shall be full to an overflow. The stream proves the reality of the spring, and the abundance of its waters the strength of the spring. The holy happiness, dwelling in the heart, will manifest itself in cheerful obedience. Nor is even this all.

§ 3. He who accepts the invitation becomes the means of communicating happiness to others.

There is a third idea suggested by the words,—'He who accepts the invitation shall be the means of communicating holy happiness to others.' He shall become a secondary fountain. The same general truth is brought before the mind, in various ways, in the Holy Scriptures. When Zion is enlightened, she shines.' 'Ye are,'" says our Lord, the "light of the world."18 When Christians are shone upon by the Sun of Righteousness, the true light of the world, they, though naturally dark bodies, become luminous, and, shining as lights in the world, show forth to men around them the glories of Him who called them. What they have received they communicate. Acting as mirrors, in reference to God in Christ, who is holy love, they are changed into the same image, by that which is glorious, into that which is glorious. God shines in and on them; and they thus become fit for imparting to others the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of his Son." To use another figure, they are saved themselves, through Christ, from that state of moral putrefaction, which is the natural state of all men; and not only so, but saturated, as it were, with the moral antiseptic, they become "the salt of the earth."20 Christians become the means of communicating to others the knowledge, the holiness, the peace, the hope, the joy, they have obtained from the Saviour: "Freely they have received, freely" they "give."

So it should be. So, to a certain extent, wherever there is true Christianity, it actually is. A useless Christian is a contradiction in terms. He who has got good from the Saviour cannot help doing good to his fellow-men; and the degree of the desire to communicate, is the measure of the degree in which good has been received. This is as natural as for the stream to flow from the fountain-head, when it is surcharged with waters. He, from whom flow out no streams of living, life-giving waters, has reason to fear he has never yet come to the Fountain of life, and drunk.

17 Isa ix. 1. 18 Matt. v. 15. 20 Matt. v. 12. 19 2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 6.
How illustriously was this declaration fulfilled in the case of the apostles and primitive Christians! Andrew brings Peter, and Philip Nathanael, to Jesus. The woman of Samaria, having tasted the living waters, invites her townsmen to “come and drink.” And what a deep, broad, rapid, river of life proceeded out of Jerusalem, carrying fertility and beauty throughout the heathen world! Indeed, in every case of genuine conversion, the saying is verified,—Every one who, believing, comes to Christ and drinks, “out of his belly proceed rivers of living waters.”

There is one great important practical truth, which this subject brings strongly out, and which I desire to press on your attention in the close of this discourse. If we would be savingly useful to others, we must receive saving blessings for ourselves. If we would have rivers of waters flow out of us to refresh and cleanse others, we must believingly come to Jesus, the fountain of life, and drink. If we would give freely, we must receive freely. If we would be instrumental in obtaining for other men the Holy Spirit, we must be primarily desirous and diligent in obtaining the Holy Spirit for ourselves. If we be, as I trust we are, really desirous of succeeding in the good work of endeavoring to make others, both at home and abroad, holy and happy in the enjoyment of “heavenly and spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus,” let us seek for ourselves a larger measure of Divine influence, and of that holy happiness which it produces. This will secure purity in our aims, constancy and perseverance in our exertions. This, too, will draw down the blessing of God on our exertions,—for then they will be indeed, not only exertions for what is generally agreeable to his will, but exertions rising from the principles, and directed and regulated in the manner, which he approves. It would be rash to say, that an unconverted man cannot be made the instrument of producing in others a blessed change, to which he himself is a stranger. Such an event is not impossible, and may actually have taken place; but the reason of the thing, the history of the church, and the declaration of Scripture, unite in support of the principle, that it is converted men who are to convert unconverted men,—that it is religious men who are to make other men religious,—that it is the possessors of holy happiness, who are to be the diffusers of holy happiness,—that it is those who have drunk deep of the fountain of saving blessings, “out of whose hearts are to flow rivers of living waters.” And admitting that an unconverted Christian professor, or an unconverted Christian minister,—what an incongruous combination of terms! though, alas, the still more monstrous reality they designate has, we are afraid, been no rarity in any age of the church,—may become the instrument of conversion to others,—be surely is among the sons of perdition, the most utterly lost,—who perishes of thirst while leading others to the Fountain of living waters; who, after conducting others to the regions of eternal light, when “the door is shut,” finds his lot.

21 John i. 42, 46. 22 John iv. 39.
assigned him among the hypocrites "in outer darkness,"—"the blackness of darkness for ever." "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

APPENDIX TO EXPOSITION IX.


John vii. 39.

The evangelist subjoins an expository note on this statement of our Lord, which now calls for consideration. "But this spake he of" the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

This saying about "rivers of living water," had a reference to that dispensation of Divine influence, which was to commence on our Lord's return to his Father, to be "glorified with the glory he had with Him, before the foundation of the world."

It has been made a question whether, in this declaration, our Lord refers to the extraordinary, or to the ordinary, influences and gifts of the Holy Spirit; and whether the declaration in the 38th verse refers exclusively to the apostles and Christians of the primitive age, or to Christians in every age. We are not called, by anything in the words, or their connection, to narrow their reference; and, therefore, we hold that there is a reference to the Spirit's influence and gifts, of whatever kind, which were to be given after Christ was glorified. It was not the kind, but the measure, of divine influence and gifts, which was to distinguish the New Testament. There were extraordinary spiritual gifts under the Old Testament—for example, the gift of prophecy. There were ordinary spiritual gifts also. How else were men sanctified? But under the New Testament dispensation, both the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were to be more extensively and more abundantly communicated. There were, probably, more inspired men during the last half of the first century, than during the whole period of the old economy. Certainly, far more clear information respecting the character of God, and the way of salvation, was communicated in the course of these fifty or sixty years, than had been from the beginning of the world.

The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were intended for the benefit of the church in all ages. We derive, and so will the latest generation of Christians, important advantages from the revelations made under the inspiring influences of the Holy Ghost in the primitive age, and the miraculous confirmations given of these revelations by his mighty energy. It is through that truth, revealed and confirmed by this miraculous agency, as well as by

an influence over every individual mind, opening it to apprehend the meaning and evidence of that truth, that men are made holy and happy, and are made the instruments of making others holy and happy; that they are induced to come to Jesus, the Fountain of living waters, and drink; and that out of their bellies are made to flow rivers of living water. The statement is a general one, and holds true of every one believing under the New Testament dispensation.

When these words were uttered, that dispensation had not commenced,—Jesus was yet on the earth. It is under divine influence that men are led to believe in Jesus; and it is the Holy Spirit, who by means of the truth believed, puts men in possession of holy happiness, and qualifies and disposes them to be useful to others in making them holy and happy. Under the former economy, men were partakers of divine influence but in a limited measure, corresponding with the limited and obscure character of the revelation then given. In the degree in which that divine influence was enjoyed, it made those who possessed it holy and happy, and disposed them to make others holy and happy. This is very evident from the words of the psalmist, “Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit: then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” But our Lord’s words refer to that more abundant communication of divine influence which was to characterize the new economy; a communication corresponding in its abundance to the extensive and clear revelation given under it.

When a man, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, was led to believe the complete revelation of God in the person and word of his incarnate Son, as found in the apostolic testimony, and by divine influence operating through that truth understood and believed, was put in possession of the heavenly and spiritual blessings of the Christian salvation, and made at once capable, and disposed, to become the instrument of conveying these blessings to others,—then were the words of our Lord fulfilled—that man, believing, had come to him and drunk, and out of his belly were flowing rivers of living water. Under the new dispensation, the people of God were thus to be blessed, and made blessings, in a measure far exceeding that in which they were blessed, and made blessings, under the former dispensation. The fuller, clearer revelation, understood and believed, accompanied with a correspondingly enlarged measure of divine influence, fills the

53 "As the Son operated in mankind long before his incarnation, so also the Spirit was manifested long before the outpouring. But as the fulness of life belonging to the Son was not revealed until his incarnation, so also the Spirit was not displayed in its full power till the outpouring at Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit, therefore, is the same circumstance in his development as the incarnation is in the development of the Son. It might be said that, until the glorification of Christ, the πνεῦμα ἐγὼ operated as ἐπιδήμων, and after this as προφητής."—Olshausen.

believer’s heart to an overflow with holy happiness, and at once
fits and inclines him to make others holy and happy.

The language of the latter part of this verse is somewhat re-
markable. Literally, “The Spirit,” or “the Holy Spirit, was
not yet,”—because Jesus was not yet glorified.” The Holy
Spirit, here, is plainly not the Holy Spirit personally. He is
“the eternal Spirit.” It might be said of him equally with the
Word—“He was in the world, and the world was made by him,
and the world knew him not.” He brooded over the chaos. He
garnished the heavens. He gave and sustained created intelli-
gence and active power. He inspired the prophets. He sancti-
tified the Old Testament saints. “Without the Spirit of God,
as the perfective principle, nature would not have been nature.
All things would not have been good—very good—but by the
communication of his goodness; and without some special op-
erations of the Spirit, the godly, before Christ’s coming into
the flesh, could not have been godly, nor in any present capacity for
glory.” He formed the human nature of our Lord. He was,
and is, and is to come. “The Holy Spirit” here, obviously de-
notes, the influence, operations, gifts, of the Holy Spirit—and
not his influence generally—but that measure and kind of influ-
ence by which the New Testament dispensation was to be char-
acterized, the Spirit which they who believe on Jesus Christ—
that is, true Christians—should receive. It is in the same
sense, the disciples at Ephesus said, that they had “not so much
as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost;” not that they
were ignorant of the divine agent called the Holy Ghost, but
that they had not heard anything of that remarkable effusion of
divine influence, which the prophets had led them to expect
under the reign of the Messiah, and which they were in the
habit of calling the Holy Ghost. That divine influence had not
yet been put forth, and it was not till that divine influence was put
forth, that our Lord’s words, in all their extent of meaning, could
be fulfilled.

“The Spirit,” in this sense, began to be “shed forth abund-
antly” on the day of Pentecost. The results of that abundant
communication are embodied, and made permanent, in the apo-
stolical epistles, which are the voice of Jesus Christ speaking by
his Spirit, from his throne in the heavens; and, since that pe-
riod, divine influence, attending that truth, has led in innumera-
ble instances, to the verification of our Lord’s declaration.

The reason assigned for the Spirit not being yet given, at the

27 ἐγνον is excluded from the text by later critical editors.
28 ἀκούσον ἤπειρον. At the time that Christ preached, he promised the Holy Ghost;
and, therefore, ‘the Holy Ghost was not yet’—not that he did not yet exist essen-
tially in heaven; but ‘he was not yet’ in his manifestation and working. For
this is the peculiar work and office of the Holy Ghost, to manifest and glorify
Christ, to preach and bear witness of him: One must not fall into such senseless
thoughts as to suppose that the Holy Ghost was only created after Christ’s resur-
rection from the dead: What is here written is, ‘the Holy Ghost was not yet,’
that is, was not in his office.”—LUTHER
29 Baxter.
30 Acts xix. 2.
time our Lord uttered these words, is, that 'Jesus was not yet glorified.' The same sentiment is contained more at large in our Lord's words to his disciples:—"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."\(^{31}\)

The glorification of our Lord is obviously his being exalted, receiving "a name above every name, a name at which every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, receiving power over all flesh, all power in heaven and in earth,"—in one word, his being made "Lord of all," as the reward of his having, in obedience to the will of his Father, "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

There seems to be a double connection between Christ's glorification, and the giving of the Spirit. The power of dispensing divine influence formed an important part of our Lord's mediatorial reward,—a reward peculiarly appropriate to his holy benevolent character; and there was an obvious propriety that the work should be accomplished before the reward was conferred. It was becoming that he should have "finished the work the Father had given him to do," before, in the exercise of that unlimited power in heaven and earth conferred on him by the Father, he should "shed forth on men abundantly the Holy Spirit."

But this is not the only connection. The Spirit works by means of the truth, in satisfying the spiritual thirst of men, and in qualifying and disposing them to quench the spiritual thirst of others. Now, as the saving truth is just a plain account of what the incarnate Son did and suffered to expiate human guilt, and open a way for the communication of divine influence, and its results—true holiness and happiness to men, it is obvious that the revelation of that truth could not be complete till the work was accomplished. The history could not be written till the events had taken place. The Spirit was not sent till the instrument for making men holy and happy, in the degree which was to characterize the new dispensation, was prepared for him.

It was not, then, so wonderful that men should at that time continue in a state of spiritual thirst, destitution, and painful desire; Jesus was not glorified, and therefore, "the Spirit was not yet." But is it not natural to put, with some degree of astonishment, the question, Why should men to whom the word of the truth of the Gospel is come—why should they continue thirsty? why should they not drink, and become fountains of waters? Jesus is glorified—the Spirit is given—all things are ready. All the obstacles which the holy character and the righteous law of God seemed to place in the way of sinful man's happiness, are removed. Jesus has done all—Jesus possesses all—Jesus is ready to give all that is necessary to man's true permanent happiness. The Spirit has been poured out—the Spirit is even still shed forth

\(^{31}\) John xvi. 7.
abundantly—the promise is every day receiving new confirmation by additional fulfilments. "Your Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him." "Ask, and ye shall receive, seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. Every one that asketh receiveth; every one that seeketh findeth; to every one that knocketh it shall be opened."

If we have not the Spirit, and if we have not the holy happiness which he only can give, there is no difficulty in discovering the true reason. It is not in God. God is not,—cannot be, unwilling to give that, to make the giving of which consistent with his truth and justice, he freely gave his Son. He is not unwilling to give the Holy Spirit. No, the cause,—the guilty cause, is in ourselves: "We have not, because we ask not, or because we ask amiss."

Jesus Christ alone can satisfy the thirst for happiness. They who will not come to him, and drink, must for ever suffer the torments of unquenchable thirst, without even a drop of cold water to cool their tongue, tormented in the flame which cannot be extinguished. He now invites you—he has long invited you—he still invites you; but he will not invite you for ever. O, listen to his voice—comply with his invitation. Then will he not only lead you to the still waters to refresh you, amid the toils and exhaustion of the wilderness, but in due time, in the paradise above, as the Lamb once slain, but now in the midst of the throne, "he will feed you, and lead you to living fountains of waters, and God will wipe away all tears from your eyes."
EXPOSITION XI.


John, viii. 12-59.

The law of Christ, in its spirit and precepts, is illustrated and exemplified, in the character and conduct of its divine Author, to an extent, and with a minuteness, which is indeed wonderful.

Christians are commanded to “redeem the time”—to be diligent in their business, the service of the Lord—to “be instant in season, and out of season”—to “do good to all as they have opportunity”—never to be “weary in well-doing,” but to be “stedfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” In this respect, as in every other, Jesus, our Master, has “left us an example, that we should follow his steps.”

To be, and to do, all this, we have only to imitate him. “Follow me,” is a command of very comprehensive import. Never was there a life of such laborious, incessant, unceasing, dutiful exertion, as the public life of Jesus Christ. “He went about continually doing good.” It was his “meat to do the will of his Father, and to finish his work;” and the language of his conduct was, “I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming, in which no man can work.” Never, probably, was so much thought, feeling, and active exertion, crowded into the same space of time, as in the ministry of our Lord. The intervals of rest which he allowed himself were few and far between. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, untried by the threats, undismayed by the obstinacy, unalienated by the unkindness, of his countrymen, he continued to labor, even to fatigue, in healing their bodily diseases, and ministering to their spiritual necessities. He scarcely took time for the necessary refreshment of food and sleep, and seems to have grudged every moment which was not directly devoted to the promotion of the Divine glory and human happiness.

Into this track of thought we have been led by the passage of sacred history now lying before us for exposition. After a fatiguing journey from Galilee, Jesus had been constantly engaged, during the concluding days of the feast of tabernacles, in
teaching the people in the temple. On the evening of the last
day of the festival, while all the people "went unto their own
houses," "Jesus," who had no home to go to, "went unto the
Mount of Olives," where it is not unlikely he spent the night
in solitary devotion; and, instead of repairing to the hospitable
house of his friend Lazarus, at Bethany, to refresh himself by a
cessation from labor, "early in the morning he came again into
the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down,
and taught them."

This was redeeming the time—this was diligence in his busi-
ness—this was being instant in season and out of season—this
was doing good to all, as he had opportunity—this was not
wearying in well-doing—this was being stedfast and unmovable,
always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Our Lord chose so early an hour, probably, that he might
have an opportunity of once more addressing his countrymen,
before they left Jerusalem to retire to their respective homes,
especially the more devout portion of them, who, previously to
commencing their journey, thought it right to go up to the temple
to perform their devotions. On his appearing within the sacred
precincts, "all the people"—that is, either a great crowd, or all
the people who, at that early hour, were in the temple—gathered
round him, and he, assuming the ordinary attitude of teaching
among the Jews, sat down, and began to discourse to them.

Among the causes which prevent a man, who is really desirous
of devoting his time and energies to their proper purposes, from
being useful in the degree in which he wishes to be so, must be
placed the unexpected and unpleasant interruptions which he
often meets with. These interruptions operate in a twofold way
in producing this effect. They occupy time, which might be
better employed; but that is not all: they distract the attention,
they break the train of thought, they cool the ardor of pursuit,
they sometimes ruffle the temper, and, in these ways, they both
lessen the quantity, and deteriorate the quality, of our work; we

1 John viii. 1. This should have closed chap. vii.
2 John viii. 2.—In these introductory remarks, I proceed on the hypothesis that
the paragraph, chap. vii. 53—viii. 11, is genuine, or, at all events, authentic. It
is universally known among scholars, that its genuineness has long been a subject
of controversy among critics and interpreters. Much may be said. much has
been said, on both sides of the question—so much, indeed, as to make many stand
in doubt as to its right resolution. If the matter is to be determined by the
number and weight of names, it will not be easy to settle it; for, on the side of
the genuineness of the paragraph, we find Selden, Mill, Bengel, Whitby, Calmet,
Capellus, Osiaeder, Lampe, Michaelis, Storr, Hug, Kuinoel, and Scholz; and on
the opposite side, we find Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Le Clerc, Wetstein,
Morus, Olausen, Luccke, De Wette. Griesbach marks it as doubtful—probably
spurious. Tischendorf omits it altogether. Such names being to be found on
opposite sides, shows, what personal examination of the evidence will confirm,
that it would be rash to treat the paragraph as a mere poetic invention; and, to
say the least, it seems, whether proceeding from John's pen or not, to be, what
Tholuck terms it, "a genuine evangelical tradition." A full statement of the evi-
dence on both sides is to be found in Staedlein's "Prolusio," of which Kuinoel
gives an abridgement; and a shorter, yet clear state of the question, is given in
Tholuck's notes.
not only do not do so much, but what we do is not so well done, as had we been secured from these teasing intrusions.

It is the part of a wise man to guard himself, as far as practicable, from such interruptions. In the present state of things, to keep entirely free of them is, I believe, impossible. Our business should be, when they occur, to get rid of them with as little delay as possible; and especially to endeavor to preserve our minds in such a state, as that, when the impertinent intrusion is over, we may be able to resume our proper employment, as if it had not been interrupted, and prosecute it with as much alacrity and self-possession, as if nothing had occurred to break in upon our thoughts, or disturb our feelings.

The principle announced by us on beginning these observations is applicable to this case also. Here, as in almost every situation of difficulty in which we can be placed, our Lord has set us an example, and we should follow in his steps. When employed in his favorite work of teaching the people—a work delightful to himself, and most useful to his auditors—he met with a very impertinent and disagreeable interruption. His enemies, the Pharisees, entered, and endeavored to engage him in a work altogether alien from the design of his mission, with the intention of entrapping him into some statement which might be turned to account by them in securing his destruction, either by awakening the prejudices of the populace or the jealousies of the government. Though perfectly aware of their malignant intention, “in patience he possessed his soul;” with admirable prudence he eluded the snare they had laid for him, and entangled his unprincipled opponents in the net they themselves had woven; and, having dismissed them overwhelmed with disappointment and shame, he, without exhibiting the slightest appearance of being agitated with passion, or led away from the subject he was discussing, immediately recurs to the agreeable and useful work in which the Pharisees had found him engaged, and prosecutes it just as if nothing had occurred.

I.—CHRIST “THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.”

John viii. 12-29.

Your attention has repeatedly been called to the remark, that our Lord, in his discourses, usually borrowed his illustrations from present incidents and surrounding objects. Of this, we seem to have an instance in the case now before us. Our Lord had returned, early in the morning, from the Mount of Olives, where he had spent the night. It is highly probable, then, that it was in allusion to the rising sun making his appearance above the horizon, and investing all nature with light and beauty, that in the commencement of that discourse, on the illustration of
which we are about to enter, he represents himself as "the true Sun, the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of men."\(^3\)

§ 1. The Claim.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."\(^4\)

Light, in Scripture, is the emblem of true knowledge, of true holiness, of true happiness,—just as darkness is the emblem of ignorance and error, guilt and depravity, privation and misery. When Jesus calls himself "the light," he means that he, that he alone,—for there is but one Sun in the spiritual as in the natural world,—is the Author of wisdom, pardon, sanctification, happiness, in all the extent of that word. \(^5\) I can—I alone can—enlighten the darkness of benighted man; I am, in the moral world, what the sun is in the natural world,—the source of light, and heat, and health, and beauty.

It is very unduly to narrow the meaning of the words, to consider them as merely equivalent to—"I am the great Teacher. They include this; but they include a great deal more than this. They are equivalent to—"I am the Saviour,' and ignorance and error are by no means the only evils man requires to be delivered from.

But he calls himself not only "the light," but "the light of the world,"—not only the Saviour, but the Saviour of men. The Jews expected the Messiah to be "the light of Israel," but our Lord intimates that the blessings he had in store, and was sent to communicate, were intended for mankind at large. He was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of God's people Israel."

"He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Let us endeavor, first, to apprehend the figure, and then seek its meaning. He who follows a moving luminous body enjoys its light;—were a person following the sun, there would be no night to him. That is the figure; now what is its meaning?

What is it to follow Christ "as the light of the world"? and what is it to "have the light of life"? In order to answer the first of these questions, we must put another. Following a luminous body is that which, according to the constitution of the natural world, is necessary in order to enjoy its light. Now, what

\(^3\) The reference has been otherwise explained by some very learned interpreters. They consider the words to have been spoken "on the last and great day of the feast," and find in one of its ceremonies what naturally suggested the figurative representation. "In the court of the women there stood two colossal candlesticks, decorated with a multitude of lamps: towards the evening, these were lighted up, and the people danced around them with great rejoicing." In allusion to this light of the temple, they consider our Lord as saying, "I am the light of the world."—\textit{Vide} Oldhausen.

\(^4\) John viii. 12.

\(^5\) Luke ii. 82.

* See Note A.
is that which, according to the constitution of the spiritual world, is necessary in order to our enjoying the blessings which Christ has to communicate? It is obviously faith—faith of the truth with regard to him, as the light of the world—the Saviour of men. Whosoever believes the truth respecting Christ Jesus as the Saviour of men, he shall—he alone can—participate in the blessings of his salvation; “he shall have the light of life,” the life-giving light. I can scarcely doubt that the reference here is to the beautiful prediction of the prophet Malachi: “Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” The true Sun, of which the sun in the firmament is but a figure, rises; and by his wings we are to understand his rays, or rather, perhaps, the refreshing breeze which, in tropical climates, often accompanies the rising of the sun, diffusing health all around. “The light of life” here refers, not to Christ personally, as “the light of the world” does, but is descriptive of his benefits—the knowledge, holiness, and happiness which he communicates.

The general statement is, ‘He who believes the truth, in reference to Christ, he, and he alone, whoever he may be, whether Jew or Gentile, enjoys the blessings of Christ’s salvation. If a man do not follow the sun, he must walk in darkness. If a man do not believe the truth about Christ, he must continue in the darkness of ignorance, error, guilt, pollution, and misery; and the longer he remains in unbelief, the deeper does the darkness grow, till it becomes that darkness that may be felt—the blackness of darkness for ever and ever. On the other hand, he who follows the sun must enjoy his light. He that believes the truth about Christ, just in the measure in which he believes it, enjoys, and cannot but enjoy, the blessings of his salvation; the knowledge, the peace, the holiness, the hope, the happiness, which he, and he alone, can communicate.’

Like many of the other figurative representations of this truth, this beautiful metaphor conveys the important idea, that continued faith is the appointed means of the continued enjoyment of the christian salvation. It is not he who has believed—it is he who believeth—who habitually believes, that shall be saved. We must follow the Sun of Righteousness if we would constantly enjoy the healing which is under his wings. If we follow Christ, we shall be happy in both worlds; if we follow Christ on earth, we shall follow him to heaven.

§ 2. The claim vindicated.

This declaration was not probably understood in its full extent by any of our Lord’s hearers, though it likely was considered as a claim of being a prophet, if not the Messiah. In the minds of such of the Pharisees as were present, it excited that disposition to cavil by which they were so remarkably characterized. “The

6 Mal. iv. 2.
Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true." In these words the Pharisees seem plainly to have had a reference to what our Lord himself had said on a former occasion; and, apparently, they meant to accuse him of self-contradiction, as well as falsehood. He had said, "if I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true;" that is, is not trustworthy—is not to be credited unless supported by other evidence. It is just, then, as if the Pharisees had said,—"How do you reconcile what you say now with what you said so lately?" We have only your word for your being the light of the world. How can you expect us to believe such a declaration, or to trust to the promises which are founded on it?"

Our Lord's answer to this cavil is contained in the verses which follow:—"Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go." Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

There is some difficulty in the passage, but so far as I have been able to apprehend it, this is the train of thought:—"In this declaration I have just made, no doubt I have uttered a testimony concerning myself. This testimony is not, however, on that account to be rejected as of no value. Indeed, from the circumstances of the case, I must testify of myself, else the truth about me could not be known." I know the truth, and can declare it. You do not know the truth about me, and unless I state the truth, you must remain ignorant of it. But my testimony is not unsupported testimony—my testimony is indeed my Father's testimony, as is abundantly established, and his testimony is worthy of all acceptance." Let us look at the words somewhat more closely.

"Though I bear record of myself, my record is true;" that is, it is not reasonable or safe in you to set aside my testimony, to treat it as if it were not true, merely because it is mine. They seemed to go on the obviously false principle, 'The thing cannot be true, because he says it.' His reply to them is, 'It is true; and though I say it, it deserves to be credited. I am a divine messenger; who can deliver the message, but he who has received it? I know whence I came, and whither I go. I came from the Father, I return to the Father. I am come to deliver a message, and I go to give an account of the manner in which I have delivered it. You are utterly ignorant as to whence I came, and whither I go, and what is the message with which I

---

7 John viii. 13. 
8 John v. 31. 
9 "videt—mov; unde—quae. Ad hoc duo capita potest referri doctrina de Christo. De illo agitur, v. 16, et sequ.; de hoc, v. 21, et sequ."—BENGEL. 
10 John viii. 14-18. 
11 "Lumen et alia demonstrat et seipsum. Testimonium sibi perhibet lux, aperit sanos oculos, et sibi ipsi testis est."—Auguerrin.
am entrusted. If you knew whence I came, and whither I go, you could not for a moment doubt but that I was warranted to give testimony of myself; and that that testimony, when given, was most worthy of credit.

'But your false principles of judgment prevent you from perceiving the truth on this subject. "You judge after the flesh;" you form your judgments of me, according to the carnal notions of your nation respecting the Messiah, as a temporal prince and a national deliverer; and therefore you cannot receive the truth respecting me. I am not the kind of person you were anticipating as the Messiah, and you reject my testimony, not because it is not true, but because it does not coincide with your carnal views. That is the true reason why you refuse to credit it. Let a person come with the temporal power and splendor you wish and expect, and you would be ready enough to receive his testimony respecting himself, even though unsupported by such evidences as I produce.'

"I judge no man." These words have been variously interpreted. The statement, though unlimited, must plainly be qualified; for no doubt, so far from being true that our Lord judges no man, he is judge of all; all must stand at his judgment seat. 12

Some understand it as equivalent to 'I am not a civil or criminal judge.' Others understand it thus, 'I do not now judge. My business now, and here, is to suffer and save. I will reign and judge, and condemn and punish, elsewhere and hereafter.' These are both truths, but they seem to have no bearing on what is our Lord's object.

It is natural to seek the limitation in the context. Of those who do so, some look back, and others look forward. Those who look back, understand it as equivalent to, 'I do not judge any man after the flesh.' Those who look forward, understand it as equivalent to, 'I am not alone in my judgment. When I judge a man, the Father judges him also. My judgment is not so much mine, as his who sent me.' The first of these seems to me the more probable interpretation. 'You judge generally, and in particular you judge me "after the flesh." You form your opinion of me according to carnal principles. I do not judge you, nor any man, in that way. I judge on spiritual principles. I judge of men and things, not from their appearance, but from the reality. My opinion is regulated, not by men's judgment, but by God's judgment; "and yet if I judge,"—or rather, "and when I judge,"—"my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." Whatever judgment I form or utter, is according to truth; for it is not merely my judgment, it is the judgment of my Father, whose messenger I am.'

I apprehend we have here, repeated, the claim made by our

12 Rom. xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10.
13 The use of ἐξετάσκειν, as equivalent to "when," is not unfrequent in the New Testament. John xii. 32; xiv. 3. 1 John iii. 2. The Hebrew בִּין is used in the same way Gen. xxxviii. 9—where the LXX. has διὰ τοῦ.
Lord in the fifth chapter, of so close a connection between him
and his divine Father, as that, whatever he says is to be con-
sidered as said by the Father; whatever he does is to be con-
sidered as done by the Father. He speaks by the divine wisdom,
which is common to the Father and to the Son. He works by
the divine power, which is common to the Father and the Son.
If so, how could his judgment be but true? It was a matter of
very little importance to him how they judged him. It was a
matter of infinite importance to them how he judged them.
How different are things in reality, to things in appearance!

Our Lord then goes on to state, that his testimony was not un-
supported testimony. It was the testimony of the Father, as well
as of himself. It is as if he had said, ‘There are two witnesses
here, which the Mosaic law required.’ This is not a case to
which the principle of the Jewish law is strictly applicable, but
the circumstances are more in accordance with it than at first
sight they might appear to be. ‘I am one that bears witness of
myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.’ How
the Father bare witness of our Lord, is fully unfolded in the fifth
chapter, and has been already illustrated. He bare witness to
him by the miracles he enabled him to work. These miracles
could have been performed by no power inferior to divine. He
bare witness to him by the supernatural voice and glorious ap-
pearance that distinguished his baptism; he bare witness to him
in those ancient predictions which were so wonderfully fulfilled
in his character, and doctrine, and actions, and sufferings. The
argument seems to be, ‘Two men’s testimony is considered as
satisfactory evidence. Here are two testimonies—and testimonies,
each of them infinitely outweighing all human testimony.’

With ‘obtuse haughtiness,’ or, perhaps, with an intention to
induce him to utter some stronger and plainer declaration, which
might lay a foundation for a charge of blasphemy to inflame the
people, or of sedition to alarm the government, ‘they said to him,
Where is thy Father?’ as if they had said, ‘Bring forward this
witness, whose testimony is so good, as not only to be worthy of
credit itself, but even able to make your incredible and unintel-
ligible statements worthy of belief. We should like to see this
Father of yours.’

Our Lord’s reply is worthy of his divine mission. ‘Ye neither
know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have
known my Father also:’” as if he had said, ‘My Father is he
whom you call your God; ye think ye know him, but in truth you
are equally ignorant of my true character and His. If ye had known
me to be what I am,—the Son of the Father,—the Only-begotten,
who was in his bosom from eternity, and who has been made flesh
for the express purpose of revealing him that his glory may be seen
in my face,—if you had known the truth about me, and received
me in my true character, you would have known the Father, for

14 Deut. xvii. 6.
16 Tholuck.
15 John v. 32-39.
17 John viii. 19

VOL. I.  29
I should have revealed him to you, and, indeed, in knowing me you would have known him, for "he has seen the Father that has seen the Son;" for he is "the image of the invisible God," "the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person."

These words were spoken by our Lord in that part of the temple buildings that was called the treasury. 18 This was in the court of the women, where there were placed thirteen treasure-chests, which served as repositories for the free-will offerings of money, and for the yearly tribute for the support of the temple. 19 This was a place where there was usually a conourse of people. Vitringa supposes that the temple synagogue was in this place, but this is uncertain.

There can be no doubt that the Pharisees were greatly incensed at our Lord's discourse, but though unprotected by any human guard, "no man laid hands on him." The unseen shield of his Father was around him. "His hour was not yet come;" and till it arrived, he was immortal. "The hand of the Lord," as Olshausen says, "protected the Beloved, until the hour of the great sacrifice."

"Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." 20 He said it "again," he had said it before. 21 The train of thought seems to be this, 1 It is your interest immediately to attend to, and believe, my statements. It is thus only you can escape impending destruction. There is no time to lose—I will not continue with you always, I will not continue with you long; a time is coming, it is near at hand, when you will eagerly seek Him whom you now reject, but seek him in vain.

"I go my way." This is a declaration of the same import as that addressed to the Jewish rulers: "Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come." 22 And to the disciples—"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." 23 And again—"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." 24 The words in themselves signify merely, 'I am about to leave you;' but, from other passages, we know that he was to leave them, not by removing to some other place on earth, but by leaving earth and rising to heaven.

"Ye shall seek me." After our Lord had left the earth and gone to heaven, the Jewish people were to be involved in deep distress. In their distress they would seek, earnestly desire, the presence and help of the Messiah, and Jesus was He. But their desires would be unavailing. They would not find him. He had been on earth—they rejected him. He has gone to heaven;

18 John viii. 20. 19 Mark xii. 41.—Vide Lightfoot and Relandi, Antiq. Heb
22 John xiii. 33. 23 John xvi. 28.
and he will not return to earth to help those in the day of their
distress, who, when he was with them, treated him with neglect
and contumely. The words are equivalent to, 'The Messiah will
not interfere on your behalf.'

On the contrary, "Ye shall die in your sins." These words
admit of two meanings—'You shall die under guilt—unforgiven.
You shall go to the judgment-seat with all your sins uncanceled;
and, in this case, what can await you but hopeless condemnation
and unending punishment?' Or, 'Ye shall die; ye shall be
punished on account of your sins.' The last seems the meaning
in the passages in the prophecies of Ezekiel, from which the
phrase seems to be borrowed—"The soul that sinneth, it shall
die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither
shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of
the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the
wicked shall be upon him." 25  "When I say unto the wicked,
O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to
warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his
iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Neverthe-
less, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do
not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast
delivered thy soul. When I shall say to the righteous, that he
shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and com-
mit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but
for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."
"When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and com-
mitteth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." 26 'The Messiah will
not interpose for your relief, and the wrath due to your sin will
come upon you to the uttermost."

"Whither I go, ye cannot come." 'I go to heaven, you
cannot come thither; hell—not heaven—will be your habitation,
when ye die in your sins—are driven away in your wickedness.'

To these solemn warnings of our Lord, which must have been
at least partially understood by his opponents, they reply with
profane levity, and with an impious sneer. "Then said the
Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye
cannot come."

Self-murder was by the Jews accounted the greatest of all
crimes. Josephus, in dissuading his companions in war from
self-destruction, to whatever sufferings they might be exposed,
says strikingly of suicides—"A darker hell receives the souls of
such;" 27 a passage which probably suggested the still more strik-
ing words of the poet of the "Grave":—

"These herd together;
The common damned shun their society,
And look upon themselves as fiends less foul."

25 Ezek xlviii. 20. 26 Ezek. xxxiii. 8, 9, 13, 18.
27 John viii. 22.—'Volant dicere, se cum ubique posse invenire.'—BENED.;
q. d., "He will not find it easy to escape beyond our reach. There is but one
way—Will he take that?"
28 τουτων αυτων οδος διερησαι φιλομηνε. De bello Jud. i. 8, 8, 5.
They resent the intimation contained in our Lord's words, that, perishing in their unbelief and impenitence, hell must be their final and everlasting abode, and endeavor to cast back the reproach, as if they had said, 'What can the man mean? Does he intend to destroy himself, and thus to secure for himself a mansion in Gehenna, of which few will be anxious to be joint-tenants?' In this case he is quite correct, "Whither he goes, we shall never come."

Our Lord meets this impious sneer with an elevated seriousness. He takes no direct notice of it, but he repeats, explains, and enforces his former statements. "And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

The force of the 23d verse seems to be this,—'The true cause of your constantly misapprehending and misrepresenting me, is to be found in the incongruity which exists between your carnal minds and my spiritual doctrines.' In this case, his words suggest the same idea as that expressed more clearly in the words of the apostle: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Or, perhaps, these words are explanatory of the assertion, "Whither I go, ye cannot come;" 'while you continue earthly in your character, how could you dwell with me in heaven?' He who feels this world to be his home, could never feel himself at home in that world, into which our Lord was about to enter. While men continue unregenerate, "not having the Spirit," mere "natural" men, "conformed to this world," untransformed in the spirit of their minds, it is in the nature of things impossible that they should come where Christ is—that they should enjoy along with him holy spiritual happiness in heaven.

This view of the words seem better to connect them with what follows—"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins." This is the reason why I have strongly affirmed that, instead of coming where I am going, you must die for your sins. With your present character, so directly opposed to mine, you cannot be saved—you must perish." Our Lord seems here to assert the same principle which he stated to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see."—he cannot enter into—"the kingdom of heaven." A man must have a heavenly character to fit him for heaven. He must learn to think with Christ, to will with Christ, to enjoy with Christ, in order to his dwelling with Christ.

And the belief of the truth with regard to Him, is the only way of effecting this change of character, which is necessarily connected with escaping destruction, and getting to heaven. "For," adds our Lord, "if ye believe not that I am he"—or rather, "If ye believe not what I am,"—the truth about me—"ye shall die in

20 John viii. 23, 24. 30 1 Cor. ii. 14. 31 ψυχικοί. 32 John iii. 3.
your sins.” The belief of the truth respecting Christ is, by Divine appointment, absolutely necessary in order to escape destruction, and obtain eternal life; “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” And farther, it is through the belief of the truth that the carnal man becomes spiritual, the earthly man heavenly, so as to be qualified to be with Christ, where he is, to behold his glory, and to share in his happiness.

On our Lord saying, “If ye believe not what I am, ye shall die in your sins,” the Jews contemptuously asked, “Who art thou?”—a question “full of insolence, and of malevolent ridicule,” equivalent to that proposed by them afterwards, “Whom makest thou thyself?” It was probably their intention to entrap our Lord into some statement as to his Messiahship, of which they might have availed themselves, in making him an object of suspicion and jealousy to the Roman government.

With admirable wisdom our Lord avoided the snare laid for him, and replied, “Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.” “The beginning” may refer to the beginning of this discourse, in which case the answer is equivalent to, “I am the light of the world.”—I am the author of knowledge, and holiness, and happiness, to mankind; or it may refer to the beginning of his ministry. In this case it is equivalent to, “I am the person I have always represented myself to be; and if you were really desirous of knowing who I am, you could have no difficulty in finding out the truth.” For though our Lord in very few instances, in so many words, declared that he was the Messiah—and it is easy to perceive that there were important reasons for this caution—yet no intelligent hearer of his discourse could have any doubt that he did lay claim to be the divine, and divinely qualified, appointed, and accredited, spiritual deliverer promised to the fathers.

Our Lord proceeds to remark—“I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.”

33 “With Grotius, I understand δη = δη, τι, which is the same as τι, quid, what.”—Campbell. “The reading δη, τι is, according to all critical authorities, to be preferred.”—Owen.
34 John iii. 16, 18.
35 John viii. 25.—οτι τις ελ refer to δη τι εγω ειμε.
36 Tholuck.
37 John viii. 53.—Luther paraphrases it very characteristically: “They speak very pointedly, as if they had said, ‘Aha! and shall it indeed be so, then?’ And pray who are you, good squire Jesus!’”
38 John viii. 25.—ἀρχή for κατ αρχήν. This is the simplest and most satisfactory exegesis of this verbum exatum. “Non valet όλως omnino sed propriè in principio.”—Bengel.
39 “It is certain that των ἀρχῶν is to be taken adverbially, like ἀμφοτερ, Matt. xv. 16; and that δη, τι is to be read and written as a relative.”—Tholuck. See Note B.
free them from obscurity, it is necessary to call up to our minds, the effect which our Lord’s answer must have produced on his opponents. We cannot doubt that their countenances were expressive of sarcastic incredulity, and it is not unlikely some of them gave utterance to this sentiment in appropriately bitter and contemptuous words. On this supposition, our Lord’s words are equivalent to—‘Your behaviour lays a foundation for much condemning remark. I have many things to say about you, and to condemn—for that is obviously the force of the word rendered “judge,”’—‘but your contemptuous incredulity does not dishearten me. Whether you believe what I say or not, I know most certainly that it is true. He who sent me is true—He cannot be deceived, He cannot deceive; and I have in this case, as in every other, just delivered his message. “I speak to the world,” or in the world, those things, and nothing but those things, which I have heard of him. I deliver my message, neither more nor less, just as I received it; and I know that it is true, for its Author cannot lie.’

The evangelist remarks, “They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.” Some of them—for it is scarcely possible to suppose that they could all be so stupid—did not understand who it was that our Lord referred to when he spake of him who sent him—they were not aware that it was God the Father of whom he spoke.

Our Lord then proceeds to say to them—“When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he,” or what I am, “and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” That we are to understand the lifting up of the Son of man of our Lord’s crucifixion, is plain from his own words on another occasion, as explained by the evangelist: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” The inspired annotation is, “This he said, signifying what death he should die.” The passage before us is a prediction that, after his crucifixion, many of those who had taken an active part in it should come to be persuaded that he was indeed the Messiah,—that all his claims were well-founded,—and that, as a faithful messenger, he had just done and said what he had been commissioned to do and say by his Father, who sent him.” How gloriously was this prediction fulfilled, when multitudes of Jews believed on the day of Pentecost! Three thousand believed,—among whom were, probably, not a few of those who had “lifted him up”—were constrained to acknowledge that that “Jesus whom they had hanged on a tree,” was not only “a man approved of God by miracles, and signs, and wonders,” but being “raised from the dead,

42 Mark i. 33.—εἰς τὰς αναγωγὰς.  
43 John viii. 27.  
44 “τότε, tunc, non prius. 1 Cor. ii. 8.”—BENGEL.  
45 John viii. 28.  
46 John xii. 32, 33.  
48 Acts ii. 41.
and set on the right hand of God," was "both Lord and Christ." 34

Our Lord added, "And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone;" for," as I said to you from the beginning, "I do always those things which please him." 35 The Father was with him most intimately, by that common nature of which they were possessed. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me;" "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." 36 Here, however, from the connection, it is plain that it is the Father's presence, in his guiding, protecting, comforting influence, that is referred to, as when it is said, "Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." 37 This is evident from what follows,—"For I do always those things that please him." 'In everything I conform myself to the Father's will. "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish his work."' Whatever opinion men might form of his doctrines or his conduct, he knew that in all he said, and all he did, he was the Father's elect servant, upheld and delighted in by Him—"his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased."

II.—TRUE LIBERTY—REAL SLAVERY.

John viii. 30-36.

These statements, in connection with the miracles which he had performed, made a great impression on the minds of many of the hearers. We are informed that, "as he spake these words, many believed on him." 38 They could not help thinking that he must be the Messiah; and they seem to have intimated so much to himself. They professed themselves his disciples. The bulk of these men do not seem, at this time, to have been believers to the saving of the soul. The character of faith is to be learned from the object of faith. Not only may men profess to believe the truth about Christ—not only may they think that they believed the truth about Christ—not only may they really believe much about Christ which is not true,—but they may even believe much about him which is true, while yet they do not believe "that truth" about him, which cannot be believed without the believer being saved by it. Men may believe a proposition which, rightly understood, implies the saving truth, but which, as understood by them, does not imply it, nay, implies the reverse of it. Such was the case before us. These men likely believed Jesus to be the Messiah; but then their notions of the person of the Messiah, the design of his mission, and the nature of his kingdom, were

34 Acts ii. 22-36.
35 "The Father hath never forsaken me."—LYNOR ap. THOLECK.
36 John viii. 29.
37 John xiv. 10.
38 John xvi. 32.
39 John viii. 30.
not only exceedingly defective, but essentially erroneous. In one point of view, they believed the truth about him, for he was the Messiah. In another and more important point of view, they did not believe the truth,—they believed falsehood, about him; for they believed that he, as the Messiah, would soon take to himself his great power, and reign as a temporal prince, and employ himself in rescuing them from their subjection to the Romans, restoring the kingdom to Israel, establishing a universal empire, and giving the chosen people rule over the Gentile nations. And there can be no doubt, as to most of them, that on finding that he was not the kind of Messiah they expected, they would not have renounced their preconceived notions, and held fast by the faith they had professed, but they would have concluded that they had been in a mistake about him, and that he was not the Messiah at all.

Our Lord never availed himself of the mistaken opinions of men to secure professed adherents, and thus to swell the number of his followers. He took good care that if any mistake was committed in joining his standard, the cause of that mistake should not be with him. He wished to entrap no man into discipleship. Instead of expressing himself as gratified by their adhesion, he informs them that something more is necessary than merely calling him Lord, in order to being recognized by him as genuine disciples—"disciples indeed;" and while he promises them most important blessings if they become his genuine disciples, he intimates, that these blessings, though of far higher value, were entirely of a different kind from those which the Jews generally were expecting from their Messiah.

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In these words, our Lord intimates that he was a teacher of truth, not a temporal prince (just as when he said to Pilate, "I am a king; but my kingdom is not of this world." "I was born,"—I came into this world,—"to bear witness of the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth my voice"); and that, if they would be, not merely nominally, but really, his disciples, they must "continue in his word." The "word" of Christ is his doctrine, and to "continue in his word," is to persevere in receiving his doctrine, holding fast as true whatever he had said to them, readily admitting as true whatever he might yet say to them, and perseveringly following out their professed faith to its practical results.

Such persons as thus continued in his word—such persons alone—would he acknowledge as genuine disciples; and all such genuine disciples would "know the truth." To know the truth

---

55 John viii. 31, 32.—For the illustration of the nature of true spiritual freedom, the following passages may be consulted:—John viii. 36; xvii. 17. 2 Cor. xiii. 7. 1 Pet. ii. 16. James i. 25; ii. 12. Rom. vi. 18; viii. 21. Gal. v. 1, 13; iv. 26, 31. Rom. viii. 6. 56 John xvii. 6, 14, 17, 20; v. 47; vi. 63, 68; xv. 7.
is something more definite than to know what is true; it is to understand that revelation with regard to the salvation of men, through the mediation of the incarnate Son, which is so often in the New Testament called, by way of eminence, "the truth,"—the truth of truths,—the most important of all truths,—the truth of which he was full,—the truth that came by him, as the law came by Moses,—the truth, the reality, in opposition to the shadows, the emblems, of the introductory economy,—what Paul calls "the word of the truth of the Gospel"—"the truth as it is in Jesus." Our Lord's manner of using the phrase appears from chaps. xiv. 17; xv. 26; xvii. 17, 19. He assures these Jews, that such of them as were characterized by a persevering faith in him as a divine teacher, would, in due time, be made to understand that truth, the knowledge and faith of which were at once necessary and sufficient for their salvation. By attending to his discourses, it would gradually open upon their minds, for he would unfold it to them as they were able to bear it. Events would develop it; and, at the appointed season, the great monitor and instructor, the Holy Spirit, would be given them, who would "teach them all things," and "guide them into all truth,"—or rather, all the truth.*

Our Lord adds, "And the truth," this truth, "shall make you free." 'It will give you spiritual liberty,—freedom from the fetters of ignorance, error, guilt, and depravity: in plain words, it will make you wise, good, happy.' It is just as if he had said, 'Expect not from me civil enfranchisement,—temporal freedom. If you profess yourselves my disciples in this expectation, you shall assuredly be disappointed. But if you will permanently subject yourselves to my teaching, you shall have your minds opened to a system of saving truth which will emancipate you from a worse slavery than man can impose on man, and invest you with a freedom incomparably superior to any which man can bestow on man,—a freedom which will end in "the glorious liberty of the children of God" in heaven.'

This was not at all what they either wished for or expected. Instead of thankfully accepting the proffered blessing, some of those who had just professed to be his disciples (for the words naturally refer to them, and not to others in the crowd who had made no profession of faith) were offended, and began to carp at his language, as if it implied an unfounded reproach on the holy nation, as if it represented them as a set of slaves. "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" As if they had said, 'You seem to think us a body of slaves; you are mistaken. As Abraham's descendants, we possess honors and immunities superior to those of any other nation on earth; and, besides, we are not the slaves—we never were the slaves—of any individual or nation. We are both in right and in fact freemen.'

As to the truth of the first statement, there could be no doubt.

* Phil. iii. 8. Col. i. 5. 55 John xvi. 13. 56 John viii. 33.
They, as Abraham’s descendants, had many and important privileges. They had “much advantage every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” “To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; theirs were the fathers, and”—what was more than all—“of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

As to the second statement, whether you consider it as referring to the Jewish people during the whole period of their history, or to the existing generation, it is, to say the least, a very questionable one. Though the Jews continued a distinct people, governed by their own laws and rulers,—to a certain extent, even in Egypt,—to a greater extent, certainly, in Babylon, and under the Syro-Macedonian and Roman dominion,—yet surely it could not be said in truth that the people who, in Egypt, “sighed by reason of their bondage,”—who “served the king of Mesopotamia eight years,”—who were “sold into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan,”—who were “delivered into the hand of Midian seven years,” and “into the hand of the Philistines forty years,”—who were “carried captive to Babylon,” and continued in captivity seventy years,—of whom Ezra says, even after their return to their own land, “We are bondmen,”—and who, in a solemn address to God, make use of this language, “Behold, we are servants this day; and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure; and we are in great distress”—who were repeatedly subdued by the Syro and Egypto-Macedonian kings,—and who at this moment were tributaries to the Romans, and very impatient of their yoke,—surely it could not be truly said, that they “were never in bondage to any man.”

But even if both the statements had been true, they were obviously irrelevant. The liberty our Lord spoke of was plainly not a civil privilege, but a spiritual blessing. It was a liberty to be produced by the knowledge of the truth, of which those who had all the immunities of Israelites, and were free from any human yoke, might yet be destitute. They spurn the offer of spiritual liberty, on the plea that they were never in temporal servitude, as if, though they had never been in bondage to any man, it followed that they never were in bondage to any lust. Henry’s note is good:—“Carnal hearts are sensible of no other grievances but those which molest the body and distress their secular affairs. Tell them of encroachments on their civil liberty and property,—tell them of waste committed on their lands, or damage done to their houses,—and they understand you very well, and can

60 Rom. iii. 1, 2; ix. 4, 5.
61 Exod. ii. 23. Judges iii. 8; iv. 2; vi. 1; xiii. 1. Ez. ix. 9. Neh. ix. 36, 37.
give you a sensible answer—the thing touches them, and affects them; but discourse to them of the bondage of sin, of captivity to Satan, and of liberty by Christ,—tell them of wrong done to their precious souls, and the hazard of their eternal welfare,—and you 'bring certain strange things to their ears;' they say, as Ezekiel's hearers, 'Doth he not speak parables?' This here was somewhat like the blunder Nicodemus made about being born again; but it seems in this case to have been rather a cavil than a blunder."

Their sole object seems, indeed, to have been to cavil; and when persons are determined to find fault, it is easy to obtain an occasion. Our Lord replies to both their cavils, beginning with the last—"We were never in bondage to any man." The answer to this is in the 34th verse: "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." As if he had said, 'What though it were true, that you are not, that you never were, in bondage to any man? you may not the less for that be slaves; you may not the less need the liberty which my true disciples obtain, through means of the truth:

"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant" or slave "of sin."

The phrase, "He who commits sin," describes not the man who occasionally falls into sin—"who is overtaken in a fault"—who, under the influence of "the law in his members," violates but too often "the law of his mind”—does not what he wills—does what he hates." It is the man who, being in the flesh, walks after the flesh—the man who habitually sins. The habitual sinner is a slave—the slave of sin. Depraved principle is dominant in his mind—"Sin has dominion" over him. It "reigns over his mortal body;" he "obeys it" by the desires and appetites of that body; and he "yields his members to it as instruments of unrighteousness."

It is common in all languages, I believe, to personify depraved principle, and to represent the man who is habitually influenced by it, instead of being guided by truth and righteousness, as its servant or slave: thus we speak of the slave of ambition, avarice, or lust. This is the most degrading, if not the most galling, of all slaveries. Sin is the worst of all tyrants; his work is pollution; his wages destruction. Sin exercises a double power over the habitual sinner—the power to condemn, and the power to deprave. Sooner or later men must be ashamed of his service, and the end of these things is death."

Our Lord does not say, in so many words, but his language obviously was intended to suggest the thought, 'You are such slaves; surely, then, you require to be emancipated. The liberty which the truth gives, is a species of freedom, of which you stand very much in need.'

The reply to the second cavil, "We are Abraham's seed," is to be found in the two following verses:—"And," or moreover,
“the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

It has been common to consider these words as just a following out of the idea expressed in the 34th verse—“the servant,” in the 35th verse, being supposed to be the same as “the servant of sin,” in the 34th verse. It appears to be impossible to extract a satisfactory meaning out of the words on this principle. “The servant,” and “the Son” are contrasted. If it be the servant of sin, it must be the son of sin—and what does that mean? and whose house is spoken of? and what is the meaning of the servant of sin not remaining in the house for ever, while the son of sin remains for ever?

Viewed even as a reply to the cavil, “We are Abraham’s seed,” they are not without difficulty; but it is possible, in this way, to extract a coherent and appropriate sense out of them. The term “house” here, as in so many other places of Scripture, does not signify edifice, or mansion, but family; as, when we say, the House of Stuart—the House of Hanover—the House of Bourbon. It is true, as a general principle, that servants have but a temporary place in a family—a son has a permanent place in it. But the reference here is not to a family generally, but to a particular family—the holy family—the family of Abraham. “We are Abraham’s seed!” “We belong to the holy family, and are possessed of all its immunities.” “Well,” says our Lord, “admitting that you belong to Abraham’s family—the holy family—the peculiar people of God—in that family the servant abideth not for ever; it is the Son only who abides for ever.”

The reference may be to the facts in Abraham’s history, which the Prophet Isaiah, and the Apostle Paul, employ allegorically to illustrate the character and fates of the external, carnal, Israelitish church and its members, in contrast with those of the spiritual church and its members. Abraham had two sons, one by Hagar, a bond-woman, who, as children, take their political status from their mother, was, as it were, a slave-son; and another by Sarah, a free-woman, who was a free son, and because of this is called his only son. The slave-son did not continue in the family always; for, mocking his free-born brother, he and his mother were expelled the family, while the free-born son continued in the family, and succeeded to the inheritance.

If the allusion be to this, then the force of the words is, ‘Ye are, no doubt, Abraham’s seed,—i.e., Abraham’s descendants; ye, no doubt, are in the family, but it does not follow from that, that ye do not need to be free; you may be,—in truth they were,—in the family, as Ishmael was in the family.’ And, possessed of Ishmael’s character, they were soon to meet with Ishmael’s

69 John viii. 33, 35. ἡμεῖς here has a force similar to ἡμεῖς in other places—“free in the highest sense of the word.”
70 Isa. liv. 1, &c. 71 Gal. iv. 22, &c. 72 “Ventre sequitur partus.”
fate. They only who were in the family as Isaac was—who were “not of the circumcision only, but who walked in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham”\textsuperscript{72}—they only were the free children of the family, who were never to be cast out, but enjoy the inheritance. ‘There is a freedom, then, which ye, though descendants of Abraham, need; and that is the freedom which my true disciples obtain through the knowledge of the truth.’

