

THE  
**WORKS**  
OF  
**WILLIAM JAY.**

**Volume VIII**



THE  
**WORKS**  
OF  
**WILLIAM JAY,**  
COLLECTED AND REVISED BY HIMSELF  
VOLUME VIII.  
CONTAINING  
**MEMOIRS**  
OF THE LATE  
**REV. JOHN CLARK,**  
**ESSAYS, AND VARIOUS SERMONS**  
LONDON:  
C. A. BARTLETT, 66, PATERNOSTER ROW. 1843.

**Quinta Press**

Quinta Press, Meadow View, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry,  
Shropshire, England, SY10 7RN

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OF

**WILLIAM JAY**

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**REFLECTIONS ON VICTORY:**

**A SERMON,**

PREACHED

IN ARGYLE-CHAPEL, BATH,

DECEMBER 5, 1805;

BEING

THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL  
THANKSGIVING

FOR THE

**SIGNAL VICTORY**

OBTAINED UNDER THE LATE LORD VISCOUNT  
NELSON,

OVER THE

COMBINED FLEET OF THE ENEMY.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

A SERMON issuing from the press is submitted to a severer test than a Sermon only heard from the pulpit; and a discourse impressive in the delivery is generally less interesting in the perusal, having no longer the advantage of a number of auxiliary feelings and circumstances.

This obvious reflection would have hindered the author from sending abroad a Discourse composed in haste, in the ordinary course of his duty, and with no view to publication—had it not been for two reasons—

The one taken from the expediency of seizing events as they occur, and of turning to utility present impressions.

The other from the difficulty of resisting importunity, when it comes from a people endeared by a thousand attentions and kindnesses.

The substance of the Prayer is also inserted by desire

*Percy Place,*

*December 8, 1805.*

**PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.**

O God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty; thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment; thou ridest upon the wings of the wind. When we reflect upon the glory of thy Majesty, we are astonished at thy infinite condescension in deigning to notice creatures so mean and so vile as we are. What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man that thou visitest him? We have thought of thy loving kindness, O Lord, in the midst of thy temple, and are again assembled together to call upon our souls, and all that is within us, to bless and to praise thy holy name.

We rejoice that thy throne is in the heavens, and that thy kingdom ruleth over all; that we are under the empire of a Being, not only almighty, but perfectly righteous, and wise, and good; that all things in our world are appointed and arranged by thee; that thy providence numbers the very hairs of our head; and that a sparrow falleth not to the earth without our heavenly Father.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. We bless thee for personal mercies. If we are called, it is by thy word. If we are renewed, it is by thy spirit. If we are justified, it is freely by thy grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is in thee we live, move, and have our being. Thy goodness has been always near us to listen to our complaints, to soothe our sorrows, and to rescue us from dangers. And numberless are the instances of loving kindness that now from ignorance or inattention escape our notice, the discovery of which will awaken our songs when we mingle with those that dwell in thy house above, and are still praising thee.

We thank thee for relative mercies; for blessings on our families, blessings on our churches, and blessings on the country to which we belong. We confess that we are not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewn us. Sins of every kind and degree have reigned among us; have spread through all ranks; and continued through all warnings and corrections; and if thou shouldst deal with us after our sins, or reward us according to our iniquities, we should no longer have a name and a place among the nations of the globe.

But while to us belong shame and confusion of faces, to thee, the Lord our God, belong mercies and forgiveness. All thy dispensations towards us have said, with a tenderness that ought to penetrate our hearts, How shall I give thee up, O England! Our privileges never improved, and forfeited times without number, have been continued. We still behold our Sabbaths, and our eyes see our teachers. Our constitution endeared by comparison has been preserved: our civil liberties, and laws, marked by their justice and mildness, have not been subverted; and still we sit under our own vines, and under our own fig-trees, none daring to make us afraid. Thou hast given us rains and fruitful seasons; thou hast fed us with the finest of the wheat; our garners have been full, affording all manner of store; our oxen have been strong to labour; our sheep have brought forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets. Thou hast spread thy wing, and sheltered us from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that rageth at noon day. We have not been permitted to hear the confused noise of warriors, nor to see garments rolled in blood,; it has not come nigh unto us. Our enemies have often threatened to swallow us up, but thou hast frustrated their designs; and, brought into conflict, thou hast given us a succession of victories—the greatest of which we have the happiness this day to acknowledge.



O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! By these cords of love draw us to thyself. By thy mercies may we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service. After such a deliverance as this, may we no more break thy commandments! May we never convert our blessings into instruments of provocation by their nourishing pride and arrogance, and self-confidence, and presumption; so as to compel thee to complain—Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

With all our gratitude and joy, may we remember what reasons we have also for sorrow and humiliation. O give us that repentance that is unto life. O reform our manners and forgive our sins. And suffer us to plead for a continuance of thy goodness. On thee we depend for our preservation and deliverance. O! disperse the clouds that hang over us. Mingle not a perverse spirit in the midst of us. In such a period of danger may we feel as the heart of one man. May we not grow impatient under the pressure of needful burdens; nor ever suffer our trials to make us insensible to our comforts.

Let the king live before thee. Upon his head may the crown long flourish. Be his consolation and support under the weight of growing years, of bodily infirmities, and of national anxieties. Bless him in his royal consort; and in all the branches of his illustrious family. Bless him in his counsels. Impart to those who are at the helm of public affairs that wisdom that is profitable to direct; and let all who are in stations of public trust be faithful to public interests. May all the various classes of our community pursue that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and forsake that sin which is a reproach to any people. And, as all events are under thy control, and all hearts are at thy command, open, we beseech thee, a way for the termination of hostility, and the restoration of peace.

For, O God, we would always deplore the necessity of war; we would weep over its calamities; we would sigh even over its successes. We must bedew our own victory with tears, in the loss of so many of our fellow-creatures, and of our fellow-citizens, and in the mournful death of our distinguished leader. God of Peace, wipe away our tears. Cause the triumphs and the horrors of war to cease. Return, O Lord; how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we, may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

## REFLECTIONS ON VICTORY.

*“And the victory that day was turned into mourning.”—*  
2 SAM. xix. 2.

“**M**AN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.” Even our joys as well as our sorrows proclaim, “This is not your rest.” and call upon us to “arise and depart hence.” For

“—Roses grow on thorns,  
And honey wears a sting.”

There are two great diminutions of all our present enjoyments. The one arises from change and disappointment. Have we health? To-morrow we may be laid on “a bed of languishing.” Have we substance? “Riches make to themselves wings and flee away.” Have we honour? Our laurel withers in wearing, or is torn off from the brow. Alas! how many in speaking of their possessions and comforts are constrained to refer to them as—past! One cries I had an estate—another, I had a father—a third, I had a child

The other springs from imperfection and alloy. Even allowing certain objects to be attained and secured—on how many conditions depends the pleasure of enjoyment! The absence of one agreeable quality, or the presence of one disagreeable circumstance, will be sufficient to spoil all the relish of our bliss; and even to excite vexation and disgust. A favour was shewn me: and had it been given ten-

derly—it would have been pleasing: had it come earlier—it would have been useful: but it was given ungraciously; it came too late. There we see a man who has large wealth to leave behind him—but he goes childless. Here we behold a numerous offspring—but the means of subsistence fail. When Haman “came home, he sent, and called for his friends and Zeresh his wife. And he told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared, but myself: and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet—all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.” The Israelites went three days from the borders of the Red Sea—and “found no water:” they came to Marah—“and could not drink of the water because it was bitter.” A true representation, says Bishop Hall, of a wilderness state—where we are always complaining either of our trials, or of our indulgences—and where Providence so taxes every happiness that our fruitions differ but little from our wants.

“No; ’tis in vain to seek for bliss,  
 For bliss can ne’er be found—  
 —Till we arrive where Jesus is,  
 And tread that heavenly ground.”

My brethren, I have read a sentence from the sacred history that affords another exemplification of this truth, whether we consider its original reference, or its present application—

AND THE VICTORY THAT DAY WAS TURNED INTO MOURNING.

Victory is our present subject. And we invite your attention while we consider—I. Those victories that terminate in joy—and II. Those that are attended with sorrow.

Yes—my brethren, there are victories that terminate in joy, And such was,

First, our Redeemer's victory over all his enemies, and ours. Ah! what a struggle had he to conquer those that had ruined mankind, and spread misery over the creation of God! "He looked and there was none to help; and he wondered there was none to uphold—therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him, and his fury it upheld him." He interposed, and—succeeded. And his success was the more remarkable as it seemed to spring from actual defeat. In fighting—he fell. The enemy, sure of victory, shouted. But his triumph was short. How often, and how truly have we exclaimed—

"I sing my Saviour's wondrous death,  
He conquer'd when he fell:  
"Tis finish'd"—said his dying breath  
And shook the gates of hell."

"Now is the judgment of this world: now is the prince of this world cast out. He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly. Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil: and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

And this victory issued in joy to Himself. He had his eye upon it all through the conflict: for "the joy that was set before him he endured the

cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." It was the assured reward of his sufferings: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. I will 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 sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." It is thus "he draws all men unto him:" It is thus he gains the hearts and the praises of all those for whom he bled and died: who, while here, glory only in his cross; who, when in heaven, behold "his scars of love, and kindle to a flame,"—and who, through endless ages, will adore, "saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

For it ends also in joy to his people.—What days of suspense and despair were those that passed while he was silent in the tomb! For he had gone to assail the king of terrors in his own dark dominions; and he said as he entered, "O death I will be thy plagues, o grave I will be thy destruction, repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." And—will he return? said his anxious and desponding followers. Yes. On the third hallowed morning he comes forth, all life and immortality. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." "The Lord is risen indeed," was their song and their salvation. And they went forth and said "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as

it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

And how was the intelligence received? Not coldly, but with gladness of heart. How was it heard in Samaria? "There was great joy in that city." How did the Galatians receive it? With blessedness; "where is the blessedness, says the Apostle, ye spake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." How did the Thessalonians embrace it? They "received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." And why do not you give it the same welcome? Is it not of the same importance to you as it was to them? Does it not abound with the same exceeding great and precious promises? Does it not open the same prospects to your hopes? Does it not bring the same relief to your necessities?—Why then does not this victory equally enliven and rejoice you?

What would have been the consequence if he had not fought—if he had not conquered these enemies? We should have become a prey to their teeth. And the miseries they would have inflicted upon us infinitely surpass all the evils we can endure from the successes of other foes. These combined enemies would have robbed us of all spiritual liberty and property; of every divine relation and enjoyment; they were sworn to destroy both body and soul for ever. "But be of good cheer: He has overcome the world!" "The lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed." "His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him

the victory.”—Proclaim it to the ends of the earth. Let it reach, O Christian, every wretched corner of thy trembling soul:

“Hell and thy sins resist thy course,  
 But hell and sin are vanquish’d foes;  
 Thy Jesus nail’d them to the cross,  
 And sung the triumph when he rose.”

Let there be “light in all” your “dwellings.” Let every tongue be filled with rapture. “Sing unto him, sing Psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the hearts of those rejoice that seek the Lord.”

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!”

Let us pass from the victory of Christ to the victory of the Christian. For the Christian is a soldier; and he wars “a good warfare.” His cause is righteous, his alliance is almighty, his success is sure: and he “joys before the Lord as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.”

Nothing, perhaps, strikes us more powerfully than military grandeur. Johnson has remarked, that were you in a room with a company of philosophers, and there came in Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, or Frederick the Great, every eye would instantly be drawn off from the former, and fastened on the latter. Indeed the glory that attends the conqueror is so dazzling, that it unhappily prevents our observing sufficiently the wickedness of his character, the injustice of his means, the wretchedness of his exploits. But it is the moral hero the Scripture



calls upon us to admire; it is the man that subdues himself. "He that is slow to anger is greater than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." There is no skill like this; no valour like this; no glory like this; no joy like this. Have you ever been enabled by Divine grace to subdue a rebellious passion? For instance. When stimulated to revenge, have you resisted, and "overcome evil with good?" What a serenity filled the mind! What a delicious sensation of kindness spread through the heart! It was a proof by dignified feeling that "it is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression." It was a little approximation to Deity—to him, who "is slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."

We may say the same of every other moral conquest. Such victory nothing can embitter. It yields a pleasure the most pure, the most generous, the most durable. It will bear examination and review. It will abide a dying hour. It will live in eternity. It is an angel that brings the wreath. It is God himself that approves and applauds. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

Here, indeed, the believer's victory is imperfect: he will be annoyed even to the end of life. And hence his happiness is proportionably incomplete. "While without are fightings, within are fears." But a full and a final triumph awaits him. The last enemy (O blessed termination of the war!)—the last enemy shall be destroyed—and he shall "always triumph in Christ." "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on in-

corruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

—Happy Christian! The victory of that day shall never be turned into mourning. Thou art more than a conqueror through him that loved thee. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are all passed away." "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more."

Are all such victories?

No, my brethren—Not such are the victories of the young man—who overcomes the force of a pious education, the scruples of a tender conscience, the admonitions of friendship, the restraints of fear and shame.

Not such are the victories of the seducer—who accomplishes, O cruel success! the infamy and ruin of innocence and weakness; and forces a wretched and defenceless being to groan, "and I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?"

Not such are the victories of the infidel—who can boast, O hellish triumph! of the number of victims whose principles he has poisoned, whose hearts he has corrupted, and whose comforts he has destroyed.

Are all such victories? No, my brethren: there are some that are attended with sorrow. And to approach more nearly to the business of the day, such was the victory of Joab—such, in some respects, are all national victories—and such in a memorable circumstance is the victory we are assembled to improve.

First. David by the skill and valour of his troops, under the command of Joab, had gained a complete victory. Nothing could be more seasonable, or important. It crushed the wide-spread rebellion, and reduced his subjects to their allegiance. But behold the king, all suspense, sitting between the two gates, waiting for intelligence. Two messengers run to announce the victory. “And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well.—And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, when Joab sent me, thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.”—“And behold, Cushie came, and Cushie said, Tidings, my lord the king! for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto Cushie—Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushie answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.” Nothing could have been more wise and delicate than the manner in which the truth was insinuated—but like a sword it pierced through David’s soul. “And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom: would God I had died for thee, O Absalom my son, my son!”

David was doubtless in some measure to blame. It was surely wrong in him not to notice, as they returned, the brave men who had jeopardized their lives in the high places of the field for his safety. But O! who can help—at least what parent can help—excusing, if not justifying his conduct? David stood in a double relation. He was not only the King, but the Father. And though Absalom had been undutiful—still—he was a child—and for a child to be cut off, not only in the midst of his days—but in the midst of his sins! Excuse David or condemn, the event was the same.—“The people got them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. For the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son—and the victory that day was turned into mourning.”

And, secondly, my brethren, this is true in some respects of every national victory. In order to see this, it is necessary for us to separate off the utility, and also what is called the glory of the business, and contemplate the circumstances that attend it, and the effects that follow it. Many of these indeed are never published, and some of them cannot easily be imagined. But without difficulty we may apprehend more than enough to verify our observation. When a victory is obtained on land, why—I use the language of Scripture—“the land mourns,” “the earth languisheth:” fields are ravaged, fences are laid waste, houses are demolished; a garden of Eden is trampled into a wilderness. There is often also much slaughter among the brute creation, especially in that useful and generous animal, the horse. And “God takes

care for oxen," and tenderly mentions the loss of very much cattle in the destruction of Nineveh. But let us refer to our own species only.

Mournful is the infliction of pain—while thousands are agonizing and groaning together, and not a few long left with their wounds bleeding and undressed.

Mournful is the loss of limbs. How we feel when a neighbour, by disease or accident, is compelled to submit to a single amputation! How we are affected, even to this hour, with the case of Mephibosheth. Poor babe!—His nurse, hearing the approach of battle, fled, and he dropped from her frightened arms, and became "lame in both his feet." But how many individuals by one action are maimed, and return home leaving parts of themselves behind; moving, or carried about, mangled and dismembered; one without an eye, another without an arm, and so of the rest!

Mournful is the loss of lives. For where is the human being that is not of importance to some one?—On the late news Edinburgh was illuminated; but not entirely: one street refused its lustre—in this lived the widowed wife of the gallant Captain Duff. It was a striking exception. Darkness best suited an anguished mind, whose hope was fled. But social attachments and usefulness do not depend upon rank and office. How many a poor widow in Spain, in France, in England, whose name will never be announced in the public papers, is now weeping over a husband she will see no more! How many a child is at this hour crying "my father, my father!"

Mournful above all is the loss of souls. We are far from supposing that all warfare is unlawful; and that a good man cannot be a soldier. Who has not

read the life of Colonel Gardiner, slain by the rebels, in the battle of Preston Pans? Was there ever a mind more purely and ardently pious? And, blessed be God, we have a few Centurions "devout men, and who fear God with all their house." A man may ascend to heaven from the field of battle. But the moral state of armies and navies is too well known to be a secret. At any time the generality of those that compose them are ill prepared to die. How dreadfully affecting then is it to think of so many of our fellow-creatures being cut off in a moment, and sent, with all their sins upon them, to appear before the Judge of all!—So many ways is victory turned into mourning.

But let us finally observe whether there be nothing to render our remark significantly true on the present occasion. Let none imagine that we are going to depreciate the value of the victory with which Providence has crowned his Majesty's arms, and which we are assembled to acknowledge. Never was there a victory more seasonable. Never was there a victory more complete. Never was there a victory more wonderful—whether we consider the number of ships compelled to strike to such an inferior force; the annihilation of so large a portion of the naval power of the enemy at a blow; the preservation of our own vessels through the tremendous gales that rendered it necessary to destroy so many of the prizes. As a victory was never more bravely won, so never was there a victory more modestly, more piously announced. In perusing the dispatch, we seem to be reading the language of a divine, and the Gazette charms us as well as the result of the battle. O my country! were this the disposition of all thy sons; were all thy rulers, thy magistrates, thy officers, thus

boldly and openly to acknowledge God in all their ways, and to walk before others in the profession of truth and the practice of devotion—we need “not fear: what can man do unto us?”—Never was there a victory more important. Events have indeed since taken place, which have not only distressed, but alarmed many. The strides of the enemy in Germany have been rapid and discouraging. But not to observe that his situation every day seems to become more critical, and in that quarter too at “eventide it may be light,” we should remember that all the continental successes of the enemy add to the importance of our victory: for if we are to be deprived of other resources of assistance, and compelled under God to depend alone upon ourselves, every reduction of their means of annoyance and invasion becomes in the same proportion more valuable.

But still we acknowledge that the more difficult the period is, the more need have we of extraordinary wisdom, decision, and courage. Frequently much, yea, everything, depends on one man into whom nature has infused those elements of greatness which events combine, draw forth, and complete. And such a man was our departed Hero. It cannot be denied—that a man who was a host in himself; a man whose very name struck terror into the foe; a man whose success inspired the most absolute confidence in those he commanded, and whose orders would stimulate them to the most dangerous enterprises—no—it cannot be, denied that in the present circumstances of our country that such a man can ill be spared: and therefore that, though our success has been glorious, it has demanded a costly sacrifice.

It is remarkable that the ship in which he fell was THE VICTORY and thus the words we have chosen were circumstantially accomplished: "the victory was turned that day into mourning;" the cabin-boy and the captain wept; the groan spread from the ship through the whole fleet; villages and cities shared the grief; till the tears of the sovereign mingled with those of the people.—NELSON, farewell! Thou hast more than repaid the confidence thy king and thy country reposed in thy patriotism and thy talents. Thy warfare is accomplished—but long shall thy fame live; long shall thy example stimulate. Thy memory shall be embalmed in our grateful affections: and history shall record that a whole nation, sensible of their obligations to thee, by their presence or their sympathy attended thy funeral, and followed thy awful remains to their august and final abode.

—What then, you say, what is it that you wish from us on the present occasion?—Are we not called together to rejoice, and do you expect us to mourn? Not absolutely. I would wish even to inspire you with joy. There is nothing more hateful than a certain disposition that freezes everything it touches. There are some fretful beings that sour every enjoyment by discontent. Mention anything joyous—and their evil genius looks only after exceptions: speak of anything commendable—and their sagacity is exerted to make deductions. They never fix upon pleasing and cheerful circumstances, but turn round the dark side of every object, till they behold only gloomy aspects, and become a burden to themselves, and a kind of terror to their connexions.

Be not ye like unto them. Be not insensible to



the numberless blessings we enjoy, or regardless of the several hopeful indications that brighten our condition. Rejoice therefore, but let your joy be tempered—

First, with seriousness. Indeed the times require it. God has obviously a controversy with us. Our difficulties are great and increasing. We are engaged with a foe formidable by his means and malice. Our sins testify against us. And to this hour, neither the displays of his wrath nor his mercy have made any due impression upon the public mind. “Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” Is it not as true of nations as of individuals? “he that being often reprovèd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” Where now are the empires of antiquity? Where now are the famous churches of Asia? Where are his once peculiar people, the Jews?—“And if he spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest he spare not thee.”

Secondly, with prayer. Everything depends upon the Lord of Hosts. It is as easy for him to help with few as with many; we should therefore never despair. On the other hand without him “vain is the help of man.” Vain are the best appointed and commanded armies and navies. He can take wisdom from the wise, and courage from the brave. Sickness is his, and dissension. “He holds the wind in his fist;” let him open his hand and the storm roars, and our defence sinks like lead in the mighty waters. And prayer has power with God, especially the prayer of those that love and fear him. The Bible is a history of its exploits. But nothing is

more suitable or encouraging than the fate of Sennacherib. He had overrun many countries; and going from conquering to conquer, ascribed all his surprising successes to the wisdom of his own understanding, and the vigour of his own arm. He poured into Judea Everything seemed to give way before him—and he deemed himself perfectly sure of taking Jerusalem. But Hezekiah discomfited him—not by fighting—but praying. He went up into the temple, and spread the letter before the Lord, and his vast army dispersed and disappeared, like chaff before the wind. “Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us.”

Thirdly, with praise; that praise that will pass by instrumentality, and confess the hand of God; that praise that will ascribe nothing to our worthiness, but all to his undeserved goodness. Had he dealt with us after our sins, or rewarded us according to our iniquities, instead of saying, “the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad,” we should now be sitting in sackcloth and ashes. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.”

And surely, my dear hearers, we cannot suppose that we have done justice to the design of the day, by indulging a warm momentary impression, or exclamation. This is only, to imitate the Jews, of whom it is complained, “he saved them from the hand of them that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel.” Let as “keep these things for ever in the imaginations

of our thoughts, and prepare our hearts to seek God." Let us daily ask, "what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" And let us consecrate to him our time, our talents, and our property.

For in the last place we require you to blend with your joy, beneficence. "Let all your works," says the Apostle, "be done with charity."—What said Isaiah of a fast? "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?" And what said Nehemiah to the people upon a festival? "This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep. Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and SEND PORTIONS UNTO THEM FOR WHOM NOTHING IS PREPARED."

Men and brethren, it is scarcely necessary for me to mention the particular purpose for which your liberality is to be exercised this morning. You well know that a collection is voluntarily to be made this day through the whole kingdom, for the relief of the families of those who suffered in the late action.

While all our fellow-citizens are coming forward, I am sure this congregation will readily co-operate with them. The claim made upon you is a claim of humanity, of gratitude, of justice. It addresses you as Christians, as Britons, as Men. Suppose all these Victims of bereavement were now assembled before

you, dressed in mourning, and wiping their weeping eyes — C o u l d   y o u   b e   i n s e n s i b l e ?

Ah, ye brave countrymen who fought to defend us, and who generously perished that we may continue in the possession of all our comforts—ye, descending wounded and gory into your watery graves—ye—ye said, “We lament not our own destiny; we have fallen at our post—But to you we commend our mothers, our wives, our children, our babes. Deprived for ever of our support, let them find succour in you.” Valiant sailors! there is not a British heart but awakes and melts at your call. Ye have indeed done your duty; and we hasten to perform ours.

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.”

**PAUL'S COMMISSION EXPLAINED AND  
APPLIED:**

**A SERMON,**

PREACHED AT

CHESHUNT COLLEGE,

JULY 7th, 1842,

BEING

THE JUBILEE OF ITS INSTITUTION.

TO THE TRUSTEES  
OF  
THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S COLLEGE:  
TO JOHN HARRIS, D.D.; TO JOSEPH SORTAIN B.A.,  
TO PHILIP SMITH, B.A., THE PRESIDENTS;  
AND TO THE STUDENTS UNDER THEIR CARE;

**THIS SERMON,**

PUBLISHED AT THEIR DESIRE,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR,

WILLIAM JAY.

*Bath, July 20, 1842*

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE reason why this Sermon issues from the press appears in the Dedication.

But a word as to the delays. It was not, by some means, till nearly a week after the delivery, that the application to publish arrived. In consequence of this, the friend who secured it had. not been desired to write it out, and had also in the mean time gone to a distance from home, which occasioned a further loss of time; and when the manuscript was received, it found the Author going to preach from home, and in the midst of preparing for an excursion to the sea-side.

The Discourse will easily be recalled by those who heard it, and they will perceive that no attempt has been made to alter the free and popular mode of address in which it was delivered from brief notes.





## PAUL'S COMMISSION EXPLAINED AND APPLIED.

*"I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to sight, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*

—Acts xxvi. 18.

IT may not be needless just to remark the propriety of choosing this passage of Scripture as the foundation of our present discourse. Be it therefore observed, that though these words were spoken near two thousand years ago, they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come; that though they were addressed to an Apostle, he was our Apostle, the Apostle of the Gentiles, and the very chief of the Apostles in whose history we feel pre-eminently concerned; and that Paul, in receiving this order, was not designed to be viewed as an exclusive individual, but as a specimen, an example; and that, dropping the marvellous appendages, the charge was to operate to the end of time.

The question is, Who may lawfully claim the honour of this apostolic descent? We must surely exclude from it all that are heretical in sentiment, all that are infamous in character, all that are wicked in practice, whatever titles they may wear, or to whatever ancient councils or ecclesiastical authorities they may appeal. And we think they have the best claim to the distinction, and that they are the truest successors of the Apostles, who are one with these men of God in the belief of the same truth, in the possession of the same principles and dispositions, in the

display of the same zeal, and in being able to claim a measure of the same success: for surely they are most apostolical, who have most of the Apostles in them—who most decidedly tread in their steps—who most fully breathe their spirit—who most strongly remind us of their lives and labours—and who can say of their converts and charges, “Do we need epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart: and such trust have we through Christ to God-ward.”

Why, even the Quarterly Review has lately observed that a succession to the apostolic office, without a succession to apostolic doctrine, would be a curse instead of a blessing: and the proverb tells us, Like begets like; and the faithful and true Witness declares “by their fruits ye shall know them,” and not by a mysterious genealogy, which no diligence or skill can suffice to determine.

This being premised, we bless God that “He has never left himself without witness,” and rejoice in the assurance, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” Hence this valuable institution, the jubilee of which we are met to commemorate. It may not perhaps be easy to determine how many servants of the Most High God, which shew unto men the way of salvation, have already issued from it; but who can tell how many of these young apostles will, from this day forward, rise up and call it blessed?—to each of whom the Saviour will say,

“I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

To do some justice to these words, before we come to the peculiar design of our assembling together, let us view them three ways.

I. As displaying the glory of Christ.

II. As exemplifying the adaptation of the Gospel to the state of human nature.

III. As prescribing the main concern of every Christian minister.

At any other time we should be induced to take a fourth view, and to remark that they furnish matter for solemn inquiry, to every hearer of the Gospel. But this we fear we must entirely omit, or greatly abridge, on the present occasion. You may be assured the preacher wishes not to be long, even on his own account, as he speaks under the effect of an indisposition, which a few days ago seemed to forebode his declining this service. Yet it is probable that he may trespass a little on the time of the audience, for there are many things which he dares not pass unnoticed in such an engagement, and at his time of life; and therefore he beseeches you to hear him patiently. We consider these words, then,

I. As displaying the glory of Christ. For this purpose observe his authority—his wisdom—his goodness. His authority in the commission—his wisdom in the agency—his goodness in the design.

First.—His authority.—This appears in the commis-

*sion*,—*I* send thee. Belsham has the audacity to aver that our Saviour, since his resurrection, has no personal authority, that is, as he explains it, no authority but what he derived from his miracles, and teaching, and example; and that if he in any way governs the Christian church now, it is only, as Moses governed the Jewish church after his death. But the Scripture everywhere, and in every form of language, ascribes to him a personal authority supreme and universal, telling us that He is “King of kings and Lord of lords;” that He has “all power given him in heaven and earth;” that “the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” For his authority, my brethren, reigns in nature as well as grace, and rules in the one for the sake of the other. He, therefore, himself said, “Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” And the Apostle says, “He is made Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Dr. Priestley, in one of his publications, speaking of Christ, remarks, “Doubtless he is now somewhere on earth, for what relation can he have to any other planet? and from some expressions in the Epistles it would seem as if he had something to do with the church of God even now. But what this is, it is impossible to determine.” It might have been impossible to him, but there is not a Christian here this morning but can determine this—*He* knows that “the government is upon his shoulder;” that “he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the remission of sins;” that “he ever lives to make intercession for us;” that “he is our Advocate with the

Father;" that "he received gifts for men; "that "when he ascended up on high, *he* gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry;" and that he is equally concerned now in the mission of all those who are really sent. He prepares them for their office, *he* appoints them their work, *he* opens doors for their labours, *he* gives them their *acceptance*, and success. And hence, though they are nothing in themselves, yet because he sends them they cannot labour in vain, according to his promise, "as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Secondly.—His *wisdom*. This appears in the *agency*—I send *thee*. There are some who may suppose that it would have been most proper in such a work to employ a heavenly messenger. But his thoughts are not our thoughts. Though angels desire to explore the sufferings and glory of Christ, they are not allowed to teach them. The angel that appeared to Cornelius told him to send for Peter, who should tell him words by which he and all his house might be saved. And the Apostle says, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." For the weakness of the instrumentality displays the more, the perfection of the Author and stills, as David says, the enemy and the avenger. To be con-

quered by a Cæsar or a Wellington would soften something of the defeat; but how humiliating must it have been to Goliath to be slain by a stripling shepherd. with a sling and a stone; and how mortifying must it have been to the Midianites to have been vanquished by a thresher with three hundred pitchers and lamps; and how must Satan have raged to find that he was falling like lightning from heaven at the movement of a fisherman—a poor monk—a despised tinker!—"Yea, O Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight; thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Besides, had the Saviour sent Michael or Gabriel, he could not have spoken from experience; he would have been like a telegraph, conveying unconscious intelligence; whereas, *men* have like passions with ourselves; they know the heart's bitterness of the penitent; they intermeddle with the joy of the believer; they feel the inward conflicts of the Christian warrior; and they are equally interested in all the blessings they announce, with the people they address.

Yet, allowing a man to have been chosen, there are some perhaps who are ready to think that Saul of Tarsus was the least eligible of all agents. He had been a blasphemer and a persecutor; and he had made havoc of the church, and endeavoured to imprison or destroy all that called on this name. But nay—was it not wise in Him to shew that he had a mighty arm; that he was able to take the most unlikely materials and bend them to his own purpose; and that he could easily change the most malicious foe into the most devoted follower? Why, in any other case you would have called this a masterly stroke of

policy, that he should have seized this man and made him willing in the day of his power, and induced him to ask, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? For he, having had much forgiven, would love much; and under a sense of his obligation, would "count not his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." For the Saviour not only called him by his grace, but engaged him in his service; not only made him a partaker of the Gospel, but a chosen vessel to bear his name before the Gentiles and before kings; and by this do you not see, that at once he weakened the cause of his enemies and strengthened his own, drawing over this Napoleon of Satan from one side to the other, with all his resources with him? The Jews lost in him a champion unexampled for talent and zeal, while the Christians gained all his learning, all his genius, all his influence, all his ardour; and found in him the greatest of all their advocates and helpers: and so sensible of this were the churches, that when they heard only that he who had persecuted them in times past now preached the faith that once he destroyed, —they glorified God in him.

Thirdly.—His *goodness*. This appears in the design. I send thee *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

When Moses descended from Horeb, and saw the Jews dancing around the calf, filled with indignation as well as grief, he threw the tables of stone upon

the ground, and dashed them to pieces—and yet Moses was the meekest man upon earth. When James and John—the *loving* John—found that the Samaritans would not accommodate our Saviour, even as a traveller on his journey to Jerusalem, they said “Master, wilt thou that we command fire from heaven to consume them, as Elias did?”—But how was it here? The Lord had looked down on the human race; from age to age he had seen the children treading in the steps of their fathers; he had seen them introducing a thousand improvements while they remained morally the same, yea, waxing worse and worse, defying his authority and abusing his goodness—and surely he might have smitten the earth with a curse. But what says he? Go, thunder, and terrify them? Go, hurricane, and destroy them? Go, earthquake, and swallow them up? Go, ye mighty angels in flaming fire, and take vengeance on them? How was this? He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. He was despised and rejected of men; and, though he came in flesh and blood only to serve and save them, they pursued him with remorseless malice through life, and at last hung him on a tree.

But now he is risen again; now he is appointed Judge of the universe; now surely he will reckon with them; he will now surely say, “As for these mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me!” But what said he when he arose, to his Apostles? “Go preach repentance and remission of sins in my name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”



And what said he to Paul, when he sent him? "Be astonished, O heavens; and wonder, O earth." "You see," as if he had said, "you see I am not seeking revenge; I am not consulting even my own greatness and majesty, but their safety, and peace, and welfare! Go, Paul, not to summon them to my judgment-bar, but to call them to my mercy-seat. Go and preach me as their Saviour. Go and tell them to come to me under all their burdens, and I will give them rest. Go and tell them I am waiting to be gracious, and exalted to have mercy. Go and say, Come, and throw yourselves into the arms of my compassion. Come, ye ignorant, and be instructed; come, ye unholy, and be delivered from the bondage of corruption; come, ye guilty, and have your sins washed away; come, ye poor and perishing, and receive from my fulness, and grace for grace. I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Does not all this display his glory? The

II. view we take of the words is as exemplifying *the adaptation of the Gospel to the state of human nature*. This is obviously a fallen state, and the religion that is not founded on this principle is not the religion of the Bible. There are some who consider Christianity as only a re-publication of the law of nature, accompanied with clearer and fuller displays of future rewards and punishments, and so enforced by stronger motives, but where, after this, all is left to ourselves. If this be the Gospel, it ill accords with its import, as "good tidings of great joy to all

people." If this be the Gospel, it is another Gospel than that which tells us, that He came into this world to save sinners; and came that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. If this be the Gospel, it is a Gospel that frustrates the grace of God, and makes Jesus Christ to be dead in vain.

In the Scripture the dispensation always comes before us in the nature of a remedy; and a remedy supposes always a disease. Why do you need a physician if you are not sick? Why do you need a deliverer if you are not in danger? The Gospel, therefore, implies man's fallen condition; and, until this fact is admitted and believed, it is impossible for us to see the excellency, or to feel the importance, or to relish the blessedness of the Gospel—yea, its message will be found to be even offensive and repulsive, like the offering of alms to the wealthy, or attempting to couch a man who says, Why I see!

Let us enter a little into this. If the Gospel be a Divine expediency, and if God does nothing in vain, it will follow that men must be naturally in a state of blindness and darkness, of depravity and vice, of guilt and condemnation, of penury and wretchedness.

And, *first*.—Are they in a state of *blindness and darkness*?—The Gospel meets them. Go, and "open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light." How was it with the heathen? Assyria, and Egypt, and Greece, and Rome had improved upon each other. They had their schools of learning and their wise men. In the arts and sciences they had made great progress; and by some of their writings we are taught at this day. But what were they in Divine things? The world by wisdom knew not God—professing themselves to be wise, they became fools—

they were vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. And if it was thus with their philosophers what must have been the case with the multitude? What must have been the case with the labouring poor, toiling from morning to evening, and who had to gain their bread by the sweat of their brow? Go, "open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light." Go and turn Seneca from darkness to light! Was *he* then in darkness? What did the sages know? What did they know of God? What did they know of themselves? What did they know of their souls, or their destination? Not half so much as any one of the boys or girls in a Sunday school. Conjecture is not knowledge; as Paley finely observes, "Nothing more in religion is known than is proved." Take the immortality of the soul, which some of them seemed to believe. It was one of their many conjectures in which they happened to be right; but they never taught it as a truth; they never used it as a motive; they never felt it as a principle—it had no influence over themselves—they held the truth in unrighteousness.

Go, and "turn them from darkness to light." Go, and tell them of the eternity into which they are hastening, and that after death is the judgment. Go, and tell them of their perishing state, and of the means of their recovery. Go, and tell them, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Let infants lisp my praises, and know the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation. Let the poor know that they can obtain unsearchable riches. Let the slave know that he can become free indeed. Let all know

me, from the least unto the greatest, and be no longer the children of the night, or of darkness.

Is not this design of the Gospel yet operative and necessary? Are there not many among us who are perishing for lack of knowledge? Let persons go into some of our villages and learn. Let them go into our towns—Let them ask some of the London City Missionaries, whether they do not find thousands and thousands, even in our enlightened metropolis, who are ignorant of the very first principles of the oracles of God. Yea, let them get among those who are strangely called the better sort of people, and examine rank and fashion; there, will they not find denser darkness still? What multitudes are there all around you, of all classes, who think they are safe, while destruction and misery are in their paths; and to whom He who is fairer than the children of men has no form, nor comeliness, nor any beauty, that they should desire Him? There is not an unrenewed sinner here this morning, whatever his external advantages may be, but is “alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, and because of the blindness of his heart:” and there is not a Christian here but is ready to acknowledge, “I *was* blind, but *now* I see; “and who is not concerned to shew forth the praises of Him who has called him out of darkness into His marvellous light.

*Secondly.*—*Are they in a state of depravity and sin?* The Gospel meets them. Go, turn them from *the power of Satan unto God*. How necessary was this, if John's testimony be true—“The whole world lieth in wickedness!” Nothing could exceed the degree of their corruption. Take their own writers (I do not mean their poets and satirists; you must always

allow them licence), but take their historians, and they will abundantly confirm all the statements you have in the beginning of the Romans. Take their religion itself. What was it but an establishment of vice? A theocracy in which the devil was god, and his angels ministers? You are prone to think idolatry absurd rather than wicked. But was it not always accompanied with every kind of licentiousness? Was there one of their deities ever adored for any moral quality? They did not think, in the construction of their gods and goddesses, any thing holy was necessary. Yea, their divinities were the patrons of crimes. Some of the worst vices were perpetrated even in their temples. Only think of drunkenness and lewdness being made acts of worship; the practice of which was to recommend them to the superior powers! Their most admired characters were guilty of crimes which would exclude men here from the very dregs of society. Mr. Ward tells us, after living many years among them, that he had never met with any trace of truth, or honesty, or moral honour, among all the Hindoos he had known.

The Scripture, therefore, speaks of *abominable* idolatries. But they were *abominable*, not only for their obscenity, but also for their barbarity. Time would fail us, and we should only harrow up all your feelings, were we to describe their horrid self-inflicted tortures, and their infanticides, and their burnings of widows, and their murders of fathers and murders of mothers. But how well might it be said, "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty!" All earthly, sensual, devilish—did not these persons need to be turned from the power of Satan unto God?

But how was it to be done?—This was the thing. Go and ask Plato. Oh! says he, I have never been able to bring over a single inhabitant of a village to walk after my rules. We know that all the ancient philosophers gave up the mass of the people as entirely desperate, and considered them beyond every attempt at improvement. Was this the case with the fishermen of Galilee? They went to Rome, and they could say, “Ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” They went to Thessalonica and could say, “ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.” They went to Ephesus, and could say, “and you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” They went to Corinth, and of characters Satan himself could neither have made nor wished worse, they said, “and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

How is this difference to be accounted for? We want time to return a full answer. But separate from the Gospel there never was a body of theology, or a system of virtue in existence. The heathen had no proper notion of virtue. What was a Grecian or a Roman? A proud unfeeling tyrant, placing right in power, triumphing in the states he had subdued, and the laurels he had unrighteously gained. Did this complicated iniquity ever trench upon the boundaries of their virtue or benevolence? Did any of their

strictest moralists ever censure it? As to humility, they had not the very word, and they despised the thing. As to charity, they had not a single hospital, or infirmary, or poor-house among them. As to humanity, see their gladiatory rites, and their maimings of captives in war, and their chaining of slaves, like dogs, to the doors of their houses, and flinging their bodies alive into the ponds to feed their fish. The Gospel brought not opinions, but facts; and what an advantage was this! The life of our Saviour was itself a body of morality with all its exemplifications. This is a distinction the heathen never had. They had no complete example—neither, indeed, had the Jews; for though they had excellent examples, they had no perfect pattern. But the Gospel presents One, in whom was no sin, and who was the image of the invisible God.

Then observe the motives the Gospel had to enliven and enforce Divine truth. They were addressed to every principle and passion of human nature. The preacher drew back the curtain, and the people saw the rising dead, the descending Judge, the books opened. They pictured hell, and there was enough in any one of their representations to have driven a man out of his senses, or out of his sins, for life. And they opened the gates of paradise, and men could see what was enough to make them turn their backs upon every thing here, and seek in full ardour those things that are above.

Nor was this all,—for here is the excellency of the Gospel, and it shews us how God sanctifies us by his truth—namely, that here the means, however suitable, are not left to their native energy, but are accompanied

by his own influence, the testimony which he always appropriates to the word of his grace: the ministry of the word is the ministration of the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

We may ask, what has this to do with us? And we may think ourselves better than they. In some things we are as a people, far less gross; but every unconverted sinner is a heathen world in himself. Do we keep ourselves from idols? The human heart may be much hid by the forms of education and politeness; but could we look underneath, we should see it as God represents it, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. O what pride is there! O what enmity against God is there! O what impurity is there! o what a cage of unclean birds is there! Now and then appears a Burke—a Greenacre—a Good—to show us what man is capable of being even in a Christian country; and if anarchy was once to prostrate authority, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes, we should soon behold the dignity of human nature, and hell would be seen on earth. "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin." Of what a man is overcome, of the same he is brought into bondage. See that slave to chambering and wantonness, his eyes full of adultery, and which cannot cease to sin. See that slave to avarice, who is proving that the love of money is the root of all evil. See that victim to intemperance. See that fury of revenge—are not such persons as these taken captive by the devil at his will? Do not these need to be turned from the power of Satan unto God? Go, then, and turn them. Let philosophers reason—let rulers legislate—let moralists declaim on the beauty of virtue—let parents



educate—let afflictions chastise—and we would not undervalue means—but the Gospel *alone* is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.

Here “we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen”—Yes, we have seen the drunkard made sober, and the swearer learning to fear an oath; and we have seen, not only the profligate made moral, but the moral made spiritual; and we have seen those who were in the flesh, walking by faith, and having their conversation in heaven; and we have seen those who were a burden to themselves, and a curse to the neighbourhood, delivered from the tyranny of their lusts and passions, made peaceful and contented, and having obtained mercy delighting to exercise it, and like “a dew from the Lord” on all around them. And we defy any to produce an instance of such a change where the doctrines of the Gospel are denied or concealed. And what therefore, says Doddridge, are the Doctors in our Israel doing, in hazarding the health and the everlasting lives of their patients by the use of their own nostrums, while they neglect a remedy that was never tried in vain?

*Thirdly.*—Are men in a state of *guilt and condemnation*. The Gospel meets them—*Go, that they may receive forgiveness of sins*. Despair hardens the heart, and binds a man more than anything else to his natural condition. We fell by losing our confidence in God, and we can only be restored by regaining it. The first step therefore of a sinner, in returning to him, must be an apprehension of his reconcile ableness. We are saved by hope. Hence the Gospel tells us that God can pardon; that he does pardon; and that he is ready to pardon all that come unto him.

And what system besides ever gave such decisive

encouragement and consolation? Examine the state of those who were destitute of revelation, and you will find that they were all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death; and though always striving, yet never able to find means of relief under their anguish: yea, in general the very methods they devised to obtain ease increased the evil and the guilt the more, especially, as we see, in the offering of human sacrifices.

When once a man is awakened to reflection, how many fears and doubts will gender the anxious question, "how shall I come before the Lord, and bow before the high God?"

Is he disposed to pardon at all? And if he be, will he pardon all sin? Or if only some sins, what sins? Will he pardon without any expression of regard to the rectitude of his government? If he requires any reparation, what is it, and who is to make it? Can I know that I am pardoned? By what criterion am I to judge? Now, where or how without the Gospel could these questions be answered? The questions are not only too high for us, but they do not fall within our province to determine. The offence has been committed against God. He is the offended law-giver. He alone knows the desert of sin, and the consequences of dealing with it. But here he himself comes forward and speaks. Here he leaves not the trembling conscience in a state of uncertainty, or peradventure saying, "Who can tell if God will repent, and return, and leave a blessing behind him, that we perish not?" Here we are assured divinely, that "there is forgiveness with him;" that "we are accepted in the Beloved;" that "he has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God;" and that

“by the one offering up of himself he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” This sacrifice is as available for many transgressions as for one; yea, “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin;” and God the just is “the justifier of the ungodly that believeth in Jesus.”

But the glorious Gospel of the grace of God not only absolves, but it enriches—not only pardons, but exalts. For,

*Fourthly.*—Are men in a state of *penury and wretchedness*? The Gospel meets them. Go, *that they may have inheritance among them which are sanctified* by faith that is in me. That is, the Christian church, which at that time did not consist of a whole country, or a province, or like Noah's ark, containing the clean and unclean; but the faithful and renewed, with Jesus Christ at their head. Such a church was the finest community upon earth, and to be admitted into their fellowship was a greater dignity than to be enrolled as a member of any philosophical or royal society among men—for “the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.” And compared with the privileges and prerogatives of incorporation with them, what are the treasures of the worldling? What was the land flowing with milk and honey to the Jews? What was Eden to our first parents? What is the condition of an angel in heaven? For

“Never did angels taste above  
Redeeming grace and dying love.”

Hear how the Apostle gives thanks to the Father, who had made them “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” And hear how he Prays for the Ephesians, that “they may know what

is the hope of their calling, and what is the glory of the riches of his inheritance in the saints."

The first Christians felt this ennoblement amidst all their secular abasements. "That," said they to those who were without, "which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." And if you say, Is this so desirable? Are you not persecuted, and despised, and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place? Yes, and you may wonder at the ambition of our benevolence, if you judge of us by things seen and temporal—but our citizenship is in heaven. We have pleasures, and wealth, and honours, you know not of. But we wish you to know them and enjoy them—"and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Yes, if you join us, you will not only sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but with Jesus the Mediator, and God the Judge of all.

And what is the estimation and desire of all awakened and enlightened souls? How readily do they let go the sons and daughters of vice and vanity, and run and take hold of the skirt of him who is a Jew, saying, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you!" Christian, call to remembrance the commencement of your religious course. Ah, how peculiar and sacred the people of God then appeared! Ah, you said, *you* are safe, *you* are happy, you are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.—They seemed the only beings worthy of your regard. If the waggon of a Christian passed you on the road, the very *name* on the vehicle seemed to endear it. If you leaned upon the gate, and looked down upon his meadow, it seemed "as the smell of a field which the

Lord had blessed." You surveyed their goings and their worship, and wept, and said with Cowper,

"Clothed in sanctity and grace,  
How sweet it is to see  
Those that love Thee as they pass,  
And as they wait on Thee!"

And when you looked down from the gallery, and saw the household of faith, and the King sitting at his table, was not this your most feeling wish, "O that I were counted worthy, and could make one with you!" Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; but "Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." David was a hero, a conqueror, a mighty monarch, and blessed with every gift of genius; and he, turning away from all this, kneeled by the humblest subjects of Divine grace, and prayed, "Remember me, O God, with the favour thou bearest to thy people. O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, and glory with thine inheritance."

We were about to call in the testimony of an enemy, and we have such a testimony—Balaam said, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" He said this, indeed, when "his eyes were opened"—and the eyes of you all will be opened soon—and then will be heard the exclamation, "We fools counted their lives madness, and their end without honour: how are they numbered with the children of God, and their lot is with the saints!"

But what need have we of further witness? What does *He* who knows all things—what does *he* consider as the consummation of his goodness and loving-kindness in this commission? “I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and INHERITANCE AMONG THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED BY FAITH THAT IS IN ME.” This brings us,

III. To consider the words as *prescribing the main concern of every Christian minister*. We are not fond of negatives, but it is of the greatest importance not to mistake our Saviour's meaning.

Let us suppose him now addressing these candidates for the holy ministry before me. Would he not say to each of them, I send thee—not to be apolitical zealot. You are indeed to put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates; and you may tell them of their rights as well as of their duties; and as a minister you have your own civil claims, and you need not decline or disown them. But I do not mean you to be a disputer of this world, or a leader in angry strifes, by which you may prejudice many whom you should morally win.

Would he not say, I send thee—not to be a *philosopher*, not to run a race to get fame in *literature*? Every kind of knowledge is indeed valuable and useful, but there are persons whose calling science is,—it is not yours—though you may subordinately and subserviently pursue it. The language in which you are principally to excel is the language of Canaan—your botany is chiefly the Rose of Sharon and the

Lily of the Valley—your astronomy is the Bright and Morning Star. Oh! may we not suppose him to say to some of his ministers, How is it that you have been able to command such lengths of time, and such depths of application, in producing works that others could have produced as well as you, while my commission was sounding in your ears, I send *thee* to bless them in turning away every one of them from his iniquities?

I again send thee, he would say, not to be a *Bible connoisseur* and critic—to determine the situation of Paradise—the disputes about Leviathan and Behemoth—and to fix “the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.”

Yea, I send thee, not to be a *party-man*, dividing from others, instead of co-operating with them, and striving together for the faith of the Gospel. And here, my brethren, let me observe that, if some things are true in which we differ from others, they are much less momentous than those wherein we are agreed. And how inferior is the zeal that aims to make proselytes to a party, to the noble earnestness that seeks to make converts to Christ! I remember hearing Mr. Newton make this facetious but striking avowal—“When I entered the ministry, I resolved, if I was anything, I would be a physician, and not a robe-maker; I would endeavour to recover my patients, but leave the cut of their garments to those whose business this was.” And there are always enough who can fit you to a nicety, and set you off in the best fashion of any denomination you please.

But since he does not send you, my young friends, for such purposes as these, for what end does he send you? Hear Him. “I send thee to open their eyes,

and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." This, this is to be your concern—your chief concern; and your chief concern—in distinction from all other claims. You are to help them much that have believed through grace; you are to neglect no part of our flock; yea, you are to feed even the lambs.—But you must remember who it was that said, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

Not that the ninety-nine are to be disregarded, and their safety and pasturage to be overlooked; but the urgency, the necessity of the case, is to excite and proportion our exertions. A mother has a numerous family—she loves them all, and she provides for them all—but suppose one of them should be lost—where will her heart be then? Yet, is she indifferent to the rest of her charge and care, because she is all-anxious about John?—Oh, perhaps he has fallen into the river! perhaps he is murdered! perhaps he has dropped down dead! perhaps he is sick and fainting and none near to hold his aching head!—She cannot sit still in the midst of the rest—she rises and runs, and looks and inquires, and calls and beseeches others to flee and search also. But you do not censure her particular sensibility, but justify it fully; and even admire the seeming partiality of her zeal. And you, my brethren, must not forget that, with all your attention to those who are already called by Divine grace, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth more than over



ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.”

You are, therefore, to be peculiarly concerned to seek and to save those that are lost—This is principally to engross and regulate all your energy and exertion.

Let us view the case as exemplified in Paul, who, you will allow, understood well the commission he here received. We see how he always kept it in view. How impossible is it for any one to read his history, and believe that he made the ministry a sinecure! He was never weary in well-doing. He made the end of one good effort the beginning of another; and thought nothing of what was done, compared with what remained to be accomplished. They who were ignorant of his principle must have supposed that he was beside himself; and they did think so, who knew not that the love of Christ constrained him.

But while he thus laboured so abundantly, you will observe that he had but one reference; and our text guided as well as engaged him. He varied indeed his means, as every wise man does when he has an important and difficult work to execute; but his design was one and always the same. To the careless he was alarming; to the dull he was lively; to those of weak nerves he spoke softly; to those of reputation he preached the Gospel privately; to the old and lame he went from house to house; to those who had bad memories he told them the same things over and over again; he used quaint words, and bits of words; he employed anything, however plain and homely, that he could render easy of apprehension and impressive and retainable. Yet all was directed.—How? Hear

him. "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means *save* some. And again, I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be *saved*."

O let us, my brethren, make this more and more *our* entire aim. This will enable us to feel satisfaction arising from a consciousness of being found faithful to our commission. This will aid us much in the discharge of our office. Why is it that frequently we are so long in choosing our texts, and fixing on our subjects? Why do not our minds open and glow more in our preparations? And why are we so straitened and sapless in our preaching? Where the aim is not straight and simple, we never exert ourselves to advantage: but where the eye is single, the whole body is full of light. This will also. I will not say insure our success, but promote it. Success is from God but why does he withhold it so much from us? Do we pray for it so much as we should if the thing lay more upon our hearts? Should not the experience of others, and our own, convince us, that if the salvation of souls was more the concern of our ministry, it would oftener be the consequence of it?

With two remarks, I draw towards a conclusion.

*First.*—As ministers should judge themselves by this subject, so others should judge of them by the same. If ministers are instruments, that instrument is the best, not which has the finest handle, but that which does its work the best. He is the most enviable preacher, who succeeds most in bringing souls to God, whatever comparative disadvantages he may labour under. There are some persons who lay down one quality after another for a minister, and a great deal frequently goes to make up a complete reverend. They connect a minister with a certain dress; or with a college, or academy; or with some peculiar studies and attainments; and when they hear of the one, they are led to think of the other. But we should distinguish between what is essential, and what is preferable, or accessory, or accidental. A minister is not a dandy, but a dandy may be a minister. A minister is not a gentleman, but a gentleman may be a minister. A minister is not a man of genius, but a man of genius may be a minister. A minister is not a classic, but a classic may be a minister. What is a minister then? Go and ask Jesus Christ. He will send you to this commission. A minister is the text embodied—alive—in motion.

*Secondly.*—It is to be lamented that there are so few of those who have been professedly sent for this purpose, who have retained the aim and spirit of their office. It was so in the Jewish church, as appears from the language of the true prophets, when speaking of the false. “The diseased,” say they, “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 back that

which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost." It is hardly possible for us to imagine what a contemptuous term the word "dog" was, as used among the Jews. And yet the sacred writers make no scruple to adopt such language as this—Their "watchmen are dogs;" blind dogs—"that cannot understand;" "dumb dogs—that cannot bark;" "lazy dogs—lying down, loving to slumber;" "greedy dogs—which can never have enough, each seeking his gain from his quarter;" "drunken dogs—come, say they, we will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and yet more abundant;" "dirty dogs—they have not only eaten up the good pasture, but have made foul the remainder of it with their feet." Read the history of the Reformation—read what is lately published by D'Aubigné, and you will see that a Pope's palace was little better than a brothel, and that his clergy were at that time, though forbidden to marry, living in known licentiousness, selling pardons of every kind of iniquity for gold, while offices were multiplied in the church, in order to provide for the illegitimate brood of the higher dignitaries among them. And what were the ministers of this country formerly, after the exile of the Puritans and the expulsion of the Nonconformists? What thought some ecclesiastics themselves of the heathenism of these Christian parts, when, owing to this, Mr. Romaine set apart a day for fasting and prayer? How many pious and evangelical clergymen did *he* mention as then living in England and Ireland? Was it more than fifty? At that time the truth was principally maintained by the Dissenters; yet some of their congregations had Socinianized, or

Arianized; and those who were sound in the faith were precise, and formal, and inactive. So that the difference was little more than this: the Church was asleep in the dark, and the Dissenters were asleep in the light. Such was the awful state of things *generally*, when up sprang a band of men whose hearts God had touched, who flew like angels, having the everlasting Gospel to preach, wherever they could gather souls to hear.

Since then there has been a blessed increase of those whose hearts are right with God; and care has been taken to maintain, and even augment, their number.

Hence arose the Countess of Huntingdon's College. It was first founded at Trevecca, and then at Cheshunt. In this latter place it has now been established fifty years. At the commencement of its present institution, I had therefore been a pastor more than one year, and a preacher for several years. Though I did not attend the opening, I remember it well, and my concern towards it, for I felt a kind of relationship—Whitfield having been her Ladyship's chaplain, and he bringing forward in the ministry the excellent Cornelius Winter, who introduced into the work your present preacher.

I knew personally the noble foundress, and I more than once conversed with her, and I am liable to no mistake when I say that her grand and only design in this work of faith and labour of love was founded entirely on the words of our Saviour to Paul—to send forth, as speedily as possible, a number of preachers, whose hearts should teach their lips, and whose lives should be consecrated, “to open the eyes of sinners, and to turn them from darkness to light,

from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that were sanctified by faith in Christ.”

I well remember that both from the Church of England and from the regular Dissenters, much reflection was thrown on what was called the superficialness of the education, at first. But the thing hardly allowed of a choice. The times were peculiar; and the spiritual wants of the country were far more pressing than many of you can imagine; and the people had none to care for their souls, though so many were well paid for it; and yet, especially in the villages, there was often a disposition to hear. Now, were the wants and cries of perishing multitudes, “Come over, and help us”—were these to be disregarded till the students had acquired a very finished education? Yet in other respects, even this *comparatively* defective preparation had some advantages. It shewed the students the extent of knowledge, tending to make them modest and humble; and it gave them, also, a turn for study, and a tone of application (which I have scarcely ever found in those who have entered the ministry some other way); and laid a foundation for after improvement, as means and opportunities offered.

And even now, when there is a disposition to go so far to the other side, even now, the experiment is yet to be made, and the proof is yet to be given, whether the impressiveness and usefulness of these less literate men will be exceeded by a blank-verse style of preaching—whether a more profound acquaintance with the mathematics will enable men to speak more affectingly of the things of the Spirit—whether the stained glass will transmit more light

than the purely simple—whether exegesis be better for the mass, than exposition—or German criticism than Christian experience.

I hope your preacher will not be misunderstood here. He is far from undervaluing the advantages of our modern Colleges; and, he has always lamented that he had not greater literary means and opportunities in the more humble academy in which he was reared; and yet when he looks back, he dares not complain—nor can he reflect on the course his Godlike Tutor pursued. Yea, he is well persuaded that had Paul visited Marlborough, and had seen the state of the villages all around, he would not have hesitated to say, Send instantly, send, send, send these young men to speak unto the people ready to perish, and endeavour to save their souls from death.

Your preacher is not ignorant of the altered state of society. He is aware how the influence of the press, and the number of publications, have contributed to the diffusion of knowledge, not only through the middle ranks, but also among the lower orders. He is aware that things were tolerated formerly which would not be endured now; and yet, let us take care as to what we substitute for what we supersede. Let us not forget that human beings are always essentially the same; and that the grand resource we must depend upon for our success is not, after all, human learning, but Divine grace: “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.”

I confess I have been sometimes ready to tremble at the language I have occasionally met with. We have been told that the reason why many of our

ministers run dry in a year or two, is their not having a sufficient depth of learning; and there are those who *seem* to think we want scholars rather than preachers. We do want scholars, and I hope a number of these will always be forthcoming; but does not the day require also preachers? and preachers of a very different complexion from many of those who are not illiterate, and have even vouchers for their sufficiency at the end of their names?

The preacher speaks freely; and he does so the more on this occasion, as the former president of this College, both in conversation and by letter, urged him to publish something suited to the present state of preaching; a desire which he must decline, not only from a sense of comparative incompetency, but too many claims and engagements now for his years. But he would observe that when he commenced his ministry there was too little order, and too little intellect in most sermons; and the mode commonly prevailing was too careless and low. But an improvement gradually took place, in which he himself perhaps had some little influence, at least in his own immediate connexion; but we are prone to run into extremes: and let him not decide, but humbly ask, have we not now too much forgotten the difference there is between the pulpit and the press?—and have we not mistaken the respective provinces of reading and hearing? We frequently now meet with elaborate and brilliant productions—and who does not admire them? But must not the very greatness of these discourses necessarily reduce their numbers? and is there no danger that the preachers should become, especially on public occasions, rivals of fame? and afford more admiration than profit?



and may not the hungry sheep look up and not be fed? and may not the example of Him be forgotten of whom it was said, "the common people heard Him gladly?"

I would have inscribed over the front of every place of worship, "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them;" though I fear that many who attend some of them would be tempted to say, when they came out, What a lie does this title tell!

Again, I fear, the preacher may seem to be taking freedoms, but he has now been many years in the ministry, and has been placed in a situation and circumstance, favourable for comparison and remark. And, my brethren, he confesses, while there are many things to please and encourage him, yet there are some with which he is by no means completely satisfied. What he deems wanting is a mode of preaching more remote from scholasticism; warm and experimental; not highly doctrinal, nor drily practical, but blending the doctrines and practice of Christianity strongly with the affections; abounding with point and interest; and which shall come home, not only to every man's business, but to every man's bosom—which shall make the hearers weep rather than wonder, and talk more of the subject than, the preacher. Whether he grows more fastidious as he grows older he knows not, but he seems to apprehend a considerable difference between many of our present young men and those of his earlier days. He refers now chiefly to the *manner* of some of our moderns. For instance, they shew no little self-confidence by choosing difficult topics, and expressing themselves with dogmatism where others feel difficulty. By their lengthiness they take for

granted their peculiar acceptance: and instead of bespeaking the candour of their audiences by, at least, apparent modesty and diffidence, they challenge their judgment and demand their approbation, by a fearless and daring kind of address. They sometimes shew also, by a satisfied and careless demeanour, that they are above the usual auxiliaries needful to some of their brethren and fathers. He one day heard of a young minister of this calibre (I know not that he is in this crowd, but if he be it will not much signify), who being about to preach, was asked whether he did not wish to *retire* before he went into the pulpit? "No," said he, "I am charged and primed." He was *primed* indeed, but not *charged*—when he went off, it was only a flash in the pan.

One thing more: true eloquence is not, as some suppose, to be judged of by excitement, but rather by impression. The preacher is persuaded that no kind of eloquence will ever, *much* or *long*, tell in the pulpit, but that which arises from feeling; but feeling is always eloquent. Little is to be done by fine words, and made-up gestures, and studied action, and "start and stare theatric." What did affectation ever do?

What made a Whitfield? What made a Spencer? Grace and nature; not grace without nature, nor nature without grace—but what can withstand the attraction of both?

I have now done with ministers, but here are people as well as ministers, and I must not suffer them to depart without one word. It is this—Let them remember that their duty is correlative with ours. From what preachers we are required to be,

they may learn what hearers they are required to be.

Let me beseech you therefore, as many as are here present, to examine yourselves by the standard before us. Have your eyes been opened, and are you now light in the Lord? Are you turned from the power of Satan unto God? Are you rejoicing in a sense of Divine forgiveness? And are you an inheritor of all spiritual blessings among them that are sanctified? And do you believe in the Son of God? If not, what avails your attendance upon our preaching? You have heard for what purpose God has sent his servants among you. If you remain strangers to these Divine effects, your privileges will become your curse—and the savour of life unto life will become the savour of death unto death,—and it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you. How happy would every minister here be, if he could return to the people of his charge and say, “our Gospel came to you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance!”

Here is also to be a collection. Let now none suppose that it is a kind of desecration of a Divine service to speak of a collection. Paul, after the finest chapter in the Bible, and after summing up its sublime contents by saying, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord:” instantly adds, “and now concerning the collection.”—Such also is the state of things in the providence of God, that there is no carrying on any service, not even his own, without pecuniary assistance.

Here is an account which we have not time to read; and I presume it is not necessary. The collection has always been made in support of the College, but on this occasion more liberal exertion than usual is called for, owing to the alterations, enlargements, and improvements, which it has been deemed expedient to introduce. I hope the statement of a case and a claim so important will be sufficient and—effectual.

It was not needful for ministers to apply to the first Christians to give. The first Christians pressed their ministers to receive: and in many instances their very poverty abounded unto all the riches of liberality; so that to their power and beyond their power they were willing of themselves. And must I stand here this morning to *beg* of those who are *able* to give? I will not beg. I have been a beggar for considerably more than half a century; and I will beg no more, at least where the Saviour's cause is concerned—I will do nothing but *plead* in His name; and *enforce* his claims—*his* claims who died for you and rose again.

And is there one here but cries, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

**THE LOSS OF CONNEXIONS  
DEPLORED AND IMPROVED:**

**A SERMON,**

PREACHED IN

ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH,

ON

SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>, 1813,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

MR. THOMAS PARSONS,

WHO DIED THE 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, IN THE 70<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF HIS AGE.

TO  
THE BEREAVED FAMILY  
OF HIS HIGHLY ESTEEMED FRIEND,  
THIS SERMON,  
PREACHED TO IMPROVE THE DEATH OF THEIR HONOURED  
FATHER,  
AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,  
IS  
DEDICATED WITH ESTEEM, AFFECTION, AND SYMPATHY,  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.

## THE LOSS OF CONNEXIONS DEPLORED AND IMPROVED.

*“Lover and friend Hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.”—PSALM lxxxviii. 18.*

MY BRETHREN, we were obviously designed to live not in a solitary, but a connected state. Even in Paradise, and according to the judgment of God himself: “It was not good for man to be alone.” Our nature, and condition; our inclinations, and necessities; our excellences, and weaknesses; alike indicate our destination, and contribute to render us social beings.

Some of the finest feelings of the human heart are called forth by the various unions of life, and much of our happiness depends upon the endearments of association.

But what blessing below the skies is perfect and unalloyed? Every pleasure has its corresponding pain. The wider our sphere of action, the more varied our interests, and the keener our sensibility, the better mark are we for the arrows of disappointment. Our losses arise, and can *only* arise, from our possessions. Our affections produce our distresses and our tears.

“Our roses grow on thorns,  
And our honey wears a sting.”

So that from the sober estimate of reason, as well as the hasty feelings of passion, we begin, at length,

to acknowledge the mortifying truth, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

But none of our comforts are more heavily taxed than our social. Our connexions often make us weep. They do this three ways.

First; We weep *for* them. Jeremiah said of some of his hearers, "my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." There are frequently things in our dearest friends that we long to rectify or remove. We hint our minds; we admonish; we beseech; but in vain: and nothing is left but to grieve—that a freckle should injure a fair moral visage; that occasional imprudence should defeat talent and excellency; that a peculiarity of temper should hinder the display or the impression of principle; and that where there is so much to extol, there should be anything to extenuate.

Secondly; we weep *with* them. In proportion as we love another we necessarily sympathize with him; we make his grief as well as gladness our own; we launch in the same vessel, and partake of the storm as well as the breeze together.

Lastly; we weep *over* them: for none of them are durable; and as they are successively withdrawn from us, the world grows dreary, and the "desolate heart" cries—"LOVER AND FRIEND HAST THOU PUT FAR FROM ME, AND MINE ACQUAINTANCE INTO DARKNESS."

Let me remark—The connexions which give a charm to life—consider the loss of them—trace the agency of God in their removal—teach you how to improve such dispensations of Providence—and introduce a well-merited tribute of respect to the memory of our late fellow-worshipper, Mr. Thomas Parsons.



I. Let me remark, The connexions which give a charm to life. David mentions three: Lover, Friend, and Acquaintance.

First; "Lover." As this is distinguished from Friend and Acquaintance, it stands for the tender relative. By nothing is such a connexion so properly characterized as affection; for love in kindred is considered natural and unavoidable; it is in a great measure instinctive; and it is also fanned and fed by sameness of residence, constancy of intercourse, and mutual interests, attentions, and obligations. "Lover," therefore, recalls to mind the husband, the wife, the father, the mother, the child, the brother, the sister, and other dear ties of flesh and blood.

Secondly; he mentions "Friend." This is a sacred name which many usurp, and few deserve. It cannot be applied to the confederate in sin; or to the mercenary, selfish wretch, that loves you because he wants to make use of you, as a builder values a ladder, or a passenger a boat. Friendship is founded in a community of heart. It supposes some strong congeniality, yet admits of great diversity. Of all the twelve Apostles, Peter and John seem to have been the most attached to each other; and yet who can help supposing a considerable difference in some of their attributes? The one was more forward, the other more reserved; the one more bold, the other more timid; the one more severe, the other more soft and gentle; the one a hand, the other an eye—yet they were "of one heart and of one soul."

We may be assured that these amities, which enter so much into our present welfare and enjoyment; and which, continuing to flow with an even or increasing current through so many years and

changes, fertilize and adorn the vale of life, are peculiarly designed and formed by our Heavenly Father, who is said so often in the Scripture to give a man favour in the eyes of another. But, with regard to ourselves, some of the choicest friendships are accidentally produced. We thought not of the connexion the day, the hour before: perhaps we travelled the same road; or we met in some mixed company; or we received or we administered some token of kindness—and from such a tiny seed blown by the wind, sprang up this heavenly tree, under the shadow of whose branches we have been so often refreshed.