In this mode of interpretation, I should have been disposed to acquiesce, had the 36th verse not followed: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”\textsuperscript{74} There can be no doubt that “the Son,” in this verse, signifies our Lord himself; and it seems very harsh to give the term a different reference, in the verse immediately preceding. This makes me seek the interpretation of this passage, not in the Prophet Isaiah, and the Epistle to the Galatians, but in the Book of Numbers,\textsuperscript{75} and the Epistle to the Hebrews.\textsuperscript{76} In the third chapter of that epistle, we find Moses and Christ represented as placed in succession over “the house,” or the family, “of God”; and Christ is represented as worthy of much more honor than Moses, as the founder of the family deserves the highest place in it; and, while Moses is represented as a servant over the family of his Master, Christ is represented as a Son over his Father’s Family, which is also his own. Supposing our Lord, in whose mind lay all the truth afterwards unfolded by his apostles, to have had this view of the matter before him (and we know that the Holy Spirit only took of the things of Christ, and showed them to the apostles), a consistent and beautiful meaning comes out of the two verses. ‘You are Abraham’s seed; you are in Abraham’s family, which is indeed God’s family; but you belong only to Abraham’s natural descendants. You have privileges, but they are all external privileges; and not only so, they are but temporary privileges. You hold under Moses, the servant, who is not to continue for ever: the economy under which you enjoy free privileges is hastening to an end. Moses, the servant, as a ruler, is soon to go out of the family, and all the privileges which belong to that order of things are about to vanish away. There is a spiritual family of God, of which the Son is the founder and the head; that family has higher and more enduring immunities. The Son continues ever, and so do all who hold a place in the family under him. Though you have all the privileges the servant can give you, what will these avail, when he goes out of the family? There is a higher set of immunities belonging to those who hold their place in the family under the Son, and he only can confer them. The Son has a freedom to bestow, of which ye, though free under the servant, stand in need; and if He make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{72} Rom. iv. 12.

\textsuperscript{74} “The ἄνωτος ἐλεύθερος stands in opposition to the imaginary freedom, which the Jews supposed they possessed as descendants of Abraham.”—OLBHAUSEN.

\textsuperscript{75} Numb. xii. 7, 8.

\textsuperscript{76} Heb. iii. 5, 6.

\textsuperscript{77} I find that this is substantially the view taken by Chrysostom, the best in-
The freedom here referred to, is the superior state of privilege to be enjoyed under the new and better covenant, of which the Son is the mediator. This consists in a clearer view of the truth with regard to the divine character of the Father, as manifested in the person and work of the Son; in a generous childlike frame of temper and disposition, growing out of the faith of the truth; and in the possession of a simple and rational, spiritual and easy, system of worship corresponding at once to this revelation—"the truth," and to the character which results from the belief of it. They whom the Son makes free, believing the revelation of the Father, made in, and by, the Son, "receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear; but receive the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father." 78 Under the influence of this spirit, they "come boldly to the throne of grace."

They are the true "circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." They "walk at liberty, keeping God's commandments," serving him "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter"—serving "him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their life." 79 It is the Son who gives this freedom, and he gives it through the knowledge or faith of the truth. "As many as receive him, to them gives he power"—the privilege—"to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "And if sons," then free men indeed,—"heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." 80

Our Lord's answer to the cavils of the Jews, seems, then, equivalent to, 'Ye need to be emancipated, both from the slavery of sin, and from the servitude of the Mosaic institutions.'

But what are these things to us? Our Lord's words to the Jews, are really as applicable to us, as they were to them. We all profess to have believed in Christ. Mere apparent—mere professed—discipleship will do us as little good as it did them; we must continue in his word; we must know the truth; then will we be truly his disciples,—then will we be made free indeed.

How glorious is this liberty! How happy they who are possessed of it!

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside.
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth,
Of no mean city; plan'd'd or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every state;
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose ev'ry day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:

terpreter among the fathers. It is no valid objection that it was not possible that the Jews could thus understand our Lord's words. Many of our Lord's sayings were intentionally enigmatical—intended not to be understood at the time, but lodged in the mind, and to be called up again when events had given meaning to them. 78 Rom. viii. 15. 79 Heb. iv. 16. Phil. iii. 3. Rom. vii. 6. Psal. cxix. 45. Luke i. 74, 75. 80 John i. 12. Rom. viii. 17.
For he has wings, that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine,
No nook so narrow, but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. Th' oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;
And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwella.

This is a liberty unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraisd,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow'rs
Of earth and hell confedrate, take away:
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whose tastes can be enslav'd no more.
'Tis liberty of heart derived from heaven,
Bought with his blood, who gave it to mankind,
And sealed with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By th' unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp, that speaks them his,
And are august; but this transcends them all."

This liberty is the earnest of the glorious liberty of the children of God, for which the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain:—

"A flight into God's arms,
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way;
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal wo."—Cowper, "Task," v.

How degraded and miserable the state of those who are the slaves of sin! Are there no such slaves among us? Would God it were so. But no. There are many "committing sin," and the faithful witness proclaims, "these are the slaves of sin." We all were once such bondmen, and some of us, it is to be feared, are in shackles still. Oh, that they would but open their eyes to their true character, and see, that, if doers of iniquity, they are without question slaves—and if they remain unenfranchised by the Son, "stripes and a dungeon must be their portion for ever."

Let us all remember that there is still both an external and a spiritual church—a church into which men can give entrance, and a church into which none but he who opens, and no man shuts, and who shuts, and no man opens, can give entrance. The privileges of the one are of little value, when compared to those of the other—worse than useless if disjoined from them. And at best, they are but of temporary duration. Alas, alas! how many, after having been for many years in the kingdom of heaven in its external form on earth, and occupied high places in it, shall at last be "cast out," being found to be not disciples indeed, "into outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth!" Oh, let us all seek to be free citizens of the Jerusalem above,—let us enrol ourselves as followers of Him who is "the King" and the King's Son, and "who shall
abide before God for ever." Let us act the part of good soldiers of Jesus Christ, that being by him made more than conquerors, we may "enter through the gate into the city," and become "pillars in the temple of our God, and no more go out."

III.—THE SPIRITUAL PATERNITY OF THE UNBELIEVING JEWS.


In the verses which follow, our Lord prosecutes the subject, and says much that was calculated to disabuse the Jews of those most dangerous mistakes into which, under the influence of their misjudging mind," they had fallen, with regard to the nature of their connection with Abraham, and the advantages which resulted from it. "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

§ 1. Not the spiritual children of Abraham.

Our Lord's object is plainly to convey to their mind this sentiment, that though they were the natural descendants of Abraham, yet they had, in a moral and spiritual point of view, a very different—a much less creditable—paternity. "I know that ye are Abraham's seed." 'I never thought of calling into question so certainly true a proposition as that you are lineally descended from that illustrious patriarch. In that sense you are his children, but in another, in a more important sense, you are not his children; you are the children of a very different kind of father, and the present state of your minds is abundant proof of this. You are seeking to kill me; you are plotting my destruction—you know you are—and the reason is, "my word has no place," does not abide, "in you." You, very lately, professed to believe in me; and I said to you, if you abode in my word, you would be my disciples indeed. But it is plain my word has not taken fast hold of you—you have let it go already. Having found out that I am not the kind of Messiah you expected, you are now desiring and plotting the death of him whom so lately you declared yourselves willing to acknowledge as the long-expected deliverer. My doctrine not being understood and believed, has made no permanent lodgement in your mind.'

'In me you may learn what it is to have any one for a father. "I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do what you have seen with your father." My doctrine is what I have received from my Father. It is what I have seen and heard when with him, as I have been from unbeginning ages—and, from its nature and tendency, it clearly shows who is my Father. Its spiritual, holy, benignant, character, tells plainly that it comes

61 Psal. lxi. 7. 62 ἀδόκιμος νόησ. Rom. i. 28. 63 John viii. 37, 38.
from Him who is a spirit; who is the Holy, Holy, Holy One; and whose nature, as well as name, is Love. 'He is my Father.'

"Ye do what you have seen with your father." 'Your actions tell who your father is, as my doctrine tells who my Father is. In both cases "father" here seems to mean spiritual model—the being, after whom the character is fashioned—the being, under whose influences the moral spiritual frame is formed. The thought that lies at the bottom of the representation is, 'Men's sentiments and conduct are things that are formed, and indicate the character of him who formed them. Your actions, which are characterized by falsehood and malignity, distinctly enough prove, that, in a moral spiritual point of view, neither Abraham, nor the God of Abraham, is your father. The former of your spiritual character is not in heaven, wherever else he may be to be found.'

The Jews could not but have some suspicions whither our Lord's remarks pointed; but they pretended not to observe it; and seemed to wish to represent him as a calumniator of Abraham. "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father." "If we do what we have seen with him, surely we shall do very well? Do you mean to slander the illustrious patriarch of our race—'the friend of God'?"

"Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth; this did not Abraham,'—rather, Abraham acted not thus. 'If ye were Abraham's children in a spiritual sense—if ye were conformed to his character—you would imitate his conduct. But your conduct is the very reverse of his. You are desiring and plotting the murder of a man who has never injured you, whose only crime is that he has made known to you important and salutary, but unpalatable, truth. Abraham never did anything like this. He readily received every communication made from heaven. He never inflicted injury on any man, far less on a divine messenger who had merely done his duty. No, no! if children are like their parents, Abraham is not your father. He whose deeds you do, he is your father.'

§ 2. Not the spiritual children of God.

The drift of our Lord's insinuations was becoming more and more apparent, and the Jews were becoming more and more indignant, and more and more disposed to repel them with scorn. "Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father,"—even God." The meaning, or rather reference, of the first clause, "We are not born of fornication,"—'we are not a spurious brood, we are not bastards—is doubtful. It may refer to what goes before, or to what follows. It may refer to Abraham's, or to divine, sonship. In the first case, it is equivalent to,
'We are genuine descendants of Abraham, Hebrews of the Hebrews. We are not Ishmaelites, or Samaritans; we are the children, not of the concubine, but of the wife; not of the bond-woman, but of the free.' From its connection, however, we think it more probable that it refers to the filial relation they claim to God. Idolatry is often in the Old Testament, in consequence of Jehovah's representing himself under the figurative character of the husband of the Israelitish church, termed fornication and adultery. "To be born of fornication" or adultery—to be the children of fornication and adultery, is, according to the Hebrew idiom, just equal to, 'to be idolaters;' as if they had said, 'If you refer to something more recondite than mere natural relation, then God is our Father. We are not idolaters; we have not many fathers—gods many, and lords many. "To us there is but one God and Father." Jehovah is our Father; and surely you dare not say anything against Him.' They refer to such passages as, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?"89 "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."90 "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?"91

In reply to this cavil, "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."92 These words are equivalent to a denial that God was their Father in the sense in which they claimed to be his children. He was their Father as he was "the Father of the spirits of all flesh, who had made of one blood all the nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth."93 He was their Father, as he preserved and provided for them, and blessed them. He was their Father, as they belonged to the nation of whom he had said, "Israel is my son, even my first-born,"94 "to whom pertained the adoption;"95 but He was not their Father—they were not his children—in a higher sense. They were not the objects of his complacent regard, of his moral approbation—neither in spiritual relation nor character were they his children. They were not "heirs of God," neither were they "partakers of a divine nature."96

"If God were your Father," and you his children, then "you would love me." He was the Son of God by way of eminence, "the first-born among many brethren." Surely they could not be God's children if they did not love Him and hate his Son, who was the image of the invisible God—the brightness of his glory—the express image of his person, in whose face the glory of the Father was mani-

89 Deut. xxxii. 6.
90 Isa. lxiii. 16.
91 John viii. 42.
93 Rom. ix. 4.
94 Rom. viii. 17.
95 2 Pet. i. 4.
96 Mal. ii. 10.
97 Exod. iv. 22.
fested. "He that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him."

"I proceeded forth and came from God." It is difficult to say whether these are two different expressions for the same thing—our Lord's divine mission; or whether the first refers to his sonship, and the other to his mission. 'I am his Son—I am his messenger. If ye were his children, you would love me as his Son, and readily receive me as his messenger.' "Neither came I of myself, but he sent me." 'I am no unauthorized teacher—I have a commission, a clearly-authenticated commission, from Him who you say is your Father; but surely he cannot be your Father, else instead of seeking to kill me, ye would have gladly and gratefully received my message, and treated myself with the most respectful and affectionate kindness.'

"Our Lord adds, 'Why do ye not understand my speech? even because you cannot hear my word.' Our Lord refers here to the difficulty—to a certain extent real, to a much greater extent affected—which the Jews had discovered in apprehending the meaning of what he had been saying to them. "Speech" and "word" are nearly but quite synonymous. "Speech" is external address—discourse as spoken; "word" is the same address, viewed as the expression of thought. 'Why do you not understand my discourse? It is because you do not relish its subject.' "Hear" is equivalent to listen. 'You dislike it so much that you will not listen to it.' It is true as a general principle, that the cause why the Jews, and indeed mankind generally, do not understand the Christian revelation, is, that they are so indisposed to its substance, that they are morally incapable of giving it that consideration that is necessary to its being understood. But our Lord's reference is plainly to his present discourse. 'You affect to feel great difficulty in apprehending my meaning. The reason is, you are not disposed to attend to, or believe, what I am saying.' But as you seem not to comprehend me clearly, I shall state the truth in words, which you will not be able, however much you might wish it, to misapprehend or misrepresent.'

§ 3. The children of the Devil.

Our Lord, then, in the words before us, in plain terms tells them the truth, with regard to their spiritual or moral paternity.

96 Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3. 2 Cor. iv. 6. 1 John v. 1.
97 "Similis epitasis, non potest. 1 Cor. ii. 14."—Bengel.
98 John viii. 43.
100 λόγος.
1 "Lucé distinguishes between λαλία and λόγος thus:—He regards the latter as denoting the contents or the sentiments, and the former as meaning the form, the λόγος λαλομένος. This is quite correct in itself; but it is evident that, in one passage, the two expressions are employed synonymously, since λαλία, in connection with γνώσει, must necessarily have reference to the sentiments."—Oelschaeuser.
2 "Qui veri sunt Dei filii et domestici non possunt paternæ domus ignorare linguam."—Calvin.
“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

Fully to understand the first part of this verse, a number of questions must be answered. The first is, Who is “the devil”? the second, What is meant by the devil being the Jews’ “father”? the third, What is it to be of “the devil”? the fourth, What are “the lusts” of the devil? the fifth, What is it to “do” these lusts? and the sixth, What is it “to will” to do these lusts?

With regard to that very remarkable being, here termed “the devil,” and elsewhere “Satan,” “the tempter,” “the old serpent,” “the destroyer,” our information, all of course derived from revelation, though very limited, is abundantly distinct. He is a being of the angelic order, formed, as all intelligent beings were, in a state of moral integrity, who, at a period anterior to the fall of man, in consequence of violating the Divine law, in a manner of which we are not particularly informed, was (along with a number of other spirits, who, it would appear, in consequence of being seduced by him, were partakers of his guilt) cast out of heaven, his original abode, placed in a state of degradation and punishment, and reserved to deeper shame and fiercer pains, at the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Through his malignity and falsehood, man, who was innocent, became guilty—man, who was holy, became depraved—man, who was happy, became miserable—man, who was immortal, became liable to death. Over the minds of the human race, while they continue unregenerate, he exercises a very powerful, though not physically irresistible, influence; and hence is termed “the prince,” “the god of this world,” “the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience,” who “leads them captive at his will.” Even over their bodies he has, in many instances, exercised a malignant power. He exerts himself, by his numerous agents, in counter-working the Divine benignant plan for the salvation of men, throwing obstacles of various kinds in the way of their conversion, and spreading his snares for, and aiming his fiery darts at those who have thrown off his yoke. Error, sin, and misery, in all their forms, are ultimately his works; and his leading object is to uphold and extend the empire of evil in the universe of God.

When this malignant powerful being is termed the father of the Jews, it is obvious that the term is employed in a figurative or analogical sense. That being is, in a moral point of view, my father, under whose influence my character has been formed, and whose sentiments, and feelings, and conduct, are, as it were, the model after which mine are fashioned. When, then, the devil is represented as the father of these Jews, it intimates, that instead

---

3 John viii. 44. See Note C.
4 John xii. 31; xiv. 30. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 23.
PART III.]  SPIRITUAL PATERNITY OF THE JEWS.

of having a spiritual character formed under divine influence, they had one formed under a diabolical influence; and instead of being formed in God's likeness, or in the likeness of Abraham his friend, they, in their great moral lineaments, resembled the grand enemy of God and man. "The devil is your father," is equivalent to—'Your character has been formed under the influence, and fashioned after the model, of "the wicked one."'

To be "of" the devil, their father, is the next phrase which requires exposition. The particle "of," expresses relation of a great variety of kinds. One of the most common of these is property. To be "of the world," is to be the world's own. "The world loves its own,"—those who are "of it." To be "of God," or "God's," is to belong to God, to be God's property and possession. To be "of Christ," or "Christ's," is to belong to him. To be "of the devil," or "the devil's," is to belong to him, to be as it were his property. All created beings are, and must be, in one sense, and that a most important one, God's property. The devil himself, in that sense, is God's. He is subject to his control, and will be made to serve his purpose. But in another sense, the Jews, and all who possess the same character, are the property of the wicked one; they practically renounce their dependence on God; they deny his proprietorship, and they practically surrender themselves to the wicked one, yielding themselves his slaves, and their members as instruments of unrighteousness in his service. It is as if our Lord had said, 'Ye say that ye are God's peculiar people, but ye are really the devil's self-sold slaves.' That this is the leading idea seems plain from what follows, which is explanatory or confirmatory of this.

"The lusts of your father ye will do." "Lusts" are strong desires. Now what is meant by the desires of the devil? "Lust," in Scripture, signifies, not merely desire, properly so called, but the object of desire. "The lust of the eye" is a general name for those things which, contemplated by the eye, excite desire,—what is splendid or beautiful. "The lusts of the devil" are to be understood, in this way, not of his individual desires or longings,—for how could the Jews do these?—but of the things which are the object of his desires,—such as the establishment and permanence of error, vice, and misery among men,—whatever is calculated to gratify his impious malignant mind, a mind of which, as Milton powerfully expresses it, "evil is the good." To do the things which the devil desires, is to oppose truth, and to increase sin and misery. These things the Jews did—habitually did.

The phraseology is emphatic,—"ye will do." The term "will" is not here the mere sign of futurition,—it denotes disposition, determination, choice. 'Ye will do the evil things which your infernal father wishes for.' It is a phrase of the same kind as—"If any man will be my disciple;" "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

8 John vii. 17.
The Jews were not merely occasionally, by strong temptation, induced to do what is in accordance with the devil's desires, but their desires were so habitually consentaneous with his, that in seeking to gratify themselves, they produced the result which he desired. They were cheerful servants—voluntary slaves.

In the middle part of the verse, our Lord intimates the particular points of similarity of character and conduct which proved them the moral progeny, the self-surrendered property, of the wicked one. "He was a murderer from the beginning." He was a manslayer, a homicide, from the beginning." The reference here is plainly to the history of the fall of man. "From the beginning," is equivalent to— "from the very origin of the human race." Man was formed immortal. It was in consequence of the sin which was brought about by the temptation of the devil that the awful sentence was pronounced, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." It is said, "By man came death;" with equal truth may it be said, 'By the devil came death.' To use the language of an apocryphal writer, "God made not death. He created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity: but through the devil's envy or malignity came death into the world." All the death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, in the world, is ultimately his work; and, perhaps, on this account, he receives the fearful appellation, "He that has the power of death." In all the extent of meaning belonging to the term, then, he is a murderer. Our Lord's words were plainly fitted, and intended, to excite the thought, 'And are not ye his children? You are seeking to murder me, an innocent man. Verily, ye do the deeds of your father.'

Another leading feature in the devil's character is his falsehood. Malignity guides him in the choice of ends, and falsehood characterizes the means he employs to gain these ends. "He abode not in the truth." These words have often, perhaps generally, been considered as stating that the devil did not persevere in that state of integrity in which he was created. He was formed, no doubt, like the rest of the angels, in the moral image of God, of which truth is a leading feature; and he certainly did not continue possessed of this image. But we doubt the accuracy of this interpretation. Surely it could not be said of Satan before his fall, 'there was no truth in him.' In this case, a thing would be represented as the cause of itself. Besides, the word translated "abode," though it wears the preterite form, uniformly, both in the classics and in the New Testament, is used in a present sense,—'He abides,' literally, he stands, 'not in the truth.' It refers to his habitual character as false. He is habitually untrue; he has no liking for what is real; his delight is in delusion and error, wrong thought, false feeling, de-

---

6 ἀνθρωποκτόνος.
7 "Lücké, De Wette, and Nitzsch have maintained a reference to the murder of Abel by Cain. 1 John iii. 18.—This, however, evidently takes away from the depth of the meaning." Organisms.
8 Gen. iii. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 21.
9 Wisd. ii. 23, 24.
10 Heb. ii. 14.
ceitful conduct. He stands not in the truth; and the reason is, since he became depraved, “there is no truth in him.” The great radical falsehood, which forms, as it were, the very moral nature of the devil, is, that happiness, true life, is not in God, and is to be obtained out of Him, away from Him, opposed to Him. This is the lie of lies, by which the devil deceives himself, and deceives all who yield themselves to his influence. And here, as in the former case, our Lord’s words are plainly intended to suggest the thought,—“In falsehood, as well as in malignity, you bear the image—you do the deeds—of your father. You hate truth; you love falsehood. By the most deceitful means, you endeavor to accomplish your malignant ends. Are ye not, then, of your father the devil?”

The concluding clause of the verse has been variously interpreted, according as it has been considered as referring to the devil, or to the person who is of the devil. The first is the more ordinary way of explaining it. “When he,”—that is, the devil, —“speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own.” When he utters falsehood, he acts according to his nature, his own proper character; “for he is,” and ever has been since his apostasy, “a liar, and the father of it.” There is no antecedent to “it.” Lying, as implied in the word “liar,” has generally been understood. He is the father of lying,—the first liar in the universe of the God of truth, and the cause, direct or remote, of all the falsehood that ever has been in it. This is very good sense; it is in accordance with the facts of the case, and very well corresponds with the context.

Some, however, perceiving, what there can be no doubt of, that the natural translation of the last clause is, ‘and so is his father,’ and seeing, at the same time, how inapplicable these words would be to the devil, have supposed that the statement does not refer to him, but to any one of the Jews who were “of him” as their father,—rendering the passage, “When any one of you speaketh a lie, he speaketh like his kindred; for he is a liar, and so is his father.” He belongs to a family whose vernacular tongue is falsehood. No wonder he lies; the wonder would be if he spoke truth.’ Though this view is taken by some excellent scholars, we, upon the whole, prefer the more common one.

Our Lord goes on to state, that so completely did they resemble their father in their hatred to truth, that the very reason why they did not believe Him, was that he told them the truth. Had he concealed, had he denied, the truth,—had he told a falsehood,—then they would have believed him. Ay, when what they thought he had said was indeed a falsehood, then they had believed him; for so long as they thought that he was the Messiah they were expecting, they were disposed to be his disciples;—no sooner did they know the truth, than it was “Away with him; away with him.” They were as much opposed as the devil him-

---

11 Porphyry, speaking of demons, says τὸ ἔνδος τούτων εἰκεῖον.
12 Bishop Middleton, Grotius, Wakefield.
self to the truth,—refusing to receive our Lord's doctrine, not only although it was truth, but because it was truth. "And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not."12

The leading idea is, 'Falsehood has laid such fast hold of, has taken such deep root in, your minds,—you so firmly believe a lie,—that truth, instead of being a recommendation to my statements, is the very thing which prevents you from receiving them.' They had professed faith in him; but that was when they were in a mistake respecting his character. They had concluded that he was "the Messiah," understanding by that word a temporal deliverer. Viewing him in this false light, they were quite ready to be his followers; but no sooner had he told them the truth, that the liberty he came to bestow was a liberty of mind and heart, to be produced by the operation of his doctrine understood and believed, than they retracted their profession,—they would not acknowledge him as the Messiah,—they would not "continue in his word,"—they would not be "his disciples." Had he told them a lie,—had he flattered their prejudices,—had he promised to "restore the kingdom to Israel," in their sense of these terms,—then they would have believed him, then they would have followed wherever he chose to lead. But because he told them the truth, that he was not a temporal deliverer, but a spiritual Saviour, —"therefore," on that very ground, they disbelieved him, and were disposed not only to "go back, and walk no more with him," but even to wish and to plot his destruction. They thus showed that they not only had no appetite for truth, but a positive distaste for it, and proved their spiritual relationship to him who is a liar, who abides not in the truth, in whom there is no truth. So dangerous is it for the mind to get under the influence of error respecting the great fundamental principles of religion. It leads, in innumerable instances, to the mistaking of truth for falsehood, and falsehood, for truth,—and induces men to receive a doctrine for the very reason for which they ought to reject it, and to reject a doctrine for the very reason for which they ought to receive it.

In rejecting our Lord's doctrine, they acted very inconsistently. On the ground of his miracles, they had professed faith in him. Now, what had occurred which ought to have shaken that faith? Was there anything that our Lord had said or done to prove that he was an imposter,—to neutralize, or more than neutralize, the evidence which had led them to offer to become his disciples? This seems the import of the words which follow:---"Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"13

The word "sin" may refer either to conduct or opinion, or both. It may be either error or fault, or both. The reference is, I think, primarily to opinion, though our Lord chose, intentionally, a word which had a wider import. The term "convince" used in an obsolete sense, as equivalent to 'convict.' There may be cases—they are not of unfrequent occurrence—in

12 John viii. 45. 13 John viii. 46.
which it is impossible to convince an opponent of error, when it may still be very reasonable to refuse to believe him. If I can convict him of error, it is enough. But our Lord sets them at defiance. ‘Which of you can convict me of saying or doing anything which should shake that confidence in me you so lately expressed? what is there in what I have said since, that can be disproved? You said you believed me to be a divine messenger; is there anything I have said, since you made that profession, that is self-contradictory, that is inconsistent with fact, that is irreconcilable with any part of the Scriptures, which I, as well as you, hold to be “given by inspiration of God”? If there is, you will be able to convict me of sin as a public instructor—that is, of error—but if, as is the truth, there is none of you who can thus convict me of sin, why do you not believe me? Is the evidence of my divine mission less clear and satisfactory than it was? and if not, what adequate reason can you give why you do not believe me? No, no; you do not believe my words, because ye do not like my doctrine; and you do not like my doctrine, just because it is truth, and, being truth, will not at all harmonize with those false sentiments, those lies which, under the influence of the father of lies, you have systematized in your minds. The reason why you do not believe me is, not that ye are of God, as you profess to be, but because ye are not of God, but of God’s great enemy, the devil.’

“He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

“He that is of God,” is descriptive of the same person as “a son of God;” but it seems to describe the person as the peculiar property of God, just as “to be of the devil,” is to belong to the devil. All men are God’s property. All the Jews were God’s property, in a peculiar sense; in a still more peculiar sense, regenerate men are his property: “The Lord’s portion is his people; Israel”—the spiritual Israel “is the lot of his inheritance.” “The Lord hath set apart the godly man for himself.”

He who, in this sense, belongs to God, “Heareth God’s word.” “Hears” is equivalent to, listens to—attends to—believes—obeys. Whatever revelation God makes of his will, accompanying it, as he always does, with appropriate and adequate evidence, they who are God’s readily embrace it. They say, “Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.” “I will hear what God the Lord will speak.”

Our Lord obviously here goes on the supposition, that his words were God’s words, and his doctrine was a plain, well-accredited revelation of the Divine will. All who were God’s readily received his doctrine. They were the good soil, in which the seed, sown by the Son of man, readily took root, and grew, and multiplied. Every one who was of the truth, by an elective attraction, clung to him who is the truth. “Ye do not hear

15 John viii. 47. 16 Deut. xxxii. 9. Psal. iv. 3.
17 1 Sam. iii. 9. Psal. lxxxv. 8.
God's words" which I speak to you—you will not listen tothem—youdonot relish them—you do not understand them—you do notbelieve them; and the reason is, not that they are not plainenough—not that they are not sufficiently attested—but, that"ye are not of God." Though you belong to the highly-favoredIsraelitish people, you are not of God's peculiar people, in thehighest sense of the term. No; you are not of God—you are ofthe devil. That explains, fully explains, your not believing mydoctrine—your not continuing in my word—your not being mydisciples indeed.' They who are under the influence of him,whose leading characters are malignity and falsehood, cannot beexpected readily to receive, keenly to relish, doctrines, theleading characteristics of which are "grace and truth."

The thus unveiling of their true character, to the self-deludedproud Jews, was by no means agreeable to them. They shrunkback from the mirror, would willingly have dashed it to pieces,and given him who held it up to them substantial tokens of theirdissatisfaction: "Then answered the Jews, and said unto him,Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan,18 and hast a devil?"19

The Samaritans were a mixed race, partly of Israelitish, andpartly of Gentile origin. They were the objects of the greatestcontempt and dislike on the part of the Jews, who hated themeven more than the pagan nations; and these sentiments weremutual. To call our Lord a Samaritan, was to give him the mostcontemptuous and odious of all names. It was especially to reproach him as an enemy of the holy nations; and they not onlygave him this name, but affirm that he richly deserved it—"Saywene well?" 'Is it any reproach? Who, but a sworn foe of ournation, could have represented us, free-born Israelites, as slaves? us, the seed of Abraham—us, the children of God—as thechildren of the devil? It would require all the malignity andimpudence of a Samaritan, to forge and utter such atrociouscalumnies against the holy nation.' But, as if no malignity,however great, in connection with a sane mind, could haveinduced a person to cast out such opprobrious imputations, theyrepresent him as a demoniac, as well as a Samaritan. To haveadevil, is to be mad; and not only mad, but mad throughdemoniac influence. 'What you have said is worse than anySamaritan would have ventured to say, if he had been in hissober senses. He must have been deranged, and his derangementmust have been of demoniac origin, before he could havegiven vent to words so outrageously absurd, so utterly false, soatrociously wicked. None but a Samaritan maniac could havebeen expected to utter such words anywhere, but especially in thisholy place, which speaks so plainly the sacredness of our people,and Jehovah's regard for them.'

Oh, the patience of Jehovah! He who was thus contumeliouslyabused, was the Son of his love, "the brightness of his

18 It is a saying of the Talmud, "Thou art a Cuthite, and no Cuthite can be a witness." 
19 John viii. 48.
glory, the express image of his person;” and his abusers, the creatures of his hand, rebellious creatures, who owed it to the riches of his long-suffering that they were not in the region of hopeless misery, suffering to their utmost capacity of suffering—and he has but to will it, and they sink into annihilation, or are plunged into perdition. “Consider, also, HIM, who endureth such contradiction of sinners against himself.” Oh, how did heaven and earth stand contrasted on this occasion! The heavenly tranquillity of the Saviour’s mind remained undisturbed. Holy displeasure, melting pity, possessed his heart. He renders not railing for railing, but calmly vindicates himself, and warns them of the fearful responsibility they were so recklessly incurring.

“Jesus answered, I have not a devil: but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is One that seeketh and judgeth.”49 Our Lord takes no notice of the first reproach. He perhaps passes it over as unworthy of answer, the mere outburst of irritated wanton malice, or perhaps his silence was intended to intimate, that the distinction between Jews and Samaritans was soon to be abolished, and that order of things introduced in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile,—in which neither does circumcision nor uncircumcision avail anything,—in which, as to religion, all such external distinctions are unknown, and a man is honored, just as he is under the influence of “faith that worketh by love.”

In reply to the second reproachful charge, he satisfies himself with merely denying it. “I have not a devil.” “I” is emphatic. The words intimate, ‘whoever may be under demoniac influence, it is not I.’ Indeed, as was said on another occasion, “His words were not the words of one that had a devil.” Nothing incoherent, nothing malignant, nothing untrue. No, “he was not mad, he had spoken the words of truth and soberness.” It is as if he had said, ‘That is not the state of the case. The state of the case is this, “I am honoring my Father, and ye are dishonoring me.”’ Well did our Lord know he had only to flatter the prejudices of his countrymen, and their hearts would have been as the heart of one man, to place him on the throne of his father David. But his Father in heaven had sent him on another errand, and nothing could divert him from executing it. He would deliver His message, however it might be received; he would do his will, whatever might be the consequence. He was honoring his Father by discharging the work he had given him to do; and, while he was honoring his Father, they were dishonoring him, treating him like an impostor and maniac.

He adds, “I seek not my own glory.” ‘If I did, I should not have told you the truth. Had my own aggrandizement been my object, I should have followed another course; and my not obtaining “glory”—a good opinion—from you, no way disheartens me.’ “There is One who seeketh,” that is, ‘who seeketh my 49 John viii. 49, 50.
glory. There is One who will look after my reputation. There is One who is pledged in holy covenant to make me his first-born, "higher than the kings of the earth." And he who seeketh my glory, "judgeth." He will sit in judgment on your judgment, and "His judgment will be according to the truth." 22 The words seem plainly intended to intimate, in a very impressive way, the fearful responsibility they had incurred. He was doing his Father's will: they were treating him with contumely. His Father was seeking the honor of his faithful servant, his beloved Son; and dreadful would be the manifestation of His displeasure against those who, so far as lay in their power, had put to shame the God-man, whom He delights to honor.

Our Lord adds, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." 23 The coherence of thought here, is not very easily perceived. The connection has been variously stated. Some have supposed that these words were intended as a proof; that his doctrine was not of infernal, but of celestial, origin, from its benignant tendency and effects; and others, that they were meant as evidence that he did not seek his own glory, for, instead of dwelling on his own vindication, he proceeds to show them who had reproached him, the way to be saved. A third class, with greater probability, think these words were addressed to his true followers who were present. While they who would not honor him by receiving his words as God's words, should be judged, condemned, punished, doomed to the second death, cast into the lake of fire, "they who kept his saying should never see death."

To "keep our Lord's saying," or word, is the same thing as to "abide in his word," or to "have his word abiding in us." To receive our Lord's word is to understand and believe it, and yield to its influence—to give it a lodging-place in the mind, conscience, and heart; and to keep it, is to persevere in this, to let it dwell in us, to keep it in memory, to continue believing it, and, what follows as a matter of course, to continue yielding to its influence.

Now, of those who thus receive our Lord's words, he says, "They shall not see death." This statement admits of two modes of interpretation. They both agree in this, that they consider "to see death," as equivalent to, "to die," according to the Jewish idiom, in which, "to see," as well as "to taste," is often equivalent to, "to experience." 24 Some consider the word "death" as signifying death properly so called,—the state of disunion between the body and the soul; and as the keeping of Christ's word gives no exemption from the operation of the great general law of fallen humanity—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,"—they would render the words, "shall not taste death for ever"—shall not remain for ever in a state of

21 "It was not for him to contend with them about this: that would be done by the Father."—Tholuck.
22 John viii. 51.
23 Psal. lxxxix. 48; xvi. 10.
death—shall obtain a glorious resurrection. They must die, but they shall not die for ever. They shall be “raised up again at the last day.” In this case, the passage is exactly parallel with chap. vi. 39, 40: “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” This brings out a very good sense. But the second mode of interpretation seems on the whole preferable, in which death is considered as a general name for all the misery to which man is exposed on account of sin. “Not to taste death,” in this sense, is just “not to perish, but to have everlasting life”—to be delivered from all evil, to obtain possession of all good. Death is evil—life is good. It is plain our Lord very often uses the terms in this acceptation. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.” “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?” He who perseveres in the faith of our Lord’s word, shall not “perish, but shall have eternal life”—obtain true permanent happiness. Both expressions refer to both parts of man’s complex nature. His soul shall not perish—shall not be miserable; but shall live—be happy. His body shall not perish—shall not ultimately be lost; it shall live—it shall be re-united to his spirit, and, along with it, enjoy a perfect, ever-enduring happiness. As the apostle states the whole doctrine: “The body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness; and if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” They who keep our Lord’s words are ultimately to be placed in a state where there is no death in any sense of the word. “The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed,”—cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. Death is to be “swallowed up in victory.” As it was said to the Jews when about to pass through the Red Sea, so may it be said to saints, even when just about to die, “The enemy whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever.”

This most gracious declaration was not received in the spirit in which it was made. As Matthew Henry says, “Instead of laying hold on this precious promise of immortality, they laid

21 John iii. 36; v. 24; vi. 50; xi. 25, 26.
22 Rom. viii. 10, 11.
hold on this occasion to reproach, as a demoniac madman, him who made them so kind an offer." "Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom maketh thou thyself?" As if they had said: 'There can be no doubt now that the man is mad—deranged by the insanity of pride. Was there ever such intolerable arrogance? Surely the man who speaks so cannot be in his sound mind?' Nothing but derangement, in their estimation, could have dictated so absurd and presumptuous a declaration. They propose, therefore, the questions: 'Do you really mean to represent yourself as greater (a more illustrious person, possessed of higher powers) than Abraham, our honored progenitor, or than the holy prophets, by asserting that you have the faculty of giving immortal life to your followers?' 'Whom maketh thou thyself to be?' 'What are the limits of your pretensions; or have they any limits at all?'

IV.—THE PRE-EXISTENCE AND DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

John viii. 54–59.

The principle on which these questions of the Jews proceed, is obviously a just one, that in promising immortality to all who kept his words, there was implied a claim of superiority to Abraham, and to all the prophets: and, you will observe, our Lord by no means disowns the claim. "Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God. Yet ye have not known him; but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying." These words are equivalent to, 'I am greater than Abraham—I am greater than the prophets—I am warranted to promise what they would not have been warranted to promise—I am able to do what they were not able to do; and as to your question, Whom make I myself to be? it is not I who make myself anything. I have not glorified myself by assuming of my own accord the high characters which I bear. I am, as a divine messenger, what my Father has constituted me. If my claims were unsupported claims, I should deserve no honor. But the Father has honored me; he has conferred on me great and peculiar powers, which raise me far above Abraham—far above all the prophets; and he has in the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and in the miraculous works which by his power I have performed, clearly and distinctly intimated that he hath thus honored me. I am his sent and sealed messenger; and the Father who hath thus honored me is He of whom ye say

27 John v. 52, 53.  28 John viii. 54, 55.
that he is your God. I have, therefore, the strongest claim on
your belief and obedience. The commission I bear is from
Jehovah, whom ye acknowledge to be the only true God—to be
your God. My credentials are signed and sealed by his own
hand. If you really had that intelligent regard for Jehovah’s
will which you say you have, you would acknowledge me to be
what he has constituted me, and declared me to be.

‘But, whatever you say, he is not your God in the true sense
of the word. He cannot be the God of those who know him
not; and it is plain ye have not known him—it is plain ye are
ignorant of his true character. You do not understand the
revelation of his will, made to you in the Old Testament Scrip-
tures. If you did, you would recognize in me his image, and in
my doctrine the full development of the mystery partially unfolded
by the prophets.’

“But I know him.” ‘I am intimately, fully, acquainted with
his character and will; and, therefore, however contrary to your
conceptions and wishes, I unhesitatingly declare the truth con-
cerning him.’ “I proceeded forth, and came from him.” ‘In
the beginning, I was with him—in his bosom—so that I cannot
but know him; and, knowing him, I trust in him.’ “If I
should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you:
but I know him and keep his saying.” ‘Should I, to ingrati-
ate myself with you, or to avoid your attempts to destroy me, con-
ceal or deny that intimate and peculiar knowledge of God to
which I have so often laid claim, then I should be guilty of false-
hood, as ye are, when ye say that he is your God, and that you
know him. Your claim, that God is your God, and that you
know Him, is false; and my denial that He is my Father, and
that I know Him, would be equally false. But that I will never
do. No, I do know Him. I know His character; I know His
will; and I evidence this knowledge by keeping His saying.’

“The Father’s word,” or “saying,” here plainly refers to what
our Lord elsewhere calls his “commandment.” It is the com-
misson given him as the Saviour of men,—His instructions as
to all that he was to say, and do, and suffer for man’s salvation.
In the whole work of our salvation, the Son was the Father’s
servant. He came to do his will, and he was his righteous faith-
ful servant. He was “faithful to him that appointed him.”
“His meat was to do the will of his Father, and to finish his
work.” He did always the thing that pleased Him. He “kept
his word.” He persevered in doing his will, till he could say, “I
have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which
thou gavest me to do.”

The words which follow, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to
see my day: and he saw it, and was glad,”—though not con-
ected with what immediately precedes them,—naturally rose
out of the course of the conversation. They look back to our

29 Heb. iii. 2. John iv. 34· xvii. 4.
30 John viii. 58.
Lord's statement at the 40th verse, as well as to the Jews' question at the 53d verse.

Viewed in reference to the former, the train of thought seems to be, 'I said to you a little ago, that you could not be the spiritual children of Abraham, for your conduct to me is very different from what his would have been,—yes, very different from what his has been. You seek to kill me. "Abraham," whom you call "your father, rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

Viewed in reference to the latter, the train of thought seems to be, 'You ask me if I were greater than Abraham—let Abraham himself answer the question. Abraham's conduct in reference to me evidences the estimation in which he held me. "Abraham, your father, rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

Interpreters are greatly divided as to the meaning of these words. As to the import of the expression, "my day," there is little room for diversity of opinion. Strange notions have, however, been entertained about it. In the whole of this discourse, our Lord plainly proceeds on the principle that he was the Messiah. His "day," then, is just the period of the economy which takes its name from him, beginning with his incarnation and reaching to the end of the world, with the delightful and glorious events by which that period was to be distinguished. The phrase may be illustrated by the similar phrases, "days of Noe," "days of his flesh." But while there is generally agreement as to the meaning and reference of this phrase, there is great variety of sentiment respecting the other parts of the declaration.

As they stand in our version, they seem to be a strong declaration that Abraham saw our Lord's day, and that the sight filled him with delight. The two clauses of the verse seem just synonymous, the sentiment being repeated to mark it emphatic, 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day: yes, he saw my day, and was glad.' But our version does not very accurately express the meaning of the original; and if we look closely at the words, we find that the statements in the two clauses, though closely related, are not synonymous. Some, dissatisfied, as they well may be, with our version, render the words, 'Your father Abraham would have rejoiced to see my day; and indeed he did see it, and was glad. It would have delighted Abraham to have seen me as you see me. This delight was denied him; but even the prophetic view he had of my day filled him with joy. Though he did not "receive the promise,"—that is, the promised blessing,—he saw it afar off; he embraced it; and this filled him with holy exultation.' This is good enough sense, but it is not, any more than our version, the meaning of the original words. The same fatal objection lies against a mode of interpretation very generally

31 "The days of the Messiah" is a standing form among the Rabbins."—Tholuck.
32 Matt. xxiv. 37.
33 Heb. v. 7.
adopted. Abraham earnestly desired, like the "many kings and righteous men" referred to by our Lord on another occasion, 'to see my day, and his desire was fulfilled; a revelation was made to him on the subject,—he saw it and was glad.' The phrase "rejoiced to see my day," is plainly what has been termed a pregnant phrase;—it encloses in it an idea not distinctly expressed. It is equivalent to, 'rejoiced in the expectation that he would see;' just as we say, 'I am very glad to meet with my friend;'-—that is, I am very glad in the prospect of meeting him.

The first step to right exposition is correct translation; and I think there can be no doubt that the strictly correct rendering of the words is, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day: and he saw it, or has seen it, and was glad, or has been gladdened.' Now what is the meaning of these words? It has been supposed that the first clause refers to an expectation which Abraham at one time of his life had, that a revelation would be made to him respecting the Messiah; and the second clause, to the fulfillment of that expectation, when such a revelation was made to him. There is nothing, however, in the inspired history which would lead us to suppose that Abraham receive dany promise from God, that at some future period of his life he should have a revelation about the Messiah made to him.

I apprehend that the joyful expectation of seeing the Messiah's day, referred to in the first clause, grew out of the promise made to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."24 Abraham could scarcely doubt that the expression, "thy seed," referred, not to his descendants generally, as it obviously does in the preceding promise, but to some one illustrious descendant. The number is changed from the plural to the singular;25 and perhaps it is this that Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, had in his eye, when he said, referring to this very promise, "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."26 And he could as little doubt that this illustrious descendant, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, was the same glorious deliverer who, from the beginning, had been made known under the name of the woman's seed, as the conqueror of man's great enemy—the old serpent. This promise was the object of Abraham's undoubting unbelief. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what He had promised He was able also to perform."27

On the ground of that promise, Abraham joyfully expected to see the Messiah's day. It is not at all probable, that Abraham indulged any hope of seeing the Messiah's day during his mortal life. What God revealed to him respecting his posterity for

---

34 Gen. xxii. 18.
35 Gen. xxii. 17.—In the beginning of the verse it is a multitude of individuals, like the stars of heaven; in the end, it is one individual—"his enemies."
36 Gal. iii. 16.
37 Rom. iv. 20, 21.
four hundred years," must have prevented any such expec-
tation. It is plain, however, from the declaration of the apostle,
that Abraham, like the other patriarchs "who have obtained a
good report through faith," "died in faith, not having received
the promises, but having seen them afar off, and was persuaded
of them, and embraced them, and confessed that he was a
stranger and pilgrim on the earth. For he, saying such things,
declared plainly that he sought a country. And, truly, if he
had been mindful of that country from whence he came out, he
might have had opportunity to have returned. But now he de-
sired a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is
not ashamed to be called his God; for he hath prepared for him
a city." It is plain from this passage, that the patriarch ex-
pected to live with God in a city, which had foundations in a
better country, after death. In like manner, Abraham rejoiced
in the expectation that, at the appointed time, he should see
"his seed" blessing all nations:—"Now," says our Lord, "this
expectation has not been disappointed. Abraham has seen my
day: Abraham in paradise sees—knows—that my day is come." He is aware that I have appeared, "in the end of the age, to
take away sin by the sacrifice of myself;" and to lay deep the
foundation of that kingdom which is to embrace all nations.
There is a connection between the church on earth and the
church in heaven, a connection probably much more extensive
and intimate than we generally apprehend. Conversions rejoice
angels: "There is joy in heaven," among the angels of God,
"over one sinner that repenteth." Can we suppose that the
spirits of the just made perfect are ignorant of such events, or
unaffected by them? "Jacob," is said by Isaiah, speaking of
the very same event and period, viz., the coming and times of
the Messiah—"Jacob," who had long ago been dead as to the
body, and gathered to his fathers, his own people, both as to
body and soul—"Jacob," plainly viewed as in the abodes of the
blessed, is said, "not to be ashamed," that is, to exult; and "his
face" is said "not to wax pale," that is, to beam with joy and
gladness." 'Abraham in paradise has seen my day, and has
rejoiced.' The events which took place at Bethlehem, when the
Saviour was born, were undoubtedly well known in heaven.
Was there one there more likely to be deeply interested in them
than Abraham? And can we suppose that the anthem, heard
by the shepherds, was not sung in yet fuller chorus in the upper
sanctuary, or that any one of the heavenly harpers struck the
chords with a more willing hand than the patriarch, or with a
louder, sweeter, voice cried, "Alleluia! Glory to God in the
highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men!" May we not
suppose Abraham saying, in transport, "My seed is now come,
and in him all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,"—Jacob,

35 Gen. xv. 13. 36 Heb. xi. 13-16.
40 The view taken of this passage is substantially that of Maldonatus, Lampé,
Kuinoel, l'Ecâ, and Tholuck.
41 Isa. xxix. 22.
“Shiloh is come, and to him the gathering of the people shall be,”—David, “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it,”—Isaiah, “The virgin has conceived and brought forth a son: to us a child is born, to us a son is given,”—Habakkuk, “He that should come, has come,”—Zechariah, “Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall grow up out of this place,”—Micah, “Out of Bethlehem comes forth He who shall be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting,”—Malachi, “The Sun of righteousness has arisen with healing in his wings”—and all with one voice joyfully exclaiming, “Blessed be he who cometh in the name of the Lord”? How far Abraham, or any of the departed believers, were enlightened as to the course and termination of that wonderful work which “the promised seed” had commenced on earth, we cannot tell; but they knew that its object was most benignant, and that its ultimate complete success was absolutely certain. With the angels, they were stooping down to contemplate the unfolding scene of wonder; and as they contemplated, while they must often have been amazed at “the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God,” and even confounded at the strangeness of many of his dispensations, yet with perfect confidence in his faithfulness, they waited the result, and rejoiced in the assurance of faith and hope, and all the glorious things which had been spoken of Messiah and his reign, were in sure progress towards complete realization.

Such seems to me, upon the whole, the most probable interpretation of this somewhat obscure passage. Abraham your father, while on earth, received divine communications respecting my appearance among men, and its glorious results; he firmly believed them; in the expectation of their realization, he rejoiced on earth, he rejoices in paradise. He has now seen their commenced fulfilment—he has seen my day, and he has rejoiced—he is rejoicing.

It may be doubted how far the Jews understood our Lord’s words. Whether they misapprehended them or not, it is plain they misrepresented them. They took for granted, that our Lord had asserted that he and Abraham had been personally acquainted; and then, referring to his apparent age, asked contemptuously if he had seen Abraham, who had been so many hundred years in his grave. “Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”

You see, in this question, the same stupid and carnal arrogance, already so often manifested in the course of this conversation, which altogether indisposed the Jews to enter with seriousness on the examination of what our Lord said to them. They could not help seeing that he was speaking of something more profound than the words in their most obvious meaning seemed to indicate; but they would not give themselves the trouble of searching more deeply; and therefore with sarcastic haughtiness,
seek in this a new proof of mental derangement. Wresting the words of our Lord, as if he had spoken of an earthly inter-communion with Abraham, they exclaim, ‘Who but a madman would talk, as if he and Abraham, who has been more than eighteen centuries in his grave, were contemporaries and intimate friends?’

It may be asked, How came the Jews to speak of our Lord as a man of fifty, when in reality he was little more than thirty? Josephus tells, that fifty years was by the Jews considered as the full age of man; on which account, the Levites never performed their official duty in the temple after the fiftieth year. It is as if they had said, ‘You are not an old man; you have not completed half a century. How could you and Abraham be intimates? He has been in his grave for many a century.’ It is, however, not improbable that our Lord’s bodily and mental labors and fatigues had given him prematurely the appearance of age. Though a man of thirty, he might look like a man of fifty. So far as inward trouble expresses itself in the lineaments of the countenance, and external appearance, it is likely that “the visage of the man of sorrows was” literally “more marred than that of any man, and his form than that of the sons of men;” that “heavy hours,” even more than “time’s deforming hand, had written strange defeatures in his face.”

Our Lord had not said, that he ‘had seen Abraham.’ This was a perverse construction, by which the Jews endeavored to turn him and his discourse into ridicule. He might have said, ‘You triumph before you have gained the victory. You correct where no mistake has been committed. I did not say, I had seen Abraham. I have said nothing but what might have been true, though I had not been twenty, not to say fifty years old.’ But he admits that their inference, though not fairly drawn from his words, yet contained in it an important truth. It was quite true he had seen Abraham; and though, as a man, he was not yet fifty years old, in another respect, a far higher antiquity belonged to him than to Abraham.

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” In these words he claims to have existed before the age of Abraham. The words of the Jews narrowed the argument as to being greater than Abraham, to the point of co-existence. ‘Art thou as old as Abraham?’ As we have seen, he might have replied, ‘I did not say so.’ But he prefers saying —what, from their considering it as involving blasphemy, was plainly viewed by them as a decided affirmative answer to their question—‘I am older than Abraham. I existed before Abraham existed.’ Though, beyond all doubt, this is the general meaning, yet there is a peculiarity, and therefore a difficulty, in the mode of expression. “Before Abraham was, I am,” not, ‘I was.’ It has been supposed by some interpreters, that “I am,” is used in the same way as at verses 24, 28; chap. xiii. 19; Mark

“John viii. 58.
xiii. 6; Matth. xxiv. 5. In this case, the meaning would be, 'Before Abraham was, I am the Messiah.' This, however, involves a solecism—a present event cannot be prior to one past. The passage admits of two modes of interpretation. The principle of the first of these modes of interpretation is, that the present time is not unfrequently used for the past, especially when the thing which is said to have been at a past time, still continues to exist; and that, 'I am,' is here equivalent to 'I was.' The words, in this case, signify, 'Before Abraham was brought into existence, I existed.' The objection to this mode of interpretation is, that there does not seem any adequate reason for thus adopting a not unprecedented, indeed, but certainly an uncommon, mode of expression; and the declaration, included in the words thus understood, though so strange as naturally enough to induce suspicions as to the sanity of him who uttered them, was not of a kind to lay him open to a charge of blasphemy, which, by their seeking to stone him, the Jews showed that they thought he had incurred. The second mode of interpretation seems to us the just one. "I am," is to be understood as a proper name. "I AM, was before Abraham." When our Lord spoke of himself, he often used the third person, and for obvious reasons. For example: "God gave his only begotten Son." "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." In all these expressions, there is an implied claim on the part of our Lord to the character designated by the appellation used. "I AM," was a name of the Supreme Being, well known to the Jews. It was the name by which God made himself known to Moses at the bush,—"the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The very words employed by the evangelist, are the translation ordinarily given in the Septuagint, of an expression often used to denote the Eternal independent existence. "I AM—the eternal, independent One,—was before Abraham." Abraham's God existed along with him, and before him, and this appellation belongs to me. No doubt the Jews understood it so; and they were correct in their conclusion, that it was eternal existence, not mere pre-existence, that he claimed; and, consequently, they proceeded to deal with him as a blasphemer.

47 "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."—Exod. iii. 13, 14.
48 ἡ γενεσθαι, ἐκείνος εἰμι. Deut. xxxii. 39. Isa. xlii. 4; xliii. 10, 13; xlvi. 4; lxvii. 12.
49 This case, ἐκείνος εἰμι is used as an indeclinable noun, and the full construction is, ἡ γενεσθαι ἐκείνος εἰμι, ἐκείνος ἐκείνος εἰμι. The word signifies not only "to begin to be," but simply "to be."
This is one of the passages which have greatly perplexed those theologians who consider Jesus Christ as merely a man of our own order, the son of Joseph and Mary; and the shifts they have had recourse to in order to explain away the obvious meaning of the words, strikingly show how deeply they feel that this passage, understood in any sense which can be called natural, is fatal to their whole system. They complain, that the words are not explicit. What would they have? Had the question been, Whether the son of Mary or the son of Germanicus, was the elder person; and had it been said in reply, ‘I assuredly declare unto you, Jesus was before Caligula,’ would not the answer have been plain enough? Or is there any want of explicitness in the declaration of Moses—‘Before the mountains were brought into existence, thou art’?  

These expositors have chiefly two ways of endeavoring to avoid the conclusion to which the natural interpretation of the words so directly leads. They suppose the words equivalent to, ‘Before Abraham existed, I am,’ that is, ‘I was, the Messiah in the Divine purpose.’ This is no doubt the truth; but it is truth put into, not drawn out of, these words. Had our Lord meant to say this, he could have easily found words clearly to express it. ‘Before Abraham existed, I was fore-ordained; my day was appointed, my kingdom was prepared, in the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, and God showed it by his Spirit to Abraham.’ Besides, this is no answer to the Jews’ question, “Art thou older than Abraham?” and it affords no ground for their considering our Lord as a blasphemer, and therefore worthy of being put to death by stoning. Indeed it seems to make our Lord’s reply a puerile absurdity. ‘Before Abraham existed in the purpose of God, I was the Messiah in the same purpose and decree.’

Another plan of explaining away the obvious meaning of the words, not destitute of ingenuity, but utterly unsatisfactory, is to consider them as equivalent to—‘Before Abram became Abraham,—that is, a father of many nations,—I am the Messiah whom he desired to see, and in whom all nations are to be blessed.’ It is quite plain that “such a meaning could never have penetrated by those to whom the words were addressed; that it was quite foreign to the purpose of the immediate conversation between them and our Lord; and that it represents our Lord as condescending to a childish punning, altogether incongruous to, and unworthy to, his serious and elevated character.” It creates a harsh ellipsis, and arbitrarily supplies it; and, as is admitted by one of the most zealous philanthropists,” “it is a trifling proposition, unworthy of the solemnity with which it is introduced, that Christ existed as the Messiah before an event which it was known was not to happen till many years or ages afterwards.”

This is one of the numerous passages in which our Saviour proclaims himself more than a mere man,—one in whom dwells a superior, a celestial, the divine, nature; and the Jews well un-

51 Pye Smith. 52 Pye Smith. 53 Belsham.
understood what our Lord meant. They did not misapprehend the reference of the emphatic I am. They regarded our Lord's words as blasphemy—a making himself equal with God,—and they wished to stone him. They considered the guilt of blasphemy as so indubitable, that they were desirous of immediately putting him to death in an extra-judicial manner.

"Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." This discourse took place in one of the courts of the temple. The great repairs, commenced under Herod the Great, were still going forward, so that loose stones in abundance lay at hand. There was no want of will, no want of power, no want of opportunity, for putting our Lord to the death of a blasphemer—for treating him as his martyr Stephen was afterwards treated. But his hour was not yet come. The same divine power which protected Moses and Aaron when the congregation bade stone them with stones, protected Him of whom they both were emblems—the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. How the protection was afforded, whether miraculously or not, is a question which the words of the inspired historian do not enable us to determine with absolute certainty. When we consider the circumstances of the case, it seems not improbable that there was something supernatural in it; for how could he, in such circumstances, even supposing a number of the crowd to have been his friends, in such a place as the court of the temple, hide himself from those whom he had just been addressing, who seem to have been around him on all sides, and who obviously were strongly bent on his destruction? The divine power, which made the armed bands fall backward at his word, could easily—for to it nothing is impossible—in a variety of ways, which we may be unable to explain, have provided for his safety. There may have been a miraculous concealment—the eyes of his enemies might be holden, so as not to see him.

At the same time, it is quite possible that our Lord's escape, though providential, might not be miraculous. If the multitude was very large and closely pressed together, he might, while his enemies were stooping for the instruments of his murder, have plunged into the depth of the dense crowd, and, gradually gliding through among them, found his way out of the temple. It deserves to be noticed, that the concluding clause, "going through the midst of them, and so passed by," is, by the most learned editors of the New Testament, considered as an interpolation.

Let us, my brethren, follow Jesus as "the light of the world." It is only by acting thus—by believing, obeying, and imitating him, that we, who are by nature "darkness," sunk in ignorance, error, guilt, depravity, and misery, can obtain that knowledge of truth—that favor and fellowship of God—that real holiness and happiness, of which light is the emblem. By thus acting, we shall here, in our little spheres, become lights of the world, and

hereafter enjoy "the light of life, in all the extent of meaning belonging to the phrase, being so thoroughly penetrated by the enlightening beams of the Sun of Righteousness, as to be indeed "light in the Lord."

Let us all seek that, from being children of the wicked one, we may be made sons of God, by being united to him, "the first-born of many brethren;" and let us show that the Son has made us free, by "walking at liberty, keeping the Divine commandments," and serving our God, who is our Father, without fear; in righteousness and holiness, all the days of our lives.

Let us willingly acknowledge that Jesus is greater than Abraham—greater than all the prophets. Let us believe all his declarations, however apparently paradoxical—depend on all his promises, however apparently extravagant and unlikely to be accomplished. Let us rejoice that we have seen what Abraham in the flesh never saw; that we have heard what he never heard; and let us rejoice on earth—as he does in heaven—in his illustrious seed, in whom all nations are blessed.

Let us remember, that though Jesus is flesh of our flesh, he is "God manifested in flesh;" that though our brother, he is also our Lord; and let us worship him as the "I AM," "who was, and is, and is to come;" and instead of being offended at the clear and broad ascriptions of divinity to "the man Christ Jesus," in the Scriptures of truth, let us learn to honor the Son even as we honor the Father—thus glorifying the Father in the Son, and habituating ourselves to that mode of viewing him, which will prepare us for taking a part in the song which, like the sound of many waters, everlastinglcy echoes in heaven: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

---

**Note A, p. 445.**

The following remarks of the learned and truly venerable Archdeacon Townson, on the peculiarity of our Lord's teaching, adverted to here, and in some other parts of these volumes, are equally remarkable for their justness and their beauty:---

"One thing remarkable in the manner of our Lord's teaching is, frequent allusion to things which were before the eyes of his audience, to occurrences of the time, to the season of the year, to the offices of common life, or the usual employment of those to whom he spake. As sensible and present objects most powerfully affect us, he who knew what was in man, condescended to instruct us from those things that are most easily conceived by us, and most naturally command our attention. High and heavenly truths were presented to his hearers in a familiar dress; as angels of old came to Abraham and the patriarchs with the shape and countenance of men. Truths thus qualified struck the im-
agitation without alarming it; and would recur to the memory, on sights of the objects with which they were associated in his doctrine. The birds which were flying in the air around him, the lilies which were flowering on the plain where he stood, were turned into lessons on the providence and fatherly care of the Almighty. The sowers, who were sowing their grain in different soils and situations, near the borders of the lake where he preached from a ship, served to illustrate the various successes of the Word of God, according to the temper and disposition of the heart that received it. The sight of a vine spreading forth its branches, gave occasion, as seems probable, to a discourse of the vital union between himself and the faithful. When he called fishermen to forsake their nets and follow him, he promised to make them fishers of men. He likened the perverseness of the Jews, who found equal fault with the retired austerity of the Baptist, and his own freer converse with mankind, to the froward and sullen humor of those children whom no endeavors of their companions could please or invite to join with them. He resembled the solicitude of heaven for the conversion of sinners, and the joy of angels on their repentance, to a woman lighting a candle, and sweeping her house, in search after her lost piece of silver, and when she had found it, calling her neighbors about her to rejoice with her. If some of these images are borrowed from things low and trivial in themselves, yet he stoops, without meanness, in using them. Like the ground of which he formed us, and the dust from which he shall raise us, they acquire life and beauty in his hands. Others of his allusions are of a higher strain: As when, from the sun just risen, and shining with splendor on the gilded turrets and ornaments of the temple, when he was discoursing, he referred to the prophecies which speak of him as the light, the east, or sun-rising, and said, ‘I am the light of the world.’ Such passages may strike us as sublime; but we still find that it is the thing itself, not any parade or pomp of words, that strikes us. A difference of nature between our Immanuel and the ancient prophets produced a corresponding difference in discoursing of the same subjects. They, when heavenly objects were presented to their minds, were struck with awe, and, as it were, bowed themselves down before the majesty of the idea; and then, in presenting it to others, endeavored to clothe it in a gorgeous robe, and to deck it out with all the riches and splendor of language. But it is not so that Christ speaks of these high arguments. For, as the brightness of countenance and raiment which dazzled and overcame the sight of his apostles when he was transfigured on the mount was to him but a ray of that glory in which he dwelt before the worlds were made, so the perceptions that astonished the imaginations of man, were, to his mind, common and familiar objects, and he spake of them accordingly, with a certain unconcern and simplicity of phrase.”—Works, i. pp. 280–282.

Another peculiarity in our Lord’s manner of discourse, exemplified in the subject of this and most of the other expositions, is finely sketched by ALEXANDER KNOX:—Our Lord’s most solemn discourses were seldom other than unfettered conversations; all questions which were pertinent, or remarks which were candid, being uniformly well taken, and evidently invited. He, doubtless, chose this method of doing good on

---

1 Matt. vi. 26, 30.  
2 Matt. xiii.  
3 John xv. 1-6.  
4 Matt. iv. 19.  
5 Matt. xi. 16, 17.  
6 Luke xvi. 8, 10.  
7 John viii. 12.  
8 Isa. ix. 2; xli. 2.  
9 Zech. iii. 8; comp. Luke i. 78.  
10 Mat. iv. 2.
the self-same grounds that must always recommend it when the sphere of action is like his—society at large. 1 He knew what was in man, and he used his wisdom accordingly."—Remains, Vol. i. p. 144.

Note B, p. 453.

"We may then have a particular election between the three following suppositions. 1. Ἰην ἁφξην may mean 'for the beginning.' As Luther, Grotius, and Paulus, so also Erasmus: 'Primum sum quod etiam dico vobis, non explicò quidquid sum indignis; hoc primum dico, me missum esse a patre præcem vitæ, id quod jamdudum dico vobis.' Luther: 'If ye will follow my preaching, ye shall experience who I am.' On this interpretation, the only design of Christ would have been, in the first place, to lead the Jews to a lower view of himself, in order that he might reveal to them a higher one after they had attained this stand-point. But this is opposed to the design of Jesus, inasmuch as he wishes to show that he was perfectly correct in attributing to himself the dignity of the Messiah. And besides, what could that higher view be? In what had been said before, he asserted his high dignity. 2. Ἰην ἁφξην may have the force of ἀκροπλοιον, omnino. So frequently among the Greeks. See Elsner and Lössner, Obss. ad h. l., Viger, p. 80, 723. Elsewhere even in the sense of ἥ ιον ἁφξην, Hemsterh. ad Luc. Tim. § 26. Thus it appears to have been construed already by Chrysostom and Euthymius, then in more recent times by Erasmus, who preferred this explanation to the first, and after him by Melancthon, Wolf, Clericus, Kuinoel, and Lücke. 'In general I am the person that I profess to be.' But, in the first place, it is hard to tell what 'generally' here means; commentators have exchanged it for 'truly.' Lücke supposes that it is equivalent to ἀωρη ἁρωρ; but this force does not lie in the Greek idiom, which would lead us to construe thus, 'as from the beginning,' i.e., in general. Further, this signification is to be found in profane writers alone; it is not in the New Testament nor in the LXX. Hence we come to the ἡκατον explanation, which makes ἧν ἁφξην synonymous with ἅν ἁφξην, ἤ ἁφξην, xv. 27; xvi. 4. It is true indeed that the accusative absolute is found in the LXX, only in the sense of 'in the beginning,' Gen. xiii. 18; Dan. viii. 1; but examples may be pointed out in profane writers, where it signifies directly 'as from the beginning.'—Sophocles, Antigone, v. 72, Herodot. 1. 9, see Wahl. s. h. v. Nay, this signification is, throughout, the basis of the derived meaning 'in general,' so that in Sophocles, Buddæus translates ἁφξην by 'omnino,' and others by 'imprimis.' See Hermann on the passage. After Ἰην ἁφξην, then, we may either supply the verb Ἰατιαν, 'I have told you from the beginning what I now also say;' or, since this is harsh, we may supply εἰμι from the connection, ἰωτὸ τοῦ κοινου. The κατι is intensive, ἰ χαὶ καὶ ἧξεα; it intimates that the testimony of the true being of Christ is not different, like the Heb. 23. Αιτίω, I speak, is used instead of the preter, because the present is involved; and it also marks a continuance of the action. We must therefore translate, 'I am the same that I have told you I was from the beginning' (as in the beginning); x. 25 is similar. Thus Nonnus, Calvin, Beza, Maldonatus, and others; as also the Persian version. In Hebrew the sentence would read יד נט רעזרא קדושה דע. Christ then answered the question of the high-minded Pharisees, yet in such a manner that it contained at the same
time a most serious reproof, as well as a declaration that the question was one which they had no occasion whatever to propose.”—Tholuck.

Note C, p. 468.

"He to whom you bear a spiritual kindness is the source of all evil; into his disposition you willingly enter." 1 John iii. 10. Ammonius: ἕν συντόμω ό τούς τ. λόγον τούτο σημαίνει εἰ καὶ ἱσαρίς ἐστι, προ ποιεῖν ἕτερον τ. Θελεῖν is emphatic, as in vii. 17. Origen: αὐτόριξας γὰρ εἰς τὸ εἴνα τοῦ διαβόλου ὑμῶν τὸ κάρο θέλειν ἐν αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν τίς ἐπιθυμεῖ. 'For the will to do what he desires is sufficient to constitute one a son of the devil.'—It may here be asked in what sense the devil is denominated a murderer, ἀνθρωποκτόνος. On this there are two leading views. The first supposes that in calling him such, Christ had in mind the temptation of the first man; on which supposition death, θάνατος, would have the general meaning of 'spiritual and bodily evil.' So Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and most others. The second supposes that it contains a simple allusion to the murder of Cain. So Cyril, Döderlein, Nitzsch, and Lücke. The latter view is based upon the supposition that the context renders it necessary; because Christ was led to the idea of a relationship between the Jews and Satan from the single circumstance of their seeking to kill him, the holy Teacher sent from God. This, indeed, is the only positive ground in its favor; yet even this is weakened by the fact that, in the context immediately antecedent, Christ does not speak of the blood-thirstiness of the Jews, but of their sinful and sluggish stupidity in the apprehension of divine things. It may, however, be urged in addition, that in 1 John iii. 12, the murder of Cain is said to have sprung from the devil: yet, as we shall immediately see, the connection there is of such a character as to furnish no absolute proof in behalf of this view. And besides, in the same place, v. 15, hatred in general is called anthropoktony, man-murder. And moreover, in confirmation of the view of this passage first named, appeal may be made to Wisd. ii. 24, where the death, θάνατος, of the first man is referred back to the devil. Especial considerations in behalf of this interpretation, are the following:—1. An allusion to the first temptation of man by the apostate spirit is more natural than an allusion to Cain, since that act of the devil was the great and chief one, of which all others are merely the consequences. 2. The passage in 1 John iii. 8, is altogether parallel: ὁ παῖς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἔστιν ὅπως ἀνθρωποκτόνος ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει. 'He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.' 3. Christ afterwards, in a general way, calls lying, μεθοδός, the crime of the devil; but Satan's propensity for lying appeared directly in the fall of man. 4. In immediate reference to man's fall, the devil is called that old serpent, ὁ ὄχλος ὁ ἀρχιαίος, Rev. xii. 9. Finally, it might not be inappropriate here to quote a strictly parallel passage from the Sohar Hadash, f. 27, 3, where the wicked, the ungodly, are called τὰ παιδιά τοῦ ἄρχοντος τοῦ ἄρχοντος τοῦ ἄρχοντος, 'the children of the old serpent who killed Adam and all his posterity.' It seems best to combine both modes of exposition, as was already done by Euthymius, and to explain the passage after the analogy of 1 John iii. 8, sq. The apostle there says first,—'Every sinner who hates the divine light, is spiritually related to the fallen spirit, because, from the first commencement of the history of man, he has shown himself to be
an enemy of the light,—i. e., of holiness. A particular mark of servitude to sin, is the want of a loving heart towards the brethren; but especially so, is hostility towards those who manifest the divine light revealed in their life. Cain exhibited such hostility towards his brother, who possessed the love of God. Cain, therefore, stood in close union with satan.' Thus Christ also in this place means to say, 'Your fleshly, arrogant disposition, prevents you from understanding and receiving my doctrine; nay, you even persecute me on account of it. This proves your relationship with the fallen spirit; your heart takes pleasure in entering into his desires. He was from the beginning appointed for destruction; and has always shown himself to be the enemy of holy truth; and therefore is he hostile towards those who manifest it, as Abel first did. For Satan himself never generates aught save lies and sin. And, consequently, the ground of your unbelief in me—of your hatred towards myself and my doctrines—consists in the fact that you seek for a doctrine which will accord with your sinful disposition, and which, for that very reason, must be a lie.' Since, therefore, the devil is called a murderer, because he hates the light, and because he, for that reason, seeks to destroy the truth in itself, and all those men who manifest it, so could Christ, in the same same sense, call his enemies murderers, in so far as they persecuted him from hatred to the light (comp. v. 46), and for that reason also rejected his instructions. If we take ἀθρωποκινων, murderer, in this comprehensive sense (as done by Theodoret and Heraclitus, in Cateda Patr.), the conclusion of verse 44, and also verse 45, will connect itself with it very appropriately. 'Απ' ἀθρωποκινων, must, therefore, be taken as in 1 John iii. 8, 9, from the commencement of the history of man. Beng.: 'ex quo aliquid novit de natura humana.' comp. ἀπ' ἀθρωποκινων, Mark x. 6. Sir. xvi. 26, and Rev. xii. 9, ὁ δὲ τὸν ἀθρωποκινόν. On this passage Beza writes well against the Manichean misapprehension of the word, ἑν οἰκείωσαν. After the Vulgate, which translates in the praeter, stetit, most commentators take this verb in the praeter. This passage would then be a 'locus probans' in reference to the doctrine of the apostasy of the devil. But the praeter, ἑν οἰκείωσαν, which always has the force of the present in the classics, is never found to have any other sense in the New Testament. There are but two passages which can render this in the least doubtful, Rom. v. 2, and I Cor. xv. 1; but even there, the force of the present is to be fixedly retained. The Greek expositors recognize this, as Origen, Theophylact, Euthymius, and probably Chrysostom also. Hence, although the doctrine that the devil is not an uncearent principle of evil, but a fallen angel, receives confirmation from other passages, e. g. Jude 6, yet nothing more is here taught, than the character of the devil since his appearance in the history of man. Euth.: ὁ δὲ ἐμείνα, τουτέστι, ἐν τῷ ἔρθεν βίω ὁ δὲ ἀναπώσεται, ἄλλα μοι τῇ τοιαύτῃ πολεμεῖ. This exposition is confirmed by what follows. Christ assigns the reason why the fallen angel could find no assimilative point in good (Beng.: 'non assecutus est statum in veritate'), which is, that in his inward sense he is alienated from goodness and truth. If now the preceding context had contained an allusion to the apostasy of the devil, Christ would here have declared, as it were, the necessity of that apostasy. But the sense is, as it was in part given by Origen on this passage: 'That fallen spirit still retains the undeniable attribute of reason. Had he ceased to be a morally intelligent being, he was a physical one—he would be no longer a wicked being, but an
evil one. But inasmuch now as no morally intelligent being can retain its own self-determination except by living in holiness in God, which life in God is hence by the Scriptures denominated the truth, i.e., that which alone harmonises with human nature; so even in that wicked being there exists, unconsciously, a striving after the satisfaction of determining his own nature, and, consequently, a striving after that happiness which can only be found in a living union with God. He wishes to find an assimilative point in truth. But there is none to be found, because there is nothing kindred with it in the inward sense—nothing with which the truth could connect itself. In this very conflict between his effort to attain his own determination, and those hostile inclinations which are entirely opposed to it, consists his misery. The antithesis between truth and falsehood, ἀλήθεια and ψεύδος, may be explained from i. 4. Truth and holiness, lies and unholiness, mutually presupposes each other, and in the inward root they are in fact one. The chief lie of the foe of humanity,—that with which he seduced himself and others,—is this: that true life is not in God, but in the finite spirit itself. All other lies and sins flow from this lie. Lying is called an attribute of the father of lies. It is indeed that which constitutes his essence, and on which the individuality of his being is based, Αὐτός refers to the abstract ψεύδος involved in the concrete ψεύτης, as in Rom. ii. 20, αὐτός conversely refers to the abstract ἀκρωποστια.”—Tholuck.
EXPOSITION XII.

THE CHURCH AND ITS OFFICE-BEARERS—TRUE AND FALSE.

JOHN x. 1-9.

The beautiful allegorical discourse which occupies the first eighteen verses of this chapter, seems to be a continuation of the address to the Jews who had gathered round our Lord and the man whom he had cured of blindness, with the commencement of which the preceding chapter closes. The opinion of some interpreters, that it was delivered on some other occasion altogether, is entirely unsupported, and highly improbable. The introductory formula, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," never begins a discourse, but is always employed either in making a reply to a question, or in the continuation of a discourse, by bringing forward some additional illustration.

Our Lord had intimated that the Pharisees, though they thought themselves both clear-sighted and far-sighted in spiritual matters, were indeed blind, and therefore ill-fitted for the office of teachers of religion, into which they had intruded themselves. When the blind lead the blind, both must fall into the ditch." He now proceeds to show, by an appropriate figure, that they were destitute of the authority which belongs to properly called and appointed teachers, and that they were animated by motives which altogether disqualified them for the right discharge of the duties of spiritual instructors and guides. He states that none are genuine spiritual teachers and guides, except those who have been appointed by him, and who teach his doctrine; and that the Pharisees, who call him a false teacher, and a deceiver of the people, and did everything in their power to prevent men from embracing his doctrine, were themselves altogether unworthy of the name of religious teachers. Instead of the guides, they were the deceivers and destroyers of their countrymen. He then goes on to represent himself as the great teacher and saviour of his disciples and followers, who were not to be con-

1 "This passage is not to be regarded as a complete parable; it wants one thing belonging to the nature of parables—the narration of an occurrence as a fact. The term παραβολή (verse 6) is to be taken only in the signification of comparison. John never uses the word παραβολή."—OLSHAUSEN.
2 υμήν υμην λέγω υμιν. 2 John ix. 39-41.
fined to one nation, but were to consist of Gentiles as well as Jews.

These important truths are exhibited under the transparent veil of allegory. The figures employed are borrowed from the usages of oriental pastoral life. Many of our Lord’s parables, as well as his other discourses, were occasional in their origin and character, having been suggested by the circumstances in which he was placed when he uttered them; and this probably was the case with the allegorical illustration now before us. It is not unlikely that Jesus, after the labors of the day, was now in the evening leaving Jerusalem for Bethany, and that the bleating flocks returning from their mountain pastures, were, under the care of their shepherds, returning to their folds for the night. Palestine was eminently a pastoral country. The flocks were in the morning conducted to their pastures by the shepherd, who did not, as with us, drive them, but went before them, showing them the way. One of the sheep, termed “the leader of the herd,” on being called by name, came towards the shepherd, and all the rest of the flock followed in his train. Having guided them to the green pastures, by the still waters, and throughout the day protected them from hazard, by leading them into the cooling shade during the unwholesome ardors of noon, preventing them from wandering, and keeping at a distance from them animals of prey; at the approach of night—“when all the beasts of the forest creep forth, when the young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God”—the shepherd called them together, and conducted them back to the fold, which was a large unroofed enclosure, with walls of considerable height and strength, where they remained during the night. It would seem that the flocks of a number of shepherds were sometimes housed in the same fold. There, protected from thieves and beasts of prey by proper watchmen, they spent the night in repose, “till the sun having arisen, and the wild beasts having gathered themselves together and lied down in their dens,” the shepherds came, and being let into the fold by the watchman who kept the entrance, each again led forth his flock.

The scene which our Lord’s words bring before the mind may be thus conceived of: It is night. The flocks have been folded—the entrance is secured—the guards are set—the porter is at his station. During the hours of night a person appears, not seeking the entrance, but attempting to get into the fold by overleaping the wall. That is a thief or a robber; his design is “to steal, to kill, or to destroy.” The morning breaks—another person makes his appearance, who, instead of attempting to overleap the wall, or loitering before the gate, goes directly up to it, and, on demanding entrance, is readily admitted by the porter. That is a shepherd come to take charge of his flock for the day. And now he utters the well-known cry, and the leader of the flock, followed by all the rest of “his own sheep,” leave the fold.

4 “Videntur oves fuisse ante oculos.”—BENGEL. 5 βοσκολοχα ἐπιφώνημα.
and are guided by him to the pasture which he has found for them. Such is the emblem; and now for its signification.

It will conduke to distinctness of apprehension to keep in mind, what many interpreters have overlooked, that there are in this chapter two emblematical representations, both borrowed from pastoral life. In the one, our Lord is emolumented by the door of the fold of the sheep; in the other, by the chief, the master, shepherd. The first reaches down to the 9th verse; the second begins with that verse, and extends to the 18th verse. It is to the first of these allegories that our attention is now to be directed.

The meaning and design of the allegory will be apparent if we can satisfactorily answer the following questions:—Who are the folded sheep? What is meant by our Lord being the door of the fold for the sheep? Who are those who enter into the fold by the door, and how are we to understand what is said of them? And, finally, Who are they who do not enter into the fold by the door, but seek to obtain entrance in some other way; and how are we to understand what is said of them?

I.—OF THE FOLDED SHEEP.

The term “sheep” is obviously descriptive of a class of persons in some way separated from other men, and standing in a peculiar relation to each other, and to Him whose flock they are.

The careful reader of the Old Testament, especially of the Psalms and Prophets, must have observed that the people of Israel, separated from all nations, by a peculiar law enjoined, and by peculiar privileges bestowed, on them, are frequently represented as Jehovah's flock. That here the sheep and the Israelitish people are not terms of equivalent meaning, is very obvious (though it is also obvious, from the 16th verse, that those spoken of here were Jews not Gentiles); for much that is said in the most unqualified manner of the sheep, is not true of the great body of the Jews of that age, or, indeed, of any age. They did not follow the shepherds who had entered through the door—they did not know their voice—they did follow strangers.

But he has read the Old Testament very carelessly who has not noticed, that in the nation of Israel there was all along a peculiar people within a peculiar people. Within the sacred precincts, there was an inner temple as well as an outer. There were “Israelites indeed,”—there were “Jews inwardly.” All Abraham's “descendants” were not his “seed;”—there were “children after the spirit,” as well as “children after the flesh.” There were Jews who were “not only of the circumcision, but who walked in the steps of that faith which Abraham had, yet being uncircumcised.” While God set apart Israel for himself from among the nations, from among Israel he “set apart the godly” for himself.

6 τέκνα. 7 σπέρμα. 8 κατά σώμα. 9 Πσλ. iv. 3. 10 Πσλ. iv. 3.
These are "the sheep," the true spiritual church of God, consisting at this time of a very small number—"a little flock," and formed almost exclusively of Jews. They are called "the sheep," i.e., the sheep of God—not without a reference, probably, to their harmlessness, and usefulness, and helplessness; but chiefly to mark them as the peculiar property and care of their Divine owner.

The sheep are represented as "folded." They are collected together, forming one body; separated from others, and in a state of comparative security. If, as seems probable, "the fold" was intended to be significant, and not a mere embellishment of the parable, there can be but little difficulty in discovering its meaning. What separates "the sheep" from the rest of mankind? What gives them a common character, and privileges? What affords them security amid their dangers? The fold of Israel according to the flesh was the Mosaic covenant, the peculiar economy given at Sinai. By it, as by a fold, they were separated from the world, formed into a peculiar community, possessed of a common character and common privileges. The fold of the spiritual Israel is "the covenant of promise," first revealed to Adam, more fully developed to Abraham, clearly manifested in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is this which makes them a folded flock: separated from the world,—closely connected among themselves by common relations, a common character, and common immunities. The sheep, then, are the true spiritual people of God, as existing in the time of our Lord.

II.—OF THE DOOR OF THE FOLD.

The next question which presents itself is, What is meant by our Lord's being "the door" of the fold for the sheep? The question has been put, Whether the leading idea be the door by which the sheep, or that by which the shepherds, enter into the fold? I think there can be very little doubt that the last is the principal reference; for the contrast is not between sheep who enter the fold and sheep who do not, but between the person who enters by the door, and the person who climbs up some other way. At the same time, the general idea is, the door of the fold, by which both the sheep and the shepherds enter.

But what is the import of the figurative representation? The sheep cannot get into the fold in any other way. The walls of the fold of the visible external church may be undermined or overleaped; but there is no getting into the fold of the spiritual church but by the door. It is through the mediation of our Lord, through his quickening Spirit, that men are brought, "within the bond of the covenant," justified and sanctified, blessed with the immunities, and formed to the character, of

---

11 τὸ μικρὸν ποιμνίον.
12 Olshausen strangely represents the αἰνή as "the true community of believers." The προβατα—ποιμνη represent these—the αἰνή is that which separates them from the world, and secures them from hazard.
“the sheep of Jehovah.” It is not Abraham, it is not Jacob, it is not Moses, that is the door;—Jesus, Jesus alone, is the door of the sheep. It is not descent from the patriarchs, it is not submission to Moses’ law—it is faith in Christ Jesus, which makes a man a true Christian. “This is the gate of righteousness, the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter.” 13

And as no man can be introduced into this spiritual fold but through Jesus Christ,—so no man can rightfully enter among its occupants as a shepherd, no man can have a legitimate claim to be considered as one of their shepherds, but one who enters through Christ as the door;—no man can act the part of a faithful shepherd to Christ’s spiritual flock but one who enters in through the door, who possesses the qualifications which Jesus Christ only can confer, and who has received the call which Jesus Christ requires. The general idea is, ‘Everything connected with membership and office in the true spiritual church of God, is under the management of our Lord.’ 14 It is just equivalent to, ‘He is “the head of his body the church;”’ He is “the way, the truth, and the life;” everything in the new creation is “of God,” “through Christ Jesus.”

III.—OF THE TRUE SHEPHERDS, WHO ENTER IN BY THE DOOR.

The third question is, Who are those who enter into the fold by the door? and how are we to understand what is said of them, “He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep,” or, as Dr. Campbell renders it, “The shepherd always enters by the door”?

Judging merely by the sound of the words, and especially recollecting that at the 11th verse we have these words—“I am the good shepherd,” repeated again at the 14th verse, we should be apt to say the words before us refer to one individual, and that there is no mistaking who he is. But if we look at them more closely in their connection, we shall soon perceive that, were we to apply these words to our Lord, we should be in a mistake. In the parable, he is “the door” of the fold. It were at war with all the proprieties of composition to make, in the same emblematical representation, the same individual the door of the fold, and the shepherd of the sheep. We know that oriental figures are often mixed, but this would be absolute incongruity. What could be meant by Christ, as the shepherd, entering into the fold himself, as the door? Besides, the literal rendering is not “the shepherd,” but “a shepherd of the sheep.” The contrast is between spurious and genuine officials in Christ’s spiritual church,—between those who climb over the wall and those who enter in by the door. It is not till the 11th verse that Christ is introduced as the Shepherd: that is a separate, distinct, additional figurative illustration.

14 Erasmus thus paraphrases the passage:—“Non est salvatoris aditus in ecle- siasm ac regnum coalorum nisi per me sive pastor esse velis sive ovis.”
“A shepherd of the sheep” is just one of the shepherds of the sheep,—one of that numerous body whom the Great Proprietor appoints to superintend and feed the flock purchased by the blood of his Son. It is quite a common figure in the Old Testament to represent the official men in the Israelish church as shepherds. As the direct reference is to the state of things at the time our Lord spoke, his apostles, and seventy disciples, and other ministers of the primitive church, were probably in the foreground of the picture.

Let us now inquire how we are to understand what is here said of these genuine overseers of the spiritual church. They do not “climb up” over the wall. They do not run unseent; and they are not content with any commission but that which comes from him who alone is entitled to give one. To vary the figure, they are called by the Great Husbandman to labor in his vineyard.

To a person of this kind, “the porter openeth.” It has been thought by some good interpreters, that this belongs merely to the embellishment of the figurative representation, and that no particular correspondence is to be sought for. But this does not seem at all probable. The words might signify, generally, that to such a person the obstacles that stood in the way of his becoming an overseer of the flock of Christ are removed in a regular manner, and he is, after the due order, introduced as a shepherd into the fold. Not only does he not climb over the wall, but there is no attempt made to force open the door, nor to steal in unnoticed by the porter. That official recognizes him as one appointed by the Chief Shepherd, and gives him free passage. Others would give a more definite meaning to the phrase, and seek a correspondence to the doorkeeper, as marked as that which we have to the door. If we take this view of the subject, we have little room to hesitate, as to what that correspondence is. When Christ is represented as the door, it is as mediator. In this character he is subject to the Father—who, in the economy of salvation, sustains the majesty of Divinity—as the door is subject to the doorkeeper. If the door admits, it is because the doorkeeper opens. All that Christ does as a mediator, is done in accordance with the will of his Father. When he admits a member into his spiritual fold, or inducts a shepherd, it is in execution of the will of his Father in heaven. The Father brings all the sheep, and all the shepherds, to Jesus as the Chief Shepherd. According to the figure before us, the door opens when the doorkeeper so wills it.

The above explication goes on the principle, that the admission by the porter, through the door into the fold, refers to an original call to, and investiture with, office in Christ’s church, and this is the ordinary mode of viewing the figure; but the thought has repeatedly forced itself on my mind, while meditating on the subject, that the reference here is not to an original call to, and investiture with, a new office, but to the ordinary exercise of the
functions of an office already possessed. The person introduced as entering by the door is already a shepherd, may have been long a shepherd, and is here represented as performing his daily work. Ere the sun rises, he goes to his much-loved occupation. He arrives at the gate of the fold. He does not leap over the wall. He finds no difficulty in getting admission—the porter opens, he passes through the gate, utters the pastoral cry, and returns again through the gate followed by his own flock, whom he leads out and feeds, and when night comes he conducts them back again to the fold. Taking this view of the matter, the natural explication of the allegory seems to be,—'The genuine pastor performs all his duties under the guidance of divine influence, and with a constant regard to the mediation of the Saviour.'

It then follows—"the sheep" hear his voice," i.e., they attend to—they understand—they believe—his doctrine; not because it is his, but because it is not his, but his and their Lord's. It is one mark of a genuine christian pastor, that real Christians cordially approve of his teaching.

"He calleth his own sheep by name." There are many more sheep than his in the fold. The Great Shepherd has many under-shepherds, and each under-shepherd has his own sheep, to the pastoral care of which his time and attention are to be chiefly directed. "He calls them by name." This is intended to intimate his knowledge of his flock, and his kind condescending demeanor to them. He overlooks none of them. He is a contrast to those shepherds of whom the prophet Ezekiel speaks, when he says, "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." To a stranger it is scarcely credible how intimate is the knowledge of, and how great the affection for, their flock, that some of the shepherds of our own country possess: but the oriental shepherds go far beyond them, not only knowing all their countenances individually, but calling each of them by name." The true christian pastor "looks well to his flocks, and seeks to know the state of his herds;" and he is like his Master, "meek and gentle," he can be touched with the feelings of his flock's infirmities, knowing how to have compassion on the thoughtless, and those who are out of the way. Cold and distant, still more haughty and overbearing, manners do not sit well on any man, but they are never misplaced so sadly as on a man who bears the name of a christian pastor.

"He leads them out." He directs them in the search of truth, 

12 κοινείν here is nearly equal to εἰδέναι, verse 4; and γεγώσκειν, verse 14.
13 Ezek. xxiv. 4.
14 The Greek poet, Longus, says of the shepherd—τῶς αἰγας πρόσεπε καὶ τῶις τράγους ἐκάλεσε.
and in the performance of duty. He shows them the rich pastures, and the refreshing streams of divine revelation, and in doing this "he goes before them." In this country the shepherd generally comes behind, driving his flock. In the east he went before, leading them. The christian pastor goes before his flock; he does not say 'go,' but 'come'—he does not say 'Do you it,' but 'Let us do it.' He believes the truth he would have them believe—he does the duties he would have them practice—he makes the sacrifices to which he calls them—he seeks to be "an example to the believers in all things, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in purity," showing them all things, "by example, as well as doctrine."

Such a pastor, "the sheep"—the truly pious, those who are taught of God, and are influenced by his Spirit—"follow." They approve his doctrine, they imbibe his spirit, they imitate his example, "for they know his voice"—they know that what he says corresponds with what Christ is saying to them in his word, and with what, too, he is working in them by his Spirit.

The declaration in the 9th verse, though it may apply to the sheep, seems most naturally to refer to the shepherd who has entered in by the door. Such a pastor "shall be saved"—that is, protected amidst, delivered from, all the dangers to which he may be exposed. Sent forth, as he is, among "unreasonable and wicked men,"19 of whom wolves and lions are the appropriate emblems, he shall be taken care of by the Great Shepherd amid all such dangers. His promise to his faithful under-shepherds is, "Lo, I am with you always," and one of the most distinguished of these, who was exposed to peculiar labors and hazards, "sets to his seal that he is true"—"I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom."20 "God which raiseth the dead, delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."21 The under-shepherd shall also "go out and in, and find pasture," for his own sheep,22 "the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer." He shall be enabled steadily and prosperously to prosecute his honorable labors. "To go out and come in," is an idiomatic expression, best illustrated by quoting a few examples of the manner in which it is employed:—"Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out." "The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in." "Jeremiah came in and went out among the people; for they had not put him into prison." "Give me now wisdom," says Solomon, "that I may go out and come in before this people."23 The meaning here is, 'He will be enabled to go through

19 2 Thess. iii. 2. 20 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18. 21 2 Cor. i. 9, 10.
22 4 Tim. iv. 20. 23 2 Cor. i. 9, 10.
his work comfortably and creditably, and obtain pasture for his sheep. As "the flock of his pasture" are men, he will be enabled to feed the babes with milk, and the full-grown men with strong meat, so as to nourish them up to everlasting life. He shall not "labor in vain, nor spend his strength for nought." In the health, happiness, and activity of his flock, he shall have the cheering evidence that his Master's promise has been fulfilled. He has been delivered. He has gone out and in, and found pasture for his flock.' O happy pastor, who has such a flock! Happy flock, which has such a pastor!

IV.—OF THE FALSE SHEPHERDS, WHO DO NOT ENTER IN BY THE DOOR.

It only now remains, in order to the full exposition of the allegory, that we endeavor to answer the fourth question, Who are they who "do not enter in by the door"? and how are we to understand what is said of them?

Having ascertained who the sheep are—who is the door of the fold—and who are the genuine shepherds—there can be little difficulty in discovering what is the class of men who do not enter by the door, yet would take on them the character, and perform the functions, of shepherds. They are persons who assume the name of religious teachers—official men—in the church of God, without being divinely called. In our Lord's immediate view, they seem to have been the Jewish Sanhedrim—the Pharisees, and doctors of the law.

They entered not in by the door. They had no commission from Christ. They were not called, as his apostles were. They were destitute equally of qualification and authority. Jesus, as the door, had been made known to them, but they did not enter—they passed by the door. They treated him with contempt. They had "climbed up some other way." They had obtained the name and rank of official men in the church by worldly methods, altogether different from—altogether opposite to—"entering by the door."

So it has been in all ages. Men, under the influence of worldly motives, have sought office in the christian church. In the inner sanctuary (for even under the christian economy there is an external and a spiritual church, the latter included in the former, but by no means co-extensive or co-incident with it), they cannot have office, for they have not place. But, by getting office in the external church, they exercise tyranny and lordship, in many cases, over the members of the spiritual church. Worldly-minded men are never made ministers by Christ. Uninterested in his atonement, uninfluenced by his Spirit, how can they enter by him—the door? No; they climb up some other way. Under the influence of the love of the world, they use worldly means in order to obtain worldly ends. Their wish is
that, being made shepherds, they may have an opportunity, not of feeding the flock, but of enriching themselves, by making merchandise of them. Had the Scribes and Pharisees any wish to make the people better acquainted with God's word, and, through these means, holier and happier men? No; the situations they held, they valued just as sources of worldly honor, emolument, and influence.

And it is still so with a large class of men, assuming the name of Christian shepherds and overseers, pastors and bishops. These men are not shepherds—they are "thieves and robbers." The appellations are, in many cases, almost literally applicable to them. They seize places which they have no right to occupy—appropriate what does not justly belong to them—and wrongously and violently extort from others the obedience and support to which they have no rightful claim. The porter never opened to them. It is not according to God's will—it is in direct opposition to it—that they hold office in his church.

"The sheep do not follow them"—the goats follow them. The truly pious, generally speaking, do not follow them as spiritual leaders. They do not believe their doctrines, nor follow their example. Some of the sheep may be seduced for a season, under mistake, to follow them; but generally speaking, it is otherwise. The really pious, in our Lord's time, did not relish the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees—they turned away from it. They did not like what was presented to them. Their spiritual senses told them it was not food—it probably might be poison; at best, it was but husks—no fit food for the flock of God—fit only for the swine.

Instead of following such a teacher, the sheep consider and treat him as a stranger; and then—alas, how generally still!—stranger and enemy were convertible terms. They flee from him—afraid lest they should be injured by him—as the scared sheep flee from a stranger, when he attempts to act the shepherd's part towards them: "They know not the voice of strangers." They do not know it as they do that of their own shepherd; it is not familiar, it is not pleasing, to their ear. In many cases, where humble unlettered Christians cannot very distinctly point out what is wrong in a scheme of doctrine, nor give the reasons why they think so, they distinctly feel there is something totally different from what they have received and learned from the Bible. This is not conscience-pacifying, heart-changing, heart-cheering doctrine. This is not the Gospel of our salvation. It is not by this that men live—it is not in this that the life of our souls is.

The words in the 8th verse refer to this class of persons, and are an emphatic repetition of what our Lord had said before, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them." It has been usual to interpret these words just as if they stood by themselves, and did not form a part of a figurative representation; and interpreters have been a
good deal perplexed in seeking the means of making the statement they contain consistent with the facts of the case. It has been common to consider the term “come,” as equivalent to—‘made a public appearance,’—as in the passage, “John came neither eating nor drinking;” “the Son of man came;” and the particle rendered before has usually been considered as expressive of priority in time.

It is quite obvious that the meaning which the words most naturally express, ‘All who have appeared, laying claim to the character of divinely-commissioned teachers previously to my coming, are thieves and robbers,’ cannot be adopted; for that were, in other words, to call Moses and all the prophets impostors. Accordingly, it has been common to limit the reference to those who laid claim to Messiahship; and to consider the declaration as equal to, ‘All who came professing to be the Messiah before me were impostors.’ But we have no reason to think that any appeared before our Lord making this claim;—many came after him making it. Others would consider all as equivalent to many—the greater part. But this is to use an unauthorized liberty with the words.

By another class of interpreters, the particle translated “before,” is considered as not referring to time at all. Some of these would render the clause, ‘All who have come without me—without my authority;’ but the word rendered “before,” cannot be translated “without,” or “apart from me.” By others of this class, the words “before me,” have been considered as equivalent to, ‘In my place;’ and the statement has been considered as indefinite as to time—‘All who come in my room—“in my name,”—as it is elsewhere—‘are impostors.’ But the usage of the language will not suffer this. Others reject the words “before me,” as an interpolation; but, though wanting in many manuscripts, the critical evidence of its genuineness cannot be satisfactorily set aside; and the omission of these words would not remove the difficulty. By others still, the words “come before me,” are considered as opposed to, “come after me,” ‘All who do not follow me as their leader, but who go before me, putting me behind them.’ This, I believe, approximates to the truth; but it is not the right way of bringing it out of the words.

What seems to lie at the foundation of right interpretation here,

24 πρω.
25 This was a recommendation of this exegesis to the Gnostics, who adopted it for the reason which has often led to the ready reception of ill-supported interpretations of Scripture, because it agreed with a favorite hypothesis. They held that, in these words, they had Christ’s testimony against the Old Testament.
26 πρω μου cannot be, as some have insisted, μωσής μου, and there is no such various reading. It is painful to find such a scholar as Olshausen attempting to show that, by αποσιωπησις, πρω may involve χωρις.
27 πρω ας = αντι or υπερ.
28 Campbell, who supposes an ellipsis of ἀλλαξονθην.
29 Jeremiah, speaking of himself, says, “I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee”—literally, after thee. “I have not gone before, but followed, the Chief Shepherd.”—Jer. xvii. 16.
PART IV.] CONCLUSION.

is to remark that, what our Lord says, he says of himself, under the figure of “the door” of the sheep-fold. The words are literally, ‘All—whosoever—come, or have come, before me, are thieves and robbers.’ “Before me,” putting themselves, as it were, between me and mankind, and thus placing themselves above me, taking the precedence of me. All who, admitted by the porter, pass through me, the door, into the fold, are genuine shepherds. All who come “before me” as the door, and do not seek to pass through it, are thieves and robbers.31 All official men, who do not recognize me and use me as the door of the fold, are not genuine—they are merely pretended—shepherds. They stand before the door, not entering themselves, and doing what they can to hinder the sheep from entering. That was the case with the Scribes and Pharisees, and it has been the case with vast multitudes of men, pretending to be Christian teachers and pastors: it is the case with vast multitudes still.

Every man, pretend what he may, who does not practically acknowledge Christ’s authority in obtaining and exercising ecclesiastical office—who looks no farther than a patron’s presentation, or the ordination, it matters but little whether of a prelate or a presbytery—who is satisfied with mere human authority and call, civil or ecclesiastical—he is not a “shepherd of the sheep”—he is, in the sense in which I have already explained the phrase, “a thief and a robber.”

Such men the sheep—the true people of God—do not, cannot, hear—that is, listen to, believe, obey. Whatever titles they may wear, whatever claims they may make,—be they called “pope,” or “patriarch,” or “bishop”—be their style “rabbi” or “reverend,” “master” or “doctor”—the sheep, when they conduct themselves as they should, will have nothing to do with them. In our Lord’s time, they preferred the teaching of the carpenter of Nazareth, and the Galilean fishermen and peasants who followed him, to that of the men who wore large phylacteries, and made long prayers, and sat in Moses’ seat; and, in our own times, they will rather frequent the despised conventicle, where a pious man, it may be of moderate talents and limited education, unfolds the doctrine, and enforces the law, of Christ, in simple phrase, and it may be awkward manner, to a handful of those, poor in this world, but rich in faith, who have chosen him as the helper of their joy, not the lord of their faith, than listen to the instruction that causeth to err, though couched in the enticing words of man’s wisdom, by men distinguished for their rank, and learning, and eloquence, in the time-hallowed parish church, where many a generation of their ancestors have worshipped, and around the walls of which their ashes repose,—or in the venerable cathedral, where, while the

31 The connection makes the general meaning plain—there is, first, in the 7th verse, an assertion that our Lord is “the door”—then, in the 8th, a description of those who do not enter by this door—and then, in the 9th, a description of those who do enter by this door.
variously stole orders of an ancient hierarchy perform the imposing services of a gorgeous ritual,—

"Through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise." 22

Such appears to me to be the meaning of this beautiful allegory. It is as useful as it is beautiful. It is full of weighty instruction to candidates for office in the church, to those who hold office in the church, and to members of the church generally.

To candidates for office in the church it says, 'See that you enter through the door; beware of climbing up some other way. Remember no authority will compensate for the want of Christ's authority—no call for the want of his call.'

To those who occupy official stations in the church it says, 'Examine the tenure by which you hold your place, and if you find it good, then be diligent in doing its duties. "Give full proof of your ministry." "Feed the flock of God:" be gentle, laborious, wise shepherds. Preach the truth—not anything but the truth—all the truth. Rule well,—"rebuke, instruct, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine;" and take the comfort of the kind promise of the Chief Shepherd to the faithful under-shepherd—"He shall go in and out, and find pasture." "Lo, I am with you always."'

To the members of the church, it says, 'Make a distinction among things that differ. "Try the spirits." Never intrust the management of your spiritual interests to any whom you do not, on satisfactory ground, consider as one of the shepherds who by the porter has been introduced through the door into the fold; and beware, in any way, of giving countenance to those who have climbed up some other way, and whom your Lord warns you against as thieves and robbers. Place yourselves under the care of one as your own shepherd, who, you have reason to think, has indeed entered through the door; and, having done so, treat him as your shepherd,—hear his voice—follow him, not by any means implicitly, but wait on his ministrations—and receive from him "with meekness the ingrafted word." He will never ask you to receive anything on his own authority, nor to do anything merely because he bids you. He but declares to you the mind and will of our common Lord, "the Great Shepherd of the sheep." Take kindly his warnings and reproofs. He watches for your souls, as one who knows he must give account.'

Oh, how high and holy are the enjoyments of a Christian pastor and his flock, when they have entire confidence in each other, and mutually strive who shall best perform their respective duties! Most delightful is it for him to lead them to the green pastures, and to make them repose by the still waters,—and most delightful for them to enjoy his pastoral care. It is the antepast

22 Gray.
of that full feast of holy happiness, when all the true sheep, and all the true shepherds, gathered together in the great fold above, shall, by the Chief Shepherd, "the Lamb in the midst of the throne, be fed and led unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

33 There are two elaborate dissertations, on the subject of this Exposition, in the second part of Hasæus' and Ikenius' "Thesaurus Novus Theologiae-Philologicus," folio, p. 501–525. Their titles are, "Königsmann's curata inquisitio in scopum et sensum parabolæ de malis pastoribus," and "Baierus de verbis Christi, πῶς ἔστω πρὸ Ἰησοῦ." It is finely said of this paragraph, chap. x. 1–18, by Alexander Knox,—"This portion contains almost the only parable which St. John records; and of all parables which are recorded, this is the fullest of gentleness, amiability, and consolation. It gives a compendious view of spiritual Christianity; the deepest, the solidest, the sweetest, the sereneest, the surest, the most comprehensive, that could be conveyed in words. There is a beautiful idea in the beginning of Leighton's fifteenth lecture, of nature's being fitted beforehand for the elucidation of Divine truth. This semblance of a shepherd and his sheep is strongly in favor of such a supposition."—Remains, iv. 359.
EXPOSITION XIII.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

John x. 11.—"I am the good Shepherd."

_These_ words, in common with most of our Lord's sayings, are pregnant words. They are, like their Author, "full of truth," and "of grace" too. They are at once transparently clear, and unfathomably deep. There is much important truth on the surface—there is more, much more, beneath it. Much meaning meets the ear, but more meets the mind. The words express much—they suggest more. They are replete with emphasis, and rich in reference. My object is to illustrate and apply them; and, as preliminary to this, to ascertain their _true_ meaning, and, as far as possible, to apprehend their _whole_ meaning.

They are equivalent to 'I am a Shepherd—I am a _good_ Shepherd—I am _the_ Shepherd—I am _the good_ Shepherd.' 'I am _a_ Shepherd.'—I stand in a peculiar relation to a peculiar people, who, in conformity to the figurative representation employed, are termed my sheep; and I am appointed and engaged to perform towards them certain important and beneficial offices. 'I am a _good_ Shepherd.'—I deserve the name, for I possess the appropriate qualifications, I perform the appropriate duties, of the character I sustain. 'I am _the_ Shepherd'—the Shepherd of the _flock_—the one Shepherd of the one flock; not like the shepherd mentioned in the 2d verse of this chapter, who is _a_ shepherd, one of the shepherds, of the sheep; but the _great_ Shepherd, _the chief_ Shepherd, _the proprietor_ Shepherd, "whose own the sheep are,"—the Shepherd of the shepherds, as well as of the sheep. 'I am the _good_ Shepherd.'—I possess, in the most perfect degree, all the qualifications which are requisite to the discharge of the numerous, and varied, and difficult duties of this most exalted office; and I actually do perform all these duties in the most perfect manner. Such is the _emphasis_ of the words; now for their _reference_.

'I am _that_ good Shepherd.'—To understand fully the meaning of the statements of our Lord and his apostles, we must never forget that their minds were completely filled with the contents of that Scripture that had been "given by inspiration of God;" and that they spoke to people whose almost only book was the
Book of God, and who were, many of them, very familiar with its contents. The extent of tacit reference to the Old Testament in the New, and the importance of noticing that reference, to bring out the exact form and impress of the inspired man’s thought and feeling, are well known to every intelligent student of the Holy Scriptures. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy;” and we find him often appealing to it, sometimes directly and openly, at other time indirectly and tacitly. The latter sort of appeals are not the least striking to a reflecting mind. Our Lord seldom, in so many words, claimed Messiah-ship. There were good and obvious reasons why he should not have so claimed it. So far as I recollect, a distinct recognition of his own claims, was made by him only to the woman of Samaria,—to the man blind from his birth, when excommunicated by the Sanhedrim,—to the disciples as a body, after Peter’s answer to the question, “Whom do ye say that I am?”—before Pontius Pilate, in reply to the question, “Art thou a king, then?”—and before the Sanhedrim, when adjured by the high-priest to say whether he was the Son of God.” He often referred to the Old Testament Scriptures, leaving his hearers to draw the inference. While he was with his disciples, “he spake to them, saying, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him.” He often used appellations such as “the Son of God,” and “the Son of man”—appellations given in the prophetic oracles of the Messiah,—in a way which showed that he applied them to himself. He commenced his ministry by reading a very remarkable prediction respecting the Messiah, recorded in the sixty-first chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, and then declaring, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” When he proclaimed, “I am the light of the world, he obviously referred to that ancient oracle which declares that Messiah should be “a light to lighten the Gentiles;” when he said, “I came not in my own name,” he probably referred to that other ancient oracle, “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord;” and there can be no reasonable doubt that, in the words which form the subject of discourse, he referred in his own mind, and he meant to turn the minds of his hearers, to those passages in the inspired predictions in which the great Deliverer promised to God’s peculiar people is represented as their Shepherd—their proprietor Shepherd—their good Shepherd. It is just as if he had, in the hearing of those whom he now addressed (as in the synagogue at Nazareth), opened the book of the prophets and read:—“Get thee up upon a high mountain, thou that publishest good news to Zion; raise powerfully thy voice, thou that publishest good news to Jerusalem. Raise it, be not afraid; say to the

1 Rev. xix. 10.
cities of Judah, Behold your God. Behold, the Lord Jehovah shall come with might, and his arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom: he shall gently lead the milk-giving ewes—"those who are with the young."  Tert. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." "I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." "And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them: I the Lord have spoken it."—And, on completing the reading, had closed the book, and proclaimed, "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears,"—"I am the good Shepherd,"—"I am the divinely-qualified, the divinely-commissioned, the divinely-accredited, the divine Saviour, promised to the fathers.' Such is an attempt to get at the import of these simple but sublime and striking words, "I am the good Shepherd."

It has been a subject of discussion among interpreters, whether the leading idea suggested by the term "shepherd" be that of a ruler or of an instructor. The controversy is not an important one; for though it does seem plain that, both in sacred and profane ancient writers, authority rather than instruction is the leading attribute of the figurative shepherd; yet, in the case before us—that of the Messiah—the rule referred to is moral rule, the empire of truth and love over the minds and hearts, exercised by the agency of his Spirit, and the instrumentality of his word. Indeed, all the figurative representations of the Messiah, as a prophet, a priest, a king, a physician, a husband, a surety, a shepherd, the light of the world, the bread of life, are intended to bring before our minds some of the numerous phases of the all-comprehensive character of Saviour—deliverer from evil in all its forms, and in all its degrees; and the only question of importance, in reference to each of these figurative representations, is, What is the truth respecting Christ's saving character and work, which is designed to be presented by it to our intelligent faith and affectionate contemplation? This, then, is the question

6 Isa. xi. 9—11.—Her derson. 7 Ezek. xxxiv. 11—24. Mic. ii. 12, 13. 8 Hom. Iliad A, 265 Jer. xxii. 22, 23.
in reference to the figurative representation of our Lord in our text as the good Shepherd,—to an attempt to answer which the remaining part of these observations are to be devoted.

That question might be answered by showing, first, that our Lord Jesus Christ does indeed possess all those qualifications which enable him to perform towards his peculiar people all those kind offices which are naturally emblemized by the conduct of a good shepherd to his flock,—that he has all the knowledge, all the wisdom, all the power, all the authority, all the kindness, all the faithfulness, all the peculiar interest, which are required for this purpose; and then, that our Lord Jesus actually does manifest these qualifications in a performance of all these offices,—rescuing his sheep from the power of the great thief and robber, and bringing them into His own flock,—providing them with nourishment, refreshment, and repose,—guarding them from danger, guiding them in perplexity, healing their diseases, reclaiming them from their wanderings (for though the Shepherd never forsakes the sheep, the sheep sometimes forsake the Shepherd); and at last, at the close of the great day of time, safely housing them in his heavenly fold. This would open up a very delightful field in which the christianly devout mind would not soon become weary of expatiating; but to traverse it at all in a satisfactory way, would require more time than we can at present devote to it.

I prefer another, and what I cannot help thinking a better, way of answering the question. I shall endeavor to bring out, in strong relief, our Lord's own illustrations of his own declaration—"I am the good Shepherd." He is the good Shepherd, as he secures for his peculiar people all the blessings they stand in need of. While the "thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy," he cometh that his sheep may have, and retain, life; and that, so far from being deprived of anything, they may have abundance of everything necessary for their welfare. "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." He is the good Shepherd, as he secures these advantages to them at the greatest conceivable expense to himself,—he secures them by "giving himself for the sheep." He is the good Shepherd, as there subsists the most intimate and endearing mutual acquaintance and intercourse between him and his people. "He knows his sheep, and he is known of his sheep; even as the Father knoweth him, and he knows the Father." He is the good Shepherd, as he cares for the happiness, he secures the salvation, of all his people. "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold (rather one flock), and one Shepherd." To these four illustrations of our Lord, confirmatory of his assertion, "I am the good Shepherd," let us, then, apply our awakened

---

8 John x. 10.
10 John x. 28.
13 John x. 14, 15.
15 John x. 16.—ποιμάνῃ, not αὐλῇ.
11 John x. 11.
minds. And, oh! may all of us, while thus employed, be enabled to sing to Him in our hearts, making melody in his ears, ever open to such music, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,"—a psalm some of us have often said before being laid to sleep in our cradle,—a psalm which we would wish to say again, when about to lay ourselves to sleep in our grave.