Thirdly. David speaks of the loss of “Acquaintance.” Acquaintances are distinguished from friends. The former may be numerous; the latter must be limited. The one is for the parlour, the other is for the closet. We give the hand to the one, we reserve the bosom for the other. We go to the one with a smiling countenance, we repair to the other in a cloudy and dark day, and when we have a burden too heavy for us to bear. Yet, though acquaintances are inferior to friends, they are not without their importance, and add much to our accommodation and pleasure. Such are the agreeable connexions of life, the loss of which we

II. Proceed to consider. “Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.” There are two ways by which we may be deprived of our connexions.

The first is by desertion. The highest degree of this crime is the want of natural affection. And yet husbands have hated their own flesh instead of nourishing and cherishing it. Fathers have not pro-

vided for those of their own house, but have left them to ignorance and want. "Can a *woman* forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? She may." Savage's mother is not the only one that has abhorred and persecuted the offspring of her own bowels.

Perfidy is a vile thing, but not a very rare one. How many kiss, in order to betray; and gain your confidence, to lull your suspicions! A brother is born for adversity; but the very season in which we need his assistance and kindness is commonly the hour of abandonment: and the heart, aghast with surprise and grief, groans "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom."—"It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: we took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God in company."

Sometimes weakness rather than wickedness robs us. Job's friends condemned him because they misunderstood his character: when they were undeceived they returned to him with presents. "At my first answer," says Paul, "no man stood by me;" they were panic-struck and fled: and he only prays God "that it might not be laid to their charge."

Men are often called into distant situations where they necessarily feel new impressions, and are engrossed with new engagements: and thus in the ordinary course of things, and where no blame attaches, we must reckon upon some degrees of social losses. To which we may add, that sometimes where censure

is deserved, the fault appertains to those who complain and upbraid; they themselves having been unamiable, inattentive, and unkind. "He that will have friends must shew himself friendly."

But the second way of losing our connexions is by bereavement. And this is principally, if not exclusively, here intended: "Lover and friend hast thou put *far from* me, and mine acquaintance *into darkness*"—that is, they are lodged in the gloomy grave, the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness."

What the Apostle says of the Jewish priests is applicable to all our connexions: "they are not suffered to continue by reason of death." The greatness of the affliction occasioned by their removal, it is not easy to describe.—Several things add poignancy to the loss.

First; They are of great importance to us here. In some cases, the bereaved are deprived of worldly support. The widow is called down from elegance and ease to struggle with hardship and distress; the children lose the caresses of the neighbourhood, and are exposed to insult; perhaps they become vagabonds and learn to beg their bread. How much depends often upon a single individual! Great and little are comparative. What a slender aid will render one a benefactor, and another a beneficiary anxious for his life! One day at a funeral, your preacher, turning away from the mouth of the grave, saw an aged female weeping. Her left hand held a grandchild; with the right she raised the corner of her woollen apron to wipe the tears that ran down her

furrowed cheek. "What," said I, "have you lost a friend?" "O Sir, that good woman allowed me a shilling a-week." "My God," said he, as soon as he was withdrawn a little, "and can the application of so small a sum so deeply interest the feelings, and so essentially promote the comfort of a fellow-creature—who would waste a farthing; who would not economize; who would not deny himself, to be able to do good?"

By the removal of our connexions we are deprived of their company. They no longer beguile the social hours and the social walk. The eye that beamed kindness is sealed up in darkness, and the tongue that charmed us is dumb for ever. What a vacuum is felt!

We are deprived of their example. We are deprived of their reproofs. We are deprived of their counsels. We are deprived of their prayers. What a loss is here!

Secondly. We cannot recall them. We were sometimes separated before, but the absence from each other was partial and transient. When they left us in the evening, it was that they might take rest in sleep: the morning restored the circle. But here "man lieth down and riseth not, till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep." When they journeyed, it was to revisit their abode again, and the expectation of meeting, relieved the tear at parting. But they are now "gone the way whence they shall not return."

Thirdly. We can have no intercourse or Correspondence with them. If you have friends in America, or the East Indies, it is possible for you to commune with them still by messengers, Of writing. But

who can tell what regions of space separate between us and our departed connexions! Who can tell in what part of his vast universe they are placed: for in our "Father's house are many mansions!"—No: we can receive no intelligence from them, and they can receive none from us. "His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not, and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not." "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished: neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun."

Hence, Fourthly. They cannot promote our welfare where they now are, If our friends by dying increase their knowledge, and learn that the state they left us in, is a state of religious delusion; they cannot rectify our mistake, or send to warn us of our danger. They have left us with Moses and the Prophets. Elijah, in his last walk with Elisha, was convinced that his usefulness to his successor was restricted to this life; and therefore he said, "Ask now what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee." This is a solemn reflection for the living, and it should operate as a constant stimulus. "With what diligence should we do "the work of him that sent us while it is *day*; for the *night* cometh wherein *no man can work!*"

III. Let us trace the agency of God in their removal: "Lover and friend hast *Thou* put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

In the experience of the believer, the work and the enjoyment of heaven are begun on earth. We read that "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they

shall see God." This is the representation of their employment, and their blessedness. They shall see God! They shall see him completely. They shall see him only. Though ten thousand objects will be there, nothing will be seen but God. There are angels, but they are his servants. There are spirits of just men made perfect, but they are his jewels. There will be new heavens and a new earth, but they are his throne and his footstool. Thus everything will only serve to reflect or proclaim God; and according to the sublime sentiment of the Apostle, "God will be all in all." But the believer sees him now. While others live without God in the world, and God is not in all their thoughts, he sees him in his word; sees him in his house; sees him in his works, and in his ways; sees him in all occurrences and events. He sees him in the garden and in the field; sees him in the rose and in the corn; sees him in the sun and in the glowworm. "The day is thine," says he, "the night also is thine. Thou hast made summer and winter. Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it. Thou makest it soft with showers. Thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop down fatness."—

If light attends the course I run,  
'Tis he provides those rays;  
And 'tis his hand that hides my sun,  
If darkness veil my days.

"O," says one, when any evil befalls him, "it was that unlucky accident; it was that unfaithful friend; it was that malicious foe; it was that careless servant:" but when the news of an awful judgment

reached Eli, *he* said, "It is the *Lord*, let him do what seemeth him good." When Job heard that the Sabceans, and the Chaldeans, and the elements, had robbed him of his substance, his servants, and his children, *he* said, "The *Lord* gave and the *Lord* hath taken away." The death of Christ was "the hour and power of darkness." It was Judas that betrayed him; it was Peter that denied him; it was Pilate that condemned him; it was the Jews and the Romans that crucified him—but *he* saw neither of them: he only eyed God—"The cup which my *Father* hath given me shall I not drink it?" And so David in his relative losses: he does not say, my loss is owing to that unskilful physician; or that fatal delay; or that improper medicine;—he only thinks and speaks of *God*: "Lover and friend hast *Thou* put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

The Scripture abundantly confirms this pious and consoling sentiment. It assures us, that everything, however minute or casual, is providential. It tells us "that a sparrow falls not to the ground without our heavenly Father; and that the very hairs of our head are all numbered." It asks, "Is there an evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" It represents Jehovah as saying, "I create peace, and I make trouble. I wound, and I heal; I kill, and I make alive."—

If therefore you have been deprived of your interesting connexions, remember that *He* has done it. He has done it—

—Who is almighty and irresistible. He taketh away, and who can hinder him, or say unto him, what doest thou? He has done it—

—Who had a right to do it. If they were your



friends, they were his creatures and servants; and was he obliged to ask your permission, to do what he would with his own? He has done it—

—Who was too wise to err, and too kind to injure *in* doing it. For, my brethren, while we allow that God in such dealings is sovereign, we deny that he is ever arbitrary. He often, indeed, “giveth no account of any of his matters;” and the reasons which govern him are commonly far above, out of our sight, so that he frequently *appears* to act from his *pleasure* only: but he has reasons; he always has motives of preference which would more than justify him were they fully known. Our Saviour, therefore, does not refer to his will, but to his wisdom: Yea, O Father, for—so thou wouldest; no—but “so it *seemed good in thy sight*,” and what seems good to him must be really good. We may be imposed upon, but he is not mocked: “we know that the judgment of God is always according to truth.”

We may also be very imperfect judges of our own welfare; and not be able to see how certain events *can* ever befriend us: but, says the Apostle, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God:” And again: “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” This is the proper view we are to take of Our afflictions. They are the result of divine goodness. They are the discipline of a father. They are the prunings of a husbandman, to ensure better fruit. They are the ploughing of the fallow ground to prepare it for the reception of the seed. They are the refinings of the furnace, that when we are tried we may come forth as gold.—This brings us

IV. To teach you, How to improve such dispen-

sations of Providence. And here let me observe that we should improve them in a way of sympathy; in a way of gratitude; in a way of precaution; and in a way of resignation.

First; We should improve them in a way of sympathy. Let us always feel tenderly for those who have been bereaved. They need it. Every circumstance in their situation cries, "Pity me, pity me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." Are we not commanded to "be pitiful;" to "bear one another's burdens;" to "strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees?" Let us suppose *our* friends removed. Let us imagine *ourselves*—waking in the dead of night,—rising in the morning—going from room to room—meeting with the books they folded down—sitting at table, where David's seat is empty—kneeling without them at the family altar—stripped—divided—torn to pieces: let us place our souls in their souls' stead—that we may not be severe to mark what they do amiss under such a pressure of anguish—that we may pray for them—that we may assist them—that we may soothe them—and gain the character Job had deserved, "as one that comforteth the mourners."

Secondly; We should improve them in a way of gratitude. Is not the affliction which we have portrayed, your own? Have you not been visited with breach upon breach? And who has kept your house from becoming a house of mourning? Who has preserved, from year to year, your connexions? Who has guarded them in the dangerous path of life, from every accident and disease?—Some of you have followed your beloved friends and relatives down to the very gates of the grave, and stood weeping and trembling behind them. With what joy did you hear

the sentence, "return, ye children of men!" with what pleasure did you walk back with them! with what zeal, for the time, did you resolve to serve Him who had "performed all things for you!" Has the sense of your obligations continued? Where are the effects and the proofs of it? Have you rendered according to the benefit done you? If a person had preserved a dear connexion, in whom your happiness was bound up, from the sword of an assassin, you would feel indebted to him through life: and if you neglected him, everyone would be ready to shun you. Yea, and this has been the case, if a fond and faithful animal had rescued a husband or a child from a watery grave, even the poor dumb deliverer would have retained your regard. Yes—the instrument is to be acknowledged, while the agent is to be disowned; the creature—a man—an animal!—ought to be remembered; it is only *God* that is to be forgotten. *He* who is "the preserver of men:" *He* "in whom we live and move and have our being." O weep, weep, over your vile, your wretched unthankfulness; and hourly ask; ask every moment; "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

Thirdly; We should improve them in a way of precaution. We should hold our connexions with a loose hand, and be prepared for the removal of them when the summons comes. From whence arises the anguish of affliction? From disappointment. From what does disappointment arise? From high expectations. Who is to blame for the indulgence of high expectations?—Where are we now? Alas! we do not believe that our friends are mortal. We are so attached to them that we cannot bear to realize the thought of separation. We forget the brief, the

precarious term on which we take them. We consider that to be given which is only lent. Hence, at last, when the event befalls us, it kills us by surprise. But who is chargeable with this surprise? Not *he*, who has said, "Arise, and depart hence, for this is not your rest." Not *he*, who in so many ways has said, "Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Not *he*, who says, "Time is short: it remains therefore, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."

Lastly; We should improve them in a way of resignation. It is too common for persons, when they would console the bereaved, to endeavour to diminish a sense of the greatness of their loss. But the afflicted will be sure to reject such consolation as this. Their very esteem and affection will lead them to revolt at it. Neither is such a mode necessary, or proper: it is not a scriptural mode. There is no grace in *bearing* what we do *not feel*: nor can we *resign* what we do not *value*. I would rather say to the afflicted, Your case is trying—

But you have heard that the hand of God is in it; and by this consideration David was silenced; "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth; because *thou* didst it." Your case is trying—

But it is not peculiar. Thousands are now mourning; and mourning in a condition far worse than yours. Your connexions are removed—

But perhaps they are taken away from the evil to

come. Perhaps that child, whose death cost you so many tears, would, if he had lived, have broken your heart. Perhaps that Christian friend who departed with so fair a memory, would, had he continued longer, have been drawn aside by temptation, and have disgraced his profession. Perhaps that beloved relative might have been rendered a sufferer for life, and you have been the worn-out spectator of pain and anguish you could not even relieve. It is certain if they were the followers of Jesus, by remaining here, they would have been still at sea; but they have now entered the desired haven: they would have been still at war; but now their warfare is accomplished. They are removed—

But the change is infinitely to their advantage. It is a deliverance: an advancement: a consummation. If absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. They have reached all that they valued and toiled after here. And therefore pause before you say—and actions can speak—“I am sorry, they are released from prison; I am sorry, they will no more say I am sick; I am sorry, they behold his face in righteousness, and are satisfied.” If you loved them you would rejoice because they said we go unto the Father. They are removed—

But you are going after, and will join them again. The separation is but temporary. If life be short, your want of them cannot be long. They are removed—

But their departure has rendered this earth, which we must leave, less attractive; and placed more allurements beyond the skies, and our conversation ought to be in heaven. Finally: if lover, friend, and acquaintance are gone—

God is not. He is near you. He is with you. He has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He is a very present help in trouble. He can sanctify every loss. He can more than repair it. He has supports and compensations that can enable us even to glory in tribulation. You may therefore say with the Saviour, "I am left alone and yet I am not alone. because the Father is with me."

My *bereaved hearers*, you who have lost an agreeable and instructive acquaintance; you who have lost a delightful and edifying friend; and especially you who have lost a loving, honoured, and invaluable parent; in addressing the afflicted, you will consider me as having peculiarly addressed you. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Indeed the whole course of our meditation has been so applicable to the providence we are reviewing, that little remains to be said, especially as the design of funeral notices should be to impress the living, rather than to eulogize the dead.

To characterize at all, or to characterize justly, is not, in many cases, an easy thing. Some individuals run into the mass of sameness, and no peculiar feature can be seized by which to distinguish them. Others have a singularity of attributes and actions, upon which it may not be always proper to pronounce, and concerning which, people will decide according to their respective views and feelings.

The original character that comes before us this morning, has given rise to a great diversity, and a great uniformity of opinion: but the uniformity of conviction embraces what is truly excellent and praiseworthy, while the diversity regards only what is less important. I feel the difficulty of the deli-

neation on which I am entering, but, by the grace of God, I shall speak without flattery, and without fear.

Mr. Thomas Parsons was the only son of the late venerable pastor of the Baptist church in this city. He received a good, though not a learned education; and early discovered very superior powers of mind, which he constantly cultivated by reading and exercise. His acquaintance with science at large was very considerable. His talents were indeed sufficient to have rendered him illustrious in anyone department of knowledge; but instead of concentrating his attention and application to a single subject, he diffused them over an extensive surface; and thus gained general information, rather than remarkable pre-eminence in anyone particular branch. His proficiency, however, in sculpture, drawing, mineralogy, chemistry, astronomy, and moral philosophy was by no means common.

His apprehension was distinguished by a peculiar quickness and clearness. He seemed to know intuitively every subject that came before him; and he was able to express himself concerning it, with the most happy precision and ease.

No one was ever so little inclined to take anything on trust. or so little in danger of becoming the slave of prerogative and authority.

As a reader, he accustomed himself to write a critique on the work he was perusing; and it commonly leaned to the side of censure; for he had a singular sagacity in detecting errors and mistakes which others overlooked.

An opinion has generally prevailed, that as a hearer, our friend did not exercise his great cen-

social abilities very tenderly; in consequence of which, many dreaded to preach in his presence. But this charge must be taken with very considerable qualification. He loathed indeed everything that bordered on the spiritual coxcomb; and scrupled not to make free with inflated academics, and all those who, by their confident and self-conceited manner, seemed more than satisfied with their own performances, and defied rather than deprecated criticism. He always esteemed grace more than talent. He often remarked, that sterling and elevated piety, in the simplest character, is far superior to the finest intellect, and the most extensive acquirements unassociated with the fear of God. The man who was "serious in a serious cause;" whose aim appeared to be only usefulness; who was not aping anyone; nor attempting things beyond his reach; and who did not dogmatize and condemn others; however humble his claims, was not likely to miss his approbation. I have often heard him observe, of what importance it was to bring the affections into exercise in public performances; expressing also his conviction, that an obvious solicitude in a preacher to do good, had contributed more to his usefulness than anyone quality beside. In a word, he only *acted in prose* what Cowper has expressed in poetry:

In man or woman, but far most in man,  
 And most of all in man that ministers  
 And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe  
 All *affectation*. 'Tis my perfect scorn;  
 Object of my implacable disgust.  
 What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge  
 A silly fond conceit of his fair form.



And just proportion, fashionable mien,  
 And pretty face, in presence of his God  
 Or, will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,  
 As with the diamond on his lily hand,  
 And play his brilliant parts before mine eyes,  
 When I am hungry fur the bread of life?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

—Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare,  
 And start theatric, practis'd at the glass!  
 I seek divine *simplicity* in him  
 Who handles things divine; and all besides,  
 Though learn'd with labour, and though much admir'd  
 By curious eyes and *judgments ill-inform'd*,  
 To me is odious—★

★ How often would he quote from his admired poet!—

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,  
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,  
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace  
 His master strokes, and draw from his design.  
 I would express him *simple*, grave, sincere;  
 In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,  
 And plain in manner: decent, solemn, chaste,  
 And *natural in gesture: much impress'd*  
*Himself*; as conscious of his awful charge.  
 And *anxious mainly* that the flock he feeds  
 May feel it too! *affectionate in look*,  
 And *tender in address*, as well becomes  
 A messenger of grace to guilty men.  
 —Is it like?—Like whom?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

He would also say—

For ghostly counsel, if it be not back'd  
 With show of love, at least with hopeful proof  
 Of some sincerity on the giver's part;  
 Or be dishonour'd in the exterior form  
 And mode of its conveyance by such tricks  
 As move derision, or by foppish airs

And

As an author, Mr. P. published but little; and as this was principally of a local and temporary nature, it never spread very widely. In the dispute a few years ago in this city concerning the antichristianism of *all* war, he was deeply engaged; and they who were not complete converts to his sentiment must, I think, acknowledge that he advocated his own principle in a manner far superior to anything they had ever seen before: nor did the controversy move or ruffle his temper, or break in upon his friendly intercourse with his reverend and respectable opponent. The same goodness of temper, along with the keenest argument, and very forcible diction, is apparent in his "High Church Claims Exposed."

He had adopted the opinion of the eloquent, but paradoxical genius, Rousseau, concerning the improper use of fiction in all education and teaching; and a few years ago he wrote a masterly essay on the subject; but it was refused by the periodical writers to whom it was offered: for no talent, however superior, can prove the point against the conviction and practice of the whole world, and the constant usage of our Saviour himself, who always spake in parables.

Many of you well know that Mr. Parsons for many years officiated as a minister. His preaching had its claims, and marked a very strong and superior mind; but it did not sufficiently abound with doctrinal sen-

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And histrionic mummery, that could let down  
The pulpit to the level of the stage;  
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.  
The *weak* perhaps are *mov'd*, but are not *taught*,  
While prejudice, in men of *stronger minds*,  
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.

timent. It was too philosophical to be very popular. It required a degree of discernment and taste in the hearers which very few hearers possess. It was also in a style too unlike the common pulpit phraseology to be admired, or perhaps well understood, in the congregations which he generally addressed. This style has, indeed, been recommended in preference to the usual one; but if we appeal to fact, we find very little in favour of it. Several preachers of superior endowments who have made the Spectator and Rambler their model for *pulpit* composition, instead of the language of our old divines, freed from their occasional lowness and quaintness; and have too much disused the simple and well-known, yet rich and striking terms and phrases of the present translation of the Bible; have not met with much acceptance and have done little good.—Only one of our friend's sermons has passed the press: and this was printed, not published. But it is a most judicious and eloquent production, and worthy (and this is saying much) of the fine female character it so justly describes and extols, the late Mrs. Philips of Melksham.

The deceased excelled in prayer. He was remarkably fluent, and serious, and affecting. Whoever heard him must have entertained a high opinion of his habitual devotion. In this exercise I never heard but one that I could rank above him, I mean my esteemed friend and honoured tutor, the late Cornelius Winter, of whom Mr. Parsons was often heard to say, "That man is more like the image I have formed of Jesus Christ than any man I ever saw or expect to see."

For a length of time the son aided his father; but

differing from the good old man in some of his high notions; and the difference being magnified by suspicion and officiousness on the side of ignorance, and a refusing to come to explanation on the side of talent, he was interdicted labouring in the church to which he belonged; yet he continued, till within a very few years, to preach as opportunity offered, or as circumstances seemed to render it a duty, in various places, especially in this church, of which, upon the death of his father, he became a member. Our friends here will long remember their obligation to his kindness, in so frequently and promptly supplying them, when they wanted assistance.

With regard to the sentiments of our departed friend, strange as it may seem, I profess to know very little, after an affectionate intercourse of four and twenty years. I should infer, and I think fairly infer, from his invariably attending a certain kind of preaching, when it was perfectly optional with him to hear any other—and he had an independence of mind that scorned to act but from his own conviction; from the cast of sermons he always selected when he read in his family, and from many general expressions, that, in his leading doctrinal views, he nearly approximated what is called orthodoxy. But he had imbibed an ineffable contempt for all creeds drawn up by fallible men. He would not endure *systematic* divinity. He considered revelation indeed as a *divine* system; but contended, that, in our present state, we are incompetent to admit the whole; and; therefore, that it is our wisdom to be satisfied with a limited knowledge of it, studying and improving those parts that bear upon our duty and welfare, and for the rest, to “wait the great teacher death, and God adore.”

He wished to bring men to the Bible for facts rather than opinions. He would have them introduced into this "broad land of wealth unknown," if possible, by a silent guide; or by one who, instead of prepossessing them in favour of particular spots, as he went along, should praise the whole; and when there, he would have them left to explore for themselves; and be perfectly free to move in what direction they pleased, and regardless how widely they diverged from each other, while they all kept on holy ground. He allowed, that though there could be no real contradictions in the Scriptures, there were many apparent ones; and as various things seem contradictory to a child, which easily and beautifully accord in the mind of a man, so some doctrines revealed in the Gospel, and which perfectly harmonize in the view of the Supreme Intelligence, will elude all our attempts at reconciliation till we come of age. Hence, instead of torturing the obvious language of Revelation, he deemed it better to give every text its own plain and unforced meaning. Theological systematizers, he would observe, contrive at least to escape all inconsistencies in language; but the sacred authors have numerous expressions which all parties dislike. Had the Epistles been written by Gill or Whitby, many passages would have been omitted, or very differently worded. There are texts which are the torment of Calvinists, and there are texts which are the grief of Arminians.

I have here endeavoured to shew, as clearly as I could, the disposition of our friend's mind with regard to religious inquiry. And here, I confess, I go a considerable distance with him, and in stating *his* views I have in a great measure expressed my *own*. But you will excuse my saying, that I always feared

his candour bordered too much on latitudinarianism; and that he did not attach, or at least evince that he attached, sufficient importance to doctrinal truths. I mention this the more freely, because you will bear me witness how often I express and expose an opposite extreme. For how many are there, especially in our day, who attach too much importance to their sentiment: I do not mean if taken in its connexion and influence—then we cannot be too strenuous in the support of it; for, as a late writer observes, “If error be harmless, truth is in the same proportion worthless;” but, abstractedly considered, when faith is valued, not as the principle of holiness and good works, but a substitute for them: when the creed dispenses with the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments; when people think it sufficient, if their notions are sound, though their lives are worldly, or their hearts full of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. May we always hear a voice behind us, saying, “this is the way, walk ye in it, when we turn to the right hand, and when we turn to the left.”

But what I least admired in the subject of this address, was too great a love of singularity in his general opinions, which led him to dissent from almost everything that was said in company, and turning conversation into an intellectual contest; a willingness to perplex people as to his principles, or to excite suspicions of his heterodoxy; a degree of mental severity that inclined him more profusely to censure than to applaud, and to notice blemishes rather than beauties; and above all a freedom of discourse upon religious subjects before young persons, and people not decidedly religious, from which those who well knew him would not have inferred his belief, but from which

others were in danger of erroneously doing so, and of acting under the countenance of his supposed authority. But for this he must have been idolized. I mention it with tenderness; but I do not, I cannot justify it. I throw a veil of love over it, conscious that, for other imperfections, I need a much larger one myself. My regarded friend would not desire indiscriminate praise—he is too great to stand in need of it. His solid, his extensive, his established, his acknowledged worth, can bear a censure. Some are too poor to lose a farthing; but the loss of a purse does not alarm the friends of the rich. It is the insignificant pretender that dreads reproof: he is “in danger of being snuffed out.” But we have not a *candle* before us.

Defects through nature’s best productions run,  
Our friend had spots, and spots are in the sun.

Let me hasten to exhibit what will combine the suffrage and will draw forth the praise of every individual: It is, THE CHARACTER OF THE DEPARTED AS A WHOLE. Here I see no ordinary assemblage of excellency.

Here I see a man peculiarly attached to the volume of inspiration, and the determined enemy of every opinion that would reduce its importance or share its authority. Even the common distinction between natural and revealed religion, as to their *origin*, he disclaimed; and contended, that *all* religious knowledge was from Divine communication, even to the belief of a Supreme Being. Hence, Ellis’s “Knowledge of Divine Things, not from Reason, but Revelation,” was his favourite book. Hence, no institution so completely gained his applause as “The Bri-

tish and Foreign Bible Society.” The spread of the Scriptures, without note or comment, was the wish and the delight of his soul.

I see a man possessing a capacity to edify himself and his family at home; regular, and invariable, unless hindered by indisposition, in his attendance on the means of grace; and honouring the worship of God in the week as well as on the Sabbath.

I see a man distinguished by the most inoffensive manners; the most upright conduct; avoiding through life the appearance of evil, and leaving a reputation without a stain.

I see a man the ardent lover of liberty; the hater of war, and of priestcraft; of bigotry and intolerance; of everything that would divide Christians, or narrow the terms of their communion.

“What shall I say of his kindness and usefulness as an adviser in every difficulty and embarrassment?

What shall I say of the generous benefactor that never refused distress when he had it in the power of his hand to relieve; and whose bounty resembled the goodness of our heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to rise and his rain descend “upon the evil and the good?”

“What shall I say of the friendly correspondent of the vast and varied circle he indulged; of the hours he employed in letters of edification and comfort, addressed to the fatherless and widow, the poor and the helpless, and in which talent and piety were equally combined?

Observe him at the head of his family. See him walking within his house with a perfect heart, and setting no wicked thing before his eyes. Hear him morning and evening at his domestic altar. Remem-



ber the unimpeachable value of the neighbour; the master; the husband; the father—

And you will not wonder, that as a citizen he is so missed; that as a friend he is so lamented; that as a relative he is so beloved; and as a character he is so extolled.

He had nearly reached the general limit of human life. For some years back he was rather infirm: and during the winter suffered considerable confinement, with much difficulty of breathing.

Of late he seemed better than usual, and had, only a week before his death, peculiarly enjoyed a visit at the house of a beloved friend, in a neighbouring town. On the Friday evening he conversed in his usual manner with one of his most intimate acquaintances so late as nine o'clock. But very early on the Saturday morning he was seized with an intestine complaint, which in a few hours carried him off, and with a rapidity that astonished even his old and skilful medical attendant. Thus his friends were deprived of an opportunity to see him: and very few knew of his illness, till they were astonished and distressed at the news of his death——

But let us listen to the voice from “the most excellent glory:” “Is any afflicted? let him pray.”——

“O GOD, thou hast been our refuge and dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth, and even from everlasting to the world everlasting, thou art God. But as for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”

May each individual in this mournful and numerous assembly, retire and pray—Make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. May we so reflect on the vanity, brevity, and uncertainty of things, seen and temporal, as supremely to pursue those things which are unseen and eternal. May we seek the pardon of our sin, and the sanctification of our nature, a title to heaven, and a meetness for the inheritance of the Saints, in light; with all the ardour and diligence, their infinite importance, and the short and precarious season for obtaining them, demand.

Before we leave this world, may we not only be prepared for abetter, but assured of it; that we may be able to say, the bitterness of death is past; view our dissolution as the signal of our deliverance and triumph; and have an entrance ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Establish in us a firm and lively persuasion of thy being, providence, and grace. We bless thee for all our personal and relative comforts. May we always hold them at thy disposal, and be ready to resign them at thy call. And when they are removed from us, enable us to blend the views of the Christian with the feelings of the creature: and in weeping submission say, “the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.”

In thy loving kindness and tender mercy regard the afflicted family, whose invaluable head thou hast taken from them. We bless thee that he was not prematurely removed in the midst of his days, and before his offspring were reared, educated, and provided for—but matured by years and experience, like

a shock of corn fully ripe in his season. We bless thee that those who are mourning over a thousand affecting recollections, sorrow not as others who have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. May every tendency to murmur, and even to complain, be lost in the conviction, That all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies: and that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. May the house of mourning be found the house of instruction. By the sadness of the countenance may the heart be made better; more soft to receive holy impressions; and more serious to hear what God the Lord will speak. May the sons and daughters of bereavement, who have added the remains of a long-spared father to the ashes of an early lost mother, be encouraged to confide in thee the living God, and say, When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. May they never forget the worth to which they have been allied, nor degenerate from those excellencies which beyond every other patrimonial inheritance they ought to value. May they have grace to follow those who are gone before them, as far as they were followers of God: that they may look forward, and realise a renewal of intercourse, in a world of perfect and endless friendship.

Eternal Jehovah! we can die easier than we once could! many of the ties that once bound us to earth, are broken asunder! our treasure is in heaven:

“There our best friends, our kindred dwell,  
There God our Saviour reigns.”

How many whose presence once gave a charm and a relish to life; whose counsels guided us, whose example blessed us; whose hand wiped away our tears—and we have had many to wipe:—have left us in this wilderness; while they have reached the promised land, and are made pillars in the temple above, and shall no more go out! We would not draw them out, and bring them back if it were in our power. We rejoice in their safety, and happiness, and glory. But we are allowed to long for the hour when we shall be received by them into everlasting habitations. Thou wilt not suffer us to want, what appears so necessary to our blessedness, the pleasure of knowing those again whom we have so dearly esteemed. We shall mingle with them again, and the days we have passed in their absence will appear as a dream. We shall form new and more intimate connexions with them. We shall excite no mutual anxieties. We shall only add to each other's pleasure, and promote each other's improvement.

“Now, unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.”

**GENERAL REMARKS ON THE REFORM-  
ATION:**

**A SERMON,**

DELIVERED IN

ARGYLE CHAPEL, OCTOBER 4. 1835.

**BEING THE THREE HUNDREDTH YEAR  
THAT VERY DAY**

OF PUBLISHING

**THE FIRST COMPLETE VERSION OF THE BIBLE  
IN ENGLISH.**

## ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is certain, at least to the Preacher himself, that this Sermon would not have been extended from the pulpit to the press, had it not been for the favourable manner in which it was received; and two written addresses presented to him, which seemed to render it not only a courtesy but a duty to comply. One of these was *very numerously* and *respectably* signed. The other was from a gentleman of property, piety, talent, and philanthropy. His name would deservedly carry weight and influence; but this the Author reluctantly suppresses: yet he ventures (without known permission) to insert the address, as it comes from a liberal Episcopalian, and contains a suffrage more than satisfactory in favour of the sentiments delivered.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HOPE I am not taking an improper liberty in respectfully suggesting to your consideration the propriety of publishing the Sermon preached by you yesterday morning. It appeared to me, and I doubt not to many others, to be admirably suited to the occasion, and calculated, at the present time, to be extensively useful,—like oil poured upon the troubled waters of political and religious controversy. Several points in particular were touched upon in a way that is likely (in my humble opinion) to correct a great deal of misconception, prejudice, and error, which

pervade the minds of an influential class of persons in this country; while the kindly and conciliatory tone of the whole Discourse was well adapted to commend the truth to the candid attention of our opponents.

It is of great importance, I think, to shew, that the most uncompromising opposition to Popery is quite compatible with the concession of civil and political rights to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects; and this distinction was usefully and conclusively insisted on in your Sermon. Either from not perceiving or not admitting this distinction, Dissenters, and the friends of civil and religious liberty generally, are ignorantly or maliciously represented by a certain party as being indifferent to the spread of Popery—seeking to compromise the principles of the Reformation in the ardour of political zeal, or in their desire for the reform of the Established Church.

Another point on which many persons require to be enlightened, is the alleged increase of Popery. For my own part, I should as soon expect to behold the religion of Brahma or Fo take root and flourish among us, as to see the superstition and spiritual domination of the Vatican re-established in England; and I cannot but fear that the alarm which is sounded (by many at least) of the Church being in danger, is intended, not so much to serve the purposes of pure and undefiled religion, as to maintain the supremacy and temporalities of a particular denomination. The Episcopal Church, nay more, religion itself, is so identified and bound up, in the minds of many excellent men, with state connexion and patronage, that to touch the latter is equivalent in their opinion to laying unhallowed hands upon the ark of God itself,—us

making common cause with infidels and destructives, and all the enemies of religious and social order. The public mind does, indeed, require to be disabused on this point; and when party spirit runs so high as it does at present, it appears important that moderate men especially should make their sentiments known on the great points that are agitating and dividing the country. They may help to check and regulate the vibrations of the pendulum in the violence of its first movements. It is this feeling alone—a desire to promote the great interests of truth and righteousness—that has induced me to offer the suggestion with which I commenced my note. Leaving it to your better judgment to comply with it or not, and apologizing for the intrusion of my opinion on such a subject,

I remain, my DEAR SIR,

With great respect, yours very sincerely,

No one but a public speaker knows the perplexity that arises from an attempt to form an address on a subject to extensive as to require very much selection; and so common-place and well-known as scarcely to admit the possibility of novelty of remark or freshness of illustration.

*Percy Place,  
October 10, 1835.*



## GENERAL REMARKS ON THE REFORMATION.

*“The time of Reformation.”*—HEB. ix. 10.

MY BRETHREN,

IN the perusal of history men will always be affected and influenced according to their peculiar principles and dispositions. “They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” Scholars, philosophers, artisans, merchants, and warriors, will look after changes and improvements in learning, science, mechanism, commerce, and the defence and slaughter of human life. But a man of God looks after “the time to favour Zion; yea, the set time;” or what the Scripture calls “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord:” and as he meets with these, he feels like a wearied traveller in a sandy and parched desert, when he finds occasionally a few green and well-watered spots, which charm his eye, and refresh his foot, and relieve his thirst, and send him on his way rejoicing.

Several of these distinguished periods are recorded in the Sacred Writings.

It was a blessed time when the Jews came out of Egypt by Moses, and “sang His praise at the Red Sea;” and said at Horeb,” all that the Lord commandeth us will we do.” It is called” the kindness

of their youth, and the love of their espousals, when they went after him in a land that was not sown. Israel was then holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase.”

It was a blessed time when, under the ministry of Samuel, “All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.”

It was a blessed time when David, with songs and sacrifices, and a multitude that kept holy day, brought up the ark of the Lord and placed it in the royal tabernacle at Jerusalem.

It was a blessed time when Solomon dedicated the temple, kneeling on a scaffold of wood, with his arms spread out towards heaven before the assembled nation; and “the people returned unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant and for Israel his people.”

It was a blessed time when the captives returned from Babylon; and laid the foundation of the second house of the Lord: and a blessed time also when they finished the edifice, bringing “forth the top stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.”

It was a blessed time when John, the forerunner of the Messiah, “preached the kingdom of God, and all men pressed into it.”

But O what a glorious season was the day of Pentecost! when, according to the Saviour’s promise, the Spirit was poured out in miraculous operations and sanctifying influences; when multitudes were converted; and “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And, they continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fel-

lowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

This brings, us to what the Apostle here calls THE TIME OF REFORMATION. He intends the beginning of the Gospel; or the introduction of the evangelical dispensation. He gives it the name of THE REFORMATION, because of the purifications, corrections, and improvements which it was the noble means of effecting. Let us briefly explain.

Judaism was essentially the same with Christianity; but there were many differences between them; and the one had a vast pre-eminence over the other. The one was necessarily limited—the other was to be universal. The one was temporary—the other was to be permanent. The one was initiatory—the other was to be final. The one was preparatory—the other was to be perfective—"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." "For the law made nothing, perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh to God."

But, besides the *comparative* imperfection of the system itself, Judaism, in process of ages, was injured and debased in such a degree as scarcely to resemble

what it was in the hand of Moses and the Prophets. We have not time, considering what lies before us, to enlarge upon all the degenerations and abuses, this morning. Let it suffice to observe two things.

The first of which is, That the Jews mistook grossly those appointments which were designed as *means* to lead them further. This was the case with their ceremonies and sacrifices. These were not valuable in themselves, neither were they only or principally founded in any physical, political, or moral reasons; but were prescribed as types or “shadows of good things to come.” But they made them the substance. They trusted in the mere observance of them for their acceptance with God. They cried, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we;” when they had no reference to the Redeemer in whom God’s soul delighted.—Yea, they not only made these services a substitute for the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, but also a substitute for every holy disposition and every moral virtue. Hence, God abhorred the very offerings which he had ordained. Hence, by the mouth of Isaiah, he thus addresses these votaries of rubrical righteousness, and agents of real ungodliness and immorality: “He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.” “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bul-

locks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The second leads us to observe, That they had annexed to the service of God a multitude of appendages. They raised their oral law to a level in authority with their inspired writings; yea, they even explained the one by the other; and in repeated instances, "made the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions." Judaism was of itself "a yoke;" which, says James, "neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." But there were added to it a thousand distinctions, observances, and self-denials, too grievous to be borne. Never was there a poor people so vexed and oppressed by their spiritual rulers, who "caused them to err, and destroyed the way of their paths." Hence, our Lord and Saviour pitied them, and said, "Come unto me, all

ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take *my* yoke upon you, and learn of me—for *my* yoke is easy, and *my* burden is light.” “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

What an era of REFORMATION, therefore, was the commencement of Christianity! Now, for the dawn, was the day. Now, for the infancy of the Church, was the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ. Now, instead of the types, they had the realities. Now, instead of going up three times a-year from the most distant parts of their country to Jerusalem, they could in every place worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. The blood of bulls and of goats was superseded by the blood of God’s own Son, which cleanseth from all sin. Bestial oblations were succeeded by spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. God was no longer viewed as the Lord of hosts chiefly, but regarded under the relation of a parent: and his children received not the spirit of bondage to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they, cried, Abba; Father. “Well, therefore, did our Saviour, comparing Christianity, not with Paganism, but even with Judaism itself, say “Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.”

And now we come to another TIME OF REFORMATION—The Reformation, not from Judaism, but from Romanism. We are aware that the Popish divines

and historians have commonly called it the *pretended* Reformation; (and the reformed in France were for a length of time vilely constrained to call themselves in their public acts the *pretended* reformed;) but though we may learn of an enemy, it is not necessary to ask counsel at his mouth, concerning a case in which he is deeply and not very honourably concerned. *We* are accustomed to call it *the* Reformation; and *we* contend that it deserves all the force of the emphasis; and that the more it is impartially examined, the more it will appear to be important and beneficial in a degree beyond example.

You need not wonder, therefore, at the attention it continues to excite. The Protestants in France, it is understood, mean to regard the third centenary of the event in the year following. All the Lutheran Churches in Germany, and the Moravians in Bohemia, celebrated it November 21, 1834, on account of the publication of the entire Bible in their own language by Luther. Geneva (though, alas! so much of the doctrine of the Reformation has been abandoned there) observed it in the July of the present summer. And as on this fourth of October, three hundred years ago, the printing the entire English version of the Scripture was completed by Miles Coverdale, it is to be generally, and, I believe, universally commemorated, in this highly-favoured country, on the present Sabbath. And, I trust, it will not be noticed in many instances (though I fear it will be in some) in the spirit of party, and politics; but, as becomes the Lord's day, and the Lord's house, and the Lord's cause, in a spirit of devotion, humility, and praise.

In this business I know not who was the first

mover; but I am glad the movement has taken place; and the more so, because it has not emanated from any mandate of authority, but from spontaneous feeling, or only the excitement of brotherly recommendation.

I have also the more readily fallen in with the design, because it has been surmised, and pretty loudly rumoured too, that Dissenters are less adverse to Popery than many of their brethren in the Establishment. In some cases, I fear, and am persuaded, this reflection has issued from ecclesiastical malevolence, always ready to impeach and traduce those who differ from it, and are supposed to stand on less favoured ground. But, in other cases, it has, perhaps, arisen from what we are so far from denying, that we openly admit and acknowledge——our cordial wishes that our fellow Catholic subjects might obtain and enjoy all civil rights and privileges with ourselves; and that our lovely religion may be freed from every vestige and aspect of persecution, not only in actual violence or coercion, but in every hateful and depreciating privation, stigma, and restraint. If to believe and assert—That while we render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, we should render unto God only the things that are God's—That the church is not the state, nor the state the church—That politics and religion should be separately defined—That civil authority has nothing to do with an intercourse with our Maker and our Judge—That its powers and penalties extend only to actions; while it takes under its impartial wing the life, property, and freedom of *every* man who submits to its laws—That toleration is an exceptionable term, blaspheming while it degrades, by *allowing*



*God to receive* as well as *his creatures to pay* those devotions which their *convictions* dictate, and without which they would be of no avail;—if this is to be guilty, we glory in the charge; assured that to these just conclusions every reasonable mind will in time be brought; that we have already on our side the suffrages of many of the wisest and best men that ever lived—yea, and—that the very Reformation the day brings under our review was founded really in these very principles, and can only be completely justified by them.

But let none err from hence; or suppose that, because we are friendly to what we deem the civil claims of this class of our fellow-subjects, we think the more favourably of their religious system, or of their faith and worship, or of the sectarianism and despoticalness of many of their principles. And if Catholics themselves have been led from such construction to imagine that Protestants are more reconciled to Popery than formerly, I hope the testimonies issuing this day from all our churches, chapels, and meetings, will rectify their mistake.

Let us distinguish things that differ. Your Preacher remembers hearing the late excellent WILBERFORCE say, with great firmness, when rather reflected upon for his decided approbation of the Emancipation measure, “I am a friend to the Bill *because* I am an enemy to Popery.” Nor need you, my brethren, be surprised at this remark. If any fact be more clear than another from history, it is, that sects and parties are most likely to relax, and languish, and decline, as they are left alone. They flourish most when they are persecuted. Restraint operates upon them like a dam thrown across the

river, which makes the waters rise higher and spread wider. Opposition unites them more closely; blends the pride of resistance with the sturdiness of belief; inspires and confirms the zeal and the firmness of martyrs; and calls out resources which the agents would not have known they possessed had they not been stimulated and called forth. And do we not see this in our own day? What has been the effect of Societies established to summon public meetings, to send forth itinerant haranguers, to challenge warfare, to hurl defiance, to organize and parade a number of attempts *professedly and expressly* to oppose and subdue? Has it not caused a reaction, and raised such a zeal in the Catholic cause as was scarcely ever before witnessed? And is it politics, or prejudice, or misdirected yet conscientious piety, that is still preaching up crusades like these?

But let us proceed to our design, premising only one thing further. It is this. We presume that no candid Catholics, especially at a time when their community is certainly not backward to advance, much less to defend themselves, can either wonder or blame us, if, as Protestants, we state the grounds on which we stand, and confess that "after the way which they call heresy, so worship we the God of our fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

In such a limited service we cannot be expected to give you the history, or even an abridgment of the history, of the Reformation. You have access to many able and valuable works pertaining to the sub-

ject; and most of you are acquainted with the leading facts of the case. All I can do is to furnish a few general remarks, that, if duly regarded, may be found profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. Let us then briefly—*Review the necessity of the measure—Acknowledge the hand of God in the event—Avoid undervaluing the benefit because of the defects attending it—Justify our confidence in its stability and success—And be concerned to improve it aright.*

First. *Let us call to mind the necessity if the measure.* In any corruption of Christianity there is nothing more than might be accounted for from the present state of human nature. Men are fallen and depraved creatures; and, unless divinely influenced, are likely to injure and defile every thing in which they are engaged. But here, the corruptions were plainly foretold, and much of them was even specified; so that, instead of being confounded by the event, our faith in the Scriptures is even confirmed. To such predictions you can easily turn.

No enormous evils connected with what is really good, ever reach their completion and maturity at once. The progress of corruption in the case before us was gradual. It began early. The principles were working even in the days of the Apostles. But there were for a considerable time hindrances to their full development. While the Church was in a state of opposition and suffering, it preserved no little purity and *true* lustre. But when the Roman Government ceased to be Pagan, and Christianity was established by Constantine, it was soon secularized too; so that to become a Christian was no

longer the way to become a martyr, but the high road to bask in the sunshine of royal favour, and to gain the honours, and riches, and places, and preferments that come from man only. Thus passages were opened and allurements spread for the entrance of every improper and unprincipled pretender. Conversion was no more a proof of sincerity, but might equally well shew only an appetite for loaves and fishes.

To what a state of degeneracy religion was reduced in the course of a few centuries, we have sufficient testimonies from Popish writers themselves; though many attempts have been made, since these confessions were delivered, to suppress, or deny, or qualify them.

It matters little where we begin, or in what order we proceed, provided our statements be true; and never was there a subject in which there could be so little need of exaggeration.

By a concurrence of favourable circumstances, a priest called the Pope obtained in himself the union of both spiritual and temporal power. His sovereignty was absolute; and he determined that to him every knee should bow, and every tongue confess. Numberless offices and dignities lay at his disposal. He had his palace, his court, his council, his ministers. His ambassadors intrigued; his bullies threatened; his soldiers slew; and his locusts devoured. Cabinets were cajoled by his agents; and kings held their dominion as his dependents, and paid him the most slavish homage. If any disobeyed him, he interdicted all the usual worship in their realms, and absolved their subjects from all allegiance to their authority. The most abject bondage, or the most fearful anarchy,

hung upon his frown. To all the wickedness was annexed the title of Holiness; to all the falsehood, the claim of infallibility. The ministers of the sanctuary, instead of being the servants of the meek and lowly Jesus, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, lorded it over God's heritage, were tyrannical and rapacious, indolent and self-indulgent; so that Isaiah would have said, "his watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, everyone for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." "Like people, like priest." Nothing could have exceeded the ignorance and depravity of the common ranks, who in blind submission yielded up, bound hand and foot, their understandings and their consciences to those that had the rule over them, and did not watch for their souls.

Almost every thing, Jewish and Pagan, was blended with "the simplicity there is in Christ." Instead of "a pure offering in righteousness," and a spiritual service, there were introduced an endless number of saints' days, and a round of unmeaning, unprofitable, superstitious usages, unsanctioned by the first and purer ages of the Church, as well as at variance with the word of life. They forbade to marry, and commanded to abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. "Touch

not," said they; "taste not; handle not—after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship,—and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

But the time would fail me to tell—of transubstantiation, or converting the bread and wine in the Lord's supper into his very body and blood; of the adoration of images and relics; of the mediation of saints; of prayers to departed spirits; of pilgrimages; penances; compositions for guilt; sales of indulgences; prices set on every species of sin; morals poisoned at the fountain-head; persecution justified and extolled; heretics, *i. e.*, all who received not the mark of the beast, fined, imprisoned, banished, put to death: and all this to do God service! Justification by faith, a doctrine "by which a church stands or falls," was exploded. Works were meritorious of salvation; yea, they could produce a superflux of merit remaining after the performers had been indemnified and rewarded, to constitute, with the merit of Christ, a general fund from which portions might be taken and applied to the prevention or shortening of the pains of purgatory. The service was in an unknown tongue. The Scriptures were withholden from the laity. Yet there was no salvation out of this church! And all this was confirmed by lying wonders! Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. And could you have witnessed the whole, instead of hearing a thousandth part of it this morning, how would you have sighed, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad."

Secondly, *Let us acknowledge the hand of God in the event.* We by no means wish to speak of it as miraculous; but considering its magnitude and the consequences immediate and remote, we need not wonder that it was extraordinary; and that many special circumstances, separately and unitedly considered, constrain us to say, This is the finger of God! What hath God wrought!

It is God's way to prepare for his own designs, and give indications of their approach. Accordingly, some streakings in the firmament preceded the dawn. Some, in several countries, had begun to feel the powers of the world to come. From the Waldenses and Albigenses (two millions of whom had been slain for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus) a remnant escaped, and bore with them wherever they went much of the light of the pure Gospel. Some of them arriving in England, prepared for the learned and pious Wickliffe; and the writings of Wickliffe carried it into Bohemia. where it was favourably received. John Huss and Jerome of Prague had exposed the abounding absurdities and abominations; and diffused the savour of the Redeemer's knowledge. They were cruelly put to death; but though the earthen pitchers were broken, the lamps within, like Gideon's, shone out the more in the midst of the darkness, and contributed increasingly to the consternation of the Amalekites.

But by-and-by something more decisive and efficient took place—And here let me call upon you to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. All corrupt communities, deeply interested in the frauds and evils, are never very likely to reform themselves. For a long time, in the Romish Church, complaints had been made to those whose business it was to ex-

amine and redress them. And, bad as they were, they acknowledged the necessity of some change. They gave promises. They called councils—but nothing, nothing was ever done. At first the greatest of all the reformers wished not to break with Rome. Luther was a true son of the Church. He was only concerned for its amendment. He began with inquiries, entreaties, and addresses; and submitted in a manner the most respectful. What was the result? He was refused, vilified, and excommunicated—and not one iota with regard to any abuse was conceded. What human probability then was there, that at such a period, and out of the very bosom of this degenerate and unalterable Church, instruments should be raised up for the very purpose of reformation?

And, at the commencement, how insignificant, and weak, and inadequate, did the agents appear! What, was a poor monk starting from his cell, with a few associates dropping in one after another, timid, and not always harmoniously co-operating, to shake a system radicated in the corruption of ages, and sustained by everything that is called God or worshipped? But the ravens fed Elijah, and “the earth helped the woman.” Observe here the wonder-working providence of God. The death of one emperor; the embarrassments of another; the affairs and interests of German Princes; and the state of the King of France:—all these strangely concurred to favour what they might naturally have been expected to oppose. Thus were employed in rearing this infant cause, not only Protestant powers, but Popish; not only friends, but foes; not only good men, but evil ones also.

The badness of some of the individuals engaged



has often been urged as an evidence that the work could not be of God. But, first, this came with a very bad grace from those who could not deny the shameful vices of some of the popes, and yet contended that this did not affect their authority and infallibility of office. And, secondly, the accusation has been too generally applied and much overcharged in the degree, by malice and falsehood. We will not, however, deny the fact that some, by no means pious characters, very much promoted the Reformation. We have nothing to say of such a wretch as Henry VIII. We give him credit for no one good motive in all he did in this work. He was only actuated by some of the vilest passions of human nature. But our Lord sent out Judas as well as John: and Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, though from envy and strife. Living water may run through dead pipes. The unworthiness of the instrument does not prevent his usefulness. God employs slaves as well as servants; He works by sinners as well as by saints. Yea, and in such a state of things the agency of God is peculiarly displayed. When we see the streams turned from their natural current, and flowing reversely; when we see the wrath of man praising him; when we see the most jarring contingencies composed into harmony and co-operation; when we see the most adverse designs not only counteracted, but subserving the very end they were intended and adapted to destroy;—who can help exclaiming, The thing proceedeth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working?—It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

And who is not struck with the hand of God in

the seasonable revival of learning? The dispersion of the Greeks through Europe, by the taking of Constantinople by the Turks? And, above all, in the invention of printing;\* by means of which, what was composed or translated could be published and spread? What could have been done without the Scriptures? But how few could have possessed them, had they been only procurable from the labour and expense of transcription!

Thirdly, *Let us avoid undervaluing the benefit of the Reformation because of the imperfections attending it.* As in nature the dawn breaks into the day, and as in the field we have first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear; so the wisdom of God sees it fit that some truths should make their way by degrees: and it must be acknowledged that men, especially in their relative and social state, are not always instantly and immediately prepared for even every improvement: and this should supply a reason why labourers in the cause of all reform should labour with patience as well as with zeal.

We should also remember that where the agents employed in any cause, however good, are but human beings, we must look for failures, defects, and improprieties. But let us not reject the grain because of the chaff, which is no a part of it; or unseasonably pluck up the tares, lest we pluck up also the wheat with them. The harvest is the season for separation: and to know *when* this is, and *how* to improve it, is always the secret of wisdom. "He that

\* Cardinal Wolsey is reported to have said, "If we do not destroy the press, the press will destroy us."

gathereth in summer is a wise son; he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.”

We acknowledge that some principles at the Reformation were not carried to their proper outfalls. Weakness, or fear, or prejudice, or ignorance, restrained those who, had they lived to our own age, instead of being satisfied with their noble beginnings, would have endeavoured, at least, to go on unto perfection. For is it to be supposed that the door of improvement was then all at once for ever shut? Can we believe that time, and opportunity, and experience, and observation, were to be for ever after thrown away upon the world and the Church? We talk of antiquity;—why, antiquity is with *us*. The world and the church are much older *now* than at the Reformation. Are we required to be no better, no wiser at the end of three whole centuries, during which the word of the Lord has had free course, and talent of every kind has been expending its energies to the utmost? “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain!” and our fathers once moved about in leading-strings; and lived without windows and chimneys; and they once kneeled down to the host; and they once worshipped the sun, Sunday, and the moon, Moonday. We are here, you will observe, indulging in no reflection; nor attempting to determine any controversy concerning the Church: let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind; but let him be able to give a *reason* of the hope that is in him: let him distinguish between the authority of truth and of *unreal* antiquity; let him remember the reproof of Solomon, “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this matter.”

Who can help remarking that at the time of the Reformation, what some manfully claimed for themselves, they were not equally willing to concede to others! They eulogized the Bible, and professed to appeal only to its authority; but they fixed their own meaning, and placed it in creeds and articles of faith, and required everyone else to subscribe, not to the language of the book, but their own exposition of it; and proceeded to exact a uniformity not only of opinion, but of Church order and discipline; instead of saying, "Prove all things;" and "hold fast that which is good." "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

At this period civil liberty was not completely understood; and as to religious, all parties (for there were always individuals who saw better, but they were disregarded)—all parties seemed to think, and did think, that the interference of human authority was lawful and necessary *somewhere*: in consequence of which, toleration (if a detestable by-gone term may be brought up again) was pleaded for in different measures of allowance; and persecution, provided for in principle, was, in the practice, only a question of accident and degree.

Now such a judgment of things we have no objection to condemn; but let the subject be taken fairly. Let it be viewed as the error of the times rather than of the men. We pretend not to vindicate Calvin in the affair of Servetus: but let not even those who, by a patent of their own creation, call themselves rational Dissenters, cast stones at him. Dr. Toulmin, in his lives of those men, agrees that Faustus and Lelius Socinus were infected with the

same mistaken notion, and pleaded for restraint and coercion, and even actually countenanced some measures of severity.

But, instead of complaining of what, at this era, was omitted, let us admire what was done. And who can deny that much, very much *was* done? And who can deny that the results were most important and beneficial? Were not governments liberalized? Was not the human intellect roused from torpor into activity? Was not freedom of inquiry sanctioned, advanced, and directed? Was not man raised to the dignity of thinking for himself, and no longer bound to pin his faith to the slecve of custom and superstition? Was it nothing that the Bible was brought forth like Jehoash from its hiding-chamber, and was anointed and proclaimed king in Zion? Was it nothing that the water of life was no longer a spring shut up, a fountain sealed? Was it nothing that the common people again heard their Saviour gladly? Was it nothing that the poor had the Gospel preached unto them? Was it nothing that the worship of God was made a reasonable service, and ignorance no longer called the mother of devotion? Was it nothing that the anxious conscience, inquiring, how shall I come before the Lord? and, what must I do to be saved? was turned away from folly, and heard only a voice that cried, "Behold the Lamb of God;" "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"?

We should not forget, too, the extent as well as the value of the benefit. In a comparatively short space of time, this Reformation entered Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, Prussia, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Italy.

and Spain. From Italy and Spain it was indeed expelled. But were these countries improved by the expulsion? Would they not at this hour have been in a far preferable state had Protestantism prevailed and remained among them?—"I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say?"

But in our own nation, blessed be God, after some severe trials, it triumphed gloriously and spread widely and deeply. Who can tell how much, to the operation of this cause, we may ascribe of our literary, intellectual, commercial, moral, and religious greatness; and of the exertions we are now making to set every child of bondage free, and to "make known his saving health among all nations?" For here the tree has not only thoroughly taken root, and is growing firmer by every shaking, but it "bears twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

Fourthly, *Let us confide in its stability and success.* If the Reformation be founded in truth, it is imperishable: for great is the truth, and it will prevail. A Gamaliel might have said at the commencement to the Sanhedrim of opponents; "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." And so it has been. Every kind of fraud and force was employed against this cause, to vilify, to check, and to ruin it. But out of weakness it waxed stronger and stronger. The adverse things that happened, turned out rather to the furtherance of the work. Its sufferings only

purified and increased its progress: and the very blood of the martyrs was the seed of the churches.

“Oh!” said Latimer to Ridley at the stake, “give me thy hand, brother—we are kindling a fire that will never be put out.” The dying oracle did not speak falsely. So it has been. So it will be. We do not necessarily connect the cause with a particular place, or mode of church government; but we have no fear of the continuance and advancement of Protestantism.

“But is not the Church in danger?” You must tell us your reference before we can answer this question. If you mean the Church of Christ, we reply, in his own language: “On this rock will I build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Who would dread the return of apparitions, and fairies, and witches? You cannot bring them back, without bringing back previously the times and the credulousnesses which gendered and supported them—“But the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.”

“But is there not great danger from Popery? Do not its advocates and adherents amazingly increase?” By no means. They increase proportionably with other parts of our population; and they may exceed in a particular district: but take the *cause at large*, and ask Papists themselves whether their church is prosperous and multiplying? They must be exceedingly flattered by the magnifying reports of their enemies, and may not choose to contradict them; but they cannot believe them. *They* are aware of the difference between former and present times. *They* know what Popery once was,

and what it now is. *They* know how kingdom has been lost after kingdom; and how little it would be in the power of any bull to make any ruler or people tremble now. *They* know how they have been successively shorn of their wealth, splendour, power, and influence. *They* know the decreed violation of the celibacy of their clergy in the South American States he made a breach in the infallibility and perfection of the whole unity. And they know how the Providence of God is spoiling them of their strongholds, and laying, in numbers, their monasteries and their orders waste.\* What multitudes of proselytes did they formerly boast of abroad! and what learned and expensive missions were supported and gloried in to evangelize the heathen; *i. e.*, to bring them within, the pale of the Church of Rome! Where are their missionaries now? The missionary field is left entirely to Protestants, and so are all the foreign colonizations too. Commerce and enterprise are nearly confined to them also.

According to our views of Scripture, the Papal system, as such, is doomed to perish; and if we had no prediction of this kind on which to rely, we should expect the result from many agencies now in motion. The extension of liberty, the spread of education and knowledge, the preaching of the truth as it is in Jesus. the prayers and exertions of those who have power with God and can prevail;—all these are tokens that the fears of many are groundless. “But are you not afraid of Popish persecution?” We are not afraid. It is perfectly a bugbear, unless you can turn the world upside down. Juster views

\* One decree of the Spanish government put down at once 480 convents.



prevail, and they cannot be unlearned. Parties have committed themselves on the side of freedom too far to recede. Persecution is a wickedness that can never again be established by a law. The trial indeed has been made.—What persecution is there in America, where Catholics are as free as others? “That persecution is there in the mixed countries of Europe, and even where the Popish is the major part of the inhabitants? See the Cantons of Switzerland, where, in many of the towns and villages, the Catholics and Protestants alternately use the same places of worship.

“But is not Popery always the same?” And is not Presbyterianism always the same? and does not the requisition of its formulary *enjoin* and *bind* all its true sons to do everything in their power to “root out and destroy all papacy and *prelacy*?” If some things are the same, others are not; and to these the former must bend, and by these they must be regulated. Why has not Popery for ages burnt any one for heresy? They *could* not do it; could not do it even in their most devoted realms. The force of opinion in time becomes more powerful than any law, than any authority. We may dare every Popish power to put one Protestant to death! The Heavens would reveal the iniquity, and the earth rise up against it, and ring from one end to the other with reproach and horror.

*Let us, Lastly, be concerned to make a right improvement of the subject.* And can we do this better than, First, in a way of thanksgivings to God; of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things, to whom be glory. From Him all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do

proceed. He turns the hearts of men to any particular purpose, and strengthens their hands for the enterprise. He furnishes the means, and the opportunities for employing them. He blesses the use of them, and insures their success. Let us not forget his works and the wonders which he has shewn us. Let us not induce him to complain of us as he did of Israel: "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what Balak King of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord." "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

"When we are rais'd from deep distress,  
His love demands a song;  
We'll take the tribute of our praise  
From Zechariah's song,"—

And say, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people—that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." And let our gratitude be not only practical, but fervent. Let it bear some proportion to the vastness of the excitement. What as MEN, as BRITONS, as CHRISTIANS, as PROTESTANTS, should we feel for such an inestimable blessedness as the Reformation we this day celebrate! Who can read Robertson's account

of this interesting event, in his History of Charles V., and not be grieved and offended at the cold manner in which this divine of the Scots Kirk, and this secret friend and admirer too of Hume the sneering infidel, relates what was enough to make an angel burn with rapture, and did inspire a seraph in flesh and blood—Yes, hear the language of the immortal bard who has furnished our isle and our world with its “sublimest song.” “When we call to mind at last, after so many dark ages wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the Church, how the bright and blissful Reformation, by Divine power, struck through the black and settled night of ignorance and anti-christian tyranny; methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears, and the sweet odour of the returning Gospel embathe his soul with the fragrancy of Heaven. Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the dusty corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it; the schools were opened; divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues. Then the princes and cities were seen trooping apace to the new-erected banners of salvation; and the martyrs, with the unresisted might of weakness, shaking the powers of darkness, and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon.” This is sentiment. This is language becoming the occasion.

Secondly, Let us improve it in revering and cherishing the memory of those who conscientiously acted, and suffered in this noble cause. We are too little sensible of our obligation to these excellent men. They laboured, and we have entered into their labours. And how *did* they labour? Well done, said the Sa-

viour, as he received them into the joy of their Lord, good and faithful servants, you have laboured and have not fainted.

Nothing offends me more than attempts to lower the reputation of any of these heralds and heroes of salvation. When a fine character comes before me, says a great man, I never take it to pieces. The reformers exerted themselves under many disadvantages, and were only men—but they were men of God, they were men of another world, they were men of faith, and of charity, and self-denial, and invincible fortitude. Placed in their circumstances, would you have done what they achieved? Would you have borne what they endured? “unto all long-suffering with joyfulness.” “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee. then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan!”—Why, the sneer of a neighbour, the laugh of a fool, the frown of a relation, the loss of a customer, this, this is sufficient to induce some of you to conceal your principles, or turn aside from the way of righteousness—But *they* resisted unto blood, striving against sin. *They* loved not their lives unto the death—

“Patriots have toil’d, and in their country’s cause  
 Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,  
 Receive proud recompence. We give in charge  
 Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic muse,  
 Proud of the treasure, marches with it down  
 To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,  
 Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass  
 To guard them, and immortalize her trust:  
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,  
 To those who, posted at the shrine of Truth,

Have fallen in her defence, A patriot's blood,  
 Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,  
 And for a time insure to his lov'd land.  
 The sweets of liberty and equal laws;  
 But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,  
 And win it with more pain, Their blood is shed  
 In confirmation of the noblest claim—  
 Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,  
 To walk with God, to be divinely free,  
 To soar, and to anticipate the skies,  
 Yet few remember them, They liv'd unknown  
 Till Persecution dragg'd them into fame,  
 And chas'd them up to heaven. Their ashes flew  
 —No marble tells us whither. With their names  
 No bard embalms and sanctifies his song:  
 And History, so warm on meaner themes,  
 Is cold on this. She execrates indeed  
 The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,  
 But gives the glorious sufferers little praise—”

Shall this be the case with us? a let us embalm  
 their memory in our bosoms! Let us read—what  
 can be more edifying?—their history, their experi-  
 ence, their acts, their conflicts; and see how they over-  
 came by the blood of the Lamb and the testimony  
 which they held. Let our souls cling to their names.  
 Let us inscribe beneath their prints, “of whom the  
 world was not worthy.” Let us mingle our spirits  
 with “the noble army of martyrs,” “who came out  
 of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made  
 them white in the blood of the Lamb.” “Let us not  
 be slothful, but followers of them who through faith  
 and patience inherit the promises.”

Thirdly, let us not commemorate the illustrious  
 event in any manner unbecoming it. I am sometimes  
 dreadfully afraid of the Popery of Protestantism.  
 God's work requires to be done in his own way. Our

cause is wise; let us not “take to ourselves the instruments of a foolish shepherd.” Our cause is good; let us not belie it by “an evil spirit.” Popery may be opposed in the very temper of Popery. Into what fierceness, and folly, and falsehood have some been hurried! “No faith is to be kept with heretics.” Abominable! “No,” says Dr. Dopping, Bishop of Meath, boldly from the pulpit, “No faith is to be kept with Papists.” What we imitate we so far justify and commend, The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. The meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ do not require or admit a pen dipped in gall, or a tongue set on fire of hell. “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” What is the command of our Leader? “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.” What was his practice? “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Make what allowances you can for the persons whose errors you condemn. Remember the prejudices of education; and how very much there is in the antiquity, and the universality—once, and the splendour, and address to the senses and imagination, in Popery, to fascinate and impress, Judge not the heart. Decide not on motives. Impute not consequences to principles, which their professors deny and abhor. Let us recollect, also, that to insult is not the way to

convince. "He that winneth souls is wise." Let the persons we would reclaim see that we love them, and are really concerned for their welfare; and, by our example as well as by our admonitions, "shew them a more excellent way."

Let us, however, Lastly, improve it by practice and progression; endeavouring to carry on the cause, and to follow up its principles. And is there nothing to be done? Is there nothing to be done in Ireland, that beautiful and interesting, but degraded, suffering, and distracted country? Say not, they have an endowed Establishment already. What has this Church done? Has it subdued, has it reduced, has it counteracted Popery? Have they not themselves complained of an increase of the evil? It is hoped and believed that this Church is at length bestirring herself; and that many of her ministers and members, and not a few in the upper ranks of life, are not only believing the truth, but feeling *now* the importance and worth of her doctrines. But "yet there is room" for a thousand other instrumentalities and co-operations. And why are they so sparingly afforded? While so much is done, and commendably done, for foreign objects, why is so little raised by all our religious communities here, to aid the sister island? Have persons less claims upon us, because they are not only our fellow-creatures, but fellow-subjects, and placed more easily within the reach of our kindness and zeal?

But to come nearer home. Is there nothing to do in our *own* respective communions? Have *we* no errors to correct? No imperfections to lament? Have we no forms of godliness without the power? Have we no preferences of "the man with the gold ring

and the goodly apparel?" Have we nothing exclusive and illiberal? "Mr. Prejudice," says Bunyan in his Holy War, "fell down and broke his leg: I wish," adds the fine dreamer, "he had broke his neck." Is there no bigotry amongst us?—At the first meeting of the London Missionary Society, a divine, now with God, said, "we are attending the funeral of Bigotry." But if it was so, it certainly came to life again; or its ghost has appeared often enough since. What is bigotry but the ape of Popery; or a species of persecution, ashamed, or afraid, or unable to act? What is High-Churchism, but Popery in the bud, or in the embryo? I know excellent Churchmen who are not bigots; they have their convictions and their preferences (and who would forbid these to any man?); but it is no part of *their* religion to condemn, or *even unchurch* others, But he who deems it sinful to enter any place of worship but his own; or treats it as a most lamentable offence, that one of his own flock has, once in his life, communed at the table of a brother, as much "holding the head" as himself, and differing from him only in non-essentials; or who refuses or murmurs to bury a child baptized by a dissenter, or not baptized at all; or considers all other churches but his own as unscriptural, and all the administrations of ordinances in them as invalid; let him rail as long and as loud as he chooses against Popery, be assured he is a Papist at heart and in principle. Liberty of conscience is his grievance. He would willingly recall it if it were in his power, and let loose the dogs of war, or employ the fetters of spiritual despotism. He secretly calls for fire from heaven; but the comfort is, there is no one there to hear him.