I. Jesus Christ is the good Shepherd; as he secures for his peculiar people all the blessings they stand in need of.

An official person deserves the epithet good in the degree in which he answers the purpose for which the office is designed. He is a good king who secures order, peace, and prosperity to his subjects. He is a good physician who preserves health and cures disease. He is a good Shepherd who protects his sheep from danger, and obtains for them abundant wholesome nourishment—refreshing drink—seasonable repose. He is a good saviour who delivers from all evil, and who obtains for those whom he saves every kind, and a high degree of every kind, of enjoyment. Now this is the truth in regard to Jesus, our Saviour. He "saves his people from their sins"—he "redeems Israel from all his iniquities"—he delivers them from all their enemies—he delivers them "from the power of darkness"—he delivers them from "the present evil world"—he delivers them from "the wrath to come"—and he gives them "the redemption that is in him, through his blood—the forgiveness of sins;" he gives them the Holy Spirit, and "the one heart," and "the new spirit," which are the result of his operation; he gives them "peace with God," and "good hope," and solid joy, and "abundant consolation," and "eternal life"—even "the salvation that is in himself, with eternal glory"—deliverance from evil in all its forms and degrees for ever and ever, and enjoyments suited to all their varied capacities of enjoyment; and filling every one of them to an overflow, during the whole eternity of their being.

The fact that Jesus Christ does thus secure for his peculiar people all the blessings they stand in need of, is brought before the mind in a very interesting way in the passage before us. Our Lord contrasts the tendency and the effects of his coming as the good Shepherd with the tendency and the effects of the coming of one whom he calls "the thief." "The thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"—or rather, for you will notice that it, being printed in italics, is a supplement—"that they may have in abundance." Many good interpreters suppose that our Lord contrasts himself with the carnal rulers and teachers of the Jews, whose objects were selfish, and whose teaching and guidance were mischievous and destructive; but I cannot help thinking that this is a mistake. In the former part of the chapter, a thief is contrasted with a shepherd; here, it is

---

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

The thief and the shepherd. “The thief” either signifies some one individual, called, by way of eminence, “the thief;” or it is used as equivalent to “thieves,” to mark what is common to the class.

In the first case there can be no doubt whom “the thief” would denote—the murderous felon. Whom could it denote but him who stole into Eden, stealthily bereaved man of his best property, and proved himself a murderer as well as a thief—the liar and manslayer from the beginning? On this supposition, the contrast would be very striking. “The wicked one” came originally, and still “comes, to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” He who comes to destroy the works of this wicked one, “comes not to kill,” but that life might be retained; “nor to steal”—to take away what is valuable, but greatly to increase the property of those to whom he comes. The great objection to this interpretation is, that you cannot carry its principle throughout; for if the thief be the devil, then who is the hireling?

The second mode of interpreting the term, “The thief,” as being equivalent to “thieves,” seems the just one. In this case, then, as well as in the case of the hireling, we have the usual Hebraistic, emphatic mode of announcing a truth, by stating it first negatively and then positively. “I am not like the thief who, when he comes to the sheep-fold, comes to plunder and to kill; I am like the shepherd, the good shepherd, who, when he comes to his flock, comes to protect their life and to increase their comforts.”

“Life and abundance” are a comprehensive summary of all happiness—the capacity of enjoyment, and everything that is necessary to fill that capacity. Christ secures for his people, not only life, but a royal life—“they reign in life;” not only “grace and the gift of righteousness,” but “abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness.” He “blesses them with all heavenly and spiritual blessings.” He “supplies their need, according to his glorious riches.” He “makes all grace to abound to them”—“forgiving all their iniquities—healing all their diseases—crowning them with loving-kindness and tender mercies.” And the blessings he bestows are as permanent as they are numerous, and abundant, and valuable: “I give unto my sheep eternal life”—ever-lasting happiness; “and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me is greater than all; and none can pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” Yes; “the counsel of peace is between them both.”

II. Jesus Christ is the good Shepherd; as he secures those advantages which he obtains for his people at the greatest conceivable expense to himself.

It is a proof of kindness to confer benefits; but the proof becomes greatly stronger when the conferring of the benefit neces-

15 Rom. vii. 17. Eph. i. 3. 2 Cor. ix. 8. Psal. ciii. 3, 4.

VOL. 1. 33
sarily implies much exertion, sacrifice, and suffering, on the part of the benefactor. In the case of the good Shepherd, we have this additional evidence in the highest conceivable form. These blessings could not have been secured for the sheep but by the sacrifice of the shepherd’s life; and that sacrifice was cheerfully made. ‘The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep; but he who is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.’ Here we have, as in the former case, an emphatic double statement: ‘I am not like a hireling shepherd. He may, for his own advantage, take care of the sheep, when the care of them exposes him to no hazard; but let dangers arise, let the flock be attacked by wild beasts—resisting which might endanger his life—he betakes himself to flight, and leaves the sheep to their fate. I am like the proprietor shepherd, who has a peculiar interest in the flock; and so deep is that interest in my case, that I not only expose my life to danger, but I lay it down for the sheep.’ The thought naturally rises: But if he lay down his life for the sheep, how can he subsequently take care of them? It is to meet this thought that he says: ‘I lay down my life that I may take it again.’ ‘I lay down my life to secure these blessings; I take my life again, that I may bestow them. Because I die, they are saved from death by my dying; because I live, they live also by my life.’

Let us endeavor to bring out a little more distinctly this figurative illustration of the close connection subsisting between the death of Christ and the salvation of his people. For this purpose a clear apprehension of the figure is necessary. It may be this: The flock has been carried off by the thief and robber, and he is determined to resist all attempts to wrest from him his ill-earned booty. The shepherd must engage in conflict with him. The proud defiance of the lawless one, supported by his legions, is:

‘Shall the prey be taken from the mighty; shall the captives of the terrible one be delivered?’ The shepherd enters on a combat apparently more unequal than that of David with Goliath. Alone he attacks his numerous assailants; and falls under their foul and murderous blows. A shout of triumph rises from the felon crew. But the triumph is short—the joy is but for a moment. The smitten Shepherd, having touched the earth, rises from the bed of death, and, armed with preternatural strength, overwhelms with shame and discomfiture the armies of robbers, and takes possession of his flock, now doubly his own. The application of the figure, in this view of it, to the victory of Christ over Satan, and the emancipation of his people, who were enthralled by him, is obvious and easy.

Or this may be the figure: ‘The flock is attacked by a herd of ferocious wild beasts; the shepherd rushes in between them,

17 Isa. xlii. 24.
diverts their attention from the sheep, and becomes himself a prey to their ravenous appetites. But scarcely has he fallen, when he again rises, and completely destroys the whole herd of wolves and lions—setting his sheep entirely free from all danger from their craft and cruelty. In this view of the figure, we see death, and the other penal evils to which the whole race to which our Lord’s flock belongs had exposed themselves, laying hold on the Redeemer; and as he submits to these, we hear him saying: “Oh Death! I will be thy plague; Oh Grave! I will be thy destruction.” We see him destroying death, by dying; ransoming from the grave, by lying down in it; redeeming from the curse, by becoming a curse; bearing, and by bearing, bearing away the sins of men.

In either view of the figure, it strikingly brings out the connection there is between the death of Christ and the salvation of his people. The last view strikes us as most probably the true one. It brings more fully before our mind the great truth respecting the nature of this connection, so often indicated by the death of Christ being represented as an expiatory sacrifice; that what he suffered, was suffered not only for the benefit, but in the room, of his people; that he suffered what they are liable to; and that it was by his having suffered it that they are freed from suffering it. It is the same truth that is so beautifully taught—taught, as some excellent expositors suppose, under the same set of figurative representations in Isaiah’s prophecy: “All we like sheep had gone astray; we had turned every one to his own way; and the Lord made the iniquities of us all”—the ill deserts—the penal evils due to our sins—like so many beasts of prey ready to devour us—“to fall upon him,” our surety-shepherd. “And he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed.” In the first view of the figure, we see him “spoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over them in his cross.” In the other, we see him making provision for our being made the righteousness of God in him, by becoming a sin-offering in our room.

In dying, and in thus dying, Jesus Christ manifested in a remarkable manner his love of those whom he terms his sheep: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” And then such a life as was laid down! —a life more valuable than all the lives of men or of angels—the life of an absolutely innocent, an absolutely perfect, man—a man possessed of all possible wisdom, and holiness, and benignity—a man infinitely dignified by personal union to Divinity! The blood shed for us, and by which we are redeemed, is infinitely more valuable, and therefore the shedding of it infinitely more expressive of love, than would have been the sacrifice of the whole created universe. And then, still further, the life was laid down in the room of the guilty; the death was the death of a victim.

Ah! to die on the field of battle in a glorious cause is a very different thing from dying on a cross like a felonious slave. Yes, the death of our Lord, for the salvation of his people, is an overwhelming proof that he is the good Shepherd!

III. Jesus Christ is the good Shepherd, as there subsists the most intimate and endearing mutual acquaintance and intercourse between him and his people.

‘I am not like an hireling, who cares not for the sheep, and for whom the sheep do not care; but I am like the good proprietor shepherd—I have a deep interest in them.’ "I know my sheep, and am known of mine; even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father.” To perform the offices of a good shepherd, intimate knowledge of, and frequent kindly intercourse with, his flock, are necessary; and whenever these offices are performed the sheep readily recognize their shepherd, and show satisfaction in seeing his person—hearing his voice—following in his steps. This is remarkably the case in oriental countries, and affords a beautiful figurative representation of the mutual regard which subsists between our Lord and his peculiar people.

He knows them—he distinguishes them from those who do not belong to his flock. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." 23
No hypocritical art, however exquisite, can impose on him; and no bashful reticence of disposition can conceal genuine discipleship. The best of the under-shepherds, however sagacious, may be often mistaken both ways; Eli may mistake Hannah for a drunkard, 24 and Jehoiada may suppose Joash a pious youth; 25 but the good Shepherd is never deceived.

He knows them; i.e., he is intimately acquainted with them individually. He needs not that any one should testify of them—he knows what is in them. He knows everything pertaining to them—all the peculiarities of their constitution, "he knows their frame"—all the incidents of their history—all their excellencies and all their faults—all the strong and all the weak points of their character—all their fears, anxieties, and sorrows—so as to be able to suit the communications of his grace to the exigencies of each of them.

He knows them; i.e., he acknowledges them as his peculiar property—the objects of his peculiar love and care. This is not an uncommon use of the word know, in Scripture: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” "Depart from me; I never knew you." 26 He recognizes them as his. He manifests himself to them in another way than he does to the world. He and his Father come to them, and make their abode in them—dwell in them—walk in them. He shows them his glory. He gives them his spirit—the seal of their discipleship—the earnest of their inheritance. He sets an indelible mark on them, showing that they are his "purchased possession.”

23 2 Tim. ii. 19.
24 2 Kings xii.
25 1 Sam. i. 13.
And this intimate knowledge and intercourse is mutual. As he knows his sheep, he is known of them. If the sheep do not know the shepherd, it is a proof that he is not a good shepherd. Our Lord does not want this mark of being a good shepherd; for all his peculiar people know him.

They can distinguish him from all others. The language of their minds and hearts is, “None but Christ, none but Christ,” as the ground of hope—as the Lord of the conscience—as “the one mediator between God and man.”

They are intimately acquainted with him. They know him, and follow on to know him, and count all things loss for his excellent knowledge. They delight in studying the truth about him, as revealed in his Word. The divinity of his person—the perfection of his atonement—the prevalence of his intercession—the omnipotence of his grace—the tenderness of his compassion—the faithfulness of his promises—“the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints—the excellent greatness of his power towards them who believe”—these are among the things most firmly believed among them.

And they know him experimentally. They have experienced his wise guidance and his condescending care—the depth of his wisdom and the tenderness of his heart—in his conduct to them individually. They have, as it were, not only heard of him, but they have heard his voice—they have seen his countenance, they have “looked on him, and their hands have handled the Word of Life.” They have eaten his flesh, and drunk his blood, and know and are sure that “his flesh is meat indeed—his blood drink indeed.”

Still further: they acknowledge and recognize him as their Shepherd. He is “the Apostle, the High Priest,” the Shepherd, of “their profession.” They hear his voice—they follow in his steps. Where he goes, they go; where he lodges, they lodge. His people is their people—his God, their God. Their whole character and conduct say, “I am Christ’s.” What is said in reference to the faithful under-shepherd, is true in a higher sense of the great Shepherd:—“The sheep follow him, for they know his voice; and a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of a stranger.”

The illustration which our Lord gives of the intimate and endearing acquaintance and intercourse which exist between him and his people, is derived from a comparison which could scarcely have entered into any human imagination; and if it had, he must have been a bold, if not an impious man, who should have dared to utter it: “I know my sheep, and am known of mine; even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father;” for this, according to the most learned and judicious interpreters, is the manner in which the words should be construed. An attentive observer of mankind must have noticed that the mode of illustrating a sentiment often marks the peculiar character,
circumstances, profession, and pursuit, of him who employs it. The same subject—the same principle—is very differently stated and illustrated by different men. The agriculturist, the merchant, the lawyer, the physician, the soldier, the minister of religion, will generally, when speaking unrestrainedly on almost any subject, give token to a sagacious hearer by which to form a probable conjecture regarding their respective professions.

The general principle now referred to is applicable to our Lord. He uses illustrations natural to him, which never would have occurred to any other, and which plainly tell us he was "not of this world"—he was "from above." He borrows his illustrations from the heavenly state, and from the very adytum of the celestial temple—the holy of holies—the holiest of all. Who but Christ—he who had been "in the bosom of the Father"—would have used such language as this to illustrate his love to his people? "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." And who but he would have sought, in the ineffable intimacies of the Father and his Only Begotten, an illustration of the mutual, intimate knowledge, and complacential intercourse of himself and his chosen ones?

This is a subject dark through excess of brightness; yet we cannot choose but gaze a little on it. However incapable we may be of conceiving of the manner in which the Divine Persons apprehend truth, nothing can be more apparent than that there must be the most perfect mutual knowledge and mutual complacency among the mysterious Three, who, having the same Divine nature, must have one mind—one will; and that mind, the perfect light—that will, the absolute good. The Father knows the Son"—thoroughly knows him; he regards him with most complacential delight; and he acknowledged him, no doubt—though in a way we can form no conception of—from all eternity. We can, however, form a conception of the way in which he acknowledged him on earth, and is acknowledging him in heaven. He gave his Spirit to him without measure. He sustained him amid all his toils and sufferings. He bore witness to him by the mighty works which he enabled him to perform. He again and again, from the most excellent glory, proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." He raised him from the dust of death—he set him at his own right hand, and said to him, "Sit on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." And while he is bringing him into the possession of the world he proclaims, "Let all the angels of God worship him."

In like manner, "the Son knows the Father." He is intimately acquainted with his perfections, his purposes, and his works; and regards all these with infinite complacency. And as he knows, so does he acknowledge the Father. This he

---

28 John viii. 23.
29 Matt. xi. 27.
30 Phil. ex. 1.
31 John i. 18; xv. 9.
32 Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5.
33 Heb. i. 6; comp. Phil. xxvii. 7.
did when on earth; in everything doing his Father’s will, and saying, in reference to his human inclinations, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt;” and this he is doing in heaven; for there he is declaring his Father’s name to his brethren; and in the midst of the congregation of his chosen “is he singing His praise.” When it is said that as the Father knoweth the Son, and the Son knows the Father, so does the good Shepherd know his sheep, and is known of them, the meaning, so far as they are concerned at least, is merely that there is resemblance, not equality; for “as no man knoweth the Father but the Son, so no man knoweth the Son but the Father.” The idea is, that there is as really a peculiar, mutual knowledge and acknowledgment between the good Shepherd and his sheep, as between the Father and the Son, and that it has the same character of complacent affectionateness.

IV. The only other illustration of the appellation, “the good Shepherd,” as applied to our Lord, to which I mean to call attention, is that suggested in the 16th verse of the chapter. Jesus Christ is the good Shepherd, as he cares for all his sheep: “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold,” or rather one flock”—“one Shepherd.” He is not a good shepherd who overlooks any part of the flock committed to his care: he is the good shepherd who protects, and guides, and feeds, and cares for all. When our Lord uttered the words before us, his charge on earth was a very little flock; and was chiefly, if not exclusively, to be found within the fold of the Jewish economy. But our Lord well knew that it was not to be always so. He remembered the decree that he had gone forth: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” He remembered the exceeding great and precious promises which had been made to him,—that he should see of the travail of his soul—see his seed, and have the mighty for his portion—the strong for his spoil. He remembered that it had been said of old of him, “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.” He knew Him who had said, “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel,

39 Matt. xxvi. 39. 40 Psal. xxxii. 22. 41 Psal. lx. 8. 42 Luke xii. 32.—The ποιμήν was indeed ποιμένον. 43 ἡ ποιμήν, not αὐτής. 44 Psal. liii. 12. 45 Psal. lxxii. 8–11.
and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages: that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves: they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim."

In the full assured belief of these declarations, with a clear apprehension of the vast extent of official saving care committed to him, we find him saying, “Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” His object was, to “gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad” in all the countries of the world, throughout all the ages of time. This is the charge committed to him, and he will be “faithful to him that appointed him.” “Of all whom the Father hath given to him, not one of them,” not anything, “shall be lost.” They shall all be “raised up again at the last day.”

In reference to them all, the Gospel shall be brought to them, or they brought to the Gospel. Every one of them shall be brought into the fold, and kept there; for it is his purpose that there shall be “one flock—one Shepherd.”

It is generally supposed, and justly, that these words have a direct reference to the termination of the exclusive, preparatory, economy, and the introduction of that better order of things, where there should be neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; but all one in Christ Jesus. In this view of the subject, the best commentary on the text is to be found in the words of the apostle: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” [through the great Shepherd giving his life for the sheep]. “For
he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down
the middle wall of partition between us; having abolish'd in his
flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in
ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so
making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one
body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and
preach'd peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were
nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto
the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers nor foreign-
ers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of
God; and are builded upon the foundations of the apostles and pro-
hets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all
the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple
in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habita-
tion of God through the Spirit."**

"The great Shepherd of the sheep," very soon after he had
been rais'd from the dead by the God of peace, began, by his
apostles, to "bring" those other sheep not of the Israelitish fold.
He spoke to them, and they heard his voice. His Gospel was
"preach'd with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;" and
Gentiles, in vast numbers, had grant'd to them that repentance
unto life, that salutary change of mind, which is implied in the
faith of the truth. Since that age, the gathering of the sheep
has gone forward; and though now on earth there is still a fear-
ful preponderance in numbers of those who are not of Christ's
sheep, yet even now there is on the earth a multitude which could
not easily be number'd, out of many a kindred, people, and na-
tion, who were "as sheep going astray, but have been brought
back to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls."

But it may be said, "Here, indeed, are many sheep, but where
is "the one flock," the one fold? Even the genuine followers
of Jesus Christ are far from forming anything like that visibly
separ'd and united body—separ'd from the world "lying
under the wicked one,"—united among themselves—that the im-
age of a flock in a fold naturally brings before the mind. They
are found in pens, jealously separ'd from one another; while,
in too many instances, these pens are construc't'd on such a prin-
ciple as by no means to exclude the world, though they do ef-
fic'tually shut out Christians who differ, it may be, even on a
very minor point of doctrine, or worship, or order, from their
occupants. Instead of one fold, there seem to be innumerable
pens of this kind." Alas! it is even so. It is with shame and
sorrow we make the admission. But still, in the eye of the great
Shepherd, his sheep are one flock; and nothing is necessary to
their appearing to be so to themselves and the world, but their
pulling down those middle walls of partition, and repair'n the
great wall of separation between the church and the world.

A time is coming—we have no doubt, notwithstanding many
unfavorable appearances, that it is hastening onward, rapidly ap-

** Eph. ii. 11-22.
proaching—when the really existing union among genuine Christians shall become apparent,—when Christ's church shall appear one glorious temple, the house of the Lord, from which no "Israelite indeed" shall be excluded, and in which the "Canaanite shall no more be found,"—when, in answer to the prayer of the Saviour, all his people shall be one, and shall so appear to be one, as that the world will be constrained to believe that "the Father hath sent him.”

To this glorious consummation these words look forward; but I mistake if they look not beyond it, to a more glorious consummation still. When the end cometh, “the Son of Man,” the good Shepherd, “shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

As the glorious results of his pastoral care, he will present them whom the Father gave him, not one amiss, “a beautiful flock,” —“a glorious church,”—“redeemed from among men, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,”—“before the presence of the divine Majesty with exceeding joy.” On the high mountains of the heavenly Canaan shall their fold henceforth forever be. “There they shall lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed,” upon the hills of paradise; while “the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne,” their great Shepherd, feeds them, and leads them to the fountains of the river of life. “They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” “He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.”

This is the one flock—the one Shepherd. Glorious shepherd! —happy flock! Then will the full meaning of our text be understood, “I am the good Shepherd.” “The nations of the saved,” with one voice, will then gladly acknowledge, He has done as he said,—“He is the good Shepherd.” “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

47 Zech. xiv. 21.
49 Matt. xxv. 31-46.
5 Rev. vii. 14-17 Isa. xlix. 10.
48 John xvii. 21.
50 Eph. v. 27.
52 Rev. i. 5, 6.
EXPOSITION XIV.

THE SON, IN ACCOMPLISHING THE WORK COMMITTED TO HIM, THE OBJECT OF THE FATHER’S DELIGHT.

John x. 17, 18.—“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

These words immediately follow our Lord’s instructive representation of his own saving character and work, under the emblem of a shepherd—a good shepherd—the good shepherd. The connecting particle, “therefore,”—“for this reason,” “on this account,”—usually looks backward, and indicates, that what is about to be stated is the result or consequence of what has been stated in the previous context. Sometimes, however, it looks forward, and indicates, that the reason of the statement which follows the particle is just about to be assigned. In the case before us, it does not much matter whether you consider the word as looking backward or forward.

If the particle look backward, it refers to the whole of what our Lord had stated respecting his conduct to “the sheep.” He comes, not like the thief, to steal, and kill, and destroy them, but he comes to preserve them alive, and secure for them abundance of every blessing. He cares for them. He does not flee at the approach of danger, but lays down his life to save theirs. He exercises a most intimate and endearing superintendence of them. He gathers them together, and finally lodges them all in the one fold above—in a state of absolute security—perfect happiness. “Therefore,” for being all this, and doing all this, for and to the sheep, “the Father loves the Son.”

If the particle look forward, it refers to the words that immediately follow, which, when viewed in their connection, obviously contain in them a summary of what he had already said of himself as the good Shepherd. ‘For this reason, the Father loveth me,’ “because I lay down my life for the sheep,” “in their room, and for their deliverance;” and I lay it down, not that I should permanently remain dead—that would prevent me from doing the duty of the good shepherd to those rescued by my death,—but that I may live again, and devote my restored life to their

1 διά τοῦτο.
happiness; gathering them—reclaiming them from their wanderings,—by making them hear my voice, and conducting them all in safety to the fold of everlasting rest, where there shall be "one flock, one shepherd."

For thus executing the duties of the great Shepherd, our Lord declares himself fully qualified. "I have power to lay down my life,"—that is, "I have power so to lay down my life for the sheep, as that they shall be secured from death, by my dying in their room, "and I have power to take up my life again," so that I can, having secured them from death, give them abundance of blessings, gathering them together into one, and together, making them perfect."

"This commandment," adds our Lord, "I received from the Father." By many interpreters, this statement is considered as referring exclusively to what immediately precedes it. They consider the word "power" as equivalent to "authority." "I have authority to lay down my life, and I have authority to take it again; and this authority results from the command I received from the Father to do so." We think it must be more natural to refer the commandment to the whole commission given to the Son as the good Shepherd, the appointed Saviour, the expression of that will of which our Lord says: "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." The "power" referred to is not, I apprehend, so much, if at all, the authority which the Son, as mediator, had to execute this work, but the power which he essentially possessed, and on account of the possession of which, he was qualified for the work to which he was appointed, and to which he never would have been appointed had he not been thus qualified. The statements in these verses, then, though at first sight they may appear somewhat disjointed, in reality express one complex thought. "The Father hath committed to the Son a great work; for that work the Son is fully qualified; and, in performing it, he is the object of the Father's most complacent regard;" or thus, "Jesus Christ, satisfactorily accomplishing the great work of salvation committed to him, in the exercise of powers every way adequate to it, is the object of the Father's entire approbation and most tender love." To the illustration of this delightful truth, I mean to devote the remaining part of this discourse.

Our blessed Lord is the object of his Father's love on other grounds besides that specified in the text. "The Father loveth the Son." He loves him on account of that independent absolute perfection, of which the Father and the Son are equally possessed; and he loves him on the ground of that most intimate relation which subsists between them, as in some way distinct, though in essence one, and of which the relation of sonship is

2 John vi. 38.  
* See Note A.
the fittest analogy to be found among men. Yes,—the Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world. From the ages of eternity he was in his bosom; in the beginning, before his works of old, he possessed him as his invaluable treasure, and he was daily—i.e., continually—his delight. This love is the source of the appointment of the Word, who was with God in the beginning, and who was God, to be the great revealer of divinity, in the anguish economies of creation, providence, and redemption.

The Father loveth the Son, on account of the manner in which he unfolds the Divine character, in the creation and the government of the world. He regards with infinite complacency those displays of wisdom, and holiness, and righteousness, and benignity, which he made, when “by him all things were created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, principalities and powers, thrones and dominions; and which he continues to make, while he upholds, by the word of his power, all things which subsist.”

But the love here referred to, is love drawn forth by the manifestation—the still more illustrious manifestation—of these excellences, on the part of the Son, in the accomplishment of the great and beneficent work assigned to him as the Shepherd of the sheep—the Saviour of the lost; a work expressly committed to him by the Father—a work performed by him, in the exercise of adequate powers, in a manner absolutely perfect—and, therefore, the proper object of the entire approbation, the most complacent regard, of Him who appointed him.

To bring out the truth on this subject—so far as we can discover it—in the manner most fitted to enlighten our minds and impress our hearts, it may be useful for us to inquire, what is the great work in which the Son is engaged; then to show that this work has indeed been committed to him by the Father; then to attend to the qualifications which he possesses for this work; then to consider the manner in which he performs it; and then, finally, to show how, in the performance of this work, he is, and must be, the object of the Father’s most complacent approbation and most tender love. And may the Holy Spirit—equally the Spirit of the Father and of the Son—take the guidance of the thoughts and the affections both of the speaker and of the hearers, that, on a subject dark with excess of brightness, he may not still farther darken counsel by words without knowledge; and may not only be prevented from thinking, or speaking, or feeling, in any way inconsistent with the sacredness of the subject, but that his heart may “indite a good matter, and his tongue be as the pen of a ready writer, while he speaks of the things touching the King;” and that they, perceiving that though the voice is on earth, the speaker is in heaven, may listen with holy reverence to the Father proclaiming, “This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased,” and have conscious fellowship with Him in His complacent approbation, His tender love.
I.—THE GREAT WORK IN WHICH THE SON IS ENGAGED.

The great work in which the Son is engaged is salvation—deliverance—the deliverance of men—of a particular class of men. In the discourse of our Lord, it is represented under the figure of rescuing a flock of sheep from circumstances of extreme impending danger, and bringing them into circumstances of complete security and perfect happiness. It is plainly of primary importance to our forming just judgments of this work, that we have clear apprehensions as to the class of individuals who are here termed “the sheep.”

It is obvious that they are men; and some interpreters and divines have been disposed to think, that “the sheep” is just another name for the human race, viewed as the subjects of the Divine property, and the objects of the Divine care; but we are persuaded that this is false interpretation, and naturally leads to unsound theology. There can be no doubt that Jesus Christ is the divinely-appointed Saviour of the world; there can be no doubt that the salvation he came to work out, is a salvation which all men need—which is suited to all men—and which all men, without exception, are made heartily welcome to participate in. There is no doubt that “the one Mediator gave himself a ransom for all”—that he is “the propitiation for the sins of the whole world”—that no man perishes because there is not an all-perfect sacrifice for sin—and that no man, to whom the Gospel comes, need want a personal interest in the saving effects of that sacrifice, but for his own simple refusal to accept of what is freely given to him of God—and that, in this view of the matter, men might have been represented as “the sheep,” in opposition to the fallen angels, for whom no mediator has been provided, to whom no Saviour has been offered.

But while all this is truth—important truth—it is plain that “the sheep” here are but a portion of mankind, for we read in the context of men who are not Christ’s sheep; and the salvation here spoken of is not only a possible, but an actual salvation; not only the means of deliverance, but deliverance itself; salvation not only procured, but applied. The good Shepherd not only gives his life for “the sheep,”—which he did when he gave himself a sacrifice, the just in the room of the unjust, when he died “once for all”—but he gives unto “the sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish,” but “shall have everlasting life.” Now, we know these statements are not true of all mankind; for, while “the sheep” at last enter into life eternal, there is another class of men who go away into everlasting punishment.

“The sheep” are obviously the same persons who are termed “the called ones”—“the faithful or believing ones”—“the holy ones”—“the heirs of salvation”—“the chosen generation”—“the royal priesthood”—“the holy nation”—the disciples of the great

3 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. 1 John ii. 2. 4 Heb. x. 10. ἐπαραγ. 5 John x. 28.
PART I.] GREAT WORK IN WHICH THE SON IS ENGAGED. 527

Prophet—those who, sprinkled by the blood of the atoning sacrifice, come to God through the great High Priest—the obedient subjects of the King, whom God has set on his holy hill. "The sheep" is just a general name for "the innumerable company, out of every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation," who shall be made possessors, in all its blissful extent, of the salvation that is in Christ with eternal glory. In other words, they are "the elect of God," for there can be no doubt that it is the same class of individuals who are "blessed with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus"—who were "chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to God the Father, according to the good pleasure of his will." Whether the term "sheep" have a direct reference to their being "elected," or rather to their being "selected"—whether it be intended as descriptive of them, as objects of eternal, special, sovereign favor, without reference to spiritual character, or of them as possessed of, or to become possessed of, certain distinctive characters, in connection with certain distinctive privileges, is a question of minor import; though I confess that, while I can have no doubt that "the sheep" and "the elect" are two terms descriptive of the same class, I should hesitate to say that they are synonymous expressions—two terms which are intended to be expressive of the same truths with regard to that class. "The sheep" are just the same persons as "the many sons" whom the Son—the first-born among many brethren—as the Captain of salvation, is certainly conducting to glory—the brethren, whom he is to present to his, and their, Father and God.

Their deliverance, their salvation, is the great work referred to in the passage before us. Now, what is this work? In the case of every work of deliverance, it is quite obvious that just views of it cannot be acquired without a clear apprehension of what the evils are, under which the subjects of it labor, and from which they require to be delivered. Now, "the sheep" are a portion of the fallen race of man, and the evils they labor under are just the evils common to men as sinners. In the passage before us, these evils are represented under the figure of the evils to which strayed sheep are subject. They have exposed themselves to certain death, from which they can be delivered only by the Shepherd laying down his life to save them; and they are, moreover, away from the fold, indisposed to return, and they need to be guided back to it.

In consequence of having violated the Divine law,—by upholding which alone, not merely the honors of the character and government of God can be sustained, but, what is really the same thing, the true, permanent happiness of his intelligent creatures can be secured—those who are to be saved are exposed to those penal evils, by which He vindicates the wisdom, righteousness, and excellence of that law, and by which He shows the

6 Eph. i. 3-5. 7 Heb. ii. 10.
folly and wickedness of "every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of that law to do them." From these evils they must be delivered, or they shall be miserable, without measure and without end; and they can, in the nature of the case, be delivered by nothing but what "magnifies and makes honorable" the Divine law, and secures its holy and benignant ends—at least in the same degree as the perfect obedience of innocent man, or the everlasting destruction of sinning man, would have done. This, then, is the fundamental part of the work of the salvation of man—equally fundamental to a salvation suited to all, offered to all, and to a salvation received and enjoyed by "the sheep." Their salvation must be made consistent with the perfections of the Divine character, and the principles of Divine government; in other words, with the good order and happiness of the intelligent creation of God.

But while this is the fundamental part of the work, it is not the whole work. "The sheep" who have been rescued from the evils ready to destroy them, by the self-sacrifice of their Shepherd, must be induced to turn their straying feet towards the fold; they must be made to listen to, and obey, "the great Shepherd, brought again from the dead, by the blood of the everlasting covenant;" and following him to "the green pastures, and the still waters," they must be prepared for being, at the close of the day of time, all brought together into the heavenly fold—a state of perfect holy happiness.

"The sheep," as they are by nature as guilty, so they are also, by nature, as depraved, as the rest of the race; and an essential part of their salvation consists in being delivered from this depravity—in "being transformed by the renewing of their mind"—in being made like "the ever-blessed God," by being made like the Holy, Holy, Holy One. All the evils of life in themselves—the manifestation of the Divine displeasure against sin—even death itself—must be made to bear their part in the bringing about this perfect conformity of mind and heart to God; and then, when they have served this purpose—so different from that which He whose work they are, intended them to serve—they must all cease: the afflictions of life at death, when the spirit enters into a state of entire freedom from sin and pain; and death itself at the resurrection, when even "the last enemy shall be destroyed:" and the sheep,—the saved ones, in all the entireness of their natures as embodied spirits, endowed with high powers of intellect, affection, and action,—must be delivered from evil in all its forms and in all its degrees, and a happy, holy company be put in possession of a happiness filling, to an overflow, all the capacities of enjoyment of their now perfected natures, throughout the eternity of their being. Such is a hasty sketch of the work of salvation which man needs. All this must be done, or "the sheep" cannot be saved.

It was the determination of God that they should be saved;

# 1 Cor. xv. 26.
but where was to be found the Saviour who was capable of doing all this? Had Jehovah, on a day "when the sons of God came to present themselves before him," unfolded his purpose of mercy, stated what was necessary to be done to carry that purpose into effect, and proclaimed, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" there would have been silence in heaven. Willingly as they "do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word," the highest angels would have shrunk from a task which they must have seen clearly no created arm could accomplish. To use the quaint but expressive language of holy Herbert,——

"When man was lost, God's pity looked about
To see what help in th' earth or sky;
But there was none: at least no help without;
The help did in God's bosom lie.
There lay his Son."

He was a party to the council of peace, and gladly consented to become man's Goel, Kinsman-Redeemer, and, at whatever cost, re-purchase the forfeited inheritance: "Lo, I come;" "I delight to do thy will."

II.—THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SON TO HIS GREAT WORK BY THE FATHER.

To the accomplishment of this great work, the Father appointed him. This is the second topic to which I wish to turn your attention: "This commandment"—the commandment to act the part of the Good Shepherd, in all its extent, to the sheep—"this commandment I received of the Father."

There was no danger of any created being ultraneously assuming this character, or doing the work that belongs to it. The wisdom and the power necessary for its accomplishment were wanting; and, even if they had been present, where was to be found, among creatures, the self-sacrificing pity which was not less necessary? It was for the Father—the economical representative of Deity—to determine whether such a work should be undertaken, and to determine, too, who should undertake it. He had no confidence in his angels for such a purpose; and, wise as they are in managing the affairs entrusted to them, they soon would have been found chargeable with folly here. Love to the Son, and love to those who were to be saved by him, induced the Father to appoint Him to be the Saviour.

This principle, that Jesus Christ is the divinely-appointed Saviour, holds a high place in the revealed system. In ancient prophecy, he is spoken of as "He who should come in the name of the Lord to save." "Behold," says Jehovah to the church, by his prophet, seven hundred years before he that should come did come—"Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall..."

Psalm xi. 7.
bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.”  “Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spreadeth forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth bread unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: 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.”  “The Lord hath called me,” says Messiah himself by the prophet; “The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”  “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”  “We all, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.”  Exaction was made, and he became answerable. “I will,” says Jehovah, “set up one Shepherd over my sheep, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.”

The fact that the Father had sent him, and sent him to save his people from their sins, occupied a leading place in the declarations made by our Lord himself. He declares that “the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” He came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” And He “came not of himself, but the Father sent him.” “The Father sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him should be saved.” “I am come in my Father’s name.” “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” “The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment.” “I came to do the will of him that sent me.” “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

His forerunner, John the Baptist, calls him, by way of eminence, “He whom God hath sent.” His apostles often teach the same

10 Isa. xlii. 1, 5, 6.  
11 Isa. xlvi. 1-3, 6.  
12 Ezek. xxxiv. 23.  
13 Matt. xx. 28. Luke xix. 10. John viii. 42; iii. 17; v. 43; vi. 37-40; xii. 49; iii. 16.  
14 John iii. 34.
PART II.] APPOINTMENT OF THE SON TO HIS GREAT WORK. 531

doctrine, aware that it lies at the foundation of human hope. “God sent forth his Son,” says the Apostle Paul, “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” “God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,”—i.e. as a sin-offering,—“that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Explaining an Old Testament oracle, he says that when it had become plain that “sacrifice and offerings,” and “burnt-offerings,” which were under “the law,” could not take away sin, Christ “came to do the will of God,” “which will was the sanctification of the called ones, through the offering of his body once for all.” “God sent his only begotten Son,” says the Apostle John, “into the world, that we might live by him.” “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”

So abundant is the evidence that the Son, in becoming “the good shepherd of the sheep,” “the Saviour of the body,” did not “take this honor to himself, but was chosen of God, as was Aaron.”—He who said to him, “Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee,” said also, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” “Thou art my servant, in whom I will be glorified.” To use another figure, he said, “Behold I will bring forth my servant, The Branch;” “He shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory.” “The counsel of peace is between them both.” But in the new economy, even this originates with the Father. “All things are of God,”—of the Father—“by Christ Jesus the Son.”

And now, let us reflect on the depth and variety of misery into which man had plunged himself, by his unprovoked violation of that law which is holy, just, and good, and his infatuated departure from Him who is the fountain of all good,—on the infinity of power, and wisdom, and kindness, which was necessary to rescue us from these miseries, and restore us to the enjoyment of life, of what is better than life,—on the resolve of sovereign grace, that out of the ruins of the stately fabric demolished by Satanic malignity and human folly and sin, should be erected a building of mercy, in which unnumbered millions of the self-ruined race should enjoy a happiness, higher in its nature, because rising out of a fuller display of the grandeur and graces of the Divine character, than they could have enjoyed had they never fallen,—and on the, if possible, still more marvellous means by which this marvellous purpose was to be executed. Let all that is within us bless the thrice holy name of the Father and of the Son,—of him who came to save us, and of Him who sent him. Let us honor the Father; and let us honor the Son as the Father; for this is the Father’s will. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

17 Heb. v. 5, 6. Isa. xlix. 3. Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12, 13. 2 Cor. v. 18. 1 Cor. viii. 6.
who, according to his abundant mercy, has blessed us with all heavenly and spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.” “And to him that loved us,” so as not to love his own life to the death for our salvation; to him who loved us, “and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father, to Him be glory for ever and ever.” Nor forgotten be the Holy, the good, Spirit of the Father and of the Son, whose dwelling without measure in the incarnate Son made humanity in him the perfection of moral beauty, and who, shed forth on his chosen ones, gradually conforms them to his image, till at last they become like him, seeing him as he is. “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.” “Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever: And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.” “O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Hallelujah.

III.—THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SON FOR HIS GREAT WORK.

To every one who reflects on the nature and extent of the work to be accomplished, it must be obvious, that qualifications of no ordinary kind were requisite for its accomplishment. Whether we fix our mind on that part of the work which lay in rendering the salvation of men consistent with the perfections of the Divine character, and the principles of the Divine government, or on that part of it which lay in actually putting individual men in possession of salvation, the truth of the remark now made will appear with equal clearness.

He who is to make atonement for human guilt, must himself be completely free from guilt; he must have a perfectly accurate knowledge of that law which, by obedience to its precepts, and endurance of its sanctionary penalties, he is to “magnify and make honorable;” he must have an entire conformity of mind and will with the great Lawgiver, rendering his obedience and sufferings the intelligent, hearty expression of complete satisfaction with, entire acquiescence in, supreme admiration of, that law which man had contemned and violated; he must be a person who is not naturally subject to the requisitions of the law, either preceptive or sanctionary,—a person who is not “under the law,” but who must “be made under it;” and, in fine, he must possess such a dignity of nature, as well as perfection of character, as that His cheerfully and perfectly satisfying the demands of the law violated by man, shall place the excellence of that law, its wisdom, righteousness, and benignity, in at least as strong a light as the perfect obedience of an unsinning human race, or the everlasting misery of a guilty human race, would have done.

When you reflect on the nature of some of these obviously ne-
cessary qualifications, and on the degree in which others of them are requisite, it is plain, that no mere created being could be the expiatory of human guilt; and it is equally plain, that the uncreated Being, viewed merely as uncreated, could not perform this most wondrous and difficult of all works. Nothing short of the union of Divinity with humanity, could serve the purpose. God, as God, cannot obey, suffer, and die. Man, as man, can never do more than answer the demands of the law on himself,—can never do more than it is his duty to do,—far less yield an obedience and satisfaction, so overflowing with meritorious value, as to lay a foundation for the just God justifying an innumerable multitude of ungodly sinners, justly doomed to destruction for their offences and transgressions. The expiatory must be God. He must be man. He must be "God manifest in flesh." *13

Nor are qualifications less extraordinary requisite for—because adequate to—the second portion of the great work entrusted to the Son, the actually putting individual men in possession of that salvation, for the communication of which he has opened up a way, by that perfect satisfaction to the demands of the Divine law, which we term his atoning sacrifice. What is the extent of power and knowledge, and wisdom, and purity of principle, and firmness of purpose, and benignity of disposition, that is necessary in him who is to raise man from the depths of ignorance, error, ungodliness, sensuality, malignity, and wretchedness, and to make him wise, good, and happy, in a degree corresponding to his ever-increasing capacities of intellectual and moral excellence, and of the happiness which springs out of these? Think what is necessary, both as to the control of external events, and the communication of internal influence, in order to effect this in a single instance, even the most favorable; think of what must be necessary to effect this, in the case of all "the nations of the saved," scattered over the whole habitable globe, during all the ages of its existence, in all the various stages of human civilization; then think of what is necessary to the destruction of the last enemy,—to the restoration of immortal life to the dead—to the changing of the vile bodies of his people, and fashioning them like unto his own glorious body—superinducing immortality on mortality—incorruptibility on corruption—swallowing up death in victory;—think of all this, and say if the qualifications required for such a work, are not of an extraordinary kind? How inadequate were the powers of the highest angel—how inadequate the concentrated energies of the created universe—to the production of such effects as these! The entire conduct of the government of the universe—the control of all beings, influences, and events—"power over all flesh"—"all power in heaven and in earth"—guided by divine wisdom influenced by human sympathy—is obviously necessary for the accomplishment of this mighty work.

Now, all these qualifications, high and varied as they are, are

*13 1 Tim. iii. 16.
to be found in him to whose management the Father hath committed it. The good shepherd has all the qualifications for saving his sheep. He saves them from death, by laying down his life; and having resumed the life he laid down, he can rescue, and guide, sustain, feed, and guard them, till he bring them to the fold above, the abode of inexhaustible abundance, of perfect security, of endless peace.

The view given us of the Son's qualifications for his work, in the passage before us, is a very interesting and comprehensive one. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again." These words imply, that the Son had a life to lay down for the sheep, by the laying down of which, they would be rescued from destruction; that he had power to lay down that life; and that life which he had, if resumed, would enable him to give to his sheep eternal life; and that he had power to take it up again, to employ it for this purpose. Let us look a little at these statements respecting our Saviour's qualifications, thus implied or expressed in the passage before us.

He had a life to lay down, which could make expiation for sin, and save the sheep. There never was a life in the universe which could have served this purpose, but his—the life of a perfectly holy man in union with God. The life of God could not have served the purpose; but life could not be laid down, for God lives by necessity of nature. And if that life could be laid down, the consequences would be, not the salvation of man, but the annihilation of the universe. The life of man could not have done it. The life of even an innocent man is God's gift; and when God calls back his gift, what merit is there in quietly, gratefully restoring it? The life of guilty man could not do it. "None could redeem his brother:" none could redeem himself, for the desert was, in every case, death—"ever-dying death"—death, beyond which there is no life. The life of the whole animal creation was obviously utterly inadequate, utterly unfit, to take away sin. The only life, by the laying down of which expiation could be made, was the life of the incarnate Only-begotten, the man in union with God; one, whose life was his own property—and such a property as was fully adequate to the end contemplated. When we think of the Son laying down his life, we are not to fix our mind on the simple fact of dying; it is his dying. The sacrifice was himself, the thinking, feeling, active, suffering being—Himself, in every thought, feeling, and action, from the moment of the commencement of his human existence, perfectly conformed to the will of God, and this conformity made meritorious by the supreme dignity of that higher nature which, in him, was united to the human. His whole human life was the sacrifice, and we call his death so by way of eminence, merely because it was the termination, and the most striking display, of that course of entire devotedness to the Divine will, which commenced with his human being.

Now, this life which our Lord had, he had "a power to lay
No man did, no man could, wrest it from him. "He laid it down of himself—he had a power to lay it down." Jesus died a violent death. He was "taken, and with wicked hands crucified and slain." Yet his death was in the highest degree voluntary. He died, because he chose to die. "Himself he cannot save," said his enemies; and it was true, though not in their sense. He could not, because he would not. For this cause, he had come to that hour. His enemies had no power over him, but what was given them from above. His smiting, by a look, to the earth, an armed band, showed how easily, without asking for legions of angels, he could have baffled the powers of his enemies and rescued himself. But there is something more in the words, than that our Lord's death was voluntary. They intimate, that he was Lord of his own life; that it was his own independent property. He had submitted, in the economy of redemption, to be appointed to exercise this independent right in laying it down; but had it not been for the possession of this independent right, no Divine appointment to lay down, an entirely dependent life, could have made the sacrifice of such a life adequate to the redemption of mankind. The words are equivalent to, 'I can, by my death, rescue the sheep from destruction, for I have a life to lay down, over which I have entire independent control.'

And as the laying down this life, over which he had power, was necessary and sufficient for the expiation of the sins of the saved, so the resumption of this life was necessary and sufficient for their actual salvation. Had that life been laid down, never to be taken up again, man could not have been saved. Actual salvation is to be enjoyed through the constant activities of the ever-living God-man, who "was dead, but who is alive, and lives for evermore," as "Lord of all." The Son, then, as an all-accomplished Saviour, had power to resume the life he laid down. When men destroyed the temple of his humanity, he had power—and he exercised it—to raise it on the third day. When "put to death in the flesh," he was "quickened by the Spirit." He could not, "it was not possible that he should, be bound with the cords of death." The exertion of this power is the evidence that he is "able to save to the uttermost all coming to God by him."

Our Lord's qualifications as an actual Saviour are reducible to two classes: Qualifications which rise out of Divine appointment; and qualifications which lie at the foundation of Divine appointment. And it is chiefly, I apprehend, to the last of these that our Lord refers, when he says, "The Son hath life in himself, even as the Father hath life in himself."—'has an independent power over his life, which makes that life, when given, an adequate expiation for sin,—which makes that life, when resumed,
the effectual instrument of salvation.' The true cause why, because he dies, his people shall not die, and why, "because he lives, they shall live also," is to be found in his true divinity—"the power he had to lay down his life, and the power he had to take it up again."21

This power he has exercised; and in exercising it, he has accomplished, and is accomplishing, the great work given him to do,—the salvation of his chosen ones. How different the death of Christ from the death of an ordinary man! There, there is a display of nothing but weakness; here, there is the weakness of humanity, and the power of Divinity equally manifested by him who died. He has put forth his power in laying down his life, and he has put forth his power in taking it again. In laying down his life, he has expiated the sins of his people. He has laid down his life "for the sheep,"—in their room, for their salvation. His death was a powerful death: it has made atonement for the sins of men, having satisfied the demands of Divine justice, and made it consistent with these demands to extend forgiveness and salvation to every sinner believing in Jesus.

IV.—THE SON'S ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS GREAT WORK.

This is the very first principle of the Gospel, as stated by the Apostle Paul. "He is set forth a propitiatory in his blood." "I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand." "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received [first of all], how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Yes, he suffered for sin, "the just in the room of the unjust, that he might bring us to God." He was "delivered for our offences." He "redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." In him we have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." He "loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might purify it by the washing of water by the word." He "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." As the Mediator of the new covenant, he submitted to death, that "through his death, the transgressions which remained, unatoned under the former covenant might be expiated."22

And this offering has been effectual for the purpose for which it was presented. It has "finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness." This "one offering has perfected for ever all them that are sanctified." This "blood cleanses from all sin:" it "purges the conscience on which it is sprinkled from dead works," to serve the holy God. None can lay anything to the charge of God's elect, since Christ

21 John v. 21; xiv. 19.
PART V.

PROOFS OF THE FATHER'S COMPLACENCY.

has died; and there is no condemnation to them who are "in Him" who was "delivered for our offences."

And as the exercise of this power, in laying down his life, has rescued his people from guilt; so the exercise of this power, in taking his life again, lays the foundation for their actual deliverance from all the evils consequent on guilt. He "who was given for our offences," has been "raised again for our justification." He who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures," has "risen again from the dead according to the Scriptures." And the life he has resumed—the life of the God-man—is devoted to the bestowing on his sheep all the blessings of his salvation. He is "exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins." He is "head over all things, to his body the church." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And "because he lives, they shall live also." Raised from the dead, he comes in the administration of his Gospel, and the influence of his Spirit, to bless them, turning them from their iniquities;—ascended on high, and having received gifts for men, he sheds forth the Holy Spirit abundantly, and is "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."

The one part of his work is completely finished. He offered himself once for all. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin," for no more is necessary; and the other part of his work proceeds successfully—"the pleasure of the Lord prospers in his hand." Vast multitudes of degraded, depraved men, are now, through his mediation, "spirits of just men made perfect;" and vast multitudes more are preparing, through the same mediation, for joining that holy happy assembly.

V.—THE COMPLACENCY MANIFESTED BY THE FATHER TO THE SON, IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT, AND FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT, OF HIS GREAT WORK.

Let us now turn our attention to the complacent approbation, the tender love, with which the Father regards the Son, on account of his thus, in the exercise of these qualifications, successfully accomplishing this glorious work: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again."

That the conduct of the Son, in accomplishing the work given him to do, must have been regarded by the Father with infinite complacency, must be obvious to every one who reflects on the leading features of the Divine character, and on the nature and design of that work. Jehovah loves holiness, and hates iniquity; his nature, as well as his name, is love; and He must have surveyed, with infinite delight, the disinterested sacrifices, the

unwearying labors, the intense sufferings to which the Son submitted, to make God glorious and man happy, and the complete success which crowned these sacrifices, and labors, and sufferings.

The manner in which this satisfaction has been displayed, will be best described in the words of the prophetic and apostolic testimony. When, in prosecuting his great work, he descended into the state of the dead, God “did not leave his soul in hell”—the separate state—nor did he allow even the body of his Holy One to see corruption. He showed him the path of life; he introduced him into his immediate presence, where there is “fulness of joy;” he set him “at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore.” And there He who is the King and the King’s Son “joys in his Father’s strength, and in his salvation he greatly rejoices. He has given him the desire of his heart; he has not withholden the desire of his lips. He has prevented him with the blessings of goodness; He has set a crown of pure gold on his head: he asked life and He gave it him, even length of days for ever and ever: His glory is great in his salvation; honor and majesty have been laid on him. For He has made him him most blessed for ever; He has made him exceeding glad with His countenance.” “The Son loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even his God, has anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows.” He has “set him on his own right hand, and said, Sit on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool;” and the decree has gone forth, “Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” He has “given to him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and that kingdom shall not be destroyed.” “All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.” “His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.” And, while the Father brings Him, as his first-begotten, into the world—puts him in possession of his inheritance of the nations—He gives forth the mandate, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” Jehovah has been “well pleased for his righteousness’ sake;” and “when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he saw his seed, he prolonged his days, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hand. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied.” Jehovah has assigned him “the great for his portion, and the strong for his spoil; because he poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Such is the prophetic testimony respecting Jehovah’s satisfaction in the work of his Son and Servant, and respecting the manner in which this satisfaction is expressed.

Yet now shortly attend to the apostolic testimony on the same subjects. In answer to his supplication, as the God of peace, the Father "brought him again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," received him up into heaven, and hath "glorified him with the glory which he had with him before the world was." He hath "made him both Lord and Christ"—"Lord of all." "He hath raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, 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, and hath given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." He "hath committed all judgment to him"—given him power over all flesh—all power in heaven and earth—and commanded that all should "honor the Son, even as they honor" himself. "Because he, who was in the form of God, and reckoned not equality with God a prey—emptied himself—took on him the form of a servant—was made in the fashion of man—and being found in that fashion, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject to him."

And when the end comes, then, in a still more illustrious manner, will the Father manifest, before the assembled universe, how he loves the Son, because "he laid down his life, that he might take it again." He shall then "appear in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. Then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations;" and his righteous sentence, as the supreme Judge, shall fix the eternal destinies of men and angels. Then will it be made apparent to all intelligent beings, that this is the God-man whom Jehovah delights to honor, and indelibly will it be engraved on every mind in the universe, "The Father loveth the Son"—"Behold how he loveth him."

Thus have I endeavored, with all the brevity and distinctness in my power, to lay before your minds the various parts of that magnificent thought which the text expresses—"Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten of God, satisfactorily accomplishing the great work of human salvation committed to him, in the exercise of powers every way adequate to it, is the object of his Father's entire approbation and most tender love." I have turned your attention to the great work of the Son—showed you that this work was committed to him by his Father—unfolded the qualifications which fitted him for such a trust—described the manner.

---

in which, in the exercise of these qualifications, he performed the
work entrusted to him—and, finally, pointing out the manner in
which the Father has manifested, is manifesting, and will manifest,
his entire approbation of the work, and his infinite complacency
in its author.

And now, my brethren, "What think ye of Christ?" You
have heard of his qualifications as a Saviour; you have heard
how he has manifested these qualifications in procuring and be-
stowing salvation; you have heard of his all-perfect atonement;
you have heard of his prevalent intercession; you have heard of
his boundless dominion; you have heard of his resistless power;
you have heard of his infinite grace; you have heard what the
Father thinks of him and his work; you have heard how He
loves him, why He loves him, and how He manifests his love to
him; and shall all this appear to you a matter of slight interest,
of little moment? and shall we, who speak to you of these things,
seem to you as those who mock? can you make light of it? You
may do so now, but you will not be able to do so always—
likely not on a death-bed—certainly not at the judgment-seat;
and how soon may you be laid on the one—placed before the
other! I scarcely think one of you would dare to speak deroga-
torily of the person and work of the Son of God; but if you
think, if you feel, if you act, derogatorily of them, it is the same
thing in the estimation of Him with whom you have to do—
who, while men look at the outward appearance, looks on the
heart. His question is, "What think ye of Christ?" and he
asks it, not that He may obtain information, but that you may be
led to reflection. Oh, remember that, as you judge of Him, you
shall be judged by Him: "By what judgment ye judge, ye shall
be judged." Can your judgment be right, if it is not in accord-
ance with that of God, whose judgment is always according to
truth? God loves Christ; ought not you to love him? God
loves him, because he died to save you, and will you not love
him for this reason? Will you not love him who so loved you,
as not to love his life to the death for your salvation? God is
well pleased with his work; why should not you? God rewards
him; why should not you seek to avail yourself of the high
honor put within your reach, of being workers together with
God in this highest and holiest of his works, rewarding his Son?
You do not rightly estimate him and his work, if you do not, on
account of that work, devote yourselves entirely to him, who
devoted himself entirely for you—if you do not henceforth live,
not to yourselves, but to him who died for you, and rose again;
and, taught by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, learn to deny
"ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously,
and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope,
and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour
Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us
from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Note A, p. 524.