Elizabeth said to some of her Bishops, (for she had said before, "I who made you can unmake you,") "When you dispute against the Papists you are Puritans; and when you dispute against the Puritans you are Papists." So it is, and so it must be in all such arguings, till persons get down from a narrow edging bank, where it is not easy to balance themselves between two ditches, and get upon firm broad ground, where they can defend themselves without danger of slipping, and make full use of their weapons, and also walk at liberty. And this is the ground selected by Chillingworth—"THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE ALONE is the religion of PROTESTANTS."—That excellent work, the *Christian Observer*, in the last Number, reviewing the disputes among the Quakers, remarks, that "the only solid basis of scriptural union, in any body calling itself Christian, must be the *essential verities* of our holy faith, and not the *exclusive* habits of a sect." And why cannot this be extended to all bodies calling themselves Christian in their relation to every other?

Let us all individually inquire—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Surely some things are within our power. Let us pray that God would send out his light and his truth, that all flesh may see his salvation together. Let us pray that He would pour out of the spirit that animated the Reformers upon all Protestant states and churches, and especially those abroad, in many of which there is such an awful departure from evangelical purity, zeal, and doctrine.

Let us be anxious and active to maintain and recommend those glorious truths for which the Reformers lived and died, especially the doctrine of the

atonement, so well expressed, as they contended for it, in the words of Dr. Watts—

“The death of Christ shall still remain  
*Sufficient and alone.*”

They considered justification by faith as the main article of a rising or falling Church: and no less value and influence are attached to it in the sacred writings. And here we ought to mingle with our concern thankfulness and joy, that this grand principle of Protestantism has been so blessedly revived in our own country, and is now preached by such numbers both in the Establishment and out of it, in all its fulness and glory. Surely this is a token for good. And O! shall we not hail afresh that precious Book, which this day three hundred years ago came forth in newness of life, and, like its Author, full of grace and truth! Blessed be God for a Bible *inspired*. Blessed be God for a Bible *preserved*. Blessed be God for a Bible *translated*. Blessed be God for a Bible PRINTED. Use it as God’s unspeakable gift. Search it. Meditate in it day and night. Bind it about thy neck; write it upon the table of thine heart: when thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

Men and Brethren, we have been speaking of the Reformation. But what is the Reformation to you if you are not reformed; yea, transformed by the renewing of the mind; yea, new creatures? for if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. If you live under a more privileged dispensation, so much the greater is your responsibility: and if it be not improved, your guilt will be

the more heinous, and your destruction will be the savour of death unto death.

The period is coming when Protestantism shall be reformed; when every plant which our Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up; when "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound;" when "for brass," says God, "I will bring gold. and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

We go further. The Church in her noblest state while in this world, will only be comparatively perfect, What will it be when the Saviour shall present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing! Then we shall have, in quality or in consummation, new faculties of soul, new powers of body, new employments, new enjoyments, new companions, new residences. He that sitteth on the throne saith, Behold, I create all things new. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

And here I should have closed, having trespassed

already so much upon your time: but it is a singular circumstance, of which I have been but recently informed, and it is too strikingly affecting to many in the presence of God to be passed over without notice—That this very day is the forty-sixth anniversary of the opening of this sanctuary. To no one in this large assembly can this event be more interesting than to him who is now addressing you. He was the only minister employed in the services of the dedication. He was soon after called to take the charge of the church and congregation; and here he has been, labouring with undiminished acceptance and attention during the whole of this long period—

“Many years have pass’d since then;  
Many changes he has seen—”

But his principles have not been changed. His opinions with regard to many things may not be the same now as formerly; but those doctrinal views which he professed when he came among you, have rather increased than diminished, in his conviction both of their truth and importance: and in the humbling review of many infirmities in the discharge of his office, he feels one unmingled satisfaction—a confidence that he has not shunned to declare all the counsel of God, or kept back anything that was profitable to his hearers.

These forty-six years have been very eventful ones with regard to the surrounding countries, our own nation, and the state of our churches. I have had a longer and a better opportunity of comparing and of judging than many; and I should belie my convictions if I did not affirm, that I believe genuine religion, has, during this nearly half a century, been amazingly increasing, and is now rapidly ad-

vancing, and will continue to extend, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas. The times may be troublous, but the walls of the temple rise. We may have our particular views of public affairs; but, as Christians, we should judge of our own concerns by a rule of our own; and deem those the best days in which the best cause flourishes most. Our faith does not allow our hearts to tremble for the ark of God. He who died on the cross, and is now on the throne, shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.—He will draw all men unto him.

How many, during these forty and six years, are gone the way of all the earth! How few of those who heard the first sermon within these walls are now hearing the same lips that delivered it! How many of your dear connexions have I wept over at the grave's mouth, with whom we once took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God in company! But I rejoice others have risen up to succeed them; and instead of the fathers I see the children, and hear them resolving, "we will not forsake the house of our God."

The place was not opened for sectarian purposes, but to aid the common cause of Christianity. It was opened to proclaim and perpetuate the GLORIOUS DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION. May it be said, "when the Lord counteth up his people, that this and that soul was born there!"

Peace be within these walls, and prosperity within this palace. "For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."



**THE CHRISTIAN:**

A

**SERMON,**

DELIVERED AT

THE INTERMENT

OF THE LATE

MRS. MARIANNA HEAD,

IN THE

BAPTIST MEETING, BRADFORD,

MARCH 1, 1832.

TO

Miss MARIANNA JANE HEAD

THE ONLY SURVIVING GUILD;

TO

Mrs. JANE BLATCH,

THE ONLY REMAINING SISTER;

AND TO

ALL THE RELATIONS AND FRIENDS OF

THE DECEASED,

**THIS SERMON,**

DESIGNED TO DELINEATE HER CHARACTER.

AND TO IMPROVE HER DEATH,

IS,

WITH MUCH RESPECT, INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR

*BATH, AUGUST 29. 1833.*



## THE CHRISTIAN.

*"A CHRISTIAN."*—I PET. iv. 16.

WHO are they that principally occupy the pen of the biographer and allure the attention of readers? Travellers, painters, poets, scholars, orators, philosophers, statesmen, princes. All these have their respective and comparative claims, which we by no means wish to deny or undervalue. But, my brethren, we are going to bring forward a character this morning, often indeed, like the original, "despised and rejected of men," but superior to them all, and great where they are nothing, great in the sight of the Lord, great in the dissolution of the universe, great in the annals of eternity—a CHRISTIAN.

The exemplification will naturally lead me to call the attention of this large assembly to this little tenement of clay, or rather towards the owner of these mortal remains, who has now ascended to her Father and our Father, to her God and our God. Preachers, on such an occasion as this, often feel an embarrassment between the convictions and dictates of their own consciences and the wishes of friends and relations. Hence some ministers decline all funeral discourses. But this is a resolution we by no means approve. For such events are capable of improvement by the attention they excite; and the

preacher is not compelled to indulge in a strain of improper eulogium; and without glorifying the individual, he may glorify God in him. Yet some persons not only distress their ministers while living, but perplex them when dead, There are things to be admitted which cannot be denied, and which cannot be approved; some things are to be concealed; some to be excused; some to be explained. But a preacher is happy when, like him who addresses you this morning, he has nothing to confess, nothing to omit, nothing to defend, nothing to palliate; but where, without pleading for perfection, or denying the infirmities inseparable from humanity, every bosom will echo back the motto we have chosen, and say "a CHRISTIAN."

Let us therefore consider—

First, the *origin* of his name.

Secondly, the *commonness* of the appellation.

Thirdly, the *real import* of the title.

Fourthly, the *privileges* attached to it.

Fifthly, the *obligations* it imposes.

And, a God, fulfil thy promise—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Amen.

First, then, Let us consider the *origin* of the name.

Now we learn from the sacred history the very place where the name was first imposed—"And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Before this they were called by their adversaries "Galileans," "Nazarenes," "people of this way," "this sect:"—and, among themselves, they were called "brethren," "saints," "believers," "the faithful," "disciples." But now they were called Christians, and the name has continued ever since.

It was common for the followers of the various classes of philosophers to call themselves and to be called after the names of their founders and teachers, such as Platonist from Plato, and Epicureans from Epicurus, and Aristotelians from Aristotle, and so of the rest. Here was therefore only a conformity to a general usage. But a question has arisen which has always served to divide expositors—namely, whether this title was given them maliciously by their enemies, or whether it was assumed by themselves under a Divine direction? Perhaps it is impossible absolutely to decide this; neither is it necessary or important. Against the probability of the former, we have the authority of Robert Hall: and it is no easy matter to think for one's self in the presence of such a mighty mind. He alleges, that if the designation had been derived from their enemies, they would have given the disciples a more opprobrious name. But to this we reply that the thing was impossible—there was no being more obnoxious to all parties than Christ and him crucified. He was to the Jews "a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." He had been called a demoniac, a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sin-

ners, a blasphemer of Moses, a rebel to Cæsar; and it would then have scandalized a man much more to be called after the name of Christ, than to be called now after Paine, Despard, or Robespierre, or any other wretch who finished his days on a gibbet.

Who can estimate the influence of a name? "We see the force of it formerly in the words Lollard, and Puritan, and Quaker; and latterly in the term Methodist. The enemy is aware of the power of a name; he well knows that the multitude in all ages are more governed by words than by things; and therefore he caused the disciples to be called Christians. But the Apostles and their followers, so far from considering themselves as degraded by it, owned the distinction, and rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer shame for his name.

It must, however, be acknowledged that the advocates on the other side are powerful. These are their arguments—That the name was of importance—that much depended on the appellation and the retention of it—that it was very instructive and useful—that the disciples had always been accustomed to inquire of God in difficult cases—that this, in the instance before us, could easily be accomplished, because there were many prophets in this very church—that the original term rather favours a divine interposition—and that this seemed to be only the fulfilling of a prophecy in Isaiah—"And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name."

Let us pass from the origin of the name to consider,

Secondly, the *commonness* of the appellation. Of this we may take three views.

First. In one respect the commonness is astonishing, and should be convincing. "We may say to an infidel, Pray how came this name to be so general as it now is? The Founder—we now refer to his humanity and humiliation, and the argument requires such a reference—He, the Founder, was a poor man, a mechanic in a village. Foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but he had not where to lay his head. He had received no university education. He was brought up at the feet of no Gamaliel. The people, therefore, said, "How knoweth this man letters, never having learned?" It was said of him, "the common people heard him gladly;" but "have any of the rulers believed on him?" The chief ministers in his new empire were a company of fishermen from the lake of Galilee. His kingdom itself was established on the destruction of every worldly opinion and passion. When we consider the nature of the doctrine the Apostles preached; the difficulties they had to overcome, in the profligacy of the multitude, in the subtlety of philosophers, in the covetousness of priests, in the persecution of magistrates; and when we consider their entire resourcelessness, what can be more astonishing than that this name should have spread so rapidly from province to province, and from country to country, till before the termination of the third century it had reached the boundaries of the unwieldy Roman empire; and has since far surpassed them, and is now advancing towards the ends of the earth? Gamaliel alone furnishes us with a rational clew when he said, "If this counsel or this

work, be of men, cit will “come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” “It is the finger of God.” “The thing proceedeth forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” Not that the success of a cause is always the proof of its divinity, as we see in the case of the false prophet. It is indeed a very mysterious thing in the divine proceedings that Mahomet’s name should have spread so widely, and have continued so long: but there is no mystery in the fact itself when you come to consider the means by which it was spread, the nature of the system, and its adaptation, not to the wants, but to the follies and wishes of those to whom it was addressed. Besides, it is to perish; and as it was established only by human power, when this is withdrawn—and how easily may it be withdrawn!—it already shakes to the basis—it will perish, but “*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 blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.”

Secondly. In another view the commonness is delightful, and we cannot but wish the, name was more common. We wish that it prevailed exclusively of every other. We wish no other had ever obtained in the world. We wish the church would even now, if it were possible, fling off every other; and we hope that this will be the case by-and-by, when the pristine glory of Christianity shall revive, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. It is an idolatrous homage paid to any man

to call ourselves religiously after him, as Calvinists after Calvin, Arminians after Arminius, and Baxterians after Baxter. If I must have a human appellation I will go back at once to Apostolic times. I will call myself a Johnite from John, or a Paulite from Paul—But no. “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” No—I will be called by no human name; no, not even if it be an inspired one. I will not in religion be derived from a servant, but from the Master himself. I remember his own command, “Can no man master on earth; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.”

Thirdly. In another view, the commonness of the name is humiliating and lamentable, Let me explain this. The word Christian was *once* very significant and discriminating: but, alas! now, in numberless instances, it has lost all its distinction. “Whom does it now comprehend? All mankind with the exception of Pagans, Turks, Jews, and Infidels. It takes in all others; it is now a kind of geographical distinction rather than a religious, France is a Christian country, Portugal is a Christian country, Spain is a Christian country, Italy is a Christian country, England is a Christian country,—and England, blessed be God, *is* a Christian country, comparatively. But a Christian country is not a country of Christians; and, therefore, the term, even among us, includes numbers who are swearers, and drunkards, and sabbath-breakers, as well as numbers who, though not distinguished by any gross vice, yet are perfectly opposed to the spirit and genius of

Christianity in their principles and tempers. Often, therefore, now, it means nothing, yea, it means worse than nothing; it is even injurious by its familiarity. Men are easily deluded in their own favour; they easily imagine they are, what they are called; and, having the name, they infer they have the thing, especially when there is no one to dispute their title. Multitudes of these *Christians* would be offended if you were to withhold from them the name; but yet, if you were to call them saints, or the sanctified, they would be still more surprised and mortified: and yet a saint and a Christian are the same persons, according to the language of the New Testament; and the Apostle assures us that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

You will remember that when our Saviour saw Nathanael coming to him. he said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” By calling him an *Israelite* he distinguished him from other nations,—by calling him an Israelite *indeed* he distinguished him from his own, “for all were not Israel who were of Israel.” There were many who were the children of Abraham by birth, who were not the children of Abraham by faith, and therefore the Apostle says to the Romans, “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Now let us just change two words, and then we may address the passage to numbers now.—He is not a *Christian*, that is one outwardly; neither is that *baptism*, which is



outward in the flesh: but he is a Christian, which is one inwardly; and baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

And now, my dear hearers, the business grows more personal; and I must come to close quarters with you. I must “commend myself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God;” and speaking as a dying man to dying men, I must urge the words of a very serious admonisher—

“Let us ask th’ important question,  
Brethren, be not too secure;—  
What it is to be A CHRISTIAN,  
How we may our hearts assure?  
Vain is all our best devotion,  
If on false foundations built;  
True religion’s more than notion  
Something must be known and felt.”

Let us, Thirdly, consider the *real import* of this title, CHRISTIAN.

It is obvious that a Christian is one who has a *relation to Christ*—not a professed, but a real relation—not a nominal, but a practical relation—a relation rising above every other connexion—spiritual in its nature—never-ending in its continuance—and implying the derivation of everything from Christ. Beware, let me beseech you to beware of a Christianity without Christ! It will only be a stream without a fountain, a branch without a living stock, a body without a soul—Beware, “beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men. after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are com-

plete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

A Christian is a *learner of Christ's doctrine*. In all systems there are some common principles; but my professing what is common in the system of a master does not entitle me to be named after him. My believing with a Socinian that there is a God, and a future state, and a resurrection of the dead, does not render me a Socinian; but my believing what is peculiar in his creed, that Christ was a mere man, that he came by ordinary generation, that he died only as an example, or a witness. Deism has some principles in common with Christianity; but my believing these will not constitute me a Christian, but my holding what is peculiar to Christianity; and this is to be found only in the Scriptures. There a Christian searches for his creed—there he kneels before the oracles of divine truth—there he takes up his principles, and says, these, however mysterious they may be to my reason, these, however repelling they may be to the pride of my heart, these I take up on the authority of Him who has revealed them—I sit with Mary at his feet—I pray by his Spirit to be led into all truth—and to be able to say with John, “We have an unction from above, and we know all things.”

A Christian is a *lover of Christ's person*. This attachment is deservedly demanded by everything in him, and by all that he has done and suffered for us. Paul describes the subjects of divine grace as those “who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:” and so far was he from supposing that a man could be a Christian without this love to Christ, that he says, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,

let him be anathema maranatha." Christ was himself the essence of humility, and yet he had such a consciousness of his dignity, and of his claims to the subjection of the heart, that he said, "he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." To them that believe he is precious: how precious it is impossible to describe or conceive; but every Christian loves to read of him, loves to hear of him, loves to speak of him. To him his name is as ointment poured forth. He delights to hold communion with him. He values everything according to the degree of its connexion with Christ.

A Christian is a *copier of Christ's example*. Without this in vain you contend for his truth, and talk of your regard to him; "he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked." In all things, indeed, he has the pre-eminence; but Christians are said to be predestinated to be conformed to his image. He had, indeed, the Spirit without measure; but a Christian possesses the *same* Spirit, for, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." We must, therefore, if we are Christians, resemble Him "who went about doing good,"—who said, "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,"—"who pleased not himself,"—who, though "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," "in the midst of the Church sang praises unto him." Again, I say, we are no further Christians than as we are like him, and have the same mind in us which was also in him; and I am sure I express the experience of all Christians when I affirm, that there is nothing more painful to them than their want of more conformity to Christ. They know that they shall hereafter be like him completely, for they shall see

him as he is; but there is nothing they pray for with more earnestness than a growing resemblance to him now—

“Be thou my pattern—make me bear  
More of thy gracious image here.”

A Christian is a *dependant on Christ's mediation*. He rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh. He comes to God only by him, and he looks for the acceptance of his person and services only in him. While he makes mention of his righteousness only, he also goes forth in his strength. He feels that, whatever be his own convictions and resolutions, he cannot stand longer than *he* holds him up, nor walk farther than *he* leads him on: but, at the same time, he sees that there is an all-sufficiency in him for every duty and trial; and while he believes that without him he can do nothing, he believes that through his strengthening him he can do all things. And as he begins his course in this way, so he continues it. However advanced he may be in the divine life, yet he acknowledges himself an unprofitable servant, and looks for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life—

“The best obedience of my hands  
Dares not appear before thy throne;  
But faith can answer thy demands,  
By pleading what my Lord hath done.”

A Christian is *an expectant of Christ's coming*. He said unto his disciples when he was going to leave them, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” His people believe this, and therefore they are described as now looking for him—“To them that look for him will he appear a second time without sin

unto salvation.” The influence of this faith produces a marked difference between them and other men. *They* are from below—a Christian is from above. A Christian views his present possessions and enjoyments, whatever they may be, as only the accommodations of a passage; he feels and acknowledges himself to be a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth; his treasure is in heaven;

“There his best friends, his kindred, dwell,  
There God his Saviour reigns;”—

he cannot therefore be happy unless he is there too, for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. Jesus knew this disposition, and therefore he said, “Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am to behold my glory.”

Such, in brief, is a Christian—He is altogether related to Christ—he is a learner of his doctrine—a lover of his person—a copier of his example—a dependant on his mediation—an expectant of his coming—This is a Christian.

Let us, Fourthly, observe his *privileges*. But what is the preacher to do here? Is he to repeat the language of Scripture, and talk of the “riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints”? Is he to repeat with Paul, “If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ”? Is he to say with him, “All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s”?

We read of some, God forbid that this should be your case, who have their portion in this life: and

Scripture, and all history, and all observation, and all experience, tell us what it is—"All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Whereas there is attached to the portion of a Christian, eternity, immensity; and, therefore, it is said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

I hardly suppose this will be deemed satisfactory. Yet what else can I do, unless I consider his privileges in two divisions, two parts—grace and glory; the present and the future—which yet are necessarily and intimately connected, and run one into the other? David combines both, when he says, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel; and afterward receive me to glory." He refers to the future when he says, "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!" and to the present when he says, "which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men." Here he speaks not only of what God has laid up, but what he has laid out j not only of what the believer has in expectation, but in experience. Even now he is pardoned. Even now he is justified from all things. Even now he is renewed in the spirit of his mind, Though at present he does not rest from his labours, he finds a rest in them. Though he is not yet come to the promised land, he has reached Elim, where are twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm-trees. He is yet in the desert. but he is not alone there; there he has the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; there he has the mercy-seat, and the manna, and the water from the rock, and some clusters of the grapes of Eshcol. Take a

Christian *now*; take him in his communion with his fellow-creatures; take him in his religious exercises; take him in his meditations, in his reading the Scriptures. in prayer; take him at the table of the Lord; take him as he comes from all these, and he can look a gainsaying world out of countenance; he can sing—

“The men of grace have found  
 Glory begun below,  
 And heavenly fruits on earthly ground  
 From faith and hope may grow.”

Even this is too general and unsatisfactory. To see a Christian to advantage, we must contemplate him in some peculiar positions.

We must see a Christian in *youth*. What so pleasing and engaging in this world as a young Christian! “I love them,” says the Saviour, “that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me”—find me,—for this is the meaning,—as others never will, as others never can, find me.

“’Twill save you from a thousand snares  
 To mind religion young;”—

It will not only preserve you at a period when so much depends upon every step you take in life, but it will also lay a foundation for a course of eminence, and excellence, and usefulness. It is a hellish proverb, that “young saints make old devils.” Look at history,—think of Joseph, and Samuel, and David, and Timothy, and a countless number more,—and you will see that “young saints make old angels,”

To see a Christian to advantage, you must see him in his *solitude*. A man is really as to happiness what he is alone. Some of you seem cheerful enough in

public, and in your jovial circles; but were you excluded from these, and compelled to retire and think, your pleasure would dissolve like snow in the sunshine. But a Christian is never less alone than when alone. He is not, indeed, satisfied with himself, but he is satisfied with his company; he can say with David, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake I am still with thee." "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."

To see a Christian to advantage, you must take him in *prosperity*. The prosperity of fools destroys them. Their table becomes a snare. They are drowned in their honey. They forget the God that formed them. They fall, as the Apostle says, into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown them in destruction and perdition. But it is otherwise with a Christian. *He* is taught and enabled to view his possessions as talents to employ and improve. *He* knows that with regard to all he enjoys, he is only the steward, and not the proprietor. He receives it as from the hands of his heavenly Father; and regarding his temporal comforts as flowing from covenant love, he enjoys a relish in them to which all other possessors are strangers. O how his pleasure is increased and sanctified while he sings—

"He sunk beneath our heavy woes  
To raise us to a throne;  
There's ne'er a gift his hand bestows  
But cost his heart a groan".



To see a Christian to advantage, you must see him in his *adversity*. Others are invaded with evil, as some of you well know; but the eternal God is not their refuge. Others have their trials oppressing them; but the everlasting arms are not underneath them. Others may have their lamps blown out or burnt out, but then all is darkness,—darkness that may be felt,—there is no Sun of righteousness to arise with healing under his wings. It is otherwise with a Christian: “To the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.” In times of commotion the Christian can say—“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” In circumstances of destitution he can say—“Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” His crosses are without the curse. All the sufferings that befall him are divinely appointed; and all are made to conduce to his spiritual and everlasting welfare.

To see a Christian to advantage, you must see him in *death*. Other troubles may come, death must come. And how will you meet it without Christ? What is it, at this awful hour, that makes the difference between a Christian and a man of the world? The man of the world may sicken in a fine

mansion, and he may languish on a bed of down, and have more attendants than a real Christian. What then makes the difference? The Christian may have the disadvantage as to all external things; but *he* has Christ,—he has a friend born for this adversity,—he lays hold of his dear arm, and, descending by a gentle flight of steps, says—

“By long experience I have known  
Thy sov'reign power to save;  
At thy command I venture down  
Securely to the grave,”

“Oh!” said Marshal, when he was dying, “I cannot say I have so lived as not to be afraid of death, but I can say I have so learned Christ, that I am not afraid of death.”

You must see a Christian, if you would see him to advantage (and you will all see him in this position by-and-by),—you must see him *before the judgment-seat of Christ*. He will have confidence. and not be ashamed before Him at his coming: he will lift up his head with joy, for *his* redemption draweth nigh. He knows that Christ is his brother; he knows that he who died for him is to judge him. “Oh!” says he, “he who has been everything to me before, will be everything to me now, He my surety will say, I will be answerable for him. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that wed, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

We have to glance, Finally, at the *obligations* of a Christian, A Christian is not like the heifer spoken of by Hosea, who loves to tread out the corn but not

to break the clods, A Christian is not averse to the word duty, or an enemy to the thing itself. With him spiritual duties are spiritual privileges. He is not, indeed, always free and lively in the exercises of religion, but still there is something in his views and dispositions congenial with these exercises; so that he feels them to be his element. Other persons regard spiritual duties as medicines, and take them to keep off danger; the Christian finds them to be his food, and says with the Saviour, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work."

What, then, is the duty of a Christian? You cannot imagine that in the concluding part of a single division of a single discourse, I am going to describe all his obligations; in this respect the whole Bible only would be an answer to the inquiry—I wish only to refer to the obligations a Christian owes to the character itself.

Are you then a Christian? You are under an obligation to be thankful. You were not a Christian by nature, but by the grace of God you are what you are, It is not from a want of candour, but from a regard to truth that we say, comparatively, there are not many real Christians—but the wonder is that there are any. Considering the depraved state of the human race, there would be none, but for the purpose and grace of Him who has said, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." And, therefore, it becomes you to exclaim, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory, for thy mercy

and for thy truth's sake." For if you are now nigh, you were once afar off; if you now see, you were once blind; if you are now alive, you were once dead in trespasses and sins.

Are you a Christian? You are then under an obligation to glory in the distinction. It is very affecting to read ecclesiastical history. In some of the earlier periods when Christians were arraigned before human tribunals, the process was very short. "Art thou a Christian?" "Yes." "Away with him to the lions or the flames." Could you have returned such an answer, foreknowing the result? Have you not often endeavoured to hide your religion? Have there not been places and companies in which you have been afraid to have your conduct and your principles known? A Christian, says Young—

"A Christian is the highest style of man;  
And is there who the blessed Cross wipes oft  
As a foul blot from his dishonour'd brow?  
If angels tremble, 'tis at such a sight."

When you look at toads and vipers, do you blush to think that you are a man? Is a scholar unwilling to be known? Is a Prince ashamed of being acknowledged as the King's son? Peter was ashamed of Christ and denied him; but where was Peter when he denied him? He was in apprehension for his life, and life is dear; "skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life." Are *you* exposed to a stake, to a prison, to the spoiling of your goods? Where was Christ when he denied him?—At the bar of Pilate, and just going to be crucified, But where is he when *you* deny him?—At the head of the universe, "the Lord of all."

Are you a Christian? You are under an obli-

gation to walk worthy the vocation wherewith you are called. There are some who seem not to be ashamed of Christ. but they are a disgrace to him, and cause the worthy name by which they are called to be blasphemed. We have many of these in our day. The son of Scipio Africanus resembled his father in nothing but his name, and was only distinguished by vice and cowardice; yet he always wore his father's picture, But what did the Roman Senate? They passed a decree that he should not be allowed to wear and disgrace it. Alexander, also, said to a man in his army whose name was Alexander, "Change thy name or be a soldier." And what says the Apostle?—"Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Consistency requires of you nothing less than this, but it requires much more; it requires. not only that you should cease to do evil, but that you should learn to do well; it requires that you should not only be "without offence," but "adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things."

Are you a Christian? You are under an obligation to regard properly all your fellow Christians. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren," Whenever you see a real Christian, though he may be a Dissenter and you an Episcopalian, though he may be sprinkled and you dipped, you see one that is more nearly related to you, and who ought to be more endeared to you, than any other connexion on earth. You are not in the possession of the temper of a Christian unless you can say, "I am a companion of *all* them that fear Thee,

of all them that keep thy precepts." What are the differences that are found among real Christians but the distinctions of the members of the family in age, stature, and dress, while all are the children of the same father? Though now the corn of the kingdom grows in various fields, severed by walls and by hedges, at harvest when it shall be cut down and gathered in, no inquiry will be made to ascertain where it grew. The question hereafter will not be *where*, but *how* you have worshipped. There is no such command in the Scripture as take heed *where* you hear; but there is a command to take heed *what* you hear, and take heed *how* you hear, The nearer we approximate the spirits of just men made perfect, the more perfect we shall be ourselves; but with them all the differences which now divide the religious world are done away.

If you are a Christian, you are under an obligation to endeavour to make others Christians. Thus Andrew, as soon as he had found the Messiah, went and told his brother Simon; Philip, as soon as he had found the Messiah, went and told his friend Nathanael; and the woman of Samaria, as soon as she had found Him, went and told her neighbours; and thus many were brought to Jesus. All usefulness dignifies a man; but you may become the honoured means not only of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, but even of teaching transgressors God's ways and of saving souls from death. You need not despair of accomplishing this, unless indeed you undertake it alone, and not in the strength of the Almighty and relying on his grace. Christians, the day is coming when from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same his name

shall be great among the Gentiles. If you are a Christian indeed, you will rejoice in the prospect. You will long to see his word have free course and be glorified. You will long to see our churches full; and the last wish of your heart will be breathed out in the exclamation—

“Let him be crown’d with majesty  
Who bow’d his head to death;  
And be his honours sounded high  
By all things that have breath.”

You who are blessed should prove blessings, You are the persons upon whom we most hopefully depend, You are the most likely to prevail upon others. You can speak with confidence and feeling. You know the wretchedness of a state without Christ; and you know the blessedness of being in Him. Follow, therefore, the example of the first Christians, and say—“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

It will now be expected that I should take a respectful notice of the estimable friend whose death gave rise to these reflections. To her I am persuaded every individual here present will readily apply the epithet “a Christian”—yea, and apply it pre-eminently too—for “one star differeth from another star in glory.”

Of the particular manner in which Mrs. Head became pious, I have not been informed: her religious privileges in early life were probably the means. She could trace back decided piety in her family through at least three generations. One of

her ancestors was the friend of the celebrated John Bunyan. This was Mr. Richard Gay, who lived at Hay Combe, a small village near Bath, when he preached the Gospel before any Baptist Church was formed in that famous city.

She was the friend of the pious Theodosia, and of her father, Mr. Steele, the last of that name who was Pastor of the Church at Broughton, in Hampshire. There she was baptized September 17th, 1769; and she never removed from the church she then entered, though she married and settled, and lived and died in this town; and though she was seldom able to unite in worship with it corporeally, she felt the most lively interest in its successes and trials.

All the partakers of divine grace have not had a lengthened opportunity to evince and exercise their religious principles: but Mrs. Head died not prematurely; she was gathered home in a good old age, like a shock of corn fully ripe in its season, She had reached her ninetieth year; and by far the greater part of this extended period she walked in the way everlasting, in close fellowship with God, and in all his commandments and ordinances blameless.

Many run well for a time, but are hindered; if they do not tarnish their profession and turn again to folly, their love waxes cold, and they forget their first works. But Mrs. Head retained the dew of her spiritual youth; and brought forth fruit in old age. Meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light increased with her days, and her graces became more vigorous under the infirmities and decays of nature; as it was with the first Christians, who could say, "our outward man perisheth, but the inward man is renewed day by day."



I need not remark how highly she was respected in this town and neighbourhood, or how much her judgment was valued, and her advice was followed. She had the power of doing good, and the will to use it. To many of the public institutions, religious and charitable, she contributed; and, in addition to their claims, she was constantly administering to cases of private and occasional distress. Indeed, benevolence and beneficence constituted one of her most distinguishing features. Her natural kindness became a habit by practice and a grace by principle; and I cannot but remark from her example, that if a decent distinction from the vulgar, and an elegant simplicity, instead of a vulgar and wasteful profusion, would satisfy many professors of religion, liberality would have many more resources than it now has; and we should not so often hear, as the ground of refused applications, "I really cannot." Mrs. Head viewed every degree of property as a talent. Her conscience continually heard the command, "occupy till I come." Instead of reducing her means by folly, dress, luxury, and self-indulgence, she preserved and enlarged her enjoyment of doing good. No one was less ostentatious; but though she never wished her left hand to know what her right hand was doing, the benefactress could not be hid. When the eye saw her, it blessed her; and when the ear heard her, it gave witness unto her: the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon her, and she caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

Even when young she exercised her medical skill towards many of her poor neighbours in the village where she resided, and her judicious and timely ap-

plications were very beneficial in removing complaints and preventing expense, in those who are so unable to pay, especially when unable to labour. Nor were her salutary attentions confined to the indigent: her connexions at large shared her tenderness and exertion. Wherever calamity or disease was known, her hasty feet soon took her to the house of affliction and the chamber of sickness; and, not content to be a spectator, she was occupied day and night in devising and applying means of relief or comfort. The authoress to whom we have already alluded was visited by her in a very dangerous illness, and after her recovery she thus addressed her devoted friend:

“Yet, next to Heaven, to Friendship’s honour’d name  
 The lay which grateful love inspires is due;  
 With lenient hand she nurs’d the vital flame,  
 When, faintly glimmering, it almost withdrew:  
 Heaven smil’d indulgent on *her* tender care,  
 Bless’d were her efforts—answer’d was her prayer,”

Of some it may be said, “at what time they wax warm, they vanish;” but Mrs. Head was as firm and constant in her attachments as she was sincere and fervent. When did she ever abandon a connexion, or was ever deserted by one? She had her own religious convictions, and adhered unwaveringly to them; but who was ever more candid towards those who differed from her? Her hospitality was not sectarian: her door was open to members of every denomination holding the Head. She always carried about a heart that cried, “Grace be with *all* them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;” and stretching forth her hand towards his disciples of every name, she said, “*Whosoever* shall do the will of my Father

who is in Heaven. the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

I have seldom seen a person of more lowliness of mind, or more disposed to consider others better than herself. She was not a gaudy tulip, catching the eye of every passenger; but the violet, which loves retreat, and betrays its residence by fragrance rather than show. She was “clothed with humility,” and had the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Her complaints, and confessions of unworthiness and unprofitableness, were not the artifices of religious affectation: they were the unavoidable feelings of her heart, while judging herself by a high standard of obligation, and feeling the impulse of great and heavenly desires.

Hence self-inspection occupied much of her care, and she examined herself faithfully, not by the opinions of her fellow-creatures concerning her, but by the judgment of God, and weighing her motives as well as her actions. Few I believe heard or read so much for *themselves* as she did. Most of the passages which she has marked in her favourite authors are such as bear upon conscience, and shew that she was more ready to censure than to flatter herself. She dreaded above all things self-deception: she was therefore often inquiring of the spiritual friends and teachers she confided in, what were not only the tests of a *safe* state, but of a heart that was right in the sight of God: and had it not been for a very sound understanding, her moral anxieties would have issued in the scruples of squeamishness, and tenderness of conscience would have degenerated into weakness.

No one loved the house of God more than Mrs. Head, or was more regular in her attendance while the privilege was in her power. Many are fond of the temple of God, who think little of the God of the temple; but *her* concern was to appear before God, and to see his power and his glory in the sanctuary. Many attend the public services of religion who never retire; but she much frequented her closet, and always found much to do alone. In her, one duty never clashed with another, much less hindered it. Her religious engagements never drew her off from the claims of her household. Wisdom is profitable to direct; and she possessed the wisdom of the prudent, which is to understand *their* way. By economy she learned to redeem time; and early rising enabled her to arrange her affairs before many of her fair contemporaries had left their beds. Thus she had time for her private devotion. for her daily avocations, for reading, and for the pleasures and improvements of intercourse and friendship.

Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth: and our departed friend was exercised with sore troubles, first of a relative nature in the loss of her affectionate husband, in the death of a beloved and pious son, killed by an awful accident,\* and in the removal of an attached daughter, who died in the faith of Christ in the midst of her days;† secondly, of a personal quality, in the privations of occasional deafness, and of entire blindness for some years before her death; and in long confinement to her dwelling. in which she was made to possess months of vanity, and had

\* See the Appendix, 1.

† See the Appendix, 2.

wearisome nights appointed unto her. The passive graces are harder to exercise than the active. It is often pleasing to exert ourselves, and always gratifying to excite notice and praise; but to exist rather than live, to drag on a dull sameness of being from week to week, and from year to year; to feel inefficiency for any important purpose, and depend in helplessness on the attentions of others for support and comfort amidst depression of spirits, and languor of frame, and frequent aches and pains:—here is the patience of the saints; here is the triumph of godliness!

In this case I have had opportunity of observing, as well as of learning; and nothing appeared to me more perfectly to characterize her temper and demeanour than the words of David when he said, “I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me, Let thy loving-kindness, I pray thee, be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.” “Blessed be God,” she would often say, with Burket. “the time of affliction is no unprofitable time; no inconsolable time. It is an awakening time; a thinking time; a teaching time; a reproofing time; a weaning time.” “Blessed is the man whom the Lord correcteth.” “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” Yet she was always praying against impatience; and afraid lest she should not glorify the Lord in the fires.

It would follow from hence that, whatever had been her experience and expressions in her last days and hours, nothing would have lowered the opinion of any of her connexions concerning her. But with such characters, whatever have been their previous doubts and fears, in general “at evening-tide it is

light." "The righteous hath hope in his death." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." Such was peculiarly the closing scene here; and the glory into which she was entering beamed through the rupture of mortality upon her departing spirit, And here I do not refer to consolation only, but also to principles associated with it, and which proclaimed that her comforts were "the comforts of the Holy Ghost." What a growing regard to the Saviour did she feel and express! How glorious did he appear as the great High Priest in his sacrifice and intercession! "I count all things," she exclaimed, "but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. He is fairer than the children of men. He is all my salvation and all my desire."

Her anxiety for the rising generation was great: and how earnestly did she implore those who approached her to remember their Creator in the days of their youth; expressing the satisfaction it afforded her in having been led to seek Him early; and that her mind, even in her infancy, had been stored with psalms, and hymns, and passages of Scripture, which she still recalled with renewed impression! She often expressed her concern for the Missionaries, and for the spread of the Gospel. The cause of Zion had been always near her heart: all her springs were there.

A few specimens of numerous and striking utterances we can only repeat. The Sabbath previous to her release, that delightful psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," was much in her thoughts; and she repeated. "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;" and with a

peculiar emphasis, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

With much earnestness she repeated, after many expressions of confidence in God,

"Thine earthly Sabbaths, Lord, we love;  
But there's a nobler rest above;  
To that our labouring souls aspire,  
With ardent pangs of strong desire.

"No more fatigue, no more distress,  
Nor sin, nor hell, shall reach the place;  
No groans to mingle with the songs  
Which warble from immortal tongues."

Waking after a slumber, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God—"

"Be still, my heart; these anxious cares  
To thee are burdens, thorns, and snares;  
They bring dishonour on thy Lord,  
And contradict his gracious word."

"All my times are in his hand." "I shall be satisfied when I awake with his likeness." "My heart and my flesh faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." "Though undeserving of the crumbs that fall from his table, he has fed me as a child with the rich provisions of his house, O I want to tell of his power and compassion to me in every time of need through a long-protracted life."

On Tuesday, the day of her death, among other things worthy of remembrance, she said, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On thy kind arm I fall;  
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus and my all."

“I am poor and needy,” ‘yet,’—said one, ‘the Lord thinketh upon you.’—“Yes, yes,” she replied; “and will never leave me, never forsake me.”

Here her power of communication ceased; but her lips moved, and her hand, with tender pressure, evinced her consciousness and consolation.

And now the first object I have to address is the only surviving child of this CHRISTIAN. You, my esteemed friend, always felt the sentiment of the Poet,

“A mother is a mother still,  
The holiest thing alive.”—

Since the death of your brother and sister the care of this precious deposit devolved exclusively on you; and you have discharged your trust with an affection the most tender, and a vigilance the most unceasing. You have rocked the cradle of her age who rocked the cradle of your infancy—

“Who bore you, and who bred,  
Nurs’d on her knee, and at her bosom fed.”

Your long and close attentions have been attended with sacrifices, but they have been voluntary ones; they have been pious ones; they have gained you the commendations of the wise and good; they have been followed with the approbation of conscience, and the smiles of God. You have been his appointed instrument, a ministering spirit to this heir of salvation; and by you He has comforted this sufferer upon the bed of languishing, and made all her bed in her sickness. You are now in the state described by David—a state the most touching and afflicted; “as one that mourneth for his mother.” But though you mourn over such a mother as few



have been favoured with, yet you sorrow not as others who have no hope. You know that your loss is her gain—

“All her sorrows left below,  
And earth exchanged for heaven!”

I need not say, call her often to remembrance, and maintain communion with her spirit. You have many mementos of her left behind you. You have seen her a widow indeed, trusting in God with all her heart, and unrelaxing in her endeavours to promote the welfare of her children, and above all restless, but as she had reason to hope that they were found in Christ, and that Christ was formed in them. You remember her morning and evening blessing, her judicious counsel, her tender sympathy, her constant solicitude, her admirable example. You remember the rooms in which you sorrowed, rejoiced, read, conversed, and prayed together—where you found a sanctuary from the tumults and follies of the world—the house of God—the gate of heaven. You have witnessed her mental exercises in seeking Divine strength and guidance; her deep humiliations before God; her penitential breathings; her devoutness of spirit. And you will not forget the encouragements she administered in prospect of your bereavement; how she said, “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will he comfort you;” “the eternal God is your refuge;” your “shoes shall be iron and brass, and as your days so shall your strength be.” Trust, therefore, in the God of your beloved parent. Daily feel that you have now another powerful attraction in heaven. Seek those things that are above, where she now is; and re-

member the separation is but partial and temporary. the moment of re-union is on the wing; you will soon see her face, and hear her voice again, and be for ever with her, and for ever with the Lord.

The death of parents is peculiarly striking, even in addition to the excitement of natural affection. While either father or mother remains alive, there seems something between us and the foe; but when each of them is removed we seem no longer in the second but foremost rank, and more open to the next assault. The event, therefore, should lead to serious reflection, and every such bereaved individual should appropriate the acknowledgment, "I know Thou wilt bring *me* to death, and to the house appointed for all living."

Here are other relations, some more near, and others more remote, who, I am persuaded, feel it an honour to be allied to all this departed worth, As far as I have the pleasure of an acquaintance with them, they are, if not equally, yet like-minded, in Divine things, with the deceased. If there should be any that is not, (and something more than amiableness and morality is here necessary,) may the death of the saint prove the life of the sinner. If any should be thoughtful, yet undecided, may they no longer hesitate, but make this the hallowed morning in which the heart shall be surrendered, saying, "Lord, I am thine, save me."

You, the minister, and the people of your charge, with whom she was so long connected, you have lost one of your brightest ornaments and most useful members: and though for some length of time she was not able to attend your public services, she ac-

accompanied them with prayer; and though absent in body, was present in spirit, and cheerfully aiding you in all those offerings which the cause of Christ requires. Perhaps, my brother, you feel what I often feel at the mouth of the grave of my members, (how many excellent ones have I interred!) a jealousy lest my burying-ground should become richer than my church. But with Him is the residue of the Spirit; and we rejoice to see others hopefully rising up, and coming forward to the help of the Lord, who shall be a seed to serve him, and be accounted for a generation, when the clods of the valley will be sweet about many of us,

Here are spectators; and while many are drawn from regard, others have come from curiosity, to see and remark the circumstances attending the funeral of a neighbour. But the grave into which you are now going to see this corpse laid, is also your destined abode, and is ready for you. You are accomplishing as an hireling your day, and the services now performed for others will soon (and who can tell how soon?) be required for you, O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you considered your latter end! O that I could send you home praying, with Moses, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

And now, Saviour Jesus, we turn to thee. In all the defections of creatures, thou art "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Among all the wrecks of mortality, thou art the resurrection and the life. We bless thee for thy goodness towards the deceased. We glorify thee in her. We acknowledge that by

thy grace she was what she was. May the prayers she offered for us in the days of her flesh be answered. May we follow her even as she also followed thee; and not only imitate, but surpass her excellences. Be with us through all the changes to which we are exposed. May we die the death of the righteous; and may our last end be like hers.

## APPENDIX TO 'THE CHRISTIAN.'

## I.

**M**R. GEORGE HEAD, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, was a young man of great excellency. He possessed good talents, and had feared the Lord from his youth. His acute sensibility of mind, his extreme conscientiousness, and his fear of self-deception, rendered him occasionally liable to lowness of spirits, and religious depression; but his heart was right in the sight of God, and filled with holy zeal and benevolence.

His concern for the salvation of sinners, and for the spread of the Gospel, was great and incessant. He was much struck with the moral condition of our Sister Island; and it would not perhaps be too much to consider him, under God, the originator of the Baptist Irish Missionary Society. He wrote several letters anonymously, and addressed them to an influential quarter, proposing the formation of such an institution; and stimulated and encouraged the undertaking not in word only.

He was never more in his element than when he was doing good. On the morning of his death, he had gone over to a neighbouring village to endeavour to reconcile two individuals who had been at variance. He had succeeded according to his wishes, and was returning; but as he mounted his horse, the animal started: he was thrown to the ground, and, after a few hours of unconsciousness, expired! Is it true, That the path of duty is the path of safety? That in keeping his commandments there is great reward? That blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God? *It is true.*

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
 And scan his work in vain;  
 God is his own interpreter,  
 And he will make it plain.”

The explanations of Heaven and of eternity are yet to come.

2.

MISS ELIZABETH THEODOSIA HEAD died January 14th, 1825. At her funeral the author preached a sermon to a very crowded assembly, from the close of which the following reflections are taken:—

I have been furnished with no particular account of the commencement of her religion, nor did I deem it necessary to inquire after one. The change from night to day, and from winter to summer, is real and great; yet the transition is not traceable like the results. We behold in the economy of nature no sudden changes, but the workings of things one into another gradually and imperceptibly—imperceptibly I mean, not in the effect, but in the progress. Why should not spiritual changes have the evidence of analogy? In how many cases is there nothing in the process of conversion definite enough as to time, and place, and manner, for narrative! And it is with the consequences we have to do. We know that, however the principle is produced, if it leads to God, it comes from him. That which is of the Spirit is spirit; and it is sufficient to be able to say, “whereas I was blind, now I see; whereas I once had a heart of stone, I have now a heart of flesh, and can feel the things that be of God.”

For a similar reason, we lay not so much stress as many do on the last sayings of a death-bed. These may be influenced by the nature of the disorder, or the state of the imagination. I have known some persons whose religion I rated very high, who expressed themselves in their last

moments with little confidence and joy; and when elevated frames and triumphant effusions are not preceded by a *way* of which they seem to be the natural and scriptural *end*;—when the death, instead of being the *conclusion* of the life, is the *reverse* of all that could have been inferred from it, though we should never speak without caution, and we are not to limit the Holy One of Israel, the Scripture says, “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of *that* man is peace.” “The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the *righteous* hath hope in *his* death.”

Yet where the character and the conduct, allowing for unavoidable infirmities, have evinced a dedication of heart and life to the service of God, it is pleasing and encouraging to find the Lord honouring those who have honoured him; to see how, after doing his will, they have been supported in suffering his pleasure; and after their practice has said, “For me to live is Christ,” to hear their last comforts proclaiming, “To die is gain.”

And so it was, in no ordinary degree, in the case before us. Everyone, in proportion as they knew her, could say, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,” Integrity and uprightness preserved her. The love of truth seemed in her innate. The love of Christ was shed abroad in her heart; and as he was all her salvation, so he was all her desire, her glory, and her joy. The Scriptures were her delights and her counsellors. She loved the habitation of God’s house; and no excuses detained her from beholding the beauty of the Lord, and inquiring in his temple. Nor did the closet bear less witness to her communion with her God than the sanctuary. But her religion was not *confined* to those seasons and ordinances which are designed to *increase* it. She did not, like many, rest in them as an end, but used them as means—means of grace—by which supplies of wisdom, strength, and con-

solation are afforded, to enable us to exercise godliness in all the concerns of life.

The religion of some good people is not only defective, but deformed: to imperfections they add disagreeableness; they repulse rather than allure. But the deceased was one of those who pursue whatsoever things also are lovely and of good report; and who are concerned not only to maintain, but to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

Her natural disposition was sweet; and the grace and peace of God which ruled in her heart refined and principled that amiableness, that readiness to please, that obvious preference of the accommodation of others to her own indulgence, which attracted and attached all around her: for, let the rude and stern, and the lovers of themselves, say what they please, "He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable of God and approved of men." Had she not been benevolent and beneficent, she would have been an exception to the character of her family; but it was both her employment and enjoyment to devise liberal things, and administer to the relief and comfort of others.

Zeal was added to charity, How concerned she was for the instruction and improvement of the rising generation the sable appearance of this infant crowd will testify.\* She was sorrowful for the solemn assembly, and the reproach of it was her burden: but how rejoiced was she when the word of God had free course and was glorified! With what deep interest did she read the accounts of the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad! Not many hours before her departure she exclaimed, "Be good to the missionaries—O pray for the dear missionaries."

Now let us look and see whether the promise be true,

\* A large number of the Sunday School children, surrounding the coffin in the table-pew, all dressed in mourning.



“I will be with thee in trouble.” In the first part of her illness, which confined her for some weeks to a bed of languishing, she was highly favoured with Divine consolations; but as she seemed to be coming back to life, her views became more clouded; and the subsequent darkness of her mind led her to fear that all her former hopes were delusive. She experienced a temporary doubtfulness whether God would ever appear to her joy again; and this in review afflicted her mind, as if she had distrusted his faithfulness and goodness. But by comparing herself with David in the 77th Psalm, she followed him out of his despondency, and entered into all his better feelings, when he confessed that his suspicions were only his infirmity, and was enabled to say, “I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.” From that time she could say, “He setteth my feet upon a rock, and establisheth my goings.” Her confidence in God was never allowed to be shaken again; and the suitableness and fulness of his promises tranquillized and sustained her mind even before those richer indulgences were, realized which glorified her last hours.

The “full assurance of hope” is not the only or principal thing to be sought after in the dying of a Christian. We love to see not only confidence, but humility and penitence. We love to see the man of faith in godly sorrow at the foot of the Cross bewailing his vileness, confessing his unprofitableness, and looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. We love to hear the patience that cries, “Not my will, but thine be done;”—the gratitude that owns, “He hath not dealt with us after our desert;”—the regard for the Saviour that speaks well of his name, recommends his service, and prays, “Let the whole earth be filled with his glory.” And it was the combined influence and display of all these that made the late dying scene inviting and impressive;

so that a friend who witnessed it could well say, "It was enough to make the privileged observer in love with death."

There were few promises but at one time or another, she did not remember and repeat. Through her whole illness she seemed peculiarly impressed with the words, "I press towards the mark, for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Much of her language was not taken down at the time; and I shall not be able to use all that has been furnished me. These were a few of the utterances of the heart:—"Into thine hands I commit my spirit"—Sweet to lie passive in his hands, and know no will but his, yet having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Yes, it would be far better to go than to live"—Yes, to live afflicted as you have been through the past year, said one; but if health should be granted with life, would it be better then to go? "O yes, better than life with health and every other endowment." "Eternal rest! eternal purity! to be for ever with the Lord"—This she again and again repeated—"and to be without sin and to see Him as he is;"—"Christ in me the hope of glory." When any nourishment was brought her, she would say—

"There's not a gift his hand bestows,  
But cost his heart a groan"—

All has been forfeited by sin—

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

When her sister was attiring her, "O to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven." Speaking of absent friends, "Give my love to them all: love is the state of Heaven, and I love all I know on earth," When asked whether she did not wish to be restored for the sake of her dear parent, she answered by repeating the lines—and said, "Let me repeat them loud enough to be heard—

And down to old age all my people shall prove  
 My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
 And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,  
 Like lambs they shall still on his bosom be borue.”

At another time, looking towards her enfeebled mother, she has said, “I will not leave you comfortless’—Trust in the Lord for ever.” And to her sister, “He will remember you; O let me go—let me go; take me—who is to take me?

‘Jesus, lover of my soul,  
 Let me to thy bosom fly.”

The last Sabbath-day morning, when weak and fainting, “Light affliction, and but for a moment; and working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory’—

‘One gentle sigh their fetters breaks’—

‘The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;’—‘Where I am, there shall also my servants be.’” The last day in which she could speak she spake of the blessedness of Heaven. “He is gracious, very gracious,”—these, with an affectionate inquiry for the welfare of her connexions, were her last words.

Blessed be God for another testimony that there is a reality, an excellency, an efficiency in the religion of the Cross! “O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

There is *one* deeply concerned in this event, who must be made the subject of tender reference only, as she cannot be present to be the object of address: She has taken leave of the house of God below, and is waiting to enter the temple above, never more to go out, I mean the mother—the afflicted mother—the aged mother, in whom the keepers of the house tremble, and they that look out of the window are darkened, and the doors are shut in the

streets, and fears are in the way, and the grasshopper is a burden—the widowed mother, and who has long been a widow indeed, desolate and trusting in God, and continuing in supplications and prayers night and day—the bereaved mother, bereaved before of an only and worthy son, the manner of whose death, added to the lass, and now bereaved again of a daughter, whose care and delight it was to attend her tottering steps, and who has now but one child left, whom God for her sake, for the sake of others, preserve! Let me claim on the behalf of this mother your sympathy and prayers, while she is now saying in the house of mourning—“Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth.”

But others can be *addressed*. Here are before me various relations of the deceased. May you, imbibe her spirit, and follow her steps; and may none of you be found weeping and wailing when you shall see her and others of your pious kindred in the kingdom of God while ye yourselves are shut out.

Some of you are young; but death does not go by seniority. Then we should have had before us the parent instead of the child; and how many fall before they reach the age inscribed upon this coffin! Give yourselves to God, and you are prepared, my friends, for every event. If you die young, early death will be early glory; if you prolong your days, his grace will be sufficient for you; and, looking back to your present services and sacrifices, he will say, “I remember thee the kindness of thy youth.” If the departed, instead of being cut off in the midst of life, had been spared to the age of her mother, would she have repented of serving God too soon or too long?

As to *you*, her sister, her beloved sister, what shall I say to you? You have grown up together, you have never been apart; you have taken sweet counsel together, and gone to the house of God in company; together you have

walked the fields, and explored the abodes of want and misery; there has been no secret between you, and no strife but which should most dutifully discharge the claims of filial piety. What wonder that you feel the wound grievous that has separated such friends! But how *are* you separated? The connexion is not dissolved, though now it is invisible—

“The saints below, and all the dead,  
But one communion make;  
All join in Christ their living head,  
And of his grace partake.”

How separated? You are partakers of the same faith, you approach the same throne, she in praise and you in prayer; absent in body, you are present in spirit. How separated? Weeping may endure far a night, but joy cometh in the morning. The few hours of absence are over, and she has received you into everlasting habitation. Wherefore return to your mourning mother, and comfort one another with these words.

But, my *dear children*, I cannot forget you. Indeed, few sights could affect me more than to see you all thus attired by the bounty of the bereaved family; and I am persuaded many of you at least have not only the attire but the feelings of little mourners. I see your eyes turned towards this coffin—ah! it contains your friend, your teacher, your benefactress;—she who gave so many of her hours to your improvement—she who, though not a mother in nature, was a mother to many of you. We are now about to lay her in yonder grave, around which you are going to stand and sing the words which have been printed as a memento for you. I dare say, my dear children, you would grieve if you thought you had ever displeased her; and would do anything in your power if you supposed it would give her pleasure now. I am not sure that she is ignorant of your present state and conduct; but this I

know, that your good behaviour and improvement will please her mother, and sister, and minister; and it will please the Lord whom the deceased so much loved, and who put it into her heart to regard you. And though *she* is dead, *He* lives, and will be your friend if you seek him; for he still says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

But are we not *all* addressed? Should not every instance of mortality in others remind us of our own? "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." And need you be told that while you are unpardoned and unrenewed you are just as near to hell as you are to death? Can you bear to think of the consequence of dying in your sins? Who knoweth the power of his anger? "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And can you be happy without some hope that you are prepared for a world on the borders of which you must know you perpetually stand? Could anything add so much to your satisfaction as to be able to say, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory"?

Be ye, therefore, ready. Prepare to meet thy God, And what is that preparation?—for "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."—And what can equal the disappointment of a man who drops from the expectation of heaven into the depths of hell? What, then, is that preparation which will enable you to meet death with safety, if not with joy? The voice from heaven tells you—"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Therefore, said Paul—may you all make the sentiment your own—"That I may win Christ, and BE FOUND IN HIM." Amen.

**CONSOLATION IN DEATH:**

**A SERMON,**

OCCASIONED

BY THE DEATH OF MRS. ELIZA BERRY,

WIFE OF THE REV. JOSEPH BERHY;

AND PREACHED IN THE

**COMMON-CLOSE, MEETING, WARMINSTER.**

MARCH 1, 1812.





## CONSOLATION IN DEATH.

*“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”—Ps. xxiii. 4.*

COMPARISON is a method of instruction the most easy, pleasing, and impressive. Hence it has been adopted in all ages, and in all countries. The sacred writers peculiarly abound with it. They always express spiritual subjects by natural ideas; and hold forth things unseen and eternal by means of those which are seen and temporal.

To aid our acquaintance and communion with God, he has condescended to reveal himself under every relation and office that can awaken our attention, and encourage our hope.—Thus he calls himself the SHEPHERD of his people; and the Psalm before us is a beautiful commentary on the character.—Happy the man who can say, “The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters”—Here David views himself as in a state of prosperity, peace, and pleasure, enjoying every advantage the most favoured situation could afford.—But to rejoice in such indulgences had nothing remarkable in it. He was a man of too much reflection to conclude that a scene so gratifying would continue always, or continue long. He knew the instability of everything human. He knew that he was liable to wander, and

would often need restoring grace—"He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." He knew that he was mortal, and looked forward to a dying hour—at once foreboding the worst, and exulting in it. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

It will be necessary to consider three things.

I. A *condition* supposed—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death."

II. A *confidence* of mind in the contemplation of it—"I will fear no evil."

III. The *foundation* of the fortitude—"for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

I should always have deemed these words worthy of your attention, but they have this morning been chosen for me; and will in future be additionally endeared to many in this assembly, as containing the experience and the desire of our dear and invaluable friend, MRS. BERRY. But, before I bring her character more prominently forward, and in order to bring it forward to advantage, I shall attempt to illustrate, as briefly as I am able, the doctrine of our text, according to the arrangement proposed.

FIRST, then, David speaks of a passage deep as a valley, dark as a shadow, and dreadful as death, It means—a state of affliction—of danger—of terror. It means the approach and the state of dissolution—it means the passage that unites this world and the world to come: "Yea, though I walk through the

valley of the shadow of death," This is the condition he supposes: and the supposition is—

First, natural. The reason is, because the event itself is unavoidable. We can think of many journeys which we may never accomplish: but we must all travel this dreary road: it is "the way of all the earth." By the reduction of the term of human life, a century now sweeps the globe, and dispossesses of its inhabitants every cottage, every mansion, every palace, every temple. By the universality of the appointment the world is delivered from the foolish and the vain, from the wicked and the vile, from the troublesome and the mischievous, from the plagues and curses of the community—but then it also takes away the wise as well as the ignorant, the good as well as the evil. the useful as well as the injurious; private and public benefactors; those who have turned many to righteousness, those who have saved states, those who have adorned families—and often, according to the estimations of reason, those are removed first who can least be spared. The supposition is—

Secondly, useful. Death is not only an inevitable, but a momentous event; and it is well to realize it. The thought of it is indeed irksome to the man of the world, who has his portion in this life, and possesses no hope of a better; he therefore always endeavours to keep it, or to banish it, from his mind. And, if your putting the evil day far off was putting it away, the practice might be justified. But the destroyer of the Gentiles is not even to be diverted; and during every moment of your forgetfulness it is approaching you. And what if, coming suddenly, it finds you sleeping? A Christian should never be surprised in death: neither should he leave things un-

arranged and unexecuted which will throw him into tumult, and induce him, when the summons arrives, to pray for protraction; "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more."—"Familiar thoughts," says Young, "will slope the way to death:" so that when you come to the end of your travels, you will find, not a precipice, but a gradual descent.

There are some cases in which the anticipation of death will be found *peculiarly* proper. For instance: it is peculiarly proper when a fondness for the world creeps upon us. David often refers to the subject of mortality in the Psalms, and applies it commonly as a cure for the pride of life, for man is prone to walk in a vain shew, But, says he, how humbling is the reflection! Do they trust in their "wealth and boast themselves of the multitude of their riches? None of them can by any means redeem his brother; nor give to God a ransom for him that he should still live for ever and not see corruption, *Is he* in honour? He abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish, *Is he* a prince? His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his dust—in that very day his thoughts perish," It is peculiarly proper when sickness invades our frame, For what is every bodily indisposition and infirmity, but, according to its degree, a gentler or a louder knock at the heart, saying, "Behold the judge standeth before the door"? In this state Job was, and, reckoning on the tendency of his disease, said, "I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." It is peculiarly proper, when "the almond-tree flourishes, and the grasshopper is a burden, and desire fails, and man is going to his long home," pressed down by the weight of years,

and ordered to contemplate the grave, whither he is *hastening*.—And O! how peculiarly proper is it when we see our neighbours, friends, and relatives withdrawing, and we follow them with weeping eyes! When we are committing to the dust the remains of our dear connexions, should not a solemn awe come over our minds? Does not their mortality remind us of our own? Can we help retiring, and saying, “Ah! soon, in a scene like this, I shall be the principal figure. All these sad ceremonies will be performed for me. And while my body returns to the dust as it was, my spirit will return to God who gave it.”—

Thirdly, the supposition is modifying. Let us observe what David says of the prospect.

—He calls it the valley of the *shadow* of death. Can the shadow of a sword wound? Can the shadow of a lion kill?—Jesus endured the reality, for he bore our sins in his body on the tree. It is not therefore without reason that the Apostle so frequently varies his expression when speaking of Christ and of Christians. He *died* for us, that, whether we wake or *sleep*, we should live together with, him. If we believe that Jesus *died* and rose again, even so them also that *sleep* in Jesus shall God bring with him. Hence our Saviour said to his hearers, “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”—What? Do not his disciples die as well as others? No. “There is one event, indeed, to the righteous and to the wicked;” but death comes so changed, so softened, so blessed to the believer, that it does not deserve the name—call it a removal, a departure, a sleep—call it anything but what would so misrepresent it—death. “He hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.”

David speaks of *walking* through this valley. Some are forced through. The wicked, says Solomon, are *driven* away in their wickedness. He shall be *driven*, says Bildad, from light into darkness, and *chased* out of the world. Some are carried through. These are the deluded, who presume that all is well, while all is ruin: who have no bands in their death, and whose strength is firm: who die like lambs, and become the prey of the devil and his angels. But the believer *walks* through. He is not compelled; and he is not merely passive. He has something to do there: he has graces to exercise, and duties to perform there: and having honoured God by the life he has led, he is also concerned to glorify him by the death he shall die.

David speaks of walking *through* the valley of the shadow of death. He does not wander there; does not remain there; does not perish there. We soon lose sight of the passengers. We cannot see their egress on the other side—but we know that when absent from the body they are present with the Lord. The cessation of their breath is the signal of their escape: and as soon as we discern it, we exclaim—“They are happily over. They have reached the borders of Immanuel’s land. They are singing as they look backward and forward, ‘We went through fire and through water, hut thou hast brought us out into a wealthy place.’”

SECONDLY, Here is a confidence of mind in the contemplation of this condition: yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, “I will fear no evil.”

This confidence is not *easily attained*. We have

asked the question—Can the *shadow* of a sword wound? Can the *shadow* of a lion kill?—And we readily answer—no. But the shadow implies the substance. The sword, the lion whose shadow we stand in cannot be far off. This makes it trying. There is a reality somewhere: and some are exposed to it. And can we help asking with a shudder—Who are they? The very language of David supposes that there is much naturally in death to excite fear. And the wonder is, not that any should be afraid, but that any should be without fear. Even many of those who affect to be free from it are only imposing upon others and deceiving themselves. It is called the king of terrors, It is an untried state. No one has returned to tell us what it is. We must go through it alone. If others at the same time are passing it—and how many are passing every moment!—we cannot see each other, Death breaks off all the busy and fond purposes of the heart, It deprives us of all our temporal possessions and enjoyments. It breaks up the tender connexions of life. It separates between those intimate companions, the body and the soul. The forerunners of death are often dreadful—the sinking eye, the trembling limbs, the convulsions of pain, the mortal dew—

The pains, the groans, the dying strife  
Fright our approaching souls away;  
Still, we shrink back again to life,  
Fond of our prison and our clay.

When dead we become so offensive that our dearest friends bury us out of their sight: and we say to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister. When we reflect on all this, what wonder, if “we groan being bur-

dened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life"? In addition to all this we must observe, that death leaves one relation untouched, the relation of a creature to his Creator, of a subject to his Sovereign, of a criminal to his Judge: it translates us from a temporal to an eternal mode of being, from a state of action to a state of retribution—for "after death the judgment!" *And* who is not a sinner? Who has nothing to fear?

We would remark also, that this confidence is possessed by the subjects of divine grace in *very unequal degrees*. There is often a great difference in the constitutional firmness of men. One person shall tremble at the shaking of a leaf, while another does not shrink at the prospect of any danger. Some have clear views of the Christian's safety and privileges; the apprehensions of others, even with regard to the leading truths of the Gospel, are defective and obscure. Some have hardly faith enough to entitle them to the name of believers; others are strong in faith, rich in faith. Hence, some are "all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death," while others go on their way rejoicing in the Lord always; and saying, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"—And thus, when the last hour arrives, some meet death with rapturous pleasure; and some with tranquillity; while, in some, doubts and hopes alternately prevail.

Yet we would further observe, that this confidence *generally increases as the people of God approach death*. Hence, Isaiah compares their peace to a river: for as a river rolls deeper and broader as it hastens



to the sea, so their peace commonly becomes more solid and more extensive as they draw near eternity. In this view, the change which Doctor Goodwin experienced was remarkable. "Is this dying?" exclaimed he a little before he expired: "Is this what for so many years I have been dreading? O, how precious does the righteousness of the Saviour now appear!—He cannot love me better than he does; and I think I cannot love him better than I do." This is not a solitary instance. How many have we seen ourselves who wept upon the mountains of Zion, but rejoiced in the valley of the shadow of death; whose harps, long before hung upon the willows, were taken down, and delightfully used in singing the Lord's song, in the most strange part of all the strange land!

We cannot always account for things as effects, which yet we are compelled by observation and testimony to admit as facts. But the case before us sufficiently explains itself. The love of life, having from the will of God no longer now any purposes to answer, is suffered to die away. By drawing near the better country, he feels something of its influence, as the perfumes of Arabia the Happy are blown into the neighbouring provinces. Above all, there is now more of the simplicity of faith. During life, some degree of legality attaches to all his performances. Doing continually intermingles with believing: and often insensibly to himself he is anxious to make himself better, to *entitle* him to the Divine favour, or to find something in himself wherein to hope, if not whereof to glory before God. But all this is now over. What can he *now* do? What qualifications can he *now* acquire?—What attainments can he *now*

propose? "Let him look back upon a well-spent life." This is impossible. Every review he takes of himself is humbling. The very sins of his holy things would drive him to despair. One resource remains, one, only—one, which is always equal to our relief—one, whose consolation is only hindered from flowing into us by the want of *simplicity* of mind—it is looking by faith to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world; it is to commit implicitly a lost soul to him, saying—

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On thy kind arm I fall;  
Be thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus and my all.

Finally. This confidence is *enlightened and wise*. David's fearlessness was not apathy, He was a man of fine feelings. His imagination was lively. He was a lover of poetry and music. No man ever more bewailed his unworthiness and vileness; or was at times nearer despair, Neither did ignorance raise him above the fear of death, His courage was not the boldness of a man who shuts his eyes and can see no danger. The peace of many people will not bear reflection. It would die before thought, and therefore its aim is to elude it. But, whatever some may imagine, the religion of a Christian is not a mass of blind feelings. Ignorance is not the mother of *his* devotion. *His* privileges are not pictures of fancy. *His* joy is not the ferment of enthusiasm. *His* confidence results from just views of things: therefore it is said, "they that know thy name will put their trust in thee," *He* is able to "give to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him." Yes, he has *reason* to say—though I walk through the valley

of the shadow of death, "I will fear no evil"—for there is no evil in it. Yea, it has not only lost the power of injuring him, but obtained the power of doing him good. It is not only a conquered foe, but a most munificent benefactor, Hence, Doctor Gouge often said he had two special friends in the world, Christ and death; "Christ," said he, "is my first friend, but death is my second." And the Apostle tells us that "to die is gain." Now, the heir of immortality comes of age, and gains his inheritance. Now, the tempest-beaten mariner gains the desired haven, Now, the often-wounded soldier gains his victory and triumph. Now, the Christian, after all his struggles with darkness, sin, and sorrow, gains admission to a state of perfect light, and purity, and joy. His gain is everlasting and infinite; and, therefore, inexpressible and inconceivable: as it is written, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." But we go one step further; and say, that death is not only to the believer productive of advantage in the issue, but also admits of satisfaction and pleasure in the passage. And this has brought us to the—

THIRD division of our subject, and which leads us to observe the *foundation* of this fortitude: "For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Let us consider the reasons themselves, and the certainty of David's mind respecting them.

The reasons are two.

First, The Divine presence: "For thou art with me," He is everywhere by the immensity of his nature; but he is peculiarly with his people: "He

is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, he also will hear their cry and will save them," He is with his people in *every* state, he *never* leaves them, nor forsakes them; but he is peculiarly with them in *trouble*—and he is most peculiarly with them in *this trouble*. In none do they need it so much; for if He is not with us there, we must be alone; every other connexion then leaves us: if He is not with us there, we must sink; for every earthly dependence on which we have leaned then fails us. And, if in other cases the child of God cries with Moses, "If thy presence go not with us, take us not up from hence"—with what awful anxiety will he ask after this conductor, when he comes to the entrance of this dark valley, and looks in! In this position the sweet singer in our British Israel represents the believer, and puts this language into his trembling lips—

O, if my Lord would come and meet,  
 My soul shall stretch her wings in haste;  
 Fly fearless through death's iron gate,  
 Nor feel the terror as she pass'd.

Well, he indulges this unavoidable wish. He not only comes to the *other* side to receive us to himself, that where he is there we may be also; but he comes to *this* side—and accompanies us—he is with us all through.

The second is the Divine attention: "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." It would be trifling to give each of these terms a separate import. By an allowance, common in all language, but especially in eastern poetry, two words are used for the same thing. This thing means the pastoral crook: and the pastoral

crook means the pastoral care. This adds therefore to the former assurance. God will not only be with us, but as a shepherd—as a good shepherd, exercising the care we need in this unfriendly condition—and exercising it in such a way, as not only to guide and guard us, but to provide for us where there seemed to be no possibility of pasture to feed us—yea, to *comfort* us—Thy rod and thy staff *they comfort me*. It reminds us. of the language of God concerning his Church, in the second chapter of Hosea, and the fourteenth and fifteenth verses. “I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness”—and *there* she will surely be dreary and alone: *there* she must surely be destitute; she cannot look after anything like a garden in a desert; there she, will only nourish despair, or sigh in anguish: nay,” I will speak comfortably unto her: and I will give her her vineyards—from thence; and the valley of Achor—for a door of hope; and she shall sing—there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt,” Paul speaks of *strong consolation*: and it must be strong indeed, when affliction, however depressing, cannot subdue it, or death itself destroy or diminish it.

But could David reckon upon this? He could. He had no uncertainty of mind respecting either the presence or the care of his heavenly Shepherd. But whence did he derive this assurance, that enabled him to say, even in reference to the valley of the shadow of death, “Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me!”

It was derived first from the word of God, which cannot be broken, in which he has revealed his designs concerning us, and bound himself by the most

solemn engagements, all in unison with this promise; "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

And secondly, from his own experience. How often does he remember the years of the right hand of the Most High! How often does he remark what God hath done for his soul! How encouragingly and confidently does he reason from the past to the future; from what God had been to what He would be; concluding that He remained the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; would perfect that which concerned him, and forsake not the work of his own hands! "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings."—Such is the ground of the believer's hope; and *it maketh not ashamed.*

—But I forbear enlargement, in order to meet the eager expectation of this crowded assembly in noticing the event that has brought me hither this morning—an event which will afford us a better exemplification of our subject than any your preacher has been able to afford; and which cannot fail to strengthen our conviction that we are *not following cunningly-devised fables.*

I am not fond of funeral eulogies; and in the case before us, an attempt at panegyric is unnecessary if

not improper, as the deceased is already so well known, and so highly esteemed among you; and her character, like a beautiful form, would be injured, rather than benefited, by finery and paint. But from justice to my own observation, and to the competent and harmonious testimony of numbers who had better opportunities of remark, I feel myself compelled to say, that I consider Mrs. Berry not only as one of the excellent of the earth, but one of the most excellent—one of the most amiable, consistent, exemplary, edifying Christians, in every relation and office she was called to fill, that any of our churches could ever boast.

I never think it of much importance to inquire *how*; persons became religious, if it appears that they are actually in the possession, and under the influence, of it. The work must be of God, and the grand thing to ascertain is the reality of it by its effects. In many very eminent Christians the operation is very gradual, and attended with none of those remarkable circumstances which would form a narrative, The event that was chiefly instrumental in the conversion of our departed friend was the conversation of her very amiable and worthy brother-in-law. It is observable, that this friend to religion, at the same time, and in the same way, was rendered useful to her sister, who, after walking as an heir of the grace of life, died happy in the Lord Jesus. I mention this to excite and encourage religious conversation; and to enforce the words of Solomon—"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

The religion of Mrs. Berry was not only real, but peculiar and distinguishing; and there are several circumstances in her conduct, and several attributes in her character, which I wish to notice, as largely as the limits of our time will permit.

Piety is not always combined with gentility and talent. But Mrs. Berry was descended from a family of respectability, and had been favoured with the advantage of a good education. She possessed all the elegant accomplishments, and was company for any class of society. She had no ordinary share of mental discrimination and taste. Her remarks on books, and preachers, and characters, were always judicious, though never obtruded on others, or blended with ill nature and censoriousness. Her judgment concerning religion itself may be in a measure inferred from a single observation. Having some time ago finished a course of reading, part of which included Mrs. Rowe's Devotional Exercises, Williams's Diary, Garie's and Pearce's Memoirs, the Lives of Miss Anthony and Mrs. Bennet, and Brainerd, she said to her husband, "I think if a young person was to ask me where religion might be seen apart from the Bible, I would put into his hands the lives of her subjects. The lives of saints, indiscriminately, would not do, even supposing they could all be written, Nor would all those answer the purpose whose characters might be *irreproachable*. Religion herself is amiable and inviting. Attraction is her grand character. I would not put into such hands Mrs. Rowe's Exercises. Her religion is too much passion: she soars, and she flies, and is lost in her feelings. Brainerd was a holy man, and we cannot but revere his memory: still in all his religion there appeared that



melancholy tinge which was constitutional. Pearce was an amiable Christian; and so was Garie. But I think I should give first of all Williams's Diary. There I see a combination of grace and intellect. There is the whole scene displayed. There you have not the effervescence of religion only, but the Christian warfare. You witness all his infirmities, and you see in what way they were brought into subjection. You witness the tendency of his religion, and see him habitually rising towards God; but you see him also sobered by sense, and struggling with sorrow." When her husband asked, "But how does this accord with my Eliza's opinion, that the grand character of religion is attraction?" With an eye full of expression she promptly replied: "Is not the attraction of truth its unreservedness, its honesty?" Her opinion of authors was evinced in the selection which adorned her little separate study. Through a great part of the winter of 1810, she was an evening prisoner in her own house, and as at that time her children were too young even for maternal address, her time was principally spent in reading—especially in reading her Bible. Hence were derived her instructions, her reproofs, her hopes, and her joys. This book gratified her intellectual as well as her religious taste. How often at this season would she come down from her closet, and, embracing her husband, say, "Joseph, the Bible is my all. Its matter and its manner suit me, Its subject is good, and the treatment, if possible, makes it better. Modern ministers attend too much to style and phraseology; the old writers often attended to matter at the expense of language—my Bible regards both. I do not shut this

book, and say, O how tedious! or, O how superficial! It is *all* I want, and *as* I want it.”

The religion of this saint was not *occasional*; it did not depend upon particular seasons, and exercises, and occurrences. She was in the fear of the Lord all the day long; and acknowledged him in all her ways. No one loved the habitation of God's house more than she did, but her devotion was not confined to it. It was not roving and hearing religion. It appeared in public, but it lived in private—it was closet and family religion. It was not a thing separable from her, and which was sometimes assumed and sometimes laid aside; but it was a principle wrought into all her feelings, habits, and actions. Let me adduce a partial but interesting illustration. After the month of November, 1811, she scarcely ever went out. Her Sabbath-day evenings were employed in reading the Scriptures, and holding familiar dialogues with her three babes. After hearing them repeat a short prayer, and one of Watts's little hymns for children, she seated them each in a separate chair, while, with maternal simplicity and endearment, she heard and answered *their* questions, and proposed *her own*. Dismissing the two youngest to rest, the eldest (being now six years old) was retained up a little longer. With him, her constant Sabbath-day evening custom was to kneel and pray. At these periods she forgot herself in endeavouring to interest her boy. She would begin with prayer for his father, who at that precise period was preaching; then she would pray for her children, one by one. After mentioning their names, she either implored forgiveness for foibles, or expressed her gratitude that “the

great God had made them such good children." Taking this boy one day into the parlour, where she usually performed these exercises, his father asked him if his dear mother did not sometimes kneel with him and pray; with eyes instantly filled with tears, the little disciple artlessly replied, "Yes, father, mother used to kneel at *that chair*, and hold my hand, and pray for father that he may do good, and for me, and Henry, and for little Mary, and for all of us."—

O, ye mothers, sanctify your tenderness and your influence. How much depends upon your gentle and early endeavours! How often may you sow the seed which after a lapse of time shall revive and flourish, thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold! How often has a disobedient son been reclaimed by the remembrance of the eloquent tears of her who bore him, or the pressure of her trembling hand when delivering her dying charge! What did Mr. Cecil and Mr. Newton owe to the lessons their mothers taught them! What did Timothy owe to his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice! What did Samuel owe to Hannah! We know little of Jesse, but how often and tenderly does David in his devotions refer to his mother, and plead the relation in which he had the honour and happiness of standing to her—"Save the son of *thine handmaid*." "Truly I am thy servant, and the son of *thine handmaid*."—"I think," said this deceased mother about a fortnight before her death, "I think, in looking back on all these seasons, my sweetest exercises were with my dear boy on the Sabbath evenings:—The house was still: my babes were in bed: my husband was labouring for God in the sanctuary: everything aided and inspired devotion. I think my dear boy will never forget some of

these seasons any more than myself. O, my happy seasons with my infant son!" Similar to this was her attention to the religious welfare, as well as domestic comfort of her servants. She would often converse with them on the concerns of their souls, and administer reproof with mildness, or encouragement with tenderness, as their state required. The servant living with her at the time of her death remarked with tears, "That she little thought when she entered the family, that her master would have proved her spiritual father, and her dear mistress her spiritual nurse." But so it was. On the Sabbath-day evening it was common before prayer for the master to repeat the outlines of one of the sermons that day delivered, the mistress that of another, and the servant that of the third. Thus there was friendship to soften authority, and to sweeten subjection: while it insured subordination, it made them forgetful of dominion or dependence: it was a family of love.

Her *humility* was one of her distinguishing qualities. She was clothed with it. She had no religious ostentation about her. She was like the sun which is unavoidably and only seen in doing good: or the violet that is betrayed in its concealed retreat by its fragrance. She did not, like many, talk of her spiritual attainments, or say much of her experience. Neither was she always in company uttering expressions of her unworthiness and vileness—this she *felt*, and the sense of it *influenced* her; but, as Mrs. More observes, humility consists not in telling our faults, but in being willing to be told them; and, judging by this standard, it is to be feared the lowly complaints of many professors against themselves will be found to be, not only *less* than nothing, but *worse* than

nothing. The deeper the river, the more noiseless it rolls by; it is the shallow rivulet that breaks, and bubbles, and deadens your ears with its sound. Her intimate friends knew much that her common acquaintances never knew: her husband knew much that her intimate friends never knew: her God knew much that her husband never knew—her *life was hid with Christ in God*.

Let me remark another feature equally obvious in our deceased friend; I mean her *kindness*. This was a perpetual stream flowing from the fountain of a warm heart—

“Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,  
Which humour interpos'd too often makes.”

She was free from

“Temper flaws unseemly.”

She had “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” She listened to no backbiter. She spake evil of no man. Upon *her tongue was the law of kindness*. In doing good she was in her clement; and she not only seized, but sought opportunities to be useful. She loved the poor. She often visited them. She promoted no less than three charitable institutions in her own neighbourhood, and was secretary to them all.

Her *prudence* was pre-eminent. It appeared in all her conduct. She seemed intuitively to perceive all the proprieties of action in whatever combination of circumstances she was placed. But this quality is to be chiefly noticed in her as the wife of a minister. This I have always considered as one of the most difficult spheres for a female to fill up properly; but

she filled it up without *censure* and without *envy*. She had no heralds to carry and bring news respecting households and individuals. She had no *familiars* into whose possession she completely put herself, and who were privy to all her opinions; and though she had her select friends, they were chosen after slow and judicious observation; and in all her intercourse even with them, remembering her peculiar relation, she maintained a degree of dignified reserve. Often when sounded respecting the characters or actions of others, she would reply with a sweet smile in her face, "You forget that I am a minister's wife; she may tell her husband what she thinks and hears, but she must only tell his flock what is calculated to promote their peace." She never embroiled her husband in ecclesiastical contests; never urged him to look abroad after a more popular sphere; never stimulated him to exact more prerogative; never made him discontented by intimations that the respect shewn him was not equal to his claims. More than once, when he received an invitation to labour for a while in a much larger congregation, she has said, "My Joseph, let me beseech you to decline it. Many of our young ministers seem too eager to catch at popularity and to rove abroad. Let us be satisfied with the condition in which the Lord has fixed us. His eye is always upon us, and he regards not the splendour of the station, but the manner in which we discharge the duties arising from it." Though exceedingly attached to his company, she was not so selfish as to wish to detain him from his studies or his official work. She would often gently call him from his books and remind him that a minister was not only to read and

make sermons, but to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to speak a word in season to them that are weary.

Her attention to *order and regularity* was singular. Life with her was a system, and everything in it had its due time and importance. Hence she knew nothing of that hurry and fretfulness occasioned by omission and confusion. In her last illness she looked forward and arranged everything, however minute. On giving up her books as secretary, a few weeks before she died, her countenance was a true index of her mind; but when the different ladies (as temporary treasurers till an extraordinary meeting could be called) were gone; she exclaimed, "Blessed be my God for this. I should not have liked my husband or my children to have been reproached with unprincipled or inaccurate accounts; above all, I should have been sorry if the cause of my Jesus had suffered. Religion is with me a sacred cause, and concern for its honour in everything, little or great, a sacred duty.—Indeed there is nothing about religion little, because it *all* regards God." She examined all her papers, destroying those she did not wish to have preserved, and neatly folding up all the rest. An inventory of all the household furniture, and of all the children's apparel, was written by her and given to her husband—so that in a moment he could find everything he wished. She had cut with her own hand, and laid by in the same order in which it was to be used, work for, her dear little girl to sew for twelve months, to come. No circumstance connected with her funeral had she overlooked. And one thing in particular, as very characteristic of the self-possession which enabled her to provide for every case that could result

from her condition, I cannot forbear to mention. It was intended that she should have been buried in the vault under the communion-table. At the last administration of the Lord's Supper, her husband, struck with the thought that, when performing the next service of this kind, his beloved wife would be lying beneath his feet, was too much affected to proceed. She accidentally heard of this; and without consulting or informing him, she sent for some of the gentlemen belonging to the church, and expressed to them her dying wish, that she might be buried under the front gallery! Her wish was gratified.

Much I have remarked already, and yet I have much more which I wish to notice if your time would allow. Will you, my Christian friends, excuse me if I protract the service a little beyond the usual limits? We are not assembled on an ordinary occasion—I hope we are come hither to learn to die.

And O! what a death was here! Few, even among the subjects of Divine grace, have ever been so favoured in their last illness and their last moments. Those friends who had the best opportunity of observing, and on whose judgment as well as piety we can rely, have uniformly acknowledged that they never witnessed a scene so blessed, so glorious. Her afflicted chamber was none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven. Here was Doctor Watts's strong language realized—

“And lose my life among the charms  
Of so divine a death.”

What shall I bring forward? Her serenity of mind? It was more than serenity; it was joy unspeakable, and full of glory.



Some representations and expressions must not die with her. We will follow the order of time in stating them.

From the end of December till beyond the middle of January she scarcely ever composed herself to sleep without repeating again and again the little song said to be composed by an Indian; the second verse of which she after rehearsed with a kind of transport—

“A few more rising suns at most  
Will land me safe on Canaan’s coast.”

On the 30th of January her husband returned from the funeral of a relative which he had been called to attend at a distance from home. A friend was then sitting in the room with her. but as soon as she had withdrawn, this beloved bride hung round the neck of her husband and said, “My Joseph, my dearest Joseph, the time is very near that we must part. I have no cause for sorrow at the thought; but I know you will sorrow; but do not sorrow overmuch. My God is your God, and will be so to the end. He will also be the God of my dear children. Endeavour to make up your mind to the stroke, and be assured it is his doing who doth all things well. My tears are flowing fast, and yours are flowing fast, but they are all dropping into our Redeemer’s bosom. He knows our circumstances, and we must live upon that sure promise; ‘as thy day thy strength shall be!’” On his replying, “Why, my dearest creature, do you think thus?” she rejoined, “I know that I am going home, and that heaven is my home; yes, my dearest home, from the inexpressible enjoyment I have had, I have lain on that bed and had more joy than a mere mortal could hold; such joy would

not do for creatures—it would be more than they could sustain. The twenty-third psalm was a heavenly message to me, and with calmness, and the certain prospect of soon entering the valley, I could say, ‘I will fear no evil’—no, not even there—for ‘thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.’ I tried to sing this, and much more in the night, but I had no voice; and therefore I sung it only in spirit.” Having exhausted herself with her tears and her discourse, she dropped asleep; but presently after awaking, and feeling her weakness, she said, “My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”

February 2. While two friends were sitting by her bed-side, she expatiated most sweetly on the glories of heaven, and her assured hope of going there. As one of them left the room, her little girl entered it, and when the babe shewed herself at the corner of her curtain, she observed, “There, I thought I never should have been able to give up that child; but now I can do even this, and do it without the least anxiety. It is my Father’s will we should separate; his will is mine: and cannot I leave her with him?”

February 4. Her husband in the evening announced her medical friend was come. She was, at that instant, sitting up in bed and reading her Bible; as he entered the room she shut it, but after his departure said, “I thought to avoid ostentation by putting my Bible away, but it struck me, why should I do it? Precious book! thou art all my consolation and support. If the gay and the worldly are not ashamed of their cards, would it have been right for me to have been ashamed of thee? Surely not. But lest it should appear like Pharisaic righteousness, I

shut it and talked to Mr. —— about my feelings and my prospects.”—Pausing a little for breath, she added, “My present experience is truly blessed. The clouds in the air pass swiftly along, nor hide the sun from view.” I do not mean the dark black clouds which are impenetrable, but the upper clouds on a summer’s day: through them the sun diffuses his light and heat, so that while they pass, one is scarcely aware of them. I have my clouds, weakness, weariness, and pains; but my greatest pain is when thinking on the pain of separation; nevertheless, through all these Jesus, my blessed sun, is seen. He soothes and cheers me; and but for the sorrow of my dearest Joseph, I should say, I am without anxiety,”

February 5. Was spent chiefly in arranging domestic concerns, and the still more awful concerns of her funeral.—She said, “If there MUST be a funeral sermon, let the text be, Psalm xxiii. 4. The hymns—

THE FIRST.—When languor and disease invade  
This trembling house of clay,  
'Tis sweet to look beyond our cage,  
And long to flyaway, &c.

THE SECOND.—Hear what the voice from heaven proclaims  
For all the pions dead;  
Sweet is the savor of their names,  
And soft their sleeping bed, &c.

THE THIRD.—The Lord my Shepherd is,  
I shall be well supplied,  
Since he is mine, and I am his,  
What can I want beside? &c.”

She strictly enjoined, “Let nothing be said of me, but what grace has done in me, and done for me. I have hope towards God beyond a doubt; and this

hope is founded, not on frames or visions, but a comparison of my state with the word of my God. There I read, man is a poor, lost, ignorant, unholy creature. I both believe it and feel it, but so effectually has grace wrought in me that, though lost, I cry unto God for mercy—though ignorant, I go unto him for wisdom. I find the *Gospel suited to my state*. I look out of myself entirely. I go as one utterly lost to Jesus Christ. I wish no alteration in the doctrine of his cross. I would be saved in the very way he has revealed, though I had the choice of more, and millions more, if possible.”

February 6. A friend calling, she said to her, “My hopes rest on the Deity and atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have told Mr. Berry I would have him preach no other doctrines than those he has done all along; they are doctrines suited to sinners, one of whom is his Eliza.”—An old deacon (much like herself, ripening for glory), when he approached her bed side, said, “Well my good friend, how do you do now?” To whom she replied, “Almost at home—my precious Bible, true every tittle—I never thought it could have supported me thus, but it does—I never thought I could have enjoyed so much—I have not an anxious wish—It is heaven *already* begun—I am happy as I can be on this side heaven—

“A mortal paleness on my cheek,  
And glory in my soul.”

A friend from a little distance calling that evening, she spake most delightfully of her ecstatic joy; and as he was taking his farewell, and leaving her with the mention of the name of Jesus, she closed the conversation, repeating—

“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On thy kind arm I fall;  
Be thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus and my all.”

February 11. To several friends she said, “Jesus is very precious. I have no anxiety. Everything is settled. My drawers, my house, my treasurer’s books, my children, my all—I have nothing to do but die and go home,”

February 13. She said to a friend, “Surely all this cannot be delusion.” To another, “I am not gone yet. The dross is not all taken away; I shall not go till it is,” The last friend who saw her on that day witnessed her very much enfeebled indeed, but, putting his ear towards her, he distinctly heard the whisper, “All is heaven and peace within.” While her husband and servant were turning her in the bed, she remarked, “Ah, my dear, it is hard work,” and, recollecting, caught up her words, “Hard did I say? no, I’ll recall that word, it looks like repining; it is not hard, but requires more than nature to acquiesce in,”

February 15. To a friend she observed, “It seems as if there were no enemy. He is, as good Bunyan says, ‘as still as a stone.’ I scarcely think of *him*. My Jesus is all my salvation, and all my desire.”

February 16. “My Jesus is very precious to me. Had I had breath, oh how could I have sung of him in the night!” On a kind friend’s leaving her, she said, “Tell your dear sister what I enjoy; it is not like a death-bed—it is sleeping in my Jesus’s arms.”

February 17. When it was thought she was actually going, “It is sweet to die in Jesus—Bless God,

my dear, I am so happy—Though I walk through the valley,” &c. About a quarter past eleven o’clock that evening, while profound silence was kept, she broke it, and, with seemingly more than human voice, she uttered—

“There shall we see his face,  
And never, never sin;  
There, from the rivers of his grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in.”

Pausing, as though every word seemed a feast to her soul, she added—

“For ever his dear sacred name  
Shall dwell upon my tongue,  
And Jesus and salvation be  
The close of every song.”

Her breath scarcely allowing her to reach the last word, she lay quietly meditating, but after waiting perhaps more than a minute, with seraphic accents she burst forth again—

“Yes, thou art precious to my soul,  
My transport and my trust;  
Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,  
And gold is sordid dust.”

Her arms falling, her husband attempted to put the one next him into bed. Speaking of her being much reduced, she said, “Worms will not feast much on me.—Blessed be God, I am not afraid of worms.

“Though greedy worms devour my skin  
And gnaw my wasting flesh,  
When God shall build my bones again,  
He clothes them all afresh.”

In the night she begged her husband to pray once more with her. He did it; but when it was over she said, “My dear, you have forgotten to pray for one thing.” He asked, “What is that?” “Why, that we may be prepared for and supported in the parting

hour." When he intimated the difficulty of doing it, she pleasingly and firmly replied, "Well, *I* can do it; and, much as I love my Joseph, I can leave him to go to my Jesus," And then taking his hand, she prayed, acknowledging the kindness of God in uniting them, the happiness they had proved in each other, &c. After this she dozed and enjoyed some calm hours. About ten minutes past seven in the morning she was evidently seized for death. During her illness she had frequently requested Christian friends to pray for an easy dismissal; and God, her gracious God, answered prayer. While the perspiration was breaking forth in all directions, and every oozing drop seemed larger and larger, she inarticulately uttered, in broken accents—"Valley—Shadow—Home—Jesus—*Peace.*"

She seemed free from pain. "Without a struggle she lay for nearly twenty minutes, and at twelve minutes before eight o'clock her head gently dropped on the left side of her pillow; her last pulse was felt by the hand of her anguished husband, and her disembodied spirit soared to the presence of her God.

After these statements, I need not say that this was a highly *indulged and honoured death.*

But it is also a *mournful* one. All that so eminently fitted her for heaven equally fitted her for earth. We have but comparatively few of this character. Yet these are the persons we want. We want them, for they are the dew of heaven, the salt of the earth, the light of the world. We want them as intercessors as defenders, as benefactors, as examples. Every loss, therefore, will draw forth tears—and *must*, if we would escape the reproach of insensibility charged upon the Jews: "The righteous perisheth

and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

Yes, you find it a mournful one, O ye poor whom she succoured. Yes, you find it a mournful one, O ye schools of charity whom she inspected. Yes, you find it a mournful one, O ye friends with whom she took sweet counsel.—

—But what shall I say to you, my dear, my afflicted brother; to whom God has said—"Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke!"

What shall I say to you, ye bereaved children, whose loss at present you are unable to estimate? A wife may be replaced, but a mother cannot. "As one whom his mother comforteth," so may our Heavenly Father comfort you. May he *take you up* as the God of providence and of grace; *guide* you with *his counsel*, and *afterward receive you to glory*.

The death is no less *instructive*. It says, in feeling accents,

The dear delights we here enjoy,  
And fondly call our own,  
Are but short favours borrow'd now,  
To be repaid anon.

It warns us that in the midst of life we are in death. It urges us to "seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near."

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

I conclude a service which I fear would have been tedious, had not the saint furnished more than the preacher, with three remarks.

The first regards the efficiency of Divine grace: for by the grace of God she was what she was; and we ought to glorify God in her. See under the



agency of this principle what human nature even in this world may become!—And since this grace is the same, and is not only sufficient for us, but attainable by us, let us be strong in it; let us ask that we may have, and seek that we may find.

The second regards the impression of character. What is it that has put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, so that against this child of Israel not a dog moves his tongue? What is it that prompts the language of lamentation or encomium from everyone you converse with in the house, or meet with in the street? What is it that has induced almost every member in this church, and almost every hearer in this meeting, to appear in the attire of mourners? What has this morning turned this place of worship into a *Bochim*,—a place of tears? What has led the ministers and congregations of this town voluntarily to shut up their own sanctuaries and come here to weep with those that weep? The deceased was only a private character—it is true; but she was a decided character. She was a consistent character. She was an amiable character. She was an inoffensive character. She was a benevolent character. She neither lived nor died to herself; “and he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.”

The third regards a reflection, which, though it be often made, cannot be made too often; and which the subject we have explained and the event we have considered alike urge upon us—it is the excellency of genuine religion. It does not, indeed, exempt us from the calamities of life or the stroke of death, but this it does—it prepares us for them; it supports us under them; it turns the curse into a blessing; it removes the fear of evil; it enables us to

dwell at ease in a world of changes and alarms; it affords us comfort even in death. And who is the man truly happy? Not he who has health, but he who is prepared to lose it. Not he who has a portion on earth; but he who has laid up treasure in heaven. He it is who can look forward without dismay; he it is who can pass an hour among the tombs, and say—"Hither I hope I am willing to come, when my Father shall send the summons." The end crowns the action; and the proverb tells us all is well that ends well. I am far from allowing that religion has no present claims and advantages, for it has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come—but allowing that it is, what many people falsely imagine it to be, a system of sacrifice and self-denial only, all toil and all gloom, yet it has this unparalleled recommendation—it ends well—it ends infinitely well; and "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." O, when you come to finish your course, to be able to say with Jacob, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" When the body is falling to pieces, to be able to say with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." With Simeon to be raised above the love of life, and the fear of death, and to be able to say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."—What can you wish for like this!—"Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last, end be like his!" Amen.

## THE WIFE'S ADVOCATE:

### A SERMON,

PREACHED ON A MARRIAGE OCCASION.

“Husbands, love your ‘Wives, and be not bitter against them.”

“Husbands, love your Wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it.”—PAUL.

“*True* greatness is always tender and sympathising.”—LAVATER.



## PREFACE.

“**D**OING nothing by partiality”—said Paul to his son Timothy. If Ministers would observe this charge, they must bring forward the doctrine, the experience, and the practice of the Christian system, equally—or at least proportionately. Circumstances may indeed vary: The day in which we live, the zeal of false teachers, the ignorance or tendency of a congregation, may occasionally require a more full and frequent enforcement of one of these parts than of the other two: but neither of them must be lost sight of in the ordinary course of our preaching—provided we wish to “speak unto the people all the words of this life”—and to preserve our hearers from legality, enthusiasm, and Antinomianism. For each of these evils greatly arises from the too *exclusive* treatment of each of these three divisions of theology—Antinomianism, growing out of *mere* doctrinal—enthusiasm, out of mere experimental—and legality, out of mere practical preaching.

When the Author, if he may be excused a reference to himself, quite a youth, first went to London, and was all anxiety to hear the preachers, of the famed metropolis, he was told by a friend, if he wished to hear a good doctrinal sermon, he must hear Mr. —; if an experimental, he must hear Mr. ; and if a practical, he must hear Mr. —. And he well remembers simply asking, “But is

there no minister here who preaches all these? I should rather hear him."

This mode, he is conscious, he has always aimed and endeavoured to follow himself; and by this criterion he is willing to be judged—not indeed by an occasional hearer—but by his regular and constant attendants. The following discourse, therefore, is not to be taken as a *specimen* of his preaching, but as a *part*, the propriety and usefulness of which are to be viewed in alliance with other parts, and in harmony with the whole.

A minister, who, like Epaphras, would "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God," *must* inculcate the *relative* duties.

The Author, some years ago, preached and published a Sermon on "The Mutual Duties of Husbands and Wives"—a discourse which he hopes has not been without its usefulness; while the number of editions it passed through shewed its acceptance with the public.

The following Sermon may be considered as an addition bearing on one important reference. If the Sermon produced some clamour after the delivery, it is easy to conclude from what quarter the complaining came—They will not feel the reflection who are perfectly innocent of the Charge.

*Bath, December 1, 1829.*

## THE WIFE'S ADVOCATE.

*“And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good-will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly, seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.”—MALACHI ii. 13–15.*

It has been the lot of some very good men to live in very bad times. And this was the case with Malachi. Even *then*, indeed, some were found, “who feared the Lord and thought upon his name.” And they were graciously noticed and distinguished by him—“They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I shall make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

These, however, were only so many exceptions from the multitude, and resembled a few small luminaries, that serve to render the darkness between the more palpable. According to the language of our Prophet, the degeneracy was complete. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there was no soundness. The young and the old; the rich

and the poor; rulers and subjects; priests and people—were all deeply revolted from God.

In such a corrupt state of society the office of a minister is not a very enviable or a very easy one. It is trying to censure and condemn; and he that is not faithful to his conscience and commission will fail under the trial, and prophesy smooth things, because the multitude love to have it so. But the man of God, raised above the love of fame and the dread of frowns, will not shun “to declare *all* the counsel of God,” “warning *every* man, and teaching *every* man in all wisdom, that he may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus.”

The connexions of life, the sources of so much virtue and sin, happiness and misery, are numerous and various; and when properly estimated, they are not to be judged of by their publicity, and elevation, and splendour, but by the constancy of their influence, the extent of their operation, and the importance of their effects. The most ordinary relations, therefore, are the most fundamental. These are the DOMESTIC. Communities originate from families, and depend upon them; and the quality of the one must partake largely of the attributes of the other. In religious concerns it is not too much to say, with Philip Henry, that “a man is really what he is relatively.” We are aware that there is much of instinct in the relative affections; and that they do not strike far into moral character. The existence of them alone is not a sufficient proof of piety. But it is otherwise with the *absence* of them. This is decisive evidence *against* a person. If he is bad at home, he is good nowhere. If he is a bad father, and a bad husband, he *cannot* be a good man. And, therefore,



when a very eminent minister was asked whether he thought a certain individual was truly pious, he replied, "I cannot tell—I never lived with him."

Hence a preacher that would make full proof of his ministry must enter the scenery of families, and inquire how matters stand between masters and servants; parents and children; wives and husbands.

And it is here we find Malachi. He is dealing with the latter relationship, and he speaks boldly as he ought to speak—"And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with goodwill at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

Let us attend to four articles:—

THE SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT.

THE AGGRAVATION OF THE OFFENCE.

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE TRANSGRESSOR.

THE MEANS OF PREVENTION.

First. THE SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT. The Charge is against unkind husbands, and consists in this—That they embittered the lives of those they ought to have loved and cherished,; so that they caused them,

when they approached the sanctuary of God, instead of rejoicing before Him, as his service required, to break forth into the most passionate expressions of grief. "This have ye done, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out."

Who does not here call to mind the history of Hannah? "And as she went to the house of the Lord, so her adversary provoked her much, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb-Therefore she wept and did not eat - and she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore." But you say, " This was not occasioned by Elkanah. He was an attached and an attentive husband." It is true it was not occasioned by him *immediately*, but it was so *really*. Had Hannah been, as she ought to have been, his only wife, the distress would have been prevented; and she would not have found herself in alliance with a fellow-wife, that delighted to insult and aggravate her disappointment

And you will observe, that this was one of the ways in which the husbands, here complained of, converted the very devotion of their wives into mourning, and made the altar of God, not a place of gladness and praise, but of refuge and appeal. They added to their number; and thus vexed and degraded their wives, by reducing them from peace to a state of contention; from supremacy to jealousy and rivalry; from being the sole objects of attraction, to share divided, diminished, precarious regards.

Though polygamy had been long practised among the Jews, it was never justified. The very tolerance

of it, in every instance, shewed most clearly and strongly, by the effects, that it was a deviation from rectitude. That which is irreconcilable to the welfare of domestic life could never obtain the *approbation* of Him who ordained that state, not only for the purpose of purity, but of peace and happiness. The evils arising from the usage itself, therefore, had so far checked it, that in Judea, at the time of our Saviour, we meet with no instances of it. It was also forbidden among the Greeks and Romans, And this accounts, as Paley observes, for our finding no particular enactment against it in the New Testament; but it is said, "To avoid fornication, let every man have his *own wife*—not wives; and let every wife have her *own husband*."

The pleasure of God also appears in proportioning the actual number of males and females. There is, indeed, some little inequality in the births of these; but the fact strengthens the reasoning. If there are born more males than females, by one in nineteen, the level is restored by the superior casualties to which the male sex is exposed; and the balance remaining allows but one woman to one man. And what can shew the will of God more decisively than his conduct? If we go back to the beginning of the world, no conceivable reason can be given, why, if polygamy was to be continued to the human race, it should not have commenced with it. But hear our prophet—"And did not he make one?" One Eve for one Adam? Adam even in Paradise had one wife only—This oneness, therefore, could not have been deemed a confinement, but a regulation becoming the most perfect state—"Yet had he the residue of the Spirit"—and *could* therefore have made another partner as fair and lovely as Eve her-

self was—"And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed"—And where is such a pious offspring likely to be found? Can children be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—in the presence of the lawlessness of one sex, and the debasement of the other? In the residence of oppression? Sensuality? Passion? Artifice? Hypocrisies? In the midst of divided and opposing interests? Dissensions? Swellings? Tumults? "Where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

But another of the evils here reprobated was the putting away their wives when they chose to dislike them. Unless in one case, conceded by reason' and revelation, the marriage relation is indissoluble. Hence, says our Saviour, in answer to the question of the Pharisees, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for *every* cause? Have ye not read, that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Upon which they said unto him, "Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" He said unto them, "Moses; because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it' was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication. and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

This exception being made, "The Lord God of

Israel saith, that he hateth putting away." Cases of hardship, bearing peculiarly on individuals, will doubtless now and then occur; but such occasional evils are more than compensated by the advantages of the limitation. For we should consider what would be, not the personal and immediate, but the general and the ultimate tendency and effects of larger permission. Whatever other reasons for divorce were allowed, many would be sure to live up to them; and licentiousness would soon also require yet more allowance. This was seen in France. When, after the Revolution, husbands were permitted to put away their wives for unsuitableness of temper, mutual dislike, perverseness, and other causes, bad men availed themselves of every excuse to disengage themselves from restraint; and dissolution and misery spread among thousands who would otherwise have been satisfied with their condition. For people soon acquiesce in what they know to be unalterable; and their destiny, by habit, is easily moulded into choice. They who are conscious that they cannot separate will feel that it is their mutual interest to forbear, to give up, and to accommodate. To which we may add, that when a connexion is formed for life, much more prudence and care are likely to be exercised in forming it than if it were terminable at pleasure.

We cannot be censured for these remarks. Not only has our subject brought them before us, but they are very worthy of our attention; and we cannot help observing, that the exclusion of polygamy and the prohibition of divorce—confining marriage to one pair, and rendering the union indissoluble—have done more to promote and secure the morals

and welfare of the community than all the institutions, the wisdom, and goodness of legislators have ever established. Nor can we be sufficiently thankful, that in these important concerns the laws of our country fall in with the authority of God.

But though in this highly favoured land neither of these modes of domestic persecution is open to a husband, there are many other ways in which he may "cover the altar of the Lord with tears, and with weeping, and crying out."

He cannot safely take to himself more wives than one—But to that one he may prove unfaithful, and basely transfer to another the affection alone due to herself.

He cannot legally put away his wife—But by oppressive and cruel, degrading and insulting conduct, he may force her to withdraw; and then falsely plead and use the refusal to live with him, which he himself designedly produced.

I know not how to refer to bodily violence—"No *man* ever yet hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it"—But is there a brute in human shape? Is there a wretch, miscalled a husband, who is not ashamed to execute what the preacher is ashamed even to intimate?

But every depth of disgrace, every exertion of cruelty, is not necessary to break a tender heart, or to crush a delicate spirit. He may accomplish his work by studied neglect; by churlish manners; by unkind language; by alienated or angry looks, A contemptuous sneer will strike a death-chill into every feeling. A bitter irony will sting like a scorpion, and leave the deadly rankling behind.

He may reduce her to the mortification of seeing

him restless at home; always anxious to contrive or excuse absence, instead of dwelling with her according to knowledge; and fonder of any company than the society of his wife.

He may deprive her of her needful support and comfort. And though she would patiently and cheerfully share in the privations and distress brought on them by the providence of God, she cannot but feel grievously the trial of hardships and straits arising solely from idleness, or drunkenness, or gaming, or licentiousness.

He may wound her by withholding from her the confidence required by the mutuality and unity of the relation—a relation that allows nothing to be concealed; nothing to be found out by search or accident. Yet it is not a very uncommon trial for a wife, unapprised, unprepared, to be plunged from genteel life into destitution and woe; while she has been censured for living in a style she would have been the first to have reduced had she divined the event that rendered it a duty.

We cannot do justice to this part of our subject. The causes of complaint are numberless. But we must not avoid adding—That relative trials are often more painful than personal ones—That in the case before us, the anguish is enhanced by the nearness and importance of the quarter from which it comes—and, That it is frequently increased by secrecy and suppression—the sufferer being denied the relief of pouring her sorrow even perhaps into the ear of friendship. The heart knows the bitterness. The groanings cannot be uttered. But let us pass from the complaint to—

II. THE AGGRAVATION OF THE OFFENCE. It is taken from the character of the aggrieved.

First, "She is the wife of thy *youth*." The exemplification is derived from an early marriage: and the reference is a countenance of the usage. Men may marry when they please; but, in order to illustrate the force of this relation, the Scripture does not notice confederacies of profit; bargains of convenience; provisions of nursery-hood for infirmity, and sickness, and death—the only connexion to which God in his word ever alludes, and from which he reasons, is "the wife of youth."

To such an object there will belong a peculiar affection. It is the first attachment; fresh, simple, and undebased. The feelings strike deeper, and root firmer, owing to earlier implantation and longer growth. The conformity between the parties is more full and perfect; as they assimilate into the qualities of each other more easily while soft and pliant than after years and habitudes have confirmed them, and rendered all change impossible, or difficult and irksome,

About what other object, when taken away, will a man's memory linger so long and tenaciously as the image of the wife of his youth? Of *her* who first drew into one mighty and exquisite feeling all the sympathies of his heart? Of *her* with whom he passed the delicious season of virtuous courtship? Of *her* who inspired him with all the liveliness and enjoyment of hope? Of *her* who first made him sensible of the endearments of domestic bliss? Of *her* who first by the cry and the image of innocent helplessness told him the tenderness of the parental



relation? Of *her* on whose knee his child first clasped his little hands to pray? Of *her* whose leaning so often pressed his arm, in his way to the house of God, in the walks of rural excursion, and the journey of life?

—And canst thou, O man, overlook all this while she is living? What if the charm that lighted up the blaze of attachment be now fading? The rose could not always bloom; but surely the fragrance remains. What if infirmities more suddenly or slowly begin to appear?—now is the time for evincing and displaying a more grateful and unselfish affection. Is the worth of years to be forgotten? Has she not been always thy ministering spirit? Has not thy happiness been dearer to her than her own? In all thy afflictions has she not been afflicted? Perhaps in giving life, or watching over the pain and malady of thy offspring, she has impaired her frame, and health is only now a living sacrifice. Go and make God thine example—“I remember Thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousal, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.”

Secondly, says the Prophet, “Is she not thy *companion*?” This, perhaps, is the most lovely and becoming idea of the relation that can be supplied. She is not, O man, thy superior; she is not thy slave—thy servant—thy dependent. She is indeed a helpmate, so art thou—but she is “thy companion.”

Yet, as a companion, she is very distinguishable from every other. A brother or sister is a companion; but they are so involuntarily—she is thy companion by choice. Many are companions for a

while; but they are separable from us, and our intercourse may be reduced to correspondence—She is thy companion for life. Let other companions be ever so intimate, they have yet their separate allotments—she is thy companion, so as to have no interest of her own, but is an equal sharer in all the cares and comforts of thine.

It will be confessed, that there are some differences between the male and the female character, produced by nature, and enlarged by education. But the very differences render them the more mutually eligible as companions. The defective qualities of each are provided for in the attributes of the other. Both excel, but they excel in their own way, *He* is more characterised by thought; *she* by sympathy: but these properties demand and aid each other. The eagerness, the sensitiveness, the delicacy, the genius of the female would unnerve the man: and the courage, the inflexibility, the severeness of the man would unsex the female. Nothing can be more absurd than to oppose their respective claims; nothing more injurious than to separate them, Let their peculiar properties and places be retained—and all will be found adaptation and order. Let them be associated—and all will be found harmony and completeness.

But how is it to be lamented when their companionship is not carried into the widest, noblest, and most important region of its exercise—I mean religion? How unmeet is it, while one goes into the presence of Gael by devotion, for the other to stand without till this transaction be over! How forceless the petition singly signed, while the voice of love and union cries, “If two of you shall agree on earth,

as touching anything they may ask, it shall be done of my Heavenly Father!" How strange and unsightly must it be for one of these associates to be walking the way everlasting while the other is going the road to death! How hurtful and fatal to divide and separate, where, weak and opposed alone, they need every mutual encouragement and assistance! How appalling to reflect, that the most endearing alliance must be broken up for ever at the termination of a life equally short and uncertain!

Husbands and wives! never forget that you are moral and accountable beings; and that the present life is only the threshold of existence. Be companions in faith and godliness. Walk together as heirs of the grace of life. Take sweet counsel together, and go to the house of God in company, Allure each other over the land of revelation in the length and breadth thereof. Mutually survey its prospects, admire its beauties, and gather of its flowers and fruits, Encourage one another with these words; and let your hearts be comforted and knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—Then your children will not be perplexed by contrary counsels and examples. Then you will be lovely in life, and in death not divided. Then your separation will be only temporary; a time of re-union will come, and the intercourse of pure and perfected friendship will be renewed for ever.

Thirdly, "She is the wife of thy *covenant*." Covenant here means the marriage contract; and by the mention of this the husband is called upon to remem-

ber that the vows of God are upon him. A truly virtuous man will feel love more binding than law; yet, considering human frailty and the interests of society; it is well to be bound by duty as well as affection; and be constrained, if we act wrong, not only to violate principle, but obligation. The forms and rites of the connubial engagement may vary in different ages and countries, but some sanction has been always required. If the contract be not directly a religious transaction, it has generally been accompanied and enforced by religious sanctions. And surely such a connexion can never be rendered too solemn and too sacred. It is the most awful and interesting compact into which it is possible to enter. Yet there are men who can trifle with a stipulation so momentous, and seem to forget all the responsibilities it entails: requiring perhaps at the same time exact fidelity on the other side—as if, in a covenant, both the parties were not equally bound. Did these men, beforehand, tell the persons they are endeavouring to espouse how they designed to treat them; or did they refuse to pledge themselves to any kind of agreeable and good behaviour towards them, they would act an open part at least; and their wives, though chargeable with folly in venturing to advance, would yet have no deceitfulness to complain of. But when a man has voluntarily promised and bound himself by oath, he is no longer at liberty to behave otherwise than his engagement prescribes without falsehood, perfidy, perjury, and disgrace.

He that does not verify the engagement not only implied but expressed, upon which alone the heart was surrendered to him, is no better than a seducer.

He falsely wins confidence, basely to betray it; and proclaims himself not only to be destitute of the principles of a Christian, but the honour of a man: and for want of common honesty, he ought to be shunned by all reputable society. Herod, though he was grieved at his promise, yet would not refuse to ratify it, for his oath's sake. Jephthah, though he had to sacrifice his own daughter, yet said, "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." A good man" sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." And we know who has said, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in souls. Pay that which thou hast 'vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?" Therefore let us consider—

III. THE CONDEMNATION OF THE TRANSGRESSOR. Here we have both the sentence—and the evidence upon which it is adjudged.

The first is thus expressed—"Insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good-will at your hand," And is this a light thing? God is the supreme good. In His favour—is life. It is the most delightful consciousness in the world to know that we are accepted of him; and to have the testimony that we please God. But all here is aversion, rejection; contempt. "I will have no communion with you, I hate not only your sins—but your services,"

It would seem surprising, indeed, that those who live in disobedience to his commands should yet be found attending the worship of God at all: for there is much in the Dutch proverb, "Praying will make, a man leave off sinning, or sinning will make a man leave off praying." But the heart is deceitful above all things, as well as desperately wicked; and the inconsistencies it is continually putting forth are as wonderful as any thing in the course of nature or order of providence. There are those who will observe the form of godliness, and deny the power of it. There are those who will support the cause of Christ, and defraud their tradesmen; who will regard the positive ordinances of religion, and neglect its moral requisitions; who will value the ritual part of devotion, and violate the practical. How many are godly on the Sabbath and worldly all the week! Who appear saints in the house of God, and are demons in their own! Are there not some who even maintain morning and evening service in their families, and yet cover the altar of the Lord with tears, and with weeping, and crying out?

But let such know that omission is preferable to perversion. And let them "go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice"—"God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth"—He that stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, and shall not be heard. Hence the God of Israel saith, "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol."

Wherefore? Were not these observances of His own appointment? They were. But He loathed them when they became substitutes for moral principle, or connected with practices which he had condemned. Therefore, says he, "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes—Seek justice; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widows—Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Is this a light thing?—More is implied than is expressed, There is no medium between non-acceptance with God and condemnation. If we are not in his favour, we are under his wrath. And who can stand before *Him* when once *He* is angry? The grand question is, In what relation are we found to *Him*? Is *He* our friend or our foe? If our foe, he can arm all creatures against us: he can operate immediately upon our mind: he can pursue us beyond the grave, which screens us from all other enemies; and, after he hath killed, can cast into Hell. He that judgeth us is the Lord—If he be for us, who can be against us? He can make all things work together for our good. They whom he blesses are blessed: and they whom he curses are cursed: and none can reverse it.

And is this a light thing? Wisdom cries, Hide not thy face from me: put not thy servant away in anger. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. And, to heal this broken heart, to soothe every sorrow, to sweeten every

comfort, to raise me above the fear of every evil, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

But, secondly, in order to punish legally. there must be not only guilt, but conviction; and there is no conviction without evidence, without witness. Who is the witness here? God himself—"The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast, dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant." This indeed is a case in which human witness is not, and cannot be always attainable. A few transgressors may be careless of observation, and, in their shame, seek no disguise: but, in general, the offender courts secrecy. He knows his reputation is at stake; and that nothing lowers a man more in common estimation than improper temper and conduct towards the most claimful of all relations. He therefore tries as much as possible to cloak it. Before others he is often full of pretensions. He uses, perhaps, the most endearing expressions; and while the sufferer is conscious of the falseness of all this display, he passes for a respectable, perhaps a fond husband, But not with Him whose eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. *He* sets his secret sins in the light of his countenance.

It would be well for us always to remember that God sees us; and the less we are under the cognizance of others, the more, in a way of motive and influence, we need to realize the inspection of our witness in heaven, and our record on high. In the world and in the church we are more upon our guard, because there are many to observe us; but in our dwellings we give ourselves more latitudes.



But God is there; and therefore we should walk within our house with a perfect heart, and set no wicked thing before our eyes, and hate the work of them that turn aside. He knoweth our down-sitting, and our up-rising. He compasseth about our path, and is acquainted with all our ways. He is a witness between us and our servants; a witness between us and our children; a witness between us and our wives—a constant witness—an unerring witness—a witness who is at the same time the lawgiver whose orders we contemn, and the judge who will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

What mysteries of iniquity will that day make manifest! How many tyrants have dispatched their victims in dungeons, or by assassins whose employers were never known! How many seducers have entangled and ruined the innocent and unwary, the discovery of whom was suppressed by power or bribery! How many husbands have destroyed the peace, the comfort, the health, the life of those who ought to have been dear to them as their own souls, uncensured, and even unsuspected! But the Lord comes, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart.

Yet in wrath he remembers mercy: and before he destroys he warns and admonishes. Hence,

IV. THE MEAN'S OF PREVENTION—"Therefore take heed to your *spirit*, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

Here we are led immediately to the source of all evil. "Take heed to your *spirit*." There all be-

gins. There is no sanctifying the life without an attention to the heart. Therefore, says Solomon, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Heal the spring, and the streams will be, wholesome. Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. Renew the heart, and upon the tongue is the law of kindness, Replenish the heart, and out of the abundance of' the heart the mouth speaketh. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

But the meaning is, not only that we should attend to our principles if we would regulate our practice, but that we should never overlook or neglect the very first risings of evil. Evil is spreading like leaven, and a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. It may be too late to assail the enemy when he has advanced and gathered force from success. Attack him at the outset, while yet his strength is small; and no strong-hold is taken; and no pass is even seized. When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Crush, therefore, the cockatrice in the egg, lest it break forth, and become a fiery flying serpent.

Again, *All* are concerned in this caution—and "let *none* deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

Are Levites excepted? They are chiefly the persons here complained of. Their lips are indeed to keep knowledge; but they are to *do* as well as to *teach*. They are to be examples, to illustrate and recommend their own doctrine. The snuffers in the tabernacle were to be made of pure gold, They who

reprove others are to be blameless themselves, Their exhortations, dishonoured by their own temper and practice, will not only be unavailing, but repulsive; and all the convictions *they* would fix in the conscience will drop like arrows from an impenetrable shield. "Behold, thou 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 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 dishonourest thou God?" Who revolts not at receiving his food from a leprous hand? If the bad husband disgraces the good preacher, men will abhor the offering of the Lord.

Are the upper ranks above this injunction? It might be supposed that they had this imagination from their conduct in too many instances, But the higher the individual, the more is he bound to regard it. He is by his station the more observable and influential; and the more injurious will his life prove, if it be vicious. Evil is a stream, and like every other stream it does not ascend, but run; downward. Or, to borrow another image, a private person is like a pocket-watch, that only misinforms the wearer: a public character is like a town-clock, that leads astray the whole parish.

Yet *no* man is entirely unobserved and uninfluential, especially when placed at the head of a family. Therefore let the low as well as the high remember the advice. Indeed, the less of outward prosperity persons have, the more necessary is it to guard against those tempers and practices that will embitter their trials: and to seek solace, under their privations, in the grace of the Gospel, the consolations of religion, and the comforts of domestic peace and lore. And execrated, be the sentiment that love and poverty are incompatible. There may be more of contentment, though less of mirth; more of the reality, though less of the shew of happiness, in the cottage than in the mansion. Where the Lord is sought, he blesses their bread and their water. When in the simplicity of faith the Scriptures are read with prayer and praise, these are found to be better than thousands of gold and silver.

Is this idle talk? Here is the language of inspiration—"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. Better is a little with quietness, than a house full of sacrifices with strife." "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." What heart-cold wretchedness is often found connected with splendour, abundance, and excess!—"The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

Let the advancing in life guard against the loss of their first regards. The effervescence of the passion may subside, but let the spirit of the principle be preserved; and, like generous wines, it will refine and improve by keeping.

And let not the young be careless. The newly-

married pair, happy in the possession of crowned desires, may think themselves in no danger of abated regard: but we have seen goodness, even in wedded life, like the morning cloud and early dew that passeth away. Therefore take help to *your* spirit. Watch not only against the grosser evils, but minor delinquencies. Guard against the first symptom of declension. One thing prepares for, brings in, justifies another; and, when going astray, the smallness of each movement may keep us unalarmed, till we look back, and are shocked at the distance we have reached. Let your wife have no reason for the most *distant* apprehension. Let no sigh flit across her mind. Be not satisfied to keep within the bare precincts of duty; but care for the things of the wife, how you may please the wife. Be open. Be candid. Be tender. Be attentive. Be exemplary. In the connexion before us, inattention leads to indifference; and indifference to dislike; and dislike to disgust. If love be withdrawn, wedded life is confinement, misery, hell. Let love abound, and no ennui is known; no restraint is felt; no task is performed. The yoke is easy; the burden is light. Duty is privilege; and to oblige is more delightful than to be obliged. But remember, religion is the *best* promoter and preserver of this love; and therefore let *domestic morality* be founded in *Christian piety*.

“But why have you chosen such a passage as this?” Go and ask Malachi why he inserted it in his short series of prophesyings? Go and ask Paul whether “all Scripture is not given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness?”—Does not the unspeakable importance of the sub-

ject justify the selection? Does not the character of the day in which we live render such a discourse needful?

But I have availed myself of a particular event to bring forward these thoughts this morning. It is the union of —— with ——.

He will have too much good sense to take improperly the drift of the subject; or to suppose that caution and admonition necessarily imply censure or suspicion. No, my young Friend; I am fully persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak; and believe that you will regard HER, whose heart has safely trusted in you as your companion, the wife of your youth and of your covenant; and continue to love and to cherish till the parting hour. I hail you on the completion of your wishes—"He that findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtains favour of the Lord." I would not interrupt the joy of your espousals—But surely it cannot be unreasonable to say to the favoured sons of men, "Rejoice with trembling." The connexion you have formed is frail. It has its duties as well as its delights. It has also its cares as well as its comforts. Look not for a state of unalloyed happiness. Expect not to find the perfection in another which you know another will never find in you. I commend you to God and to the word of his grace: and may He whom you have honoured in believing his truth, that "it is not good for man to be alone," look down from Heaven, and say, "From this day will I bless you."

But I turn to you, my *female* friends—and, as far as I know my own convictions and feelings, I *am* your friend—you will, therefore, allow me to address you freely, especially since I have delivered myself unsparingly to those of my own sex.

First, let me address those who are yet unconnected. It is not improper for you to think of a condition which Nature has ordained us for, and which the Scripture pronounces honourable in all. Nor should you revolt from this state because there are husbands who "cover the altar of God with tears," All men are not liars. Nor should difficulties discourage you. These are found in every condition: and we are persuaded the state, if properly entered, is the most happy in this vale of tears. How much of the relish of our comforts is lost in unsocial enjoyment! How much do we need a friend, another self, to alleviate by sharing the cares and griefs of life! How many moments of languor, oppressiveness, and despondency are there, in which the heart beats for attention, sympathy, and kindness! How helpless is a solitary female! how many real dangers surround her! and how are these perils multiplied by solitariness! A single man has a thousand engagements abroad: a woman, if single, has little diversion from thought, and broods over real and imaginary evils. And how inferior is she reckoned to the female who sustains the character of a wife, and a parent, and is performing her duty to the world, and is the source of usefulness to the community!

But there is nothing *reproachful* in your present condition—unless you choose to make it so by exemplifying in your temper and conduct the imputations thrown on your state, especially in its advanced years. Shew that it does not necessarily entail malevolence; envy; scandal; curiosity; spleen; insipid formality; prudery; secrecy; a mystifying of trifles. The character and lives of too many of *our* sex are such as must prevent any reflection upon you for declining *them*: and your scorning to espouse worthlessness for

the sake of any advantage; and your refusing every connexion unapproved by your principles and conscience, as well as affection, will raise you in the estimation of all the wise and good.

Never, therefore, settle it in your minds that you *must* enter this state; or that marriage is *essential* to your usefulness, respectability, and happiness. Refer it to HIM who has a right to dispose of us as he pleases; and who knows what is best for us. And in the mean time improve the *advantages* of your present state, You are free from a thousand anxiousnesses and trials, unfriendly to mental culture and enlarged devotion. "She that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." If you have met with disappointment, let these reflections prevent dissatisfaction, and sober your hopes, and make you, when you think of altering your circumstances, to be the more prudent, circumspect, and prayerful. Look after good sense, good temper, domestic habits, and above all, the fear of God, And as, after all your caution and care, it is possible for you to be imposed upon, commit your way unto the Lord, and let integrity and uprightness preserve you while you wait upon him.

Secondly, some of you are found among the bereaved. The guide of your youth, and the companion of your days, is removed from you; and your heart within you is often desolate. I am not wishing to open your wounds afresh—You are no longer seen leaning on your beloved—But there is another Being who now stands in the most interesting of all relations to you. He is the "Husband of the widow." Be not hasty to leave a condition into which his hand



has led you; but, as a widow indeed, continue trusting in God with all your heart; and hold communion with the hour when you shall re-unite with those who are gone before, and are now waiting to receive you into everlasting habitations.

Thirdly, some of you are in a state that admits of our congratulations. You are affianced to those who are sensible of your value; whose inclinations fall in with their duty; who render love for love, confidence for confidence, attention for attention—

But I feel for *others*. The flattery which once, perhaps, your ear was too eager to drink, in has ended in disappointment and sorrow; and your eye poureth out tears unto God. Perhaps you were too sanguine in your expectations. Perhaps you looked for more in the relation than reason and Scripture have ever promised to afford. Perhaps now, upon the whole, you have but little reason to complain. Every state has its deductions.

But, admitting it to be otherwise, allow me to ask—Has there been no blame-worthiness attached to yourselves? Have you done everything in your power to render yourselves and your religion approved? You know the preacher does not join in the vulgar and unjust reflections cast upon your sex—but there are temper-flaws unsightly, and there are tongue-flaws intolerable. “Better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. A continual dropping in a rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. Are you slatterns? Do you love disorder? Are you idle, tattlers, busy-bodies, wandering from house to house? Are you keepers at home? Do you render your dwelling attractive? Do you make it the asylum of your husband from the toils and troubles of life? Does he find it

the scene of accommodation, and peace, and cheerfulness? When abroad is he "stung with the thoughts of home?" and is the most delightful part of his absence the moment that turns his face towards the loved place of his rest?

We know that you *can*—we have too often witnessed it not to know—we know that you *can* present religion in every interesting and engaging form; that you *can* not only render domestic life graceful, but piously attractive; that you *can* fan into a flame an expiring devotion; that you *can* give excellence and energy to every good word and work; that you *can* teach and enforce with a persuasive ease, and a tender mildness, whose influence is rarely without some success—Have you employed *these* efficiencies in connexion with every other? For, let me tell you, my sisters, if you have not availed yourselves of your *religious means*, and used them *with prayer, perseveringly, and wisely, and invitingly*, you have as yet no absolute cause to complain if your relative condition be not such as you would have it.

After all, with the exception of human infirmity, we will suppose a possible case. You have nothing to reproach yourself with, and yet your "house is not so with God." Even here we have a few words of advice to offer. Be not forward to complain openly, not only because noisy grief is seldom deemed very worthy of sympathy, but also because, in your peculiar case, it is more likely to add to the evil than to remove it. Exposure not only mortifies, but commonly exasperates and hardens; and the man, not only feeling the loss of self-respect, but the esteem of others, becomes reckless in his conduct. Beware of retaliation and reproach, Render not railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing. Ever follow the example of the Lord

Jesus, "who, when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Especially avoid everything that is irritating when the mind of your husband is in a feverish and inflamed state; and when a season of speaking returns, remember, a soft answer turneth away wrath, while grievous words stir up anger. Yielding pacifieth great offences. And let me not offend while I hint, that it is not authority but influence that belongs to your condition; and that your influence is not derived from violence and insistings, but from prepossessions, amiableness, a willingness to waive even a right, and a desire to please rather than to conquer—And says not the Apostle the same? "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands: that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear: whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

Some men, it must be acknowledged, seem strangers to all refinement of feeling; and cannot be overcome by even the meekness of wisdom. Yet, if the address of tenderness and entreaty be unhappily use-

less, all carriage of an opposite character will be *more* than useless, The being upon whom gentleness and good-nature are lost can never be amended by ill-humour and clamour. A man of sense will often, for the sake of propriety or peace, submit to be talked down by a wife talented in this species of oratory; but a man destitute of sense will be sure to retort such treatment with double violence and insult. "With the well-advised is wisdom:" while fools are the most unpersuadable of all animals—But you should not marry fools. You may be imposed upon with regard to piety—but you cannot be mistaken with regard to sense.

But if, after all your blamelessness and commendableness, you are in the affliction we have been endeavouring to prevent—one source of relief is open—Carry your distress to the mercy-seat; and spreading it before the God of all comfort, say—"Lord, all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hid from Thee." "While he permits your sufferings, He loves you. He pities you. He is on your side. He is able to turn the curse into a blessing—"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." We have seen wives who have been chosen in the furnace of affliction. They have had this valley of Achor given them for a door of hope, Their purposes being broken off, even the thoughts of their heart; and their prospects on life's fairest side being clouded and gloomy, they have looked out after "a better country." They have asked, "Where is God my Maker, that giveth songs in the night?" They have said, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee."

**REFLECTIONS**

DELIVERED ON

**SUNDAY, THE THIRTY-FIRST JANUARY, 1841,**

BEING THE

**FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

OF THE

**REV. WILLIAM JAY'S**

ORDINATION OVER THE CHURCH AND  
CONGREGATION

ASSEMBLING IN

ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH.

TO  
THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION  
MEETING IN ARGYLE CHAPEL,

**THESE REFLECTIONS,**

DELIVERED JANUARY 31, 1841,

ON THE

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MINISTRY AMONG THEM,  
ARE

DEDICATED

WITH GREAT AFFECTION AND ESTEEM,

BY

WILLIAM JAY.

*Percy Place, Feb. 15, 1841.*

## REFLECTIONS.

*“What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”—I THESS. ii. 19.*

“ONE star differeth from another star in glory.” So it is in the natural world; nor is it less so in the spiritual. Not only are the “righteous more excellent than their neighbours,” but some of them are more excellent than others. In the parable of the sower our Lord not only distinguishes the good ground from the three unfruitful soils, but represents the good ground itself as producing in the unequal proportions of “thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold.”

It would be easy to exemplify this in the case of individuals, Lot is called “just Lot;” and it is said, “his righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the ungodly:” but what a difference do we perceive between him and his uncle Abraham, H the friend of God”! How superior was the faith of the Roman centurion, who was satisfied with a word from the Saviour, without his bodily presence, to the hesitation of Thomas, who resolved not to believe in his Lord’s resurrection unless he saw and handled him!

The same may be also observed in regard to religious communities. Let us take, for example, two of the churches planted by the Apostles themselves. Here is first the church of Corinth, In this there

were some good men, and they abounded with every kind of gifts: but the majority of them were selfish, and vain, and contentious, and versatile. They soon turned away from Paul, and made much of an adversary that wished to invalidate his claims; so that "the more he loved them, the less he was loved by them:" therefore, with a noble independence of spirit, though a poor man, and gratefully receiving assistance from other congregations, he declined taking one farthing from them, and laboured with his own hands to supply his necessities.

But now take the church of the Thessalonians. For these Paul had a peculiar and pre-eminent regard; and they appear to have been worthy of it. He therefore (for he loved to praise rather than censure) speaks of them always not only with affection, but commendation and applause. "For this cause," says he, "we thank God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." And, again, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; for our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not



only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything."

We wish we had time to recite more of these pleasing representations: but we must hasten to the words you have already heard. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

These words will furnish us with some appropriate reflections in our way to the notice of an event which cannot but be deeply interesting to the speaker, and much of the large audience before him.

Our first remark regards *the advent of the Saviour*, for we are here informed, or rather reminded, of "His coming." This intends what is called in Scripture his "second" coming, "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and to them that look for him will he appear a second time without sin, unto salvation." His former coming was, indeed, "unto salvation;" but *then* he came for the procurement of the blessing by his blood: but his coming again will be "unto salvation," because he will then come to finish the application of it by his power, In the one he "made himself of no reputation," and was seen the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" in the other "he shall come in his glory," and "before him shall be gathered all nations," Then he was an insulted prisoner at Pilate's bar; now he is the "Judge both of quick and dead."

The Apostle here, as in many other places, mentions this coming incidentally; for he always took it for granted that they whom he addressed believed it, and were waiting for it, and regulated all their con-

cerns by it. And this is the reason why he so seldom names it, but calls it "*that*" day—"The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in *that* day"—"I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against *that* day"—"There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give me at *that* day." Are *we* so full of his appearing as to require only a minute or casual hint to bring the scene before our minds? Has our reference to this distinguished and distinguishing day such a readiness and prominence in it as to induce us habitually to view and feel it as

"The day for which all other days were made,"

and the end and consummation of all things?

Secondly. At his appearance there will be a *mutual recognition of individuals*. Much has been written upon this subject of late years; and the eagerness with which discourses of this kind have been received shews that the sentiment is much cherished. It would seem enough for us to be assured, that in God's presence our joy will be full. But there is no divesting ourselves of our present attachments and sympathies when we look forward: humanity goes along with us into another state of existence. We wish to continue to be known and to be loved. We cannot endure the thought of losing *for ever* our dear intercourse with those who have afforded us so much pleasure and profit, and to whom we often make, while here, such poor returns.

"Friend after friend departs;  
Who has not lost a friend?  
There is no union *here* of hearts  
That finds not *here* an end—"

How consoling, then, to be able to say,

“There is a world above  
 Where parting is unknown;  
 A long eternity of love  
 The good enjoy alone:  
 And faith beholds them dying here,  
 Translated to that glorious sphere.”

“I am fully persuaded,” says Baxter, “that I shall love my friends in heaven, and therefore *know* them: and this principally binds me to them on earth; and if I thought I should never know them *more*, nor, therefore, love them after death, I should love them comparatively little, as I do all other *transitory* things. But I now delight in conversing with them, as believing I shall commune with them for ever.”

This is finely expressed and sustained, But there has been much weak arguing here: and some have looked for far more express decisions than the Scriptures choose to afford on subjects not of the highest importance. Yet we think the sacred writers fully admit and establish the fact indirectly. ‘Witness the words of our Saviour: “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” Observe Paul’s language to the Corinthians: “Ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Above all, remember the words before us to his beloved Thessalonians: “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”’

This leads us to a third remark. That *the relation*

*between ministers and people peculiarly regards the day of God.* All other connexions are formed in time only, and derive all their importance from the present world; but this is designed for eternity, and all its results issue in a world to come. It is not therefore without reason the apostle says to the Thesalonians, whatsoever you are in our favour, we shall find you to be “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming:” or that he should have said to the Philippians, “Hold fast the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain,” It is easy to understand this, and to explain the bearing our labours among you have upon that solemn period.

Then only will the fruits of our ministry be secure from all danger. This is not the case now. Which of you, whatever may be your age or degree in religion, is beyond the reach of temptation, and does not need the admonition, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”? Our apostle says of his converts, “I am jealous over you; and I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” And says John, to his children who were walking in the truth, “Look to yourselves, that *we* lose not those things which *we* have wrought, but that *we* receive a full reward.”

Then only will the fruits of our ministry have attained their completeness. God has already begun the good work in his people, but he has not perfected that which concerneth them. As yet something is defective in every duty, and wanting in every grace, But then the dawn will be day; the blade will be the full corn in the ear; the child will have

reached the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: and then, as to their knowledge, their holiness, their enjoyment, that which is in part will be done away; and they will be presented “faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”

Then only will the fruits of our ministry be ascertained, and known. We have reason to fear that some, if not many, who belong to us now will conduce little to our honour or happiness when we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ—unless, indeed, as they will be compelled to bear witness to our fidelity and ascribe their destruction to themselves: “for we are a sweet savour of Christ, in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved,” But this is not the satisfaction we long after, *We* may give up our account with joy and not with grief; but that will not be profitable *for you*—And shall we have in that day to exclaim, when we survey the company of the saved, “Where is he who so long occupied such a seat in the sanctuary?—where is he who administered the bread and wine at the Lord’s table?—where are those who by their wisdom and zeal so aided in our benevolent and sacred institutions? where, are those who so largely contributed to the support of missions and the spread of the Scriptures? Are they who wrought in the construction of the ark perishing in the flood?”

Ah! perhaps, if we knew now what will hereafter be revealed, we should be affected to distraction; and certainly conclude that God had not sent us, or that we had not spoken his word faithfully.