“V. 17-19. ʾIva lábō may be connected with the latter member, τίθημι τ. ψ. μου, or with the former, ἀγαπᾷ. In the last case the sense would be—`Therefore, because I give my life, διὰ τοῦτο ὁ θεός, the Father loveth me so much, that I shall recover my life again.’ This construction, however, is somewhat forced. It is more natural to connect ἰδία with the latter member,—`because I lay down my life that I may take it again;’ for the final end of all the agency of Christ was the resurrection with which his glorification commenced. ἰδία is not necessarily ecstatic merely, ἐκβασιμώς. [See an able essay on the use of ἰδία in the New Testament, by Tittmann, translated by Prof. Stuart for the Bib. Repos. Jan. 1835.] Theod. Mopsuest.: οὐκ ἀποθανατε, ἰδία ανάστη, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ ἰδίωμα τὸ γραμμικόν, ὃς αἰτήσῃ τὸ κλήμενον ἔρχεται. ‘He did not die for the purpose of rising again; but, conformably to a scriptural idiom, he calls that a cause which was merely a consequence.’ Calvin: ‘dict non habiile se morturum, ut absorbeatur ut mortem, sed ut victor mox resurgat.’ ‘He says that he is not about to die in such a way as to be swallowed up of death, but to the end that he might rise again victorious from the grave.’—It would seem that the only ground on which the Father could love Christ for his entrance into death, was the fact that he devoted himself to it freely from a personal impulse of love. He therefore adds, that he of his own accord had come to accomplish those designs of salvation which God had for the human race, through his death. This expression of necessity leads to the assumption, that in the man Christ there was a full personality, human and free, while, at the same time, we cannot suppose that this was separated from the Being of God in him; for it was only by its unity with God that it had power, ἐκσωζεί, to re-assume life. As he correctly marked in the edition of Knapp, this verse is parenthetic, and ταῦταν refers either directly to verse 17, or, as Grolius thinks, to the whole section concerning Christ’s solicitude for his flock.”—Tholuck.

58 Tit. ii. 12-14.
EXPOSITION XV.

CONVERSATION WITH THE JEWS AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.

JOHN x. 22-42.

The extreme circumstantiality of the gospel narratives is a strong presumptive proof of their truth. Nobody can read them without being struck by this characteristic. There is often a very minute detail of circumstances,—a variety of little occurrences are mentioned which could never have entered into the mind of an inventor, but which naturally suggested themselves to the mind of an eye-witness, when about to record the event with which they were connected. The time, the place, the witnesses, are very generally noticed. Now, this was what no impostor would have ventured to do. Is it conceivable, that in a book published in the place where, and soon after the period when, the supposed events are said to have taken place, such a person should state, that at such a time, in such a place, in the presence of such individuals, such transactions took place, while there were many who, from their own experience, could contradict his testimony, and declare that no such transactions happened? Imposture has generally found it necessary to deal in general undefined statements; or, if it descends to particulars, the scene and the period are placed at such a distance as to make confusion difficult. The more of circumstance we introduce into a story, it has been justly remarked, the more do we multiply the chances of detection if it be false, and the means of confirmation if it be true; and, therefore, where a great deal of circumstance is naturally introduced, it proves that the narrator feels the confidence of truth, and labors under no apprehension for the fate of his narrative. Even though we have it not in our power to verify a single circumstance, yet the mere fact of a story being minutely, yet naturally, circumstantial, is always felt to be a strong presumption of its truth. No narratives possess this character in a superior, perhaps in an equal, degree, to the gospel histories. And when it is considered that, at the time of their publication, there were multitudes of highly-influential persons who would have eagerly embraced every method of proving their falsehood, the corroborative evidence thus suggested of their truth will be felt, by all honest minds, to be powerful indeed.

1 Paley.
We have an example of the circumstantiality referred to in the verses which introduce the subject of our exposition. "And it was at Jerusalem the Feast of the Dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch." An interval of from two to three months appears to have elapsed between the occurrence of the events described in the first part of this chapter and of those detailed in the latter part of it. The whole of the transactions recorded from the beginning of the seventh chapter of this gospel down to the 21st verse of this chapter, seem to have taken place at Jerusalem at the feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated in the latter part of our month of September, and in the beginning of October. The conversation we are now about to consider took place in that city at the feast of Dedication, which was celebrated about the middle of our December.

Where our Lord was during the interval, and how employed, has been a question among harmonists, and like many of their questions, it is one, not of very great importance, nor of very easy resolution. It is doubtful whether we have any account of this period, that is, whether any of the events recorded by any of the evangelists took place during it. We know that what is recorded in the gospels is but a specimen of what took place. John, referring not only to his own narrative, but to others, says, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Wherever our Lord was, and however employed, we know that he was about his Father's business, going about doing good, finishing the work of Him who sent him. It seems probable, however, from John's usually relating, with considerable minuteness, the circumstances connected with our Lord's leaving Jerusalem for Galilee, and his returning to that city, that, in this instance, he remained in the metropolis or its neighborhood, during the interval between the feast of Tabernacles and the feast of Dedication.

This last festival did not belong to the number of the divinely-appointed feasts. No festival was appointed or observed in commemoration of the dedication either of the first or of the second temple. They were both solemnly dedicated. We have an account of the one in the eighth chapter of 2d Kings, and in the fifth chapter of 2d Chronicles; and of the other, in the sixth chapter of the book of Ezra. Neither of these dedications took place in the winter. Some have supposed that the dedication referred to was the dedication of the temple as rebuilt by Herod the Great. But though that temple was dedicated with great pomp and solemnity, we have no reason to think that its dedication had an anniversary commemoration. It is all but universally admitted that the dedication of the temple here spoken of, is that which took place after its being purified from the desecration to which it was subjected by Antiochus Epiphanes, who had sacrificed a great sow on the altar of burnt-offerings, and sprinkled broth made of its

2 John x. 22.  3 John xxi. 25.
flesh all over the temple. For three years the services were suspended, and great dilapidations made on the building. In the fourth chapter of the 1st book of Maccabees we read that, after Judas Maccabeus had repaired the temple, and cleansed it from its pollutions, the people kept the dedication of the new altar of burnt-offering for eight days, with songs, and anthems, and harps, and cymbals, worshipping and praising the God of heaven, offering burnt-offerings with gladness, and sacrificing the sacrifice of praise. This dedication took place in the winter season, and was commemorated by an annual festival, not in Jerusalem only, but over the whole land. The historian informs us that "Judas and his brethren, and the whole congregation of Israel, ordained that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year, by the space of eight days, with mirth and gladness." Neither the dedication nor its commemoration were of direct Divine appointment, and the festival seems to have been rather a civil than a sacred one.

There is, I believe, much in the Bible which has never yet been brought out of it, and there has been much brought out of the Bible that was never in it. Many passages of Scripture are not turned to all the purposes they are intended to serve, and some have been turned to purposes which they are neither calculated nor intended to serve. The passage before us—like the famous passage, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church," on which has been built a wondrous superstructure of error and superstition, the mystery of iniquity, a stupendous fabric of imposture—belongs to the last of these classes. From our Lord's being present at this festival, very extraordinary conclusions have been drawn,—such as, that the church, or the state, has a right to decree rites and ceremonies which shall be obligatory on the conscience, and that the consecration of churches, and the commemoration of such consecration, are usages having scriptural sanction.

We have no reason to think that our Lord went up to Jerusalem for the purpose of observing this festival, as in the case of the divinely-appointed Jewish feasts, such as the Passover, and the feast of Tabernacles. He was at Jerusalem at the time of this feast; and, wherever he had been at that time, he would have found it observed. The peculiar services of this festival had no Divine authority, and were, therefore, not likely to be taken part in by one who said, "Well hath Esaias prophesied, In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." And, besides, the ceremonies were of a very childish kind. It was called the feast of lights, from the custom of lighting up candles in every house—one on the first day of the feast, two on the second, and so on, till on the eighth day there were eight candles burning in every house; and sometimes the more zealous lighted a candle for each individual in the family, so that,

——

4 Vide Joseph. Antiq. xii. 7, 7. 1 Mac. iv. 56. 9 Mac. i. 18. Lightfoot, Hor Heb.
9 Mark vii. 6, 7.
in a family of twelve, by the end of the feast there would be a blaze of nearly a hundred candles. All this could be but little to the mind of him who said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” There is no proof that Judas Maccabeus did right in instituting such a custom, or that succeeding generations did right in observing it.

With regard to the practice of the consecration of edifices for religious purposes, we may remark, that there is an obvious propriety, when taking possession of a house to be permanently employed for the worship of God, in invoking His blessing on the religious ordinances that are there to be performed; and if those using the edifice for these purposes choose annually to express solemnly their thanks to God for furnishing them with a commodious place in which to worship him, and for the goodness and truth he has made to pass before them there, I do not see how any valid objection could be made against such an observance; but it is at most a matter of laudable expediency, not of absolute duty. But to seek for sanction to the foolish customs of the popish church in consecrating churches,—painting twelve crosses on various parts of the building, and lighting up a lamp before every cross,—the bishop knocking at the closed door with a pastoral staff, ordering the devil to depart, and invoking the presence of God, the angels, and the saints,—scattering ashes over the floor of the place,—sprinkling the place with holy water,—anointing the crosses and the altar; or for the only somewhat modified fooleries observed in some churches calling themselves reformed, on such occasions—to seek sanction for such mummeries in the passage before us, is absurd indeed. It is difficult to say whether the effrontery of those who employ such arguments, or the folly of those who are, or who profess to be, convinced by them, be most deplorable.

There was a time when I should have thought it utterly needless to make such remarks; but there is much passing around us to impress us with the importance of guarding against introducing anything human into the services of religion, and with the possibility of the most absurd rites of a superannuated and apparently deceased superstition being extensively, though it must be only temporarily, revived. It is impossible to be too zealous in reference to the purity of Christian doctrine and the simplicity of Christian usage. Let us, my brethren, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and refuse to bend our neck to any yoke of bondage. I trust I shall never have occasion to say of you, “I am afraid of you; ye observe days, and months, and years.” “Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holiday;” “let no man beguile you by a voluntary humility;” by a vain show of unsanctioned ceremonies. Sanctify the day the Lord has made holy; and what God has left common, dare not thou to consecrate, any more than to desecrate what he has sanctified. Those who do the one are most likely to do the

---

6 John iv. 24. 7 Gal. iv. 10, 11. 8 Col. ii. 16, 18.
other. The slave of human authority is ever ready to be a rebel against Divine authority.

The only fair conclusion you can draw from the statement in the text is, that our Lord availed himself of the opportunity afforded by the assembling of such multitudes in Jerusalem and the temple, of proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. He could not be absent from some one or other of the places where this festival was observed, for it was observed all over the land of Judea. He would not intermit his beloved work,—and where could he carry it on with greater advantage than in the place where the largest assemblage of men was to be met with? And here, too, he has set us an example that we should follow his steps.

"It was winter." It was so, as a matter of course, at the festival of Dedication; but that does not seem the meaning of the phrase. It was not only the winter season, but it was winter weather; and, therefore, he walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Neither the heats of summer, nor the colds of winter, could hinder him from prosecuting his great object, the instruction of his countrymen.

"The righteous," said Solomon, "shall be held in everlasting remembrance;" and here his proverb is exemplified in reference to himself. The temple he was honored to raise for the worship of Jehovah had long ago crumbled into ruins under the sacrilegious hands, and by the devouring fires, of the Babylonian invaders. The magnificent portico on the east of the temple, 400 cubits long, its principal entrance, overlooking, from a height of 600 feet, the deep valley, along which runs the brook Kedron, remained when the rest of the edifice was destroyed; and though no doubt in the course of ages frequently repaired, continued to retain its original name, and probably materially its original form; for we find that, when Herod Agrippa was petitioned by the people to rebuild it, that employment might be found for the many thousand workmen (18,000 according to Josephus) who had been engaged in the repairing of the temple, which was then finished, a very short time before its final destruction, he refused to allow so venerable a relic of antiquity to be pulled down. But the porch of Solomon, as well as his temple, had long been levelled with the dust; not one stone of it stands on another. Yet the services of that prince to the cause of truth and piety shall never be forgotten; and the latest generation of mankind will study his writings, and venerate him as the wisest of men.

In this spacious colonnade,—forming the eastern entrance to the temple, properly so called, and along with the whole buildings around, included in the general name of the temple,—of which we read repeatedly in the New Testament," we are informed Jesus walked. The picture these words call up to the mind is an interesting one. On one of the days of the festival, the mysterious Galilean peasant is seen walking, as in deep

* Joseph. Antiq. xx. 9, 7.

** Acts iii. 10; v. 12.
meditation, apart from the crowd which bustled around. It was but a few months ago that his enemies here had taken up stones to put him to death as a blasphemer. Yet he returned undismayed, conscious that he was not only "the Lord of the temple," but of his own life, knowing that no man could take it from him till he laid it down of himself.

While thus "walking in the temple in Solomon's porch, then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."\(^\text{11}\) The term "the Jews," here, and often elsewhere in the gospel history, signifies some of the more distinguished among the Jews—some of their scribes or rulers. They eagerly clustered around the wonder-working Nazarine, who had made it very evident that he could not be turned into a tool to serve their purposes, and whom they were determined to crush, perceiving that his influence must be fatal to theirs, desirous of entangling him in his talk, that they might obtain the means either of inflaming popular prejudice against him, or of preferring an accusation against him to the Roman government. They profess to be in a state of great anxiety in reference to the question, whether he was indeed the Messiah. They intimate that their minds were in a state of painful suspense; and, by implication, they blame him as the cause of this. "How long dost thou make us to doubt?"\(^\text{12}\) "How long dost thou keep our minds in suspense, as if on tenterhooks?" This statement, with regard to themselves, was not true, and their imputation against him was utterly unfounded. They were anxious, indeed, very anxious; for this Galilean peasant was undermining their power. Their desire was not to get evidence that he was the Messiah, but, if possible, evidence that he was not the Messiah; or rather, having made up their minds that he was not, and could not be, the Messiah, they were desirous that he, in making a direct claim on Messianic honors, might afford them an opportunity of crushing him, either by means of popular tumult, or by judicial process. The imputation against him was entirely unfounded. If they were in suspense, it was not his fault. Evidence, abundant evidence, had been presented to them; and if they had been but willing to do the will of God, they could not but have known the doctrine, whether it was of God. If they were in suspense, it was not want of evidence, but want of disposition to make an honest use of evidence, that was the cause of it. The struggle in their mind was a struggle between the evidence which seemed to prove that he was the Messiah and their indisposition to receive such a Messiah. Much less evidence would have satisfied them, had he been the kind of Messiah they wished and expected.

It is so still. It is dissatisfaction with the substance of Christianity which induces men to reject it; and this dissatisfaction with its substance they endeavor to cloak under a complaint in

\(^{11}\) John x. 23, 24. \(^{12}\) ἡμῶν αἴρειν. 2 Kings xvii. 29. LXX.
reference to its evidence, as if that, in its kind or measure, were not what they had a right to expect. They impute to Christianity what is owing to themselves. It is not the Gospel which makes men doubt. It is their own ignorance, or prejudice, or immoral principles. The fault is not in the object, but in the eye. The tendency of Christ's words and works—their only tendency—is to make men believe. If men doubt, it is in spite of them, not because of them.

"If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." These words, like the inquiry addressed to John the Baptist, plainly intimate that the Messiah was generally expected to make his appearance at this time: all were, if we may use the phrase, on the outlook for him. They indicate, likewise, that the surmise that Jesus was the Messiah was common. They also seem intended to convey the idea, though a false one, that "the Jews" had been impressed with a conviction, from what they had seen and heard, that Jesus was the Messiah, and that they wanted little more than an explicit declaration from him, to induce them to acknowledge his claim. If he would but speak out, their suspense would be at an end. They acted like "the spies, who feigned themselves just men." If we might believe these men, they were willing—anxious—to acknowledge the Messiahship of Jesus, if he himself would but avow it. Nothing was nearer their heart; but they could not account for this reserve on his part.

The words imply a very dark insinuation against our Lord's character. It is either, 'He knows that he is not the Messiah; but he is well pleased to enjoy the consequence which his being supposed to be so, gives him with the ignorant vulgar;' or, 'Fear prevents him from making an avowal, which he is very much disposed to do, though he knows that it is false.' This was a most unworthy imputation on the Great Prophet, who was "faithful, like Moses," in all his transactions respecting the house or family of God committed to his care; who never "concealed God's righteousness in his heart, but published his salvation in the great congregation."

The vile imputation, though groundless, was not without some appearance of foundation; for Jesus had never yet declared, plainly and openly in public, that he was the Messiah. He never did so, till, under the solemnity of an oath, he was required to do so; and then his acknowledgment was as explicit as was the denial of his forerunner, when materially the same question was put to him. "He confessed, and denied not, but confessed" he was the Son of God, the King of Israel. But hitherto he had declared his Messiahship explicitly only to the twelve disciples, to the Samaritan woman, and the Sychemites, and to the man blind from his birth, whom he had miraculously cured.

The reasons for this reserve are obvious. He could not have made such a declaration without hazarding revolt, or giving his enemies an opportunity of destroying him before his hour was

13 John i. 19. 14 Heb. iii. 2. Psal. xl. 9, 10.
come; and his object was to test men's characters, by the manner in which he revealed himself. There was enough—far more than enough—to convince the honest-minded; there was not so much as to make it impossible for the prejudiced to refuse assent.

The principle on which this demand on our Lord proceeds, that men are entitled to the highest possible degree of clearness, in statement and evidence, in the case of a divine revelation, is a false one. To that degree of both they are entitled that is necessary to reasonable belief, but to nothing more; to such a degree of them as annihilates all objection, all difficulty, they are not entitled. Such information and evidence are seldom given in any case. The words of Jonathan Edwards are full of wisdom: "The human understanding is the ear to which the word of God is addressed, and if it be so spoken that that ear, 'if open and attentive,' may plainly hear it, it is enough. If the mind of God be but revealed to us, if there be but sufficient means for the communication of his mind to our minds, that is sufficient; whether we hear so many express words with our ears, or see them in writing with our eyes; or whether we see the thing that he would signify to us by the eye of reason and understanding. It is not for us to teach God how he should teach us, nor prescribe to him how clearly he should tell his mind and will; but to be thankful for divine revelation as we have it, which, if we do not believe, neither would we be persuaded though it were never so much adapted to our humor. The question at last will be, not, had you such demonstration that you could not resist, but such evidence as you ought to have yielded to; not, was it made so plain that you could not misunderstand it, but was it made plain enough that you might have understood it?" In the case before us, our Lord had not said openly that he was the Messiah; and if he had, there was no ground to suppose that these men would have acknowledged his Messiahship, but the reverse; but he had said and done enough to instruct and convince all who were disposed to be instructed and convinced on this subject.

To the unreasonable and insidious demand of these Jews, "Jesus," with his ordinary depth and "meekness of wisdom," "answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." These words have been very generally interpreted, as if they were a direct answer to the demand of the Jews, and an appeal to his miracles as evidence that what he had previously said, when he asserted his Messiahship, and what he had now said, was true,—"I told you that I am the Messiah." Though he had never done this in so many words, in direct terms, he had often done it substantially. He had used the expressions, "the Son," "the Son of God," "the Son of man," in a way which nobody could doubt referred to himself; and the Son of God, and Messiah, and the Son of man, though by no means synonymous terms, were well

16 John x. 25.
known to be different significant appellations of the same person. He had called himself "the Light of the world," and "the good Shepherd," which, to persons well acquainted with the prophetic writings, were understood to be descriptive titles of the Messiah. He had told them, that "Abraham saw his day," and "Moses spoke of him,"—statements which plainly intimated, that the speaker was "He that was to come." He had thus declared his Messiahship in such a way that no intelligent Jew could doubt his meaning: 'I have thus told you that I am the Christ, and though I did so, you did not believe me. You are not likely to believe me now, if I only repeat, in somewhat more explicit language, the declaration I have so often made to you. Yet you ought to have believed me, for "the works which I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." The miracles which I perform, professedly as a person sent by God, whom I claim as my Father in a peculiar sense, clearly prove that whatever I declare is worthy of credit. No man could do such works as I do, unless God was with him; and God, who is the God of truth, would never affix his seal, which cannot be counterfeited, to what is untruc.'

This brings quite a consistent sense out of the words; yet I more than doubt whether it exhibits an accurate statement of our Lord's meaning. It is too much like a giving the go-by to the demand of the Jews—appearing to reply to it, while, in reality, it does not. I apprehend the view which Dr. Campbell, Mr. Scott, and other good interpreters prefer, is the true one. When men proposed questions to obtain gratification to their curiosity, or food for their malice, our Lord often returned answers which disappointed both expectations, and conveyed reproofs which their own consciences enabled them to understand. It is so here. The verse is but one sentence: "I told you, and ye believed not, that the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." It is as if our Lord had said, 'I have not "plainly"—rather "openly"—declared that I am the Messiah: there are very good reasons why I should not do this; but I have not left you at all in the dark respecting who I am, unless you voluntarily choose to remain so. I have said to you again and again, that the "works which I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me;" they distinctly tell who I am; they, to every intelligent reflecting man, proclaim that I am the Christ.'

Our Lord seems to refer to such sayings as the following, recorded in the fifth chapter of this gospel:—"If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness that of John: for the works

17 παρ' ἡμᾶς.
which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I
do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. Ye have
neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye
have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him
ye believe not. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye
have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And
ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." This is a
summary of the evidence of our Lord's divine mission and
Messiahship. It is as if he had said, 'My own unsupported
testimony, as to who I am, would not be accounted worthy of
credit; but I have a witness who is worthy of all credit. I do
not refer to John, though he, a divinely-authorized teacher of
great eminence, and whom you for a season greatly reverenced,
gave testimony in my favor when you made inquiry of him,—
a circumstance I refer to, not to add to my claims on your belief,
but for your advantage. The witness I refer to is one infinitely
higher than John: it is God, my Father. He bears evidence to
me in various ways. These works, far surpassing human created
power, which I perform, as one sent by him, they declare the
truth respecting me. Nor is this all. You have heard his voice
proclaiming, "This is my well-beloved Son, hear him;" and ye
have seen the cloud of glory from which that voice proceeded.
Nor is this all. In the writings of the prophets, who spake as
they were moved by his Spirit, there is a testimony concerning
me; and yet ye will not come to me that ye might have life.'

The words of our Lord now under consideration plainly mean
more than—'The miracles I work prove my divine mission;'-
the meaning is, 'They declare my distinctive character,—they
prove not only that I am a divine messenger, but that I am the
Messiah. The miracles which I perform, are the miracles which
the prophets declared the Messiah would perform.' The best com-
mentary on them is to be met with in the reply of our Lord
to the message which John the Baptist sent him by two of his
disciples,—"Art thou he that should come? or look we for
another?" And in the same hour he cured many of their
infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that
were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering, said unto
them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and
heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are
cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gosp-
el is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be of-
fended in me.' These were the precise verifications of the
ancient predictions as to what was to take place when the divine
Saviour—the Messiah—appeared. "Then the eyes of the blind
shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped:
then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the
dumb sing." Our Lord's miracles, taken in connection with
ancient prophecy, clearly proved, not only his divine mission,
but his Messiahship. 'I told you then,' says our Lord, 'my

\[\text{Luke vii. 21-23.}\]
\[\text{Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.}\]
mecto show who I am, but you did not believe me when I said this to you; would you more readily believe that direct claim to Messiahship which you are endeavoring to draw from me?" They pretended that they only doubted. Jesus tells them they did not believe. "Skepticism in religion," as Matthew Henry says, "is no better than infidelity." The truth is, they were seeking, in such a declaration, not the means of confirming their wavering faith, the fixing their unsettled minds, but the means of carrying out their fixed determination to destroy him. They would have found in such a declaration new ground of cavil, and have said, 'Thou bearest witness of thyself,—thy witness is not true.' What they needed was, not clearer statements, more cogent arguments, more striking miracles,—it was a humble, docile mind and heart, a disposition to know and do the will of God—to know what was true, to do what was right.

The very interesting question, How is it that, in all ages, so many who have been furnished, in a statement of the truth and its evidence, with the means of Christian faith, have yet remained unbelievers? resolves itself into two inquiries. The first question is, Why do men not believe what Jesus Christ declares to them,—why do they not account it true, just because he declares it? The answer to that question is, Because they do not believe that he is what he professes himself to be. They do not believe the testimony of the Father respecting him, that he is his well-beloved Son—his sent and sealed messenger. They disbelieve the testimony given by him, because they disbelieve the testimony that is given of him. They do not hear the Son, because they do not hear the Father bidding them hear him. The second question is, But why do they not believe the testimony of the Father concerning the Son? This is not owing to any want of clearness in the testimony, nor from any want of sufficiency in the evidence that it is indeed the Father's testimony. It is to be found ultimately in the operation of some immoral principle—in the working, in some particular mode, of the depravity of nature which characterizes all mankind, preventing the testimony from being apprehended in its meaning and evidence, so as to produce its proper effect.

The questions referred to are intimately connected, but they are obviously distinct, and ought not to be confounded. The want of faith in the doctrines arises out of want of faith in the Teacher; and the want of faith in the Teacher arises out of the want of faith in his credentials; and want of faith in these arises out of their not being rightly apprehended; and want of right apprehension arises out of want of right examination; and want of right examination arises out of—it can arise out of nothing else—some modification of immoral principle, profligacy, thoughtlessness, or pride—the pride of worldly distinction, or of wisdom, or of self-righteousness. It is unbelief, in the first of these phases, to which our Lord refers here; and he traces it to its
true cause. "But ye believe not; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you."

These Jews, seeking to entangle our Lord in his talk, speak as if ready to acknowledge his Messiahship, if he would but avow it. Our Lord’s reply is substantially, "There is no room to suppose that, though I were to make the avowal which for your own malignant reasons you urge on me, you would credit it, however plainly and solemnly made. I have told you that the works which I perform, in the name of the Father, contain in them a testimony respecting me sufficiently explicit to all who are desirous, or even not indisposed, to attend to and receive it. You did not believe that statement. You are not disposed to believe any statement I may make; and the reason is, "ye are not of my sheep." Let us inquire for a little what our Lord means by being of his sheep; and then show how these men, not being of his sheep, accounts for their not believing him.

Christ’s "sheep" are obviously those who are peculiarly related to him—his "peculiar people"—the objects of his especial love and saving care. They stand in a peculiar relation to him as the great, the good, the proprietor-Shepherd of the sheep, and are characterized by a peculiar mode of thinking, and feeling, and acting, in reference to him. They are "the election of grace," "those" chosen "of God from among the fallen race of Adam," before the foundation of the world, "to be redeemed by the incarnate Son from all evil," and to obtain "the salvation that is in Him, with eternal glory."

But though "the sheep" and 'the elect' are two appellations that refers to the very same individuals, they are not to be considered as synonymous terms. The truths intended to be conveyed to our minds respecting them by these two designations are by no means entirely coincident. When we call the peculiar people of Christ "the elect," we mean that they are the objects of a sovereign special love and purpose of salvation. Their relation to Christ, as elected, is that of persons who are certainly to be saved by him; but their state and character, as elect, are in no way different from those of the rest of mankind. They are just a part of the fallen family of man, under the curse of the violated law, and common heirs of the universal depravity which characterizes their race; "children of wrath," "children of disobedience," righteously condemned, thoroughly depraved, in themselves hopelessly lost, apart from Christ. When we call them "the sheep," though we are speaking of the same individuals, we mean that their state and character are materially different from those of the rest of their race—the purpose of mercy, in reference to them, has begun to develop itself. Influenced by the Divine Spirit, enlightened by the Divine word, they have been

20 John x. 26.
21 Ammonius’ gloss is good. ei δε μη ἀκολουθεῖτε μοι, οὐκ ἐπείδη οὐκ εἰμι ποιμήν, ἀλλ’ ἐπείδη ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἔστε πρόβατα. Corderii Catena in Joan.
22 χωρὶς Χριστοῦ.
brought to Jesus Christ as the good Shepherd. They have been taught by the Father to come to the Son. In the belief of the truth respecting him, they have been placed, and have placed themselves, under his care. They are thus brought into a relation to Christ which gives them an actual interest in the blessings of his salvation. They are pardoned on the ground of his atonement, justified by his righteousness, and regenerated and sanctified by his Spirit. They hear his voice, and they follow him, a declaration which is not true of any sinner, merely as elected; for, till he is "brought nigh," he is just as far off as those who are never brought nigh—just as guilty, as depraved, as rebellious, as obstinate, as the rest of the race. The sheep of Christ, then, are those who, under a special divine influence, have been induced to believe the truth respecting the Saviour, and whose spiritual state and character have been thus savagely changed.

We are prepared now to reply to the question, How these men not being of Christ's sheep, accounts for their not believing what he says to them? Whether none of these men were among "the elect" we cannot tell; for anything we know, some of them may, at an after period, being taught of the Father, have come to the Son as the good Shepherd; and we are quite sure that if they came to him he would not cast them out. But it was quite evident that they were not, at this time, "of his sheep;" their relation to him, and their disposition towards him, were anything but those of his sheep; and this being the case, it was not wonderful that they should not believe what he said to them. They did not regard him as their shepherd,—how then should they "hear his voice and follow him"? They did not believe his divine mission as a teacher,—how then should they credit his declaration, especially when so much opposed to all that they had been accustomed to consider as true? They did not believe his divine mission as a Saviour, how then should they rely on him for salvation?

Some excellent divines, though, in this instance, not very accurate interpreters, considering "the sheep" and "the elect," as not only descriptions of the same persons, but as synonymous terms, have supposed that our Lord's statement is, "Ye do not believe, because ye are not among the elect." Now, though the faith of every believer must be traced to the sovereign love in which his election originated, manifesting itself in that special divine influence which alone can produce the faith of the truth in the human mind, yet the non-election of the unbeliever is not, in any proper sense, the cause of his unbelief. To himself it is something entirely unknown, and therefore it cannot influence his mind; and, most certainly, there is nothing in the Bible which would lead us to the dreadful conclusion that God prevents men from doing what he calls on them to do. The cause of holiness and salvation is to be sought in the sovereign grace of Jehovah, of which the first operation is the purpose of mercy; but the cause of sin and perdition is to be sought, not in the Divine de-
cree, but in man himself,—his perdition is the just punishment of his sin,—and his sin, his actual violation of the Divine law, is the development of the depravity of his nature. It were dreadful presumption in any minister to say of any set of men, or any individual man. "You do not believe, you cannot believe, because you are not elected;'' not merely because these very persons may yet, in believing the truth, by their calling, make their election evident, but because in no case is it non-election which is the cause of men's unbelief. Unbelief, though it is a negative word, is a positive thing, and requires a positive cause, and, in all its forms, is always charged on men as something for which they are culpable; and it surely was not our Lord's design to furnish these men with a plausible excuse for their unbelief, but, on the contrary, to charge it home on them as a sin which would necessarily exclude them from deriving any advantage from Him, as the great and good Shepherd? It would be strange, indeed, if he who "came not to condemn the world," had in these words (as he has done if they bear the sense which has been, by a mistaken interpretation, imposed on them) anticipated as to these individuals, the final condemnatory sentence of the judgment-day. A plain obvious meaning comes out of the words, 'It is because ye have never seemed to me to be the good Shepherd, and, under this conviction, come into my fold, that ye have discredited what I have said to you; and while you continue in this state, you will continue to discredit whatever I may say. If ye were of my sheep, ye would believe what I have said to you—you would believe whatever I shall say to you.'

The words, "as I said to you," in our version, are connected with what precedes them. If that be the true connection, our Lord must either refer to something he had said which is not recorded—for nowhere in any of the gospels is he represented as having said to those men, or those like them, 'ye are not my sheep'—or to declarations which he had formerly made of equivalent meaning, as, "I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not."'\(^{23}\) 'I know that ye have not the love of God in you.' "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."'\(^{24}\) It seems, however, more probable that these words ought to be connected with what follows rather than with what goes before, or rather that they are the junction of the two statements. "As I said unto you, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me," in which case he refers to what he had said in the discourse delivered to them a few months before in the same place. 'Ye are not my sheep, according to what I said to you.' "My sheep hear my voice."—'they attend to, they believe, they obey me;'' and they follow me'—'they acknowledge me as their leader, their teacher, their exemplar—they take the course I point out to them, and not only point out to them, but in which I go before them. Such is the character and conduct of my sheep. Such is not your character and con-

\(^{23}\) John vi. 36.  \(^{24}\) John viii. 44.  \(^{25}\) John x. 27.
duct. Ye do not hear my voice,—ye do not follow me." "I
know my sheep." 'I know who are sincere believers in me;
and, knowing who are my sheep, I know who are not my sheep,
—and I know that ye are not of my sheep.' You profess an
anxiety to hear, a readiness to receive, an avowal of my Messiah-
ship; but I am not to be imposed on.' To many who professed
faith in him, he committed not himself, for he knew what was in
man; he needed not that any one should testify of man. He
tries the heart and the reins. All things are naked and open be-
fore him. Or, the words may be taken thus, 'I acknowledge
my sheep, but I do not acknowledge you for my sheep.'
This statement respecting the conduct of his sheep towards
him, and his knowledge of them, introduced apparently for the
purpose of illustrating the fact, that the Jews were not his sheep,
and that he was well aware of this, leads to a declaration of the
blessedness and security enjoyed by those who were his sheep—a
declaration which contains in it, and which seems to have been
intended to convey to the minds of the hearers, the truth with
regard to his Messiahship. He does not say plainly, in so many
words, 'I am the Messiah,' but he represents himself as being
what none but the Messiah was, and doing what none but the
Messiah could do, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they
shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my
hand."{20}
This is a declaration equivalent to that of the apostle, in the
Epistle to the Hebrews, "He became the author of eternal salva-
tion unto all them that obey him."{21} To all his sheep,—that is,
to all who, taught by the Father, have come to him—to all who,
under special divine influence, have believed the testimony of
the Father concerning him, and been placed by Him, and have
placed themselves, under his care as the good Shepherd—in other
words, to all believers,—he gives eternal life. In restoration to
the favor, image, and fellowship of God, he bestows on them
true permanent happiness.
It is not said he will give them eternal life, but, he gives them
eternal life. On their believing in him, he puts them in possess-
ion of true happiness, and the state of happiness into which he
brings them is a permanent state. He quickens them, makes
them alive, gives them the capacity and the enjoyment of true
happiness. Their life is never-dying,—they shall never cease to
be happy. The happiness they obtain is the same in nature as
that which, in larger and ever-increasing measure, is to constitute
the felicity of their eternity.
He "gives" them this happiness. It is not worked for, it is
not purchased by them. "Eternal life is the gift of God through
Jesus Christ our Lord."{22} It cost him much to open up a channel
for this eternal life to find its way to us,—"dead in trespasses and

{20} John x. 23.—"οὐ μὴ ἀπελαύνων—Med. non perdent sese. 
καὶ ωθεὶ—nec per
ullum hostem externum eas a manu mea rapit sinam."—Bengel.
{21} Heb. v. 9.
{22} Rom. vi. 23.
sins," sunk in spiritual death, doomed to eternal death; but it comes to us "freely, by God’s grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Indeed, it plainly could not have been got by us at all, had it not been given.

And this "gift and calling is without repentance." They to whom he gives eternal life "shall never perish." The state of grace into which believers are brought is one "in which they stand."—continue—stand by faith—continue in by continued believing—which is secured by the continued influences of that good Spirit which first led them to believe, which the Saviour perfected by his sufferings, has shed forth on them, and will continue to impart to them. It is their relation to the good Shepherd, their being "in his hand," his property, under his care, that secures them; for otherwise they are not secure. They have many and powerful enemies who seek their destruction, and, without his protection, would assuredly effect it; for neither in wisdom nor in power are they at all a match for their foes. But their Redeemer, who is in the midst of them," is mighty —"the mighty God,"—and "none can pluck them out of his hand." No being, human or angelic—no power, earthly or infernal—can accomplish their ruin. "The gates of hell cannot prevail against Christ’s church, as a body, nor against the feeblest of its genuine members. The Father has put them into his hands, and who shall pluck them out of his hands? What power can overpower Him who has "all power in heaven and in earth," and has all that power just for this end, "that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him," —"who is able even to subdue all things unto himself?" And what wisdom can overreach Him whose name is "Counsellor," —"in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," —who is the "wisdom of God," as well as "the power of God." Nothing but a want of love on the part of him whose "saints are in his hand," then, could account for their being "plucked out of his hand." But he who loved them so as to give his life for their salvation,—can he be deficient in love? No; "he rests in his love,"—"he hateth putting away,"—"whom he loves, he loves to the end;"—"Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." "The mountains may depart, the hills may be removed; but his loving-kindness shall not depart from his people, neither shall the covenant of his peace be removed." "His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him."—his chosen ones.

The security of the sheep of the good Shepherd is farther illustrated by the declaration, that "the Father which gave them to Christ is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of his Father’s hand." The Father, in the economy of human sal-

29 Rom. xi. 29. 30 Rom. v. 2. 31 Matt. xvi. 18.
32 Matt. xvi. 18. John xvii. 2. Phil. iii. 21.
33 Isa. ix. 6. Col. ii. 3. 1 Cor. i. 24.
ciii. 17.
35 John x. 29.
vation, sustains the majesty of Divinity. All things are of the
Father, by the Son, through the Spirit. From eternity, the
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blesses all the “faithful”
—that is, all believers—with heavenly and spiritual blessings in
Christ Jesus, in love chose, or elected, them in him before the
foundation of the world, having predestinated them according to
the good pleasure of his will: and, in prosecution of this pur-
pose of sovereign mercy, he in time selects them from the world
lying under the wicked one, takes from among them the Gentiles
a people to his name, calls them with a holy calling, leads them
by his word and Spirit to Christ, and puts them under his care.
It is a question among christian interpreters whether the phrase
now before us—the giving of the sheep to the good Shepherd by
the Father—refers to the first or the second of these. It is not a
matter of vital importance how the question is settled, though I
am disposed to think that the latter is the more probable inter-
pretation. The two things, however, go together—they cannot
be separated—sovereign personal election, and special saving
divine influence. The Father entrusts his Son with the care of
these objects of his sovereign love—his eternal choice—his effect-
ual grace. He puts them into his hand, not as if he were hence-
forth to take no more concern of them, for “the Son does
nothing of himself,” apart from the Father. All His resources
are available—are pledged—for the salvation of the sheep.

He is greater than all—infinitely exalted above all creatures in
all excellence. In the economy of grace, the Father is supreme
—greater than the Son—greater than the Spirit, both of whom
He sends. In essence there is none of the divine persons greater
or less than the rest, for they are one. The reference here is to
the supreme authority, and unbounded power, and infinite wisdom,
of Divinity. “And” here, as in some other places, is equivalent
to ‘therefore.’ “None is able to pluck them out of my Father’s
hand.” The Father also loves them. Had he not loved them,
there never would have been either the Shepherd or the sheep;
and as his love has destined them to “the salvation that is in
Christ with eternal glory,” so he will “keep them by his power
unto salvation”—will “deliver them from every evil work, and
preserve them unto his heavenly kingdom.” He will “take the
wise”—enemies of his chosen—“in their own craftiness,” and
make their devices subservient to the attainment of ends the very
reverse of those for which they were intended; He will “keep
the feet of his saints,” and who can make them so stumble as to
fall into perdition? He will “preserve them for ever;” He will
“perfect that which concerneth them;” He will not “turn away from
them to do them good.” They in whose hearts he puts his fear
“shall not depart from him;” He who begins the good work in
them “will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” The Apost-
tle Paul is a beautiful exemplification of the state of one of Christ’s

26 Eph. i. 3-5.
27 Mark iii. 22.—The LXX. repeatedly render ἐκα τούτῳ τοῦ ἡμῶν Παντοκράτορος ἐκείνος ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκ
τῶν ἁγίων ἐκ μεταφοράς. Is. xliv. 25.
sheep, realizing the truth of the exceeding great and precious promises contained in the passage before us:——“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

It does not appear to me to be possible, without using an extreme degree of violence to the ordinary laws of language, to bring out of these words of our Lord, illustrated by the commentary of the apostle, any other doctrine than that the final salvation of all the sheep of Christ,——all true believers (and all who are true believers are so in consequence of the special influence of the Holy Spirit, given them according to the good pleasure of Him who “has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion”), is as secure as the infinite love, power, wisdom, and faithfulness of the divine Father and Son can make it.

The perseverance thus secured is not a perseverance in the enjoyment of blessedness connected with the Divine favor, irrespective of holiness—a security of heaven, though the individual continue in sin. While God continues what he is, and man continues what he is, such a perseverance can never be anything but the wild dream of the deluded antinomian, or the monstrous creation of the unfair polemic. The perseverance which Jesus promises, and in which Paul exults, is a perseverance in the possession of that holy happiness which, from the very nature of things, as well as by the appointment of God, can grow only out of the continued faith of the truth, which just as naturally and certainly purifies as it rejoices the heart—as certainly transforms the character, as it pacifies the conscience. It is a blessing which none but a true believer can enjoy, and the comfort of the enjoyment of which must correspond to the measure, the extent, and the practical efficacy of his faith. To a regenerate man, under the influence of unbelief, giving way to sinful propensity, this doctrine must be “a well shut up, a fountain sealed.” It is only those who have evidence that they are Christ’s sheep, that can legitimately rejoice in what he says of his sheep. The promise, however, obviously not only secures final salvation to those who persevere in believing, but it secures perseverance in believing to those who have believed through grace. It is by faith, which God works in us by his Spirit, that we are put into Christ’s hand; and if he who truly believes in Christ could fall from faith, he would, by so fall-


39 Rom. ix. 16.
ing, fall out of Christ's hand, and the promise would become of none effect." When Satan desired to have Peter to sift him as wheat, his object was to pluck him out of Christ's hand; but our Lord said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Peter's perseverance in believing was insured by Christ's intercession. The event was certain; but the exhortation to "watch and pray" was not superfluous. Had Peter but regarded it as he ought, he would have been saved agonizing remorse, unspeakable anguish. The perseverance of all true believers is secured in the same way, and they have the assurance of it in the "exceeding great and precious promises" which we have been considering.—promises, however, the sweetness and invigorating influence of which they can taste only in the degree in which they have evidence that they are the sheep of Christ.

It is a great mistake to suppose that this doctrine renders nugatory, exhortations and warnings to true believers. It is by the truth dwelling in the mind, and influencing the conduct—it is thus, and thus alone, that the promise can be fulfilled; and hence our Lord says to his disciples, "Abide in me;" "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." And the apostle tells all, without exception, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." "He that turns back, turns back to perdition." The safety of Paul's companions in the ship was certain; and they had it declared to them that it was certain, by a divine message, "There shall be no loss of any man's life." Yet the same divine message tells them, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Peter assures all begotten to a lively hope, that the inheritance laid up for them should be theirs, and that they were kept to it, by the power of God, unto salvation; yet he commands them to "give all diligence to add to their faith virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and brotherly-kindness, and charity,"—assuring them that it was thus they were to "make their calling and election sure," and that, in doing these things, they were secure of not falling, and of obtaining "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

In the beautiful language of Hooker, "It was not the meaning of our Lord and Saviour in saying, Father, keep them in thy name"—a prayer answered in reference to all his chosen ones—"that we should be careless to keep ourselves. To our own safety, our own sedulity is required; and then, blessed for ever and ever be that mother's child, whose faith had made him the child of God! The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heaven may be appalled, the

48 Scott.
sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory; but, concerning the man that trusteth in God—if the fire have proclaimed itself unable as much as to singe a hair of his head—if lions, beasts ravenous by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have, as it were, religiously adored the very flesh of the faithful man—what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection to God, or the affection of God to him? If I be of this note, who shall make a separation between me and my God? I know in whom I have believed; I am not ignorant whose precious blood hath been shed for me; I have a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power. Unto him I commit myself; his own finger hath engraved this sentence on the tables of my heart: 'Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not.' Therefore, this assurance of my hope I will labor to keep, as a jewel, to the end, and by labor, through the gracious mediation of his prayer, I will keep it."

Our Lord concludes his declaration of the absolute security of his sheep, arising from the impossibility of plucking them out of his or his Father's hand, with these very remarkable words, "I and my Father are one." It has been common to interpret these words of harmony of will and design. 'My Father and I are united in our determination to save the sheep.' This is true; and without violence to the usage of scripture language, these words might be considered as teaching this truth; but the connection of the passage naturally leads us to another mode of interpretation. Harmony of will and design, is not the thing spoken of here; but harmony, or union, of power and operation. Our Lord first says of himself, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand." He then says the same thing of the Father—"None is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." He plainly, then, ascribes the same thing to himself that he does to the Father; not the same will, but the same work,—the same work of power, therefore the same power. He mentions the reason why none can pluck them out of the Father's hands,—because he was Almighty, and no created power is able to resist him. The thing spoken of is power,—power irresistible. And in order to prove that none could pluck them out of his hand, he adds, "I and my Father are one."" One in what? unquestionably in the work of power whereby he protects his sheep, and does not suffer them to be plucked out of his hand. What the Father is, that the Son is. What the work of the Father is, that the work of the Son is. As the Father is Almighty, so is the Son likewise. As nothing can resist the Father, so nothing

42 Tittmann.
43 John x. 30.—'εν εσομεν per εσομεν refutatur Sabellius; per εν Arius."—Bengel.
"Unum sumus, ego et pater; ostendit duos esse quos aequi et jungit."—Tertull. ad Praxeum.
44 "The unity here spoken of must be determined from the connection. Euthymius says:—'εν κατα δύναμιν, ήγουν ταυτόδινομοι et δε εν κατα την δύναμιν, εν άρα και κατα την θεωτητα."—Tholuck.
VOL. I. 36
can resist the Son. "Whatsoever the Father hath, the Son hath likewise. Whatsoever the Father doeth, the Son doeth likewise. The Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father." These two are one—one in nature, perfection, and glory.

This is the plain meaning of the words; and this is the meaning in which the Jews understood them, for they took up stones to stone him as a blasphemer; and instead of saying anything to correct their error, if it was one, he went on to say what must have confirmed it. On the supposition that our Lord is not a divine person, even if it were possible to explain satisfactorily these words so as not necessarily to imply a claim of divinity, which it is not, it would be altogether impossible to account for his using language which was so much fitted to lead, and which has led, the great body of his followers, in all ages, into what, on this supposition, is one of the greatest of errors and sins,—the holding to be God, and the worshipping as God, him who is not God. "If he was not one in nature with the Father, why did he give his enemies such a handle for charging him with blasphemy, by making himself God? and why did he not correct their misapprehensions of the meaning of his words, when he found that such a bad use had been made of them, and could not indeed but see that the manner of his expression gave countenance to it? Why did he present to his sincere followers all but an irresistible temptation—a temptation before which they have fallen—to adore him as one with the Father, if he really was not one with him? Did he mean, by high swelling words of vanity, to blind the eyes of his followers to the most fundamental truth of religion, that 'there is but one God, the Father'? Was it his intention, by words improperly chosen for expressing his real character, to cast stumbling-blocks before his followers, over which the greater part of them, in every country and age, should stumble and fall into idolatry, which was one of those works of the devil that he came to destroy? If Jesus Christ is not one God with the Father, we and our christian forefathers, and have been, as really idolaters as our pagan ancestors. And must we, in that case, not be shut up to say, that Jesus Christ, by his ill-chosen words, if not by his false doctrines, has confirmed, instead of destroying, the reign of idolatry in the world?" Such are some of the inextricable difficulties, the enormous absurdities, in which we involve ourselves, if we deny the doctrine of the true and proper deity of our Lord and Saviour.

In this statement our Lord had, in effect, complied with the demand of the Jews, to say who he was; though he did not in so many words declare he was the Messiah. He intimates that he was "the good Shepherd of whom Isaiah speaks,—he who was to come and save his people,—the divine author of eternal salvation to all who obey him." The Jews, who had professed themselves to be so desirous to hear him say who he was, so

43 Dr. Lawson.
ready to acknowledge him if he would but avow himself to be the Messiah, were filled with indignation on hearing these words, and showed a disposition to execute summary justice on him, as a self-convicted blasphemer.

"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him." Their object had all along been to entangle him in his talk. For this purpose, they assumed an air of candor, and seemed anxious that, in order to relieve them from a state of distressing doubt in reference to a subject of such deep interest, he should make a clear statement of his claims, and of the grounds on which he based them. He did substantially state his claims, and their foundation; but he did it in such a manner as at once disappointed their malignant hope, that, in doing so, he would lay himself open to a criminal charge before the Roman magistrate, and excited to something like madness their feelings of abhorrence against him, as an impious usurper of divine honors. The mask was now thrown aside, and they appeared to be what they were—not anxious inquirers, but determined opposers. Shutting their eyes to the evidence of his divine mission to which our Lord had directed them, they considered his declaration, that he and the Father were one, as a blasphemous assumption of equality with God, and were about to proceed, in a most illegal manner, summarily to inflict on him the punishment which the law of Moses denounced against blasphemy—availing themselves of the stones which, as the repairs of the temple were not yet completed, lay scattered around.

It was not the first time they had thus threatened violently to take away his life. In the same place, not long before, when he had obscurely intimated that he was in reality that "I AM" who existed before Abraham, they took up stones to cast at him." Their hands, on that occasion, seem to have been mysteriously, if not miraculously, restrained. The object of their irritated malignity suddenly disappeared, and made his way safely out of the temple, through the midst of them. The prevention, at that time, of the greatest possible crime—the murder of the Son of God—did not produce its proper effect. The time for reflection was not properly improved; and, when the circumstances of temptation return, they appear as ready for the perpetration of their wickedness as ever.

Even had their view of our Lord's conduct been just, their procedure was unjustifiable. By the law of Moses, no doubt, the blasphemer ought to be stoned to death. But trial and conviction, by the proper authorities, ought in every case to precede the infliction of punishment. The law condemned no man till it had judged him. Our Lord's enemies were for taking the law into their own hands, and for acting at once the part both of judges and executioners.

Their fury excited in the mind of Jesus no alarm. He knew that "his hour was not yet come;" he knew that it was not by

46 John x. 31. 47 John viii. 59.
popular violence, but by perverted judicial procedure—not by being stoned, but by being crucified,—that he had to expiate human guilt, and glorify God. While, then, the uplifted stones were ready to be hurled at his head, unprotected but by the invisible hand of his Father, he calmly expostulates with his infuriated enemies, and mildly asks them the reason why they were preparing to put him to death. By his divine power, he bridled their rage, and restrained their power, till he had set before them the wickedness of their conduct.

"Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?"—i.e., are ye about to stone me? In arresting the lifted stone, how did our Lord manifest his power? showing that he was indeed He who stills the noise of the sea, the noise of its waves, and the tumult of the people; who says to the tide of human passion, as well as of the ocean, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." And, in expostulating with these men, rather than destroying them, as he so easily could have done by a mere act of his will, what a display did he make of his forbearance, long-suffering, and patience? The general force of our Lord’s question seems to be this—I have never done anything to deserve such treatment. As a teacher, I have taught only the truth; as a worker of miracles, I have done only good. I have taught no false doctrine; I have done no injurious act. I have taught many important truths; I have performed many beneficent miracles. If you consider me as deserving to be stoned, it must be for teaching some of these truths,—for doing some of these miracles. Which of them is it that has provoked your resentment, and led you to meditate so severe a punishment?" The word "works" seems most naturally to refer to miraculous operations; yet it is plain that our Lord represents the teaching the truth as an important part of "the work" given him to do. "I have finished," says he, in his prayer to his Father, "the work which thou hast given me to do;" and he explains that work, as manifesting the Father's name to those whom He had given him out of the world—giving to them the words which the Father had given him. We are therefore disposed to consider our Lord as referring to all that he did, as the teacher sent from God, both in speaking and doing things which no man could have spoken or done, if God had not been with him.

These works he terms "good works," literally beautiful, morally lovely, and praiseworthy, or beneficent, kind works. His doctrines were "full of grace," as well as of "truth," and his miracles not more instinct with power than with mercy. What could be more morally beautiful than to teach men saving truth, and to afford them evidence of that truth, by bestowing upon them supernatural blessings? Holy benignity—the perfection of

---

43 John x. 32.  
44 καλά ἐργά. Comp. 1 Tim. vi. 18. Gen. xliv. 4. Numb. xxiv. 13. LXX.
moral beauty—was the leading characteristic both of his doctrine and of his miracles? Our Lord's works corresponded well with the design of his mission, and the nature of the economy he came to establish. The law was introduced in words and works of terror, and Moses' mission was accredited by thunders, lightnings, earthquakes, plagues. The mission of Christ was confirmed, not by striking his enemies with sudden sickness, and destroying them by dreadful deaths, but by healing the sick, dispossessing the demoniac, and raising the dead.

He had performed many of these works. His whole life was spent in teaching truth and doing good. How many miracles are distinctly recorded in the gospel history! how many do the evangelists mention only in general terms! how many do they pass over entirely in silence! "There are many other things," says the beloved disciple, "which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written." The miracles of our Lord are far more numerous than all the miracles recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures.

"I have showed you" these "many good works." Jesus taught his doctrine, and performed his miracles, in public. He drew men's attention to them; he held them up for examination. All the land of Canaan was brightened with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. "These things were not done in a corner." "In all Galilee, and throughout all Judæa, he went about," not, as his enemies said, perverting the people, but "doing good, and healing all that were possessed of the devil." He showed these many glorious works, not only to friends, but to enemies, who used all their malicious craft to discover some blemish in them, but found none—no falsehood in his doctrine, no imposition in his wonderful works.

And these numerous, glorious, public works performed by our Lord, were works from God. He showed them these many good works "from his Father." His doctrine was not his, but his Father's who sent him. It was the Father who sent him who did the works he performed: his doctrine was divine doctrine—his miracles divine miracles. The force of our Lord's words, then, is, 'I have, in my doctrines and miracles, publicly done many things, all of them of a holy and benignant character, and all of them of a divine origin.' This is our Lord's whole history. He did this, nothing but this. Not one word of an opposite kind did he ever speak; not one action of an opposite kind did he ever perform. 'Why then stone me?' says he, 'why, what evil have I done? If this violence be not utterly causeless, it must have its cause in some one or other of the many good works which I have showed you from my Father.' He well knew that the truth of his doctrine, and the excellence of his works, were the real cause of their enmity. They believed not, because he told them the truth; they hated him because of his excellence; and he put the question to compel them, as it were, to open the eyes of their
consciences to the baseness of their conduct. It is as if he had said, 'What injury have I ever done you, that ye seek, in so cruel and lawless a way, to take away my life? I have done you much good; I have never done any of you anything but good.' The ingratitude included in the conduct of the Jews, greatly aggravated their guilt. Our Lord was constantly engaged in bestowing favors on them, while they repay them by seeking to put him to death. His question is, 'In what have I deserved this at your hand?' It puts us in mind of Jehovah's expostulation with his ancient people—"O my people, what have I done to you, and wherein have I wearied you? testify against me." 50

Awed, apparently, by the calm undaunted appearance of Jesus, the Jews desisted from executing their purpose; and, unable to resist altogether the force of his mild and unanswerable expostulation, they "answered him, saying, For a good work we stoned thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, maketh thyself God." 51 Ingratitude is a sin which no man will own. None could be guilty of it in a higher degree than those enemies of Jesus; and yet they will not acknowledge the justice of the charge. They dare not, indeed, call in question the substantial truth of our Lord's statement. The cure of the man blind from his birth, in its whole circumstances, was so striking an example of the many beautiful things which he had showed them from God, and had taken place so recently, that they durst not meet his assertion with a counter one; but they intimate that, however numerous and however remarkable were the good things he showed, there was one bad thing which he had done, which more than neutralized the claims of them all, and justly exposed him to the punishment they had showed themselves ready to inflict on him. They thus prove, that there is no action so bad, but men may find out some excuse for it, not altogether destitute of plausibility.