On the other hand, at present we are not proper judges of our success. In many instances we may never know while here the good we have been the

means of doing. Some of our converts are fearful and backward to speak; others who receive benefit may be removed to a distance, and have no opportunity to communicate with us. Yea, we may be useful to some when we have finished our course, The sermons heard from the living voice with indifference may in remembrance impress; and the thought of meeting us again may awaken a salutary alarm.

Indeed, with regard to our success, ignorance at present may be safer for us than knowledge. Popularity is always dangerous, and frequently injurious; and perhaps no kind of popularity is so exciting as that which arises from eminent and distinguished usefulness. If Luther, or Whitfield, or Wesley could have seen in a vision what they did while living, and what they are doing now they are dead, they might have been "exalted above measure." But no danger will attend any discoveries of this kind hereafter. There will be no subtle vanity in us to work upon. We shall not "sacrifice to our own net, or burn incense to our own drag." We shall see and acknowledge that we were only instruments; nor shall we feel as we sometimes now do, that *we were* the instruments, and employed *rather* than others.

Finally, we remark, that these future realizations *may even now be partially anticipated*. A minister, as you have heard, must *principally* wait for what is to take place at the revelation of the Saviour: but the less is included in the greater; and even now, *in* a good measure and degree, he may look towards his people, and say, "What *is* our hope, or joy, or crown

of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

The degrees of ministerial satisfaction will vary. Some *encourage* us—These are our hope. Some *solace* us—These are our "joy," Some *dignify* us—These are our "crown of rejoicing." We are all aware that the same persons may be all this to a minister in the successive stages of their experience and improvement: but we shall exemplify the Apostle's gradation in three classes found in every religious society, though the first is more numerous than the second, and the second than the third.

Some *encourage* us—These are our "hope." In some measure this will apply to all our hearers. "What animation should we feel if, when we entered the pulpit, we were to look down upon our audience, and suppose the greater part of them were beyond the reach of mercy? But the Scripture does not require us to think this—yea, it commands us to preach the Gospel to every creature; and to say to the ends of the earth, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." But many "reject the counsel of God," or "neglect so great salvation;" and we cannot deny that there are those among our own people who almost inspire us with despair. They are those of you who have long heard the word of life, and know the truth, but hold it in unrighteousness; and have been often wooed and awed in vain; and have resisted the Holy Ghost, and have quenched the Spirit; and have become insensible under the means which once alarmed you; and are now at ease in Zion.

But there are those who are our "hope"—

—They are the *young*, whose consciences as yet

are tender; whose hearts as yet are not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; whose understandings are not yet perverted by error; who are not yet induced to flee to infidelity as a refuge; who are not yet taken captive by the devil at his will; whose affections now glow with ardour; who are now free from the cares that will engross, if not embitter, future life—while everything invites as well as calls them to “remember their Creator in the days of their youth; before the evil days come, or the years draw near, in which they will say, We have no pleasure in them.” When Jesus saw the young man, “he loved him; and said, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God,”

—They are the *offspring of pious parents*—For though grace goes not by descent, *they* have a thousand advantages of which others are destitute. They have been screened from vicious companions; they have been followed by many prayers; they have early known the holy Scriptures; they have kneeled every morning and evening at the family altar; they have seen good and alluring examples; they have been embraced and bedewed with tears, and addressed alone; and the father has said—“My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine;” and the mother has said—“What, my son! and the son of my womb! and the son of my vows!” —We know, alas! that all these advantages may be counteracted; but we also know that in many cases they have been divinely blessed. In the families of our pious ancestors religion was a kind of heir-loom, and passed from sire to son; and” as was the mother. so was the daughter.” We know also the value at early impressions, and we know also who has said—



“Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

—They are the *afflicted*. Afflictions may be in vain; and we read of those that “turn not to Him that smiteth them.” Yet what numbers have had reason to say—“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.” Afflictions feelingly shew the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the uncertainty of creature dependence, and the importance of something that shall refresh us when our gourds wither, and support us when our props give way. There is therefore a natural adaptation and tendency in them to aid religious decision. I always, therefore, look hopefully toward persons when they come into trouble: just as, when I see a smith putting the iron into the fire, I conclude that he is going to turn it into an implement of usefulness, which could not be done while it remained cold and hard; or as when I see the husbandman pruning a tree. I conclude, however much he cuts off, that he does not mean at present to destroy it, but is anxious for its growth and fruitfulness. I cannot indeed always, when I see a parent chastising, infer from the action *his* moral concern for the child; for the fathers of our flesh often chastise for their own pleasure, in relief of their passion: but “the Father of our spirits” always does it “for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.” He does not afflict willingly, but, as the only-wise God, employs the rod to enforce the demands of the word; and he himself expects a suitable result: “I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence,

and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”

—They are the *convinced and awakened*, who begin to feel the powers of a world to come; who are sometimes awfully, and sometimes pleasingly, affected by divine things; now trembling at the terror of the Lord, or now melting into tears at his dying love; loving to retire from the sons and daughters of vice and vanity, to indulge in the morning and evening walk; and, meeting with the addresses of a God in all around them, are ready to surrender their hearts, saying, “Lord, I am thine, save me.”

—We acknowledge that conviction is not conversion, nor impression renovation, nor emotion principle; and therefore we do not *depend* upon them. But we are now, speaking of what is only *hopeful*: and a beginning, though it does not ensure the end, is necessary to it; and the blossom, though it is not fruit, precedes it; and though knowledge is not always influential, influence depends on knowledge.

Some *solace* us—They are our “joy.” These are the converted, and who give credible evidence of it in their lives. When Barnabas came to Antioch, and had “seen the grace of God, he was glad.” Yet they in whom the effects appeared were not converted by means of *his* preaching; but surely they would not have afforded him less pleasure if they had been the fruit of his *own* ministry.

Nothing is more mortifying than labouring in vain, and spending our strength for nought; and what can be more grateful than, in any interesting case, to see our anxieties and sacrifices, and fears and toils, crowned with success? Thus, how cheering to the

husbandman is it, after manuring, and ploughing, and sowing, to go forth and see “the springing of the earth,” “the valleys standing thick with corn, and the little hills rejoicing on every side.” “A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.” And thus it is with the true ministers of the word: they “travail in pain till Christ be formed in the souls of their people.” And what then are their feelings? Paul speaks of Timothy’s tears, and more than once of his own; and even of his “weakness, and fear, and much trembling.” Many know little of our exercises and apprehensions. We have trials in common with men; we have trials in common with Christians; and, in addition to both these, we have trials peculiar to ourselves. And what comforts us? and what is our “joy”? Are not even ye? For “we live if ye stand fast in the Lord.” And strangers can little imagine what our “joy” is when our prayers are answered, and our endeavours succeed, and tokens of Divine approbation are afforded, and seals are added to our ministry. For, whatever a Popish or Protestant priesthood may avow, an effectual ministry is the most valid one; and such ministers need no letters of recommendation *to* them, or *from* them, “Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living Gael; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.”

And in the event itself, the salvation of souls, how

much is there not only to excite, but to justify our "joy"! James considers the work as its own reward, and proposes no other; and he proposes this not as to a multitude of converts, but an individual only: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins," Compared with this, what is the rescue of a fellow-creature from the flood or the devouring flame? Yea, what would the freeing of an empire from civil bondage be, compared with the deliverance of *one* sinner from the power of darkness, and his translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son?—for this one ransomed sinner will at length have lived an infinitely longer period than the subjects of this empire would have lived if all of them could have existed one after another. And what a difference in their conditions! For while they would have lived only in a vale of tears, this saved sinner not only lives for ever, but lives for ever in an immensity of glory and blessedness. Angels, therefore, who are proverbial in their knowledge, and have a free intercourse with our world, are represented as thrown into an ecstasy by this event only: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," Yea, in every transaction, the Lord Jesus sees "of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied." "He will save, He will rejoice over them with joy, He will rest in his love, He will joy over them with singing,"

Some *dignify* us—They are our "crown of rejoicing!" These are not only safe for eternity, but walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.

They not only have life, but they have it more abundantly, They not only possess what is essential in religion, but “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

—They are the *well-informed*—in malice children, but in understanding full-grown men; not easily imposed upon; having their senses exercised to discern both good and evil; distinguishing things that differ; not mistaking a weak conscience for a tender one; not laying on minor things in religion the stress due only to the greater: for what is the chaff to the wheat? It is sad to look at a people and ask, “Is there not one wise man among you?” But how emboldening is it to be able to say, “I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say!”

—They are the *consistent*, It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, and that we fall not from our own steadfastness. Therefore, says the Apostle, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” We do not admire a Reubenite, of whom Jacob said, “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” A changeling can be no character, for character is the force and effect of habit; and habit arises from repetition and constancy. Oh! it is delightful to see a man standing in every evil day, and saying by his life, “My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.” Even in matters of Church order, and discipline, and attendance on the means of grace, steadiness is commendable, Inconstant hearers, now in their places, and now out of them—one Sab-

bath here, another there—rambling after novel-  
ties, and heaping to themselves teachers—having  
itching ears—are no minister's care, no minister's  
comfort, and no minister's credit. Yet how many  
are there, in our day, mere birds of passage; spiritu-  
ally, homeless vagrants; religious gipsies, who prefer  
the lanes and hedges to the rates, and duties, and  
privileges of the citizens of Zion!

—They are the *amiable*—who not only think upon  
“whatsoever things are true, and whatsoever things  
are honest, and whatsoever things are just, and what-  
soever things are pure,” but “whatsoever things are  
*lovely*, and of *good report*.” Oh, there is such a thing  
as the beauty of holiness. There is such a thing as  
sanctity without sanctimoniousness. There is such a  
thing as a *proper* separation from the world, without  
saying to others, “Stand by thyself, come not near to  
me, I am holier than thou.” Oh, there is such a  
thing as rendering religion not only impressive, but  
inviting; and while we enjoy our liberty, not suffer-  
ing our good to be evil spoken of: “and he that in  
these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and  
approved of men.”

They are the *mild* and *pacific*—who “*follow* peace  
with all men;” and “as much as lieth in them *live*  
peaceably with all men.” They are not soon pro-  
voked; and they are ready to forgive; and the meek-  
ness of wisdom enables them to say,

“I'll not easily offend,  
Nor be easily offended;  
What's amiss I'll strive to mend,  
And endure what can't be mended.”

—They are the *kind* and *generous*—who devise  
liberal things; who shew mercy with cheerfulness;

and, as they have opportunity, do good unto all men, and especially to those that are of the household of faith, The Apostle makes a difference between a righteous man and a good man; but says, it is for a *good* man one would even dare to die.

—They are the *public-spirited*—zealously caring for the things of God; abundantly labouring to promote the cause of the Redeemer in their own connexion, and at large; arid evincing, not only by their prayers, but exertions and sacrifices, that they are on his side, and fervent in spirit while serving the Lord.

You see by my rapidity that I can only point at these characters, for I have not time to describe them. But these, these are they that not only solace us, but complete, and adorn, and crown our rejoicing.

But now, it may be asked, How stands the case with regard to you, my brethren of this communion? I am not accustomed to give flattering titles to any; and I do not, I must not, I will not, say this of you all. O that I could! It would save me many a sigh, and furnish me with many a song, on this Jubilee. Yet, blessed be God, I have reason, much reason, to be thankful in the review of this Church as a whole. Few religious bodies would bear a comparison with it, or furnish so many individuals who are nothing less than a “crown of rejoicing.”

But why should not this be the case with all of you? Why should not all those who are our hearers become our “hope”? Why should not all those who are our “hope” become our “joy”? Why should

not all who are our "joy" become our "crown of rejoicing"?

Yea, and why should the most highly approved among you be satisfied with any advances you have already made? Are you above Paul? But Paul said, "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Let as many, therefore, as be perfect be thus minded.

And thus, in an ordinary service, I should conclude my address: but on this occasion something more will be naturally expected from me. And here I feel a difficulty. The speaker must now become, in a measure, his own subject; and who does not know how delicate it is for a man to enlarge upon himself and his own concerns? If he speaks favourably of his attainments and exertions, his aids and successes, he is likely to be charged with vanity: and if he speaks in a more lowly strain, he is then likely to induce the suspicion of affectation; and some may still conclude that he is angling for praise, with the bait of humility.

There are four things which relieve and embolden me here. First, my young friends naturally and lawfully wish to hear a little of things which preceded them, but in whose consequences they now find themselves deeply concerned. Secondly, I am not troubling the Public at large, but speaking in my own immediate connexion; so that others have no right to complain, or even to criticise. Thirdly, my age allows a little more freedom than would be conceded to



greener years. And, lastly, above all, the occasion is unusual and striking; and few, I presume, would think that it were proper or possible to pass it by without some notice.

David reigned in Jerusalem forty years; and the historian speaks "of the times that passed over him, and over all Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries." My connexion here is ten years longer than his reign: and what times, my brethren, have passed over us and over others during these fifty years! During this period what occurrences and excitements, what shakings and wars, what revolutions and changes, have taken place in the nations of the earth! The hand of God has been in all this; and, we are persuaded, eventually for the improvement of mankind, and the accomplishment of his counsel, wherein He says, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

We do not, therefore, ask why the former days were better than these; for, as Solomon says, we should not "inquire wisely concerning this matter." We have no superior veneration for what is called antiquity. Lord Bacon has very justly observed, that *we* are the proper ancients of the world; and in proportion as we go back we approach the world's infancy. And is childhood always to govern age? Is time to advance, while everything else is to lag behind?

And what a period has this been for our own country! What an extension of empire has taken place

—what increase of commerce—what progress in science—what improvement in the arts—what gainings in the cause of liberty, by the removal of invidious and unfair distinctions, by the substitution of justice for toleration, and by the concession of the right of private judgment, and the abhorrence of persecution and bigotry!

And what a progress has there been as to moral and spiritual advantages! Some of you are not qualified to compare the former and the present state of our country; but how am I struck with it, when I look back, to see how the wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose! Since the noviciate of my ministry what a spirit has been excited—what agencies have been produced—what societies have been established—what a multitude of sanctuaries has been opened for the worship of God, and the preaching of the Gospel—what a spread of evangelical religion, both in the Establishment and out of it!

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, the author of all good, by not gratefully acknowledging that *much* has been done because *all* has not been done. Say not the greater part of the business has been mere profession: there has been much really of the power of godliness. Say not, the zeal which now burns is not of the right kind: it *i. e.* of the right kind. It is religion alive and in motion. It is not speculation; it is not mysticism; it is not the luxury of retirement: it is what the day requires; it is activity in the field; it is seizing the means and opportunities Providence is furnishing us; it is employing our hands as we rise from our knees, and after asking, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Resides the salvation of souls, (and how many have there been called by Divine grace!) we ought not to overlook what has been done subordinately, during this period, by the influence of Christianity. To this we owe the noble exertions which have been made in the abolition of the accursed slave trade, and the opposition to war by our peace societies, and our temperance meetings, and the education of the poor, and the provision made to meet human distress in all its forms and degrees. And yet, forsooth, according to some, the world is so bad that it must soon come to an end! Why, my brethren, evil is not increased more than formerly; but the increase of good makes it more felt, more lamented, more opposed, and therefore more observed too.

But we must draw a little nearer home, and view things more in relation to ourselves. Though it is now just half a century since my connexion with this church, yet I laboured here occasionally, and sometimes for several Sabbaths together, during more than a year previously to my ordination. Neither was this the commencement of my ministry: I began preaching before I was sixteen, and had preached one thousand sermons before I was of age. Now, I do not boast of this; yea, I should rather reflect upon it, had it been the result of my own forwardness. But I was under a tutor whose authority I was bound not to dispute, but to obey. Our academy was at Marlborough; and the state of the villages all around was truly deplorable. Our tutor—the Reverend Cornelius Winter (concerning whom the late Bishop Jebb, in one of his letters, exclaims, “O, what a celestial creature was this Cornelius Winter!”)—compassionating those who were perishing for lack of

knowledge, sent his students to address them very early, and when they would have been unqualified for larger and more regular congregations. But the poor rude rustics required little depth or accuracy: they only wanted to know the “faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”

In some of those villages I have preached down many a livelong Sabbath in the homely cottage, on the green turf before the door, or in some open place in the road, or in a field hard by. How often have I wished to revisit all these hamlets! But, alas! how few should I now find alive, and who would be able to remember—what he was always then called—“the boy preacher?”

Many of these places we supplied on week-day evenings, as well as on the Sabbath, as we could afford time and assistance. To many of them we walked on foot; from some of them we returned, for want of accommodation, the same evening, whatever was the weather; and from none of them received we the least remuneration.

We seldom encountered persecution. This depends very much always on the preacher: and our prudent tutor taught us not to rail and abuse, but simply to preach the truth; and to avoid the offence of folly when we could not avoid the offence of the cross.

I shall never forget with what eagerness and feeling these villagers received the words of life. The common people heard us gladly, and the poor had the Gospel preached unto them; not by “the poor man’s Church,” but by those who *then* supplied their lack of service.

Upon leaving the academy I felt myself too young

to undertake the pastoral office. I therefore chose an obscure village, where I had preached frequently while a student, to enjoy retreat and to pursue my improvement. Income I looked not after, provided my personal wants were supplied. My fixed salary, therefore, was thirty-five pounds a-year, and my board in a private family. But, being then known, and not unpopular, I was frequently drawn forth to supply the neighbouring churches; and, being ill-supplied with books, the design of my retirement was very imperfectly answered,

I then met with Lady Maxwell, who engaged me to officiate in her chapel at the Hotwells, There I was for nearly a year, not without proofs of acceptance and usefulness, as the place was filled and crowded. I was, therefore, pressed by her ladyship to take the oversight of the congregation. At the same time, having preached in Bath before and during the illness of my predecessor here—(who with his dying breath recommended me to his people)—I received an invitation also to settle in Argyle Chapel. For a time I was perplexed; but while deliberating on these two proposals, some circumstances arose which immediately determined my movement towards this city. The step was to me an event of unspeakable importance. It was instantly followed by a conviction that I was where I ought to be: and this conviction never for a moment wavered. Disregarding, therefore, all subsequent offers to change my situation (and some of them, compared with my salary, were very lucrative), I resolved to continue in a connexion which has proved a peculiarly happy one; but which has, as you here see, witnessed the lapse of the larger and better part of my life. It is worthy of remark,

that the first text I ever preached from among those who were to become my “hope,” and “joy,” and “crown of rejoicing” was, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”

Some time after the acceptance of the call, I was ordained—fifty years ago yesterday. The Charge was addressed to me by my honoured friend and tutor, Mr. Winter; and the Sermon to the people was preached by the Rev. John Adams, of Salisbury. I was a young pastor—but the people despised not my youth; and, under various deficiencies and inexperience, they patiently waited for more maturity from ripening seasons,

Without entering into the minuteness of any human system of divinity (which I would not do for any people under heaven), I engaged to preach Mr. Hervey’s three R’s, as they have been called,—Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration; ruin by Adam, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit. From these principles—and these *are* principles—I have never seen cause yet to swerve. And though, in this long course of things, there have been many “Lo, here’s” and “Lo, there’s,” I have been too much bent on the good old way to be attracted by them. If in any minor things I have ever differed from my brethren, and have had faith, I have had it to myself before God; or I have said, “Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

With regard to abstruse speculations—to which I was naturally much inclined—I was, after no inconsiderable reading and inquiry, constrained to draw off my attention; having a full conviction that, if these things were not so useless as not to merit regard, they were too high to be reached, or too deep to be

fathomed: and therefore of such subjects I have long been very contentedly ignorant. We shall know, in a few moments after we enter the world of light, much more than we could acquire here by the laborious study of many years; while the precious time and attention saved from impertinences can be rendered profitable to life and godliness, I have valued nothing in teaching since I have been here but what had, at least in my own conviction, a practical bearing on the conscience and conduct; fully persuaded that, "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

But what is preaching without impression and effect? And is nothing here to be sacrificed to secure this? Can you plant a flower without bending, or lift up a child from the ground without stooping? Is there to be no difference between the, press and the pulpit? Are preachers only to consider what will be gratifying to scholars, and overlook the mass of their audience? "The words of the wise are as goads and as nails." There is no informing the multitude in the way of dissertation: argument with them is nothing unless it be brief, and illustrated by comparison: and no feeling is to be produced without facts, examples, natural imagery, touches of passion, and strokes of imagination. How few are there of those who very freely pronounce on preachers who are proper judges of what is necessary to rouse the careless mind, to relieve the jaded attention, to recall the wandering thought, to fix a sentiment, to furnish a handle to an idea, so that it may be laid hold of and carried away; to put a picture over the lesson of the child; to honey the vessel containing the medicine which the patient is by no means willing to receive!—

Yet we are talked of, and we are censured, by persons who consider condescension as a want of taste, and a plainness of address as vulgarity, and who never take into the account our situation as ministers, our difficulties and our aims. I remember, a French monarch wished that all his subjects could be kings for a few months; for, he said, it would free them from envy and reflection. I wish that all our hearers, upon the same principle, could be preachers for a few months; for, I am sure, it would disarm them of those free and foolish remarks in which they now often indulge. However, I bless God I have never regarded fastidious criticism, or resigned one particle of that freedom by which I could use anything important or convertible to popular edification. Is not one sentiment, though it may be quaintly expressed, which is remembered and repeated by numbers twenty years afterwards, better than a whole sermon of tame smoothness, which slides off from the mind like oil or mercury down a slant marble, and is forgotten before the admiring audience have even reached their own home?

The state of things at my coming to Bath was not considerable, but it was encouraging; and there seemed to be an open door, and not only room, but a call. for increased exertion. Our Baptist friends had a church, but it allowed of no mixed communion. The Wesleyans had an interest, which was very prosperous; and there was a chapel belonging to the Countess of Huntingdon, which had been a great blessing, but it was *then* supplied by Episcopalian ministers *only*; and the exclusion of other preachers who had laboured there before gave rise to a secession of persons who had been awakened, and converted,



and edified, by their labours. This led, eventually, to the formation of the Independent Church here; for the seceding members were encouraged by their former ministers, and especially by the Rev. Rowland Hill (who all through life ever took the liberal side of things), to secure a place, and to act for themselves; which they immediately did. In the Church of England there was nothing which the Evangelical clergy who visited Bath would, according to their views, consider the Gospel; and none of them could gain admittance into any pulpit of the Establishment here for many years after my settlement, except that of my respected father-in-law, who was then officiating at Batheaston, though his living was at a distance, Perhaps the opinion of such a man as Mr. Wilberforce, an Episcopalian himself, concerning the state of things here at that period may be more regarded than my own. In one of his letters, after kindly admonishing me (and the admonition was not needless or useless) to be very explicitly evangelical in every discourse, he says, "I am aware that your own congregation may not stand in need of this; but, indeed, my dear Sir, you are a debtor both to Greeks and barbarians. Consider the situation in which you stand—not another minister in Bath whom any of the poor wretched upper classes are likely to hear who preaches the Gospel. They come, perhaps, to your chapel; they never heard the word of life before; they never may have another opportunity. Pity them, my dear Sir, as I know you do. They above all others deserve to be pitied. I, alas! have been more acquainted with them than you, and am thereby the more impressed with the sense of their wretched ignorance in spiritual things—"

The peculiarity, therefore, of my situation influenced, in a considerable degree, my preaching and my ministry. I saw that the impression must be very much made in the pulpit; and I kept my eye, not only upon my home-hearers, but upon strangers, who, at that time, often peculiarly needed evangelical information, and who, if they obtained good, would carry it away and disperse it in their own neighbourhood. And I cannot but bless God for the number of persons who have made acknowledgments of this kind; and no few of whom were ministers, or became such, nor less than seven of these Episcopalians.

A church, therefore, of our own faith and order, seemed to be here desired. To this encouragement was given, not only by residents, but by visitors, One, in particular, from London, a banker, who nearly, if not entirely, at his own expense fitted up the old Roman Catholic chapel (which, for the glory of God, had been burned down in the Gordon riots), and engaged, on his recommendation of a minister, to support him till the people were able to bear the burden. That house, now used by our friends the Quakers, proving too small, my predecessor, encouraged especially by Lady Glenorchy, who promised a considerable sum (which was lost by her untimely death), and others of his friends, was induced to undertake the erection of this place. When ready for use, that excellent man of God for whom it was erected was too ill to open it, though he was present: I therefore performed all the services of the day; and, as I was the first preacher in this place, so I have been the only pastor of this people.

I only add, that this church was from the beginning as liberal in its discipline as a regard to its purity

would allow, never refusing occasional fellowship to communicants of other churches; and though no lion was placed at the door of entrance, and though no accounts of conversion and experience were *exacted* before all, what a small number from the beginning here has ever been excommunicated, or even suspended from the holy communion! It is remarkable that during the fifty years we have been reviewing there has been no division, no discord, no jar.

As the cause has prospered much, there have been several enlargements of the chapel, the last of which was very expensive; but all has been paid for, and the place set clear by the generosity of the church and the congregation, which has afforded me no little gratification.

Such are the reflections derivable from the subject of our text, and the occasion of the day. And, now, what can I add more? As I ascended this desk, and looked down upon this vast audience, I said to myself, Ah! where will all this assembly be by the return of this Jubilee? Flame of you will remain, and, perhaps, you will then be talking over what is now passing here: but where, O where, will the majority of you be found then?

As to many of us, a much shorter period will have removed us, and the places that now know us will know us no more for ever. Other occupiers will fill these pews; other singers will lead the psalmody when the voices of those who now charm us will be silent in the grave; and another voice will be heard in this pulpit than that which has filled it for fifty years past.

To how many of you is my ordination a matter of

history! You have been born since that day, which many of your fathers and mothers attended. How many of you have I taken in these hands, and offered to God in holy baptism! How many of you have I hailed at your coming to the table of the Lord! And how many of your connexions have I followed to our burying-ground! "Ah!" says one, "there lies my cherub child!" "And," says another, "there lies the desire of mine eyes, taken away with a stroke." "And there," says another, "lies the guide of my youth." I am glad, therefore, when every church has a place of interment of their own: it seems keeping up still a kind of connexion with the departed. Our dead lie not among strangers. "There I buried Abraham, and Sarah his wife; there I buried Isaac, and Rebecca his wife; and there I buried Leah." We have all our precious dust in yonder ground! where is the person belonging to us who does not go to the grave to weep there? I am sometimes ready to be jealous lest our burying-place should become richer than our church. But no; instead of the fathers are the children. Our sons are plants grown up in their youth; our daughters are corner stones, polished after the similitude of palaces: and we have a noble band of the young and middle-aged, who have covenanted with God, and who are saying, We will not forsake the house of our God. Oh, how does old age, while it leaves life, peel off continually its connexions, till we seem left even as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, or as an ensign upon the hill! O how many of the various relations of life, during such a varied and extensive acquaintance as mine, have gone down to the dust, and have seen corruption! How many ministers have been taken

away! "The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" Of all the ministers that belonged to the Wiltshire Association when I entered it, I am the only survivor: and of all those who signed my call when I came here, only one remains, whose venerable head you would have seen here this day but for indisposition. And, oh! what a curtailment are fifty years in a brief duration like ours! Your preacher, therefore, feels this; and though, in some measure, he can talk like Caleb, who said, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, eye so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in;" yet he does not forget that the days of our years are threescore years and ten. Yes; therefore a period cannot be far remote when, as he hopes he shall never stand in the way of usefulness, he will either entirely resign his labours, or share them with another: and though he knows the extreme difficulty attached to a concern where three parties are so deeply interested, the Lord can provide,

Now I seem to be taking a farewell of the fifty years which I have passed within these happy walls! What a difference between the day of which I am reminded, and this day! *Then*, I was rapidly entering life: I am now gradually withdrawing from it. Then, I was commencing my voyage across an untried ocean: now, with the glass in my hand, I am looking for the fair havens, Then, I was a mere youth; now, surrounded with children and grandchildren. What was then anxiety is now repose; what was then hope is now accomplishment; what was then prayer is now praise,

What a season of humiliation, you will naturally conclude, must this have been! We are hardly aware of our deficiencies and imperfections till some thing occurs which drives us to retire, and reflect, and review. But who can look back upon fifty years, and not exclaim, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord: for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified." "O Lord, if Thou shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who can stand!" Yet what a season of thanksgiving ought it to be! How has my life been indulged! How few have been so satisfied with favour, and filled with the blessing of the Lord! Yet I have had trials enough to remind me that "full bliss is bliss divine." Though I have not drunk deep of the cup, I have tasted the bitterness of affliction. One trial has pressed upon me with peculiar force; and concerning which I should have been ready to say, Lord, afflict me in any other part, but spare me here—yet His ways are judgment.

But what deliverances have I experienced during this period! Serious attacks of indisposition formerly prepared me to expect an abbreviated ministry; and perhaps you looked for it too; but having obtained help of God, I continue to this day; and, after all the Ebenezers I have reared along the road, I now rear the largest of them all—And

"Here in thy house I leave my vows,  
And thy rich grace record;  
Witness, ye saints, who hear me now,  
If I forsake the Lord."

AN

**ESSAY ON MARRIAGE;**

OR, THE

DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO MARRY RELIGIOUSLY.

WITH A FEW REFLECTIONS

ON

IMPRUDENT MARRIAGES.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

WE, the Ministers of the Wiltshire Association, assembled together at Melksham this day, October 22, 1806,—deploring the little regard of late years paid by too many Professors of Religion to the Christian rule of Marriage; and deeming it desirable that the attention of the public in general, and our own Churches in particular, should be called to this subject, do unanimously request the Rev. Wm. Jay to publish some Strictures upon it, and the more so, as he has already sent forth a Sermon on the Duties of Husbands and Wives which has met with great acceptance.

Signed,  
On behalf of the Association,  
GEORGE MANTEL,

*Chairman,*

*Melksham, Oct. 22, 1806*



## ESSAY ON MARRIAGE.

### SECTION I.

The peculiarity and importance of the Marriage Relation,  
The possibility of knowing the will of God in this affair.  
The Law laid down.

**H**ow wonderful is it that two persons who, perhaps, never met before, should, by a train of circumstances, be brought together, obtain a peculiar propriety in each other, and form one absolute communion of wishes, joys, and sorrows!

If we compare this relation with other connexions, we shall find that it surpasses them all.—Are other unions *optional*? They may be limited in their continuance, or terminated at pleasure. But this is permanent and indissoluble, You cannot marry for a given period. It is for life.—Are other unions *natural*? Intimate indeed is the relation between brother and sister: tender is the relation between parents and children, especially between the mother and “the son of her womb. But for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh, “What God hath joined together let no man put asunder,”

The Marriage Connexion therefore *is* the most singular, and the most important. Hence it can never be viewed with indifference, It cannot be carelessly contemplated by legislators, by politicians, by moralists, by divines—And can it be slightly regarded

by the individuals themselves? The effects extend to families and communities—but how much more powerfully must the consequences affect the parties immediately concerned!—Can the Scripture, always alive to the welfare of man, Can the Scripture pass by such a relation? Impossible. It shews us its divine institution and benediction in Paradise, It shews us our Saviour gracing with his presence the celebration of a Marriage at Cana in Galilee, and displaying *his glory* by working a miracle to preserve the new-married couple from embarrassment and mortification. It shews us, in this condition, characters the most eminent and distinguished for piety and usefulness; witness Enoch, and Peter, and James, and John. It brands with infamy the doctrine that *forbids to marry*, It often employs the connexion as the image of the union subsisting between *Christ and the Church*. It assures us that “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

It is obvious, therefore, that the Scripture is far from discouraging Marriage. But what it does not condemn it is careful to regulate. Let us then, my Christian friends, look after the will of God in this momentous and interesting subject.

If ever we err, it is not from any defect in the Scripture, but because there is some *occasion of stumbling in us*: some inattention that hinders examination, or some prejudice that perverts it. His Word is “a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths.” There is a sufficiency in it for all the useful purposes of *life and godliness*.—Can a man ask at these *lively oracles* how he is to conduct himself in prosperity or adversity; can he inquire how he is to govern his family,

and train up his children—and be at a loss for an answer? *He may run that readeth*. So it is in the case before us. If Christians are really desirous of knowing with whom, in Marriage alliance, they are to unite themselves, we make no scruple to say the revealed will of God is decisive and clear: IT RESTRICTS THEIR CHOICE TO RELIGIOUS CHARACTER ONLY.

## SECTION II.

### THIS LAW ARGUED AND ESTABLISHED.

If nothing express had been said on this subject, the conclusion might fairly have been drawn from these general commands which forbid all chosen and needless association with the irreligious founded on the danger of contamination.

The case may be confirmed in no inconsiderable degree from the state of the Jews. It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the Jews were forbidden to marry with the surrounding nations. But it may be proper to state two objections.

First. It may be said that the prohibition was confined to the seven accursed nations of Canaan. But this was not the case, Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians are reckoned by Ezra among those from whom the returned Israelites were to be separated; and none of these belonged to the race thus devoted to extermination.

Secondly. It may be supposed that this law was political, and regarded this people only in their civil and national capacity. But the futility of this will be demonstrated by remarking—first, that they were allowed to marry with individuals of any of the neigh-

bouring countries when they became Proselytes.— This shews that the interdiction regarded not their nation, but their religion, And, secondly, that the reason always assigned as the ground of the prohibition is not political, but moral—and, therefore, universally and constantly binding, Thus we find Moses saying, “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. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.”

But to come nearer. Have we not in the New Testament a prohibition the most explicit?—“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” We are aware that some are disposed to take this Scripture in a larger sense, as forbidding to join with such persons in church communion. But, in answer to this—not to remark, what we think cannot be denied, that the expression of *yoke-fellow* is more used in reference to Marriage than to church communion; the former application of it being the natural and original, the latter, of course, only the borrowed and secondary; I say, not to avail ourselves of this circumstance, we observe, that we have nothing to fear from admitting the explanation proposed. For, if Christians are forbidden to join with unbelievers in church-communion, surely they are equally enjoined not to enter with them into marriage contract. What! were the converted Corinthians commanded to “come out from among them:” and yet be permitted to enter into the closest affinity with them? Were they ordered to be *separate* and not to *touch the unclean thing*: and yet be

allowed to become *one body*? Was there to be no “fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, between light and darkness;” and yet were these to be united for ever? Was “he that believeth to have no part with an infidel,” and yet suffer them to be *partners* for life? Was “the Temple of God to have nothing to do with idols,” and yet were idols to be set up within its walls?

But if this be not deemed sufficient to establish our doctrine, let us attend to the language of the Apostle when speaking *expressly* of marriage. “The Wife,” says he, “is bound by the law, as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will: only in the Lord.” Now, though this be stated, as the occasion of the words required, in reference to a widow, the limitation unquestionably extends to all Christians in the same relative circumstances. This then is the law of the house. This is the indispensable consideration:—**ONLY IN THE LORD.**—Thus the will of God is fully made known, and there are two things we ought to remark with regard to it.

First, He cannot err in his decision. His “judgment is always according to truth. His understanding is infinite.” He views a subject in all its bearings, in all its consequences, in all the possibilities of its operation. He sees effects in their causes. He knows the end from the beginning. He perceives how we should think, feel, and act in every untried state of being. How qualified, therefore, is He to undertake to direct us? And to what implicit respect and absolute compliance is the determination of such an adviser entitled?

But, secondly, we should remember that his counsel is not advice, but command. Considered indeed

as speaking from a regard to our welfare, a love to our souls—he is the friendly monitor: but as to our obligation to obey, and the danger we incur by transgression—there he is nothing less than a Sovereign. It is at your peril to cast any of his words behind your back. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.”

### SECTION III.

#### THE EVILS OF TRANSGRESSING IT VARIOUSLY VIEWED.

If people were as easily satisfied in receiving truth as they are in opposing it; if no more was needful to influence practice than to produce conviction; it might be unnecessary to enlarge after the adduction of the preceding arguments. But, alas! in spiritual concerns men venture their souls on such trifling evidence, as, were it to govern them in their temporal affairs, would lead their fellow-creatures to conclude that they were either madmen or idiots. Here we need *line upon line, precept upon precept*. Let us then specify some of the disadvantages and injuries that arise from an infraction of this law among professors of religion. And here we may observe—

—That it scandalizes others, It counteracts, discourages, and confounds ministers, It injures the minds of your fellow Christians. It proves a distress to the strong, and “a stumbling-block to the weak.” It turns that “which is lame out of the way.” To your pious relations it occasions the most painful regret and anxiety. “And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the Daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the Daughter of Elon the Hittite, who were a grief of mind unto Isaac and

Rebecca.—And Rebecca said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the Daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the Daughters of Heth, such as these who are of the Daughters of the Land, what good shall my life do me?”

—It excites suspicion of your own religion. At least it shews that you are not alive to its principles and privileges: that if you ask its advice you can follow your own opinion; and that, if you profess to please it, you are not afraid to offend it. Would you marry an enemy of your own before you believed there was a change of disposition wrought in him? And why? Because you love yourselves—this would prevent it. And if the love of God prevailed in your hearts, would you marry an enemy to God before you discerned in him an evidence of conversion? “Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.” What do ye more than others? Should not the line of distinction between the church and the world be not only real, but visible? Should not the Christian universally appear? Are not his choice and refusal, as well as his sorrow and joy, to evince the empire of religion? “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” These are the injunctions of God. And we are to “esteem all his commandments concerning all things to be right, and to hate every false way.”

Again. We call upon you to remember the duties enjoined upon Christians with regard to their households. The discharge of these duties ill married life

requires union, countenance, assistance. They cannot be performed to advantage, if at all, where in the heads of the family there is a contrariety of convictions, dispositions, and pursuits. Peter, therefore, enforces his admonition upon husbands and wives by this motive, "that your prayers be not hindered." For imagine the case we are condemning. Does the man seek the glory of God in all he does, and the woman her own glory? Does the woman make the will of God her rule, and the man his own will? Instead of striving together they draw adversely, and the design of the union is defeated. Are there children? Some will be likely to adhere to the father; some to the mother. Are there servants? Some will be likely to attach themselves to the master; some to the mistress. Thus the husband and wife will, probably, keep a perpetual watch over each other, unwilling to lose any of their respective influence; and the house will be divided against itself.

We observe, also, that we personally need every assistance we can receive in our passage to heaven. There is surely enough in ourselves, and in the way we travel, to keep us back without engaging anyone constantly to retard our progress, either by opposition or diversion!—What need often have we of counsel in spiritual darkness and doubts? of comfort in soul-trouble? of stimulation by reproof or example in our religious languors? "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he walketh: for there is not another to help him up." He is a friend indeed who knows the road, will journey with us, and afford us seasonable succour: but what assistance is to be de-



rived from one who has no eyes or hands, or who is going in a contrary direction? Is it enough when we want daily and hourly support that a companion will not try to interrupt us?

For here—and this is another consideration—here not to help is to hinder. The very attraction of the mind from high and holy things by continual discourse about other subjects will be no inconsiderable detriment. For it is by the frequent recurrence of divine things in our thoughts and in our conversation, that we become spiritually-minded, and continue so. Pious emotions may be starved where they are not assassinated. Fire will be extinguished immediately by water: but it will go out in time even for want of fuel.

But we do not go too far when we say that an irreligious connexion is likely to prove the most effectual instrument in the world to injure us, not only by weakening impressions, chilling our affections, and drawing us off by degrees from various duties, but also by perverting the judgment, and enticing to sin. “They were mingled with the heathen, and learned their works; and they served their idols, which became a snare unto them. Evil communications corrupt good manners.” And here several additional things should be seriously considered. For instance—

—The example is near—is always in sight.

—Evil has more power over us than good. An oath when heard will make a deeper impression than a prayer. Profane images are more easily retained in the mind than pure ones. Evil falls in with our depravity; and always finds in us a friend to welcome and to strengthen it.

—The danger is greater if the unconverted party

be the husband, as he has the advantage of superior authority and influence.

—The more attachment there is, the greater the hazard of moral injury: for affection is wonderfully assimilating. Like fire it reduces everything it seizes into its own nature. We are always in a great measure the same with the object of our regard. The image, by its frequent entrance into the mind, and by its residence there, leaves its impression and resemblance.

But if you should escape unhurt morally—which would be little less than a miracle—still you may experience bitter trials; and under these crosses you will not be able to look up to God for support and deliverance with the same cheerfulness and confidence you would feel if they were afflictions of *His* sending. —But you have chosen them.—Hence painful reflections of mind. Hence you *may* expect to hear as the inquiry of conscience, and as the censure of Providence—“Hast thou not procured this unto thyself? Thou hast done foolishly; from henceforth thou shalt have wars.” Yea, something of this kind *must* be expected.—“If my children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes.” He has said, “If ye walk contrary to me, I also will walk contrary to you.” And he is a faithful God. And he is able to make good his word. He can take satisfaction out of our chosen delights He can remove them in his anger. He can leave them to produce leanness in our souls. Though he forgives the iniquities of his people, he takes vengeance on their inventions.

To which we may add—and these are natural and unavoidable consequences—the painful anxiousness of living with those from whom you fear that you shall be separated for ever; and the peculiar disagreeableness of being connected with those who are incapable of the principal part of your affection, Love them you may indeed as husband or wife; but not as believers; not as followers of our Lord, to whom you are allied by stronger ties than human, and which can never be dissolved. Must not this be a vast deduction of happiness; a bitter ingredient in the cup; a kind of daily death?

#### SECTION IV.

##### THE MISCHIEF HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED.

We may take another view of the breach of this law, and see the evils that resulted from it as natural effects, or, as judgments from God as they are held forth in the Scriptures of truth.

This was the particular sin for which God drowned the old world.

Some of Lot's daughters married in Sodom, and perished in the overthrow,

Both Ishmael and Esau married irreligiously, and were both rejected and turned persecutors.

The first blasphemer that was stoned by God's command is marked as an offspring of one of these marriages—his mother had espoused an Egyptian,

The first captivity of the Jews, after their settlement in the Holy Land, is ascribed to this cause. The whole passage is very instructive; It is said that the remains of the nations “were to prove Israel to know whether they would hearken unto the commandment

of the Lord which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.—And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods, And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves: therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years.”

David married the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur, by whom he had Absalom—The disgrace and curse of his family,

The case of Solomon is a warning to all ages.

His son Rehoboam, that lost the ten tribes, sprang from one of these forbidden marriages—his mother was an Ammonitess.

The marriage of Ahab is thus awfully noticed. “And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him.—But there was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.”

What was it that Ezra so grievously lamented, and so sharply reprovèd? It was, that “the holy seed had mingled themselves with the people of the land.”

And what says the zealous reformer Nehemiah?

“Their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?”

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after all things as they also lusted.”

## SECTION V.

### EXCUSES TO JUSTIFY DEVIATION FROM IT EXAMINED.

In the history of the church recorded in the New Testament, we find no instances similar to those which have been remarked in the preceding chapter. The rule was too clearly understood, and the reasons on which it was founded were too powerfully felt, to allow of its violation by the primitive Christians. And, indeed, one would suppose that a godly character would stand in need of no positive prohibition in such a case as this. It might be expected that his very feelings would secure him. For surely a kind of violence must be offered to his dispositions and principles before such a step can be taken.

Accordingly something of this nature is often pleaded, They feel religious reluctance, but speak as if it *were* to be, and *must* be. Let us examine this, and see whether it be their fate or their folly.

Sometimes they plead peculiar circumstances which seem to countenance it, As this is a very common excuse, and by which many are deluded, it demands some notice, And for ever to check all encouragement derived from this quarter, let the following things be maturely considered.—That such prognostics are rarely, if ever remarked, but when they fall in with our determination, or at least with our propensity.—That when a man “receives not the love of the truth, God *may* give him up to strong delusion to believe a lie.”—That “thus saith the Lord God:

Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet: I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols: that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.”—That, after he has expressly said to Balaam, *go not*, and he finds him still longing for the enterprise, he can say by an irony, which the eager mind will mistake for reality, *go*.—That Jonah was deceived if he supposed that, when fleeing from the presence of the Lord, it was very providential for him to find a vessel just ready to sail for Tarshish.—That circumstances and events are equivocal, having occurred at different times with the most contradictory aspects.—That the word of God is our only guide, and that only while walking by this rule shall mercy and peace be upon us.—That we are to lay stress on nothing. however

singular or striking, that opposes the revealed will of God.—That the death of the prophet slain by a lion was written to teach us this very truth: he had received an express command in which he could not be mistaken, and he yielded to another specious suggestion as coming from God concerning which he could not be sure.

But there is another justification often urged. It is the prospect of being useful. This also is common, and has often ensnared those who ought to walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. Here permit me to ask you the following questions.

Are we to do evil that good may come?—It is desirable for a generous Christian to have property; he will do good with it. But is he to steal or rob in order to obtain it?

Is marriage to be considered as one of the means of grace? Is it ever spoken of in the Scripture as intended for the conversion of souls? Is it anywhere prescribed for this purpose?

Promises and appearances may induce a pleasing hope during the formation of the connexion—but may not these be very fallacious? To admit this, it is not necessary to suppose that the individual is vile enough to deceive wilfully—yet this has frequently been the case, and a regard to the forms of evangelical religion has been a mere pretence, gradually thrown off as the inducement for using it ceased—but it is not necessary to charge a man with hypocrisy. There are many powerful emotions that are very sincere, and yet not durable. The mind may be softened by affection; and view everything in reference to its favourite purpose. Men know not themselves; they

are not aware how they may feel in new and untried situations, The godliness which they seem even to admire in the general indistinct notion, and while at a distance, may become very irksome when brought near and acted upon in every instance of life; yea, it must be offensive, at least in all its more spiritual parts and exercises, to every natural man. Who, that is not alive to his religious improvement, is likely to love an example that continually admonishes and condemns? Who that is trying to go to sleep loves a noise? Who that wishes to remain in darkness can be fond of light—especially placed so near?

Is it not more consistent with a becoming diffidence of yourselves to fear that you should be injured by the irreligious, rather than that the irreligious should be benefited by you? We have already shewn the danger of this in fact, and which has led an ingenuous author to remark, that he who would pull another out of a pit had need stand firm or he may be pulled in. We have already mentioned Solomon. Whether Solomon hoped to bring over Pharaoh's daughter to worship the true God we know not, but we do know that she brought him over to worship a false one.—But we have now to do only with the apprehension and impression of this truth. Is it consistent with humility to suppose that you can stand where others, and some of them far superior to yourselves, have fallen? Is it consistent with a proper sense of your own weakness to rush into extreme perils, confident not only that you shall be secure there, but even do good? The very imagination forebodes ill. It looks like the pride that goes before destruction, and the haughty spirit that precedes a fall. Indeed it is righteous in God



to suffer us to fall when, disobeying his command, we renounce his protection, and venture to proceed without him.

Again. As you conclude that your compassion being ungodly will not be able to make you irreligious—what authorizes you to think that your being godly will be able to make him religious? Surely, out of your own mouth you are condemned; for the very principle upon which you proceed with regard to yourself should reduce the confidence you indulge with regard to him. If you have no fear that he can impress and influence you, you should have no hope that you can impress and influence him. If you believe that your love to him will not alter you, you ought not to believe that his love to you will alter him.

And do you consider what human nature is? Do you consider what real religion is? If so, surely you would not think so lightly of accomplishing the conversion of a soul as you now seem to do. If the process be so easy, why are so few converted at all? Why do not all those who have dear connexions convert those whom they love and by whom they are beloved?

But you say, You do not expect the result independent of God's influence and blessing—But is not He able to convert them? He is. And we have reason to believe He has in some cases employed his power. For we cannot go the length of Dr. Doddridge, who has remarked, that where Christians have knowingly espoused irreligious characters, he never knew an instance of the conversion of one of them afterwards.—But I ask, would you take up an affair so important on a ground so slender?—On a mere possibility?—

For probability there is none. You would not like to marry a condemned criminal because he *may* be pardoned or reprieved. God *can* make a beggar a gentleman, and yet I presume you would not like to take him on this presumption; you would rather reckon certainly upon a little wealth.—Why then marry an unconverted sinner because God may, because God can, call him by his grace?

Besides: If the acceptance and success of all our endeavours depend wholly upon his favour—Can it be a rational way to attain our wishes to slight his authority, and to provoke his anger by disobedience?—

But to conclude. Even if God should over-rule such a connexion for good, you will remember that this is *His* work, and the glory belongs to him. It does not prove that you have done right; nor can it free the mind from distress in view. For you cannot be so ignorant as not to be able to distinguish between your unrighteousness and the Divine goodness that has thus blessed you, notwithstanding all your desert.

## SECTION VI.

IN WHAT CASES THIS LAW IS NOT BROKEN, THOUGH BOTH THE PARTIES  
BE NOT RELIGIOUS.

We have thus endeavoured, by placing the subject in various points of light, to prove that Christians in the business of marriage ought to confine their choice to pious character only. But, to relieve the minds of some who deserve pity rather than censure, let me remark two or three instances in which the rule laid down is not transgressed.

First. It sometimes happens that both parties are ignorant of Divine things at the time of marriage, and one is called afterward. When this is the case, the blame docs not attach. But the individual renewed by Divine grace now feels pains and anxieties to which he was before a stranger. It is the nature of grace to excite, with a concern for our own welfare, a concern for the salvation of others, especially of those to whom we are tenderly connected by blood, friendship, or affinity. How can I endure the thought of being severed for ever from her in whom my happiness is so much bound up?—"How call I bear," will such an Esther say, "to see the destruction of my kindred?"—She will, therefore, pray, and use every persuasive method to allure. She will endeavour to render her religion lovely and attractive. It is what the Scripture enjoins. "Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husband, that if any obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the good conversation of the wives: while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." And, for the consolation of such, be it remembered that after a trial, and perhaps a long one, of their faith and patience, God has frequently heard their petitions, and succeeded their endeavours. After performing religious exercises alone, they have gone to the house of God in company; and have walked together as heirs of the grace of life.

Secondly. Persons may be mistaken after due examination, Everything admits of counterfeit. There is a specious imitation of every Christian grace as well as of every moral virtue, But we are not accountable for our inability to read the heart. This

is the prerogative of God only, "By their fruits we are to know them." If the profession be fair, and the life blameless, there is no objection upon this ground to hinder choice.

Thirdly. There is another case which, perhaps, to some will not carry the same force of conviction. Yet we do not express ourselves without due deliberation and council—It is this. Two individuals, both, at the time of promise, destitute of religion, may solemnly pledge themselves to each other, and before the actual accomplishment of the covenant engagement, one of them may become pious—We will suppose it to be the man—In this case we affirm that he would not be at liberty to violate his promise, under the pretence of looking out for a character congenial with his present views. If some contend that marriage be nothing more than a civil contract, all must allow that it is nothing less: and not to observe the coercion of the case—not to observe that the law could enforce the claim; the insufficiency of justifying a civil offence by a religious reason, and the ridiculousness of the attempt—what a dishonour would be done to the cause of the Gospel by such prevaricating morality!—For such it must appear to the world.—Whereas we are to "have our conversation honest among the Gentiles:" we are not to suffer our "good" to be "evil spoken of:" we are to "avoid the very appearance of evil"—Such is the holy delicacy of the Gospel!

This seems to be one of those cases in which a good man "swareth to his own hurt and changeth not." And trying as the scene may be, if by the consent of the other party he be not honourably

disengaged, we should advise him to a plain, straightforward policy; and to expect that, in a combination of circumstances so peculiarly providential, all will be over-ruled for good, either by way of usefulness or trial.

And, if even *this* solemn consideration be not sufficient to discharge a man honourably from one to whom he has contracted himself—Will anything else? Can anything else? What! is he to trifle with a sacred engagement, and to wound the affections, the respectability, the health, the peace of a female!—because another object comes in view subsequently, in his opinion, more eligible for person, for fortune, for address?!! If a man wished to sink the honour of religion, and to disgrace the value of the Christian—how much more should it ever be the ministerial character! he could not take a step that would more effectually accomplish his purpose.

#### SECTION VII.

The Disregard of this principle lamented. But piety, though essential to choice, not sufficient alone to justify it. Ministers under peculiar Obligation to marry discreetly. Prudence needful, and recommended.

Happy those who have formed a union founded in true godliness, the bonds of which are faith and love in Christ Jesus. They are pleasant in life, and in death not divided. But how deplorable is it that this Christian rule of marriage is so frequently trampled upon! The violation is, in the degree of it at least, peculiar to our own age. Our pious ancestors, especially among the non-conformists, would have been shocked at the practice, as appears from their

invaluable writings. And I am persuaded that it is very much owing to the prevalence of these indiscriminate and unhallowed connexions, that we have fallen so far short of those men of God who are gone before us, in our seclusion from the world, in the simplicity of our manners, in the uniformity of our profession, in the discharge of family worship, and the training up of our households in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. How could it have been otherwise? Is there not a connexion between causes and effects? Do we sow one kind of grain, and reap another? Can men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Guard, therefore, my Christian friends, against every pretence that would draw you into this forbidden path! Establish the unlawfulness and perniciousness of such alliances as a *principle* in your minds, that when the evil day of temptation comes, it may find you ready to resist, stedfast in the faith. You should not have your weapons to seek when you want them to use. O, woman, do not accept a man who has all "the wisdom of the world," if a stranger to the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." Do not, it is the rough image of an old divine. Do not choose a swine because he has a golden trough. Whatever a man possesses, remember he has *nothing*, if he has not "the one thing needful." O, man, be not reconciled to a weak or ugly mind because it wears a handsome body. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands: and let her own works praise her in the gate."

But a marriage that is not sinful may be improper. The Apostle himself distinguishes between what is

*lawful*, and what is *expedient*. Religion is indeed indispensable, but does not alone constitute the propriety of the action. Religion is indeed essential, but is not, abstracted from all other considerations, sufficient to justify choice. To exemplify this a little.

—The admission of the piety of the parties does not destroy the indecorum of haste, in marrying immediately after the death of a husband or wife.

The admission of the piety of the parties does not hinder the censure due to a great disparity in years, How unnatural, how indecent is it to see an old man surrounded with infants and babes which he can scarcely see or hear for the infirmities of age! How unnatural, how odious is it to see a young man fastened to a piece of antiquity—so as to perplex strangers to determine whether he is living with a wife or a mother!

The admission of the piety of the parties does not render in all cases a difference of sentiment, and of denomination, unimportant. It is not lovely for the husband and wife to repair on the Sabbath-day morning to separate places of worship. It is not pleasant, in remarking what they have heard, after their return home, for the one to censure what the other approves. It is not edifying in the dedication of their common offspring to God by baptism to disagree, not only as to the importance, but also as to the validity of the ordinance. The observation cannot be considered as founded in bigotry, since it will equally apply to both sides of the question in a number of cases in every religious community, and is derived from the unalterable nature of things. Indeed to have a preference from conviction, and to adhere to the distinctions

arising from it, without condemning others, can never be confounded with illiberality, but by a weak or a vicious mind.

The admission of the piety of the parties cannot preclude the necessity of suitableness. Indeed, religion being supposed, suitableness seems to be the chief requisite to the duty, the respectability, and the happiness of connected life. This fitness takes in an adaptation to each other personally, and also to the situation in which they are called to move. It has commonly been said that no class of men err so much in this article as ministers. But surely this cannot be admitted. It cannot be supposed that those who have opportunities to make the best choice commonly make the worst. It cannot be supposed that those whose office it is to inculcate prudence should be themselves proverbial for indiscretion. It cannot be supposed that those whose incomes are limited, and whose circumstances demand economy, would bring into the management of them those who have been trained up in delicacy and extravagance, and are helpless and profuse. It cannot be supposed that men whose office is respectable, and productive of social intercourse, would select vulgarity and ignorance, unfit to be either seen or heard, merely because it is pious.—A minister is to inculcate order and regularity—and would he marry a female that would render his house a scene of confusion and tumult? A minister is to shew how the claims of life and religion harmonize, and to assign to the duties of each their own place and season—and would he marry—a rattlebrain who, instead of being a keeper at home, has been always rambling after some new preacher; who, instead of quietly glorifying God in her proper sphere of action, has been endeavouring to excite



public attention; who has been zealous in matters of doubtful disputation, but has treated as beneath her regard, common and relative obligations? Need he be told that a becoming behaviour in a lower and private station is the surest pledge of, and the best preparation for, a proper behaviour in a higher and more public situation!—A minister is to recommend neatness and all the decencies of life—and would he marry a slattern? A minister is to shew that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price—and would he marry a scold? A minister is to stand in the same relation to all his people who demand his love and service—and would he marry a female who would fondly attach herself to a few cronies, listen to all their secrets and divulge her own, and form cabals and schisms, which will render his residence unpleasant, or occasion his removal?

“The attention of ministers,” says Mr. Gilpin, “in choosing such companions as may not hinder their success is of so great importance that in some countries the conduct of a pastor’s wife, as well as that of the pastor himself, is supposed either to edify or mislead the flock. Nay, the minister himself is frequently condemned for the faults of his wife: thus, in the Protestant churches of Hungary they degrade a pastor whose wife indulges herself in cards, dancing, or any other public amusement that bespeaks the gaiety of a lover of the world rather than the gravity of a Christian matron. This severity springs from the supposition that the woman, having promised obedience to her husband, can do nothing but what he either directs or approves. Hence they conclude that example having a greater influence than precept,

the wife of a minister, if she be inclined to the world, will preach worldly compliance with more success by, her conduct than her husband can preach worldly renunciation by the most solemn discourses." And certainly the scandal of many will always be the result of that deplorable inconsistency which is sometimes seen between the serious instructions of a godly minister and the trifling behaviour of a woman with whom he is so intimately connected. If the wives of the deacons are to be "grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things,"—what less can be required of the wives of pastors? "A bishop then must be blameless—one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

Things said, indeed, concerning the wives of ministers should generally be received with caution. Owing to a line in life, the peculiarity of which is often very little known or considered, their actions and motives may be sometimes condemned when, perhaps, instead of deserving censure, they merit praise. By their union with persons of some distinction and influence, they are in a state to awaken envy and ill-natured remark. By their occupying a conspicuous station, they are more liable to observation than many in more common life. This renders it needful for them to be peculiarly circumspect and exemplary. And it must be confessed, that such females are placed in a situation very difficult and trying. But, at the same time, if this situation be filled up properly, they have an opportunity to render themselves truly respectable and useful. In a superior degree they may "serve their generation according to the will of God." In such circumstances

examples of prudence, economy, order, neatness, temper, amiableness, domestication, will not fail to strike and impress the minds of numbers.

But there is another view in which we ought to consider such an *help-meet*. It is the advantage which her husband derives from her, not only personally but officially, and by which she is rendered a blessing to others. Are *his* life and exertions and reputation of importance? And does *she*, by the excellency of her character, reflect honour upon his choice, and secure deference to his judgment? Does she, by her attentions to his personal appearance, the state of his family, and the decorum of his children, add to his respectability and acceptance?—Does she, by seasonably aiding his remembrance, contribute to the punctuality of his engagements, his visits, and his correspondence?—Does she, by allowing “her husband to trust safely in her,” discharge him from secular concerns, and keep him free to pursue his work with undivided attention?—Does she, by soothing him under distress, and tranquillizing him under irritation, preserve his mind in a frame favourable to reflection and study?—Does she, by taking care of his, health and spirits, enlarge the number and lengthen the course of his labours?—Such a female deserves the esteem and applause of a congregation, a neighbourhood, a country.

Of what avail are reflections like these to such as have already taken unguarded steps? Are not the consequences irretrievable? They are—but yet they may be improvable. I know it is cold comfort to tell a man, involved in difficulty and distress, that all this might have been avoided, and to upbraid him with the warnings which he refused to take, But will it not be useful for him to ascertain the cause of

his mistake, and to review the progress of his infatuation? May he not turn to some good account the lessons of painful experience, and the corrections of maturer judgment? Ought he not to increase in self-knowledge and self-diffidence? "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement: I will not offend any more: that which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

But there are others whose escape is possible, and for whose preservation we are concerned, I hope that my younger brethren in the sacred office, and those who are under a course of preparation for it, will not be offended at my taking advantage of this address to introduce these free remarks on ministerial marriage:

And by concluding—in calling upon them to shew how undeservedly their body has been reproached.—Let them beware. Let them see how necessary it is, not only that piety, but prudence should guide them. Let them remember how much their comfort, their honour, their usefulness depend upon a wise, as well as a religious choice. A wrong step here may involve them in embarrassments; make them go mourning down to the grave; strip them of their glory, and take the crown from their head.

A PRUDENT MAN FORESEETH THE EVIL, AND HLDETH HIMSELF, BUT THE SIMPLE PASS ON, AND ARE PUNISHED. KEEP SOUND WISDOM AND DISCRETION, SO SHALL THEY BE LIFE UNTO THY SOUL AND GRACE SO THY NECK, THEN SHALT THOU WALK IN THY WAY SAFELY, AND THY FOOT SHALT NOT STUMBLE.

**MEMOIRS  
OF THE LATE  
REVEREND JOHN CLARK,**

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF;

AND, AT HIS REQUEST, PUBLISHED, WITH REMARKS.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul.”—PSALM lxxvi. 16.

TO MRS. CLARK, THE WIDOW;  
TO JOHN CLARK, Esq., THE SON;  
TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION,  
THE CHARGE  
TO THE REV. JOHN INNES,  
THE SUCCESSOR OF THE LATE REV. JOHN CLARK;

**THIS MEMOIR,**  
WITH A FEW ADDITIONAL REMARKS, IS RESPECTFULLY  
DEDICATED

BY

THE EDITOR.

## TO THE READER.

IN December, 1807, the author and subject of the following narrative being in Bath for his health, informed me that he had written some considerable memoirs of his own life, which he wished to commit into my hands for perusal and publication. This intention he never executed personally; but soon after his death, his respected widow and his son gave me the papers in compliance with his repeated charge. I received the present from them, as I did the promise from him, on the condition of my possessing a discretionary power.

If it be asked in what way I have used this authority, I answer—it has only been in the way of abridgment. And with regard to the parts omitted, I would observe that, on the one hand, there was nothing in them that could have detracted from the substantial excellency of Mr. Clark; or, on the other, that could have been important to his character, either in rendering it useful and impressive, or prominent and

distinct, They were mere repetitions of journeys and preachings, &c., without any remark of importance attached to them.

In the selection of what is retained and made public, the editor has had his motives, and they extended to every part of it: though for the perception and approbation of them, he must be indebted to the judgment of some, and the candour of others: as in a case of this kind it cannot be supposed that he could attempt to state or vindicate every view that has influenced him. Some few things would not have obtained permission to appear but for three reasons. First, an unwillingness to merge the peculiarity of the individual, and rob him of any distinguishing feature. Secondly, a fear of deviating too much from the design of the deceased, and the wishes and expectations of his friends and connexions. And, thirdly, a supposition that an editor is not deemed answerable for every expression used, or opinion held, by the author he publishes,

The editor, however, to prevent any mistaken inference from the supposition on which he has presumed, wishes it to be observed, that he is by no means ashamed of the leading doctrinal sentiments apparent in the memoir, and known to be held by the writer. But where there is a general agreement,



there may yet be a number of subordinate differences. There are things which two individuals may hold to be equally true, but not equally important: they may therefore dissent from each other as to the degree of attention they deserve—and this will considerably affect the proportion in which they are dispensed. They may hold the same things to be not only equally true, but equally important; and yet dissent from each other as to the manner in which they should be enforced, whether abstractedly in their notions, or in their experimental and practical bearings; whether in their qualities or uses; whether in the mechanical exactness of human systems, or in the fine glowing, natural, undefinable freedom of Scripture language.

This article might be exceedingly enlarged, by extending the remark to a variety of subjects. But what the editor has to allege, either by way of exception or qualification, must be reserved for those reflections with which he may review the character and the narrative in the close of the work.

To the relations and friends of Mr, Clark the editor has to apologize for the delay of the publication, or rather to account for it, by observing—that as soon as the manuscript was put into his possession, he was obliged, by engagement, to take several con-

siderable excursions from home; and that, on his return from the last of them, he was visited by an indisposition that rendered relaxation necessary even from the ordinary duties of his office.

WILLIAM JAY.

*Percy Place; March, 1810.*

**GRATEFUL MEMOIRS,**

&amp;C. &amp;C.

THE various occurrences that have attended the life of an individual can be of little importance to mankind at large: and unless some of those events have been rather unusual, they will yield but small gratification to such as read merely for the sake of amusement. I should not, therefore, have presumed to obtrude the following memoirs upon the public notice, had they not been connected with the striking providence and grace of God, in raising and establishing a religious interest in the town of Trowbridge, in the county of Wilts, by my poor and unworthy instrumentality. Surely, the goodness of God, and his wonderful works to the children of men, ought to be recorded; and no doubt it will be a gratification to those who wish well to religion, to be informed how this little work was begun, and by what means it has been carried on, by the kind hand of our God upon us, unto the present moment. All glory and praise be to his name for ever and ever. Amen.

With respect to myself, I drew my first breath at Frome-Selwood, in the county of Somerset, on the 13th of January O.S., 1745.—I was born of reputable parents, of the established church, who gave me an education rather beyond their situation in life, and beyond what they gave to any other of their

children. The first twelve years of my life were spent at my native place, and were marked with nothing very observable; except that I had frequent convictions of sin from my earliest recollection, which proved a great preservative from many of the follies and vices that youth in general are prone to run into. I can also look back upon many and striking instances of the kind interposition of Providence, in delivering me from imminent dangers—even from my infancy.

I was sent to learn Latin at nine years of age, in which I was enabled to make a tolerable proficiency, as I had an excellent master, and applied myself with diligence. My parents sent me, when about ten years old, to be confirmed by the bishop; and I recollect that I was extremely affected at the ceremony, and when I returned home wept very much, and resolved that, if possible, I would never be guilty of another sin. I was fond of hearing sermons, especially if they were delivered with any degree of earnestness; but could not distinguish between a mere moral and evangelical discourse, till I heard that excellent, and I may say seraphical preacher, Mr. Thomas Jones, of St. Saviour's, Southwark. O! what shall I render to God for his great goodness in casting my lot under the ministry of such a person? This was brought about by a remarkable providence. My father, though he was in a very good way of business at Frome, took a fancy to remove to London; where, however, he staid scarcely three-quarters of a year, and then returned to fix his residence in Trowbridge—the place of his own and my mother's nativity.

My father now began to think of placing me out.

It was in contemplation to send me to the university, but this Providence was pleased to overrule. Indeed, as about this time six students had been expelled Oxford for being religiously disposed, there seemed but little hope that any persons of seriousness would meet with much encouragement there. As the business of a brewer, which my father pursued, did not suit my inclination, it was proposed that I should be a clothier, and manage that business for him till I was at an age to take it upon myself. In the year 1766, being then twenty-one years of age, I was put into partnership with a brother-in-law, in the same line: about this time I narrowly escaped being crushed to death by the falling of a house under repair; myself, with several more, had scarcely got without the door, when it fell down with a dreadful crash.

But before this period, I hope I had made some progress in heavenly things. The Lord had begun a good work in me, and he will never forsake the work of his own hands. Great were my enjoyments in drawing nigh to him in secret; in sitting under his precious word; in conversing with pious Christians. With a company of these I soon became acquainted, especially one individual—a dear relation, who was seeking the Lord like myself, and who was a great encouragement to me in pursuing the good ways of the Lord.

On Christmas-day, 1763, she invited me to the sacrament. As I was then but eighteen years of age, I trembled at the thought; at last, however, I consented, and we received it at a church about a mile from Trowbridge, from the hands of a pious minister settled there. But it is impossible to de-

scribe the sacred delights I experienced at that ever-memorable time, I wet the ground with tears of joy and thankfulness when I took the bread and the wine into my hands in commemoration of the dying love of my dear Redeemer. From that time I constantly attended the sacrament at our parish church, concluding that the efficacy of it is not destroyed to him that receives it in faith by the unworthiness of him that administers it.—See the twenty-sixth Article. I likewise attended the preaching there as regularly as I could, though I took every opportunity of hearing the Gospel elsewhere.

Hitherto the Lord had tenderly indulged me; but now I was to be taken and taught to walk by faith. Many, great, and grievous temptations I began to experience, the reason of which I can now discover. They were, doubtless, to prepare me for the work he had for me afterwards to do. I was tempted to call in question the truth of my Christianity, and almost wished I had gone greater lengths in sin and wickedness that my conversion might have been rendered the more conspicuous. But I was enabled to ward off this temptation by the argument of the man in the Gospel who had received his sight: “Whereas I was blind, now I see.” Admitting, said I, even the worst, were all my former profession but a delusion, yet it is not even now too late to come to him who has promised to be found of *all* that seek him.—Another temptation, more dreadful than even this, was my questioning the authenticity of the Scriptures themselves; and, “if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” I was ever of an inquisitive disposition, and not being as yet acquainted with the evidences of Christianity, I was horribly

perplexed, and almost led to utter desperation; but, blessed be God, this only drove me to examine more narrowly into the truth of the Bible; and laid the foundation of those Dialogues that I afterwards published, under the title of *Fidus* and *Eumenes*, But I am persuaded that nothing will completely satisfy the mind on this subject but the all-powerful application of the truth of the word by the spirit of God. These things are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. Many other were my temptations at this period, so that sometimes I wished I had been made a brute—a serpent—a toad, or that I had never existed at all.