The principles on which they go, seem quite tenable. No works of any kind can be an excuse for blasphemy, or free from obligation to severe punishment him who is guilty of a foul affront to him who necessarily stands alone in the possession of independent, eternal, infinite, immutable being and excellence. And any mere man is guilty of blasphemy, or speaking reproachfully of God, who claims equality with God. Neither can there be any doubt that they were correct in their facts. Jesus was a man, and though a man, he did claim equality with God when he declared, that he was God's own Son, and that he and his Father were one. In what, then, did the Jews err in their judgment? and where was the fault of their conduct? If I believed that Jesus was a mere man, nothing but a man, I should find it difficult to answer these questions; I could not defend him, nor could I greatly blame them. But Jesus was more than a man; and they had abundance of evidence of this truth. His miracles proved his divine mission; and this divine mission gave

50 Mic. vi. 3. 51 John x. 33.
him a claim for implicit belief of whatever he declared respecting his person and work. And he frequently distinctly claims divine perfections and rights.

There was a great appearance of reason in what they alleged against him, but it was only the appearance of reason. They judged according to the appearance; they did not judge righteous judgment. They were ignorant of what they might have known—of what they ought to have known,—that the Messiah was to be both human and divine, the Son of David, the Son of God,—the man, Jehovah's fellow,—a child born, the Almighty God;—and they resisted the most abundant evidence, that Jesus was the Messiah, and therefore must be both human and divine; and that he was a divine messenger, and, therefore, whatever he stated of himself must be true. This ignorance and unbelief led them to the fearful guilt of blaspheming and murdering him who was God manifest in flesh, while they thought they were doing God service, by exposing blasphemy and punishing a blasphemer.

This places, in a very strong point of view, the danger of false principles in religion: they not only lead men into sin, but they make men mistake the greatest sins for important duties. False views in religion cannot be sustained as an excuse for those sins to which they naturally lead. These Jews most assuredly incurred deep guilt in the charge they brought against Jesus, and in the murderous design they formed against him. If they did not know, they ought to have known; if they did not believe, they ought to have believed.

Let us take care that we distinctly apprehend the truth respecting the person of our Lord Jesus. Mistakes here must be dangerous, may be fatal, and if, on this point, we, like the Jews, embrace false views, and follow them out like them, to their fair practical consequences, we shall have much less to say for ourselves than even they had, and shall not be found guiltless in the great day of account. It is fearful to think of the amount of guilt which must be contracted, under the completed revelation of the Divine will, by the men who, like the Jews, would accuse Jesus of blasphemy, if, like the Jews, they believed—what it is wonderful that anybody should doubt—that he, "being a man, made himself equal with God."

Our Lord's reply to this charge of blasphemy, deserves our most considerate attention. "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."

55 John x. 34-38.
And here let us notice how very different this answer is from what it must have been, had Jesus been, what some of his professors insist he was,—a mere man. On this supposition, it is difficult, indeed impossible, satisfactorily to account for our Lord using language with respect to himself which, to say the least, very naturally suggested the idea, that he claimed equality with God; which, to say the truth, cannot be fairly interpreted without bringing out that idea,—language which none of the prophets ever used anything like,—language not at all necessary to express anything about the origin or design of his mission, but what might have been easily expressed in words incapable of being misunderstood,—language which one, whose great object was to bring the world, sunk in idolatry, back to the knowledge and worship of the only living and true God, would with peculiar care have avoided. But supposing our Lord, being a mere man, had unaccountably used such language, what might we count on his certainly doing, if he, a holy man and a divine messenger, found that his language had been misunderstood, and that he was considered as claiming equality with God—making himself God? Would not he, who sought not his own glory, but the glory of Him who sent him, have disclaimed in the strongest possible terms, such an interpretation of his words, and prevented the possibility of that happening in a single instance, which has happened in the case of the vast majority of his followers in every country and age—the considering him as, by his own distinct declaration, an incarnation of the Divinity,—God manifest in the flesh? There is, however, no such disclaimer. There is not, indeed, a distinct assertion, in so many words, of equality with God. There were obvious reasons why this, in the circumstances in which our Lord was placed, should not be made; but there is what is completely equivalent to it.

Our Lord's reply consists of two parts. In the first, he shows that the charge of blasphemy, which they founded on his calling himself the Son of God, was a rash one, even although nothing more could have been said of him, than that he had been "sanctified and sent by the Father:" and secondly, that his miracles were of such a kind, as that they rendered whatever he declared of himself, as to his intimate connection with the Father, however extraordinary, worthy of credit.

Our Lord's argument in the first part of this answer, is founded on a passage in the eighty-second Psalm; verse 6; "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." These words are plainly addressed to the Jewish magistrates, commissioned by Jehovah to act as his vicegerents in administering justice to his people; who judged for God—in the room of God; whose sentences, when they agreed with the law, were God's sentences; whose judgment, was God's judgment; and rebels against whom, were rebels against God. The words require a few expository remarks. "It is written in your law." The words are not in the Pentateuch, which is often termed "the
law,' but in the Psalms; but it was customary among the Jews to call the whole Old Testament 'the law,' as an authoritative revelation of God's mind and will. 42 'It is written in a book which you admit to be of divine authority.' There can be no doubt as to the reference of the words, "them to whom the word of the Lord came;' they plainly refer to the Jewish magistrates; but there is some uncertainty as to their precise meaning. Some consider them as equivalent to, 'Those who enjoyed divine revelation'—those, as the apostle Paul phrases it, "to whom were committed the oracles of God;' but this was a privilege common to the Israelites, not peculiar to their magistrates. Others have considered the words as equivalent to, 'To whom a divine commission had been given;' and suppose that the reference is to the command in the preceding context:—"Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked." Others view the words as just equivalent to, 'To whom this word of God, this passage of Scripture refers.' It is not a matter of great importance, which of these two last views be adopted, but I prefer the view which considers the words as meaning, 'Who had received a commission from God.' "The Scripture cannot be broken;" 44 i.e., there can be no doubt that there is nothing wrong in this language, for it is the language of Scripture, given by divine inspiration. It is the language of God himself. Our Lord describes himself as, "Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world." "Sanctified," means here, "set apart" by God, by appointment, and suitable qualification; and "sent into the world," commissioned by him to appear among mankind as his messenger, to perform an important work. The words are intended to describe him as the Messiah—the Holy One of God—the Sent of the Father.

Keeping these remarks in view, the meaning and force of our Lord's argument is obvious. 'If, in a book which you admit to be of divine authority, and all whose expressions are perfectly faultless, men who had received a divine commission to administer justice to the people of God are called "gods, and sons of the Highest," is it not absurd to bring against one who has a higher commission than they, and far more abundant evidence of his commission, a charge of blasphemy, because he calls himself "the Son of God"? What was competent to them, is surely competent to him. You dare not charge blasphemy on the psalmist;—why do you charge it on me?'

This is the plain meaning of the words. We must not, however, draw from these words the conclusion some have drawn from them, that our Lord meant to declare that he was not, and did not wish to be called, God and the Son of God, in any other sense than that in which magistrates are called gods, and the sons of God,—as being in some sense God's vicegerent—in some

---

52 John xii. 34; xv. 25. 1 Cor. xiv. 21.

54 "Abey, to render invalid."—Tholuck.
sense come forth from him; much less are we to consider it as a
disavowal that he is God in the same sense as his Father—a
denial that he is equal with God. How could it be so, when he
had just been declaring, that he protects his people as the Father
protects them, that he can do the same things which the Father
does, and that he is indeed one with the Father, in power and
operation. He reasons with the Jews on their own principles.
"Were the Messiah nothing more than you expect him to be, to
charge one who claims Messiahship with blasphemy, because he
calls himself the Son of God, is plainly gross inconsistency.
Your magistrates are called God's sons, and may not your
Messiah claim the same title?"

It may be remarked, before leaving this part of the subject,
that there is a marked difference between the way in which
magistrates are termed "gods," and "the sons of God," in
Scripture, and the way in which these appellations are given to
our Lord. This is the only passage of Scripture where it is
certain that these appellations are given to human magistrates;
and you will observe, that good care is taken to show that they
do not possess true divinity, for it is added, "Ye shall die like men." "In the only other passage where the word may have this
meaning," it is immediately explained as meaning "rulers of the
people." But where Christ is called God, it is either with some
epithet descriptive of supreme Deity, as "God over all, blessed
for ever," "the great God," "the mighty God," "the true God;" or
with the ascription to him of some operation proper to
Divinity, as "the Word was God," "all things were made by
Him;"—and when the appellation, "Son of God," is given to
him, it is not "a son," but "the Son"—"the only Son"—"the
only-begotten Son"—God's own peculiar Son—the Son of
himself.

The second part of our Lord's reply is contained in the 37th
and 38th verses. It is equivalent to—"I have declared that I
and the Father are one—one in power and operation. I do not
call on you to believe this merely on my testimony. Had there
been nothing but my unconfirmed statement, I should not have
expected you to believe it—I should not have blamed you for not
believing it; but I do call on you to believe on my testimony,
supported by the miracles I have performed,—works which
nothing but a divine power could accomplish—works which en-
title him who performs them to entire credit in what he says
respecting himself. These works are the voice of God, and its
utterance is distinct: it speaks plainly, it utters no dark saying.
You cannot refuse to receive the doctrine that the Father and I
are one, that the Father is in me, and I in him, without contra-
dicting his testimony, and calling him a liar."37

It is very plain the Jews did not understand our Lord as de-

35 Exod. xxii. 28. 36 Rom. ix. 5. Tit. ii. 13. Isa. ix. 6. 1 John v. 20.
37 "ἐν ὑμίν ὁ πατὴρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὁ αὐτὸς. Νομίζετε τὸν Βαπτιστὴν τοὺς θανατηφόρους, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῶν ὁ υἱὸς τουτοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς."—Curtius.
parting from, or in any way modifying, those assertions, on which they grounded their charge of blasphemy; and as his arguments failed to produce their proper effect, in convincing them that all that he had said of himself, though strange, was true, they endeavor to follow out their purpose to have him punished as a blasphemer, but in a more regular and legal form than their excited passions had at first dictated to them. "Therefore they sought again to take him." They endeavored to apprehend him, with the intention, likely, of bringing him before the Sanhedrim, thinking that they had now obtained the means from his own lips of substantiating the charge of blasphemy against him. We have no reason to doubt that a divine influence restrained their rage. Our Lord’s hour was not yet come. As God overruled the inclinations of Joseph’s brethren, so that they threw him into a pit instead of putting him to death, as they originally seemed determined to do, so the determination of these wretched men to stone our Lord was changed into a determination to apprehend him,—God thereby intending in this way to deliver him, at this time, out of their hands, that he might live to perform those glorious works which were yet to be done by him before he left the world, that he might, to use his own words, "finish his work." While they were attempting to carry their purpose into execution, "he escaped," we know not how, "out of their hands," and again disappointed their malice, as he had done on many former occasions, and as he easily could have done at the last, if his love to man had not been stronger than death."

In present circumstances, it was plain that our Lord’s safety in Jerusalem could be secured only by a series of miracles; and we find him, therefore, leaving that city and going "again beyond Jordan to the place where John at first baptized"—a comparatively retired and desert region—"and there he abode" for nearly four months up to the time of his last passover. He knew that the doctrines rejected at Jerusalem would be received there. Some of his sheep were there, and he went to seek and save them. He knew what impressions had been made by the ministry of his forerunner, and what were the best means for reviving and deepening these impressions. John was dead, but the fruits of his ministry still remained. According to the prediction of the angel, "Many of the children of Israel he had turned to the Lord their God," and many had been in some degree influenced by his doctrine who were not yet turned to the Lord.

These persons were nearer the kingdom of God than others; and Jesus took advantage of what John had done to carry forward the design of mercy among them. Here "many resorted to him" from the neighboring places, drawn to him by the fame of his teaching and miracles. They had known John the Baptist, and esteemed him highly. They remembered, that though he wrought

---

59 John x. 39. 59 John x. 39. 60 Dr. Lawson.
61 "τὸ πρώτον may mean the same as πρώτος, formerly."—Tholuck.
62 John x. 40. 63 Luke i. 16.
no miracles, he had acquired so high a reputation for holiness and wisdom, that by many he was supposed to be the Messiah. Jesus, by his miracles, had shown that John's declaration respecting him was true—"After me cometh one who is preferred before me." "John," said these unsophisticated peasants, "did no miracle, yet we believe him. Much more is this person to be believed, who confirms his words of grace and truth with such works of power and mercy." They remembered the honorable testimony which John had borne of Jesus, and they witnessed the fulfillment of his predictions. "All things," said they, "that John spake of this man were true." "When men get acquainted with Christ," as good Matthew Henry says, "and come to know him experimentally, they find that all that Scripture says of him is true; nay, that the reality far exceeds the report."

The result of our Lord's four months' abode in this retired region was, that "Many believed on him there." The unbelieving Jews of Jerusalem no doubt thought that by persecuting Jesus they would hinder the progress of his doctrines; but they were under a great mistake. "The things which befell him, by their violence, tended to the furtherance of the Gospel." He retired to a remote district, and there, in a short time, he seems to have made a greater number of disciples than he had done for a long period in Jerusalem and in the cities of Galilee, where he had done most of his wonderful works. Men may drive the Gospel from themselves, but they shall not drive it out of the world. We may refuse to Christ the glory of our salvation, but we shall not be able to deprive him of the glory of the salvation of other men. If Jerusalem or Capernaum refuse to believe in him, he will find many in Bethabara or Ænon who will thankfully accept of his grace. It is not said that all who took notice of his miracles, and John's prophecies concerning him, believed in him. It is not unlikely that not a few who were struck with astonishment were not brought to faith in him as the Christ of God, the Saviour of the world. They wondered at his words and works, but they sought not salvation from him. But many did believe to the salvation of their soul; and John's ministry was more beneficial to them after he was dead than it had been during his life. His words, recalled to their minds, produced conviction there; and the end of his ministry was attained in bringing them to Him, who, though he came after him, was in reality, in the highest sense of the words, "before him." "John the Baptist," says Matthew Henry, "was now dead and gone, and yet his hearers profited by what they had heard formerly, and by comparing what they had heard then, and seen now, they gained a double advantage. They were confirmed in their belief that John was a prophet, who foretold such things, and spoke of the eminence to which this Jesus should rise, though his beginning was so small. They were prepared to believe that Jesus was the Christ, in whom they saw those things accomplished which John foretold.

64 John x. 41. 65 John x. 42.
"The success and efficacy of the word preached is not confined to the life of the preacher; nor doth it expire with his breath, but what seemed like water spilt upon the ground may afterwards be gathered up again." This is an encouraging thought both to preachers and hearers. This is an encouragement to ministers who may seem, to themselves, to have reason to complain of want of success in their labors. They feel as if they were laboring in vain. Let them continue to labor. "In the morning let them sow their seed, and in the evening let them not withhold their hand." There is no saying when the good seed may spring up, and how numerous and large may be their sheaves at the great harvest-home. Assuredly "he that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall return rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him." It is an encouragement, too, to hearers who are complaining of want of profit in attending on Divine ordinances. They feel little sanctifying result; they are not sensibly wiser, better, or happier; their graces continue languid, their corruptions strong. They get little they can turn to present account. Let such persons endeavor to treasure up in their memories the instructions which they weekly receive. They may perhaps find them, in some future part of their life, to be useful to them for purposes they little thought of, and to an extent of which they never dreamed. It has been ingeniously remarked, and with this observation I conclude the discourse,—"When the preaching of the doctrine of repentance has been successful, then the preaching of reconciliation and gospel grace is most likely to be prosperous. Where John has been acceptable, Jesus will not be unacceptable. The jubilee trumpet sounds sweetest in the ears of those who, in the day of atonement, have afflicted their souls for sin." John the Baptist is in more than one sense the forerunner of Jesus.

Henry.
EXPOSITION XVI.

INTERVIEW WITH THE GREEKS—THE CORN OF WHEAT FALLING INTO THE GROUND, AND PRODUCING MUCH FRUIT.

JOHN XIL 20-26.—"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."

"No man taketh my life from me," said Jesus; "I lay it down of myself." This declaration receives striking illustration from the events which occurred immediately before the death of our Lord,—a death, in the highest degree, at once violent and voluntary. It is plain that from the beginning of his public appearance, his miracles had made such an impression on the minds of the great body of his countrymen, as, had he suited his doctrine and conduct to their preconceived views respecting the design of the Messiah's mission, and the nature of his kingdom, would have secured their ready reception of him as the long-expected deliverer, and their zealous co-operation in any plan he might have proposed, for breaking the yoke of foreign dominion, and restoring the kingdom of Israel. Even repressed as this tendency was, by his studiously avoiding, in word or deed, anything like interference with the existing arrangements respecting secular rule, as well as by the spiritual character of his teaching, we find the multitude manifesting an eager desire to turn to account, in the advancement of their object, his miraculous endowments, and even attempting "to take him by force and make him a king."

At no period of our Lord's ministry does his popularity seem to have been higher, or the public expectation to have been more strongly excited in reference to him, than at the time of his last journey to Jerusalem. His crowning miracle, the resurrection of Lazarus—the restoring to life, in the presence of many spectators, enemies as well as friends, a man who had been four days in the grave—was the theme of common conversation, the object of general admiration. He had entered the metropolis of his country in triumph, vast multitudes hailing him as the Son of David.
—the King of Israel come in the name of the Lord to deliver them. He had expelled the traffickers from the temple, who had profaned its sacred courts, while their powerful patrons stood by appalled, not daring even to attempt to oppose him. His friends were full of hope—his enemies of fear. The empty throne of David seemed to invite his acceptance; and, at the time referred to in the subject of exposition, his sitting down on that throne, in a few days, amid the acclamations of a delighted people, must have seemed, to human prospect, a far more likely event than his being affixed to a cross amid the execrations of an infuriated populace.

This seems to have been the impression on the minds of his most influential opposers. "Perceive ye"—said they one to another, perplexed and alarmed—"Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." And so it really seemed to be; for not only do the Israelites, assembled at their greatest festival, appear generally disposed to receive him as the Messiah, but the Gentiles, who, having "heard of Jehovah's great name, and strong hand, and stretched out arm, had come to pray towards" his holy oracle, discover a disposition to seek his presence, that they may do him homage.

"There were certain Greeks," says the evangelist, "among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." It has been a question among expositors who these Greeks were, who are here represented as expressing a wish to be introduced to Jesus. It is well known, that ever since the time of the great captivities, numerous Jews—that is, persons of Israelitish extraction, and retaining the religion of their nation—were resident in surrounding, and even distant, countries. This was wisely and mercifully ordered by the Divine providence, that, even during the continuance of the restricted Jewish dispensation, some of the Gentiles might be instructed in the knowledge of the true God, and preparation made for the more easy and rapid propagation of divine truth among them, when that dispensation of grace, of which "the field is the world," being introduced, "the middle wall of partition" should be broken down, and "the mystery so long kept secret" should be proclaimed to all nations. These foreign Jews are those called "the dispersion of," or, "the dispersed among the Gentiles."

It has been supposed by some, that the individuals here mentioned belonged to this class, of whom we read repeatedly in the New Testament; but this is not at all probable. The name by which they were known was not that employed here, Hellenes, but Hellenists,—not Greeks, but Grecians. The term 'Greek'

1 John xii. 19. 2 1 Kings viii. 42. 3 John xii. 20-22. 4 διαστασαμα των Ελλήνων. John vii. 35. James i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 1. 5 Ελισσέν, as Acts xiv. 1; xvi. 1; 1 Cor. i. 22, &c.—not 'Ελληνοραί, as Acts vi. 1; ix. 29.
Interview with the Greeks.

sometimes signifies a native of Greece,—sometimes a man who speaks the Greek language, whether a native of that country or not,—sometimes a man distinguished by that civilization of which Greece was then the centre, and the limits of which were pretty accurately marked by the prevalence of its language,—and sometimes a votary of that pagan superstition to which, civilized as it was, Greece was devoted. When opposed to 'barbarian,' it is equivalent to 'civilized;' when opposed to 'Jew,' it is equivalent to 'Gentile.'

There seem to have been three classes of persons, to one or other of which there is a reference here. There were Gentiles who, having become acquainted with the religion of the Jews, had embraced it, and sought to obtain all its advantages as a theocratic institution, by submitting to its initiatory rites, and observing all its ordinances. These were called 'proselytes of righteousness;' and, wherever it was practicable, must have made it a point to be present at the great festivals,—where all the congregation of Israel was expected to assemble,—and to worship among the holy nation in the court of the congregation.

There were other Gentiles—Cornelius is a specimen of them*—who had embraced the truth respecting Jehovah, the only true God, as taught in the Jewish Scriptures, abstained from idolatry, and observed what were termed the seven Noachian precepts against idolatry, profanity, incest, murder, dishonesty, eating blood and things strangled, and allowing a murderer to live,—but had not formally enrolled themselves among the Jews. In the time of our Lord, this seems to have been a considerably numerous class. The more reflecting and sober-minded among the pagans found that the necessities of their consciences and hearts could not be satisfied with the fables and rites of heathenism, and found in the writings of the Jewish prophets what they could not find in the fables of their poets, the speculations of their philosophers, or the rites of their priesthood. One of the Roman satirists (Juvenal) speaks contemptuously of Judaizing Romans as no uncommon class in his time; and one of their moralists (Seneca) says that so many of the Romans had passed over to the Jewish religion, in his time, that "it was adopted throughout all the earth, the conquered giving laws to the conquerors." These are the persons who are spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, as "worshippers of God"—as "devout Greeks;" and the female part of them, as "devout, honorable woman." These also frequented the Jewish festivals; but not being permitted to enter the court of the Israelites, they worshipped in the court of the Gentiles.

Besides these two classes, there seems to have been a third—a smaller one—Gentiles who had not renounced the religion of their country, but who honored Jehovah, not as their own God, but as the God of the Jews, and who were in the habit of visiting the temple of Jerusalem to do homage to Jehovah, just as

* Acts x. 1.  
7 Tholuck.  
8 Sat. xiv 100.
they visited Delphi to do honor to Apollo, or Ephesus to do honor to Diana, or the Capitol to do honor to Jupiter.

The persons here spoken of probably belonged to the second class. They are said to have been among those who had come up to the feast. The words signify, "who were in the habit of going up to the feast"—the festival-frequenters—as we speak of church-goers—a description which would not suit the last class, whose visits were occasional and rare; and the first class were so identified with the Jews that they were not likely to find any difficulty of addressing Jesus as one of their own nation.

These gentile proselytes had probably come from a great distance. They had heard of the fame of Jesus as a teacher and miracle-worker, and, it may be, they were peculiarly interested in him, in consequence of having understood that he had vindicated their rights, in expelling, from the court of the Gentiles, the traffickers, whose noisy transactions would ill comport with the performance of devotion, and who had done this for the express purpose that God's house might not, by being made a den of thieves, be prevented from being what the prophet declared it was intended to be—"A house of prayer for all nations." We may suppose such thoughts as these to have passed through their minds: 'This must be a wonderful man. A Jew himself, he asserts the rights of us Gentiles. He must be a true son of that Abraham in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed. Here is no Jewish selfishness and pride. He is kind to the Gentiles; severe on the Jewish rulers, who contemn the Gentiles.' What if this should be He "to whom the Gentiles are to seek,"—He "to whom the gathering of the people is to be,"—"the light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of God's people Israel!" If such thoughts had found their way into their minds, it was not wonderful that they should be desirous of becoming acquainted with their unknown benefactor, who might turn out to be "their promised Saviour."

It is difficult for us to form correct ideas of a state of society so peculiar, and especially so different from that which prevails in our own country and age, as that of the Jews in the days of our Lord. The intercourse between Jew and Gentile was of a very restricted kind, and the Jewish rabbis were in the habit of assuming much state, and keeping the common people at a great distance. These Greeks did not, then, presume to address directly one whom they understood to be a great teacher, and whom they had heard the populace hail as the King of Israel; but they applied to one of his disciples, Philip of Bethsaida.

How they came to apply to him—whether he was personally known to some of them, or they had accidentally been brought into conversation with him, or there was something peculiarly friendly and trust-inspiring in his countenance or manner—it is needless to inquire. This is plain, that they made their application in the most becoming manner, showing that they cherished
sentiments of high respect both for Philip and for his Master. "Sir, we would see Jesus,"—"We are desirous of being allowed to look on so distinguished a person,"—and their manner, no doubt, supplied what was wanting in their words,—"We would count it a great favor if you could bring us into his presence." They seem to have been of the same disposition as the centurion, whose faith our Lord so highly eulogized, who declared that "he was unworthy that Jesus should come under his roof." They felt that they were "Gentiles—aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," unworthy to share in the peculiar privileges of the holy nation; but they would reckon it a high favor to be admitted but for a little to the sight, and, if he would so far honor them, to the conversation, of one who obviously had a kind regard to the Gentiles.

These Greeks "would"—wished to—"see Jesus." Jesus, my brethren, is as really present, though in a spiritual and invisible manner, at all the sacred festivals appointed by God, as he was at the Jewish Passover. He is here to-day, in the midst of us, according to his promise. Our coming here is an intimation that we would see Jesus; and assuredly we shall be here to little purpose if we do not see him. Oh! let us all say in our hearts, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple,"—to behold him who is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," "I beseech thee, O Lord, show me thy glory,"—"thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ.""

Philip did not do, what perhaps we might expect he would have done, lead these Greeks directly into his Master's presence, glad that they were disposed to do him honor, and sure that he was disposed to give them a welcome reception. "Philip cometh and telleth Andrew." It was not to Philip so plain a case as it may seem to us. He knew his Master to be meek and lowly in heart, and that he never cast out any that came to him. But he knew, too, that he had declared, that he "was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and that he himself, along with his brethren, had been forbidden "to go into the way of the Gentiles, and even to enter into the cities of the Samaritans," in proclaiming the approaching reign of God." Jesus had indeed healed a gentile centurion's servant, but it was at the entreaty of the Jews. He had healed the daughter of the Syro-Phenician woman, who was a Greek; but it was after rejecting the petition of the disciples in her favor. Besides, aware of the strength of the national prejudice against Gentiles, Philip might doubt, how far he might be serving his Master's interests, as he understood them, with the great body of the Jews, who certainly would not be the more disposed to receive him as the Messiah,
that he seemed to be on familiar terms with uncircumcised Gentiles.

In these circumstances, we cannot wonder that Philip should consult Andrew, "who was in Christ before him," as to the course proper to be followed. Andrew, whom ancient tradition speaks of, not only as of note among the apostles, but as of great authority, does not seem to have advised the immediate introduction of these Greeks to Jesus; not improbably thinking, that it would not be right, without consulting the Master, to do what his enemies the Pharisees might represent as a slight put on the people of God, or an insult offered to the temple.

It is scarcely possible for Christians, and especially christian ministers, to be too cautious in their conduct respecting anything that may involve the honor of the Saviour, or the success of his cause. The two disciples take a safe course; they go and tell Jesus. He knew what should be done. And this is just what we should do, when we are doubtful as to any step connected with the cause of Christ: consult with a confidential christian friend, and along with him, seek the advice of our common Lord. We cannot expect such an answer as Andrew and Philip received, but by his word, and providence, and Spirit, he does, in answer to prayer, often relieve the perplexities of his people, and make them to know the path in which they ought to go. No voice comes to the ear, but a "word" in the Scriptures is brought to remembrance that says, often very plainly, "This is the way, walk ye in it." 13

We are not told, in express words, what was the direct result of this communication. Some have supposed that our Lord waived the proposed interview with these Greeks, as we are not told that he consented to see them, nor that they were introduced by the disciples; and that he merely availed himself of the request having been made, as an occasion for uttering the deeply impressive sentences which follow. If it were so, there could be no ground of complaint against our Lord. He had not yet been "lifted up." It was after this that "all men were to be drawn" by him—"to him." And he might not choose to afford occasion to those who sought occasion, of saying, he preferred Greeks to Jews.

At the same time, while the text does not expressly say that our Lord admitted these Gentiles to an interview, it is quite obvious it does not deny this; and that the facts recorded are fully as accordant with the supposition, that there was such an interview, as with the opposite one. Such a supposition seems best to harmonize with the general spirit and conduct of our Lord, who never cast out any that came to him. We are therefore disposed to think, that Philip and Andrew, having gone into the court of the Israelites, where Jesus probably was among the Jewish worshippers, informed him of the wish of these Greeks, and that he, coming out into the court of the Gentiles, granted them the interview they so eagerly desired.

13 Isa. xxx. 21.
What took place at that interview, we shall never know in this world. That, and the many other unwritten deeds and words of our blessed Lord, will form interesting subjects of conversation among the blessed in the heavenly state. Oh, how much will the apostles have to tell us besides what they have written! No danger of their having forgotten it, even after the lapse of eighteen centuries.

We cannot say with certainty, whether those words which follow were addressed to Philip and Andrew, on their making their communication, or whether they were spoken to the Greeks on our Lord's coming to them, or whether they were addressed to the disciples in the presence of the strangers, after the interview between them and him had closed. The last seems, upon the whole, the most probable opinion. "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.""[14]

The words, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified," are equivalent to, "The time when the Son of man—the Messiah—is to be remarkably glorified, is near at hand; and what has just taken place, is a token and a foretaste of that rapidly-approaching glory." There is a striking similarity between these words, and those of our Lord on seeing the Samaritans of Sychar coming out in a body to meet with him: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest."[15] The period was at hand, when our Lord was to be glorified by his sufferings; when the transcendent excellence of his character—his entire devotedness to God—his love of righteousness—his hatred of iniquity—his compassion for men—were to be most illustriously displayed; and when the great design of his mission, in the satisfactory expiation of the sins of men, was to be accomplished, in a manner reflecting the highest honor on him. The hour was at hand, when our Lord was to be glorified for his sufferings,—in being raised from the dust of death, and being taken up into heaven, and set at the right hand of God, and having all things put under his feet.

But the glory to which our Lord refers, obviously is the glory to be derived from vast multitudes of men—Gentiles as well as Jews—submitting to his authority, and sharing his salvation. It is as if he had said, "These Gentiles seeking intercourse with me, indicates that the period is just at hand, when the ancient oracles shall be fulfilled—when, in Abraham's seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed—when to Shiloh shall be the gathering of the nations—when the decree shall be fulfilled, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of

[15] "the is not the adverb "when," but it marks the final end, 'the time when he must be glorified.'"—THOLUCK.
the earth for thy possession"—when "all the ends of the earth
shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the nations shall
worship before him"—when "men shall be blessed in the Mes-
siah, and all nations shall call him blessed"—when he shall "call
a nation that he knew not, and nations that knew not him, shall
run unto him"—when he shall be "given as a witness to the peo-
ple, a leader and commander of the people"—when he shall "see
his seed, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall
prosper in his hand"—when he, in the conversion and salvation
of an innumerable multitude, out of every kindred, people,
tongue, and nation, shall "see of the travail of his soul, and
shall be satisfied."  This period was just at hand.  The day of
Pentecost was approaching, and then commenced that glorifica-
tion of the Son of Man here referred to.  In the anticipation of
these glories, the Saviour prepares himself for the sufferings
which were to precede, and to purchase them.

It would be well if his true followers would prepare themselves
for their death, as he did for his.  Glory awaits them as well as
him; and they, like him, must die ere they inherit glory.  But
if, like him, they would but look steadily to the hope set before
them, they would, like him, "endure the cross, and despise the
shame," and rise above the fear of death; yea, like him, they
would be "straitened" till they pass through death into life—
through the dishonor of the grave, into the glories of heaven.

There can be no reasonable doubt that these were substantially
the thoughts which were in the Saviour's mind, and which he
expressed in the words, "The hour is come, that the Son of man
should be glorified."  But they probably excited very different
ideas in the minds of the disciples, full, as they still were, of
Jewish prejudices respecting the design of the Messiah's mission,
and the nature of his kingdom.  They probably thought that our
Lord meant to declare, that he was now about to "take to him
his great power and reign;" that he was now about to ascend the
throne of David, and subdue the world; and that the homage
of these Gentiles was but the first-fruits of the fast-approaching
harvest of the complete subjugation of the pagan nations to the
holy people, and to Messiah their prince.  To put down such
rising hopes, our Lord informs them—though in somewhat enig-
matical language—that his death was necessary, in order to the
glory of which he had been speaking; and that all who would
share with him in his glories, must, like him, be prepared to re-
linquish life, and all earthly blessings, to obtain them.

In order to understand our Lord's declaration in reference to
himself, it is necessary distinctly to apprehend the meaning of
the figurative language in which he has clothed it: "Except a
corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but
if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."  The figure is generally
misapprehended, both here and where it is employed by the
apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 36, to illustrate the resurrection of the body.

17 Psal. ii. 7; xxii. 27.  Isa. lv. 4, 5; liii. 10, 11.  18 John xii. 24.
It has been supposed that the death of the seed of corn takes
place after it is buried in the earth, and consists in the decom-
pition of the outer coatings of the germ, which takes place pre-
viously, and in order to its beginning to grow. Both our Lord
and his apostles are truer to nature in their representation than
the most of their expositors. With them, in the sign, as well as
in the thing signified, death is represented as preceding, not fol-
lowing, burial. The apostle's words are, "Thou fool, that which
thou sowest is not quickened, except it die," or be dead; and our
Lord's, literally rendered, are, "Except a corn of wheat, falling
into the ground, be dead, it abideth alone; but if it be dead, or
have died, it bringeth forth much fruit." The fact referred to,
in both cases, is what takes place, not after, but before, putting
the seed into the ground. It is not the green, living grain, full
of succulence, that in this state of apparent vigorous vegetable
life, is productive. Let the plant continue as long as it may in
this state, it will not reproduce itself—none of the seed will ever
be productive; and, if severed in this state from the plant, and
thrown into the ground, it would perish. It must ripen; it must
become what has been termed dead-ripe, ready to fall from the
withered dead stalk; and, if it be in this state when it falls into
the earth, then will it bring forth much fruit. After lying under
the mould for a short season, it will spring up, and ultimately
"bring forth thirty, sixty, or even an hundred fold." A person
unacquainted with the vegetable system would not expect this—
he would rather expect life from living grain than from dead
grain. It seems strange that the parent plant must wither, and
the seed lose all apparent vegetable life, and be cast into the
ground, where it might be expected to lose any life that might
be latent in it; yet it is this dead and buried corn of wheat which
brings forth much fruit. 19

The application to the case of our Lord is natural, and, to us,
is easy. The glory our Lord anticipates, is the glory of numerous
followers of all nations. That is not to be gained by his contin-

19 "Interpretum tantum non omnes elegantem illum et veram imaginem incepta
interpretatione deformant. Translatium quippe est et ab antiquissimis tem-
poribus per manus quasi traditum, miram hic inducere corruptionis, sepulture et
mortis confusionem. Mortem quidem et sepulturam confudit, e. g. Grotius in
adnotatt. ad. h. I. praecipiens, 'Granum morti cum aeri creptum terra occultatur.'
'Semina non nisi corrupta et dissoluta fecundius surgunt,' scribit Tertullianus
Apolog. xlviii. 'Diversum semina omnia corpus post corruptionem rursus os-
tendunt,' circumseript Semlerus. In quo ne suspicantur quidem, quam non
absa modo commemorantem faciant divinum scriptorem, sed vel ejus consilio
plane contraria. An vero Paulum adeo ne physica quidem imbutum esse existi-
mas qui opinetur semina in terre gremio putrescere aut corrupti? aut cor-
ruptum granum ullam posse revivescere unquam? Corrupta vero semina, in
eternum non progerintur, mortis aeternae vorius exemplum prabereat; non
vite recuperanda. Quanto rectius Paulus, ex ea tantum parte confest qui inter-
cedit similitud. Sepulturam sationi sequiparamdam recte affirmat. Eam mors
prcessorit necessae est. Neque enim sepelient homines ut moriantur, sed quod
vida defuncti in vivis esse desierunt, ideo exanime corpus humant. Ita nes
granum, ut Grotio placet, terram condunt, ut moriantur; sed ut defunctum morti
eripiatur et revivescat." "In arbre herens immaturum pumum terram mandari
et progerminare nequit."—Jeanz.
uing to live, and, as a mighty prince and conqueror, subduing the nations. That was the way in which the disciples were hoping that the Son of man would be glorified. But not one follower, of the kind that would glorify him, could be obtained in this way. He must not continue to live,—he must die, otherwise he must remain alone; but if, having died, he be laid in the earth, he shall have many followers. His death is the necessary and certain means of securing that vast multitude of spiritual followers, all bearing his image, all like him, in whom consists the Son of man's glory; for "in the multitude of his people is our King's honor."

The connection of the death of our Lord with his having a numerous spiritual offspring, is most intimate. The multitude whom he came to save were lost, dead—dead under a judicial sentence, which, if not removed, must keep them dead for ever. His dying in their room was the appointed and the appropriate method of obtaining deliverance from that condemning sentence which shut them up under death, and it was also as the concluding act of a perfect fulfilment of all righteousness, that which secured to him restored life, increased spiritual power—even "all power in heaven and in earth"—power to quicken whom he will. His becoming dead in the flesh was necessarily connected with his being quickened in the Spirit, and becoming, as the second Adam, the "quickening Spirit" of his innumerable spiritual children. It was thus that he obtained as his reward the dispensation of the Spirit of life, whose vivifying influences have quickened vast multitudes "dead in trespasses and sins," and made them show forth the glories of him through whose death they live. Without dying, he could not have had such a retinue of saved men. Had he never become incarnate, he would have remained alone, so far as man was concerned, in the possession of his uncreated glory; and even had he become incarnate, but not died, he might have entered heaven on the ground of his absolute perfection, but no sinner of the human race could ever have followed him;—so far as they were concerned, he would have remained for ever alone. This is the doctrine of the evangelical prophet,—"When he shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

It was but little of this our Lord's disciples could at this time understand. But all this is folded up in the figure,—all this they distinctly understood afterwards; and even at this time the words served to prepare them for what was coming, and to prevent them from supposing that all hope of a glorious harvest was cut off, when they saw, as they soon did, the corn of wheat, having died, fall into the ground. They needed it, both to check their vain hopes, and to prevent them from, in the hour of trial, making shipwreck of their hope in him who, they trusted, was to redeem Israel.

20 Pro. xiv. 28. 21 Isa. liii. 10, 11.
The Saviour, after having stated thus enigmatically, but very impressively, that his near approaching glory could be obtained only by the sacrifice of his life, goes on to inform his followers that in his cause they must be ready to make every sacrifice, even to lay down their life; and that if they do so, they shall assuredly share with him in his rewards and honors. “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.”

The word translated “life” signifies both life and the soul; and here, as in some other of our Lord’s apothegmatic remarks on this subject, which are often seeming paradoxes, there is a reference to this double signification. It is as if he had said, ‘He that loves his life shall lose his soul; he that hates his life shall preserve his soul to life eternal:’ or, ‘He that loves his life in a low sense of the word “life,” shall lose his life in a far higher sense of the word. He who hates his life in the lower sense, will preserve his life in the higher sense, to life eternal.’ ‘A wonderful sentence this,’ as one of the fathers (Augustine) says: ‘a man, by loving his life, risks its less; and by hating it, secures its safety. Unwise love is in effect hatred, and wise hatred is in effect love. Happy the man who, by this wise hatred, preserves unto life eternal, what, by unwise love, he would have lost in death eternal.’ The person who loves life is the person who, from a fear of losing the wealth, or honors, or pleasures of this life, or life itself—from a fear of exposing himself to poverty, contempt, suffering, and death—neglects duty, or commits sin—refuses to become a follower of Christ, or having become one, abandons his profession, or acts a part unworthy of it. That person shall lose his life in a far higher sense than he has retained it—he shall lose his soul. He shall not cease to exist, but his everlasting existence shall be but a capacity of feeling everlasting loss—of enduring everlasting misery.”

He who hates his own life, is he who acts as if he considered wealth, honor, pleasure, life itself, all things of comparatively no value, brought into competition with the claims of truth and duty—who readily sacrifices the former to the latter—who, when these things claim to be regarded above those, rejects the claim, and readily parts with all rather than disobey God or deny Christ. That person shall keep, guard, preserve, his life, to eternal life; when he seems to be throwing away his life, he is securing it. He shall live eternally, and his eternal life shall be life indeed—the highest measure of the highest kind of life of which man is capable. One hour’s life in that world to

22 John xii. 25, 26.—“I have found this promise as full of sweetness, that I value it above all the riches of the world.”—Richard Baxter. *Self Ignorance.*

23 “αὐδᾶν, like ‘amarē,” is used to denote a natural inclination; ἀγαπᾶν, like ‘diligere,’ to make a rational determination. This distinction is not, however, strictly adhered to by John; comp. iii. 35, with v. 20, and xxi. 15.”—Tholuck.

24 μακίας, is not used *absolutely,* but *comparatively*—Hebraēt. Mal. i. 3. Prov. xiii. 24.
which death conveys him who has laid down his life in the cause of Christ, is worth millions of ages in this world, so polluted with sin, so darkened with sorrow.

The expression, "If any man serve me," is plainly equivalent to, 'if any man be disposed to be, or profess to be, my servant.' The disciples did so;—the Greeks were probably inclined to do so. Let such a person follow me. To follow Christ, is a term which often includes all the duties of disciples—embracing the Saviour's doctrines, obeying the Saviour's laws, promoting the Saviour's interests, imitating the Saviour's example. It is the last of these ideas that seems to have been most prominently before the Saviour's mind when he used the words before us. 'Let him follow me, in not loving his life to the death; in hating it, when the honor of God and the salvation of men require him to lay it down. Let him follow me, in willingly submitting to privation, and contempt, and torture, and death; let him take up his cross, as I am about to take up mine, and be willing, when God calls him, to be nailed to it, as I will soon be. Let him follow me; and if he follow me to conflict, he will follow me to victory; if he follow me to suffering, he will follow me to reward; if he follow me to death, he will follow me into life eternal.' He well knew that to him death was the path of life—the cross, the steps to the throne. He knew where he was going, and was as certain of reaching his destination as if already there. He speaks like one already in heaven. Jesus was the Prince of believers, stronger in faith than even Abraham our father. His faith gave a present existence in his mind to what was future. He knew that, ere the end of the week, his soul was to be in paradise, and that, ere two months elapsed, he should, in his sacred glorified body, be sitting at the right hand of the Father, angels and principalities, authorities and powers, being made subject to him. "Where I am," i. e., 'Where I shall soon and certainly be, my servant, who follows me in self-renunciation to suffering, shall assuredly follow me. He shall rest with me after his labors; he shall enter into my joy; he shall reign with me in life, sitting with me on my throne, even as I sit with my Father on his throne.' "It is a faithful saying, if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

Our Lord adds, "If any man serve me," i. e., 'If any man thus serve me, by following me,' "him will my Father honor." The true servants of Christ are those who follow him wherever he leads them, believing and avoiding whatever he teaches them, doing whatever he bids them, submitting to whatever he appoints for them, imitating his example, acquiescing in the disposition of his providence, and persevering in their attachment to his person—their obedience to his laws—their promotion of his interest, though dishonor, or poverty, or death itself, should be the consequence. Jesus passed through dishonor and death to accomplish our salvation, and we are not really his servants if we are not willing to bear his cross. "He left us an example,"
when he suffered for us, "that we should follow his steps," and our thus showing that we have his Spirit, by imitating his conduct, is the proof of our being his servants. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" and if any man have the Spirit of Christ, he will be conformed to Christ, so as to be "in the world as he was in the world," and to "walk as he also walked." Such servants of Christ shall not only be with him where he is, but they shall be honored and rewarded by his Father,—they "shall inherit all things." It shall then appear what they are as the children of God; their hidden life shall be revealed—their concealed glory manifested to the admiration of all intelligent beings, while "the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them to fountains of living waters," and "the Lord God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "They shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of their God." Such shall be the reward of the servant who follows Christ,—of every servant who follows Christ. "If any man"—No Jew can share in these rewards but by following Christ; no Gentile, thus following Christ, will be excluded from them.

The terms of discipleship, my brethren, are unaltered, and unalterable. Are we thus servants of Christ? We call him Lord, Lord; but are we following him in self-denied service and suffering? Are we lovers of our lives in the sense in which he requires us to be haters of them? i.e., are we lovers of ourselves more than the lovers of him,—fonder of earth than heaven,—more taken up with time than eternity? Let no man be deceived—let no man deceive himself—on this point. A mistake here, even though temporary, is hazardous—if persisted in, must be fatal. We can have no part in making atonement—it is unnecessary—it is impossible; but we must have part in the spirit in which the atonement was made. If we have not, we may rest assured we are not yet savingly interested in him; and, continuing destitute of this spirit, we never can be sharers of the blessings procured by him. No man who is not really disposed to lay down his life for Christ—to lay down his life for the brethren—to make his glory and their salvation the great objects of life—can have satisfactory evidence that Christ's death for sinners has become effectual for reconciling him to God.

Let us rejoice in the flood of light which events have shed on our Lord's enigmatical words, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." How did the Saviour, having become dead—powerless—in the flesh, become quickened—powerful—in the Spirit! How does he who died in weakness, through that death, live in the power of God! How glorious already, in earth and heaven, the fruits of that wondrous death! What a mass of holy happiness has been produced by it! What millions on millions of perfectly holy spirits are turning the eye of the

21 1 Pet. ii 21. 22 Rom. viii. 9. 27 Isa. liii. 3
mind continually to the cross and grave of the Saviour, and saying in their hearts, 'All our happiness, and all our hopes, are due to him who hung there, who lay there.' How barren, but in fruits of the curse, had our world been, but for the falling of that corn of wheat dead into the earth; and though the heavenly paradise would have bloomed in varied beauty, not one of our doomed race would have been among those trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, in which he is glorified. Oh, what do we owe to the cross and to the grave of the Saviour! God forbid that we should glory save in that cross. God forbid that we should shrink from following him who hung on it—to the cross—if he require it—to the grave, as we know he has appointed it. It is thus only that we can follow him to the throne.

EXPOSITION XVII.

THE INTERNAL SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

John xii. 27, 28.—"Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say! Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

"It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The sufferings to which the incarnate Son of God, as the substitute of sinners, was exposed, by the appointment of his Father, as the supreme righteous Governor of the universe, for the purpose of making him what he is—an all-accomplished Saviour—in the possession of all the merit, all the authority, and all the sympathy, that are necessary for the performance of all the parts of his saving work in the best possible manner—were numerous, varied, and severe. He was, by way of eminence, "the man who saw affliction by the rod of God's wrath,"—"the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." With every form and degree of suffering, in which the holy displeasure of God against the sin of man is manifested, he was familiar, in so far as such suffering was compatible with his absolute innocency, his perfect holiness; and he could say, with an emphasis quite peculiar to himself, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by: behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, where-with the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

His external sufferings were of no common kind. During his whole continuance on earth, from the manger to the cross, he seems to have been almost entirely destitute of the comforts and accommodations, and very scantily supplied with the necessaries of life. He was indeed "poor and needy." "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man had not where to lay his head." He was the object of the malignant contempt of the upper classes of society, and of the contumelious abuse of the lower. Blasphemer and demoniac—impostor and madman—glutton and wine-bibber—friend of publicans and sinners—were the appellations commonly given him. He was worn out by fatiguing ill-requited labors—by hunger.

1 Heb. ii. 10. 2 Matt. viii. 20.
and thirst—by debility and exhaustion; and, in the tortures of the scourge, and the agonies of the cross, he experienced the utmost intensity of pain of which the human frame is capable. When we read the history of his sufferings, we cannot think it wonderful if the ancient oracle concerning him were fulfilled to the letter. "Many were astonished at him: his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Yet these visible sufferings were the least part of his sufferings. They were but, as it were, the imperfect external type of severer internal agonies. "The iron entered into his soul." A mysterious hidden fire, kindled by the breath of Jehovah, righteously displeased at the sins of men, consumed his vitals, as man’s substitute—the victim for man’s transgressions. The comparative severity of the two species of suffering may be judged of by the fact, that the pressure of external calamity, however heavy, never extorted a complaint from Jesus: but the exceeding great weight of inward anguish wrung from him sobs and groans,—"strong crying and tears." His spirit was one which could sustain any bodily suffering; but the wounds inflicted directly on itself were found all but intolerable. Well has it been said by one of the fathers of the church, on this awfully mysterious subject, "The sufferings of his soul were the soul of his sufferings."

The passage of Scripture which I have now read brings before our mind the Saviour’s inward sufferings, his exercise under these sufferings, and his divine Father’s approval of his exercise under these sufferings. The Saviour’s inward sufferings are expressed in the brief, but impressive, exclamation, "Now is my soul troubled." His exercise under these sufferings is described in the words which follow: "What shall I say?" Father, save me from this hour! But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." And the approbation of this exercise by his divine Father was manifested in a miraculous voice from heaven, as narrated in the closing words of the text. "Then came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." To these three interesting topics, it is my purpose to turn your attention in the remaining part of this discourse; and I pray that the discussion of them may, by the accompanying influence of the good Spirit, prove a suitable preparation for that solemn religious observance, to engage in which is the great object of our coming together to-day—an observance in which is commemorated our Lord’s "pouring out his soul unto death, making it an offering for sin"—for our sins—for the sins of many.

I.—THE SAVIOUR’S INTERNAL SUFFERINGS.

The first topic to which the text calls our attention is the inward sufferings of the Saviour. "Now is my soul troubled."

When the mind is free from uneasiness, both from felt and feared evil, from the experience of present, and the apprehension of future, suffering, it is figuratively said to be calm or tranquil—like the bosom of the lake when not even a breath of wind ruffles its glassy surface; when anguish, and sorrow, and terror, take possession of the mind, then it is said to be troubled, agitated, or convulsed, like the ocean in a storm, or the earth reeling under the impulses of an earthquake. The plain literal meaning of the words before us is: 'I am suffering extreme inward anguish of spirit; I am oppressed with fear; I am tortured with anxiety; I am overwhelmed with sorrow.' The language used respecting Abraham, when the miseries of his descendants were, in prophetic vision, brought before his mind, is still more applicable to his illustrious descendant, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed,—when he felt and feared the pangs of that sacrifice of expiation, that travail of soul, by which he was to bear, and bear away, the sins of his people. "An horror of great darkness fell upon him"—a thick and dark cloud intervened, as it were, between him and the light of his Father's countenance.

This is not the only place in which we read of our Lord's trouble of spirit. In the thirteenth chapter of this gospel, at the 21st verse, we read that "Jesus was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, That one of you shall betray me," and it is plainly but a higher degree of the same state of mind which we find described by the evangelists when they narrate the mysterious scene in Gethsemane, and represent the Saviour as being sorrowful, sore amazed, very heavy, in an agony; which he himself utters in these words, so instinct with anguish; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and which found an expression stronger than language could furnish, in the great drops of sweat like blood, which, during the intense cold of midnight, fell to the ground from his prostrate body.

The original terms employed by the evangelists in describing this state of mind, are peculiarly full of meaning. I do not know that our translators could have found more appropriate and expressive terms in our language to render them by than those which they have employed; but they come far short of the force of the phrases used by the sacred historian. They are explained by one who well knew their force, as describing our Lord "as on a sudden possessed with horror and amazement; encompassed with grief, and overwhelmed with sorrow; pressed down with consternation, and dejection of mind; tormented with anxiety and disquietude of spirit."

It is a natural, and a highly important and interesting inquiry, What was the cause of this deep mental suffering—this unutterable, this inconceivable, inward anguish? It is obvious that no cause can be found in our Lord's external circumstances, either

---

in the case before us, or when in the garden of Gethsemane. There was no scourge, no cross, no executioner, in either case. In the case before, there was much to awaken sentiments of satisfaction and pleasing anticipation. The multitude appear at least disposed to recognize him as the long-expected son of David, Messiah the Prince. He has entered Jerusalem, the divinely-chosen seat of David's empire, in triumph, amid the joyful hosannas of thousands, as the rightful inheritor of his throne; and, in the eager desire of the Greeks to see him, he has obtained an earnest of the fulfilment of the promise, “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” These circumstances seemed calculated to excite a holy triumph in the Saviour's mind; and so they did. They produced their appropriate effect. “He rejoiced in spirit,” and said, “The hour is at hand when the Son of man shall be glorified.” But how is it that all on a sudden his “harp is turned into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep”? How is it that he who had just said in triumph, “Now is the Son of man to be glorified,” here says in deep distress, “Now is my soul troubled”? And even at Gethsemane we seek in vain for the cause of his inward sufferings in his external circumstances. He is in a place endeared to him by the most sacred and soothing recollections. It was the scene of his confidential intercourse with his disciples,—of his still more intimate fellowship with his divine Father;—and there were none with him but his three disciples, chosen friends, to whom, of all human beings, with the exception of his mother, he was most fondly attached.

He could not be experiencing remorse, which embitters, in many cases, life’s sweetest enjoyments, and casts an appalling gloom over the fairest scenes of mortal happiness. His conscience, thoroughly enlightened, fully instructed, in every claim which the holy, just, and good law had on him, and exquisitely sensible to the slightest deviation from rectitude—could not find, on the retrospect of his whole life, a single action—no, not a single thought or feeling—which was not in perfect accordance with the will of God. In no case could he wish that he had thought, or felt, or acted differently from what he had done. The testimony of his conscience was, that he had kept his Father's word—that he had glorified him on the earth. Words which, in the mouth of any other man, even the holiest, would have argued the most intolerable arrogance—the most deplorable ignorance—both of God's law and himself—were in his case the words of truth and sobriety. “I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.” For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from

7 Isa. xlix. 6.  
8 Job xxx. 31.
mine iniquity." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." 19

It could not be the fear of his impending bodily sufferings, numerous, varied, and agonizing as he well knew they would be, that so troubled him (though no doubt their anticipation did produce uneasy feelings); for not merely did he know that these sufferings were soon to terminate, and that they would be more than compensated in the delights and glories of that state into which they were to introduce him; but we find that when the season of torture and death arrived, he was perfectly composed and firm in the midst of his sufferings. He discovered no weakness, no agitation, no fear, no perturbation then. He "gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair: he hid not his face from shame and spitting. He set his face as a flint; he was not discouraged." 20 He complained not of the cruelty of his enemies; he sunk not under it. He "endured the cross; he despised the shame." It is surely not probable that the bare prospect of those sufferings which he so undauntedly sustained, should have so troubled his soul, so disquieted his spirit, so convulsed him with terror and agony. To account for our Lord's inward sufferings on any such supposition, is to do him foul dishonor. It were to sink him far below many of his followers. They have met the most cruel tortures with fortitude; and, instead of discovering dread or dejection, have manifested the most placid tranquillity and the most triumphant hope.

There is but one way of accounting satisfactorily for this sudden, deep, inward distress. An invisible arm smites him, and that arm is the arm of the Omnipotent. On the head of that spotless, perfect man,—the man who is God manifest in the flesh,—Jehovah has made to meet, as on the victim for human transgression, the iniquities of us all. Execution is now being made, and he feels himself responsible to answer it. He has sorrow, for his hour is come, that hour in which he must become a curse, and be made sin in the room of man. Jehovah the judge, is about to complete this work,—this strange work. The sins of men, in all their odiousness and malignity, are present to the Saviour's mind, and present to his mind as the sins of those to whom he is so closely related, with whom indeed he is identified, as sins for which he must make adequate expiation. The more he loved those in whose room he stood, the more would his trouble of soul be increased, just as we are more affected by the crimes of a relative or friend, than by those of a stranger. During this season of soul-trouble, he was deprived of all sensible manifestation of the complacency of his heavenly Father,—the life of his life,—the very element of his soul's happiness. The sun of consolation was totally eclipsed. He felt that he was just about to be given up to the will of his enemies, and to all that sin deserved, without one cheering ray of his Father's countenance.

9 Psal. xviii. 21-23. John iv. 34. 10 Isa. L 6, 7
to mitigate his distress. Our depravity, and the weakness of our faculties, prevent us from forming adequate conceptions of the suffering which flowed from this source, but we can easily see that it must have been inconceivably great. The more he loved God—and he loved Him with all his heart—the clearer views he had of his glory and excellence, the more that he delighted in fellowship with him, the greater must have been his anguish when deprived of this fellowship, an anguish which found utterance in these words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" He was consciously enduring, so far as a perfectly human being can endure, those penal consequences of sin which are the expression of the Divine displeasure against it. He did not suffer, he could not suffer, the agonies of a guilty conscience; but he did suffer,—when he uttered these words he was suffering, as far as the thing is possible,—the wrath of God due to sin. He was in the hands of the living God as the victim for sin, and he felt himself to be so. The import of these awful words was fully understood, by being actually endured: "Who knows the power of God's anger? According to his fear, so is his wrath." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." He learned what subjection to the violated law of God was, by the things which he suffered." He had the most awful views of the majesty, and power, and righteousness of God, as the author and vindicator of the law, armed with all that judgment which is included in its curse,—in the act of executing the most tremendous threatenings of his word, and called on, in his public character, to inflict on him, as the surety of sinners, the full desert of their atrocious rebellion. When he thought of God in this way,—and for the moment his mind was entirely filled with the thought,—how could he but be troubled?

I have only further to remark, that in those seasons of intense inward agony, one of which is described in our text, we have reason to believe he was peculiarly exposed to the attack of malignant spiritual beings. That was their hour and the power of darkness. How they distressed his mind, we do not know, for we have not been told; but it is easy to conceive, how irritation at their shameful defeats in their former attacks, would induce them, in the hour of Divine desertion, to redouble their assaults; with what extreme loathing he must have shrank from their polluted, and to all but himself contaminating, intercourse; and how their impious and malignant suggestions must have shocked and pained his holy, sensible heart. Every method which Satanic ingenuity and activity could devise and execute, to harass and perplex, to depress and unnerve, to torture and agonize, was then in active operation.

But we must have done with this topic. The mind labors under such a subject of contemplation. Its greatness oppresses,—its strangeness confounds us. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. It is high, we cannot attain to it." It is a mystery,—a mys-

11 Psal. xc. 11. Heb. x. 31; v. 8.
tery of kindness. The soul of the God-man is thus troubled, that our souls might enjoy rest.

Before closing our illustration, however, it may be proper to inquire,—What are the purposes which these mysterious inward sufferings of our Lord Jesus were intended to serve? It may be answered in a word or two. They were intended, like all his sufferings, to "make him perfect," i.e., fully to accomplish him as a Saviour; and it is easy to perceive how they did this. They formed an important component part of the expiation which he offered for the sins of men. Mere bodily suffering, however severe, could not have made expiation for the sins of men, which are "spiritual wickednesses." The agonies of the soul must be united to the pains of the body, to form an appropriate and adequate ransom for human transgressions. The example of our Lord would have been incomplete, had he not showed his people how they ought to conduct themselves under inward troubles, which often form the severest part of their trials; and finally, without having experienced inward sufferings, he could not have sympathized with his people under these trials, when most of all they need his sympathy. But now, in deep despondency and in struggles with Satanic suggestions, he has a fellow-feeling with them. His soul has been troubled,—he has been sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful. "He knows what strong temptations are, for he has felt the same."

"Our fellow-sufferer still retains,
A fellow-feeling of our pains,
And still remembers in the skies,
His tears, his agonies, and cries." 12

II.—THE EXERCISE OF OUR LORD'S MIND UNDER THESE INTERNAL SUFFERINGS.

Let us now turn our attention to the second topic which our text brings before the mind—The exercise of our Lord's mind under these inward sufferings. That is exhibited in these words, "What shall I say?" 13 'Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name.'

It has been common to consider these words, "What shall I say?" as a further expression of inward sufferings; as if they were equivalent to, 'My sorrows are unspeakably great. They cannot be uttered in words;' or, 'they are such as to confound and stupefy me, so that I do not know what to say.' And then, they who take this view, consider our Lord as under the influence of extreme agitation and suffering, presenting the petition, "Father, save me from this hour,"—deliver me from my impending sufferings; and then they apprehend him as checking himself by the thought, "For this cause I came unto this hour;" and presenting, instead of the prayer, "save me from this hour," the petition, "Father, glorify thy name."

12 Logan. 13 "Quid dicam? non quid eligam. Coll. Phil. i. 22."—Bengel.
I cannot help thinking, that this is not the just view of the subject. There can be no doubt, that our Lord's inward sufferings were such as no human language could adequately describe, and their effect on any mere human being, would have been to confound and stupefy, and probably to induce one, without reference to consequences, to pray God to save him from what, in the very prospect, had so agonized his inmost soul. But I do not think that our Saviour could have presented the petition, "save me from this hour," in the only sense the words seem capable of bearing, 'deliver me from dying.' He reproved sharply his disciples when they would have dissuaded him from it. He was straitened till the baptism of blood was accomplished. He desired with desire to eat the Passover, which he knew was to be succeeded by his death. In the garden, indeed, he prayed that that cup should pass from him; but that cup was not the cup of death, but the overwhelming anguish that then oppressed his spirit.

Keeping in view the absolute perfection of our Saviour's character, the following seems a more satisfactory mode of explaining these very remarkable words. The words, "what shall I say," appear to express the deliberating of our Lord's mind, as to what course he should follow in his present circumstances of deep inward distress; q. d., 'To what quarter shall I turn for relief under this intolerable load? It is needless to turn to men. The great body of men are no way disposed to pity me, and even those who love me best, can do little in sympathizing with what they can so little understand; they can do little to relieve me. I turn to God: and what shall I say to Him? He can sustain, he can comfort, he can deliver me. Shall I say, "Father, save me from this hour"? Shall I ask him to release me from my covenant engagements? I have become surety for strangers, and am smarting for it. Shall I beseech him to cancel the bond? No; "for this cause" I came unto this hour." To offer up an atoning sacrifice in my death, is the great design of all the Divine decrees and operations, which have brought me to this point. And shall the decrees of the Eternal be frustrated?—shall the oracles of ancient prophecy be falsified?—shall the redemption of men's souls, which is precious, cease for ever? No; I will not say, "save me from this hour." I will say, "glorify thy name,"—display thy perfections,—promote thy glory,—finish thy work in righteousness; I am ready, I am willing, notwithstanding this horror of darkness, to meet all the sufferings of the appointed hour. Let the end be gained. I quarrel not with the means. Oppressed nature may suggest the wish, "save me from this hour," but enlightened reason, holy principle, forbids it to be indulged, even for a moment." "Glorify thy name" (that is, in other words, 'manifest thy character'): 'I

14 "We cannot exactly determine to what διὰ τοῦτο refers. We might supply διὰ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὁ ταραύτη με. Euthymius thus interprets διὰ τοῦτο ἐπιρρήθην εἰς τὸν καιρὸν διὰ τὸ ὠφθαλμεν εἰς τοῦτο. The prayer πάτερ, δόξαν κ. τ. ἀ. takes the place of πάτερ, σώθον με."—Tholuck.
have come to reveal thee, the Father,—and this is the sum of my desire, that thou shouldest be glorified in me, both in life and in death. Let the revelation be completed, at whatever expense of agony. Let thine omnipotence be manifested in inflicting on me, the willingly-devoted victim for human guilt, the adequate manifestation of thy displeasure against that evil and bitter thing, and in sustaining my human frame under what, in itself, is enough to crush the universe. Let thy wisdom be manifest in gaining the best of ends,—thy glory, in the salvation of an innumerable company of otherwise hopelessly lost immortals, by the strangest, yet the best, means, “making him who knew no sin, to be sin,”—in taking the wise in their own craftiness,—in destroying, by my death, him that has the power of death,—in making the apparent triumph of thine enemies, the means of their complete and lasting overthrow. Let thy righteous-ness be manifested in the execution of the just penalty of thy law for transgression, and in the rich reward of him who “suffered, the Just One in the room of the unjust.” Let thy faithfulness be manifested in the fulfilment, both of threatenings and of promises, the most unlikely to be fulfilled. Let thy mercy be manifested in the number of the saved,—in the num-ber, and value, and endurance of the blessings bestowed on them—and above all, in the means employed to make their salvation consistent with, illustrative of, the perfections of thy character, and the principles of thy government, even in the not sparing thy Son, but delivering him up as a sacrificial victim in the room of them all.

In this exercise of the Saviour’s mind, under his inward sufferings, there is much to fix our attention, and draw forth our admiration. He is neither sullenly silent, nor fretfully querulous. Though knowing that he deserved no suffering, still less such suffering, he makes no complaint. He does not “open his mouth, and curse his day.” He does not lose self-possession. The rational part of his nature, under the influence of religious principle, keeps the sentient and emotional part of his nature in due restraint. He considers what is right and befitting in his strange and most trying circumstances, and acts accordingly. He goes not to man, but to God, for consolation and relief. He will not ask for that which, though in itself most desirable to human feeling, was, he knew, inconsistent with the Divine de-sign. He subordinates everything to what is, and ought to be, the great end of the universe—the manifestation of the Divine glory; and not only is willing to submit to whatever is necessary to the attainment of this, but is desirous that, at whatever expense of suffering to him, that end may be attained.

What a beautiful display of character is here made by our Saviour, in this exercise of that love which is the fulfilling of the law! Love to God, in the form of entire submission to his will—devotedness to his glory; love to man, in a readiness to suffer the extreme of shame and agony, in becoming obedient to death—
death under the curse—the death of the cross—for our salvation. If we have a particle of spiritual discernment, such calm, principled, disinterested, self-sacrificing love, must call forth the sentiments of adoring esteem, gratitude, and love. If it do not, we prove clearly that our mind is not in accordance with the mind of God; for so well pleased was the eternal Father with his righteous servant—his beloved Son—in this manifestation of unchangeable devotion to the great end of his mission, in circumstances the most trying, that he broke the awful silence which he generally maintains, and, from the most excellent glory, through the opening heavens, proclaimed his acceptance of the petition, and his complacency in the petitioner,—"Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

III.—THE FATHER'S APPROBATION OF THE SAVIOUR'S EXERCISE OF MIND UNDER HIS INTERNAL SUFFERINGS.

This Divine approbation of our Lord's exercise of mind under his inward sufferings, is the last topic to which the text calls our attention. The words just quoted contain in them the great principle of Divine operation. The whole universe is a system of Divine manifestation: God has glorified his name, and will glorify it. This is the whole history of the past and the future. He has manifested himself, and will more and more manifest himself, to be what he is—the infinitely powerful and wise, the infinitely holy and benignant Being. But the words before us plainly refer to a particular economy of manifestation, compared with which all other manifestations are but as "the hiding" of his glory,—his manifestation of himself in the person and work of his incarnate Son, as the great Mediator between God and man—the Saviour of a lost race.

God had already glorified his name, and manifested his character, by Christ Jesus. The faithfulness, the power, and the mercy of Jehovah, had been gloriously displayed in the incarnation of the eternal Word: his faithfulness, in fulfilling his great promise to the church,—his power, his bringing into personal union natures so distant as the Divine and human, his mercy, in not withholding his Son, his only Son, when the salvation of lost men required his interposition. In the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the character of God, as holy love, was more fully unfolded than it had been in any former revelation. His miracles were all of them manifestations of divine power and mercy; and, in the habitual temper and behavior of him who was "God manifest in flesh," the moral beauties of the Divine character were so displayed, as that it might be truly said, that he who saw the Son saw the Father. The glory of God was "in the face of his Son," when "he dwelt among men, full of grace and of truth." He was the visible image of the invisible God.

The declaration, "I have glorified my name in thee," was fitted
to comfort and sustain the Saviour's heart. It was just equivalent
to the declaration, 'Hitherto the great purpose of thy mission has
been fully accomplished. Thou camest to make known my name,
and thou hast done so. The Father has been glorified in and by
the Son. "Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased."

The second declaration is a more direct answer to our Lord's
prayer, "Glorify thy name,"—"I will glorify it again." 'I will
glorify it in the awful events of "that hour," the prospect of
the inward agonies of which has filled thy soul with apprehension,
and in the events which shall be its results.' There never was
such a manifestation of the Divine glory as in the cross of Christ.
"Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God."
To use the words of McKaurin, the first of our Scottish theolo-
gians, "Here shine spotless justice, incomprehensible wisdom,
and infinite love, all at once; none of them darkens or eclipses
the other; every one of them gives a lustre to the rest; they mingle
their beams, and shine with united, eternal, splendor. The
just Judge, the merciful Father, the wise Governor,—no other
object gives such a display of all these perfections; yea, all the
objects we know give not such a display as any one of them.
Nowhere does justice appear so terribly awful, mercy so sweetly
amiable, or wisdom so unfathomably profound. The glories that
are found separately in the other works of God, are found united
here. The joys of heaven glorify God's goodness; the pains of
hell glorify his justice; the cross of Christ glorifies both of them
in a more remarkable way than heaven or hell glorifies any of
them. The justice of God is more awfully displayed in the suf-
f erings of Christ, as the substitute of sinners, than in the tortures
of devils; and his mercy is far more brightly manifested in these
sufferings, than in the joys of angels."

But the Divine declaration looks beyond the event of the
atoning death of our Lord to its glorious results. The declara-
tion is equivalent to—‘I will glorify my name; I will manifest
my power, and wisdom, and faithfulness, and kindness, in ful-
filling all the "exceeding great and precious promises" made to
thee in the eternal council; I will show myself to be the God
that keepest covenant; I will "not leave thy soul in hell, neither
shalt thou, my Holy One, see corruption;" "I will show thee
the path of life;" I will say to thee, "Sit on my right hand, till
thine enemies are made thy footstool;" "I will give thee the
heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the
earth for thy possession;" "the great shall be thy portion, the
mighty thy spoil;" "thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul,
and be satisfied;" "thou shalt be the light of the Gentiles, and
my salvation to the ends of the earth;" "in thee shall my glory
be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."" The resur-
rection, and ascension, and glorification of our Lord—the effusion
of the Holy Ghost—the overthrow of the kingdom of Satan—
the conversion of the world—the eternal salvation of an inaumer-

13 Psal. xvi. 10, 11; ex. 1; ii. 8. Isa. liii. 12; xlii. 6; xl. 5.
able company of our self-ruined race,—all these glorious events, embodying in them a manifestation of the name of Jehovah, are promised in these pregnant words, “I will glorify my name.”

This declaration was intended and calculated to sustain the mind of the God-man under the pressure of his unspeakable agonies, as well as to confirm the faith of his followers, and prepare them for the severe trial to which it was to be exposed. This is not inconsistent with what follows—when our Lord says, “This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes”—these words plainly meaning, ‘This voice came not solely or chiefly for my sake, as if it had been necessary to make me steadfast to my purpose to finish the work given me to do.’ This declaration seems plainly like the visit of the angel in the garden, to have comforted him; for we find him immediately adding, “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me.” And not long after we find him saying, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.”

Thus have I shortly considered the interesting topics which the text brings before our mind. The inward sufferings of the incarnate Son of God—the exercise of his mind under these sufferings—and the Divine approbation of this exercise of mind, miraculously manifested.

The subject is replete with important practical instruction. Our time only permits us to glance at a small portion of it.

It tells the impenitent sinner what he must endure, if he obstinately refuses to avail himself of the “redemption that is in Christ through his blood.” The sinner who dares to meet a holy God at the judgment-seat, unshiled by the atonement of Christ, may here see what he has to expect. How shall he endure—endure for ever—what filled the soul of the incarnate Son, as the substitute of sinners, with insupportable anguish, and made him say, “Now is my soul troubled”—“My soul is sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful—sorrowful even unto death”? “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Ah, “can thy hands be strong, and thy heart endure, in the day that he shall deal with thee?” “He”—Jehovah—“has spoken it; He will do it.” “If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” If he spared not his Son, when he bare your sins, think you he will spare you, when you appear before him bearing your own sins? Oh, ere it be too late, in the faith of this truth, seek, what you shall assuredly find, security in his atonement. “This man is a hiding-place from the storm, a refuge from the tempest.” “Give glory to God” by accepting of his proffered grace, “before your feet stumble on the dark mountains” of hopeless ruin.

It bids the Christian rejoice in the thought, that the cup of

wrest, which his sins have deserved, has been drunk to the dregs by his divine Saviour, and that, instead of it, there is put into his hand the cup of salvation.—

“Then—then he paid that dreadful debt,
Which men could never pay;
And gave those honors to the law,
Which sinners took away.

“Now shall his chosen people find
Salvation in his name;
For he hath borne thy heavy load
Of sorrow, pain, and shame.

“Twas in a most accepted time,
His prayer arose on high;
And for his sake the Lord will hear
The needy when they cry.”

Let the Christian, in the anguish of Jesus, see the foundation of his own joy—the security of his happiness. Let him love that Saviour who so loved him, as willingly to submit to unspeakable anguish of spirit, as well as extreme bodily pain, to obtain his salvation. Let him, in his hours of deep mental suffering—and few Christians are strangers to these—seek relief in the sympathy of Jesus; and, in the faith of his atoning agonies, he will be enabled, with “Christian” at the sepulchre into which his burden fell, to say with a merry heart, “He has given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death;”* Let him, under all affliction, endeavor to manifest the calm, self-possessed, pious, benignant, self-sacrificing spirit, with which Jesus bore his heaviest afflictions—his soul-sufferings,—and let him rejoice that it is the benignant purpose of his Father, and our Father, that all our sufferings, as well as his, shall be made conducive to the manifestation of his excellence—to the glory of his name—in our salvation.

To us, in our present circumstances, Christian brethren, the language of the text is, Hasten to the communion-table, where, in significant emblems, are placed before you the memorials both of the bodily and mental sufferings of our Lord Jesus; and, while you contemplate and use these memorials as he has appointed, oh, rest with unshaken, with increasing confidence, in the atonement made by these sufferings; drink into the spirit of love to God, and love to man, in which that atonement was made; and anew devote yourselves to that manifestation of the Divine character—that glorifying of the name of God, which is the great object which the great God himself constantly prosecutes—the great object which holy angels are constantly prosecuting—the great object for which you were created at first, and created anew, redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the Spirit; and, in prosecuting this object, rejoice that you run no hazard of disappointment. The voice still sounds from the excellent glory, “I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again.”

*Glas.

*15 Bunyan.
EXPOSITION XVIII.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST, AND ITS RESULTS.

JOHN xii. 31–33.—“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (This he said, signifying what death he should die.”)

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* This is a wide-reaching declaration, and receives proof and illustration in every department of the Divine works and ways.

The objects which He prosecutes, and the means which He employs to obtain them, are all worthy of his infinite grandeur and excellence, and show him to be indeed “wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” But, for that very reason, his objects are often not our objects; and even when they are, in the measure in which our feeble minds can grasp them, his means are not the means we should think of employing in order to secure them.

This is true, not only of men, but of angels. He does what they never could have thought of as likely to be done; and he does what he has determined on, and told them he has determined on, in a way which they never could have anticipated,—in a way which constrains these holy and wise beings to stand amazed at “the depth of the riches of his knowledge and wisdom,” and acknowledge that “his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.”

The angels are very holy, benevolent, wise, and powerful, and the objects which they contemplate as desirable to be accomplished, must be of a corresponding nature; but the restoration of fallen man—one of God’s objects—never would have been one of theirs. With the unalterable doom of their own sinning brethren before their minds, the recovery of sinning man might seem not only something plainly beyond their reach, but something which, in reference to its bearings on the Divine glory, and the general well-being of his universe, was not to be thought of, not even to be wished; and on learning, no doubt with amazement, that it was one of the objects of God, the means they would have thought of employing for the purpose, must assuredly, would not have

1 Isa. lv. 8, 9. 2 Rom. xi. 33.
been those which he had determined to employ—which he has actually employed. They would never have thought of "God" being "manifest in flesh,"—of the Word who "in the beginning was with God, who was God," becoming "flesh," and "dwelling among men,"—of the "Son of God" becoming "the Son of man,"—of the great Lawgiver being "made under the law," his own law, made under it, not only in its precept, but in its penalty,—"that the Holy one of God" should be "made sin,"—the ever-blessed One "a curse,"—that their Lord, whom they counted it honor and delight to worship, should "take on him the form of a servant,"—that "the Just One" should die "in the room of the unjust, that they might be brought to God," and death be abolished, and he who had the power of death vanquished, and spoiled, and destroyed. It is probable that, as the salvation of men could never have been one of their objects, so the means of obtaining it, after they knew that it was one of God's objects, must have appeared utterly beyond the reach of their intellects to discover, or even to conjecture; but it is absolutely certain they never could have conjectured the truth—they never could have thought that man's salvation was to be accomplished thus. Oh, no! The destruction of a thousand sinning worlds must have appeared to them a probable thing in comparison of the incarnation and vicarious sufferings, and expiatory death, of the Only-begotten of God.

This, the most extraordinary of all demonstrations, that God's ways are not like the ways of his creatures, whether men or angels; that "his thoughts are not as their thoughts;" but that, "as the heaven is higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than their ways, and his thoughts than their thoughts," is strikingly brought before our minds in those very remarkable words of our Lord, that are about to become the subject of our consideration. The world is about to be judged. The prince of this world, that mighty and terrible one, is to be driven from the throne he had usurped, and his miserable vassals are to be brought, in vast multitudes, to submit themselves to his victor and their Saviour. Great and glorious objects! But how are they to be accomplished! Knowing, as we do, that the great agent in these mighty and truly godlike enterprises is the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of the Highest—the brightness of his glory—the express image of his person, would not "our thoughts" have suggested that he should descend into the world he was to regenerate, in his own glory, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels, with a pomp and magnificence as little as possible beneath the infinite grandeur of his nature and the glorious majesty of his kingdom, terrifying the rebellious into submission by the lightnings of his anger, and winning their hearts by the mild glories of his condescension and love; banishing at once all the varied forms of evil, both moral and physical, from the earth, and introducing in their room universal and perfect knowledge, and holiness, and happiness. How different God's thoughts from our thoughts, God's ways from our
ways! The Son of God must become the Son of man; and he
must be lifted up—and lifted up, not as we would have expected,
first to the throne of David, and then to the throne of the world,
and then to the throne of the universe; but lifted up so as to die
—lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness—lifted
up on the cross—the accursed tree of shame and agony—and die
there, deserted of God, execrated by man, tormented by devils,
the victim for a world’s transgression.

Yet this thought is not only different from, but higher than,
man’s thoughts; this way not only different from, but higher than,
man’s ways. “The foolishness of God,” which is indeed his “wis-
dom in a mystery,” is wiser than man’s wisdom; “the weakness
of God,” which is indeed “the hiding of his power,” is stronger
than man’s power.* This was the only way in which these great
objects could be accomplished in consistency with, in illustration
of, the perfections of the Divine nature, the principles of the Divine
government, and the well-being of the intelligent creation; and
in this way they are all in process of being accomplished in a
manner which shows forth the unfathomable depth of the Divine
wisdom—the immaculate beauties of the Divine holiness—the
terrific glories of the Divine justice—the irresistible energy of the
Divine power—and the unsearchable riches of the Divine grace,
securing “glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth”—
“Grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life.” “It
became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things,”
to judge the world, and cast out its rebel prince, and draw all
men to his Conqueror and their Saviour, by appointing that that
Saviour, his own Son, should be lifted up on a gibbet, between
earth and heaven, as an accursed one, unworthy to have a place
in either; and on the cross, as on a high altar, as the Lamb of
God, to take away the sins of the world, and thus make peace
between earth and heaven.

To these high themes let us now devoutly turn our minds, and
contemplate, in succession, the views which the passage before us
gives us of the Saviour’s death, and its results:—His death, “he
is lifted up from the earth;” its results, “the world is judged, the
prince of this world is cast out, and all men are drawn to him who
was lifted up from the earth.”

I.—THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

Let us first, then, attend to the view here given us of our Lord’s
death. “And I,” says he, “if I be lifted up from the earth,” or
rather, “when I shall have been lifted up from the earth.” Had
it not been for the explanatory note of the evangelist, “This he
said, signifying what death he should die,” and the obvious refer-
cence to our Lord’s own saying on a previous occasion, “As Moses
lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of

---

3 1 Cor. i. 25. 4 “áveis, quando. John xiv. 3. 1 John iii. 2.”—KINGOEL.
man be lifted up," which he explains as meaning his being so given by his Father for men, as that they, believing in him, might not perish, but have eternal life—i.e., devoted by him to suffering in their room, that they might be saved from suffering—we might have supposed that the reference here was rather to his exaltation than to his humiliation. As it is, there can be no doubt that the expression is intended to fix the mind on the fact of his death, the manner of his death, and the nature of his death. It intimates that he was to die, to die on the cross, to die on the cross a victim.

§ 1. The fact of his death predicted.

It was a wonderful thing that He should die. Death, in the case of men generally, is often termed their debt to nature. The thought is not an accurate one. Man, the creature of God, originally owed no such debt to nature. His nature bade him live, not die. It is the debt which man, the sinner, owes to justice. Death is not a natural result of the original constitution of man, but a penal evil introduced in consequence of his transgression of the Divine law. Death is a monstrous thing; and the instinctive feelings of nature, in this case, as in many others, are more to be credited than the plausible speculations of a vain philosophy. It is, now that man is a sinner, no wonderful thing that he should die. It would, indeed, be very wonderful were it otherwise, after He who cannot lie has declared, in reference to our sinning progenitor and federal representative, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This is now the established rule, "It is appointed unto men once to die," "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." But our Lord was a man and not a sinner—a man who knew no sin—in whom was no sin—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"—in the likeness of sinful flesh, but, though a partaker of flesh and blood, no partaker of sinful flesh—one who, in the womb, from the womb, was "a holy thing"—one who always did the things that pleased his Father, who delighted to do his will, who found the doing it his meat and drink—a necessity of his moral nature—one completely free from error, and guilt, and depravity—all whose thoughts, and feelings, and volitions were in perfect accordance with the mind and will of God. How came he to be numbered among transgressors so as to die? how was it that death dared to lay his sacrilegious hand on the holy thing born of the Virgin? how came he, who alone of all human kind ever did, ever could, merit eternal life,—to receive, not the life which is the reward of obedience, but the death which is the wages of sin, from the righteous Judge, who renders to all men according to their works, and causes them to receive according to their ways?

This is strange enough; but in this death of our Lord there

is something stranger still. This perfectly holy man was in personal union with the Divinity. He was an incarnation of the uncreated Word—a manifestation of the eternal life which was with the Father before the foundation of the world. The man Christ Jesus was the Only-begotten of God. He was in the form of God; and though he did not grasp at the manifestation of equality with God—did not make an ostentatious display of it, as if it had been a prey—such equality was not, on that account, the less his undoubted possession, his rightful prerogative. The idea of such a union between a man and Divinity is overwhelmingly strange, but, on appropriate and adequate evidence, by no means incredible. Such evidence we have in great abundance; and it is, I trust, as it ought to be, one of the things “most surely believed among us,” that he who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, is “over all, God blessed forever.” This, without controversy, great mystery, “God manifest in the flesh,” is the very “pillar and ground of the truth” as it is in Jesus.

Supposing such a union to exist, abstractly considered, nothing, doubtless, could be conceived as more improbable than that he who was the subject of it, the God-man, should die. Surely, we should be apt to say, nothing so closely connected with the Living One—with Him who alone hath immortality—“who is, and was, and is to come”—who liveth for ever and ever—can ever die. The Jews, on the supposition that Jesus meant to claim Messiahship when he called himself the Son of man, express astonishment that, since the Messiah was, as they read their law, to abide for ever, he should speak of being lifted up from the earth, which they understood of being removed from the earth. Such an event seemed to them quite inconsistent with his doing the work of the Messiah; and, certainly, to the eye of human reason, the holy man, the God-man Jesus, raised up for the express purpose of dethroning Satan, and redeeming mankind, seems to take a strange way for accomplishing his object when he parts with his life. This seems the way to anything rather than to the judgment of the world, the casting out of its prince, and the drawing all men to himself.

§ 2. The manner of his death described.

But the means will appear still more strangely to contrast with the intended effect, in this first and greatest of the works of God, when we attend to the second thing suggested by our Lord’s announcement of his approaching death. His words not only intimated the fact of his approaching death, but its manner,—crucifixion. That it was our Lord’s design to give a dark hint respecting the manner of his death—a hint which the facts of the case should ere long make plain—is distinctly asserted by the evangelist: “This he said, signifying what death he should die.”

* Rom. ix. 5. 1 Tim. iii. 16.
The mystery seems to thicken on us. When we think what he is to do—judge the world, cast out its prince, draw all men to himself—it seems very strange that the immanently holy man, that the undoubtedly divine man, should die at all. But if he is to die at all, if the ends of his mission require it, and his love makes him willing to submit to it, surely, we should have been apt to say, surely the bands of mortality will be in his case gently unloosed, surely the figure will in his case become all but a reality—when he dies he will fall asleep—death, if it must be his portion, will be so in its least alarming and shocking form; or, if he is to die by violence, surely it must be as a conquering hero, insensible to the wounds by which his victory has been secured, and receiving, in the mournful congratulations and tearful rejoicings of his followers, saved from slavery by his prowess, touching tokens of their admiration and gratitude, and of their deep-felt conviction that even liberty, with all its blessings, was too dearly purchased by the sacrifice of such a life, and could be but imperfectly enjoyed without him, who had won it for them, and bestowed it on them. But no; he must die by the hand of public justice as a sentenced malefactor, like a felonious slave. He must die a death of public opprobrium and protracted torture, such as, happily, no part of our earth, except that unvisited with the humanizing influence of the religion of him who hung on the cross, can now exhibit an example of.

In no page of man's history is the depravity of his nature more distinctly recorded, than in that which treats of capital punishments. Whether, in any case, it be expedient, or even lawful, for man to take away life in the punishment of crime—to take what the law did not give, and what the law cannot restore—to do what makes it impossible that one great end of punishment should be gained, so far as the criminal is concerned—reformation; and what seems, if we may trust extensive experience and observation, in reference to others who most need the lesson, to be fully as much fitted to harden as to deter—to cut short the term of an immortal being's probation for eternity, and to speed him on to the judgment-seat, where the irreversible sentence for an endless futurity must be passed, prepared or unprepared—far most probably, utterly unprepared—whether, I say, it be, in any case, expedient, or even right, to make man pay his life as the forfeit for his transgressions of the laws of society, is a question on which wise and good men are not yet agreed; though, I should think, scarcely anything but a strong conviction, well or ill founded, that the Author of human life has declared it to be his will that he who sheddeth man's blood should have his blood shed by man—a persuasion that God has not only permitted, but commanded, murder to be punished by taking the life of the murderer—could lead any wise and good man to take the affirmative side in such an argument.

But whatever we may think of this question, all who know anything of history are agreed that the malignity and hard-
heartedness of depraved men have been strikingly displayed in multiplying unnecessarily the offences which expose to this extreme punishment, and in attaching to its infliction many circumstances of pain, and shame, and horror, which, while they added largely to the sufferings of the individual, were in no way calculated to promote the only legitimate object which public justice can contemplate in such revolting inflictions—the deterring others from the commission of similar enormities. Among those modes of punishment, invented rather to glut individual revenge than to satisfy public justice—monuments of a state of savage barbarism which have sometimes continued to exist, frightful anomalies, amid the institutions and customs of a civilized age—the mode of death to which our Lord was looking forward may be considered as possessing a bad pre-eminence.

The punishment of the cross seems to have originated among the Romans, a people remarkable for their ferocious and sanguinary disposition,—and even among them it was inflicted only on offenders of the lowest grade in society, and of the greatest atrocity of guilt. After being stripped of his garments and lacerated by rods, the criminal condemned to this horrible punishment was fastened to the cross, which was formed of a large plank of timber with a transverse beam near one of the extremities. To this tremendous instrument of torture and death the sentenced convict was fastened by iron bolts driven through the hands and the feet, the feet being nailed to the longitudinal post, and the hands in an extended posture to the extremities of the transverse beam. In some cases, the body seems to have been partially supported by a narrow seat attached to the upright post; in others, the whole weight seems to have been left to hang on the wounded hands and feet. The horrid machine, with its pitiable burden, was then raised, and placed with violence in a hole dug in the earth; and, being fixed there, the miserable victim was left to perish in lingering dreadful torments. As none of the parts essential to life, such as the brain, or the heart, or the lungs, were immediately injured—none of the vital functions, such as respiration or the circulation of the blood, directly impeded—and none of the large blood-vessels set open—the death was usually slow, while the multitude of nerves which terminate in the hands and feet, giving these parts the nicest sensibility, being wounded, torn, and tortured by the rugged nails, the suffering was exquisitely severe. The crucified man, during the hours, and sometimes days, in which he hung on the cross, must have suffered every moment more than the pangs of the most agonized dissolution.

Crucifixion was, moreover, a mode of punishment as opprobrious as it was painful. It was appropriated to slaves, a class of men whom the ancients—as indeed all, among whom the most unnatural and criminal usage of slavery prevails, seem apt to do—appear to have considered as an inferior order of beings, and
scarceely, if at all, possessed of the rights or entitled to the sym-
pathies of humanity.

Yet it was thus that the Son of man must die, in order to the
judgment of the world, the expulsion of its prince, and the
drawing of all men to himself. He did not look like the Judge
of the world, or the Conqueror of its prince, who was crucified in
weakness; nor did it seem likely that he, from whom men hid
their faces, turning aside from such a spectacle of horror and
shame, at whom many were astonished, "his face being more
marred than that of any man, and his form than that of any of
the sons of men," should "stand for an ensign to the people," —
that "to him the Gentiles should seek," while "his rest" —
strange contrast to his agony — "should be glorious," —when
"kings should shut their mouths at him," —when "all kings
should fall down before him, and all nations serve him." Yet
so it was. That crown of thorns was, as it were, the very
material out of which was formed the crown of fine gold which
was to be set on his head. For the agony of the cross, he has
been made "most blessed for ever;" and for its ignominy, "his
glory is great in Jehovah's salvation; honor and majesty have
been laid upon him." What an idea does it give us of our
Lord's magnanimity, that with a distinct anticipation that he
must suffer all this in the course of a very few days, he could
calmly, triumphantly say, "I, when I shall be lifted up from
the earth, will draw all men unto me!"

§ 3. The nature of his death unfolded.

But our Lord's words intimate not only the fact of his ap-
proaching death, and the manner of that approaching death, but
also its nature, as connected with the results which he with
certainty anticipated were to flow from it,—the judgment of the
world, the expulsion of its prince, and the drawing of all men to
him. The manner of the death-punishment indicated its nature.
It was penal; and when you take into account the fact of his
sinlessness, it indicated that, in this case, it was vicarious and
expiatory. If we do not distinctly perceive this, we must be
unable to perceive the connection between our Lord's death and
the results represented as flowing from it. For any one to say,
"I am about to be crucified," was equivalent to saying, 'I am
about to die as a criminal—as a victim to violated law—by the
hand of offended justice.' In the mouth of a Jew, the words
would have peculiar significance. Crucifixion was not a Jewish
punishment; death by suspension in any way was not. But
the bodies of criminals who had paid the forfeit of their lives as
an expiation for their offence, by being stoned or otherwise put
to death, were, by express statute, to be hung on a tree,—ex-
posed on a gibbet, which was in the form of a cross,—as a token
that they had been deprived of life on account of crime. Hence

7 Isa. lii. 14, 15; xi. 10. Psal. xxi. 1-6.
the expression, "Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree." Every one hanged on a tree, exposed on a gibbet, has been executed for crime.

This seems to make the death of our Lord—the holy man—the Divine man—more wonderful still; and appears, at first view, to militate more and more against the results which it was intended to produce. Is he likelier to be the judge of the world, that he dies a condemned criminal? Is the victim for sin to be conqueror of Satan? Is a man, crucified as a traitor and blasphemer, likely to attract followers?

There can be no doubt that the death of our Lord was penal. Men meant it so, though, as they meant it, it was unjust. God meant it so; and as he meant it, it was the just expression of holy displeasure against sin. Christ died for sins; he was made a curse. The death of Christ was the manifestation of God's abhorrence of iniquity.

But of whose iniquity? Not that of the immaculate, perfect sufferer. There was no iniquity in him. Men drew the conclusion, from the number, and continuousness, and variety, and severity of his sufferings, that he must be a great sinner, to be so "smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted," though none of them could convict him of sin. Even the judge who condemned him to die, declared that he found no fault in him. The true account of the matter is that long ago given by the evangelical prophet, —"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; he bare the sins of many. All we like sheep had gone astray; we had turned every one to his own way, and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." ⁸ "Exaction was made, and he became answerable;"⁹—that given by the holy apostles, he "became a curse in our room," we being deservedly accursed. He "suffered the just in the room of the unjust." He "bare our sins," not his own, "in his body to the tree;"¹⁰ and thus "Messiah was cut off, but not for himself," but for us sinners.

This view of our Lord's death increases the mystery of his love; but it removes in a great degree the mystery, both of his sufferings generally, and of their peculiar form. We shall wonder to all eternity, and our wonder will continually increase, that he should have taken our place; but we cease even now to wonder that, having taken our place, he met our deserts.

When we take into account our Lord's absolute moral purity and perfection, we are driven to the conclusion, that his penal death was vicarious; and when we take into account his divinity, we are drawn into the conclusion, that they were expiatory—that they were intended—and that they have been effectual for that for which nothing else could have been effectual—for the expiation of man's guilt, the ransom of man's soul. If he who died is indeed the image of the invisible God,—the Prince of the whole creation,—the Creator, and Preserver, and Proprietor of

all things,—who “is before all things, and by whom all things subsist”—assuredly “in him we have redemption through his blood.” His stripes heal us. He has made an efficacious sacrifice for sin, when he offered up himself. He has taken away sin. He has “finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.” His death, being the punishment of our offences, is our justification; and, being our justification, leads, in the first instance, to his resurrection, to be followed in the due order by ours. Yes, the “blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered up himself a sacrifice without spot unto God, purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

And now light begins to shed itself on these strange dispensations, and we begin to see that there is close connection, intimate dependence, glorious harmony, between the two great annunciations of our Lord, both of them necessarily at the time clothed in enigmatical language. ‘I am soon to be put to death on a cross like a criminal, and an expiatory victim for the sins of men;’ and as the result of this, ‘yet a little while, and the world is judged, and its prince is cast out, and all men are drawn to me “the Crucified.”’ Surely already we see, that not only are God’s thoughts and ways strange,—not our thoughts,—not our ways,—very different from ours; but that they are transcendentally excellent, wise as well as wonderful, that “as the heavens are high above the earth, so are his thoughts above our thoughts, his ways above our ways.”

I conclude my remarks on this part of the subject, with a reflection, which I hope has already risen in the hearts of you all. Oh, how should we esteem, admire, and love, this magnanimous, generous Saviour! How strong a mind! how large, how warm, how tender a heart! He not only knew that he was to die—very soon to die—but to die like a felonious slave—to die as an expiatory victim. The scourge—the cross—the spear—the shame and spitting—the cutting taunt—the brutal gibe—the loud execrations of his enemies, and the silent suffering of his dearest friend, and her who bore him, standing by the cross—the burning thirst and the cold sweat—the exhaustion and the agony—the harassment of hellish suggestions, and the soul-opspressive weight of the sadness produced by the over-clouded countenance of his Father—all these were distinctly anticipated; and though he did, as he well might, say, “Now is my soul troubled,” he did not say, “Father, save me from this hour.” No; he said, “For this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” He set his face as a flint, and refused to be ashamed. He did not fail, nor was discouraged, till, with the voice of triumph, he could say, “It is finished;” and then, meekly bowing his head, resigned his spirit into the hands of his Father, well pleased for His righteousness’ sake. Was ever magnanimity—was ever love—like this? Instead of being occupied with himself, he seems to forget

himself altogether. He has indeed "emptied himself" of himself.

"Good will to men, and zeal for God,
    His every thought engross;
He longs to be baptized with blood—
    He pants to reach the cross.

"With all his sufferings full in view,
    And pangs to us unknown—
Forth to the task his spirit flew;
    'Twas love that urged him on.

"lord, we return thee what we can—
    Our hearts shall sound abroad
Salvation to the dying man,
    And to the rising God.

"And, while the bleeding glories here,
    Fix our admiring eyes,
We learn our lighter cross to bear,
    And hasten to the skies." 12

II.—THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

The real and the apparent importance of events are by no means necessarily coincident. Indeed, not unfrequently these properties exist in the same event, not in a direct, but in an inverse proportion. This remark receives striking illustration in two events, which took place somewhat more than eighteen hundred years ago; the accession of Octavius Caesar—better known under his title Augustus—to the undivided dominion of the Roman empire, and the birth of Jesus Christ, in a small town in Palestine.

The first of these events possessed, in a very remarkable degree, the character of apparent importance. It was everywhere known and talked of; it attracted universal attention; it excited deep interest. It was the theme of the poet's song, and the subject of the historian's narrative. It gave peace to the world; it influenced, to its remotest limits, that wide-extended empire, which was nearly coincident with the discovered earth—affecting the happiness of its innumerable inhabitants—and it seemed likely to give a direction and a color to the fortunes of mankind for many ages. To a contemporary, it must have appeared scarcely possible to over-estimate its importance, either in itself, or in its probable results.

But what is its importance, viewed in the clear light of truth, at the distance of eighteen centuries? It will always bulk considerably in the history of the world. It did produce effects, direct and indirect, which have told on the progress of human society in a variety of ways. But what was it, in itself, but the elevation, for a few short years, of a mortal man to dominion over a multitude of fellow-mortals—a splendid pageant in that fashion of this world which passeth away? And what interest does it excite now? What influence does it exert now? What are Oc-

12 Cowper
tavius's glorious victories, and Augustus's wise government, but historical facts, intimately known to comparatively few, and nearly affecting no existing human interest. In the far distance of the past, the event which, in the present, seemed a sun in effulgence and in attractive force, is shorn of its lustre, and stripped of its power. It appears but a dimly luminous speck, which speaks to the mind, of extinguished splendor and spent energy. It is, in a great measure, as if it had never been. It would puzzle the most learned and ingenious to say if it be now exerting any influence—and if it is, what is the nature and extent of that influence—on the characters and fortunes of the men of the present age, whether as nations or as individuals.

The second event referred to must, with the exception of the very small number of individuals who were cognizant of its supernatural accompaniments, have been regarded by all who were aware of it, as altogether destitute of the character of apparent importance; and it would have been difficult for them to conceive how it could ever come to possess the character of real importance. The wife of a carpenter of Nazareth gives birth to a child in a stable at Bethlehem, during a casual transient residence in that little town. This is the event, as a mere human historian would record it, if he did not think it beneath the dignity of his office to notice so trivial an accident.

Yet that was in itself, and in its results, the most important event which had taken place from the creation of the world. This helpless infant is to become the great deliverer of mankind from ignorance and guilt, from depravity and misery. He is to exercise a kind, and degree, and extent of influence, on human improvement and happiness, to the remotest boundaries of the earth—to the latest ages of time—ay, during the endless duration of eternity—altogether peculiar; and far greater importance attaches to the event, than even this fact, wonderful as it is, imports; for the true record of what has happened is, "The Word which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, has become flesh—God is manifest in flesh."

And then, what changes in heaven and in earth has this event produced! What a place does it hold in the great economy of Divine manifestation, and universal government! On the happiness of what millions of human beings has it already told, and will it yet tell! What an interest does it excite—what a power does it put forth—in the minds of the most enlightened and influential part of mankind! and how strongly does he who has most deeply pondered its nature, and design, and tendencies, feel that he has yet grasped but a fragment of its wondrous magnificence—traced but a few of its bearings and influences—caught but a glimpse of its endlessly varied glories!

The death of that mysterious infant bears the same character as his birth—a strange contrast in its apparent and its real importance. There was interest—obvious interest—in the death of Christ. The death of no human being is an unimportant,
uninteresting thing. Such a harmless, benevolent, wise, wonder-working man, dying by the hands of violence, in intense agony, and deepest ignominy, could not but excite strange thoughts in all reflecting minds.

Yet the real importance of the event, both in itself and in its results, is not apparent. It lies too deep for the discovery of man or of angel. That sufferer is the victim for human guilt—that agony is its expiation. That righteous one is made sin—that blessed one a curse—that the guilty might be justified, and the justly accursed "made most blessed for ever." That cross is the way to the crown—to many crowns. Because he is crucified in weakness, he shall live for ever in the power of God. His death is the life of unnumbered millions: dying, he destroys death; vanquished, he is more than a conqueror. What an influence has that event had over the revolutions of time, and the ever-onward, boundlessly-expanding, movements of eternity! What a clear, distinctive impression it has made on the history of heaven, and earth, and hell! What a striking proof have we this day of the real importance of that event, which drew comparatively little notice when it took place! Here have we, with many thousands in this city—thousands of thousands in our land and earth—far away from the land where it took place—more than eighteen centuries since it occurred—in an act of most solemn worship, been commemorating it as the most full-robed display which the Divinity has ever made of his infinite excellence—his combined holiness and benignity—the fathomless depth of his wisdom, and the exceeding greatness of his power—the only ground of our confidence before him—our only hope for ourselves, and for our race. And, in the highest heavens, in the never-ending songs of the redeemed, and in the ever-increasingly intense studies of the angels, are given still more impressive demonstration, that the importance of that event always surpasses the creature's most enlarged power of comprehension. Here—here more than anywhere else—"God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways; but as the heaven is higher than the earth, so are his thoughts than our thoughts, and his ways than our ways." The text presents us with a striking illustration of the manner in which the result of our Lord's death prove that its real importance greatly transcends its apparent importance. Death on a cross,—being thus lifted up,—that is what meets the eye of man in the event itself—a crucified man—a spectacle of weakness, horror, and shame. But look to its results. The world is judged—its rebel prince is dethroned—and countless multitudes of ransomed men are gathered in grateful allegiance to his conqueror, and their deliverer.

The results of our Lord's sufferings, as here indicated, come now to be considered: "Now is the judgment of this world; now is the prince of this world cast out: I will draw all men to me."

13 This department of the Exposition was delivered immediately after the administration of the Lord's Supper.
What are the events which are here somewhat darkly unfolded? and how were these the results of our Lord's death, as they are here represented to be? These are questions to which your attention is to be now directed.

§ 1. The Judgment of this World.

(1.) What is meant by the Judgment of this World?

The first event mentioned in the text is the judgment of the world—"Now is the judgment of this world." What is the meaning of these words? I scarcely know a question of Scripture interpretation, to which a greater variety of answers have been given. Nor, on reflection, will this appear wonderful. Almost every word in the short sentence admits of being variously understood. "Now" may either be understood strictly of the very moment when the words were uttered, or, more loosely, of a period just at hand. The world may signify the earth we dwell in, with all its furniture and inhabitants; or it may signify mankind—all mankind—or all the Gentiles who are spoken of as inhabiting the world, as contrasted with the Jews, the chosen people of God, who inhabited Canaan—called, by way of eminence, the land or the earth—or all regenerate men—men of this world, in contrast to regenerate men—men born from above—men of another world. And then "judgment" is a word which may signify rule generally, or deliverance, or trial, or condemnation, or punishment. And then, still farther, the word may be understood either actively or passively—the judgment which the world gives or exercises, or the judgment that is given or exercised in reference to the world.

It were endless to enumerate all the senses which have been given to these words, many of them weighty sentiments, and sentiments which the mere words not unnaturally convey. Some consider the words as—'Now is "this world"—fallen mankind—in the persons of the Jewish and Roman magistrates, to sit in judgment on me and on my cause, and to condemn it—and I, the true prince of this world, am to be condemned and cast out by them.' Others, as equivalent to—'Now is this world to be judged—to be subjected to a trial. Now is to be brought out what is in fallen men. Their treatment of me and my cause will clearly manifest their own true character.' Others, as—'Now is this world to be condemned. This judgment, in reference to me and my cause, is about to be proved false, by my resurrection, and the consequent success of my religion; and all the wisdom of the world is to be shown to be foolishness with God. Others, as—'Now is the world about to be punished.' Either, 'Now are the sins of men to receive in me, on whom they have been made to rest, the punishment they deserve, and thus to be judged, condemned, punished, in my flesh;' or, 'Now shall the world of the ungodly be punished for their rejection of my claims.'
Others as, ‘Now is the world about to be delivered—judgment and salvation often going together. Now is about to be paid the price of man’s redemption,—and, yet, a little longer, and the blessings purchased and received shall be bestowed on multitudes of the redeemed race.’ Others, as,—‘Now is the crisis of the world. The events which are just about to take place are the most vitally important to man that have ever taken place in the course of his history. How vast are the interests which hang on that lifting up of the Son of man from the earth?’

This diversity of view, and the difficulty of determining what is the precise meaning of our Lord’s words, seem to arise chiefly from a looking too exclusively at the words themselves. To understand a passage, we must always look well at the words, and this will often be enough to secure our understanding it. But, in other cases, we must look also at the circumstances in which the words were spoken; for the same words will convey a very different meaning according to the circumstances in which they are spoken. This is a remark applicable to very many of our Lord’s sayings. If the circumstances in which he stood when he uttered certain words are not attended to, we shall often not perceive half his meaning, or, it may be, misapprehend it altogether. There is special reason for applying the remark to the “dark saying” before us. He plainly did not mean it to be fully understood at the time. Not one there could fully understand it but himself. To have stated at this time, in plain words, all that is folded up in these words, would not have been expedient. Yet our Lord here, as everywhere else, meant to be understood in good time, and to furnish means for being understood. If we carefully look to two things—the circumstances in which the words were uttered, and the events which soon followed, in which the words, whatever they mean, were to find their fulfillment, I apprehend we shall not find very much difficulty in perceiving their true meaning and reference.

The whole of our Lord’s statements on this occasion plainly grew out of the interesting incident recorded in the beginning of the paragraph, in the 20th, 21st, and 22d verses. A number of Gentiles had made a respectful and earnest request to be admitted to our Lord’s presence. This led him to exclaim, “The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.” ‘The kingdom of heaven is now just at hand.’ That kingdom over which the Son of man—the Messiah—was to preside, was not to be limited to the Holy Land, nor were its subjects to be confined to the holy people. “The isles were to wait for his law.” ‘All nations were to serve him.” ‘To one like the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven, and brought near before the Ancient of days, there was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”’


In these Greeks seeking to see him, our Lord saw the first fruits of a harvest just about to be cut down—the earnest of the fulfilment of the prophecy—“all the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him. For the kingdom is the Lord’s; and he is the governor among the nations.”

Previous to this, and in order to this, he knew he must die—and die in circumstances, the anticipation of which, naturally enough, stirred the inmost depths of thought and feeling, and drew out these most weighty words, “Now is my soul troubled.” But “for the joy set before him” “he did not fail, nor was he discouraged.” “What shall I say? Shall I say, “Father save me from this hour”—this hour so dark with death, yet so full of life?—No, I will not say this! “For this cause came I to this hour.” I will say, “Father, glorify thy name.”’ By a voice from the most excellent glory the Father assured him that “he had both glorified it, and would glorify it again.” To the mind of the Saviour this voice, in the circumstances, must have appeared as a repetition to him of the ancient oracle. “Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers,” “In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritage.”” It was in such circumstances as these that the Saviour exclaimed, “Now is the judgment of this world.”

The term “judge,” in the Hebrew Scriptures, is often used as equivalent to, ‘to rule,’ or ‘to govern;’ and such a use of the term is quite natural,” for not only does just judgment, in the strict sense of the word, form an important part of good government, but all proper government is the exercise, not of arbitrary will, but of sound judgment. During a considerable period of the Israelitish history, their supreme magistrates, under Jehovah their King, were termed judges. The use I refer to of the word may be understood by one as well as a hundred instances. Speaking of the Divine government, the psalmist, in the sixty-seventh psalm, says, “Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.”

It deserves particular notice that this is a word very often used in the oracles of the ancient prophets, in reference to the administration of the kingdom which the Messiah was to establish over men generally—over the nations, in contrast with the Jews—over the world, in contrast with the Holy Land. It is of this divine King and kingdom that it is said that He would “come to judge the earth; that with righteousness should he judge the world, and the people with equity.” When “the rod of his strength shall go forth out of Zion,” “he shall judge among the heathen.”

Psalm xxii. 27, 28.

Isa. xlii. 7, 8.

In that early age there was little division of labor. The judicial, legislative, and executive functions were not separated.
When “out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, he shall judge among the nations.” The glorious Prince, emblematic of that “rod which was to come forth out of the stem of Jesse, which was to stand for an ensign to the people, to which the Gentiles were to seek,” was “with righteousness to judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth, and smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips to slay the wicked.” He who as “the King,” and “the King’s Son,” was to have “dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth”—“before whom all kings were to fall, and all nations to serve”—was to “judge the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment”—was to “judge the poor of the people, to save the children of the needy, and to break in pieces the oppressors.”

Now, with these thoughts before our minds, which must substantially have been before our Lord’s when he uttered these words, can we have any great difficulty in discovering their meaning? Do we not perceive that the circumstances of the case give distinctness to language in itself indefinite? and that the words, “Now is the judgment of this world,” are just equivalent to, “That rule, that judgment,—that wise, just, considerate government of mankind, so strikingly contrasted with the wild, arbitrary, cruel, unjust thing, which the prince of the world and his agents have inflicted on the human race under that name,—that kingdom of the Messiah over the nations of mankind, is now about to commence.”

This is naturally connected both with what goes before and with what follows. “The hour is come when the Son of man is glorified.” How? By being made King of the world. Now is the world to be ruled, to be judged—to be ruled, to be judged, by him; and then his and their great enemy, the prince of this world, shall be cast down from his throne—cast out of his usurped authority, and all men, Gentiles as well as Jews, shall be drawn by the cords of love and the bands of a man to his Conqueror and their Redeemer.

It also well accords with a passage in the sixteenth chapter of this gospel, where the judgment of the world and its prince is spoken of. It is said of “the Comforter—the Holy Spirit,” that when he comes, sent by the Son of man, when he had gone to receive his kingdom, he will “convince the world”—mankind—“of sin”—of their sin—by the fact of their not believing in the Messiah, when he came—the strongest of all proofs of man’s depravity; “of righteousness”—of his righteousness—by the fact, that by a glorious resurrection and ascension, he had “gone to the Father”; “of judgment—of the establishment of a government by him over them”—by the fact that “the prince of the world” no longer judged, but “was judged”—no longer ruled,

but was ruled—"cast out"—constrained to part with his prey and captives."\(^{18}\)

The meaning of the words has, I trust, been satisfactorily established. It only remains that we consider a little that changed state of the world—represented here as its "judgment," plainly by the Son of man, which our Lord represents as just about to commence—and show how this state of things results from our Lord’s death—from his being "lifted up from the earth."