My worldly friends and relations began also to manifest their disapprobation all seeing me associate with the people of God, who were in general poor, and branded with the odious name of Methodists. Particularly my father was roused by some of his acquaintances, who insinuated to him that, if I continued to go on in this way, it would entirely ruin my fortune in this world; though, thanks be to God, they were mistaken, for none has greater reason to be thankful on that head than myself. But he used me very harshly, sometimes even proceeding to blows. But this the Lord also turned into good to me; for my being enabled to take all patiently, and not being permitted to make any resistance, or to use any impertinent language to my father, has frequently, on reflection, given me the most pleasing satisfaction. It also by degrees won him over to treat me with tenderness, and even respect, and at last he became one of my constant hearers.

I continued to assemble with my dear Christian friends every Sunday morning and evening, and once

on a week night; for they would not break in upon the public services of the church, being mostly members of the establishment. Here the time was spent in prayers, and reading the Scriptures, and sometimes a sermon of some pious and evangelical divine. As I was judged to be a pretty good reader, I was prevailed upon sometimes to take that office. This first of all induced me to write my own thoughts on a text of Scripture, and read it to them: at which they expressed pleasure and edification, and entreated me to go on in this way. The first discourse of this kind I recollect to have read was on the 8th of April, 1765, from John x. 14. But as writing sermons at length was too laborious for me, and interfered greatly with my worldly business, I was induced sometimes to content myself with taking down only the heads of a discourse, and filling up the rest extemporaneously. This I continued for nearly two years, till being invited to preach at a village about three miles from Trowbridge, called East Town, I ventured to trust entirely on the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost; and, without any previous study or arrangement of the subject, preached from Mark xvi. 16. This I was enabled to do with so much ease and comfort to myself, and satisfaction to the audience, that, thenceforward, I never made use of any notes, but was enabled to cast myself entirely on the Divine goodness. And this suited best with my occupation as a clothier; for I was frequently obliged to go from my counting-house directly into the pulpit, and could get no time for previous meditation. But though this was sometimes attended with much cause for humiliation, and often tried my confidence, it became at length so habitual, that I always made the



most regular discourses, as well as the most animated and useful, when I adhered to that method; and every deviation from it served rather to embarrass me when in the pulpit. I considered, however, that this by no means excused me from studying, in a general way, God's holy word and wonderful works; but rather enforced so much the more the necessity of it, that I might lay up a stock of things new and old, ready, when called, to bring forth to the public. My business, also, being with persons of different descriptions, especially the working poor, gave me an opportunity of knowing the real manners of men, and seeing more into the depravity of human nature. I was, also, always fond of philosophical researches, and especially of mechanics: and this occasionally, together with music, to which I was exceedingly attached, served to fill up my leisure hours, and enlarge my ideas of things, as well as men. Thus has the Lord taught me from my youth, and I have according to my ability hitherto declared his wondrous works.

But now I began to be very much grieved, having preached several years and seeing very little good done. I feared that I had intruded myself into the ministry, and had run before I was sent. One Saturday evening, after having dispatched my business, as I was solemnly musing on this important point, and beseeching my Heavenly Father to direct me, I had these words forcibly impressed on my mind:—"Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." This seemed to point out all the particulars that I had wished to know: viz.—That the Lord had de-

signed me for the ministerial office—That my charge lay among the people with whom I had associated—That my business was to feed them and watch over them—That I should cheerfully and willingly engage in it—and seek no worldly advantage from it. The remaining part—“and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”—did not at that time occur to my mind; but afterward, being at the ordination of a minister at Warminster, the charge turned upon this latter clause; and I then received very great encouragement from this gracious promise, and was glad that I did not remember it before, as it helped to prove that I did not engage in the Lord’s work from even the prospect of a heavenly reward. After this I began to think of the pastoral office; and having preached from these words—“Let all things be done decently and in order,” I was more confirmed in my thoughts about it: for hitherto there was no bond to unite us, nor discipline to correct any misconduct, but every one did what was right in his own eyes. We were also greatly annoyed by the Sandemanians on the one hand, and the Arminians on the other, who were continually seeking to draw away disciples after them. I preached from this text September 14th, 1767, and from that time I began to mention my design to some of my dear friends, who expressed themselves extremely happy at the thought of being connected more closely, and having the Lord’s Supper administered among ourselves. After a month’s deliberation, and much earnest prayer to the great Head of the church, we proposed having a meeting to consult about this important matter; and on the 15th of November, 1767,

and after making a short comment on Nehemiah ii. 17 —“Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach”—we kneeled down and besought the Lord to direct us, and not suffer us to do anything inconsistent with his glory and our mutual comfort and advantage. On rising from our knees, nine of us, six men and three women, made a confession of our faith, and solemnly gave our hands to each other in the fear of God, with a determination to watch over each other, and to promote to the utmost our mutual welfare. Others were present, but chose to wait a little longer before they joined us: but after this our number quickly increased, and great jar and Christian affection prevailed among us. It was then proposed that we should meet again in a few days, and settle the order of this infant church, and choose a minister to preside over it, and break the bread of life to the rest. We accordingly met, and they unanimously proposed me as their pastor; and as I had before expected it, and had made it the matter of most mature reflection and earnest prayer, I accepted their call, but with extreme fear and diffidence. We then kneeled down and besought the Lord Jesus, the chief Shepherd, to direct and bless us. We agreed to have the Sacrament every Lord’s day, but this some years after, from various causes, yielded to a monthly administration. We agreed to provide a box for the relief of the poor, to receive those who applied for admission as members, with the most strict attention to their faith and practice; but if any stranger, not dwelling in the town, wished at any time to sit down with us occasionally, he was

welcome, provided he came properly recommended by a member of the church; and we had no objection to any denomination of Christians partaking with us who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; for we determined from the beginning to avoid all bigotry and zeal for a party. Some have objected to the validity of my pastoral office, not having had, as they call it a regular ordination. But though I have no objection for a minister who is chosen by any assembly of Christians to be their pastor, to call in his brethren in the ministry to be witnesses of their mutual engagement, and to assist them with their prayers and advice—yet in my case it was utterly impracticable: for as to the established clergy, however inclined, they were forbidden such a service; and the dissenting ministers around us were so jealous and narrow, that it would have been in vain to apply to them, especially as we never professed to be a sect of regular dissenters. I judge that every church is competent to choose their own minister, as every family has, unquestionably, a right to choose their own servant without the concurrence of the heads of any other family—yet, I bless God, we have not been without the repeated testimony and acknowledgments of his dear servants of various denominations, Clergymen, Independents, Baptists, &c., who have publicly and solemnly prayed for us under the character and description of a church of Christ, and for me likewise as a pastor over it. But, I trust, we have that which is beyond everything else, the approbation and blessing of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who has now, at the time of my writing this, continued to bless us with all the privileges of a church nearly thirty-eight years, and

I hope will continue to do so to the end of the world.  
Amen.—

1767. Nov. 18. Had a sister who died of a drop-sical complaint; and she being the first of our family that had gone into eternity since I had been capable of reflection, it was a very awful providence to me, and I endeavoured to improve it by reading a sermon to our relations who were invited to the funeral, after their return from the grave. When I first proposed it, I could perceive some of them sneered, but they were afterward very attentive: and I hope it was attended with the blessing of God to their souls.

1768. I had now gone on comfortably for some time, and the Lord was with me, and carried me through my work, though I often found myself greatly fatigued in preaching every Lord's day three times, besides administering the sacrament, and always Monday and Thursday evenings at home, besides frequent excursions into the neighbouring towns and villages, I had also many discouragements arising from a sense of my own inability, the greatness of the work in which I was engaged, and the little success that seemed to follow in proportion to my labours, At length, my discouragement prevailed to such a degree, that on the Lord's day, Feb, 21, having had, in the afternoon in particular, a very distrebbing opportunity, I resolved to terminate my preaching with that exercise. Drinking tea afterwards with some dear Christian friends, I told them my intention. They said all they could to dissuade me from giving up the work, especially that evening, when there would be a large congregation assembled, and they must be disappointed, as it was impossible to procure any other minister, the time

being nearly expired for the service to begin. I would not give ear to any of their entreaties, but positively declared, that I could not think of preaching any more. While we were warmly debating the case, some one rang at the door, This proved to be a pious old woman, a member of our church, who being admitted, said she came to desire me to preach from these words:—"Then I said I would speak no more in his name, but his word was as a fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jeremiah xx. 9. She said she did not know where the words were, but her mind was much impressed with them; and she could not but come and desire me to preach from them that evening, I asked her if she knew the subject on which we had been discoursing: she said, she did not. This extraordinary circumstance struck me very much. I could not but conclude it to be an interposition of Providence, and therefore consented to preach that once, and from the same words; and, I bless God, I found it a blessing; and though I have had many trials in my work, I have never been so violently tempted on this head ever since.

I had now many invitations round the country to come and preach to them, which I accepted. Sometimes I preached in private houses, and often in the fields, to great numbers; and hope the Lord often blessed my poor endeavours to the conversion of ungodly sinners, and the comfort of his own people.

1769, August 23. My mother died this morning about six o'clock. Happening to be alone with her when she expired, I was very much affected; and calling up my father and the rest of the family, I endeavoured to improve the awful warning by speak-

ing to them of their own situation were death to overtake them suddenly: they heard me very patiently, and seemed greatly affected. My mother was, I hope, seeking after salvation; but I never heard her say much of her experience. She was very kind to the poor, and attended constantly the sacrament at the church, and frequently came to hear me. "While at London, she was very fond of hearing Mr. Thomas Jones, of St. Saviour's; and I would hope, at that time, serious impressions were made on her mind.

February 22, Took a journey to dispose of my cloth. Preached at Romsey—Winterbourn—Salisbury, &c. to good congregations, and with much freedom.

1770, May 27. I was seized with extreme pain in my back, attended with a violent fever. It went from my back into every joint of my body, which in succession swelled very much, and became so inflamed and painful, that I could not bear to be touched. This confined me to my room nearly six weeks, and a great part of the time to my bed. My Christian friends were very kind and affectionate; and before I was able to go to the house of God, many of them came into my chamber, to whom I expounded the first chapter of the Philippians, and was peculiarly struck with the words, verses 24, 25, 26. The whole chapter seemed adapted to my situation, and afforded me unspeakable delight. Indeed, I was extremely happy at the prospect of eternity, should it have pleased the Lord to take me.

July 8. Was so far recovered as to be able to go to the meeting, and preached from Hebrews ii. 9. I was very languid, but hope in a degree sensible of

the goodness of God in bringing me again into his house, and among his people.

July 30. Had a call to London. On the road, hearing of a young man that was confined in Marlborough jail for robbery on the highway, I felt greatly disposed to go and talk with him. When I entered the prison he appeared very penitent, and sorry for the crime he had committed. I gladly embraced the opportunity to recommend the precious Redeemer of sinners. He shewed me a letter he had written to his uncle to endeavour to save his life; but I advised him not to resort to any indirect means to evade justice, but if he was condemned by the laws of his country, to submit to death for an example to others. This, alas! was a doctrine hard to be embraced for a person in his situation: but he seemed to acquiesce; and what pleased me, was the concern the poor creature manifested for his fellow-prisoners, whom he entreated me to visit; and one of whom was confined for a similar crime. I did so, and my mind was much affected by what I saw and heard, Lord, may I ever be preserved from sin, and be content with such things as thy good providence shall bestow upon me!—Meeting with a gentleman and his wife, who were of the people commonly called Quakers, travelling the same road, and finding them seriously disposed, we journeyed several miles discoursing on such religious subjects as we were all agreed in. As we put up at the same inn, we supped and spent the evening together; but I was much surpris'd to find that on my proposing prayer before we went to rest, they strenuously opposed it. I begged one of them to engage, but could not prevail; I thought it therefore my duty to engage, but was sorry



to observe their irreverent behaviour at the time.—What a pity is it that Christians serving the same God, and believing the same Scripture revelation, should be so inflexible in trifles of no importance, and, for a mere form, break Christian communion!—After finishing my business in London, and hearing many excellent sermons, I returned to Trowbridge August 12, and again entered on my work, being kindly greeted by the brethren.

The place of worship we first occupied had been too small for the congregations that assembled; it was, therefore, proposed by some kind friends to build a place that might at the same time serve the purpose of a dwelling-house, and the rooms be so disposed as to admit of a large number of people by taking up some of the floor occasionally, and thus making the upper chambers answer the end of galleries. This was done, and we preached in it for several years. But now the place became too strait for us; and, therefore, my dear friend and relative, Miss Cook, who was now Mrs. Turner, proposed purchasing a piece of ground, and building a more suitable place for divine worship.

September 5. We have now many persons who frequently come from Devizes, and other towns and villages around us. May the Lord increase our usefulness with this intended enlargement of our tent, The principal people in the town acknowledge that much good has been done in moralizing the people, though many of them do not approve of the doctrines which have effected it.

At this time I was led to interpose my poor endeavours to moderate an unhappy difference that had arisen between the Baptist minister of our town and

some of his people, I greatly sympathised with poor Mr. R., and wrote a letter to his church, entreating them to love and unity; which, I trust, was kindly received; but it did not remove the dispute, as their minister was shortly after obliged to leave them,

September 14. I paid a visit to the friends at Devizes, It was requested that I should preach in the Baptist meeting, but the millister would not consent: I was therefore obliged to preach in a private house; not, I hope, without the approbation of my dear Master.

October 9. Preached at Melksham, in the Baptist meeting; these friends being more liberally-minded than those of Devizes. There were present some of all denominations of Christians in the town.—O! how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

I still continued going out into the villages as I had opportunity, the particulars of which would swell these papers too much, and therefore for the future shall omit such excursions, as well as my ordinary labours at home, unless anything should be found particularly worthy of recording. About this time I began to be encouraged by some seals to my ministry. I was often afraid I had been labouring in vain, and spending my strength for nought; but now it pleased God to give me more intimation of his blessing the word preached. Several characters notoriously wicked have been convinced of the error of their ways, and are now living in the most exemplary manner, to the astonishment of their neighbours. This is a sufficient recompence for all my pains and reproaches. Besides this, I have had many acknowledgments from persons that have been greatly edi-

ned and comforted. Yet I have to regret, that some of those who seemed for a season to run well are turned aside to some dangerous errors that have lately been introduced into the town, making faith to be nothing more than a simple assent to the truth of the Gospel, and denying the influences of the Spirit of God.—O, my soul! come not thou into their secret; and unto their assembly, my honour, be not thou united.

1771. My father having removed to London with my brother, I am now going to board with my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Turner. I have hitherto had but little success in trade, but I am doing the Lord's work, He is too good a master to suffer me to want; yet I would not be less diligent in attending to my worldly affairs.

April 24. Preached at a village called Nasteed, about a mile from Devizes, at the house of a Quaker, who behaved extremely kind. We had a room full of people; and upwards of twenty years after I had the happiness to find that the word was made effectual to the conversion of a profligate sinner.—The Lord's name be praised.

Going in business to a place called West Lavington, I could not but pity the extreme ignorance of the people, and promised I would come and preach to them. They appeared very thankful; and accordingly I proposed Whit-Tuesday, thinking they might be more at leisure to attend. On that day I went, accompanied by a great many friends from our town, Devizes, and other places. "When the hour of preaching arrived we found the people occupied in bull-baiting, and, as we were going to the spot, either by accident or design, they let the animal go loose;

we saw him at some distance from us as furious as a lion, and the women began to be much terrified, but no mischief ensued; he passed us as gentle as a lamb. A vast concourse of people was assembled. I began the service, and it went on for some time without interruption; but when I named my text "repent and believe the Gospel," the rabble so distracted and disturbed the congregation that I found it was impossible to proceed. I therefore postponed what I had to say to another opportunity; when I told them I would come and preach from the same text. All my injury was the soiling of my clothes with a few rotten eggs; I found myself very happy through the whole, and hope some good was done, as several wept much, and desired me to come again.

May 28. Was at Holt, three miles from Trowbridge, to hear Mr. Rowland Hill, who preached under a large tree in the middle of the place, from Ephesians v. 14, and thus commenced an acquaintance and friendship that has continued ever since, and I hope will for evermore.

May 31. Preached at Broughton Gifford, from 2 Timothy iii. 12, and had very great liberty and love to immortal souls—a large congregation and nry attentive.

June 4. Agreeably to promise, went again to preach at West Lavington. I was told on the road that the farmers had collected a great quantity of rotten eggs to throw at me, but this had no effect upon me. Having some time to spare, I called on Dr. Stonehouse, the clergyman of Chival (the intimate friend of Mr. Harvey), about a mile from Lavington, who prayed with me, and encouraged me very much. When I stood up to preach there was

a very great company of people, far greater than the last time, and I had no person to stand by me but a man who seemed to have very little knowledge of religion. But the Lord was with me, and I found it better to trust in him than in an ann of flesh. I preached from the same text, and the people were all exceedingly quiet and attentive till I had done, when one or two behaved to me with great rudeness; but, I bless the Lord, I was enabled to resent it only by wishing them the best of blessings for time and eternity.

I now found a severe trial from some of my dearest friends in Christ, I sincerely loved and respected them; but being very much inclined to Arminianism, they were continually teasing me on that head, and would fain have introduced these principles among our little flock, so that I was obliged to withstand them to the utmost of my power.

June 11. Heard Mr. Cornelius Winter, at Bradley, and found a very great attachment to him: he had formerly been an attendant on Mr. Whitfield in his voyage to America.

The Lord was now with us of a truth. Seldom a week passed but one or more came to inform me of the effect of the word on their souls. Sometimes I have found four or five together weeping, and inquiring what they must do to be saved; and what is more remarkable, it was chiefly among those who had been very moral in their conduct, and depending on their own righteousness.

The eve of the Lord's day has frequently been very precious to me after my weekly business has been finished, and I have had a view of the solemnities of the approaching Sabbath, and the important

work in which I was about to engage has deeply impressed my mind. I was favoured with a particular instance of this kind, Saturday, July 13, after being greatly affected with the arduous service I was employed in, and especially with what it would be when called to preach in our new chapel to such an increased congregation; I earnestly besought the Lord to give me some encouragement from his holy word, and opening the Bible, I was directed to the second chapter of Haggai; and all from the first to the ninth verse seemed so extremely to the purpose that I could not but be thankful and astonished.

August 4. Went to London and continued about three weeks. Was highly feasted in hearing the Gospel from so many eminent and pious ministers, both in the Established Church and out of it. I generally endeavour to be disengaged myself, as my labours at home are so abundant.; and I love to get what I can from the diversified gifts of God's dear servants,

November 20. We opened our new place of worship—a commodious building, forty feet long by thirty wide—which we called the Tabernacle; for we approved of the sentiments of Mr. Whitfield, though he had never preached among us, nor had I ever conversed with him, or even heard him preach except once in the church of Bradford. We had very full congregations each time. As my brethren that were present insisted that I should preach the first sermon in it, with great reluctance I complied, and spoke from Ezekiel xlvi. 35, Mr. Roquett, a clergyman of Bristol, preached in the afternoon, from Psalm xcix, 15–18, Mr. Wase, one of the Countess of Huntingdon's students, in the evening, from Genesis

xxviii. 17. I had composed some suitable hymns for the occasion, which we sung. It was a very blessed day. The utmost harmony and joy prevailed.

We have now very crowded auditories; and great numbers return home again, not being able to get in. This is, no doubt, in a great measure owing to novelty; but yet it is a matter of thankfulness, if anything conduces to bring sinners under the word of God: we may hope it will not prove in vain.

December 19. Thursday evening I preached from Matthew xxii. 12, and it was attended with a remarkable circumstance. A young person came out of mere curiosity to hear, and it pleased God to make the word the means of convincing her of her sinful and dangerous condition—but it was little thought by her or me at this period that we should ever be brought into so close a connexion as afterwards took place: for six or seven years from that period she was pointed out to me for a friend and companion through life. Considering the result of the occasion the text was singular—“Friend, how comest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?”

This has been a very important year of my life, and of the cause of God in this place. Hundreds of my town's-people of all sorts crowd to hear the word of God; some for the benefit of their precious souls, and some to ridicule and scoff, Many of the greatest profligates of the town, and military officers who are stationed here, come among the rest. We have been threatened with disturbance, hut it has never been permitted. My worldly friends and relations would fain dissuade me from exerting myself so much, under an apprehension that it will be injurious to my health, hut I do not find that I am hurt by it. If I was,

surely the eternal salvation of one soul is of far greater importance than a few years' presentation of bodily health—yet I would not be imprudent or presumptuous. Lord, be thou my director and protector.

Christmas-day. Preached three times as usual. In the evening I found a young minister, Mr. Rippon, of the Baptist persuasion; I went to him after service and begged he would preach for me the morrow evening, especially as my engagements were rather this week extraordinary. He readily consented; but some of the Baptist brethren dissuaded him from it!—O! how much mischief does bigotry for forms occasion to Christian love and fellowship! Friday I went and heard Mr. Rippon at the Baptist meeting, from Matthew xxv. 6; a very good discourse: he appears to be a very lively and zealous preacher.

1772, January 1. Began the new year at Melksham, where I preached from Revelations xxi. 5—“Behold, I make all things new.”

January 8. I began this evening catechising the children on a week night, as my time on the Lord's day is too much occupied to attend to it. The Lord has graciously owned this part of my office to several children, some of whom have afterwards joined the church, and made a good confession,

January 9. A company of young persons applied to me to grant the use of the meeting on a week day morning to assemble together for prayer, Happy was I to grant their request. O! what a delightful thing to seek the Lord in the days of our youth!

I think we have reason to believe the Lord is smiling on our attempts to diffuse the knowledge of his precious salvation:—his word—his spirit—and



his providence concur in encouraging us to proceed. A striking instance he has given us of the latter. Our kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Turner, were surprised on their taking stock this Christmas to find that they had gained the last year more than sufficient to defray the expense of the building, besides what they had expended in housekeeping, though they had gained no more, they imagine; by their business before than barely the expenses of their family: nor is His hand less visible in blessing the Word preached. Persons of all descriptions are continually coming to me to declare what the Lord has done for their souls; some convinced of their sinful state, and wishing to know how they shall be saved; and some to express the joy and consolation they have received under the Gospel. There are seven or eight of the most notorious sinners in the town, who were drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and even a terror to their neighbours by their wickedness, who now constantly attend, and are now reformed from their abominable ways, to the astonishment of all around them.—Glory be to God for his wonderful works to the children of men!

As we have erected the standard of the Gospel in the town, and, as it were, pitched our camp, so I determine now in the strength of the Lord to storm the devil's out-posts. For this purpose I intend going round the country villages more and more.

I find I am much censured by formal professors for preaching without doors; and my relations account it mean and degrading; but surely I have the example of the holiest character and the greatest teacher that ever was; and I hope I have the approbation of God and my own conscience. I desire nothing but to glorify his blessed name.

O, how great is my satisfaction and pleasure to observe my father and sister, and other relations, among the crowd! I hope the Lord will have mercy upon them. My father now comes to hear me constantly, though so severe against me at first.

June 3. "Went again to Westaston, and stood on an upping stock in the street and preached. At first my pride seemed to be hurt at the censure and contempt that I should incur from many of my fellow-creatures; but when I considered the dignity and importance of the work I was engaged in, I lost these degrading thoughts, and was content to become a fool for Christ. I came home with some of Studly Green, to whom my ministry had been blessed; and was greatly pleased to hear that they had consented to meet together regularly to sing and pray at each other's houses: some of them had been notoriously wicked.—Called to visit a person extremely ill in the small-pox; there was a room full of people. I read a chapter and prayed with them. The poor woman has been very wicked, and is dreadfully terrified at the thought of dying,—O! what a mercy is it to be possessed of a good hope through grace!

June 22. At Southwick Green, a great company; and no disturbance, but a few persons talking at a distance. After preaching, I went and reasoned with them; and they seemed very much abashed.—Alas! if they cannot stand before the reproof of a fellow-mortal, how will they abide the day of *his* coming, who trieth the heart and the reins?

July 5. After preaching this evening, my heart was much comforted and encouraged by the great love and respect shewn me. Both sides of the way were lined by people, who strove which could ex-

press the greatest regard. The sermon seemed a general blessing; and one person in particular said, he would not have but heard it for a thousand pounds. This the Lord has designed, perhaps, as a counter-balance to some grievous scandals that have been cast upon me the week past: I know they are unfounded, but I know also that Satan bears me no good will,

July 22. Visited one of our members—an aged gentlewoman, who seems near her end, and was much refreshed to see her spirit so calm and resigned—either to live or die.

July 29. At Hilperton Marsh, The clergyman of the parish, and Mr. B—y, the justice of the peace, and his wife and family, were among my hearers, who behaved with the greatest respect and civility. Mr. B—y afterward invited me to go into his house and take some refreshment.

September 19, Saturday. Have reason to admire the goodness of the Lord in carrying me through such a multiplicity of labours this week, exclusive of my attention to trade. Yet, I bless his name, I feel myself well and happy.

November 1. Our society being now very considerably increased, I thought it right to call them together, to recognize our former covenant as a church of Christ; and to engage anew to fulfil the duties of it to each other. I told them I was at their service, but I would rather, if they approved of it, resign my office to any pastor they should choose. This proposal threw them all into tears, and they unanimously and most earnestly entreated me still to take the care of them, I then pointed out some of the duties they owed to their minister and to each other; and asked if they chose to continue me

as their pastor upon those conditions—if so, they would signify it by lifting up their hands, which they all instantly and solemnly did, while I prayed to God to confirm us and bless us as a church of his own.

I have been lately much encouraged by visiting two old dying Christians, who expressed themselves very happy at the prospect of death.

November 20, we kept as the anniversary of opening our place of worship. I preached morning and evening; Mr. Roquett in the afternoon.

A great many persons are now offering themselves to be joined to us in Christian fellowship; but we are exceedingly cautious whom we admit, They undergo the strictest examination, first by me privately, then by the whole church. Yet after all, it is to be feared some unworthy communicants will creep in.

Thursday being the last day of the year, I took for my text Psalm cii. 25–27, and do not recollect ever closing a year with such solemnity before. Many have been the mercies of the past year—may the ensuing be marked by more abundant diligence in the ways of the Lord.

1773. Hitherto we had gone on in perfect harmony with respect to points of doctrine. For as we were originally of the Church of England. we all firmly held the tenets of it, usually called Calvinistic, as expressed in her public prayers and the Thirty-nine Articles. But now one of our dear friends, and who had great authority among us, having become acquainted with some pious relations who were among Mr. Wesley's people, and were very strenuous advocates for Arminianism. she was tintured herself, and sought every occasion to introduce the

principles among us. She not only pressed us to admit persons who held these sentiments as members of our church, but whenever any popular preacher among them made his appearance, she endeavoured to bring him forward; and as our place of worship was not yet vested in the hands of trustees, but still continued in the sole power of one individual, we could not always avoid the preaching of such men among us. This has often been a source of great uneasiness to us. One of them, a captain, at this time preaching about the country, and by his regimentals and the violence of his manner having rendered himself popular, our dear, but mistaken sister would needs invite to preach, and would not be persuaded to the contrary. He preached several times: his preaching was exceedingly contradictory—tending greatly to distress tender consciences, and distract those who were unsettled in their minds: he asserted that Christians might be perfect in this life—that they must know the exact time and even place where they were justified—yea, that they could not be Christians without it—that those who believed never doubted afterwards. I took an opportunity, and, with much tenderness, pointed out his mistakes to him, which he seemed to take kindly; but my dear cousin very much resented it afterwards, which caused me great uneasiness.

March 21. Have just heard of the death of a person who has left a glorious testimony to the power of the Gospel. He was formerly a very wicked character. About six years ago, I visited him in a dangerous fit of sickness. He was then horribly afraid of death, and made many protestations of

amendment should it please God to spare him.—It pleased God to spare him, and he became more wicked than ever—not only a urunkard and profane swearer, but took every opportunity to ridicule religion, About a year and a half ago, he came scoffing to hear me: but the Lord was pleased to put a stop to his scoffing, and sent him home deeply convicted of his unhappy condition. But he was soon relieved by faith in the Lord Jesus; and has since been abundant in offices of love, and patient endurance of tribulation for the sake of his profession, He was very assiduous in visiting the sick, and has sometimes sat up with them all night. He now was very faithful in reproving his old companions in sin; and for this he gained many a scoff from them, which he bore with meekness and fortitude, especially the abuses and extravagancies of a drunken and wicked wife. I visited him in his last moments; but found a pleasing contrast to what I had observed in his former illness, He was then dreadfully afraid of death, but now he said his greatest comfort was to think he was so near it,

April 4. I have been this afternoon called to another important part of my office. Five of my brethren's children were brought for baptism, and I baptized them in the presence of a very large and solemn assembly. As I judge we should not engage in anything of a religious nature without being thoroughly convinced in our own mind of the propriety of it, and without being able to give some reasons for it to the public, I wrote out a sermon and read it. It was greatly satisfactory to those who heard it, and I was much solicited to publish it; but

I declined it, fearing it might subject me to a controversy with my Baptist friends, which I wished by all means to avoid.

April 18. Hitherto we had made use of a box with an opening in the lid for our contributions to the poor and sick members of our church, and others occasionally; but not finding this mode sufficient, we this afternoon made a collection at the Lord's table, and were pleased to find the cheerfulness with which everyone seemed ready to give. This mode we have continued ever since,

May 9. I began my summer excursions into the country villages, and preached at Simington.

August 7. Was invited to preach at Frome, my native place. At first, it appeared formidable to think of preaching to my old play-fellows and acquaintances; and yet I have had a desire to declare to them what God hath done for my soul.

I have lately had a sight of Mahomet's Alcoran. How infatuated must rational creatures be to believe such shocking absurdities! I bless my God, this book has greatly tended to endear my Bible,

November 17. Second anniversary. I preached in the morning from Psalm cxviii. 15, Mr. Roquett in the afternoon, from 1 Thessalonians v. 16. In the evening, Mr. Marshman, Baptist minister, from Haggai i. 5. Blessed be God, it has been a joyful festivity. Mr. Roquett also preached Thursday and Friday evenings. We parted Saturday morning with great regret.—O! when shall the day come that we shall part no more?—Thus we have concluded another year. Great have been our trials, and great our mercies; and we have had very considerable

additions to our little society, of such as, I hope, will be eventually saved.

1774, January 2. I this morning began expounding the assembly's catechism, I intend to go through it by taking a question every Sunday morning, I teach it to the children, and esteem it an excellent form of sound words.

This week past I have been a good deal engaged by a curious emblematical drawing that I have sketched out, representing the chain of blessings which Paul enumerates in Romans viii. 29, 30. I have some thoughts of publishing it, as I hope God may see good to make it a blessing to others as he has to me.

April 13. Went to the sessions at Devizes, to get myself licensed as a preacher. I have hitherto been licensed by the King of kings only, but being in danger of some parish offices, which would be extremely inconvenient to me as a preacher, I thought it prudent to sue for the protection of the legislature.

April 17. We met to choose a deacon in the room of one who has forfeited his place by some imprudent step. We conformed as much as we could to the primitive mode: I proposed two to the church, whom I thought the most eligible, and then we prayed and drew lots.

July 24. We examined nine persons, who were unanimously admitted into the church.

October 9. We met on the painful business of examining into the conduct of a brother and his wife, for several charges brought against them, and especially their unchristian behaviour towards each other; which being proved to be true, we suspended them



from their church privileges till they should amend their conduct, and live peaceably together. They submitted to the censure in a very becoming manner.

October 14. We assembled according to appointment to humble ourselves before God in fasting and prayer, and to confess our sins as a church, and also to entreat him to restore our lapsed friends, and to give them repentance, Many of the brethren prayed. It was a solemn and affecting opportunity.

November 17. Our third anniversary. I preached in the morning—Mr. Roquett in the afternoon—Mr. Woolmar in the evening. The congregations were great, and love and unity prevailed among all parties.

In consequence of an Act of Parliament for calling in the light gold, the weighing of money is become a very common and necessary employment. This suggested the hint of writing a little piece, called "The Coin Act," which has occupied much of my time this week, which Mr. Hill advised me to publish, offering to write a recommendatory preface; which I consented to do.

1775, January 23. I have been this week attending a course of philosophical lectures and experiments, Hope I have gained much instruction, and been helped to admire the works of nature, and adore their great Author.

June 12. This morning, at four o'clock, set out for London. A person who owes me a great deal more than I at present possess is likely to become a bankrupt I am likely to lose all I have in the world, though, I thank God, I shall hope to be able to pay all to whom I owe anything. This has been

a severe trial, yet I doubt not but all is well: we must not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God.

I had the curiosity to see a Popish mass, and I hope I was thankful for our Reformation.

July 28. We this evening buried the remains of a grey-headed brother, who has been an honourable member ever since the commencement of our society, He was a poor Christian, but noble-spirited—true to his profession, and patient in affliction.

The present times are very alarming. War between the mother-country and the colonies; an earthquake felt over a great part of England, and the excessive rains that have spoiled a great part of the corn in the ground, threatening a famine; I thought it my duty to appoint a day of fasting and prayer, which we kept Friday, 22nd September. In order not to break in upon the labours of the poor, we met at five o'clock in the morning for one hour, and at ten and at two, and at seven, when I preached from Isaiah iv. 6, 7.—O may the Lord hear and answer our petitions for a guilty land.

September 24. Visited a very great persecutor at Hilperton, He is dangerously ill, and sent for me to pray with him. Nothing shews the reality of religion more than such instances as this, when even the despisers of it, in their last extremity, seek the prayers of those whom they have despised. I was enabled to speak faithfully to him, but am afraid he is not properly acquainted with the state of his soul.

November 9, was kept in commemoration of the goodness of God, in giving us a place for his worship. This is the fourth anniversary.

Thus have we finished another year, It has been a year of peculiar trials to me both in the world and in the church, Yet it has pleased the Lord to bless the Word exceedingly, and we have had seventeen members added.—The Lord's name be praised for all his mercies.

1776. I have sometimes, of late, been led to think whether the Lord may not be about to remove me to some other part of his vineyard. If my business does not succeed to afford me a maintenance, and should I be reduced, there is no probability that the people among whom I labour could afford me support, as they have been used to have the Gospel preached to them free of any expense; and I have lately experienced some instances of their backwardness in things like these. I would be entirely at the disposal of my heavenly Father, and go wherever he directs; or stay and suffer his will here.

February 14. The urgency of my affairs has called me again to London, and I set off this day. On Sunday evening before I left home, I preached from Philippians i. 27. I addressed the people with the greatest affection, not knowing that it might please God to continue me any longer among them, They were extremely affected, and many of them got up at four o'clock in the morning to take their leave of me.—May the will of the Lord be done.

March 13. Came home, and the people received me affectionately, and I found a better spirit among some of them than when I left them. Had a great deal of fatigue while in town; and it is now certain I shall lose the greatest part of my property; but yet I hope I have been enabled to form some advantageous connexions, which may perhaps in time com-

pensate for the loss I have sustained. I published, while in London, my "Golden Chain of Salvation."

April 3, The church met to inquire into the conduct of one of our members, who has been accused of dishonesty, in clandestinely taking her master's coal without his knowledge. Three persons came to testify, to her honesty, but she herself confessing that once she did take a small lump of coal without intention to return it again, we gave her a severe reprehension, and she received it in a Christian-like manner.

Sunday, April 14. Preached three times at Marlborough; baptized a child, and administered the Lord's Supper. I was pleased to see the godly zeal of the people, in refusing to let a person sit down at the Lord's table among them who was accused of dealing in smuggled goods. Coming back next day over the Downs, I observed a poor sheep lying in a very weak condition. As I overtook the shepherd with the rest of the flock, I asked him why he left that poor feeble creature behind? He said it could not follow the rest, and was not worth taking care of. This struck my mind, and as I was to preach at Devizes in the evening, I chose for my text John x. 11, and endeavoured, by way of contrast, to point out the good shepherd.

May 12. I have been obliged to preach four times to-day. I do not find that it has hurt me, but it is too much to be continued. Have also preached four times in the week evenings following. But can we do too much for so kind a master, and for the salvation of such valuable treasure as the souls of men?

November 4. Could not sleep this morning for reflecting on the unhappy differences that subsisted among the Baptists of our town, so as to shut up

their meeting for these three weeks past. I found it much on my mind to write them a letter to entreat them to be reconciled. I sent it by one of their members, and I hope it had a good effect, for on the Wednesday following they met to accommodate matters.

November 20. Was at Bristol, to attend the funeral of my dear friend, Mr. Roquett, who died the 16th instant, universally esteemed and lamented. I was extremely affected by the regard shewn to his memory by all ranks, which I have endeavoured to express in an elegy on the occasion. The next day we kept our fifth anniversary, rendered more solemn by his death who had assisted in the dedication of the place. My text in the morning was Revelations vii. 13-17.—In the afternoon Mr. Sloper preached from Psalm ciii. 1-5.—And in the evening, Mr. Rowland Hill from Nehemiah viii. 10. We had with us to-day ten or twelve ministers of different denominations.

December 13 was kept as a general fast. We had service three times, and in the morning I exhorted the people to go to the parish church, and we went to approve our loyalty to our king, and love to our country.

Christmas-day, preached at home three times, and I hope we can say we experienced, in the best sense of the words—a merry Christmas.

Ours is the best cheer,  
No surfeit we fear,  
Insatiate enjoyment is temperance here.

Thus are the labours and trials of another year ended. Many important events have taken place.

The Lord has seen good to deprive me of my worldly dependences, by permitting a very great loss to befall me in trade; and also a relation to sell from me an estate that would have fallen to me. But all shall be well.

1777. January 5. I began the first Sabbath in this year by taking a text out of the first Psalm, I mean to do this regularly out of all the Psalms, of a Lord's day morning, till I have gone through the whole book. I began also reading the first chapter of Genesis, and the first of Matthew, and I intend to read through the whole Bible and Testament.

February 10. We received into the church this morning thirteen members. Another had applied, but being accused of some imprudences, we judged it proper to let him wait a little longer.

April 16. Had another disagreeable meeting, which was convened this evening, to inquire into the behaviour of a member and his wife. Only the husband attended; and, for want of his wife's evidence, we could not fully ascertain the truth; but they were both set aside from the Lord's table—the one from his own confession—the other for contempt, till they should be sensible of their faults, and acknowledge them. I had many times called upon them privately, and endeavoured to accommodate matters, till it grew so notorious and offensive as to need the interposition of the church.

July 13. Visited a woman who appears to be very near death, but is exceedingly happy. She died next morning, and Tuesday following was interred in our burial-ground. She desired me to preach a sermon on the occasion; but as she named no text, I made the corpse itself my text, and mortality my subject.

November 16, Received in seven members, who were all unanimously approved of.—Blessed be God for his abundant goodness to us this year. He has brought us into favour with his dear ministers and people; united us more together in brotherly affection; and added to our number twenty-five souls.

1778. February 27, being set apart by Government for a day of humiliation, we met as usual in the morning at seven o'clock, two in the afternoon, and half-past five in the evening; besides which, I exhorted the people in the morning to go to the parish church, to shew our loyalty and Christian love.

March 26, Have this day another blessing to thank God for. I am now commenced housekeeper, and have removed to a most delightful spot, suited to my taste, in a field near a river, with beautiful prospects all around.—O may my prospects of a better world never be obscured by too great an attachment to this,

May 7. Took a little trip with my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. T. in a chaise to London, where we stayed a week, and then pursued our journey to Olney, in Buckinghamshire, on a visit to Mr. Newton, and to be at the wedding of the Rev. Mr. Jones, which was solemnized the next day by Mr. Newton. We found great affection and kindness from all, and returned home through Oxfordshire and Berkshire Saturday evening.—Blessed be the Lord our God, who has carried us out and brought us home again in safety. While at London, I preached at many places.

June 14. Expounded the seventy-first Psalm—a Psalm that has been peculiarly blessed to my soul,

and which I have frequently called, by way of appropriation, *my* Psalm. It contains the whole of my experience from the day I began to preach to the present hour. It always seems new to me whenever I read it; and I have often received inexpressible consolation from it.—O that, when I am old and grey-headed, I may not be forsaken—and may I be enabled to talk of the righteousness of God all the day long.

June 21. Preached before breakfast at our own place, and afterwards went over to Frome, and heard a sermon at church, from my old master, the Rev. P. Mason; and in the evening preached at Rook-lane Meeting, to a very great congregation.

July 27. We assembled, according to previous notice given, to investigate the conduct of one of our deacons, accused of intoxication. He was desired to attend, but did not. The charges against him being fully proved, he was put from his office, and the Lord's table, till he should discover repentance. Another person who had been suspended some time back came and confessed his faults, and acknowledged that he was extremely grieved, for what he had done, and was restored to the peace of the church.

August 23, Received into the church four members, and,

September 6, five more; all of whom giving a good account of their faith in Christ, and being irreproachable in their practice, were admitted joyfully by unanimous suffrage.

October 26. Riding by Tyburn, in my return from London, I was greatly affected at the sight of two malefactors that were executing. I was told



seven more were hung there last Monday.—O what a mercy to be preserved from those atrocious sins that bring men to such a disgraceful end! But, alas! though my sins have not exposed me to the punishment of the gallows, yet they have rendered me worthy of the damnation of hell.—O! how can I sufficiently value the all-sufficient sacrifice that has been a propitiation for my sin, and procured for me eternal salvation?

1779. As it has pleased my heavenly Father to give me an habitation of my own the year past, and also to give a favourable turn to my worldly affairs, I see it my duty to look out for a suitable companion for life, a help-meet to assist me both in my temporal and spiritual concerns. I have therefore this day, Tuesday, January 5, after the most mature deliberation and earnest prayer, proposed the matter to a Christian friend for her approbation. She is one who is, I hope, both pious and discreet, “a partaker of the benefit.” She is already my child and my sister; and I hope soon to make her my wife.

My engaging in trade, for my temporal support, is certainly attended with many advantages. It enables me to preach the Gospel without charge; and rendering me independent of the people, it emboldens me to deliver the truth with greater freedom. It also tends to stop the mouth of the scoffing infidel, who would gladly represent all the ministers of Christ as preaching from mercenary views. Besides which, being in business enables a man to judge of the real characters and dispositions of people better than he can learn them by theory or information; and he is thereby helped to address them in a more pointed and experimental way. Yet many and great are the

difficulties to which a minister of this description is necessarily exposed; especially if his business be of the manufacturing kind, and he employs many of the vulgar and low-bred people, who are often actuated by the most selfish and illiberal motives. I have lately had many very striking proofs of this. Many unjust slanders have been propagated about me; many take the advantage of my being a preacher to impose upon me; and I am not at liberty to make that advantage of my business as another person can. Some to whom I preach the Gospel freely even spoil my work. This often gives me uneasiness, and tends to check my labour of love: but I thank my God I am still enabled to go on, having his approbation, and the testimony of a good conscience,

February 23. Gave an exhortation to my spinners at Rockly, near Marlborough, after I had paid them: had much liberty and pleasure, and was heard with great attention.

December 12. We met together to inquire into the behaviour of one of our members, who has lately professed to preach, for writing a very unkind and disrespectful letter to an aged minister, It being proved against him, and also that his motive for preaching was apparently worldly gain, he was excluded from the Lord's table, till he should be sensible of his faults, and make proper acknowledgments.

I have this year finished my organ, and some other mechanical and philosophical employments, with which I bless God I have pleasingly filled up my leisure hours. We have not had additions so great this year as in some former ones, but I hope we have been more and more confirmed and strength-

ened in the good ways of the Lord. Our number is now upwards of one hundred communicants, and great love and zeal at present reign among us. O may they be continued, and increase abundantly!

1780. Sunday morning, April 9, I called the church together to supplicate the Divine throne; to bewail our imperfections; especially to lament over those who had been censured and suspended from our communion; and to pray that God would graciously be pleased to restore them: as also to beg his direction concerning many that have applied for admittance, that we might not be suffered to receive improper persons into our society; at the same time to praise his holy Name for the many signal favours He has granted us, since we became an organized church. We also took opportunity to intercede for our country—that the Lord would be pleased speedily to bring our distracting and distressing affairs to a happy issue. We agreed to meet again the following Sabbath for the same purpose,

September 20. This day my father died, aged 78 I hope the Lord has been gracious to him. He opposed me very much when I began to profess religion, but of late he has constantly attended on my ministry.

October 24. As our society has been now formed upwards of thirteen years, we begin to have many removed from us by death; and it has been a peculiar satisfaction to me to see them depart with a good hope through grace; some of them full of comfort, and rejoicing in the prospect of eternal felicity. Surely this is an ample reward for all my labour. This evening I have interred one of our dear sisters, a most amiable young woman, who, though naturally of a

timid disposition, yet was strong in faith, and left our world with holy delight. I preached by her desire from Isaiah xii. 2, as expressive of the frame of her mind in her last moments.

December 27. Mr. Sloper was ordained at Devizes. The ministers who officiated were Messrs. Phene, Winter, Jameson, Brewer, and Bishop. I was desired to point out the duties of the pastoral office, which I endeavoured to do, but was so deeply affected with my dear brother's confession, delivered with so much godly simplicity and sincerity, that I could not perform it with that order and regularity I could have wished.

1781. May 15. Was attacked with a violent fever which threatened to carry me off in a short time. It is generally supposed that I took cold in going out to pray over the grave of a person I buried last Sunday evening, after preaching to a crowded audience, and being very warm. There is a scrupulous particularity in many to have a prayer at the grave; but surely it can be of no importance whether it be pronounced within doors or without. If I fall a martyr, let it be to the souls of the living, and not to the bodies of the dead.

May 20. Have this day resumed my pleasing work of preaching salvation to sinners, but find myself very weak.

December 25. We have kept Christmas as we think most congenial to the design of its institution, and the character of Him whose birth we celebrate: viz. not in carnal feasting and profane mirth, but in feasting on the Word of God, and in holy joy. We had preaching as usual; and I trust we had more real happiness than if we had spent the day in riot-

ing anti drunkenness. Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

1782. February 8. This being appointed by Government for a general fast, the preceding evening I attempted to shew the people the nature and design of a Christian fast, from Matthew vi. 16. 17, 18.

August 4. Received in five members. Another applied to be restored, but we judged it necessary for him to wait some time longer, as he does not seem to have profited sufficiently by the censure of the church.

1783. May 28. Attended Mr. Stevenson's ordination, who is settled in the Independent Meeting in Trowbridge. He gave in an excellent confession of faith.—May the Lord make him abundantly useful to that people.

1784, December 24. Died our dear friend Mrs. Turner. I was with her, and witnessed the sweet composure with which she departed. Her complaint was a dreadful cancer in the breast, which she bore with exemplary patience, She had some imperfections, but many excellences. She was extremely liberal in her sentiments, of which some persons endeavoured to take advantage, labouring to draw her away to their opinions. She was zealous for inward piety, and practical religion; but rather too positive. Having been greatly carried away by dress and gaiety in her younger days, she would scarcely allow of anything that had the appearance of ornament. Though suspected of being inclined to Arminianism, she has often acknowledged to me that her doctrinal sentiments were entirely Calvinistic. In short, she was a most excellent Christian, and died renouncing all

dependence on her own works, and triumphing in the Saviour alone.—May my latter end be like hers.

1785. Wednesday, January 5. At the interment of our dear friend, Mrs. Turner, I preached, by her desire, from the words—“I am nothing;” which were fully expressive of her real sentiments and experience. According to our usual custom, all the members of our church followed the corpse to the grave; and I suppose there were not less than forty ministers of different denominations present. A vast concourse of people was gathered together.—May many of them be led to consider their latter end, and to copy the example of our deceased sister.

January 23. Having been greatly solicited to publish Mrs. Turner’s funeral sermon, I have been this week occupied in endeavouring to recollect the particulars, as it was delivered entirely extemporaneous; and also in composing an elegiac poem on the occasion as a token of my sincerest regard.

May 15. Approving very much of the late institution of Sunday-schools, I have endeavoured for some time to establish one among ourselves: and we have now about two hundred and fifty boys and girls; and, as it was found inconvenient to intermix them with the congregation, we have erected a gallery at one end of the meeting, which they took possession of this morning; and it was very pleasing to see what a difference there is between their appearance now and when they were playing about the street and breaking the Sabbath.—May the Lord own and bless this laudable institution.

September 18. When I came home from preaching I was informed that the weavers were rising round the country, and intended to come and destroy

all the looms of their masters. As I live at a little distance from the town, it was concluded to come to me first. Many of my friends were greatly concerned for me, and we waited up till one o'clock next morning: but being much fatigued by preaching three times, I determined to go to bed and leave ourselves in the hands of a merciful Redeemer; but happy was I in reading in the family to open at the third Psalm. This was so suitable throughout, and so comfortable, that I went to rest with entire confidence.

1786, August 27. My wife was delivered of a fine boy; both likely to do well.

October 1. In the presence of the congregation, I solemnly devoted my dear infant to the Lord by baptism.—O! may He baptize him with the Holy Spirit, and make him meet for the enjoyment of himself for ever.—We called his name John.

1787. January 4. I endeavoured to describe the office of a watchman, from Ezekiel xxxiii.—O! may I begin the year with an humble dependence on my God, to enable me to discharge this important office with faithfulness. The work-people are again in a riotous state, which, as I am a clothier and have much to do with them, creates me a deal of uneasiness. It is very difficult to know how to act, Surely the working poor should have every encouragement; but it cannot be right for them to dictate to their masters, and threaten to destroy their property and their lives,

May 19. We have this day experienced a most afflictive providence. It has pleased God to take from us our dear little boy; and the stroke seems the heavier, as it was sudden and unexpected; and he was our only child.—O! might it have the desired

effect of shewing us the uncertainty and unsatisfactoriness of everything here below, and of setting our hearts more entirely on those things that are above.

November 29. My wife was brought to bed of another son, which seems somewhat like my late Isaac being raised from the dead—but his mother is so extremely ill that I almost despair of her life.—Many have been my afflictions this year, but I can also say great have been my consolations. The rioting of the weavers—the death of my child—my own painful illness—the troublesome and litigious conduct of those who sold me the spot of ground for my new dwelling-house—and now the dangerous condition of my wife; but yet, I bless God, one portion of his holy Word has been my support through the whole. It is in my beloved Psalm lxxi. 20,:21: “Thou, who hast shewn me great mid sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.”

1788. January 13. Met to regulate some disorders that have crept in among us, and to insist on a stricter attendance at the Lord’s table; and also to choose an additional deacon to assist in visiting the poor and the sick, as our number is so greatly increased, All was conducted with harmony and decorum.

February 3. Baptized my child in the presence of the congregation, and called him by the name of his deceased brother, John.

1789. December 15. Slept for the first time in our new habitation. O, may it prove a Bethel, and may it be our resting-place till He is pleased to remove us to the house not made with hands!



1790. January 3. Preached from Psalm xxiii, 6. Surely I may apply these words to my own experience: goodness and mercy have followed me: goodness in all the benefits I have received, and mercy in all the afflictions I have endured: goodness in supplying all my wants, and mercy in forgiving all my sins: goodness from God my Creator, and mercy from God my Redeemer.—These have followed me as constantly as my shadow. These have been with me in every condition—all the days of my life—in helpless childhood, in giddy youth, in manhood, and I doubt not will be to old age; and may this be my determined and unalterable resolution—to dwell in the house of the Lord, to enjoy, and serve, and praise him for ever. Amen.

1791. Being now nearly forty years old, I judge that I have fully reached the meridian of life, and, perhaps, must henceforth expect to find my remaining years declining towards the grave: but O, may I never decline from the ways of God. He has been very gracious to me hitherto, and, I doubt not, will preserve me to the end. It is thy presence, O my God, that alone can support me under the infirmities of declining life, and it is this that must give a relish to all my enjoyments. May the remainder of my days, whether many or few, be entirely devoted to thy glory, and the service of immortal souls. Amen.

June. As the Lord has been graciously pleased to establish my health once more, I think this summer to visit the villages round this neighbourhood, where I have formerly preached the Word. There are many in these places that will not be at the pains of coming where the Gospel is regularly preached, whose curiosity may lead them to go and

hear what a babbler may say. I would, therefore, wish to accommodate myself to their prejudices, hoping that God may bless it to their souls.

July. As our church is now grown pretty large, and I find that I cannot attend to everything myself. I proposed to choose a few of our most discreet members to assist me, to inquire into the state of the church from time to time, that we may keep up its discipline, and consult about measures for its prosperity. I, therefore, called a meeting for the purpose; and six persons were approved and chosen. We have agreed to meet an hour once a month, viz. on the Tuesday evening before the Sacrament.

1792. November. My mind has been much hurt of late by finding that a spirit of disaffection to Government is gone abroad among the people of England, in consequence of the revolution in France, May the Lord check the follies of mankind, and give peace in our time!

1793. April 19th being a public fast, we kept it in a very solemn manner. The unhappy spirit of disloyalty and disaffection that prevails too much at present made the day peculiarly interesting. I preached at seven in the morning: we afterwards went to the parish church, In the afternoon I preached from Proverbs xxiv. 21: "My son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change." I found great boldness and liberty. Preached again in the evening. Had a very large congregation each time.

July 15. Died my brother at Newbury. He is taken off in the prime of life, and has left a widow and two children. To these I must endeavour to be a father, as he has not been very successful in trade,

and has left very little property. May the Lord enable me to do a father's part: and may the stroke be sanctified to the survivors.

—On a retrospection of the year past, we have great room for gratitude. The Lord has greatly increased our numbers and blessed his Word; and much unanimity and kindness reign among us. The losses of our dear friends who are gone to Heaven have been abundantly made up by the acquisitions of some very pious and useful members.

1794. Our tabernacle being so crowded as to make it very uncomfortable both to minister and people, it has been for some time in contemplation to enlarge. This can only be done by doubling the breadth, which will make it very spacious, and, I am afraid, require too much exertion for me to preach in it constantly; but the Lord can give strength according to the necessity.

June 10. Began to preach round about in the villages. O that the Lord would give me a heart of flesh and a face of flint, to proclaim his Word, and to weep over precious souls.

December 21. I bless my heavenly Father I am greatly recovered from my late illness, and am determined, in his strength, to spend the remnant of my days more than ever in his blessed service, and to his honour and glory.

1795. Being now nearly arrived at my fiftieth year, and having been reminded by my late long and severe illness of the uncertainty of human life, I judge it to be very proper that I should for a moment look back and see how these years have been spent. But, first, undoubtedly, the thoughtless years of childhood and youth must be struck out of the

account; very little improvement, though much folly, can be attributed to them. My noblest source of satisfaction is in reflecting that the Lord has honoured me with a commission to preach his blessed Gospel; and though few can be more unfit for this important work, yet He has supported me in it, and owned my poor attempts to the conversion of a number of my fellow-sinners, and the establishment of his people in his holy ways. Much, however, have I to be ashamed of in the many imperfections that have attended my endeavours. That which has occupied the greatest portion of my time has been the management of a large business, in which I have met with many losses and difficulties; yet it has pleased God to give me a comfortable subsistence, and a rich abundance. Many of my intervening hours have been taken up in educating my child, investigating the works of nature, mechanism, poetry, music, gardening, &c. In short, my time has been pleasingly diversified. But has all been done to the glory of God: and may I not say much of my time has run to waste? Yet, O my God, the best hours I have spent in this world have been those in which thou hast permitted a near approach to thyself. These have been my golden moments. O! had they been more! Great room, therefore, have I to be thankful, and great room to be humbled. May I forget the things that are behind. and reach forth to those that are before.

March 29. Preached a funeral sermon for the wife of one of our members, who, though she never professed much, yet evidenced her love to the Lord and his people by every act of kindness. Her husband was one of those abandoned characters converted at the first opening of our tabernacle; and she has of tell

observed that the ground of her attachment to us was the reformation we had made in her husband, so that she lived with him quiet and happy afterwards. I hope it may be said she also was a partaker of his grace. She always attended the Word; and being in a public-house, they kept the strictest order, and would not permit anyone to get intoxicated.

May 28. Buried our dear friend Jacob Gatton, one of our deacons, a worthy man and a pious Christian, He died after a very long and trying affliction, which he bore with admirable patience and fortitude. He might be truly said to "have great peace by loving God's law, so that nothing could offend him." It was a pleasure to visit him, and to witness his triumphing over death. In one of my last interviews I hinted to him what a mercy it was to have the great concerns of another world settled before we lay on a dying bed. He replied with great earnestness, "This is the time to spend faith, and not to get it;" and immediately recollecting that the term spend did not seem quite proper, he corrected himself, and added, "I mean to use faith, for I know," said he, "it can never be spent." At another time, a person sitting by his bedside said, "Jacob, you will be soon happy;" he answered in an ecstasy, "I am happy already, and am only going to a greater happiness. A death-bed," added he, "is the time to prove the value and importance of religion." The funeral text, chosen by himself, was Zephaniah iii. 17. He was one of the nine that joined us first, and has walked steadily and uniformly between thirty and forty years.

1797. September. I am now somewhat recovered, and am able once more to preach, but with much difficulty, and am obliged to be carried. I hope I shall

be yet able to call a few more sinners to repentance, if it is my heavenly Father's good pleasure. But the complaint in my head still continues, and I am afraid will to the end of my days. Though I have been incapacitated to attend to the concerns of our church this year past, yet I am happy to find that several have been admitted to the privileges of it.—“With respect to my own frame of mind, I can truly say that I have found the religion of the Gospel to be my only support and consolation. Though I have been excluded from the participation of the outward means of grace, yet my soul has trusted in the Lord, and I am helped.

1798. I have hitherto attempted to educate my child in every branch of useful science, but my health and spirits not permitting me to attend so closely to his improvement as his present age and abilities require, I think it my duty to put him to a master who will do justice to his talents: and I am happy to have found one—a pious clergyman, who keeps only a few boarders, and who, while he is a good classical scholar, is extremely attentive to their morals, and an evangelical preacher—May the Lord grant that his talents may be improved to the most useful and important purposes. Amen.

1799. As I have been very much confined this winter within doors. I have amused myself in looking over some little pieces of poetry, which were chiefly composed in my juvenile years, together with some hymns, which we have occasionally sung at the tabernacle; and having been frequently told that they might become a blessing if made public, I have prepared them for the press and had them printed, I hope I can say I have done it with a pure motive to

be serviceable to the cause of religion in every way I am able.

—I am thankful I am one year nearer to my eternal Sabbath, where all sin, and sorrow, and weakness will for ever end.

1800. This year I have been very much confined at home; but have been enabled in general to preach at our own place twice of a Lord's day, and once on a week-day evening, besides expounding a chapter Sunday afternoon—yet I have made some excursions. In August we visited Weymouth again, and continued there five weeks, where I often preached as I was able.—As I have been sometimes detained in private for a whole Sabbath together, it has afforded me an opportunity of more attentively and experimentally reading God's blessed Word; and I find afflictions are necessary to make us understand it. On one of those occasions I thought I would regularly read through the whole Book of Psalms; and I was surprised to find that there was scarce a Psalm but, in one part or another, exactly applied to my case. I was particularly struck with Psalm lxvi. 10, 11, 12. I have often been brought *into the net* of perplexities and difficulties in my business, and in my office, as a preacher, and as a pastor: I have had *affliction laid upon my loins* in many painful and dangerous diseases: men have *rode over my head* by their impositions and oppressions; and, because I preach the Word of God freely, many religious persons have taken occasion to borrow sums of money, and instead of repaying me have entreated me with the greatest unkindness and ingratitude, judging that I should not have recourse to rigorous methods to recover it, being a preacher of mercy: I have also been *brought through*

*fire and through water*; opposite extremes of trials and temptations; yet, I bless his holy Name, I have no doubt but He will shortly *bring me forth* into a wealthy place; either making me more useful in this world, or calling me away to a better.

1803, March 1. I published a little thing called "The Christian's Ledger," wherein are contrasted the various texts of Scripture, pointing out what we *are*, and what we are *commanded* to be; and also, what God has *promised* to bestow. May it be useful.

May, Published a little poem, called "Novitius:" intended to give some friendly hints to young preachers.—O may God condescend to smile upon my endeavours for his glory and the advancement of real religion. I hope I can say my motives are upright. I want no emolument. I have devoted the profit, if there should be any, to benevolent purposes: and as to what is called fame, it is a mere phantom—unworthy the pursuit of any rational being—O that my poor attempts may be blessed to many when I am incapable of hearing of it; and may the glory be given to Him who is the author of every good and perfect gift.

November, Much complaint having been made of a want of tunes to hymns of a peculiar metre, I composed a few, which we may occasionally use; and in hopes of their being useful to other congregations as well as our own, I published them under the title of the "Trowbridge Harmony."

"O may I breathe no longer than I breathe  
My soul in praise to Him who gave my soul  
All her infinite of prospect fair."

1804, Another thing that requires regulation, is



our singing, It was formerly our method for all the congregation to sing the praises of God; and it was performed with much reverence and devotion. But of late years it has degenerated very much from its original simplicity. A set of persons calling themselves songsters, have by degrees taken upon them the whole of that part of God's service, and the rest of the congregation sit carelessly to listen, as if they had no active concern in it. Besides, these songsters are often falling out among themselves, and frequently sing such improper tunes, that they cause great uneasiness. To obviate these difficulties, I thought the best way would be to make use of an organ, and hearing of a good one to be sold at Bath, I went over and purchased it, It is now delightful to hear the whole congregation uniting as one man in the exercise. My own son and another young gentleman have engaged to play it gratis,

1805. I have been several times seized with such a difficulty of breathing that I thought I should have expired immediately, especially after my last return from Weymouth; I was obliged to rise at two o'clock, and all my family were greatly alarmed, I expected every instant to depart; but thank God I was quite easy and satisfied; and seemed to be waiting to have the prison doors opened, and the captive soul set at liberty.—O what a mercy to have all right between my soul and my God in a dying hour!

1806. September 7. The Lord has seen good to lay me by these three or four months, in a severe fit of rheumatic gout, and a complication of other disorders. Excessive has been the pain and distress which I have felt, yet I hope I can say, the conso-

lations of the Lord have been neither few nor small. The brethren, and indeed my town-people in general, have manifested a great deal of kindness and affectionate solicitude for my recovery. It seems very trying to be checked in the midst of my work, which of late has been very pleasant to me; but the will of the Lord must be done: O that I may submit cheerfully to it. I am going, however, to be carried this afternoon to the table of the Lord.—There I met the brethren, and we all wept together for the goodness of God to us as a church, in so far recovering me, Surely the Lord was with us of a truth.

1807. In the course of my late tedious affliction, I have received considerable amusement and gratification in composing a little poem, called “The Fortunate Discovery;” and which I have since published,

August 12. Went to Weymouth, and continued there a month. It served, I think, in some measure to strengthen my general frame; but my dropsical complaint is returned again with great violence,

December. Spent a month at Bath, in hope the change of air might be useful; but the weather was so extremely unfavourable, that I could not go out, and found myself worse. As it does not seem probable that I shall ever be able again to fill up my place in the house of God as formerly, I am looking out for an assistant—one that may be a comfort to me, and a blessing to the people,

1808. January 24, This being my birth-day, and having arrived at what some people call the grand climacteric, I am induced to look back and view how

these sixty-three years have been spent. I cannot express myself better than in the words of Dr. Watts:—

“Much of my time has run to waste,  
And I, perhaps, am near my home;  
Lord, grant me pardon for the past.  
And give me strength for days to come.”

My indisposition still continues, and my people are obliged to procure various ministers to supply my place.—At length, I trust we have been happily directed to a person well qualified to take a share with me in the pastoral care of the church and congregation, He seems a man of real piety, and possessed of every other requisite for the due discharge of his important office. His name is Innes, now at Crediton in Devonshire.—May the Lord make him a useful instrument of good, and a lasting blessing to the people.

Mr. Innes preached his first sermon, after which he continued with us some time, and found great acceptance with the people, who almost unanimously invited him to be their pastor and teacher, in conjunction with myself, to which he acceded; and at the same time they have provided liberally for his support, far beyond my expectations; for all which, the Lord enable me to be thankful. It has relieved me from a great burden, and, I hope, laid a foundation for continuing the Gospel in that place—so that I can now depart in peace, and with entire satisfaction,

August 21. I ventured out to God's house this morning, and gave the people an exhortation respecting our dear friend Mr. Innes, founded on the words of Paul, 1 Corinthians xvi. 10, 11: “See that he

may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." After which, Mr. Innes addressed them in a very affectionate manner. They seemed to be much moved, and I hope were greatly edified.

August 27. Repeated my journey to Weymouth, but the weather proved so very unfavourable, that we did not stay there long, though I think it rather helped to brace up my frame, and harden me against the approaching winter. All the friends at Weymouth were very kind. Before I took this journey, I had the pleasure of hearing the experience of eighteen persons, who desired to be admitted into the church.

October 9. I assisted Mr. Innes at the Lord's table, being the first sacrament since the taking in of our new members,—O that the great Shepherd may crown all our labours, and bless our souls to his glory.

**REMARKS  
OR  
THE CHARACTER AND NARRATIVE.**

FROM the preceding Memoir it appears, that Mr. Clark's health had been for some years impaired and declining. At length the symptoms of his disorder grew more serious; and his friends foreboded the event as at no great distance. But his removal was rather sudden and unexpected, In the morning of the last Sabbath he spent on earth, he attended public worship, In the evening of the day on which he died, a friend called upon him, and remarked his cheerfulness and composure: he replied, "I enjoy a solid peace, and have not been suffered to doubt the safety of my state during all this affliction, and for years before." He performed family worship himself—it was the last time—he prayed with peculiar impressiveness, like one who was at "the gate of heaven," Then taking leave of his friend, he said, "Perhaps we may not meet again on earth, but I trust we shall meet in heaven. I might have died long ago. I may not die for some weeks, I may die this very night, But, blessed be God, let it come when it will, all is well with regard to the soul and eternity." He retired; and, when in bed. again expressed his sense of the divine goodness, that "all, all was well." Shortly after which he literally and

figuratively “fell asleep.” Nothing could have been more easy or tranquil than his entrance into the “rest that remains for the people of God.”

Thus, from the termination of his written account to the period of his dissolution only a few months intervened; and they were months of inability for public service, and of bodily sickness and pain. During this season nothing occurred worthy of remark, but the exemplary manner in which he bore his privations and afflictions; and the familiarity and satisfaction with which he looked forward to the hour of his release. His experience and conversation in circumstances so trying, and in prospect of an event so awful and important, were peculiarly interesting and edifying. I never withdrew from his presence without exclaiming, “Thus, if called to it, may I suffer.” “Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his.”

In our monthly religious obituaries there is too great an insertion of at least *one* kind of peaceful and happy deaths. I mean those deaths—*with* which the life has no correspondence—*for* which it is no preparation—and *of* which it yields no reasonable hope. The Scripture does not countenance the expectation of such a frequent discordancy between the way and the end; between the character of a man while in this world, and his transition out of it. And though we should always endeavour to do good, and never limit the Holy One of Israel, it becomes us in many instances to rejoice, not only with trembling, but with silence; and to remember that the evidences which encourage us must be, from the very nature of the case, dubious; that “light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart;” that we

are to "fight the good fight of faith," in order to "lay hold on eternal life," and to "run the race set before us," in order to "reach the prize of our high calling;" and that the frequent exhibition of careless, worldly, wicked lives being closed with a work of grace, will have a tendency to prevent a salutary fear, and to keep, alive a presumptuous hope. God forbid we should exclude, however vile, any of our fellow-creatures from mercy, even at the eleventh hour. We do not. But it may strike some with wonder to observe how commonly—may I not add invariably, even malefactors, when visited by a certain order of good men, finish their course, if not with the triumph and ecstasy of martyrs, yet with a confidence and joy far superior to those of thousands who have long followed the Saviour in the regeneration. Now admitting, as we most cheerfully and gratefully do, the possibility of a real change of heart in some of these examples, yet surely it would not be amiss if many of those who profess to experience it discovered a little more penitence, as well as assurance; and many of those who record it displayed a little more caution as well as zeal.

To return to the place from which we may seem to have digressed. In Mr. Clark the way and the end, the life and the death, harmonized. To live was Christ: to die was gain. He had been distinguished by a long course of dependence upon God, of communion with Him, of devotedness to Him. He evinced a remarkable steadiness and consistency of character. He was early called to a knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus; and from the commencement of his religious career to the close of it he was uniform. Observed at twenty, at forty, at sixty;

seen in public, in private, in single life; examined as a son, a master, a husband, a father—he was the same; harmless and blameless; holy and spiritual—no other difference being discernible than that which results from increase and progression. For “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

What an interesting object to contemplate is a man who not only begins well, but ends so; who, moving through a world like this for near seventy years, is stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; who is neither discouraged by difficulties, nor flattered by seducing prospects to abandon his course, or even to relax in it! How many apostacies and declensions has such a man witnessed while he has held on his way! How often have his principles been reduced to proof, and how often has he practically said, “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!” Such a man gains esteem and confidence: his enemies and his friends are possessed of a thousand pledges of the part he will act in any given circumstances: he is a tower-man, he has passed the mint, and circulates unquestioned and approved: he is “blessed,” for “he is tried, and receives a crown of life”—and the Judge of all, as he puts it on, says “Thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.” Such a man is here presented to the public.

A prejudice has sometimes been excited against early conversions; but an enemy has done this. Surely it is reasonable to conclude, that where God intends a man should gain much or do much, he will



dispose him to begin betimes. Surely it is not without cause that He has said, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." And the eminent servants of God recorded in the Scriptures, and the numberless examples that have adorned the church of God down to a Winter, and a Clark, will, I hope, be sufficient to disprove the wretched proverb, that "young saints make old demons," and give rise to a juster one, "that young saints make old angels."

While we acknowledge the insufficiency of a dry and barren orthodoxy; of cold and speculative opinions, that leave the heart unimpressed and the life unsanctified; no opportunity should be omitted of remarking the importance that ought to be attached to an enlightened understanding and a sound judgment. And it would not be difficult to prove how materially the adoption of definite and fixed views of the doctrines of the Gospel affects, if not the safety, yet the excellency of the individual. Decision and firmness, even when they rather partake of obstinacy, connect much more advantageously with dignity and usefulness, than levity, and fickleness, and change. That which is firm may be rendered fundamental; but who can build on sliding sand? A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. He can never be a character. Character is the result and fame of habits; habits are formed by actions; and actions that are uniform and constant enough to produce them must issue from some strong principle—the man cannot be versatile in the bias of his feelings or of his views. The firm reception of, and adherence to, a class of sentiments, even allowing the system not to be perfectly correct (a concession that ought to be extended

to every system but that which is contained in the Book of God), is preferable to a state of hesitation and uncertainty. For this state of mind, though it may in some cases be excused, and in some, for a while, be even commended, generally springs from evil, and leads to it. It reflects on revelation, which, being designed not only for important but immediate use, is doubtless intended to be plain. It discredits the truth of the promise—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;"—"The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach his way." It causes us to lose the advantage of truth under the constant apprehension of admitting error; keeps everything unoperative, because undecided; and employs in search the opportunities given for use and employment, I can never suppose, that the Scripture designed to applaud the free inquiry and liberal minds of those who are represented as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Men the most distinguished and serviceable in the cause of God have been the reverse of this vagrancy of mind; they had their leading sentiments early and firmly fixed; their "hearts were established with grace;" and though they improved much, they varied little. And this was the case with the man of God we are reviewing. He never found it necessary to change those principles which he felt perfectly adapted to his state as a sinner, and his experience as a saint. He discerned and embraced the truth at once, and, without delay, began to enjoy it—to walk in it—to profess it—to diffuse it: and hence the complexion of his future life

I am far from wishing to represent Mr. Clark as

perfect. We have no such characters in the biography of the Scripture; and when we meet with them ill other works, we feel ourselves trifled with, if not insulted. We have fable given us instead of fact, Such characters are imaginary, Even the grace of God, while it produces the Christian, leaves the man. I should not furnish a just view of the subject of this narrative were I not to observe that he had a disposition which, to an unusual degree, was retreating and reserved, To this may be fairly ascribed several of the little blemishes occasionally noticed in him. We are prone to run into extremes, The generality of ministers, as well as of females in our day, are not in danger of excess in "being keepers at home:" but in the case of the deceased home was, perhaps, too attractive and engrossing. He seemed to draw solitarily, rather than as a co-operator with others. He rarely met with his brethren in their associations, or attended any of their public services. He too rarely saw his own people, but in the house of God, and ill the hour of affliction; he had too little intercourse with his neighbours and friends; he stood too much aloof from general society.

Here it may be necessary to observe, that while religion disposes us for retirement, it prepares us to leave it; and that many of its duties call us, not out of the world, but into it. A Christian, says our Lord, is a candle; and "no man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house." And adds he—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Ye are my witnesses, says God. As such, they are subpœnaed

to *appear*; and they are not to be absent when called upon to depose. Many a testimony has been lost by the Christian's withdrawal from his place, as well as by his cowardly fear and shame when he is in it.

It is possible, therefore, that the abstraction enjoined upon us in the Scriptures may lead us astray; and there is peculiar danger of this when it falls in with a recluse temper. It is very conceivable that many find solitude much more inviting, and free, and pleasant than society. Moses, doubtless, found it a greater privilege to hold communion with God in Horeb; but it was his duty to descend, and endeavour to guide and govern a faithless and perverse generation through the wilderness to Canaan. Peter wished to remain in the transfiguration with his Master, and Moses and Elias—but “he knew not what he said,” From the irreligious maxims and manners of the world we are absolutely to retire, and thus practically bear our testimony against them: but the demand does not extend in the same way to our social intercourse with themselves. This it indirectly and conditionally forbids. This we are only to avoid when there is danger of infection, and no prospect of doing good. And even with regard to these, we are to remember—that we may be secured from contagion, if we take our preservatives along with us, and venture only at the call of God, and with a single eye to our duty: and—that there are opportunities and ways of being serviceable by a well-regulated intermixture with others, that some cannot or will not discern. We should, therefore, guard not only against everything that looks uncivil, but unsocial in religion. Though we are to discover a peculiar regard to “the house-

hold of faith;" "as we have opportunity, we are to do good unto all men." They have claims upon us as fellow-creatures, citizens, neighbours. The Saviour died for them; and it is not the will of our Father who is in Heaven that one of them should perish. If we are in the possession of a benefit that at present they are unhappily destitute of; Are we to be proud, as well as thankful? Are we to feel and act as if we considered them excluded and reprobate? Or as those who are encouraged by the mercy bestowed on them to invite others from their own experience, and to say—"O taste and see that the Lord is good—blessed is the man that trusteth in him!"

By keeping at an ungracious distance from those around us, we seem at least to regard them as the Jews did the Gentiles, unworthy to come in contact with so peculiar a people: we seem to say. "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." Hence, as they will judge by us of our religion—our religion will acquire, in their minds, a contemptuous and repulsive aspect, and the reaction of such a sentiment cannot but be injurious and lamentable.

Nor is this all. A man may move sufficiently in a state of society, and yet prevent all the usefulness of which he might render himself capable. It is only for him to imitate some of those beautiful and amiable examples with which the professing world in too many districts abounds. Let him only display the arrogance of spiritual pride; the censoriousness of superior orthodoxy; the captiousness of theological controversy; the rudeness and rancour of malevolence called faithfulness; the self-conceit, and positiveness, and intolerance, and insolence of those who *see things*

*clearly*; the evangelical pharisaism, if I may be allowed a perversion of language, of those “who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others;” and the work is effectually done. Who would ever wish to be religious with such specimens of religion before his eyes? Who would not deprecate the conversion of sinners if they were to be converted into such saints as these?

It is to be lamented that many who are in a great measure free from these incurable evils do not attend sufficiently to the apostolical maxim, “Walk in wisdom towards them that are without.” But some few there are who, along with inflexible integrity, possess the secret of moral attraction. They discover such a sympathy in their afflictions, such a concern for their welfare, such a readiness to serve them, as seldom fail to impress and interest those who neither think nor worship with them. They not only differ, but even censure, without producing resentment or alienation. They can drop hints so gentle and well-timed as not to disgust; so derived from circumstances and events as to appear natural and undesigned; so judicious in their application as to exemplify the proverb, “A word fitly spoken, O how good is it; it is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” They study the educations, connexions, habits, prejudices, and temperament of the individuals with whom they have to do, They shun every tendency to angry dispute, while they are “always ready to give to every man that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear.” They know that “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;” and, therefore, in meekness “instruct those that oppose themselves.”—They do not press

what their connexions at present are not prepared to receive; but endeavour to improve what is admitted and acknowledged, and which in due time will make way for more, Instead of assailing everything that is wrong, they commend and cherish everything that is right. They expel evil by introducing good; and banish error by presenting truth: and thus the friend acts without assuming an opposition that may render him in appearance a foe. They tear not the votaries of the world from their pursuits by violence, while their hearts would mourn after the interdicted delights; but they wean and allure from dissipation by substituting other engagements, and pleasures more rational and satisfying; and are, therefore, careful to exhibit "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report;" and to render religion as desirable as it is necessary; as "having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

Such conduct is not the sacrifice of principle, but the judicious use of it. It is prudence, considering the quality of its materials, as well as its work; varying its means to compass its end; conceding to gain, and yielding to conquer. It is not the cowardice, but "the meekness of wisdom." And though this wisdom is never perceived in its operation, and seldom acknowledged even in its useful result, by blind and furious bigots, "it is justified of all her children." Was there ever a more stedfast friend to truth than Paul? Instead of betraying the cause he espoused, he nobly fell a martyr to it. But what says he? "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as

under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

It may be necessary to touch another article of some importance in the Christian life. Habits of frugality may easily pass the line of duty, and enter the province of the neighbouring vice. People are often in hazard from this quarter, without apprehending it. Their religion teaches them to regard moderation as a virtue; and their circumstances perhaps require the practice of rigid economy even to "provide things honest in the sight of all men," What was originally necessary continues when it is no longer indispensable. They who have felt the worth of property by the want of it are apt to remember the worth when it is no longer wanted: and as they advance, not only shun extravagance, but that becomingly enlarged and liberal mode of livelihood which will not suffer "their good to be evil spoken of." For if a Christian, especially one of the stricter class, denies himself many things which his condition allows, he must be largely generous and beneficent, or his profession suffers: his privations will be considered the offspring of niggardliness, or sacrifices to Mammon.

But as habits of frugality and economy may very possibly be perverted and misrepresented, so the degree of beneficence practised by many of our fel-



low-Christians cannot be easily ascertained. When, with regard to bounty, we consider how much *ought* to be, and how much *may* be private; how many cases of distress come under the notice of another that never strike our own; how diversified the views of charity are, as well as its objects, and that those who do not walk with us may do good in their own way; it becomes us, in this as well as in many other instances, to remember the admonition, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

It has been supposed, even by friendship, that if Mr. Clark required the exercise of candour anywhere it would be here. How far it is needful, I cannot determine. From personal observation I was never impressed with the deficiency. But I can suppose, that his abstracted life cut him off from many objects, which by striking the eye would have affected the heart; and that the full employment of himself in a large business, in literary pursuits, and constant preaching, left him little leisure and opportunity to explore affliction in person. I can imagine, though I do not wish to justify the effect, that having constantly had so many of the lower class manufacturing for him, he might have had blunted, by all the wickedness he witnessed, something of the fine edge of humanity that many of those feel whose intercourse with the poor and wretched is only occasional and charitable. I know, that so conscious was he of the important duty of liberality, that he enjoined his dearest friend, if she judged it proper, to extend relief on any application, even should he himself at the time seem to be disinclined or adverse to it, He was not only the tender, but the kind relative; and amply proved himself "a friend to the fatherless," He even pur-

chased the place of worship in which he so long employed himself, and of private property made it public by putting it into the hand of trustees; and also secured provision for a considerable endowment in aid of the future support of Divine worship there. The sums expended for this purpose alone wore more than one thousand pounds. When it became necessary to have an assistant and a successor that would require a salary, he set his people an example by a very handsome annual subscription, The profits that might arise from any of his publications he previously consecrated to benevolent purposes, He bequeathed considerable legacies to the Bible, the Missionary, the Hibernian, and Tract Societies, And what was his whole life? Was it not completely disinterested? "They that sow spiritual things should reap carnal things;" "and the labourer is worthy of his hire."\* It is an ordinance of God, as truly as baptism or the Lord's Supper; "even so hath God *ordained* that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." But, like Paul, our friend always waived his privilege; not only in the infancy of the church, but when they were able to remunerate his services: and for all his labours he never received one mite. He could say, without a fear of contradiction, "I seek not yours, but you. I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel; yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Many may be equally

\* Mr. Clark somewhere strikingly says,  
 "Must not, you'll say, a preacher then have bread;  
 And feeding others, not himself be fed?  
 —'Tis true; but here a difference we conceive—  
 Some live by preaching, and some preach to live."

disinterested and unsecular in the sight of God, who cannot appear so in the view of men: but it is a singular advantage when the proof can accompany and illustrate the principle.—What could have carried a man forward, not only without repentance, but with delight, in so many ways, and for so many years, without the prospect or the wish of any emolument—yea, at the expense of substance, ease, friendship, fame? What was it that led him to subordinate worldly business and the pursuits of science to his public work? What led him to resign the figure he might have made as the gentleman and the scholar, for the sake of preaching in places and circumstances the most revolting to human pride, at the risk of health and life?

To those who were ignorant of the nature and force of the principle that actuated him, his conduct, doubtless, appeared mysterious or insane. But neither their ignorance, nor their reproach, could make him swerve, or pause. He could not but speak the things that he had heard and seen. He was a wonder unto many: but he did not view them with contempt, He pitied them; he prayed for them, And though he did not think it necessary to apologize, he explained, in language canonized by one who had a larger share of the same spirit: “For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.”

There are few, especially among the moderns, who

will bear any comparison with the deceased in point of *activity*. In labours he was more abundant. He was in season, and out of season. He knew that souls were perishing for lack of knowledge, and that his opportunities of saving them from death were limited and uncertain. He spent "the day"—it is called no more—not in idleness, or wavering resolves, but in exertion; for he saw "the night coming wherein no man can work." Is it possible for a preacher to read his narrative? Is it possible for him to reflect how often he engaged in public and in private? In how many places he proclaimed the Word of life? The quantity of fresh ground he broke up—and all this under the engagements and perplexities he felt from secular concerns—and not be ashamed or—inflamed by it?

His labours were distinguished by their *usefulness*, as well as by their greatness. His preaching laid the foundation of many religious societies in the surrounding neighbourhood. But to Trowbridge we principally look for evidence that he did not "run in vain, nor labour in vain." Beginning with three or four individuals in a private room, we behold him at length at the head of a congregation of considerably more than a thousand people on the Lord's-day, eager to hear the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. What a number of converts will be his joy and crown "in the day of the Lord Jesus!" What a number of souls encompassed the mouth of his grave, and by their tears acknowledged—"There lies the man that turned my feet into the path of peace." "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

Other ministers have gone to churches already

formed and established, but he had to form and establish one. Some plant, and others water, but he planted and watered, though it was God that gave the increase. Some lay the foundation, and others rear the building, but he laid the foundation, and with united patience and zeal, from time to time, added “the lively stones that grew unto an holy temple in the Lord.” It could not be said to him—“other men have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours.” He did not move “in another man’s line of things made ready to his hand:” but he could say—“I have strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation; but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand.”—Thus he practised himself what in a poem he has recommended to another:—

“Be you no party-man; but strive to bring  
*New* subjects daily to your heav’nly King.  
 —A Gospel preacher should be apt to teach,  
 And where the Gospel is *not* preach’d—to preach.”

Mr. Clark was a man by no means deficient *in literature*. He had been early placed at a good grammar-school, where he made proficiency in the Latin. He became also familiar with Greek and Hebrew. He had a very strong attachment to the arts and sciences through life. Mechanics, astronomy, electricity, chemistry, music—these were his delight, and employed the moments he could save from his secular and sacred engagements. In music he was a good performer on several instruments: He was also a composer; and published a volume of tunes, which

were revised by a very skilful hand, He had a soul formed for melody. Besides an organ in the tabernacle, he had two in his own mansion—one in a large staircase; surrounded with a gallery, prepared to receive it; and one in another apartment, which was entirely of his own construction, as well as a spinet; and a violoncello. Many curious and useful works remain as proofs of his delight and ingenuity in mechanism, I cannot imagine that I am sinking a biographical sketch in mentioning things like these, especially in *such* an example. Knowledge of every kind is ornamental and valuable. The skill of Bezaleel is noticed by God himself as one of his own gifts: “I have filled him with my spirit in wisdom and in understanding, and in all manner of workmanship: to devise cunning works; to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set, and in carving of timber.”—It may be prayed, from the case of Mr. Clark, that evangelical and serious religion is not, as some suppose, necessarily combined with rudeness and dulness. He was not a Gospel savage. In his dwelling, in his gardens, in his walks, taste and elegance were seen leading along piety, which, instead of churlishly refusing their offer, accepted it with a smile, and walked hand in hand with them. You were cheerful without being vain; and serious without being sad: you were instructed and improved, while you were attracted and charmed. On a large sun-dial, another work of his own hands, you saw *Pro tempore tantum*. On the front of one of his own made instruments, you read *Manu, Ore, Corde*. On an apparatus which he formed to exhibit the revolutions of the celestial bodies, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth

his handy-work." And here I cannot omit a circumstance which is characteristic of the man, and serves to shew how knowledge may be rendered useful, even in a way of charity. In the time of the scarcity of corn, in addition to what he gave himself, he devised this kind of orrery, and lectured at the tabernacle on astronomy; and obtained, by tickets of admission of half-a-crown each, a considerable sum to distribute among the poor.

N one that knew him will deny that he was a man of *great ingenuity*, and endowed with *superior talents*. This, I allow, is not easily inferred from his own memoir. In writings of this kind, there is an established mode from which it would seem there is to be no deviation. Even those who are capable of improving it are restrained by custom, or some unaccountable principle; so that the degree of genius they possess, instead of actuating their piety, is chilled and checked by it. Hence all religious journals are precisely alike. They tell something, but omit that which we are most anxious to know. We see indeed the goodness of the man, but not the individuality. We view the mind, but it is through a strait and contracted passage, like the pendulum of a clock through a circle of glass, in the body of the frame: we see it is going, but all the motion we observe is vacillation. We have repetitions of the same feelings, and the same phrases. A work of this class might be rendered, by a man of talent and remark, as well as devotion, a very interesting, a very instructive, and a very useful publication. Mr. Clark had made one improvement. He did not keep a *diary*, but wrote a *weekly* retrospect; and did it in the

silence and sacredness of the Sabbath-day morning, But it must be confessed this is all; and I have witnessed more intellect from him in one hour's conversation, or in one of his free addresses from the pulpit, than I found in going over all these papers. He had a fine imagination, that seldom failed to furnish him with the most happy allusions and illustrations. He was able to simplify and bring down to popular apprehension almost any train of thought. He had a facility in varying a few well-known truths, so as to give to sameness the effect of novelty. He could derive materials for his public discourses from the most common objects and occurrences. He studied men and things rather than pored over books; hence in his sermons there was the freshness of nature rather than the mechanism of art: and thus, while engaged in business, he was not only able to preach, but to attract and keep large and constantly increasing audiences. Though he never thought of studying oratory, his address was easy, and fluent, and correct; and though his discourses were not modelled after the forms of the schools, they were so affectionate and experimental as always to excite interest and attention: and they who heard could not but listen to addresses which they knew sprang only from a concern for their welfare, and which, instead of flourishing in abstract theory, and general declamation, touched *their* case, and expressed *their* pains and pleasures, hopes and fears: addresses which were always adapted to break a whole heart, or to bind up a broken one.

To conclude: he was an *original* character. There was a class to which he belonged, but he was unique



in it. He associated attributes rarely found blended in the same individual. It would be easy to exemplify this assertion.

—Here was a man full of diffidence and reserve, yet distinguished by active exertion; shrinking from private company, as much as Cowper, and yet apprehensive of no difficulty or danger in his public work, and seeking after opportunities to make known the savour of the Redeemer's knowledge in every place.

—A pastor, yet in trade; a minister of uncommon zeal, yet attentive to business, and acquiring affluence.

—A preacher, fixing upon his subjects in the place of worship, and deriving them from the chapters he read, yet never obliged to leave off or to talk nonsense by going on; always extemporaneous, yet never without order; and generally seizing a method as natural as it was prompt.

—Connected originally with no denomination, and shunned by the rigid of all parties; yet at length gaining the good-will and warm approbation of every neighbouring minister and congregation; and departing under their blessing and regret.

—Preaching out of the church and giving rise to dissenting congregations; and yet attached to the Establishment, not only at first, but to the end of life, —and not only as to its doctrine, but its Liturgy and forms.

—Principally labouring among the poor and common people; often preaching without doors in the streets and hedges, and passing with many for a fanatic; yet a man of substance, countenanced by persons of eminent character and reputation in their

day,\* fond of elegant learning, pursuing philosophical experiments, passing his leisure hours in leading forward his son in every branch of knowledge:—his study exhibiting scarcely a religious publication, and only containing works of literature and scientific apparatus.

Who can help seeing, therefore, how prone we are to err in judging of men by outward appearance, by common circumstances, by the class in which they usually rank? From every general rule there are exceptions. In every community there are characters that must not be measured by the ordinary standard. Indiscriminate reflections are always foolish and unjust. Many whose ignorant and illiberal minds are now asking, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” would be astonished if by accident they were to associate for a time with individuals of the bodies they censure in the mass; and if they could know them personally before they were informed of their canton or their clan, they would value them, they would be attracted towards them, and find a thousand points of amiable and useful contact, where they would otherwise suppose there could be nothing but dissimilarity and mutual repulsion. What pleasure and advantage are often lost in neighbourhoods by the prevalence of pre-

\* To mention no more: The late celebrated Dr. Stonehouse, as appears from the Memoir, more than countenanced him when he preached without doors in the vicinity of his living. And the Rev. James Roquett, of lamented memory, curate of St. Werburgh's, lecturer of St. Nicholas' churches, and chaplain of St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol; also chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl Deloraine—opened his chapel, and preached several years on the anniversary of the day.

judice, that keeps wise and worthy men at such a distance as to prevent their appreciating and loving one another! Surely if certain distinctions are deemed necessary in the present state, and restrict professional exertions; they need not forbid personal esteem and intercourse.

And to take a higher view.—As the subjects of Divine grace, under all the denominations that distinguish us, we belong to one family; and are, therefore, much more intimately related than the votaries of any party can be united. If I am a real Christian, whether an Episcopalian, a Dissenter, or a Methodist, I am your brother in the highest sense God himself can affix to the term: hence you are not at liberty to determine how you shall feel and behave towards me: you are bound to love me; and without this love, your religion is a dream. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Are we advancing to a world where it will not be inquired by what name we were called, but whether we “walked in newness of life:” not whether we served God in a particular place, but worshipped Him who is a spirit in spirit and in truth? Should we not endeavour to rise, and approximate this state? Must not a preparation for it consist in a resemblance of it? Should we lay more stress on that which is ready to vanish away, than on that which is destined to, be eternal, and is therefore infinitely superior in importance.

If God has promised unity among his own followers, we have reason to believe that it has been accomplished. But we see men equally led by the

spirit of God, and devoted to his will, differing from each other on numberless subjects. So it always has been. And so it always will be. Religion is not injured by it: nor has the Scripture spoken in vain. It never intended anything more than unity with variety; an accordance in great things, with difference in little ones. If communities or individuals pursue an uniformity of opinions, ceremonies, discipline, forms and modes of worship, they are first seeking that which is *impossible*: for the attempt has been fairly made, and has proved useless: men may as well be constrained or persuaded into an uniformity of stature—of complexion—of temper. And, secondly, they are seeking after that which would be *unprofitable*. The advantage lies in the present state of things. The cultivation of such dispositions, and the practice of such duties, as the exercise of humility, forbearance, self-denial, candour, and brotherly love, implies, are far more valuable and useful than a dull, stagnant conformity of notions or usages,—It is awfully possible for persons to be very strenuous about the “mint, anise, and cummin,” while they neglect “the weightier matters of the law;” and to contend for the forms of godliness, while they are destitute of its power. Indeed these are commonly proportioned to each other. The best way to moderate an undue zeal for the external and circumstantial appendages of religion, is, to impress the mind more fully with the spirit and the substance of it. As we regard serious and important things, we shall be drawn off from trifling ones: our time will be occupied; our attention will be elevated; our views will be enlarged.

Let me conclude the remark in the language of a

man who was peculiarly qualified to speak on this subject, having so amply illustrated ill his preaching and in his life the happy combination of liberality of feeling with firmness of conviction; of friendly intercourse, with attachment to order; of tolerance in little things, with zeal in great ones. "The true unity of spirit," says the incomparable Mr. Newton, "is derived hom the things in which those who are taught and born of God agree, and should not be affected by those in which they differ. The church of Christ, collectively considered, is an army; they serve under one Prince, have one common interest, and are opposed by the same enemies, This army is kept up, and the place of those who are daily removed to the church triumphant supplied entirely by those who are rescued and won from the power of the adversary, which is chiefly effected by the Gospel ministry. This consideration should remind ministers that it is highly improper (I might use a stronger expression) to waste much of their time and talents, which ought to be employed against the common foe, in opposing those who, though they cannot exactly agree with them in every smaller point, are perfectly agreed and ready to concur with them in promoting their principal design. A wise statesman, who has a point much at heart which he cannot carry without assistance, will gladly accept of help from persons of all parties on whom he can prevail to join with him; and will not, at such a crisis, preclude himself from this advantage by an unseasonable discussion of more minute concerns, in which he knows they must and will be against him. When I see ministers of acknowledged piety and respectable abilities very busy in defending or confuting the smaller differ-

ences which already too much separate those who ought to be of one heart and of one mind, though, while they are fallible, they cannot be exactly of one judgment—I give them credit for their good intention, but I cannot help lamenting the misapplication of their zeal, which, if directed into another channel, would probably make them much more successful in converting souls. Let us sound an alarm in the enemies' camp, but not in our own!—I have somewhere met with a passage of ancient history, the substance of which, though my recollection of it is but imperfect, I will relate:—'Two large bodies of force fell in with each other in a dark night, A battle immediately ensued. The attack and the resistance were supported with equal spirit. The contest was fierce and bloody. Great was the slaughter on both sides, and on both sides they were on the point of claiming the victory; when the day broke, and as the light advanced they soon perceived, to their astonishment and grief, that they had been fighting, not with enemies, as they had supposed, but with friends and allies. They had been doing their enemies' work, and weakening the cause they wished to support. The expectation of each party to conquer the other was founded upon the losses the opponents had sustained; and this was what proportionably aggravated their lamentation and distress, when they had sufficient light to shew them the mischief they had done.' Ah! my friends, if shame be compatible with the heavenly state, as perhaps in a sense it may, (for believers, when most happy here, are most sensibly ashamed of themselves,) shall we not even then be ashamed to think how often in this dark world we mistook our friends for foes; and that, while we thought we were

even fighting for the cause of God and truth, we were wounding and worrying the people whom he loved; and perhaps indulging our own narrow, selfish, party prejudices, under the semblance of zeal for his glory?"

—Again. Is it possible to read such a narrative as the foregoing, and not see the falsehood and infamy of reproaching men of Mr. Clark's sentiments as Antinomians, or even as persons who lay very little stress on the practical part of the Gospel? If they are ministers that urge the scandal, I would say—"Candidly examine these materials. I do not expect you to approve of every thing you meet with; but distinguish things that differ. Observe what an attention from the beginning, and throughout, Mr. Clark paid to the *moral* character and conduct of the members he admitted; and when under no sway but the influence of his own principles—principles which he knew required such sanctity, and would produce it when properly embraced," I would say—"Bring forward your own standard of practical religion, and let us see its elevation and purity. Are all those clean who bear the vessels of the Lord with you? would one instance of intoxication lay aside an official character in your community? Would smuggling exclude from the Lord's table with you? Would domestic broils suspend a member from your communion, till the force of reproof was felt, and the justice of it acknowledged?"

But it seems to demand an apology to notice such cavils, and which I fear oftener originate in malignity than in ignorance. When good men, crucified to the world, and labouring to serve their generation

by the will of God, are alarmed, they deserve attention and explanation. They really value the interests of holiness and good works: and it is desirable to remove their fears, by shewing them, from reasoning and from facts, that their pious apprehensions are groundless. But where persons give no evidence of their regard for the glory of God, or the welfare of man; where they worship nothing but “the god of this world” all the week, and on the Sabbath express *their* regrets and fears—we feel very differently. They cannot be in earnest; their complaints and clamours are railings or pretences. What are holiness and good works to them? We are here reminded of another objector, who, with a sad face and a pitiful voice, exclaimed, when he saw Mary’s zeal, “Why is this waste? Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?” An ignorant by-stander would have supposed that his heart was full of compassion. But he who knew what was in man tells us “That he said this, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”

—Mr. Clark knew and preached the importance of faith; and it was impossible for him to say more in honour of it than the sacred writers have done before him, But what did he include in his notion of faith, and what did he connect with it? An extract from one of his hymns will justly express his sentiment:

That we are saved by faith alone  
 God’s holy Word asserts;  
 But *pride* the doctrine will disown,  
 And *wickedness* perverts.



An empty notion some profess,  
 And think they now believe;  
 As if to see was to possess,  
 To know was to receive.

—But those who most themselves deceive,  
 And sure destruction win,  
 Are such who boast that they believe,  
 And yet are slaves to sin.

—Faith is an all-subduing power,  
 All-purifying grace:  
 Of holiness brings forth the *flower*,  
 And *fruits* of righteousness.

I wish this circumstance to be the more remarked, not only because the reflections to which I have alluded have been uncommonly spread and patronized of late. but also because there was nothing in the form and government of this society that was peculiar. Whatever little difference there may be in other things, with regard to *this* subject the narrative is but a fair specimen of the attention paid to the religion of the individuals *when admitted*, and as *long as they are continued in all* the churches of the orthodox Dissenters and Methodists. It is not pretended that all these members are unfeignedly pious. There is no guarding against the intrusion of hypocrites into any society, however strictly constituted or administered; but moral character and conduct are essential to membership: and it is surely sufficient to exonerate a body of people from reproach, when its adherents as soon as they are detected are disowned.

—Let those also look over the memoirs of this man who suspect that in certain societies a great deal of disaffection to government is always secretly working and cherished. What seditious practices

will they find in the proceedings here related? What of a dark and a suspicious nature will they discover in any of these public or private meetings? If they pronounce the exercises in which these deluded creatures engaged foolish, they cannot say they were dangerous. They were not of a political character or tendency. If ever these people and their minister had a reference to public affairs, it was purely religious: it was for the purpose of humiliation and prayer; and while many of their enemies were drinking, and swearing, and defaming, to shew their loyalty, they were individually and conjointly mourning over the sins of the land, and supplicating the throne of grace for protection and deliverance.

By inspecting these papers a man may see how Christian societies are formed, where nothing but toleration is expected from the secular power. He will see that in these communities there is nothing compulsory; all is founded in conviction, in choice, in spiritual friendship. He will see that the calling of the Christian does not sacrifice, but ratify and sanctify the rights of the man. He may compare these societies with the primitive churches, when no system was established or endowed, He may observe the adaptation there is in them to diffuse themselves, and to multiply; their fitness for missionary exertions; their simple, unperplexed, unembarrassed mode of operation in evangelizing a heathen country. He may compare them with the profit of the individuals composing them—with the injunctions of Scripture to watch over one another, to consider one another, to provoke one another to love and to good works—with the admonition of the Apostle, "Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even

as also ye do." "Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient unto all men"—with the exercise of brotherly reproof, the support of discipline, the purity of the Lord's table, and our Lord's rule—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."—He may take occasion from hence to inquire, whether there is anything like mystery in church government. He may ask, whether it was necessary for the Scripture to frame any particular or, definite system upon the subject. He will see whether the influence which the Gospel supplies, and the general laws it lays down, are not sufficient to guide us in all circumstances; and whether, as where there is no law there is no transgression, any injury can result from different administrations, varying with times and circumstances, and equally allowing of communion with God and social edification.

But some may be ready to ask what authority had such a man to preach at all? And the question is easily answered.—With regard to his own people, their choice and approbation.—With regard to the country in which he resided, the law of the land acknowledging, sanctioning, and protecting his labours.—With regard to God, command, inclination, capacity, opportunity, success.

Some things are usually, and some things are usefully, connected with the ministerial office that are by no means inseparable from the essence of it. Mr. Clark was not regularly inducted, nor had he an academical entrance. We are far from despising order; or supposing that learning is of little importance. Institutions established to prepare men for their public work are of great utility; and as God has, in the course of his providence, furnished our churches with them, we would earnestly recommend, that those who are encouraged to give up themselves to the ministry of the Word should avail themselves of the advantage. At the present season we should the more urge it, not only for the invaluable benefits derivable from them, but to suit the character of the times, and the state of many congregations, in which mere zeal would not, as formerly, secure attention; and also to keep back many, who, as one justly observes, while they declaim against *men-made* preachers, are fond enough of *self-made* preachers, and go forth with no advice but from their ignorance; with no consultation but with their own presumption, by which so many settled ministers have thorns planted in their nests, and schisms formed and upheld in their neighbourhoods.

Of old in Israel there were “schools of the prophets,” from which God generally took his servants: and thus he honoured the use of means. But he occasionally called a messenger from a different condition; and, by endowing and succeeding him, shewed that he was not bound to the use of them. And he does the same now. He gives us rules to go by; but he will not confine himself. While he discountenances the fanatic, he can pour contempt upon the

formalist; and teach those who love means not to idolize them, And when he produces exceptions, the circumstances will justify them; and the general rule will be confirmed rather than invalidated. It should therefore be remembered, that Mr. Clark was a man of education and knowledge: he had been prepared for his office, though in a peculiar way; and made every source of his improvement contribute to aid his public work. It will be well if some of those who deny the validity of his claim to the office he filled are able to produce the same number of seals to their ministry as we have reason to believe will authenticate his: or, as all who are alike called are not equally successful, if they are happy enough to hear the same commendation—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." While many differ about trifles; while they are disputing how the work shall be done, and who shall do it, and do nothing; such a man as this steps forward, and bears the burden and heat of the day, and is dismissed to receive a reward dispensed by a rule too frequently overlooked: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Solomon tells us "He that, winneth souls is wise." And our friend, in admonishing a young minister, has said—

Seek to be useful more than to excel;  
Who does his work effectual, does it well.

—Whatever curious critics may command,  
That best is done, that answers best the end:  
And preachers would be gainers on the whole,  
To mar a period, and to save a soul.

But was not Mr. Clark an enthusiast? Define the term, and we shall be able to answer. If you mean by enthusiast a man that pretends to new revelations from heaven, and governs himself by impulses regardless of the written Word; if you mean a man that takes it for granted he is a favourite of Heaven, and riots on high in the privileges of the Gospel, neglectful of the low claims of duty and common sense: who consults his imagination instead of his judgment; who, void of humility and caution, never supposes himself fallible—never doubts his rectitude or his wisdom, and therefore never pauses or inquires: who only thinks of his mark, but never examines the road he is to go, or the ground he is to tread: who is indifferent to the rationality of his conduct, insensible to the proprieties of life, and so engrossed with a favourite point as to resemble a man walking in his sleep, naked and staring, yet feeling and seeing nothing but the dream that inspires and disturbs him—

—If this is to be an enthusiast, Mr. Clark was unworthy of the name—no person could pass a day or an hour with him and not be convinced of this. Such a man would never have placed as a motto to one of his works the aphorism of Young:—

Reason pursu'd is faith: and unpursu'd  
Where proof invites, 'tis reason then no more.

Or have given to a preacher such advice as this:—

And if in public you would useful be,  
Make use of all you hear, and all you see.  
Observe men's tempers, weaknesses, complaints;  
You may improve by sinners and by saints.

To learn from fools and idiots condescend;  
 And on your brethren's labours oft attend.  
 What you in them approve e'er make your own,  
 Still imitate the best, but mimic none.  
 Let every science your attention prove;  
 And to converse with humble Christians love.  
 —Then study nature, nature best will please;  
 What comes from nature always flows with ease.  
 —Sound authors too with profit may be read:  
 But still the Scriptures are the fountain-head.  
 Yet ever search them with unbiass'd mind,  
 Take them, not as you wish, but as you find:  
 Nor seek to bend, and thus profanely choose  
 What only suits your predetermined views;  
 Or act the part of that prepost'rous fool  
 Who rashly dyed his pattern to his wool.\*

Is the following too the language of a wrong-headed enthusiast; or even of a man who has more zeal than knowledge?

—Fickle professors you will also find,  
 Who change about with every turn of wind;  
 From place to place, from sect to sect they stray,  
 As fancy or as interest leads the way:  
 The last with them is right, all else condemn'd,  
 All truth's within their present party hemm'd:  
 Bigots to any sect that suits their will,  
 And change they ne'er so oft, are bigots still.  
 —With real Christians too you've much to bear,  
 Those are not always wise who are sincere:

\* Alluding to the folly of a man who, being employed to dye a furnace of wool to the colour of a pattern, not being, able to bring the wool to the colour of his pattern, in order to make them match, put the pattern into the furnace with the wool.

Their tempers, manners, likings often clash:  
Some too remiss you'll find, and some too rash.  
And when a conscientious man goes wrong,  
He's hard to turn—his prejudice is strong.  
Much wisdom, therefore, you, my friend, will need,  
To judge between the motive and the deed:  
To shew a just severity to sin,  
And yet with tender love th' offender win.  
—Of love unfeign'd to all the pattern give,  
And teach with meekness, and with meekness live.  
Those doctrines preach that prove your Maker just,  
And bring the haughty sinner to the dust.  
Set forth th' experience of the Christian man,  
And urge obedience on the Gospel plan.  
Of "legal preacher" never fear the cry,  
Or aught, to please a sickly taste, deny.  
The *pious* hearer will your plan approve,  
And edify by all your work of Jove.  
But cav'ling coxcombs you can ne'er content,  
Though pure your doctrine, and your zeal well spent  
Such power to mortal man was never given;  
Nor could an angel, though sent down from heaven.  
It surely ill accords to deal in strife  
While you are dealing forth the bread of life.  
Some make the pulpit like the wrangling bar;  
The vehicle of peace, a seat of war:  
But scolding in a sermon, with hard names,  
No good will cherish, but it oft inflames.  
Then you, O man of God, let these alone;  
By setting up the truth, pull error down:  
Like arms of a true balance, one must drop  
Just in proportion as the other's up.  
—But what makes Christian discipline so rare?  
Our Christian churches are not what they were.



In former days, the shepherds led their sheep;  
 Taught them what paths to shun—what paths to keep:  
 To go before their flock was then their pride;  
 But now, too oft, the sheep their shepherds guide.  
 Church management is rated too by pay,  
 And pride and passion love to bear the sway:  
 A spirit of democracy prevails,  
 And thus authority and order fails.  
 —As all the world acknowledge the same sun,  
 In fanner days all churches were but one;  
 A general cause they all combin'd to make;  
 If one dismiss'd, the rest refused to take.  
 To gain most members now each party strives,  
 And by the loss of other churches thrives.  
 To excommunicate no way alarms.

Some other church receives with open arms.  
 But what accession does religion gain  
 By these divisions and distinctions vain?  
 Has Christ in his true church one member more?  
 Or is the man more holy than before?  
 Does it not oft'ner minister to strife,  
 And draw th' attention from the Christian life?

—But if by enthusiasm is intended the application to divine things—of that energy, that fervour of mind, which, it is supposed, always attends genius, and is essential to distinction in the arts and sciences: if, as a term of reproach, it is to decry a man who gives religion the most decided preference to every rival claim; who feels such a powerful devotedness to it, that difficulties rather increase than diminish his attachment; who is so alive to its excellency that he complains more of his defects than of his proficiencies; who is so united to its welfare, that he sympathises in all its varieties, and rejoices or weeps with it—who is so governed by it, as to make it the centre of attraction, the end to which he renders everything subordinate and subservient; I would say

—How is it that a term generally used with approbation should become in a particular case ignominious? Why should warmth be allowed and admired in every other subject, and condemned in that which beyond all comparison deserves and justifies it? Why should it not only excuse but extol the painter and the poet, and degrade the Christian, whose objects and pursuits are as superior to those of all other men, as the soul is more valuable than the body, and the heaven is higher than the earth? I would inquire—Whether it is possible to consider religion as important at all, without regarding it as all-important? Whether we can have fairly weighed eternal things against temporal, unless we see that there is no proportion between them? Whether we are required in the Scripture to attach ourselves to God a little, or to “love Him with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength”? Whether we are to obey Him partially and formally, while the heart is far from Him; or we are to be fervent in spirit while serving Him? Whether that moderation which some so highly applaud, as adjusting precisely the medium between being too little religious and righteous over much, and which attempts to reconcile and to satisfy the due claims of the world and of conscience, is not the very thing the Word of God brands as most incompatible with our Christian profession? “So then, because thou art *lukewarm*, and neither *cold* liar *hot*, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” In the latter sense of the word, Paul was an enthusiast. He felt such a commanding interest in the cause of the Redeemer as gave a unity to his active and diversified life, and produced that excellency in his Christian profession for which he is commended by many, who yet ridicule every practical approach to it in

others, In this sense, too, Mr. Clark deserves the honourable reproach, But justice requires that we make one concession. It regards some of Mr. Clark's thoughts and expressions, which, in appearance at least, and especially when presented to those that knew not the man, are exceptionable. There is, perhaps, nothing in the narrative that he could not have explained rationally and satisfactorily had opportunity been given him: but as they now stand, there are several things that deserve notice, and I shall speak freely.

With regard to the remarkable circumstance mentioned in page 337, and by which he was encouraged to go on at a moment when he determined to renounce preaching, I shall hardly hazard an opinion. I leave it to the judgment of the reader, and conclude that it will be viewed variously. It may be proper, however, to remark, that I was unwilling to admit the marvellous part of the event, till I had fully examined the case; fearing that some crude and ill-informed religionists are occasionally tempted to trench slightly on the demands of honesty and truth, to carry points for the glory of God! But, in this instance, every character stood fair; and I am fully persuaded, from what has come under my investigation, that there was no collusion, and that there could have been none. The fact is as well authenticated as the overruled result of it was happy and useful.

Mr. Clark (in page 332) speaks of his going to preach at some place; and tells us that "He ventured to trust entirely on the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost; and, without any previous study or arrangement of the subject, preached from Mark xvi.

16." And adds, "This I was enabled to do with so much ease and comfort to myself, and satisfaction to the audience, that thenceforward I never made use of any notes; but was enabled to cast myself entirely on the Divine goodness." Here we presume is an allusion to the promise given by our Saviour to his disciples, and which has frequently been mistaken and abused:—"When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Here it may be proper to observe: first, that the text has no reference to preaching at all; as appears from the words preceding—"But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles." Secondly, if it had such a reference originally, the justness of the application in the present instance would be questioned. Modern ministers are not Apostles, The miraculous and ordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost are very distinguishable. There is nothing that as preachers we have to be inspired with. We want ability to communicate what is already revealed, and to impress it upon the hearts of our hearers: and God forbid that we should ever think mere study, or reasoning, or eloquence, can succeed in securing the objects of the Christian ministry without "the ministration of the Spirit." But if "the preacher be wise," as Solomon remarks, "he will find out acceptable words, as well as words of truth:" he will see that activity and dependence, instead of being incompatible, require each

other; and that instrumentality, so far from excluding agency, supposes it. In this case, the advice of Paul to Timothy is worthy of our regard. Timothy was ordained "according to the prophecies which went before on him," and possessed extraordinary qualifications and assistance—yet, says his zealous but judicious admonisher, "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all;" or as it is ill the margin, "in all things."

Knowing Mr. Clark's views, I am certain he did not intend by the expression he used all the meaning some will attach to it: nor would he plead for anything like inspiration according to the common acceptance of the word. But here is a mad enthusiast:—here is a young unfurnished preacher who takes up the memoir, and justifies his ignorance, his incapacity for thought, his idleness, his love of gossiping by an expectation of Divine and immediate assistance. I think Mr. Clark, as far as he could have acted otherwise, erred: but before we exculpate another as far as we justify him, let the imitator be as obviously called to preach, let him be as much and as unavoidably engaged, let him possess the same education and talents, the same fancy and fluency; let him also be equally devoted to general improvement. For Mr. Clark—and it is but just to observe it—after mentioning that he preached habitually without writing or premeditating his sermons, adds "I considered, however, that this by no means excused me from studying, in a general way, God's holy Word, and wonderful works; but rather enforced the neces-

sity of it so much the more, that I might lay up a stock of things new and old, ready, when called, to bring forth to the public. My business also being with persons of different descriptions, especially the working poor, gave me an opportunity of knowing the real manners of men, and seeing more into the depravity of human nature, My philosophical researches also, to which I was exceedingly attached, served to enlarge my ideas of things as well as of men." I would also observe that Mr. Clark, unlike too many of this class, was never heard to censure those who preached in a way different from his own. He exceedingly enjoyed the labours of his brethren, and not only commended their services, but the preparations for them, "In the following lines," says he in the preface to his *Novitius*, "the reader may trace somewhat of the method which the author himself has been led to adopt; and which he hopes it has pleased God to own, to the conversion and edification of many.—But he would be far from limiting his brethren in the ministry to any particular method: let everyone consult his proper gift, and employ it in the best manner he is able—but all to the use of edifying. Some have a brilliant imagination, some a solid judgment, some a fluent utterance, and some a strong memory. I censure none but those who bury their talent, and those who misemploy it; those who seek to please themselves and those who seek to please men." In the same liberal strain are the following lines from the work itself:

—Next for your study might I drop a hint?  
With no dull rules would I your genius stint.  
Some preachers are with fertile fancies bless'd,  
To rove at large o'er nature suits them best.

From every object they can catch a theme,  
And the whole universe their study deem!  
Others there are more moderate limits keep,  
Their subjects fewer, but they dive more deep.  
In either case retirement may befriend  
To methodize the thought—the language mend,  
But study too intense brings many a grief;  
It dulls the spirits—makes the manner stiff.  
Too studious, some their native ardour damp  
With massy volumes, and the midnight lamp:  
The frame's enervated, too much confin'd;  
And gloomy vapours overspread the mind.  
But you, Novitius, take the middle course,  
Nor be remiss, nor yet your genius force:  
On no one study too intensely fix,  
But exercise and air discreetly mix.  
Should you prefer to preach extempore  
You may be less correct, but much more free.  
This was the way our good forefathers taught,  
Till, learning scarce, illit'rate men were sought:  
Now learned doctors keep the custom still,  
To ease their sloth, or else to shew their skill.  
—To preach by notes can be no sin indeed,  
Or read your sermons if you find you need:  
But wherefore then should you conceal the book,  
Or on it look as if you did not look?  
—An honest, warm effusion from the heart  
Must sure exceed the nicest forms of art:  
—Ideas will spring up as you go on,  
And honest zeal for many faults atone;  
Thoughts new enkindled set your soul on fire,  
And heavenly eloquence your tongue inspire.  
—But though your doctrine should be e'er so sound,  
Doctrine unfelt is seldom useful found.  
Not at the head take aim, with notions dry,  
Nor o'er the head let useless bullets fly  
Of learned lore; but level at the heart  
Your whole artillery, and strike that part.

And from *your* heart O send them burning too,  
 For balls red-hot most execution do.  
 If in the pulpit you appear unmoved,  
 Your sermon does small good, howe'er approved.  
 Yet do not rant enthusiastic stuff,  
 How weak no matter, so 'tis loud enough!  
 But temper zeal with wisdom and with love,  
 So men shall profit, and your God approve,  
 —Then for your language, be it chaste and pure,  
 Above contempt, though level to the poor.  
 Yet not in phrases quaint, and vulgar speech,  
 Attempt to play the buffoon, but to preach.  
 Know that your place a dignity demands,  
 For in God's name a Gospel preacher stands.  
 A striking simile you'll sometimes find  
 T' illustrate truth, and fix it on the mind:  
 Or with an anecdote attention move,  
 Lest dull monotony an opiate prove.  
 —Nor yet, my friend, affect the orator  
 In pompous diction, sounding metaphor.  
 Disguise not truth, proud eloquence to nourish,  
 As school-boys lose the letter in the flourish.  
 Enticing speech may loud applauses gain  
 From shallow hearers, and make preachers vain;  
 A feather this to tickle itching ears;  
 But 'tis warm truth must melt a soul to tears:  
 'Tis this, when aided by th' Almighty arm,  
 Will wonders work, and miracles perform.  
 —Whate'er your subject be, let heavenly zeal  
 And love to souls direct your method still:  
 Nor let strict rules, which pedagogues may teach,  
 Divert you from the end for which you preach.  
 Method, we grant, is proper; but 'tis cold,  
 If not attended with a pathos bold.  
 In nice particulars to waste your time  
 When souls are perishing, account a crime.  
 Some preachers cut the bread of life so small,  
 The greater part docs through the basket fall;



All their divisions subdivided yet,  
 'Twere task enough the numbers to repeat;  
 So full of heads, that nothing else there seems—  
 No room is left for body, life, or limbs.  
 —Some day and night upon a subject pore,  
 And rack invention till it yields no more;  
 To shew how much they can bring forth at will  
 From a small text, and thus display their skill:  
 Whate'er the text, the sermon still must be  
 A little body of divinity.  
 These in the study quench that ardent fire  
 Which in the pulpit should their souls inspire:  
 Exhausting so their subjects when alone,  
 That when they bring them forth, the savour's gone.  
 —Nor less, my friend, should you bethink your time,  
 While in a work so useful, so sublime.  
 Sweet is the Gospel, and it well beseems  
 To dwell with rapture on its glorious themes;  
 Yet some discourses would be full as good  
 If they were more compress'd in latitude:  
 They lose in substance what they gain in length,  
 As thread spun out too fine impairs its strength.  
 —Some are more garrulous the more they're lost,  
 And when they've least to say, enlarge the most.

I hope I need not apologize for the insertion of these extracts. They contain important hints, many of which are expressed in language that shews a considerable talent for poetry. They are, therefore, specimens of the kind of composition in which the author delighted, They also deliver his sentiments with regard to preaching; and will serve to qualify some passages in the memoir. They fully prove that, while he pleaded for ease and fervour, he did not oppose propriety and decorum, And surely it ought to be inquired, whether many of his strictures are not just; and whether all the evils to be dreaded are found on one side of the question, and nothing is to be appre-

hended from the opposite extreme? If the whisper could only be heard by *some*—we might suggest—Whether there is not an over-doing, as well as an under-doing? Whether habitual thought is not commonly preferable to the appointment of particular times for study? Whether general meditation is not more advantageous than minute reflection, which, while it gives a man skill in dividing and explaining words and phrases, adds but little to his intellectual stores?

A man who is always attentive and observing; who is well versed in general knowledge; who has amassed ideas upon every subject on which he is called to teach; who has rendered himself very familiar with the language of Scripture; and who speaks out of the abundance of the heart—such a man will rarely be at a loss, or preach amiss. His thoughts will easily find their proper places, and suitable language will clothe them, if he does not consume that enormous quantity of time expended by some ill their sermonic preparations, to the injury of their health, and the neglect of social duties. In all other cases, where men have similar qualifications, we are not afraid of everything they deliver on the spur of the occasion, or conclude that it must be incoherent and foolish.

We more than once in the narrative meet with a casual presentation of passages of Scripture and a seasonable occurrence of admonitions or promises on which some considerable stress was laid. I do not remember indeed any incongruous application of this kind; and Mr. Clark had too much wisdom to be led into any improprieties by such a sanction—Yet, it must be confessed, the practice is perilous; and I have known many cases in which it has been very

injuriously indulged. The text read, or recollected just at the time, has determined the person as to the state of his soul, or the path of duty: it has operated to the removal of his distress, or the solution of his doubt. But though all the Scripture is true in itself, many parts of it may be erroneous in their application to the present case of any individual. The wittableness of the part occurring is commonly supposed to prove that it is immediately from God: but this suitability is the question; and the man who decides it is the party interested, and, therefore, the most liable to mistake. The will of God may really call us off from a pursuit, when by this means the Word of God is urging us on. Jonah probably was encouraged when he came down to the sea-side to find a ship just ready to sail: when a man is in a wrong course, a piece of Scripture unexpectedly met with may keep him much in the same way. The angel of the Lord commissioned Gideon to go and deliver Israel as he was threshing wheat: a man engaged in the same work feels an inclination to go forth and preach, but has some little doubt as to his sufficiency and success - when lo! these yards came to his mind, "Arise, for the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour:" and his doubts are scattered like dust before the wind. A pious female meets with an eligible suitor, but has some conflict between inclination and conviction, founded on religious character: but she is resolved to yield, by opening the Bible, and casting her eye on the admonition, "Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with the men, doubting nothing: for I have sent them."\* A person thinks of engaging in some

\* Let no one object that the passage is not *quite* the thing: the difference between the singular and plural number is

enterprise; and it may be his duty not only to undertake it, but to undertake it immediately: but he is determined by the address of our Saviour suddenly starting into his mind, though not originally delivered quite on a similar occasion, "What thou doest, do quickly." I have read of a good old man who used to exhort people to live by the ten commandments, and not by impulses: and he used to tell how he got free from delusion himself. When he was a lad he was poor and pious, and thought that all suggestions in Scripture style came from heaven. Walking in the field in want of firing by the side of a neighbour's hedge, he wished for some of it to burn: instantly the word came—*In all this Job sinned not*; and in faith of this he began to make free with his neighbour's wood. But, happily, he discovered his error; tried the application of the text by the command—*Thou shalt not steal*; or, as the ingenious relator remarks, the Word of God might have led him out of the church into the jail.

After all, this is only specifying the danger on one side, though it is by far the most common side. But the Word of God has awful passages; and there are persons of a melancholy temperament, or labouring under dejection from temporary causes. Such persons, by a principle of association, are always prone to attract towards themselves everything of a dreadful nature. What wonder, therefore, when a threatening of Scripture strikes the mind in such a case, if the man, viewing it as a Divine intimation, is plunged into distraction or despair! We cannot love the Word,

nothing in these sublime cases: for the greater includes the less: and trifles cannot be seen when we soar.

of God too much, nor consult it too often. But we are to “*search* the Scripture;” and it is “to dwell in us richly in *all wisdom*.” We are not to turn it into a kind of lottery, or to use it as a spell, or a charm, but to “understand what we read.” We are not to take it separately, but connectedly: and if we would be directed by it as to our duty, or satisfied by it as to our state, we are to peruse its contents with diligence, humility, and prayer; to observe the passages that refer to persons of our character or condition; that describe the temptations to which we are exposed, or the trials under which we labour. In this way we shall find that the Word of God is not only designed, but calculated for general and perpetual use, and has such an infinite affluence in it as to subserve “*all things that pertaineth to life and godliness*.” Whether we are rulers or subjects, masters or servants, parents or children, husbands or wives: whether we are young or old, rich or poor, it lends us the most appropriate assistance; and is “a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.”

I most cordially subscribe to the doctrine of Divine influence, not in the lax sense in which it is admitted by all that make any pretensions to religion, but in the stricter meaning of the word. I believe that all good is derived from, and perpetuated by, the agency of the Holy Spirit. Yet this doctrine is frequently expressed by preachers and writers in a way that is not perfectly just, Everything is referred not efficiently, but immediately to God. We are wrought upon, not employed. We are passively blessed, not actuated to exertion, The means which idolatrously keep some from the God of all grace are too much discarded by others. The motive in many cases we

are aware cannot be too much praised, as it is designed to secure the glory of God. But if it needs not to be purified it requires to be enlightened. It should be remembered that God does not operate less really because he operates instrumentally. The means are his own, as well as the success of them. And the production of an effect by a series of means, deriving their operation and their being from God, instead of detracting from his glory, displays it, much more than a sudden result without any intervention. The one is a volition of God—the other an action. The one proves his omnipotence—the other shews also his wisdom and his condescension, The one astonishes—the other instructs. The one requires nothing—the other calls for prayer and obedience.—We are not wrought upon in religion as the mason works on stone, or as the carpenter on wood; we are rational and moral subjects: God works by setting us to work; He “works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.” *He* does not repent, but He enables *us* to repent: *He* does not believe, but He enables *us* to believe. He not only works in us, but even by us. He does not give me wisdom without making me wise: He informs me; and while He is the teacher, I am the learner. I am not *carried* forward like a man asleep in a ship: He leads me, He aids me: I cannot go a step without him, but *I go* with him. In doing good, I am not moved by mechanism, but motive. Renewing grace does not destroy the order, the subordination, the use of our spiritual powers, but restores them, establishes them, and sanctifies them.

There are some who seem to view the means of grace as mere tests of obedience to the will of God; as mere arbitrary expedients which, however used,

leave it perfectly uncertain whether any advantage can be derived from them. We are to regard them as a way in which we are to stand, in case God should go by and leave a blessing; not as a road leading to an end which we certainly and naturally approach if we walk on in it. The labours of the husbandman are vain without the Divine blessing; but there is a vast difference between his sowing flints and his sowing corn: a crop, by the influence of heaven, not only attends the seed, but grows out of it: the means of grace have a passive suitableness in them; they are adapted to do us good by their very nature; and the blessing is made to flow from the use of them, as well as to be obtained in it. They are not spoken of in Scripture as experiments; nor should we employ them just to try whether it be *possible* to gain any benefit: the promise is more encouraging—"Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." "Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and ye shall find, Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

We may here also notice the doctrine of Divine providence. We believe in its universality and minuteness, with men an attention to little things prevents an attention to great things; and an attention to great things prevents an attention to little things. But it is otherwise with God. The heaven of heavens cannot contain him; but He condescends to dwell with man upon the earth. He wings an angel, and He teaches the spider to weave his web: nor can it be

unworthy of Him to sustain what it was not beneath Him to create. There is dignity as well as truth in the language of our Saviour; "a sparrow falleth not to the ground without your heavenly Father; yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Yet I do not think we are justified in accustoming ourselves to such phrases as these "The Lord broke my bone;" "The Lord set my house on fire;" "The Lord blighted my apples." Nor are we friendly to many of those expressions which seem to intimate that the Lord often steps out of his ordinary course to indulge us. It savours of self-importance, while the acknowledgment may really issue from gratitude. Our speech should always be with grace; but it should be *seasoned* only with salt. The frequent use of the name of God, connected with things by no means uncommon or peculiar, but which have hereby an air of wonder and mystery given them, produces in religion the effect of the mock-heroic in poetry: and may not only diminish veneration, but excite ridicule. For things that are the same with regard to God are not so with regard to us.

In reference to any event in life, we are more than authorised to say, "if the Lord will:" but it is the sentiment that renders the diction valuable: and as the mind may feel the sentiment when the lips are silent, so the tongue may utter the words when the mind feels nothing: yea, the individual may even render the language more than insignificant: it may become "as the body without the spirit," which is not only dead, but disagreeable and offensive. I have heard of a preacher among a certain class of Christians who were formerly much more renowned than they now are for disturbing the audience by their fre-



quent and noisy assents in prayer. Conceiving that it was generally, at least, an idle unmeaning usage, in order to convince them, he said, as he was going on in his devotion, "Lord, take me immediately to heaven;" by the force of custom, "Amen" was kindly exclaimed from many a worthy brother and sister that would have been shocked at the thought of wishing him dead, And I knew a clerk, who was very conscientious in giving out any intimation from the desk, who once said, "There will be no preaching here next Thursday, *God willing*."—But "a preacher should be sparing of his smile;" and never indulge it to expose, but to rectify. I wish to be understood, It is not habitual piety we oppose; it is not the introduction of it into all our concerns; for whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. But it may be propel' to suggest to some that as there is "a form of godliness," so is there "a form of knowledge," and "a form of words;" that genuine religion deals more in things than in terms; that it induces us to be more concerned for the reality than the appearance of devotion; that though we cannot be righteous overmuch as to principle and disposition, we may as to ostentatious display, untimely exertions, and irregular actings ant of our place and beyond our power. A Christian, like the sun, is to do good, not by noise, but by shining; he is to operate principally not by his tongue, but by his life: by the consistency, the holiness, and the charms of his example. "For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

A man should study the dispensations of Providence. "Whoever is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord." But of the events befalling us two views may be taken.—First, These events may be very distinguishing; and our privileges peculiarly great. In this case, though they may be noticed by others, they can hardly be so well announced by ourselves. Humility seems to require the concealment rather than the exposure, Paul said, if I must needs glory, I will glory in things that concern my infirmities. He had visions and revelations of the Lord; and once he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words. After such a distinction, some would not have been able to contain themselves for a week or a day. They would have gone forth and have said to everyone they met; "Where do you think I have been?" Why, "in the third heaven." "And what do you think I have heard?"—Why, "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." But Paul does not divulge the honour for more than fourteen years—and then he was urged by slander; and mentions it not in his own praise, but in his own vindication, and to magnify his office in the eyes of those that unrighteously degraded him.—While he is candid enough to acknowledge, at the same time, that it had nearly proved too much for him; and that he would have been exalted above measure, but for a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, Secondly—We will suppose these events nothing more than common occurrences. In this case, though they may be worthy of attention and review to the individual himself, they can hardly be interesting or useful to others.

Thus, while in the one case publication may be improper, in the other it becomes needless. As things diminish by distance, so they are enlarged by nearness. Here persons are liable to err; and good men indulge in self-consequence without knowing it. A work that appears the offspring of pride only results from contracted views; from peculiar associations and habits; from a real wish to glorify God, If this be not taken into the account when writings of a certain kind are perused, we may censure the motive as much as we condemn the execution. I would observe also that, in addition to these circumstances, we should endeavour to comprehend their language, It is to be lamented that many of our authors should use a lexicon peculiar to themselves; but since this is the case, to judge them we must examine it: and yet many have it not at hand. When Mr. Clark says, "Such a day I had a call to London;" a stranger to his dialect may conclude that he was referring to some kind voice, or impulse, or be puzzled to understand his meaning, when all that *he* intended was, that circumstances rendered it his duty.

And here, before I conclude, I would remark the propriety of a decisive and intelligible mode of expression in religious concerns. It is not enough for a man to render it possible to understand his language; he should render it easy: he should endeavour to render it obvious not only to the initiated, but to those that are without. He knows not who may hear him, or read him beyond his own circle. Some good men are not aware of the injury they have done their cause by the use of certain terms and phrases. Some of these being early met with in a work have led the reader to prejudge and throw down the book.

which he might otherwise have been induced to read to advantage. It is useless for the author to say he was misunderstood; and that the reader appears to have been full of prejudice. Who would use language so dark or so dangerous that numbers have not views to comprehend or to qualify? A man who has eyes can step over a stone, but who would throw stumbling blocks in the way of the blind?—The figurative language of Scripture has often been rendered very exceptionable. Such words as resurrection, creation, regeneration, or the new birth, are finely applied by the sacred writers to the subject of religion: but instead of taking in the simple reference of the passage, the metaphor has been pushed to excess, and the mistaken declaimer has supposed that whatever is true of the image is true of the doctrine. Hence, such expressions have been used as would lead many to imagine, that in our renovation we are perfectly passive; hence, some of their readers seem to feel a kind of diabolical acquiescence in their present condition, as if their remaining in it was their misfortune, and not their crime. The same may be said of such declarations as these—“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” “The prayer of the wicked is an abomination.” These, separate from the positions and references which would explain and vindicate them, are often delivered so abstractedly, as to become erroneous and hurtful: men who are not conscious of religion, concluding that all their actions are the same; and that it matters not whether they go to the house of God, or remain at home; employ the Sabbath in reading the Scripture, or the news of the week.—“This is not our intention,” Why then incur the

danger? Why occasion an abuse which you could so easily escape?

It is worthy of remark, how much of the impression that a very celebrated review aimed some time ago to make against Methodism was derived from this kind of materials. Though we have no reason to believe that the writers in question would be friendly to evangelical truth, however soberly and judiciously explained; yet the weapons they wielded were certainly furnished not so much by the doctrine of the two magazines, as the quaint phrases, the cant terms, the low conceits, the mystical jargon, the spiritual prodigies, the unqualified and abrupt decisions with which, it must be confessed, they have too much abounded, And smely nothing of this was necessary in these publications. As far as the extracts from them contained *real* and *valuable* truth, neither the statement, nor the effect, would have been injured by a different and unexceptionable representation. There are authors firmly attached to the doctrines of the Gospel, and who have written in the illustration and defence of them, that we should not fear trusting in the hands of any class of readers. We do not mean to intimate that they would find nothing but what they approved; but the subject and not the author would offend; the displeasure would be “the offence of the cross;” it would be the reproach of faith, and not of folly—of the fanner we should never be ashamed: in the latter we should never glory.

The reader will perceive that I have wandered a little in some of these remarks; and that much of what I have advanced applies but very partially and indirectly to the worthy author and subject of the memoir we have reviewed. But from inferior faults

I have taken occasion to deliver myself, without reserve, upon faults of the same species appearing in their more enlarged and extreme forms. It is possible, it is probable, that by the use of this liberty censure will be incurred. It was not courted. It is not dreaded. The editor has followed the convictions which he has felt from an attentive survey of a certain portion of the religious world for some years, and in circumstances not unfavourable to observations. Under infirmities which remind him that his breath is in his nostrils, he has endeavoured to write in the fear of God, He presumes that none wish to be considered as infallible; that much harm has been done by injudicious defence and indiscriminate applause; that useful bodies of men may be rendered more useful; that while attached to the excellency of a cause, we yet should be impartial enough to see what is erroneous, and magnanimous enough to concede what is untenable. Love need not, and should not, be blind. I admire the person of a friend, but surely this does not require me to praise a stain his face has accidentally contracted: rather let me endeavour gently to wipe it off, and not suffer strangers to identify it with the figure.

As additional specimens of Mr. Clark's manner of writing, and for the sake of the useful hints they contain, I here insert a hymn—a versification of a psalm, which, though so exquisitely beautiful, Dr. Watts has omitted to notice—and an Address to Parents and Tutors. The editor presumes the propriety of his uniting to this work the Address he delivered at the mournful funeral of his friend will not be questioned.

## THE BREVITY OF LIFE.

SWIFT as an arrow cuts its way  
 Through the soft yielding air;  
 Or as the sun's more subtle ray,  
 Or lightning's sudden glare;  
 Or as an eagle to the prey,  
 Or shuttle through the loom;  
 —So haste our fleeting lives away,  
 So rush we to the tomb.

Like airy bubbles, lo! we rise,  
 And dance upon life's stream:  
 Till soon the air that caus'd destroys  
 Th' attenuated frame.  
 Down the swift stream we glide apace,  
 And carry death within;  
 Then break, and scarcely leave a trace  
 To shew that we have been.

The man the wisest of our kind,  
 Who length of days had seen;  
 To birth and death a time assign'd,  
 But none to life between.  
 Yet lo! what consequences close  
 This transient state below;  
 Eternal joys, or, missing those,  
 Interminable woe!

THE CXXXVII<sup>TH</sup> PSALM PARAPHRASED.

By Babel's streams we sat and wept;  
 For Zion's woes our hearts did rend:  
 Our harps, in tune no longer kept,  
 Upon the willows we suspend.  
 For there our foes insult us still,  
 And, taunting, aggravate our wrongs—  
 "Captives, display your boasted skill;  
 Come, sing us one of Zion's songs."

The songs of Zion are the Lord's,  
 And his are all the notes we raise;  
 We will not touch the tuneful chords  
 Till we can sound them in his praise.

While Zion lies in ruin still,  
 Dare we her dear remembrance leave?  
 No: first these hands shall lose their skill,  
 These tongues shall to our palates cleave.

Remember, Lord, how Edam's sons  
 Proudly contemn'd us in our woes,  
 Triumph'd o'er Zion's scatter'd stones,  
 And urg'd to rage her cruel foes.

But God will Babylon destroy;  
 Her righteous doom shall none retard:  
 And happy he who sees the day  
 When she shall meet her due reward.

#### TO PARENTS, &C.

PARENTS, and all who have in charge  
 To form the rising race,  
 Your duties numerous are and large,  
 And awful is your place.

The honour of your Maker's name,  
 The welfare of mankind;  
 Your children's happiness and fame,  
 —Are all to you consign'd.

then invoke the aid of Heav'n,  
 Superior wisdom ask;  
 That love and prudence may be giv'n  
 To undertake the task.



And would you much relieve your toil?  
Then meet their tempers right:  
False tenderness is sure to spoil;  
And harshness to affright.

Nor yet neglect restraint too long,  
Till nature's wild and rude:  
Habits of vice may grow so strong  
As scarce to be subdu'd.

The garden of the youthful mind  
Must not be left alone:  
Some work therein you'll daily find  
Is needful to be done.

The useful plant and pleasant flow'r  
Are rais'd with care and toil:  
But noxious weeds too oft o'erpower,  
Congenial with the soil.

While green the twig, and pliant still,  
Then bend it to its place;  
While warm the wax, impress the seal.  
Which time will not efface.

And first, unto the great Supreme  
Direct their high regard:  
With solemn awe to speak of Him,  
His name, his works, his Word.

And ever let them rev'rence yield  
To his appointed day:  
Not saunt'ring o'er the streets or fields  
In idleness or play;

But to the temples of his grace  
Your young immortals lead;  
And what they hear, at home impress,  
And there the Scriptures read.

Next to the pow'rs which God ordains,  
    Enjoin submission due;  
Obedience to superiors gains  
    Authority to you.

Teach them with equals to forego  
    All bickerings and strife;  
Peace and good-nature often know  
    A long and happy life.