We are by no means to think of all mankind, with the exception of the Jews, as entirely abandoned by God during the ages which intervened between the deluge, and the commencement of the New Testament dispensation. They were always the subjects of his general moral government; always the objects of his forbearance, and patience, and providential care. "The heavens declared" to them "the glory of God; and the firmament showed" them "his handiwork." "His invisible things were clearly to be seen in the things which he had made," if they had but liked to retain him in their knowledge. "He never left himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness."\(^{19}\)

But there can be no doubt, that in righteous judgment he withdrew himself from them as to supernatural manifestation. As they did not like to retain him in their knowledge, he laid no restraints on their deviations from truth. No prophet rose among them to stem the tide of error, and arrest the gathering clouds of superstition. The language of this dispensation was, "My spirit shall not always strive with man. They are joined to their idols; let them alone." Men have determinedly abandoned him, and it was but meet he should abandon them. "It was meet," as has been well said, "that so great a majesty having been so condescendingly gracious should not also be cheap, or appear inapprehensive of being neglected and set at nought. They declared that they would not have him to reign over them, and he left them to feel that when they said to him, 'Depart from us,' they spake that word against their own life and soul, and that what was their wilful choice should be their heaviest doom and punishment."\(^{20}\)

Oh, the years and ages of vanity and trouble, of darkness and death, pollution and blood, that the abandoned nations spent away from God, under the iron yoke of him whom they had chosen to be a prince and ruler over them. But oh, the tender mercies of the Father of Spirits! "He will not contend for ever, neither will he be always wroth." He has respect to the souls which he has made—the work of his hands. There is "time or restitution" for the nations. There is appointed a de-

\(^{18}\) John xvi. 11. It is a satisfaction, in a question of this kind, to find an interpreter like Calvin on your side. "Judicii nomen alius reformationen, alia damnationem significant. Ego prioribus magis assentior, qui sua exponunt quod mundus in legitimum ordinem restituendus est.—cimus autem extra Christum, nihil in mundo, nisi confusum esse."


\(^{20}\) Howe.
liverer, who will "lift up his steps towards their long, long desolations."

The prophets had for ages been announcing that he was on his way. He had now come, yet stood an unrecognized stranger, even among his own people. He had come to his own, and his own had not received him. Yet shall he, in despite of all neglect and opposition, sit down, not only on the throne of David, but on the throne of the world. "The hour is coming, and now is." Yet a little while, and from the depths of the grave he shall be raised to endless life. "He loved righteousness and hated iniquity," and proved this by magnifying the law and making it honorable, in his incarnation and sacrifice—and "therefore God, even his God, will anoint him, with the oil of gladness above his fellows," "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

He has entered on the judgment, the government, of the world. A new order of Divine administration has been commenced, having for its object the subjection of the world to God,—the conversion of the race, that is, not of every individual, but of vast multitudes out of every kindred and people, tongue and nation,—and to him, in conducting this glorious economy, is entrusted the proprietorship of the world. The whole globe is his rightful empire, and all its inhabitants are under his control, and ought to be his willing subjects. The times of ignorance at which God winked has passed away; and from the hour when God set Christ, as his Son, at his right hand, "his King on his holy hill of Zion,"—and said to him, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession,"—He has commanded all men everywhere to repent—to change their mind, in the belief of those glad tidings which he has commissioned his servants to proclaim to every creature, among all nations—"He has commanded all men everywhere thus to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

This passage of Scripture is often considered as exclusively referring to the period of the final judgment; but we are inclined to think it refers to the whole day or period of the judgment of the world by Christ, spoken of in the text, contrasted with the times of ignorance, and which is to terminate in the great day of the Lord Jesus, when assembled men and angels must appear before the great white throne, and own that none is judge but he.

Under this order of things, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment," or actual rule, "unto the Son," and all are bound to "honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." The judgment or government of the world is exercised by our Lord in subordination to the great purposes of the

---

23 John v. 22, 23.
economy of special mercy. He is thus governor among the nations, that he may effectually perform all his high functions as "King of Zion." He is "head over all things" with reference "to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."¹⁴ The rise, and decline, and fall of empires—the progress of discovery, and arts, and commerce—are all his instruments; and over all the earth is he working by means of those who know him not, for the hastening on the great consumma-
tion,—when the real governor of the world shall be the apparent, the recognized governor of the world,—and when earth shall be vocal with the song, raised by voices in heaven, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."²²

All things are not even yet actually put under him. He is not yet visibly judging all the world. But, a few days after the Man of sorrows had uttered these mysterious words, "Now is the judg-
ment of this world," "the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And there he sits, "expecting" till the Divine power vindicate the Di-
vine faithfulness.

The Father, during these eighteen centuries, has been "bring-
ing in his Only-begotten into the world," which he has given him as his blood-bought possession. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of isles be glad thereof: Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings are enlight-
ening the world; the earth seeth and trembles. The hills melt like wax at the presence of the Lord: at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness: and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods;" and "let Israel rejoice in him who made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their king."

(2.) How is the judgment of this world, the result of the death of Christ?

A few words must still be said in reference to the connection of his judgment of the world with the death of Christ. The connection is an intimate one. The one follows the other; but there is much more than mere sequence. The whole truth may be told in two words. It was the promised, richly-merited, reward of his death; and it is the necessary means of his carrying into accomplish-
ment the great design of his death, the salvation of his chosen people.

In reference to the first of these statements, I shall merely pre-
sent you with the declaration of a prophet and an apostle:—Of a

¹⁴ Eph. i. 22, 23. ²² Rev. xi. 15; xix. 6.
When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."—Of an apostle,—"Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also 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 in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—

But this judgment of the world was not only the merited reward of our Lord's death, but it was the necessary means of carrying into accomplishment the great design of his death—the salvation of his chosen people. The design of our Lord's death, was "to gather into one the children of God, scattered abroad" over all the earth, and during all the ages. How could this be done, had not our Lord had the entire management of the providential government of God? In the days of his flesh, "he must needs go through Samaria," that one "vessel of mercy" should be secured for the Master's use; and now all the revolutions of the world are made subservient to the bringing all the wandering sheep given him by the Father into the one fold. All power in heaven and in earth—all power over all flesh—is given him, that he may give eternal life to all whom the Father has given him—to all coming to the Father by him.

Let us, my brethren, habitually act as if we believed the declaration of our Lord, "Now is the judgment of this world;"—for his declaration is one that was true henceforward. That declaration is, as we have endeavored to show, 'Now is this world, and all its inhabitants, the property of Messiah the Prince, subject to his control, and intended to promote the great objects of his holy, benignant reign.' Let us ever regard him as the rightful proprietor, the legitimate sovereign, of all the world,—Lord as well as Christ—Lord of all. Let us submit ourselves to his government, and do everything that lies in our power to induce others to become his willing and obedient subjects. Let us rejoice in the ever-growing evidence which, in the onward development of the economy of mercy, he is giving, that he is indeed "able to subdue all things to himself;" and let us long and pray for the bliss-

26 Isa. liii. 10-12. 27 Phil. ii. 5-11. 28 John xvii. 2.
ful consummation, when all opposing power and authority shall be put down for ever; and when "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, shall be heard saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." 30

§ 2. The expulsion of the prince of this world.

The second result of our Lord's death—the expulsion of the prince of this world—comes now to be the subject of consideration.

"Now," says our Lord, "now is the prince of this world cast out." Who is the prince of this world? What are we to understand by his being "cast out"? How is his expulsion the result of the death of Christ? and how is it connected with the judgment of this world? These are the questions which naturally rise in a reflecting mind on reading these words, and we shall attempt satisfactorily and briefly, in the sequel, to answer them.

(1.) The prince of this world—Who is he?

"The prince of this world," is an expression peculiar to our Lord; and it is employed by him only on two other occasions. In the fourteenth chapter of this gospel, we find him saying, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me;" 31 and in the sixteenth chapter, "When the Comforter is come, he will reprove," or rather convince, "the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." 32 The Apostle Paul speaks of "the god of this world, who blinds the minds of those who believe not;" and of "the prince of the power of the air; the spirit that works in the children of disobedience." There can be no doubt that all these appellations are substantially of the same meaning, and that they are all descriptive of the same being. There can be as little doubt that the being referred to, is the chief of "the angels who sinned,"—"the devil"—"Satan"—"the old serpent"—"Apollyon." 33

It has been common, with a certain class of interpreters and theologians, to represent all these terms as mere personifications of the abstract principle of evil, moral and physical,—i. e., sin and misery. But if we are to interpret Scripture on the ordinary principle applied to written language, nothing can be more certain than that the sacred writers meant to teach the real personality of the being designated by these names. You may as reasonably question the real personality of Jesus, the Son of God, as of the devil, the enemy of God, whose works he came to destroy. Indeed, we find some of the later rationalistic inter-

30 Rev. v. 13, 14. 31 John xvi. 8-11.
32 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. ii. 2. 2 Pet. ii 4. Rev. xi. 9; ix. 11.
preachers and divines of Germany acknowledging the justness of this remark, and acting on it, making Jesus Christ the personified idea of the Jewish Messiah. To be consistent, they ought to go farther still,—they ought to cease to call themselves Christians, and renounce all professed respect for the statements of the sacred books, which they discredit far more by their perversion than they would do by their denial.

All the various terms expressive of personal agency are made use of by the inspired writers, in describing the character and conduct of the evil one; and, had their express design been to teach his proper personality, they could not have used more explicit language than they have actually employed. It has been very well said,—"A personification, protracted through such a book as the Bible, even should we suppose it to have been written by one person,—never dropped in the most simple and didactic portions of it,—never explained, when the most grave and important truths are to be inculcated, and when men, the most ignorant and superstitious, were to be the readers,—is altogether anomalous and inadmissible. But to suppose that the several writers of the different books of the Bible, diverse in their modes of thinking and writing, and placed in widely different circumstances, through a period of more than fifteen hundred years, should each, from Moses to John, fall into the use of the same strange personification, and so employ it that not one out of a thousand of their readers should ever suppose it was a personification at all, or even remotely conjecture at the abstract truth which they intended to be conveyed by it, would be requiring men to believe that the inspired writers, who ought to have done the least violence to the common laws of language, have indeed done the most; and shake all confidence as to the possibility of certainly ascertaining their meaning in any one instance, however apparently plain were the terms in which they expressed themselves."  There is no end to the absurdities implied in denying that the personality, the real existence, of such a being as we commonly call the devil, is taught in Scripture. How could the principle of evil tempt our Lord, in whom it had no existence? Yet he was tempted by the devil. And what idea of any kind can be attached to the declaration, that the principle of evil "abode not in the truth"?

Assuming, then, as we well may, the real personal existence of this evil being, let us shortly inquire what is meant by his being represented as the prince of this world. The appellation seems to do two things. It limits his power to this world;—and it asserts his power over this world.

He is "the prince of this world"—"the god of this world,"—and his agents are the rulers of the darkness of this world." "This world" is what the apostle terms "the present evil"—diseased, disordered—"world;" this earth, with its furniture and inhabitants, rational and irrational, lying under the Divine curse pronounced on account of the first sin of the first man. He was

---

33 Kitto's Cyclopaedia.—Art. Satan.
not the prince of the world that once was—the good, healthy, orderly world, which came from the hand of an all-perfect Creator, and which He, after He had finished it, pronounced good—very good. Satan had no power there; and he will not be the prince of the world that shall be, when “new heavens and a new earth shall be created, wherein will dwell” nothing but “righteousness.” He shall then be for ever shut up in the bottomless pit, bereft of all power, in a state which is termed “the second death.”

Indeed, we have no reason to think that the evil one has any power in any other region of God’s universe but our earth, or during any other period there than during the time the curse lies on it, —from the fall of man to the final consummation of all things. It is also right to remark that, when an individual is spiritually delivered, by the atonement and Spirit of Christ, from the present evil world, in the same degree is he delivered from the prince of this world. Neither sin, nor death, nor Satan have dominion over him, as they had previously to his deliverance.

But, while the appellation limits his power to this world, it asserts it over this world. He is “the prince of this world.” Here we must guard against opposite extremes. We must neither exaggerate nor extenuate. We know nothing—we can know nothing —on this subject, but what is revealed to us in Scripture. Let us neither add to, nor take from, the Divine communication. Let us beware of attributing to the evil one more power than he possesses; let us beware of supposing that he has less power than belongs to him. Important practical evils naturally result from both these mistakes.

We are never for a moment to suppose that Satan possesses any independent uncontrollable power. We are not to think that God has in any degree divested himself of the property and dominion of this world, and committed them into the hands of his great enemy. The thing is impossible. The natural perfections of God make it plain that he cannot—and his moral perfections make it as plain that he will not—act in this manner: “His kingdom ruleth over all.”

Even the prince of this world is his property and his subject—though a rebellious one,—and the unconscious and unwilling instrument of His holy and wise, righteous and benignant, government. The lion of hell is held in adamantine chains; and to him, as well as to ocean, God says, “Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther.” Neither are we to suppose that he possesses the power of compelling men to sin. It is unscriptural—it is antiscriptural—to ascribe any such power to Satan as would destroy man’s responsibility; and man is assuredly not responsible for what an irresistible force, external to himself, compels him to do.

But while all this is true, the evil one has a kind, a degree, and an extent of power over the present evil world, which give fearful appropriateness and significance to the appellation, “prince of this world.” Every human being, under the curse, is shut out from sanctifying divine influence, and laid open to the influ-

34 Rev. xx. 10. 35 Psal. ciii. 19.
ence of the evil one. When we think how crafty and malignant he is, and what numerous means and methods he has of affecting the human mind, we cannot doubt that that influence is extensively and powerfully exerted. He blinds the mind, he hardens the heart, he leads captive into error and sin—not against the will of the individual, but with his consent, though that consent is often not got without a struggle—it may be a severe and protracted one—with reason and conscience.

He employs the sinning angels—who, like himself, and entirely influenced by him, kept not their first abode—in exercising his power over men's minds. We have no express declaration of the number of these subordinate agents; yet the work they are in Scripture represented as performing, is of such an extent, and so exceedingly manifold and various, that we cannot suppose them to be few. The manner in which the apostle speaks of them, as "principalities and powers," as the "powers or host of darkness," constrains us to regard them as numerous, and as a disciplined band, well fitted for gaining the object of their great leader.

While he undoubtedly possesses and exerts much power over men, through the instrumentality of his angels, or messengers, it may be doubted whether the greater part of diabolic influence is not exerted over men through the instrumentality of their fellow-man. It was through Eve he exerted his power over Adam; it was through the false prophets that he seduced Ahab. All evil men are his agents; and all human institutions—whether termed systems of philosophy, or of religion, or of government—which are based on falsehood and injustice, are at once results of the power of the devil, and most powerful instruments for consolidating and extending his dominion. How the evil one exerts his influence, in darkening the mind with error and delusion, and inflaming the passions, and stupefying the conscience, we cannot fully explain. The extent to which this disordered state prevails among men, is matter of experience and observation; and a divine revelation, in the most explicit terms, pronounces it the work of the devil.

Hitherto we have spoken of the moral influence of Satan; but it is plain, from Scripture, that he has, within certain limits, power to produce malignant physical effects. Satan, in the book of Job, is represented as bringing destruction on the patriarch's family, and then smiting Job himself with a malignant ulcerous disease. In the New Testament, diseases of body and mind, epilepsy and madness, are clearly ascribed to malignant spiritual influence. Our Lord speaks of a Jewish woman, who had been "bowed down by infirmity for eighteen years," as having been "bound by Satan" during that period; and is represented as healing all that were "oppressed by the devil." To deliver over to Satan, is an expression which may mean, 'Solemnly to declare to belong not to the kingdom of God, but to the kingdom.

**Luke xiii. 16. Acts x. 38.**
of the devil;" but it may equally refer to certain physical evils to be inflicted by diabolical instrumentality. In the Apocalypse, the devil is represented as very active in doing evil in every form; and, though the particular statements of that book are to be understood according to its symbolic and poetic character, yet the general principle of the agency of evil spirits, in the production both of physical and moral effects, seems clearly implied in them. It is a mistake to attribute all physical evil, or even all moral evil, to Satan; but it is obviously the doctrine of Scripture, that it comes within the sphere of his agency to do much mischief in both respects. We are not warranted to trace, as some have been disposed to do, all disease and death to the operation of evil spirits; but neither are we warranted to conclude, as many do, that malignant spiritual influence has nothing to do with disease and death. That spirits can control matter cannot be denied, without throwing doubt on God’s providential government; and that evil spirits may be employed in the use of their physical, as well as of their intellectual and moral powers, as instruments of the Divine justice, is a principle which reason can never disprove; and that they are so, seems, upon the whole, more probable than that they are not. That they have been so, must be admitted by every man who believes the Bible, in the plain meaning of its statements; that they continue to be so, is what no sound-minded man will strongly either deny or assert.

It only remains to remark, on this part of the subject, that, though the devil and his angels never can have any right to exert their powers to produce either physical or moral evil—and that, in every instance in which they do so, they increase their guilt and deepen their condemnation—yet we shall not rightly apprehend this important subject, if we do not distinctly perceive that “this diabolic principality, in and over this evil world,” is a part of the penal arrangements of the Divine government. Man chose to follow the advice, and to submit to the government, of Satan; and, as the appropriate punishment of this foul treason, God gave man over, in a great measure, into the hand of this mighty and terrible one—allowing Satan to “practise and prosper,” so as strongly to bring out the folly, as well as the wickedness, of man’s choice and conduct.

This power is given to Satan only during a limited season—while the present evil world stands—the period apparently called in the curse, “all the days of the serpent’s life”—for at the end of it he is to be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death; a period repeatedly referred to in Scripture, as when the demons speak of the Son of God coming to “torment them before the time,” and when Satan is said to “come down in great wrath, knowing that his time is short.” It is, perhaps, with a reference to this, that the captive of the terrible one is called, in the prophecies of Isaiah, “the lawful captive;” but there it seems to be himself that uses the appellation, and we are not dis-

37 1 Tim. i. 20. 1 Cor. v. 5.
posed to take anything merely on his authority; he may speak
truth, but he is a liar, as well as a murderer, from the beginning.

It has been rashly said, that the devil, in leading sinners captive at his will, is just. He is the unconscious executioner of justice; but he is not just in executing justice. God has justly delivered over sinners to the power of Satan; but Satan has no rightful authority over sinners. So far as he is concerned, the dominion is usurped and tyrannical. Men's sins will be no excuse to him for tyrannizing over them, nor his assumed power any excuse to them for submitting to him.

(2.) The casting out of the prince of this world—what is it?

It is now time that we turn our attention to the second inquiry, What are we to understand by the prince of this world being "cast out"? The general idea in the passage is plainly this: 'The world—especially the gentile world—is in a state of disorder and misrule. The time is at hand, when the world shall be judged, ruled, and no longer given up to anarchy and tyranny. 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and, when that kingdom is established in the world, just in the degree in which it is established, shall the prince of the world—the usurper of Divine dominion, the author of all misgovernment—be deprived of his ill-gotten power—be expelled from his usurped throne. The expelling of demons from those whose bodies and minds they had affected with disease, was one of the most common of the miracles which our Lord performed in the days of his flesh, and was a striking figurative representation of what he was to do for mankind, both as individuals and as social bodies, when he had entered on his kingdom.

In every case in which an individual, through the faith of the Gospel, became a partaker of the christian salvation, he was "turned from the power of Satan unto God." Satan's throne was cast down in that man's heart; or, to change the figure, his fetters were unloosed—his prison doors set open, and the captive of the mighty, the prey of the terrible one, was set at liberty. And as, in the case of every individual convert, the prince of the world was cast out; so, just as converts multiplied, and the influences of christian truth, direct and indirect, prevailed, was Satan's throne in society levelled, and he himself ignominiously expelled.

The institutions, religious and civil, which formed the great bulwarks of his dominions, were dissolved by the influences of the Gospel. The ancient pagan idolatries gave way; and their temples, which were indeed temples to Satan, were levelled with the dust, or converted into places of worship to the true God. Wars, which in the heathen world were all but incessant, and fearfully sanguinary and cruel, became less frequent, and some of their atrocities were mitigated. The horrors of slavery—another work of the devil—were diminished, and, as Christianity
prevailed, they disappeared with the state in which they originated. In one word, wherever the Gospel prevailed, ignorance, error, delusion, superstition, oppression, every form of evil, in a corresponding degree gave way. The empire of the prince of light, and that of the prince of darkness, are directly antagonistic; and where the one triumphs the other must be defeated.

For four thousand years, the whole world, with the exception of the Holy Land—all nations, with the exception of the nation of Israel, and a comparatively small number of scattered individuals among other nations—had been given up to the dominion of the prince of this world. It was a fearful judgment, but a just one. Men had wilfully shut their eyes to the manifestations of God in the visible universe. They had obstinately stopped their ears to the testimony his works gave of the power, and wisdom, and goodness, of their Author. They “did not glorify him as God: they were not thankful.” They “did not like to retain God in their knowledge.” “They loved the darkness rather than the light.” They preferred the service of Satan to that of God, and he gave them up to their “reprobate minds,” and left them to prove the true character of the government of him whom they had preferred to Himself as their king. He who is light withdrew, and “darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the nations;” and in the midst of that darkness which might be felt, Satan, the prince of darkness, established his throne, and by the wild fables of pagan mythology, and the bloody and polluted rites of pagan idolatry, and the vain dreams of pagan philosophy, and by arbitrary tyrannical rule, or unbridled licentiousness—by slavery, war, polygamy, caste, and an endless variety of forms of falsehood, and injustice, and cruelty—carried on his government, or rather misgovernment, rendering men wicked and miserable here, and preparing them for the bottomless gulf of hopeless depravity and wretchedness in the eternal state.

But this state of things was not to continue for ever. The light which shone with but a morning twilight on the Holy Land, was to rise to its meridian throne in the heavens, and shed forth its cheering radiance over all the nations; and before its splendor the ill-omened birds of night were to stretch their wings and fly away.

Immediately after our Lord had sat down on the throne of the world, power came forth which made “Satan fall as lightning from heaven.” Out of how many hearts was he expelled during the few days which followed the wonders of Pentecost! And then, when the rod of the Redeemer’s strength went forth out of Zion, how did the strongholds of his great enemy fall before his victorious host! In less than three centuries the light of divine truth, attended with divine influence, had visited every region of the wide-spread Roman empire, and many lands far beyond its limits. The pagan temples were very generally abandoned, and their idols cast to the moles and to the bats. The throne of Satan

33 Rom. i. 21-32.
might well be said to be thrown down and himself cast out. To this has been supposed by some to relate the following remarkable oracle in the Apocalypse:—"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

It must be admitted that the cunning old serpent has regained, in some regions, to a great degree, his lost dominion, and found the means of perverting Christian doctrine into fatal error, and Christian worship into a God-profaning, man-debasing, idolatry. Yet never again has the unbroken night which preceded the incarnation gathered over the nations. At this hour, many of the regions of the world, where, at the time these words of our Lord were spoken, Satan reigned over men, sunk in the lowest debasement of ignorance, and depravity, and wickedness, large numbers of men, spiritually enlightened, morally transformed, rationally happy, are rejoicing in the liberty of the children of God; and multitudes more, though strangers to the saving virtues of the gospel, are enjoying its humanizing influence, in the improved institutions and manners of which it has become indirectly productive.

And the work is obviously a progressive one. In the triumphs of Christian missions, in our own days, we have seen Satan in a remarkable manner cast out, in many regions where he seemed very securely to have fixed his throne. And there is much to give us ground to hope that the pagan idolatries of the East, the delusions of the Arabian impostor, the superstitions of a corrupted Christianity, and all the varieties of an infidel philosophy, by means of which, chiefly, Satan keeps his place in a world from which he is sentenced to be expelled, will ere long give way before "the light, and the truth, and the grace" of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God; and when the prince of this world, driven from the earth, where, since Christ sat down on his throne, he has been "a fugitive and a vagabond," shall be shut up in the bottomless pit, no more to deceive the nations, a redeemed world, and its holy happy inhabitants, shall keep jubilee for a thousand years. "Surely his salvation is nigh them that

39 Rev. xii. 7-12.
fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps.  

We thus see what is meant by "Now is the prince of this world cast out."—'In a very short while will commence the expulsion of Satan from the world, in the conversion of many of his slaves to the knowledge and service of the true God, and in the destruction of false religion, and all his other works, by which he endeavors to enslave, debase, and ruin mankind,—a work which shall never be entirely interrupted, but shall proceed amid much opposition, to a triumphant consummation, "when the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ," and when the oracle shall be accomplished —"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled."  

(3.) The casting out of the prince of this world the result of Christ's death—how?  

It is now time that we turn our attention to the question,—How is this casting out of the prince of this world the result of our Lord's penal, vicarious, expiatory death—his being "lifted up from the earth."?

We have seen that subjection to the influence of the devil is one of the penal evils resulting from man's violation of the Divine law. It is a part of the execution of the curse. Man chose to obey the devil rather than God; and the appropriate punishment of this sin was, to deliver him into the hand of him whom he had chosen as his master. The wicked one was set over him, and Satan permitted to stand at his right hand to practice his wicked arts, and to prosper. In the holy righteous government of God, penal evils cannot be removed by a mere act of the will,—their cause must be removed. Something must be done which will vindicate the law and the Lawgiver, and, in the view of the intelligent universe, condemn sin and the sinner, as much at least as the continued infliction of the penal evil. This has been done in the sufferings of Christ,—terminated in his death. He has delivered us from the curse, by becoming a curse for us,—by bearing every part of the curse, of which innocent human nature could be the subject. He has delivered us from the power of the wicked one,

by submitting, as our surety, to be tempted and tortured by him. In the person of our representative,—our God-man—our kinsman—Redeemer,—we have satisfied that curse, which gave sin its power to condemn, and Satan his power to rule.

In another view of the matter,—In his person, we have vanquished our great foe, who had overcome us in the person of our original representative, and in our own persons; and therefore we are emancipated from his dominion. By removing the curse, the death of Christ removed the obstacles in the way of the communication of those divine holy influences which are necessary and sufficient to enable us to resist the immoral influences of the wicked one; and, moreover, secured the actual communication of these influences to all whom the Father has given to the Son, to be redeemed out of the hand of the enemy. We receive the promised Spirit in believing, as well as are justified freely in believing, in consequence of Christ "redeeming us from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for us."

Still farther, the revelation of the holy and benignant character of God, made in the penal, vicarious, expiatory death of Christ, as the subject of the gospel-revelation, is the grand instrument employed by the Holy Spirit in forming believers to that character which enables them to withstand the evil influence of Satan, to resist him so as to make him flee from them; and the example of our Lord's resistance to the allurements and terrors of the wicked one, consummated on the cross,—there bruising the head of the old serpent, triumphing over him,—is a pattern instinct with encouragement to His followers, while resisting His and their great adversary, in the hope that, through Him who loved them, they, like Him, shall in due time be made more than conquerors.

It is equally plain, that as the death of Christ was the necessary and appropriate means for casting out Satan from his dominion in the hearts of men as individuals, it was so also in reference to depriving him of his power over bodies of men. The secondary influences of Christianity depend on its primary influences. The former are just the shadow of the latter. It is just in the degree that that Gospel, which is the record of Christ's death, is preached and believed, and that that spiritual influence is put forth which, but for that death, could not have been put forth—and the putting forth of which is secured by that death—that mankind are freed from those evils, both of a religious and civil nature, which are the result of the unbroken power of the wicked one—the proofs of its existence, the means of its perpetuation.

Finally, here, it is of importance to remark, that that death merited, as its reward, that unlimited dominion, that uncontrolled power—both as to external event and inward influence—which has been conferred on Christ by his Father—in the exercise of which, he puts down the power of the devil, opposed as

42 Gal. iii. 13.
it is to the holy benignant purpose of his mediatorial reign. Quickened in the spirit in consequence of his becoming dead in the flesh, he, as the stronger man armed, enters into the house of the strong man, and, though he is armed, "binds him and spoils his goods." It is in the exercise of this power, thus acquired, that he so regulates the rise and decline and fall of empires—the progress of commerce, and science, and art, and, indeed, all events—as to secure the carrying, to all nations, of that Gospel by which, through the accompanying power of the Spirit, the prince of this world is ultimately to be expelled from every corner of a world, the whole of which, with scarcely an exception, had, for so many ages, lain helplessly under his iron yoke.

These last remarks sufficiently show, how the casting out the prince of this world is connected with the world being judged—that is, ruled—by Christ. How could our Lord cast out the prince of the world, if he were not the judge, the ruler, of the world? and how can he be the ruler of the world, without its being made certain, that in due time the prince of the world shall be completely cast out?

Let us all seriously inquire, whether this great end of our Lord's death which we have been considering, has been gained with regard to ourselves. We live in a country from which, in some measure, and only in some measure, Satan has been cast out. But have we been turned from the power of Satan to God?—have we ceased to walk according to the course of the prince of the air,—the spirit who worketh in the children of disobedience?—have we become so acquainted with his devices, as not to be deceived by them?—have we been disentangled from his snares?—and are we habitually resisting him, steadfast in the faith? Let us never forget that we are yet his children, his slaves, if we do his lusts—i. e., do the things that please him.

If we have been apparently delivered from his power, if he has been seemingly cast out of us, let us take care that we do not allow him to re-enter, and again to subject us to his power. That is what he will certainly attempt to do, and what in many cases he actually accomplishes, both in individuals and nations. The warning contained in our Lord's parable, is applicable to all countries and ages. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." 'If men, after they have clean escaped from those who live in error, are again allured through the lusts of the flesh—if those who have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, are again entangled and overcome,—the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, and it happens to them according to the true proverb, "the dog
is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed
to her wallowing in the mire."

When a country has been partially delivered from the power
of darkness, as Spain and Italy were in the beginning of the
Reformation, and, instead of the Prince of light being invited to
enter in and dwell, means are used to expel him, and invite back
his rival, how dreadful are the consequences!—ages, it may be,
of the debasement and wretchedness which spring from ignorance
and superstition, and tyranny, both civil and ecclesiastical.
When the wicked one is out, it is wisdom to keep him out.

He always seeks to re-enter, even in the case of the sheep of
Christ, who have been irrevocably rescued from him. And their
security is not in themselves, but in their Deliverer. He will pray
for them when Satan desires to have them that he may sift them
as whea—He will not allow him to pluck them out of his or his
Father’s hand. Yet must they not rest in an indolent reliance,
but, putting on the whole armor of God, in His strength resist
every attempt, on the part of the lawless one, to effect a re-en-
trance into the house from which he has been so rightfully ex-
pelled. Whatever disguises he assumes, they must refuse to par-
ley with him, and treat him as what he is, and they know him to be—a liar, a thief, a robber, a murderer.

If we have been delivered from the wicked one, let us be
thankful to Him who has delivered us, and cheerfully and hope-
fully go on in our opposition to “the adversary,” in all his attacks
on our personal holiness and peace, or on the cause of our Lord,
in the assurance that he shall be bruised under our feet shortly,
and we be made more than conquerors through him who loved
us. Let us, as God gives us opportunity, co-operate with our
Lord and King in castigating Satan, the prince of this world.

This is the appropriate employment of all the followers of our
Lord. Let us remember that he cannot be cast out but in the
name of Jesus, and that none but Christ’s true followers are likely
to be successful in casting him out. When others attempt it, the
fate of the sons of Sceva not unfrequently befalls them.”
Attempts to convert the world on the part, or by means of uncon-
verted men, have seldom ended in much good to either party.
Let us be very busy at this good work, and not forbid others to
take part in it, though they follow not with us. There are devils
enough for us all to cast out. Let us rather set in good earnest
about the work, each for himself, than quarrel with each other as
to the best way of doing it.

Let us rejoice in every new manifestation of the power of our
Lord—every new proof that his death has gained, is gaining, its
object, in the casting out of the prince of this world. Let us, with
united hearts, supplicate our exalted Redeemer—the Judge, the
Ruler, of the world—to take to himself his great power and reign.
Let us take with us words, and say to him, ‘Our Lord and King,
who sittest at thy Father’s right hand in the heavens, possessed of

Acts xix. 13-17.
all power over all flesh, and working salvation in the midst of
the earth, how long shall "the adversary" whom thou hast van-
quished reproach? Shall that enemy blaspheme thy name for
ever? Have respect to the covenant; for the dark places of the
earth, out of which he has not yet been cast, are full of the habi-
tations of horrid cruelty. Arise and plead thine own cause.
"Gird on thy sword, O most mighty, and with thy glory, and with
thy excellency, ride forth prosperously, for truth, and meekness,
and righteousness. Let God arise, and let his enemies be scat-
tered, and let them that hate him flee before him." And let us
not only pray but fight. When he whose name is the Word of
God, Faithful, and True, clothed in a vesture dipped in blood,
goes forth, in accordance with the prayers of his people, on his
white horse, in righteousness judging the world and making war
against its prince, let us see that we be found among the "armies
of heaven, following him on white horses, clothed in fine linen,
white and clean." Yet a little while, and the toils of conflict will
give way to the joys of victory. Yet a little while, and a voice
shall come out of the throne, "Praise our God, all ye his servants,
and ye that fear him, both small and great." And a voice shall
be heard as of a great multitude, and as of many waters, and as
of mighty thunderings, Alleluia: the Lord God omnipotent
reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him;
for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made
herself ready. And to her shall be granted that she be arrayed
in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righte-
ousness of the saints. Blessed are they who are called to the mar-
riage supper of the Lamb." "These are the true sayings of
God."

§ 3. The drawing of all men to Christ.

In tracing the history of our race, especially that portion of it
which has become the subject of inspired record, few things are
fitted to make a deeper impression on a devoutly reflecting mind,
than the readiness with which man, consciously or unconsciously,
sets himself to oppose the Divine designs, and the frequency with
which his attempts to frustrate these purposes, are overruled as
the means of accomplishing them. It was the design of God that
the human race should, according to the benediction originally
pronounced on it, not only "be fruitful and multiply," but also
"replenish the earth and subdue it." After the deluge, the family
of man seems to have determined to make a stand against this
law of God, and took measures to prevent their being "scattered
over the face of the whole earth." The mad attempt ended in so
confounding their language as that their remaining together ceased
to be a matter of option, and what was meant as a centre of per-
manent union became the scene of hopeless disagreement—the
spot from which "the Lord scattered them abroad upon the face
of all the earth." The means they employed to prevent, became
the means of precipitating, the feared catastrophe. The treatment
of Joseph by his brethren, which was intended to render impossible the realization of his early dreams, prepared the way for the fulfilment of these almost to the letter. In seeking to crush him, they were the unconscious, the unwilling, agents in promoting his remarkable advancement.

The frequent attempts made for the destruction of David by Saul, under the influence of jealousy, by their results raised him higher and higher in the estimation of the people, and opened the way for his being joyfully welcomed by all the tribes of Israel, to the throne to which he had been destined. Haman's deep-laid plots for the ruin of Mordecai and his people, proved the means of his own disgraceful and untimely end, and of his intended victims being exalted to "light, and gladness, and joy, and honor."

The most remarkable illustration of the two facts we have noticed, furnished by either sacred or profane history, is to be found in the manner in which men, consciously or unconsciously, set themselves to oppose the purposes of God in reference to his incarnate Son, and in which God rendered those attempts the means of gaining the very objects they were meant to frustrate. Wicked men raged; they imagined a vain thing; they set themselves in council, and formed combined purposes against the Lord's anointed. "He that sat in the heavens laughed at them: the Lord held them in derision." He permitted them to do all that was in their heart, and then showed them that they had only done "whatsoever his hand and his counsel had determined before to be done." They flattered themselves that, in putting him to death, they had permanently deprived him of life, and finally terminated those proceedings which they had witnessed with a mingled feeling of dislike and fear, little thinking that death, in that very form which their malignity had chosen, was necessary to his being "quickened in the spirit," and that he must die in weakness on a cross, that he might "live for ever in the power of God." They had been filled with rage and terror at perceiving that his followers were multiplying, and that, as they phrased it, "the whole world was gone after him," and, no doubt, thought that his public execution, as if he had been a felonious slave, would scatter his adherents, and prevent them from ever again rallying; but, to their permanent confusion, they were soon to find out the meaning of his enigmatical words, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know who I am." "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The very death of shame which they with wicked hands inflicted on him was the foundation of his throne as Messiah; and the cross, the tree of ignominy, as "the ensign of the people, to which the Gentiles should seek," while the rest of him who had hung on it in agony was glorious. Never did the wrath of man so praise God as here. "He disappointed the devices of the crafty, so that their hands could not perform their enterprise. He took the wise in their

own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward was carried head-
long.”

This third result of the death of Christ—the drawing of all
men to him, the Son of man, as the conqueror of the prince of
this world, and the lawful Prince and Saviour of the race—comes
now to be considered. “And I, if”—or rather, when—“I am
lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” There are
obviously two questions here, to which our attention must be suc-
cessively turned: What are we to understand by our Lord’s
drawing all men to him? and, How is this connected with his
being lifted up from the earth?

1. **What is this drawing of all men to Christ?**

And first, then, of our Lord’s drawing all men to him. The
general idea in the passage seems to be this: Death is generally
viewed as cutting off all connection with the living world. All
the ties are unlodged which bound to his fellow-men him who has
died. He has “no more a portion for ever in anything that is
done under the sun.” He has no power to draw his fellow-men
to him. It was to be otherwise with our Lord. His connection
with men was not to be weakened—his power over them was to
be increased—by his death. If he had influence over men when
he lived, he was to have far more influence over them after he
had died. This is the general idea which, on being carefully
considered in the light of other scripture declarations, will be
found to imply in it three things: his making all men, without
exception, the subjects of his mediatorial government; his mak-
ing all men, without exception, the objects of the invitations
of his Gospel; and his making all whom the Father has given him
—and who are a vast multitude, Gentiles as well as Jews—men
of all ages, conditions, and characters—of every kindred, and
people, and tongue, and nation,—partakers of the blessings of
his salvation. All these, though not in the same way, our Lord
draws to himself in consequence of his being lifted up from the
earth. It is right to remark that the word men is a supplement;
the original words are—“I will draw all to me.” Let us briefly
illustrate these important truths.

(1.) **All men, without exception, become the subjects of his mediato-
rial government.**

In the first place, our Lord draws all to him, inasmuch as he
makes all men, without exception, the subjects of his mediatorial
government. In the ancient oracles in reference to the Messiah,
it was plainly indicated that he was to have the government of
the world. To Shiloh was to be “the gathering of the people.”
He was to be “the Governor among the nations.” “I shall give
thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of
the earth for thy possession.” Such is the promise of the Father
to the Son. "Thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me." Such is the acknowledgment of the Son to the Father. "The Father," says our Lord, unfolding the mediatorial economy, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." "All things," says he, "are delivered unto me of my Father." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "Thou hast given the Son power over all flesh." It was the purpose of God, according to his good pleasure, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth," in or under Christ, who is "head over all things to the church, which is his body."

A change in the mode of administering the government of the world, plainly took place when our Lord, the incarnate Son, the perfected Redeemer, sat down on the right hand of his Father. Henceforward the affairs of the universe are under the immediate direction of the glorified God-man, to subserve the high, and holy, and benignant purposes of his mediation. The promise to Abraham was fulfilled to him in its fullest extent. He became "the heir of the world." He claimed and treated all men, all beings, as his rightful property, and thus drew them to him, to be employed by him as instrumental agents in accomplishing the ends of his government. There is not a living being in the universe on whom, when he requires its service, he cannot lay his hand. He has but to say, Come, and he comes; Go, and he goes; Do this, and he does it. All human, all angelic, power and activity is entirely at his command. This authority he is continually exercising; and in the close of the present order of things he will remarkably manifest it, when, coming in his glory in the clouds of heaven, with all his holy angels, he shall sit on the throne of his glory, and draw to him all nations,—when the quick and the dead, small and great, brought together by his irresistible fiat, shall stand before his tribunal, and be judged by him in righteousness.

(2.) All men, without distinction, become the objects of the invitations of his Gospel.

I proceed to observe, in the second place, that our Lord draws all to him, inasmuch as he makes all men the objects of the invitations of his Gospel. He invites all men, without exception, to participate in the blessings of his salvation. This, too, was the subject of ancient prophecy: "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people." "Thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One

45 Psal. ii. 8; xviii. 43. John v. 22, 23. Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 18. John xvii. 2. Eph. i. 10, 23.
47 Rom. iv. 13. Heb. i. 2.
of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.” He “preaches peace to them which are afar off, and to them that are nigh.” When he said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” he added, “Go ye into all the world; Go, teach all nations; Go, preach the Gospel to every creature.” And what is this Gospel? “God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses,” seeing “he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This is his voice from the throne, to which he has risen from the cross and the grave, “Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.” “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money.” “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” In these invitations, he draws all men to him—invises all, without exception, to receive eternal life as the gift of God in him.

These invitations, though addressed to all men without exception, have in reality hitherto been presented to comparatively few. A deep responsibility lies on those to whom he gives the commission to have the Gospel preached to every creature. Oh! that they felt it more than hitherto they seem to have done. And we are assured that, ere “the end come,” “this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world.” “The glory of the Lord,” in the face of his Son, as it is reflected in the Gospel, “shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” And wherever these invitations of the Gospel come, there, we are persuaded, go forth also drawing influences of the divine Spirit—influences, in too many cases, resisted and quenched, but influences indicating, like the invitations of the Gospel they accompany, the benignity of him who sends them forth, and proving how he would have gathered even those who refused to take refuge under the sheltering wings of his mercy.

(3.) All whom the Father has given him,—“an innumerable company out of every kindred, tongue, and nation,”—are put in possession of the blessings of his salvation.

I have only farther to remark, on this part of the subject, that our Lord draws all to him, insomuch as he brings to the possession of the blessings of his salvation, in a state of union with himself, all those whom the Father has given him. It is the good pleasure of our Father in heaven, that the Captain of our salvation should bring many sons to glory,—an innumerable
multitude, whom he chose "in him before the foundation of the world;" "having predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ," to "the praise of the glory of his grace." To secure their salvation, he gave up his Son to die; and to secure their salvation, he also raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that he might give them that eternal life to which they had been destined before all worlds. These he, as well as his Father, loved with an eternal love, and "therefore with loving-kindness does he draw them." That salvation is in him. He only can confer it; and it can be enjoyed only in that state of union with him, into which men are brought through the faith of the truth.

The words before us, when viewed with regard to the saving operations of our Lord in reference to his peculiar people, are full of important meaning. They lead us to think of the natural state of these men as a state of distance from Christ. They were not originally in him, nor near him,—they were in the world—far off,—without—apart from Christ. They were willing slaves of the prince of this world. And the words seem to indicate, too, that there was no disposition to come near. Left to themselves, they would never have come near. Had they not been drawn, they never would have moved, except in the way of going farther and farther from him. The history of their being drawn to him, is not, they willed, and they ran, and then he showed mercy,—but he showed mercy in working in them the will and the act of coming to him; "No man cometh to him, but he who is drawn by the Father;" and here, as elsewhere, "whatsoever the Father doeth, the Son also doeth likewise." They seem also to intimate the nature of the influence by which the change is produced. They are not driven,—they are not dragged; they are drawn to him,—drawn by chords of love, by bands of a man; their minds are enlightened in the knowledge of his loveliness and love, and their hearts impressed with corresponding affections. They are made "willing in the day of his power." They are persuaded and enabled to come to him. He "draws them, and they run after him." For though the influence is gentle and persuasive, it is powerful and invincible. He draws them to himself. He continues drawing till they are brought close to him, till they are "one in him, even as the Father is in him and he is in the Father."

In drawing them to himself, he draws them into the enjoyment of all the blessings of his salvation. "He that hath the Son hath life." In him they are justified, sanctified, and redeemed. They are "complete in him." He draws them to fellowship with him in his righteousness, and Spirit, and blessedness, even here; and he will in due time draw them up to himself in heaven. His prayer in reference to them all—and him the

50 Heb. ii, 10. Eph. i. 4-6. 51 Jer. xxxi. 3.
53 Psal. cx. 3. Song i. 4. John xvii. 21-23.
Father heareth always—is, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." Thus he draws them individually to himself; gathering them one by one out of the world lying under the wicked one; and continues drawing them farther and farther from all that is evil—nearer and nearer to himself.

He also draws them together to himself, in the holy institutions of christian worship. He dwells on earth in his churches. Of them he says, as of Zion of old, "This is my rest, here will I stay, for I have desired it;" and thither, by his Spirit, he draws all his people to have fellowship with him and with one another;—draws them effectually—they cannot stay away from what our fathers significantly called his "trysting places." They are like the Greeks, saying in their hearts, "we would see Jesus,"—we wish to "see his face, and here his voice,—for his voice is sweet, his countenance is lovely."

And as the object of his mission was "to gather together in one all the children of God scattered abroad," he will never rest satisfied till he draws them to himself at his right hand, fully redeemed, soul and body, a glorious and happy company,—at the great gathering together at his coming; and then, in the exercise of this power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself, having drawn their bodies out of the grave to him, he will draw them, soul and body, along with himself up through these heavens, into the heaven of heavens; and there, in the mansion prepared for them in the house of his Father and their Father, his God and their God, they "shall be for ever with the Lord." Our Lord will thus draw all his chosen ones to himself. Of all whom the Father gives him, not one shall be lost. No, they shall be an unbroken family, whom he brings to glory; when he presents them a perfect church to his Father, who gave him them, he will say, "Behold, I and the children thou hast given me." And though in every age and country hitherto, they have been but a little flock, when he has drawn them all home to himself, they will form "a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." 55

2. What is the connection between this drawing all to him and his being lifted up?

Having thus endeavored to explain what is meant by our Lord "drawing all to him," I proceed to the second inquiry suggested by the words before us—What is the connection between this drawing all to him, and his being lifted up from the earth?—understanding this, according to the evangelist's exposition of his penal, vicarious, expiatory death on the cross. This drawing followed the lifting up—"when"—and it followed it very soon;

54 John xvi. 24.
but there is much more than mere sequence in the connection. The connection between our Lord drawing all men to him—inasmuch as he makes all men the subjects of his mediatorial government—and his being lifted up from the earth, has already been substantially illustrated, when showing the connection between "the judgment or government of the world" by him, and his death. It is the promised and merited reward of his obedience to the death, and it is the appropriate and necessary means of his carrying into accomplishment the great end of his death—to expiate sin, so as that grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life. That death was the strongest conceivable proof that "he loved righteousness, and hated wickedness:" "Therefore God, his God, anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows," making him "King of kings, and Lord of lords:" 56 and how could he save his chosen, if he were not the Lord of the world?

The connection between our Lord's death and his drawing all men to him, by the unconditionally free invitations of his Gospel, may be easily stated in a sentence or two. Had not atonement been made by the death of Christ, there could have been no salvation to offer to any of the fallen race of man. It is because "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," that to men is proclaimed the forgiveness of sins, and that they are assured that "he that believeth in him shall be justified from all things, from which men could not have been justified by the law of Moses." "The ministry of reconciliation," has for its great subject, the atoning death of Christ—his being made sin in our room—and it is on the ground of this infinite atonement that men are assured that "God is reconciling the world to himself," and that they are besought to be reconciled to God.

The connection between our Lord drawing all to him, by putting all whom the Father has given him in possession of the blessings of his salvation, requires to be illustrated somewhat more at length. The death of Christ, as the atonement of human guilt, removes obstacles, otherwise insurmountable, in the way of any sinner being drawn to Christ as a Saviour. Till, by an adequate atonement, a foundation was laid for mercy being exercised to sinners, in consistency with righteousness, there could have been no salvation for fallen man. It is just because Christ has offered an all-perfect sacrifice in his death, that there is that salvation in Him, which there is in no other. Had he not died, he would, no doubt, have remained what he always was—mighty, almighty—but he could not have been mighty to save. Men never could have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," had it not been that "in him there is redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of Divine grace." 57

56 Psal. xiv. 7. Rev. xix. 16.
57 Col. i. 13, 14.
Then, the death of Christ—viewed as an illustration of the Divine character—as the subject of a Divine revelation, furnishes the appropriate and effectual means for drawing the sinner to him. It is a striking fact, that the truth about the death of Christ is the grand means of converting men. It is neither "the sign"—the miracle which the Jew desired—nor "the wisdom," the abstract reasoning which the Greek desired (though Christianity has many miracles, and may be supported by many most ingenious as well as satisfactory trains of arguments)—which converts men to Christ. It is the truth about Christ crucified, which is "the power of God to salvation" to men. Till I know and believe this truth—whatever else I know and believe—I stand away from Christ. The moment I understand and believe this, I am drawn to him, as an object of my confidence, and my love, and my obedience. That very event, which seemed fitted to secure that Jesus should never have another follower—for who would attach themselves to a dead man—a man put to death in circumstances of the greatest ignominy?—that very event has in it the concentration, as it were, of all those powerful influences, which ultimately are to make Christianity the religion of the world—which have already gained it a place in many millions of human hearts, which no mere man ever occupied—which have made multitudes feel it right, honorable, ay, delightful, to suffer disgrace, or even death, for his sake.

How Christ's being lifted up from the earth—dying on a cross for men—draws all men to him, has been strikingly illustrated in the history of missions. The Moravians labored in Greenland for a number of years with no apparent fruit. When they spoke to the savages of the being and attributes of God—of the sin of man—of the necessity of an atonement—of the evil of sin—of the excellence of holiness—of the glories of heaven, or of the horrors of hell—their hearers talked of seal-catching, and said they did not understand these things. But, on one of the missionaries one day describing to them, with unusual minuteness, the sufferings and death of Christ, one of the savages suddenly stepped forward, and said, "How was that? Tell me it once more. I also would fain be saved." This amazed and delighted the missionaries, and led them to adopt a new method with their pagan disciples. They preached the cross. They held up Jesus, lifted up from the earth, and virtue came forth from him. The brutalized Greenlanders were interested; their dark understandings were enlightened; their stubborn hearts melted;—in a word, they were drawn to Christ; the Spirit wielded resistlessly his favorite instrument—the cross.

Ministers, whether among heathen, or nominally christian, savage, or civilized men, if they wish to draw men to Christ, must learn to say, "We preach Christ crucified; to the Jew a stum-

58 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.
bling-block, to the Greek foolishness; but to be called of God"—whether Jew or Greek—"the power of God, the wisdom of God." "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." The fact of the incarnate Son of God dying for men, when, announced, strikes the mind, and commands attention. When seen to be true, as a display of disinterested love on the part of God and his Son—and at the same time of the evil of sin, and the Divine disposition to pardon and save the sinner—it quells the jealousies of guilt, and excites confidence and love, and makes the believing sinner cling to the Saviour in life and in death."

Still farther, that death not only removed the obstacles in the way of drawing men to the Saviour, and furnished the means of drawing them to him, but it also obtained what was necessary, and is sufficient, to secure the effectual use of these means. I refer to the special influence of the Divine Spirit. It is not accurate phraseology—it is not orthodox theology—to say Christ's death purchased the Holy Spirit. But it is important truth, that the Spirit, in his sanctifying influence, is communicated only to those who, through faith in the truth, are interested in the atoning efficacy of the Saviour's death; and, that, to all who are made the righteousness of God in Christ, that Spirit is most assuredly communicated: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us"—not only "that the blessing of Abraham"—the justification by faith—"might come on believing Gentiles," but that the promised "Spirit may be given to all, Jew or Gentile, who believe."

Such, then, was the death of Christ. He died—died on a cross—died the vicarious victim, the accepted sacrifice, for man's transgression; and such have been, such are, such shall be, its results: the world judged; the prince of the world cast out; and all men drawn to his conqueror, and their deliverer.

Turning your attention, cursorily, to a few of the practical reflections naturally rising out of the consideration of the last of these results, I shall shut up the discourse.

How full of consolation to the Christian, the thought that the Son of man has drawn all to him, as the subjects of his government! How delightful to think that himself, all his friends, all his enemies, are entirely under the control of the Saviour, and that nothing can ever, in this or any other world, in time or eternity, happen to him, which is not the dictate of the heart of Him who so loved him as to die for him—the work of the hands which were nailed to the cross for his salvation! How encouraging to think, that the cause of truth and righteousness is, and must be, safe, since there is no created power in the universe which is not subject to Him, who died to attest truth and to promote righteousness!

59 1 Cor. ii. 2. 60 James. 61 Gal. iii. 13, 14.
How alarming to the enemies of Christ and Christianity, that He whom they oppose is "Lord of all," and "must reign till all his enemies are made his footstool!" He is "the one" Ruler, Judge, and "Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy."62

What cause of gratitude, that, as the crucified One—who was dead, but is alive, and lives for evermore—in the word of the truth of the Gospel, revealing a completed atonement—a full and a free salvation—and offering the benefit of the former, and the possession of the latter, to the guiltiest of our guilty race,—he is drawing all men to him, and that the words of this life have come to us! And what additional cause of gratitude, if we have reason to believe that the power of his Spirit has, in our case, attended the invitation of his word, and that, in tender, sovereign, distinguishing, special mercy, he has drawn us to himself! That is the grand concern. If he has not drawn us to himself hitherto, his being lifted up from the earth has been in vain for us; and we are not drawn to him, if we are not drawn from sin, and self, and the world—his great enemies and ours.

To those who have experienced his attractive power, I need scarcely say, O seek to feel more of it. He has brought you towards himself, seek to be brought nearer, and nearer, and nearer to him, in mind, in heart, in enjoyment, till he draws you wholly to himself; and, for this purpose, habitually look to Jesus—to Jesus lifted up from the earth—dying—dying for you—the just for the unjust.

To those who,—though he has long been drawing them, by the invitations of his word, and, it may be, by the strivings of his Spirit—have never yet moved towards him, I would say, How deplorably pitiful is your situation, not to feel the attractions of Him who is so attractive? Even when on the earth, there was a wonderful power of attraction about him. An infant in the manger, he drew angels from heaven, shepherds from their flocks, and the magi from the distant east. A poor despised man, he never, so far as we know, bade any, except one, follow him, who did not, though at the price of forsaking all, readily obey him. An agonized sufferer in Gethsemane, he drew to him an angel, who felt honored beyond thought, in being permitted to minister to his consolation.63 What a crowd of human beings—most of them hostile to him, but all deeply interested in him—gathered round his cross; and how much more numerous and deeply interested the attendant hosts of the spirits of light and of darkness! All in heaven, and all in hell, have their views directed to him. Neither devil nor damned spirit—neither angel nor spirit of the just made perfect—can resist his power to command attention. How stupid are you who resist such attractions—who regard him neither with the love which has delight in it, nor with the fear

62 Acts x. 36. 1 Cor. xv. 25. James iv. 12.
63 Jeremy Taylor.
which has torment? If you will not be drawn by him to salvation, know that you must be dragged before him to judgment, and driven from him into everlasting destruction: “Behold he is coming in clouds, and every eye must see him.” You must look at him then; you must listen to him then. Oh, look at him now; listen to him now. His eyes will be then as a flame of fire to his obstinate enemies; but how full of compassion and melting tenderness are they now to you! His voice is a powerful one; and when He then shall say, “Depart!” the combined power of the universe cannot resist it. But that voice is now, “Come!” and it is “spirit and life” to all who listen to it with an obedient ear. The prince of this world, and his conqueror, are both drawing you—the one downward to hell—the other upward to heaven; the one to everlasting death—the other to eternal life; the one to endless infamy—the other to a crown of glory that fadeth not away; and will you yield to the one and resist the other? “O foolish people, and unwise!” He waits to be gracious. He who has drawn many to himself, will draw more. The heavenly magnet has lost none of its power: “He that gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather other besides those who are gathered.” Oh, may he draw us all, and may we run after him—draw us to himself—draw us to hope—draw us to holiness—draw us to happiness—draw us to heaven—and may we, in time and eternity, be witnesses to the fulfilment, in our own experience, of our Lord’s words, “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me.”

Sinner, to whose ear the word of salvation now comes, and to whose conscience the Spirit is now intimating that you ought to attend to it, He is now drawing you. “Will you dare”—as Rutherford says on another subject—“will you dare to be the creature that will hold when He draweth?” Has he not a good right to draw you—a blood-bought one? and is he not drawing you from the brink of the pit of perdition, into which, if he let go his hold, the very recoil will precipitate your fall? He was lifted up from the earth, that he might become qualified to draw sinners like you from destruction to salvation—from hell to heaven. He died that he might obtain arguments to use with you—those cords of love—those bands of man,—that he might obtain authority to employ Divine influence for such a purpose,—that he might merit all power in heaven and earth, that he might use it for man’s salvation; and he has been lifted up from the earth, in another sense, for the same purpose; he revived, and rose, and ascended on high, to exercise those qualifications: “He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sin.” And will you pour contempt on all this kindness? When he has shown so clearly how willing he is to gather you, will you refuse to be gathered? “Turn ye, turn ye, why will

64 Rev. i. 7. 65 Acts v. 31.