From savage cruelty, O turn  
    Betimes the tender mind!  
Who torture insects, soon may learn  
    To butcher human kind!

But every kind and gentle deed  
    Should your applauses meet:  
Sure those who kindness always need,  
    Should others kindly treat.

To make distress their merriment,  
    Deserves severest blame:  
The wanton crime God may resent,  
    And make your child the same!

Immodest speeches, songs obscene,  
    Teach them to shun and hate;  
With what is vulgar, low, or mean,  
    In language or in gait.

But let their minds retain and prize,  
    More than their daily food,  
The choicest sayings of the wise,  
    And maxims of the good.

Dishonest practices, and mean,  
    Discountenance always;  
Nor let a knavish trick be seen,  
    E'en in their childish plays.

To hate a lie, to love the truth,  
    Inculcate all you can:  
These make an amiable youth,  
    And a respected man.  
Though now their labour needless seems,  
    To industry inure:  
What may befall in future times  
    No mortal can be sure.  
Let them not idly pass a day,  
    Some useful study find;  
Or innocent and healthful play,  
    To recreate the mind.  
But with what playmates e'er you trust  
    Your darling, O beware!  
Example, like corroding rust,  
    Will tarnish all your care.  
Who would be wise, must with the wise  
    Associate day by day:  
Oft, deeds that manhood signalize  
    Are learn'd in youthful play.  
Thus taught to act their part aright  
    On life's important stage,  
They now will prove your heart's delight,  
    And soothe your drooping age.

## AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT.

—THESE are the remains of the Rev. John Clark;—once—alas! what language death compels us to use! once—the kind neighbour and friend of these mourning connexions who are bedewing his memory with their tears;—once the affectionate father of this beloved son who is raising his streaming eyes to a nobler relation, and saying “Thou art the guide of my youth;”—once—the tender husband of this pious widow, who is endeavouring to say, “the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord;”—once—the faithful pastor of this bereaved people, who are “mourning most of all that they shall see his face and hear his voice no more.”—

And for what purpose are we assembled together?—Not to flatter. Who could indulge in adulation with a grave yawning under his eye?—Not even to eulogise the dead;—not to enlarge on the excellency of his character, his intellectual powers, his acquired endowments, the originality of his preaching, or the success of his labours in the conversion of souls, and the formation and enlargement of a flourishing Christian church. And the reason is—not because we deem funeral eulogy improper. The memory of the just *is* blessed; and we *ought* to hold up to view

examples of divine grace, and to glorify God in them.—Not because we feel a disinclination to speak of the deceased. It would exceedingly gratify the feelings of him who is now addressing you if he were favoured with an opportunity to do justice to a character he has always held in the highest esteem,—But it would violate order by anticipating what custom has rendered more proper to bring forward in a funeral sermon, and which will be delivered within these walls on Lord's day morning by our young friend and brother, who now fully succeeds to the office of the departed man of God.—May a double portion of the spirit of Elijah rest on Elisha.

—What then has drawn us around this vault, and how shall we occupy the few moments sacred to this service? We are come hither to see that creatures are nothing; that man in his best estate is altogether vanity; that human distinctions and advantages are precarious and vanishing. Here the rich and the poor meet together. The small and the great are here. And how dieth the wise man? Even as the fool. “The voice said. cry; and I said, what shall I cry—All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.”

We are called hither to contemplate the evil of sin. It is this that has turned us out of Paradise into a wilderness; it is this that has cursed the ground, and sown it with thorns and briars; it is this that has stored the elements with mischief; it is this that has produced earthquakes, famine, pestilence, war; it is this that has infected the constitution with numberless diseases; that breaks in pieces the human frame, that tears asunder the bonds that attach so closely together the various relations of life, that reduces the lovely

form to putrefaction, that compels us to bury our dead out of our sight, “where they say to corruption, Thou art my father; and unto the worm, Thou art my mother and sister.” And do you—can you love sin? Can you serve a monster stained with the blood of every dear relation, and of all mankind? Can you roll that as a sweet morsel under your tongue which is infinitely more poisonous than the gall of asps?—If there was no other consideration to excite an abhorrence of sin, this is surely sufficient—that it “brought death into the world and all our woe.”

We are called together to learn, what we are so prone to forget, that we are dying, and by an instance of mortality in another to be reminded of our own. We are all partakers of the same nature: we are all under the operation of the same sentence, “dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Death is the “way of *all* the earth:” the grave “the house appointed for *all* living.” In other wars there are exemptions, there are dismissions, but in this “there is no discharge.” The solemnities and services that we see attending our neighbours, friends, and relations, will be required for us:—will be required *certainly*; and will be required *soon*. “For what is our life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.” “Our days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle.” Every image that art and nature can supply is employed in the Scriptures to hold forth the brevity of our duration upon earth: but no language can express, no imagination can conceive the importance attached to the termination of it. And yet it is as true as it is astonishing—that the principal care of thousands is only to keep this

most interesting of all subjects from their thoughts! But if there are any such deluded creatures hearing me this morning, let me remind you—that shutting yourselves against danger is not providing for your security; that your putting the evil day far off is not putting it away; that your forgetfulness of the event does not even retard its approach.—While I speak you die. Every breath you draw, every pulse you beat, brings you nearer the hour that will demonstrate the insufficiency of the world to succour you, and lay open to your view those states of immortal existence that await you beyond the grave. And can you deem it improper or needless to realize this truth? and make this awful fact the subject of serious reflection? Would it not be reasonable and useful to say individually to yourselves—“Suppose my body was nailed up in this coffin, in what region, and with what associates, would my soul now be found? Should I be joined to the spirits of just men made perfect, or have my portion with the devil and his angels?” Would it not be pious, would it not be blessed to pray, “Make me to know my end, and the measure of my days what it is, that I may know how frail I am, So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”?

We are come hither to inquire what can prepare us to meet the king of terrors, and make us more than conquerors over the last enemy that is to be destroyed. And here, by everything that is awful and interesting, let me beseech you to guard not only against indifference, but against mistake, For there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but it ends in the most dreadful disappointment, The consequences of delusion are remediless; the

possibility of it is obvious; the frequency of it is certain. There are many whose hope is as the spider's web—curiously wrought, but easily destroyed. Search the Scriptures therefore, and pray that the spirit of God may lead you into all truth. You will then be directed to HIM in whom our absent friend alone trusted, and in whom he found “righteousness and strength:” to HIM who presents himself to us under every form of kindness and love, and cries, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:” to HIM who even among these desolations and triumphs of mortality appears “the resurrection and the life,” and promises “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?—Are you convinced that He is the only foundation on which a sinner can build with safety? That He is the way, the truth, and the life; and that no man cometh unto the Father but by Him? That He once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God? That He is our peace; and that by his stripes we are healed? Have you ever addressed Him in the language of Peter, “Lord save, or I perish”? Have you ever committed your eternal concerns into his hand, knowing in whom you have believed? Is the life that you now live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you? Is he everything *to* you, and is he ever),thing *with* you? Is the same mind in you that was also in Christ Jesus? Does the same blood that speaks peace to your troubled consciences purify them also from dead works to serve the living and true God?—Such a man is prepared for life with



all its events; for death with all its importance. Let him die *how* he will—*where* he will—*when* he will; to die is gain. The consequences of death being so tremendous, and the uncertainty of life being so manifestly great, no man, while unfit to leave this world, can possibly enjoy any happiness, but from ignorance or diversion: the moment he reflects, his peace and pleasure melt away. But what a source of tranquillity and satisfaction has he—who possesses a good hope through grace that he is “accepted in the beloved;” that he has “redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins;” that “God has given to him the earnest of the spirit:”—who knows that while “the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolving, he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens:”—who can say “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me”—“I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.” This man alone is worthy of our envy. “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

We are called hither to weep and mourn. It would argue a criminal insensibility, if when the righteous perished no man laid it to heart. It would defeat the moral purposes of heaven in the dispensation. “By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.” On such an occasion as this—

“Our grief becomes us, and our tears are just.”

Not indeed with regard to the deceased. *He* is released, indulged, enriched, dignified, exceeding abundantly above all we could ask or think: and with subordinate propriety he could say to survivors

with our Lord, "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father." But his gain is our loss. We lose by his removal a benefactor, a defender, an advocate, an example: and when we look, and see reason weeping, mercy weeping, truth weeping, religion weeping, can we avoid the sympathy and refuse to weep too?—As such men, such Christians, such ministers withdraw, what a melancholy hue they cast around!—how they impoverish our world!—how they come "over us like clouds to cool our brain less arduous!"—how they wean us

From these low grounds, where sorrows grow,  
And every pleasure dies!

—How they allure us upwards, and induce us to say with Thomas, "Let us go away that we may die with him!"

We are called hither to pay the last token of respect to the revered remains now lying before us. What though these eyes that once beamed intelligence are closed in darkness; what though these lips are silent that once proclaimed the Saviour's love; what though this body be now deserted of its immortal inhabitant and is reduced to a senseless clod—yet it is not to be despised—it *was* the workmanship of God—it *was* the temple of the Holy Ghost—it *did* accompany the soul in every trial and duty—it is the Redeemer's purchase—it *shall* be "changed and fashioned like his own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself."—In the belief of this truth we commit this precious seed to the dust.—

*Here the corpse was laid in the grave.*

—"It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory:

it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption, Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law, But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

And now, servant of God, farewell. We turn away from thy tomb to mingle with thy spirit, and to transcribe the excellencies of thy life into our own. We hail thee. Thy warfare is accomplished, Thy tears are wiped away. Thou hast reached Him who was the end of thy conversation, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." We rejoice that no man has taken thy crown. We rejoice that thou hast left a profession unstained by error or by vice. We rejoice that we have nothing to conceal, nothing to extenuate, when thy name, mentioned in public or in private, awakens the attentions it deserves.—Thy dying pillow was not perplexed with those anxious forebodings that have tried the faith of many: the objects of thy regard are amply enriched by the bounty of Providence, and are disposed to honour the Lord with their substance. The wife of thy bosom is following hard after thee: and the son of her womb, and the son of her vows, is resolving at thy hallowed grave that she shall not travel alone—her people shall be his people, and her God his God. Thine eyes have seen the good of Jerusalem; a numerous church undivided and peaceful, blessed with a pastor after thine own heart, "who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding;" and who, though "young and tender," is looking to that grace that is sufficient for him.—

Our separation is only temporary. A time of reunion is hastening on. Farewell, farewell.—We shall soon meet thee in that world where the sound will be heard no more.

## **A CHARGE,**

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

**TO THE WIFE OF A MINISTER.**

AT THE

ORDINATION OF HER HUSBAND.

“Our condition.; are the best preceptors or our duties.”—  
BURKE.

“Give her of the fruit of her hand: and let her own works  
praise her in the gates.”

SOLOMON.



## PREFACE.

As there is nothing in creation that so powerfully awakens our attention, engages our inclinations, refines our manners, exalts our character, and secures our happiness, as the other sex—the sharers of our very nature, and the partners of our lives—we need not wonder that authors have so frequently noticed them. But while Physicians, and Historians, and Philosophers, and Poets have paid these claimants attention—not always in the most deserving and profitable way—it may seem strange that preachers so rarely make them *distinctively* the objects of their address.

Two reasons perhaps may be assigned for this: The one is, that in their ministry, regardless of every subordinate difference, they have principally to do with those who are before them in the quality of fallen and recoverable creatures; whose grand concern is to be excited to “win Christ and be found in Him”—“where there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; for we are all one in Christ Jesus.” The other is, the danger of misapprehended motive. Women generally deserve more commendation and praise than men; and commendation and praise are much more likely to improve than reflection and censure, where the disposition is tender and ingenuous. But in applying

these peculiarly to their *female* hearers, complaisance may be supposed to disarm fidelity; and approbation may be construed into compliment. And nothing would be so unworthy a public teacher as to “have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons,” Here, however, the Author has, in more instances than one, trusted his credit in following his conviction. But where is he now?

MY READER:

You need not inquire after—the time—the place—the intended receiver of this address—or the circumstances that prevented the delivery of it. Suffice it to observe, that the title is founded in truth. The case was this. At our ordinations, after the confession of faith, and prayer for the Divine influence and blessing to attend the union that has been publicly recognised between the pastor and the church, it has been always customary to address to each of the parties a CHARGE, containing suitable instructions, cautions, admonitions, and encouragements, with regard to their respective duties. Nothing can be more scriptural or proper than such an usage: and nothing will be found more interesting and edifying, when it is not eked out in dull formality, and prolonged reiterations of sameness; but is performed in the spirit and unction of the service.

But the writer had often thought, that if on these occasions a Charge could be likewise addressed to *another* personage, it would be, if not equally necessary, yet truly important. The WIFE of the preacher is indeed, as his nearest relation, interested in all that is said to *him*: and, as a fellow-member with his



people, she is also concerned in all that is spoken to *them*. Yet it is easy to perceive that there is, with regard to HER, an individuality of character, and a peculiarity of condition, requiring and justifying something more than general and indiscriminate address. And the writer has always been persuaded, that one of the failures in ministerial labour has been owing to the neglect of detail and specification in the enforcement of moral topics. If personal reflection be avoided—and it would be base to indulge in this—practical exemplification cannot be too frequent or too particular. “The words of the wise” could not be as “goads and nails,” if they were obtuse. What pierces must be pointed. What affects must be individually appropriate. The self-application people try to elude must be rendered difficult, impossible. Conscience must be induced to say, “Thou art the man;” and the hearer, “convinced of all, judged of all, and feeling the secrets of his heart made manifest, report that God is in them of a truth.” What are curious distinctions, abstruse reasonings, metaphysical subtleties, and general declamations, where, as Bacon says, the preacher should bring home the subject to every man’s business and bosom; or, like Paul, “warn every man, and teach every man, in all wisdom; that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”? “If,” says God, “thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.” And how is this to be done? How are we to speak as HE speaks? but by clear delineations of character? just appropriations of promises and threatenings? wise and exciting applications of censure and commendation?

The wife of a minister is in a situation distin-

guished, observable, and influential. How much depends upon her principles, temper, taste, and behaviour! How various, delicate, and arduous are the duties she has to discharge! How much grace and wisdom are necessary to fill the circle of her vocation usefully and honourably!—And yet the place she is called to preside in cannot be distinctly and expressly prepared for, by any course of previous discipline. Though the age abounds with every kind of institution; no seminary, as yet, has been founded for training up female probationers for the Levitical economy; though they are supposed to be, either from the love of distinction, or the desire of usefulness, not a few. The more needful is something like the ensuing endeavour. In making it, the Author has also the sanction of the Apostle's example. *He* deemed it necessary not only to describe the attributes of approved Deacons and Bishops, but also of their wives—"Even so must their WIVES be grave; not slanderers; sober; faithful in all things."

There is one very important point of light in which the relation here noticed is to be viewed. In former times, which we should do well to cull to remembrance, the ministry often descended. Many of the ablest servants of God, whose works praise them in the gates, were of hallowed extraction. In the Non-Conformist Memorial, how many do we find besides Philip Henry of whom it was said, "instead of the fathers shall be the children!" Our own day also furnishes examples to which it would be pleasing to allude, if delicacy did not forbid. And families will increasingly replenish, not only the Church, but the pulpit—as the wives of ministers "are nursing mothers," and are "fellow-helpers to the truth."

If, after all, some, may think the following address too restrictive to justify publication; let it be, in fairness, observed, that besides the individuals here specifically regarded, much in the remarks will apply to *other* wives; and that, while pursuing a particular object, the course furnished an opportunity to throw out many collateral hints that may be serviceable to other parties—not to say ministers themselves.

The conditions of wives differ considerably with regard to worldly things; and the admonisher could not accommodate himself to every individuality in the gradations. His aim, therefore, has been taken neither from the highest nor the lowest rank; but from the middle degree—below affluence, and—above mean dependence. This is perhaps the most eligible estate for the ministers of the Gospel. So thought the Prophet of the Lord, the wise and pious Agar—“Remove from me vanity and lies. Give me neither poverty nor riches, Feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”

Before the writer was diverted from his purpose, it was not his design to have given the Charge at the same time with the other two addresses—as the service already is wearisomely long: but the morning after the ordination; and while the impression of the solemnity would be yet remaining.

Nor would he have delivered it in the public assembly—for where females are concerned, publicity is not to be sought after—but in the pastor's own dwelling.

From the singleness of the service, the speaker

could afford to be longer in his admonition than propriety would otherwise have allowed.

From the private nature of the engagement, he felt himself the more free from anxiety and restraint.

From the quality of the individual addressed, the mode of address itself was in some measure influenced. Females love facts and incidents rather than discussions; illustrations, rather than arguments; imagery, rather than abstractness; sententiousness, rather than diffusion: and though they are capable of thinking as well as the other sex, their thinking is more tempered by feeling; and they love thoughts when they are sentiments, rather than notions. Do we mean to censure this taste? It has one incomparable recommendation—it is the manner in which the Scriptures are written; and where God has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.

Imagine then a preacher of some age, observation, and experience—and in the subject before him, of no little happy experience—imagine such a man rising and addressing his interesting auditors—while the wives of several neighbouring ministers are also present—in the form and manner following—

*Bath; December 1, 1829.*

**THE CHARGE.**

*"A prudent wife is from the Lord."*—PROV. xix. 14.

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND AND SISTER,

As this peculiar service did not arise in the preacher from affectation, or a wish to excite notice and remark, so he is persuaded your ready compliance with the proposal of it has been only the result of a concern how to please the Lord, whose providence has called you to occupy the station you are now filling. He, therefore, most willingly engages in it, and hopes that the example, at least as to its spirit, will be hereafter followed. Yet he feels solicitude; and, as the effort is novel and probationary, he is not a little concerned for the goodness of the precedent. He fears nothing, indeed, from mere human opinion: he never would enter on any religious engagement unless he was at liberty to obey all the dictates of his conviction. While, therefore, on the one hand, he will not seek to give pain or offence; on the other, he is bound to shun every appearance of adulation. How strange that persons should ever dare to pander to the appetite of vanity, in holy exercises, and under the immediate eye of God; instead of being raised into a dignified independence of mind, by feeling the sentiment of Elihu—"I know not to give flattering titles: in so doing, my Maker would take me away"!

But as ignorance is not necessary to humility, so neither is it flattery to remind people of their real and relative importance, in order to make them sensible of their responsibilities, and anxious to discharge their obligations.

We rejoice that your sex is elevated to its proper rank in the community. In barbarous ages, and in all savage countries, it never rose to any of the dignities and rights of social, rational, and immortal beings. Some philosophers have strangely argued, whether men have been improved by the progress of civilization, and advancement of the arts and sciences: but no one can deny that women owe much, for a happy change in their condition, to the prevalence of knowledge and polished life. Yet what were the daughters of Greece and Rome compared with the daughters of Zion? "What did even chivalry accomplish for the objects of its enthusiasm, compared with the benefits the female race have derived from the doctrine and spirit of Christianity? It is the religion of Jesus that, far beyond every human institution, has, for you, softened the manners of the multitude, and subdued the fierceness and tyranny of physical power and dominion. It is this that has delivered you from the discords and wretchedness of polygamy and divorce. It is this that, instead of degrading you as the slaves, or seducers of the other sex, leads us to regard you as our companions, our friends, our sisters; the fellow-heirs of the grace of life; the daughters of the Lord Almighty. The light that has been shed upon your true destination and worth will prevent their ever being concealed or denied in future. It is now too late to controvert the claims which are so justly your due; or refuse to acknowledge that—

you must have—that you ought to have—that you are designed to have, a great influence in the relations and interests of society.

Yet the manner in which this influence is to be most properly and advantageously exerted and employed is not only a question of wisdom, but, as far as the mind of God is made known concerning it, a matter of absolute submission. The ground of moral duty is the same with regard to all; but the exemplification of the principle must vary according to the connexions and circumstances of individuals. And, therefore, I need not say, that you are expressly forbidden to occupy the office of your husband, and publicly teach in the Church. This prohibition will not surprise or offend anyone who reflects, that God has a right to order all affairs in His own house; and that none of His decisions are arbitrary. *We* judge from very limited views of things; and in no case can we infallibly determine what may be best, eventually, and upon the whole. But His understanding is infinite; and His judgment is always according to truth.

Regulation is not degradation. God himself is the grand example of order. He who is above all submits to rule. He does—not what He would—but what He ought; or, as His Word expresses it, “what becomes Him;” what “behoveth Him;” what “seemeth good in His sight.”

Services uncalled of God are unacceptable to him: He may pardon them, but He cannot reward them. The result of maintaining the laws of order and decorum is more important to the welfare of society than a few instances of usefulness arising from the violation of them; and which are more noticed because

they stand out to observation: and are commonly magnified above their real desert, in consequence of their specious and immediate effect. There is danger too that, when persons have once broken their rank, and have enjoyed the sweetness of notice and applause, they will never subside into entire regularity again. Your husband would have run no little risk had he in the election of a wife made choice of an expositor of the Scriptures, whether in public, or even in the social circle. This half-female divine would, probably, have still continued ministering in the same way: as we too often see in those individuals in our churches who become occasional preachers; they seldom feel again as mere members; and are the most dissatisfied and trying hearers with whom their pastors have to deal.

Limitation here is not obstruction. It confines indeed; but it is the confinement of direction. not of hindrance. It does not oppose, but guide. It resembles the banks of a river which, not keeping the stream back, but only keeping it in, draw and aid along its course; while the current pursues the noiseless tenor of its way—even—and—clear—reflecting the sky,—and refreshing and adorning the earth. How much better is this than the turbid licentiousness of the flood, though it may make a greater shew and a greater noise; and draw more gazers to its spreading, wild, and dangerous invasions!

The Greeks did not permit the men to have much intercourse with female society unless they were related; and the Asiatics laid upon their women yet greater restraints. Hence, as Christian churches were first formed in Greece and Asia, it might have been inferred, that such females as wanted other



instruction than was given in the public assemblies must have received it in private, from some of their own sex; and that from them, also, women in penury, distress, and confinement must have received visits of succour and comfort. Accordingly we find females eligible from their knowledge, experience, discretion, and age, were appointed for these purposes. They are often referred to in the Epistles. Paul speaks of those "women that laboured with him in the Gospel." In the earlier periods of Ecclesiastical History we perceive women having some offices analogous to those of the men. But they were of a private nature. Our brethren, the Moravians, retain some functions of this kind; and, we believe, no man among them can be a pastor who is unmarried; as there are services required of the wife as well as of the husband. But none of them are consonant with the public ministration of the Word. How far any appointments of a similar order might be profitably established in our churches it would not be, perhaps, improper to inquire.

But we are not going at present to attempt any new schemes. We deem it preferable to take things as they are; and endeavour to improve what is practicable, rather than to deal in what is speculative. We therefore say that, without the assumption of office, and without leaving the sphere of engagement suited to your sex and station, you may, in an eminent degree, serve your own generation by the will of God, Let me freely develope and enforce what I should deem necessary to your securing so desirable an attainment.

I presume on your personal religion. It is said of Zachariah and Elisabeth, that "they were *both*

righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." If a Christian is to "marry only in the Lord," how indispensable is this requisition to a minister! If *he* sets at nought the Divine precaution, he not only by his example justifies others in forming unhallowed connexions, but his own wickedness will correct him; and he will be made to feel, in the natural consequences as well as in the penal rebuke, what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the fear of the Almighty. His case indeed is to be pitied, should he have been imposed upon after serious and candid examination. And there have been wives who have made pretensions to gain the upright, who are always the most unsuspecting. And when the mask has been afterwards thrown aside, what an astounding discovery has it been to the deceived, and what a degradation to the deceiver! And when the disguise has continued, what a wretched constraint has been necessary to keep up appearances! And what irksomeness has been endured in being so often engaged in the exercises of unfelt devotion! And what excuses have been made for omitting duties against the drudgery of which the alienated heart has revolted! And what can be more likely to impair conscience, and to produce impenitence, than "lying against the Holy Ghost"? "And what is the hope of the hypocrite, though she hath gained, when God taketh away her soul?" "But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

Yet, though, in your case, the reality of godliness be indispensable, it is not sufficient, Everything in the claims of your calling requires—not only that you should fear God, but that you should fear God above

many—not only that you should know the truth as it is in Jesus, but be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding—not only that you should be sincere and without offence, until the day of Christ, but be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Here let me speak of your deportment—

With regard to THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT.

With regard to OTHER RELIGIOUS PARTIES.

With regard to your OWN CHURCH AND CONGREGATION.

With regard to your FAMILY.

With regard to your HUSBAND.

First, with regard to them that ARE WITHOUT. Of these your husband is to have a “good report, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” It must be the same with you: for, though less conspicuous than himself, you will not escape observation.

You are required to be firm and decided. You must keep your high and holy ground, and not be drawn down into the course of this world. If you comply with their wishes, and conform to their maxims and manners, they may like you more, but they will esteem you less. It is by your consistency that you are to strike and impress others. They will not regard what they see you make light of yourselves: and surely you cannot evince the importance you attach to the truths you profess by owning them at one time and being ashamed of them at another, according to the place and company in which you are found; but only by the constancy of your, adherence to them, and the sacrifices you are ready to make in their defence.

Yet tenderness must be connected with decision,

both to qualify it, and to prove the source from which it results—that it is not the offspring of obstinacy, but principle; that it is not self-will, but a regard to the will of God; that it is not prejudice, but enlightened conviction. Whoever in this cause contends earnestly must yet strive lawfully. A Polemic of your sex is rarely desirable. A theological Joan of Arc we would rather decline altogether. The Amazons of orthodoxy, as those of old, may amputate the breast, the better to draw the bow: but we prefer their feeling to their fierceness; and their charms to their courage. They are not only most lovely, but most efficient, when unarmed and attired in the meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ.

In your social intercourse be careful to unite discretion with integrity. Be concerned not only to maintain your reputation, but the honour of your religion. Do not imagine that truth is an altar that sanctifies every offering. Plead for no doctrine in an uncharitable temper. Christian faithfulness does not require ill-nature; and gains nothing by ill-breeding. It is a poor way of usefulness to lose all future opportunities of doing good to your fellow-creatures by driving them away from your presence, or hardening their minds against you. Yet how often is this done by the haughtiness of reproof! or the violence of controversy! or the rancour of party zeal!

Treat no one with rudeness or neglect. Shun the spirit of the Pharisee, who, trusting in himself that he is righteous, and despising others, cries—“Stand by thyself; come not near to me; I am holier than thou,” Mixing with company prevents the appearance and suspicion of unamiableness; and has the effect of promoting good neighbourhood and general good-will.

Remember that what gentility would require of you as an accomplishment, Christianity enjoins upon you as a virtue; and what a woman of good breeding receives from education, you are to derive from religion; and what is only in the people of the world the hollowness of ceremony, is to be in you the reality of principle. "Politeness," says Lord Chatham, "is benevolence in little things." It consists in doing civil offices, and using kind words to all; in keeping every offensive subject out of view; in never obtruding your own partialities; but always minutely regarding the wishes of others; in accommodating yourselves as much as you innocently can to their habits and tastes; in forgetting yourselves, and obliging everyone about you. And what says the Scripture? "Let everyone of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." This is the way to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; and to render the Gospel not only impressive, but attractive. This is the way to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, so as to remove their prejudices, and bring them over to your cause—and "he that winneth souls is wise."

Be kind and merciful, as well as obliging. Always regard the afflicted. The hour of trouble is a season of moral impressiveness: the heart is then more serious and more soft. While the daughters of vanity and dissipation turn away from the abodes of penury and woe, be you a little image of Him who is a very present help in trouble. When Mr. Howard presented his wife with a purse of one hundred guineas to enable her to take a summer's excursion: "What a pretty cottage," said she, "will this build for a poor family!" How much more pure, and satisfying, and

durable, was the pleasure the sight of this little temple of charity afforded her than what she could have derived from a visit to a watering-place! It was a common saying of the Lord Jesus, who, from experience, knew the deliciousness infinitely better than any other being: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is to be lamented that many in your station have it so little in their power to gratify their benevolence: but whatever resources your husband commands, he will readily allow you a share of the pleasure and honour arising from the application of them: and the beneficence which should distinguish a minister's wife is not confined to alms-givings. There are alms-*deeds*. There are numberless ways in which a feeling heart can reach distress. When it cannot succour, it can soothe.

It is important to be able to give advice to the poor. They are often thriftless and wasteful, from ignorance as much as from negligence. But they may be taught to make a little go a great way; and actual and personal instruction may do much more than printed tracts.

Some little knowledge also of medicine would be always an instrument of usefulness in female charity; and none could more advantageously use it than a Pastor's wife.

Your sex are sometimes called angels. The design has not always been laudable: and the flattery, it is to be feared, has sometimes turned them into *fallen* angels. But you may truly deserve the praise of the title. Our Saviour, speaking of children, says, "Despise not one of these little ones, for their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in Heaven." And, says Paul, "Are they not all minis-

tering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that are the heirs of salvation?" Make these beautiful and lovely creatures your models. A female is never so angelical as when she adds to her personal graces the moral attractions; and displays the tender heart, the melting eye, the soft hand binding up the wounded spirit, and the foot with eager steps at the door of misery, visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.

Secondly; with regard to OTHER RELIGIOUS PARTIES. You must not judge of persons by their walking with *you* in the outward fellowship of the Gospel. They may assemble in other places, and belong to other denominations, in which the worship of the Spirit is equally maintained, and the Word of life is equally preached; and be members of the one true Church of the living God. And, being such, you are not at liberty to shew an indifference to them. You *must* be able to say, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:" "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

As your husband professes to maintain the character of a worker together with all those who hold the same essential truth, though they differ from him in matters of inferior moment, you should aim and endeavour to cherish in him the spirit of love and concord. Guard against prejudice and envy. Be not offended or grieved at hearing the commendations and successes of other ministers, as if they eclipsed the excellencies or detracted from the usefulness of one for whom it is natural that you should feel peculiarly concerned. He that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. He that planteth and

he that watereth are not enemies or rivals, The various officers in an army, and the various builders in the house, require and aid each other.

When the Wesleyan Methodists opened a Chapel at Painswick, near his own Meeting, the late excellent Cornelius Winter prayed three times publicly the preceding Sabbath for their encouragement and success. When Mr. Hoskins, of Bristol, the Independent Minister of Castle-Green, opened a Meeting in Temple Street, what did the incomparable Easter-brooke, the Vicar of the Parish? The morning it was opened, he was almost the first that entered it. He seated himself near the pulpit. When the service was over, he met the preacher at the foot of the stairs, and, shaking him with both hands, said aloud, "I thank you cordially, my dear Brother, for coming to my help—here is room enough for us both; and work enough for us both; and much more than we can both accomplish: and I hope the Lord will bless our co-operation in this good course."

There is too little of this in many neighbourhoods; so that if the leaders of the several interests are not in a state of hostility, they are too much estranged from each other. And there is often, we fear, a secret influence exerted *very near the throne*, and arising, not from a bad heart, but quick and feverish feeling, that contributes to produce and perpetuate the effect.

A man cannot receive a higher commission than the ministry of the Word; and such we are commanded to esteem very highly in love for their work's sake. Their acceptance is necessary to their usefulness; and their reputation is necessary to their acceptance. Beware, therefore, of speaking freely or



lightly of the character and claims of *any* of God's servants. Remember how Miriam erred in her flippancy, when, jealous of the popularity of Moses, she endeavoured to lower him comparatively in the estimation of the people. God was displeased. The cloud removed from the tabernacle. And "she became a leper as white as snow." And was "ashamed" to be seen abroad "for seven days." Crimes are not immediately and visibly judged now, as they were under a former dispensation. And it is well they are not. If Miriam's infirmity was followed by Miriam's correction, we know some handsome faces, and some not very handsome, whose cadaverous complexion would soon require seclusion and concealment; while the mortified sufferers would be grateful for the prayers of those they have laboured to supplant or depreciate, to restore them to comeliness and sight. "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Thirdly; with regard to your own CHURCH AND CONGREGATION. Here, like your husband, you are to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Never let your behaviour be so reserved as to appear haughty and disdainful towards any of the members or attendants; especially any of those in humbler life. A little partiality here will be sure to awaken the remark, "The rich have many friends." Your leaning should rather be to the other side; not only because it will do more honour to your motive, and you will be complying with the injunction, "con-descend to men of low estate;" but also because so many of the subjects of Divine grace are found among the poor of this world; no few of whom are rich in

faith, and able from their own experience to reward your intercourse with them.

Never be drawn into excessive attachments. They gender envy and provoke reflection. Like himself, a minister's wife is hardly allowed friendship; at least, great and engrossing intimacies. She stands in the same relation to many; and must be respectful and attentive to all. If she cannot hinder the existence of particular feelings and preferences, she may, she must learn to rule the expression of them. Many in your rank, especially the narrow-minded and the ill-educated, always have their cronies—a kind of low favourites—decent dependents—the collectors of all the news of the church, congregation, and neighbourhood—and who can feed their entertainers with timely selections, according to their peculiar appetite and wishes, with which they are perfectly acquainted. Flee these. Beware of all news-mongers, Frown them to a distance. Chill them into silence. What says the Proverb? "The receiver is as bad as the thief." What says the witty and sarcastical South? "The tale-bearer and the tale-hearer should be both punished together; only the one should be hung up by the tongue, and the other by the ear."

After all your caution, there are things which you will unavoidably hear—but you must hear them as if you heard them not—and you need not relate them. Be not suspicious, yet never be too open. Never put yourself, by imprudent confidence, in the power of any. Never betray secrets, the divulging of which may involve you in embarrassment or disgrace.

Keep yourself aloof from all breaches in the fami-

lies of your people, and any differences that may arise in the Church or Congregation. There is danger here from your being, with regard to such things, in the way of much prattling information; and unless you are guarded, you will be easily drawn in, and become a partisan: and when a female has taken her side—which seldom requires much time—she is apt to be more open than false; and frequently feels and expresses more than principle, or at least prudence, can justify. Never shew or wish to be “a judge and a divider.” Never be found in the Ecclesiastical Court. Leave these matters to those to whom they properly belong. and who “have the rule,” I never knew a minister’s wife but was esteemed and admired in proportion as she shunned contention and intermeddling, and kept within the duties of her own appropriate and lovely sphere. It is better to withdraw, and retire, and weep, and pray, than to excite notice and gain partial praise with the froward, and even the forward in spirit. “Who is a wise” woman, “and endued with knowledge?” Let her “shew out of a good conversation” her “works with meekness of wisdom. For where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace.”

In the visits you pay and receive, be always ready to encourage religious discourse. Let this appear to be the element the most congenial with your spirit. Let your speech turn habitually on subjects rather than persons, Especially, speak evil of no man—“Upon

her tongue was the law of kindness." In a general way, be rather reserved than over-communicative. We have many good discourses, says Archbishop Tillotson, on the excellency of speech; we want one now on the excellency of silence. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." How often does Solomon, the wisest of mortals, enforce a *comparative* backwardness to speak! In one place he tells us it is safe—in another, it is wise—in a third, it is dignified—in a fourth, it is useful—and everywhere he extols it as a virtue. Nature, my Sister, teaches us this lesson as well as Scripture. It has given us two ears, but one tongue: the former avenues are always left open; the latter organ is easily closed—as much as to say, "Be swift to hear; but slow to speak." Here, alas! "who can understand his errors?" Who can read the testimony of Jesus—"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"—and not pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips!" If *your* connexions and intercourse afford you more opportunities and excitements to speak—so much the more necessary is it that "your speech should be always with grace, seasoned with salt." I urge this, because of its peculiar and neglected importance. Surely what James says of our sex will apply equally to yours—especially to a female in your relation. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man; and able also to bridle the whole body."

Fourthly; with regard to YOUR FAMILY. By this I here mean servants and children.

Upon the former I shall not much enlarge. Surely, in the treatment of your servants, it will not be ne-

cessary to remind you, that you have a Master in Heaven, and that there is no respect of persons with God. He that made you in the womb made them. No being is despicable as a creature of the Most High, so fearfully and wonderfully made: and no one is to be contemned even on the ground of power and influence. Domesticity can injure you: their very situation gives them peculiar means and opportunities; and they may employ their advantage in ways of which you have no apprehension, and which render counteraction difficult or impossible. It is never desirable to wage war with inferiors: you must descend to the same lowness of contention, and employ weapons in the use of which they are likely to be much more expert than yourself—while the sympathy of beholders will be most naturally drawn to the weaker side, Think not a hint of this kind beneath your notice. It will procure you more discredit than you are aware of, to be always, or often, changing your servants; or to wear the character of a harsh, scolding, close, stingy mistress.

Sink not your proper distinction by suffering your affability to degenerate into familiarities. Neither let your kindness disappear in your authority. Servitude being established against the natural equality of mankind, should be softened as much as the duties of it will allow. Consider your servants as humble friends. Little minds endeavour to support their consequence by distance and hauteur: but true dignity is always condescending and tender: and in a woman we admire not what is stately, but what is endearing; not what is dazzling, but what is mild and lovely; not what is great, but what is graceful. Forbear threatening. Distinguish between mistakes

and the want of principle. Pass by little infirmities. Is it reasonable that the mistress should exact from a servant, the perfection the servant can never expect from the mistress? Afford your domestics occasional indulgence; and especially moments for reasonable visits to their relations and friends. Let the readiness to commend you to others,—the tear when you leave home,—the beaming countenance when you return,—the eager and uncomplaining attendance and watching by day and night in your sickness; shew that you have gained the heart, as well as hired the hand; and are served, not by the sullenness of fear, but the cheerfulness of affection. Above all, you will not overlook the moral and spiritual welfare of those who are not only under your *command*, but under your *care*—and you will care for their *souls*. You will not only give them opportunity to attend the means of grace, and family worship; but you will personally instruct, reprove, encourage them. However ignorant they may come into your service, it will be a disgrace to the mistress for them to depart unable to read the Scriptures.

With regard to the children the Lord may graciously give you, your Husband of course will share with you in the discharge of parental duty. But though here you are not exclusively, yet you are—really—you are deeply, and in some respects—peculiarly concerned. In all the animal creation the *maternal* instincts are the most powerful; and the wisdom of the provision is obvious—the rearing of their offspring almost entirely belongs to the mother. In the education of children—of the daughters till they are married; and of the sons till a certain age—the care falls chiefly on the female. To her belong

unquestionably the *first* years of both; and those periods are the most tender and ductile. Her share of tuition, therefore, begins very early; and it cannot begin too early. Infants are impressed before they are supposed to be receptive of impression; and they are proceeding in a direction before we think they are capable of motion. They can remember before they can reason; and they can judge before they can speak; as you see by their looks and gestures, their attractions and their aversions. Here your wisdom and your vigilance must be awake, instantly to seize and improve opportunities, apparently insignificant, but most serious in their effects. The roads that lead to places very remote from each other diverge very slenderly at their beginnings. When I wish the branch of a tree in my garden to occupy a particular space, I can guide it, while a sucker, with a thread: a few years after it will require a rope: and the attempt to bend it will be likely to break.

As a mother too, from his endeared dependence upon you, you are sure of the child's first and liveliest attachment. And you have always the advantage of immediate access. And you have also the influence of that insinuation and address which our sex has not the faculty to possess, or the patience to employ. One of the absurd opinions of former times was, that poison never diffused itself so quickly and powerfully as when it was administered in human milk—nothing certainly affects so much as what is imbibed from the mother's breast. In the age of Silver, Hesiod says, poetically, children continued, during an infancy of one hundred years, under maternal care.

I am weary, said the ambitious Cornelia, of being called Scipio's daughter. Do something, my sons, to

style me the mother of the Gracchi, What an honour will be conferred on you, if you should be the means of rearing a disciple or Jesus! an heir of God! a minister of the Gospel! an ambassador—to the Heathen! And why should you be discouraged? We know that human nature is depraved; but we know the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We do not think of your success without his blessing; but we encourage you to seek it: and while, in dependence upon it, you employ all the means in your power, remember his own word: “Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” This is indeed a proverb, and therefore admits of exceptions: but, as a proverb, it must be generally true: and where the mother has performed her part, there are few failures—at least *eventual* failures. For a time she may have seemed to labour in vain; but she sowed the seed in good season; and though impatience deemed it dead, some after-showers and sun-shines caused it to spring up, and bring forth fruit. So it was with the mother of Augustine. You have also heard, to the same effect, the grateful acknowledgments of a Newton and a Cecil in later times. While many, by maternal influence, have been reclaimed from the paths of the Destroyer; others—and who can tell their number?—others have been preserved; and have feared the Lord from their youth and their infancy. This was the case with Samuel and Timothy; the Jewish Church being indebted for the former to Hannah, and the Christian Church to Lois and Eunice for the latter. David does not anywhere refer to Jesse: but, says he, “Save the son of thine handmaid.” “I am the son of thine handmaid.” And who can tell what early



and touching recollections of *her* early and tender and pious solicitude he felt at the moment of such appeals?

At our ordinations, when the candidate has been asked a reason of the hope that he has been called by Divine Grace, how often, if he has adverted to the means, has a tear—which instantly drew forth kindred drops from the eyes of others—almost interrupted the confession,” I had the advantage of a pious mother!”—

—You cannot have forgotten the acknowledgment, on the preceding day, of one so dear to you—“I have no miracle to publish: I have no surprising or sudden change to relate—But, blessed be his Name, I was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—The taking of my little hand in hers—I think I feel it still, and leading me aside to pray—Her concern, on returning from the House of Gael, to enable me to remember and understand the Sermon—The murmur of her dear voice at her devotion—The maxims and principles she lodged in my infant mind—The tears that bedewed her reproofs—The caresses that enforced her entreaties—Her cheerfulness, that constantly said ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good’—Her example, that embodied her religion, and made it as lovely as herself—These endear the memory of a mother, from whom, under God, I have derived my spiritual, as well as my natural life.”—

You are not commonly in danger of injuring or overlooking the health of your offspring intentionally: but wisdom is profitable to direct. A little medical advice, and observation and experience, in the service of common sense, will enable you to see the importance of air and exercise—of sweetening the

blood by a proper choice of food—and of preventing ailments by simplicity of diet, and keeping nature unclogged by excess. Never accustom them at table to choose for themselves—you are the best judge as to the quality and measure of their provisions—and they cannot be too early taught to give up self-will to superior wisdom.

Were I addressing your Partner, I should say, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” But *your* danger generally lies on the other side. Therefore beware of fond and foolish indulgence. Trifles may be passed over; and some minor offences be safely buried in the bosom of maternal tenderness: but conceal no faults your children may commit of a more serious nature from the father; nor if you *privately* plead for the softening of correction, ever counteract the effort of rebuke, by appearing to oppose it at the time. In all matters of moral rule and discipline, nothing is more necessary than for the parents to be seen agreed and decided.

Endeavour to cultivate the manners of your children: and render them examples of good behaviour. If they are forward, and impertinent, and rude and disorderly, insulting to inferiors, disrespectful to superiors, disobedient to parents; the minister as well as the mother will be blamed: for he is to be “one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?”

Be not regardless of their dress. Let it not be costly and fine. If, through the inconsideration of friendship, things are given them above the propriety of their condition, let them be refused, or exchanged, or altered. Instead of cherishing, even indirectly, a

fondness for attire, endeavour to subdue, or rather prevent it. This, however, requires much skilfulness, especially with daughters; and all precepts will be more than vain, unless they are enforced by your own example.

Keep them from visiting too much. Some, from a regard to their father's character and office, may not only invite your children, but contribute to spoil them, by making too much of them; and giving them ideas and feelings above their rank. On this principle, they should rarely, if ever, visit families of superior condition. lest they should grow dissatisfied with the plainness and sobrieties of home.

And push them not too soon and too much into observation. Especially, when your children are *present*, never in company notice and extol any particular quality or attainment; with regard to which, you will thereby assuredly render them false and vain; and stimulate them to forwardness and talking, against which you cannot guard them too much. Hearing *you* thus admire them, they think everyone else does the same. In your attentions to them, therefore, before others, let them not perceive any particular solicitude on your part to set them off by their talents. Be content to form their minds by slow degrees: and remember, that if it were in your power to advance them in knowledge beyond their years, it would not be desirable: for what is the advantage of premature ability, compared with the danger of pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency?

No, nor in their *absence* be even eager to bring forth their parts and sayings. Not only does modesty require this, but a regard to the feelings of others: you have no right to embarrass your company by

obliging them to commend and admire things which *they* may not deem so wonderful and clever as the mother. What a child had Mary! How many prodigies could she have brought forward? "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." I am aware that this maternal propensity is not peculiar to the wives of ministers; but they are more in danger of it than many others; and the weakness will be more observable in them.

Devote a portion of your time expressly every day to the improvement of your infant charge, Prudence must determine when, and how long, it should be; but after deciding, be persevering and firm in adhering to your plan; and let interrupters no more break in upon it, than upon the time sacred to the studies of your husband.

Especially employ, without making it irksome and tiresome, a portion of the Sabbath to the examination and instruction of your children. Yet we have known the wives of some ministers who have been fonder of attending Sunday Schools, and *addressing* them, than of being "teachers of babes" at home. Sunday Schools must have their attendance, and much praise is due to those who dedicate to their service so many of their hours: but if persons have originated families *these* must be *their* first care—"He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Fifthly; with regard to YOUR HUSBAND. He is your chosen and dearest relation; and in this connexion another is involved. *Your* husband is also your Pastor; and thus an additional reason is furnished why you should "reverence" him, and "submit" to him. It is little honourable to any party,

when not only the head of the family, but the ruler of the Synagogue, is supposed to be under government. In whose hand soever the sceptre be found, it is the sign of dominion; and however softly it may be swayed, they who are under it are the subjects. But, indeed, women who assume the reins seldom manage them. with moderation or dignity. All usurpers, whatever was their previous disposition, incline to tyranny and display; and, unlike those who naturally and legitimately govern, are never satisfied but as their power is felt and acknowledged,

In no case does it become the wife to exercise *authority* over the man she has promised to obey: and she is a vain and a weak woman who exposes to observation even the *influence* which in many cases she is justified in using. Whom does the Poet commend?

She who ne'er answers till her husband cools,  
Or, if she rules him, never shews she rules;  
Charms by accepting, by submission sways,  
Yet has her humour most when she obeys.

When Livia had attained such an ascendancy over her husband Augustus that there was hardly anything he would refuse her, though emperor of the world, many of the married ladies of Rome were anxious to know the secret and the source of her success: to whom she replied, "I rule by obeying." We need not inquire from what cause it arises, but a man soon acquires a notion of the superiority of his own sex. This

"Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength—"  
He is tenacious to maintain it; and therefore is jealous of every attempt to reduce it. But it has been

observed, that he possesses at the same time a sentimental tenderness towards the other sex; and an inclination to please and indulge them; and thus while he would domineer, he is subdued. This has been called his weak side. Be it so; the use of it is obvious; and a woman of sense can always turn it to advantage, and found on it a better dominion than authority—an empire of address and affection—caresses her orders—tears her menaces—and silence and submission her arms. Here she can do wonders, because she appeals to nature itself; and is supported by a principle implanted in us by the wise Creator to humble the pride of power, and to compensate those who have not the force to conquer, by giving them the fascination to charm.

Never forget, therefore, that your means of sway must have for their basis gentleness, sweetness, and good temper; and that they must be so exercised as to allow your husband to believe that he is supporting his sovereignty, even while he is yielding it. The *show* even of *influence* will alarm his vanity and consequence; but the discovery of your intention to succeed, by anything like authority, harshness, or sullenness, will not only produce disappointment, but gender resistance or disgust. No man of feeling was ever proof against the kindness of a sensible woman: but where in all history can an instance be produced in which an ascendancy over him has been obtained by frowardness? scolding? and strife for pre-eminence?

Observe, however, that what we have said of influence goes not to justify that low and artful cunning by which some endeavour to carry a favourite purpose. If we can depend upon the writers of a former

age, the grand resource of a lady, whose lord denied her anything on which she had set her heart, was to fall into an hysteric. The ministry of fits and vapours seems now to be nearly closed. But, says an excellent writer, "Let not the dispositions by which it was introduced and upheld be found to survive its fall. Let it ever be remembered that she who, by teasing, by wheedling, by finesse, under any shape whatever, seeks to deceive or to weary into acquiescence or consent, acts no less plainly in opposition to her duty of Scriptural obedience, than she would have done had she driven him into compliance by the menaces and weapons of an Amazon."

This general, but very important requisite in your conduct towards your husband being settled, you will allow me to mention a few other articles deserving your candid regard,

—Such is an attention to his *personal appearance*. He will detest being a fop; and you will not allow him to be a sloven. You will not wish to see him waving the ring on his lily hand, nor indulging

"A silly fond conceit of his fair form  
And just proportion, fashionable mien  
And pretty face, in presence of his God"—

even comparative

"—Slovenly neglect and rustic coarseness"

are better than affectation and finicality. But these are not good in themselves. Purity, neatness, decency become the man of God in his appearance and apparel; and his want of it will draw reflection upon you.

—Such is an attention to his *property*.

These must be the matters in which the Apostle says, the wife is to "guide the house." Paul would not have a minister entangled with the affairs of this life; that he may know how to please Him that has called him to be a soldier. Keep your husband as much as possible disengaged from secular things, that he may feel himself free for his work, both in the preparation and the discharge, The kind of keenness and cleverness in worldly business, often admired in others, would have a lowering effect in a minister, The pantry, the shop, the market-place, the slang and the tricks of the huckster, would be incongruous and desecrating in him. His tact is to be of another order, and to evince itself in the things of God, "Is it reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables?" Therefore Deacons were appointed even to provide for the bodily relief of the poor of the church; while "we," says the Apostle, "give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word."

In vain the husband labours and gains, if you, in your ill housewifery, are wilfully expensive; or negligently profuse; or ignorantly wasteful. "Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." Let nothing deprive *you* of the commendation: "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." What is the cleverness of a female shewing away out of her sphere of duty? what is a sprightly wit? a smartness in conversation? an epistolary talent? or a smattering of the languages? Will these raise and recommend a woman in the midst of a neglected, ill-managed, disordered, sinking family?



Despise not a little knowledge of arithmetic—some accomplishments may be much less useful. Shun arrears, Be regular in demanding, and punctual in discharging your weekly accounts. If you commanded abundance, the Scripture would say to you, “Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost”—and there are many purposes to which the fruit of frugality may be applied: but how absolutely indispensable must inspection and strictness be, where the resources to be managed are limited!

It is not necessary that your husband should appear as a gentleman, and awaken feelings of rivalry in civil things among his people, or neighbours. Never remind him of the superior circumstances of others, or urge him even indirectly to live beyond his means—and judge of these—not by his occasional, but expected income. Exercise every kind of self-denial, rather than see him involved. How trying to his feelings to be reduced to the difficulty of borrowing! How reproachful, while calling upon others to provide things honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men, to incur the suspicion of being unrighteous himself! How can he preach at all with pleasure or freedom, though others may as yet be ignorant, while he is conscious of legal claims ready to be visited upon him?

And here you are to display your economy. You are not to regard this as a low, mean thing, fit only for the vulgar. Solomon characterizes his virtuous woman, though in high life, principally by simplicity, diligence, regularity, and domestic management: and III these the ancient Greeks and Romans placed much of female worth and excellence.

But what is economy? It is not “the stopping of

one hole in the sieve." It is not a particular retrenchment, or an occasional saving. It is not the pinching of the servants, and stinting the family one week to give a shewy dinner the next. It is a mode of regulation that eyes the whole detail of household expense. It is the art, not of sordid saving, but of making a little go a great way. It eludes meanness, as well as waste. Stinginess is one extreme, profuseness is another. There is a steering between them: but, this is not easy; and it requires the judgment and skill which some females seem to exercise by a kind of intuition or instinct: so that they always appear to advantage, unembarrassed, unconfused, ready without haste, deciding as if without design; and while causing everything to move in its proper time and place, keeping the mechanism of the process invisible—for the perfection of art is to conceal art.

—An attention to his *health of body*. This in his case is peculiarly important. It is not only the source of his comfort and enjoyment, but it is essential to his usefulness. What confusion and disappointment result from the sickness or indisposition of one on whose ministrations such numbers depend—for "his lips feed many"! Paul does not think it beneath him to watch over the health of Timothy; and to prescribe for him like a physician: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities."

Study therefore your, husband's constitutional liabilities to injury—not to render him soft, and effeminate, and fanciful; but cautious; and to aid him in the regulation of his mode of living, as to sleep, and diet, and exercise. You need not be afraid of

*proper* application and exertion. These, instead of injuring the health, conduce to it. They give circulation to the fluids, and prevent the evils of stagnation: they hinder the rust of the mind, and keep the powers polished, and easy of motion. But there may be an overdoing. The machine may be overworked. *You* will be, perhaps, by your constant and intimate observation, the best judge of the degree of labour to which he is equal. *You* will not be ignorant of his impaired digestion, his perturbed rest, his trembling nerves, his depressed spirits, his exhausted frame, and the low ebb of vigour when the Sabbath is gone, and the Monday sees him not living, but existing only. And you must not neglect to sound the timely alarm. And if zeal, without knowledge or feeling, still urges the same unremitting efforts; and tells him he cannot die in a better cause: if his spiritual task-masters require the same tale of bricks: if the *three* services of the day must still be exacted from wasting strength yet growing anxiety—his blood will be upon the heads of his godly murderers; but you have delivered your soul.

—An attention to his *peace of mind*. We have met with some members of churches who kindly think that affliction and depression are *best* for a minister. We are almost ashamed to use a coarse and unfeeling proverb among them, quite worthy, however, of the employers—and since we are not in the pulpit—let it come out—“That the preacher never preaches so well as when the cow has trod upon his foot.” Yet it never seems to strike these cold calculating reasoners that *they*, as hearers, may be benefited *themselves* by a similar experience. But if domestic distress be desirable for the improvement of the

preacher, so may any other kind of rueful probation: and if the physician, in order to perfect him in his art, is to go through all the complaints for which he prescribes, he will have neither time nor ability to practise. To dismiss this delicate figure, I hope my brother's "fair heifer" will not achieve this species of service for *him*. I am sure she will not. I am sure she will encourage him.

And he will require every favourable excitement. His work is arduous. He has trials in common with men; and he has trials in common with his fellow-Christians: but he has also various trials peculiar to himself—and *you* will best know this. *You*, indeed even you, will not know *all* his heart's bitterness; but you will hear enough, see enough, to convince you that he, whose office it is to comfort others, needs no little consolation himself. And your smiles can rainbow the cloud of grief. Your soft hand can smooth the wrinkles of his oppressed brow. Your gentle words, like the fanning of an angel's wing, can cool the heatful anguish of the mind. Your kind management—a woman is never at a loss where comfort is called for—can withdraw a distracting train of thought, and substitute cheerful imagery. You can remind him of instances of usefulness when he is complaining, "I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought." In his doubts and fears, with regard to his own spiritual condition—and to such he is liable—you can be the wife of Manoah, who said, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received an offering at our hand; nor have shewn us such things as these." If among his people he meets with mortifying defections in such as should prove a comfort to him, he will find one tried and faithful

bosom in which he can safely repose. If he has storms abroad, peace will be always awaiting him at home: and he will always enjoy a resource in that unfailling good temper

“... Whose unclouded ray  
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.”

You will, indeed, be every way anxious to render his own abode, not only the tabernacle of the righteous, but the dwelling-place of tenderness and comfort. In this his safety as well as his satisfaction will be much concerned. We have known not only men, but ministers, who have fallen by temptation: and though we by no means wish to justify or extenuate their conduct, it is no secret, that in some instances, at least, there has been little domestic happiness and attraction. What attraction *can* there be in sullenness? or in peevishness? or in clamour? “Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.” “It is better to dwell ill a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.” “A continual dropping in a rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike. Whoso hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand that bewruiyeth itself.” What attraction *can* there be in negligence? disorder? slatternliness? A disregard of propriety, and especially neatness of apparel, is in a female a fault that nothing can expiate. Even religion will not excuse it. There is a greater connexion between mental and outward purity than some are aware of. A female may be always judged of by her dress. The founders of Methodism were accustomed to say, that cleanliness was next to godliness. I have known a few excep-

tions to this in men. I never knew one in a woman.

Rely not too much on the rights of relationship, however intimate the connexion may be, and however endeared it ought to be. In preserving and keeping alive attachment, you must not absolutely depend upon the impressions that awakened it. A woman is not to presume on the certainty of homage, regardless of an attention to her manners. She is not, as soon as she has stepped over the threshold of marriage, to drop the delicacy, the decencies, the engaging appearance by which she attracted the lover. Men are very selfish beings. They have very little of your disinterested feelings. You must not suffer, with them, your amiableness to fail. And how is esteem to be preserved, even when the fervour of affection declines? You cannot dream of perpetual admiration, The roses and carnations are for the summer months. What provision is there for winter? What woman is the most universally valued? THE DOMESTIC. And for your encouragement, be assured that the more religious men are in their feelings, and the more improved in their understandings, the more certainly will they be attached to domestic life; always having an abundance of entertainments in private and tranquil scenes unknown to the vulgar and the dissipated.

—An attention to his *official ministrations*. On these, I need not say, you will be sure to attend regularly when it is in your power. But for this purpose you must value them. And here you are likely to feel some difficulties peculiar to your situation. A sage has said “Domestic greatness is unattainable,” The Saviour testifies that “a Prophet is not without

honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." And if this applied in a measure even to himself, it will bear in an unspeakably greater degree on all his imperfect servants. Distance diminishes and conceals defects; while nearness discovers and enlarges them. If familiarity does not breed contempt, it reduces veneration, and injures many kinds of impression. A husband must be a very consistent character, and be known to act always from principle, to enable a wife to feel under his services as under those of a stranger whose excellences only she has heard of, while she is ignorant of the failings that would shade them—and such we allow a husband who is a minister *ought* to be but even when he is such, though he will be essentially, he cannot be circumstantially the same always. He cannot be constantly in his robes. It would be affectation to attempt to keep up always the formal dignity of his pulpit exercises. Yea, it would be absurd even to distinguish himself in the ordinary actions and manners of life. He cannot be the preacher only: he must also appear the man, the companion, the father—

"And he will not blush, that has a father's heart,  
To take in childish things a childish part."

But hence an effort will be necessary—to see, under all these common and familiar appendages of humanity—to recognize in one of like passions with yourself, and compassed about with infirmities, the man of God, the messenger of Heaven, the herald of Salvation: to value the treasure as divine, though you *know* that it is contained in an earthen vessel; and to receive *his* word, "not as the word of man, but as

it is in truth, the word of God, that worketh effectually in them that believe.”

—An attention to his *usefulness*. I do not mean that you should aid him in making his sermons: he ought to be able to make these himself; (neither should he steal his words from his neighbour;) but you may be a help-mate to him, as to his personal religion; and need we say how much of the facility, and excellence, and success of his work, as a minister, will depend upon the spirituality of his mind, and the devoutness of his heart? You may remind him of his engagements. You may excite him to diligence in his holy calling; especially in those parts of it that draw forth less notice and praise.

“Wherever he is found, he ought to be useful; and diffusing the savour of the Redeemer’s knowledge in every place. Be not, therefore, illiberal and selfish with regard to his company. He ought to be a layer of home, and not to be disposed to spend his evenings abroad; for they are seasons not only (he most valuable to himself, but the most free and favoured to a female engaged in the affairs of a household: but sometimes he must be preaching abroad. As to his civil visits, I hope he will never accept of an invitation in which you are not included: but circumstances may render it proper for him to go when you cannot accompany him; and in such cases you will not wish to restrain him. Above all, you will not complain of his absence when you know that he is not idling away his time in lounging calls and gossiping talk, but is sedulously engaged in his study. While he is endeavouring to do justice to his intended subjects, and resolved not to offer to the Lord that which costs



him nothing—you will even aid his people and the public by doing all in your power to secure him from the disturbance of thoughtless intruders.

A long-standing connexion does credit both to the Pastor and the Church: but ministers become, not unfrequently, uneasy, and as the expression is—movable. It has been supposed by some that there is an unusual number of these movables in our day: and hence the late Andrew Fuller, by a rough, but striking metaphor, observed in a letter published since his death, that many of our modern preachers seemed stung by the gad-fly. I fear that this powerful stinger is sometimes a near relation. Not that I throw the blame always upon the wife—we know the composition of many ministers too well: but we also have seen enough occasionally on *her* side to justify our admonishing you to beware of an unsettled and roving spirit; or of becoming too sensitive to the difficulties that may arise in your husband's residence.

In every situation there are trials. We are acquainted with those in our present circumstances, and they press us; but those of a new condition are unfelt, and even unknown: yet they may be equally and even more numerous and painful. When a man changes often, there is danger of his getting, not only the character, but the habit of a changeling: and a rolling stone gains no moss: and a tree always transplanting cannot radicate so as to be firm, vigorous, and fruitful. We have known ministers who, yielding to mistaken views, or present impressions, have stepped out of their place; and left not only their comfort, but their usefulness behind them. Take heed, therefore, how you in any way contribute to this evil.

You should hardly let your preference, if you have one, be known, even to your husband, while he is endeavouring sincerely to ascertain what the will of God is concerning him.

His reputation, too, will affect his usefulness, And how much does this depend upon you! From your affection you will be eager to extol him, and, perhaps, be angry with those who do not join in your partial applause. But let me whisper a more excellent way. In the Protestant churches of Hungary they degrade from his office the pastor whose wife indulges herself in cards, dancing, or any public amusement that bespeaks a lover of the world rather than a Christian matron. This severity springs from the supposition that he should not have chosen such a consort; or that she, having promised obedience, would not thus act without his approbation or permission. If no law of this kind is known among us, the spirit of it is commonly felt and expressed. Ministers are always in a measure blamed for the defects and faults of their wives: the very pity that is sometimes kindly expressed on their behalf is constructively a sort of censure. He who acts imprudently and improperly in one case, especially if it be a matter of importance, will be judged of by it in other things—perhaps in all. It is oftensaid that ministers, though they have the best opportunities of selection, and are under the greatest obligations to make a wise choice, are commonly betrayed into alliances the most ineligible. The reflection is not a little invidious; and is by far too general. I have the happiness of knowing many most agreeable and very important exceptions. And I am fully persuaded that you, my respected friend, will be a striking addition to the number. You have

it in your power to be so—you have it in your disposition. It is your aim, and it will be your attainment, to dignify your station, and reflect honour on the judgment, taste, and piety of your husband.

And be encouraged to go forward, You will not lose your reward. You may not make a splendid figure in history. You must not expect, though so closely related to him, to gain the same distinction and notice as a popular minister will obtain. While he is exalted by his office, you are left to, move chiefly in scenes of comparative privacy. Your duties are regular, sober, unstriking; and furnish few materials for common panegyric. Yet even this very seeming disadvantage turns to your account. It serves to raise your worth; and to promote and display the purity of your motive. You can go on with patient continuance in well-doing, without the excitement of publicity, or the claps of the multitude.

Nor will you be always undistinguished. Your day is coming, You will share in the revelation of Jesus Christ, when everyone will have praise of God according to their concern to please him, and not according to the present distributions of fame. And even now you are proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Even now your duties are all-important and indispensable. Even now, in the convictions of reason and wisdom, you are approved and ennobled. The heart of your husband safely trusts in you; so that he hath no need of spoil: you will do him good, and not evil, all the days of your life. Your children will rise up and call you blessed. Your domestics will thank God that even they came under your kind and pious

care. Your neighbours will commend you. The Church and all your religious connexions will honour and love you. And God, even your own God, will bless you. He who has redeemed you by the death of his Son, and has called you by his grace: He to whom you have dedicated, yourself, both in single and social life, saying, Lord, I am thine, save me— He keeps a book of remembrance: He forgets not your work of faith and labour of love: He accepts you and your services in the Beloved; and in his favour your horn shall be exalted.

—And this consolatory assurance, my esteemed Friend, you will need. Your station has, indeed, its advantages, which it would be ungrateful to overlook. Your intellectual, moral, and spiritual privileges are above those of many. You have frequent access to edifying company. You have the entertainment and profit of books. You have the habitual presence of one whose lips keep knowledge. His education and acquisitions prepare him for instructive and improving conversation. His function calls him to a regular life, exempt from the bustle and competitions of the world; and is every way friendly to virtue and sensibility. His employment and his studies tend to soften, and refine, and elevate his mind: while the extreme value of character to his profession is a spur to excellency, and a pledge of good deportment, You have the honour of being connected, not only with a man of grace, but “a man of God;” not only with one who serves him, but serves at the altar; and fills an office, as a preacher of the Gospel, which an angel might be induced to envy.

But the honour and the advantages have their

counterbalancings. I hope you have counted the cost; and instead of complaining of the difficulties before you, are determined to be the more circumspect and the more prayerful—constantly seeking fresh supplies of that grace which alone is sufficient for you in all your duties, and in all your trials.

And trials you must not expect to escape. From envy or ignorance you may often be misjudged and misrepresented: for persons who act upon principle, especially in peculiar situations, cannot be comprehended by those “who walk as men;” and people are always more ready to be censorious than to be candid in what they do not understand. Nothing is more uncertain than the applause of the religious multitude. Your husband, now caressed, may be neglected, His place, now crowded, may be thinned of its attendants by one far his inferior—unless in novelty, and lungs. Some Diotrepthes may love to have the pre eminence, and prate against him with malicious words. A perverse spirit may be mingled in the midst of a peaceful people. The Antinomian leaven may corrupt the purity, and mar the prosperity of the Church—And at the discovery of his perplexity and distress, a sword also may pierce through your own soul.

The calling of your husband exposes him to temptations; and he may be injured by them. He may yield to vain imaginations, and high thoughts, that exalt themselves, and give up the simplicity there is in Christ Jesus. If he does not embrace dangerous errors, he may be enticed into some peculiarities, and injure his influence by some religious freaks and vagaries. He may be found among the Prophets. Instead of preaching repentance towards God, and

faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and having a word in season for him that is weary: he may employ himself in breaking open the seals, and blowing the trumpets, and pouring out the vials of the Apocalypse. The spiritual man may be mad, Popular applause (for as the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise) may elevate him into pride and arrogance. Entertained and idolized as a very agreeable and clever companion, he may grow weary of the tameness of ordinary life; and disrelish home; and leave you to serve alone in the cares of a rising family—I dare not suppose anything further—yet what changes have we witnessed in a course of years! Lord, what is man!

—But it cannot be concealed that he is frail and mortal. You may have to pray, “Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick.” You may be called to the trying alternative of leaving a helpless babe, to accompany the father who journeys for health. You may have to watch at the side of the couch of infirmity, and of the bed of languishing. You may have to faint at the stillness of a dying hour; and only revive to learn that—the guide of your youth—the arm of your support—the comforter that should relieve your soul, is gone—and the place that once knew him will know him no more for ever—his usual seat—his favourite walk—the sacred desk where yet his image seems to dwell—

You may not only be left a widow. You may be surrounded with bereaved children; and have to struggle with hardships—perhaps penury—perhaps neglect. Perhaps you may be destined, like many who have gone before you, to learn by experience the little posthumous generosity and kindness there

is towards the remnants of those who have worn out life in the service of the religious public. "Is this Naomi?"—"Call me not Naomi—call me Marah—for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me—I went out full—"

—Yet some true friendship will be found. Some will shew kindness to his house for Jonathan's sake, There are the grey-headed, who are saying, "I have been young and now am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread."—Even in the cloudy and dark day, when the eye pours out tears unto God, he will be your refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Your departed Friend, when dying, heard him say, though you could not: "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widow trust in me." And He is faithful who promised. Lean upon his Word—and you shall find him to be a "Father of the fatherless—and a judge of the widows in his holy habitation."

—And if, while feeling the attraction of your now glorified partner, who is waiting to receive you to himself, you should yet linger long in this vale of tears, He who has delivered will deliver. He will guide you with his counsel; and when you approach the end of your journey, He will hear your prayer of faith—"Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth—Thou, who hast shewn me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again; and bring me up again from the dust of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." "AND THE DAYS OF THY MOURNING SHALL BE ENDED."





# AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM HUMPHRYES,

OF HAMMERSMITH;

IN THE

BURIAL GROUND OF BUNHILL-FIELDS,

OCTOBER 6, 1808.



**ADDRESS, &c.**

**D**EATH is a familiar subject, rendered so by the frequency of the event; for in one way or another it is perpetually visiting our world, and removing our neighbours, friends, and relations from our view. It would be well if the familiarity of it did not destroy the solemnity of it, and hinder those serious reflections with which it should be always accompanied. There are indeed few who will not exclaim on such an occasion as this—"Ah! see to what we must all be brought"—"We must all die," But it is to little purpose to reflect upon death as an universal and an unavoidable event.—We must consider the cause of it; the consequences resulting from it; and the nature of a Scriptural preparation for it. We can never have a better opportunity for this than when we are assembled around the mouth of the grave, and behold the emblems of mortality before us.

—The cause is Sin: and if there were no other consideration to excite our abhorrence of it—this would surely be sufficient—it "brought death into the world and all our woe." It is the decision of the Apostle: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned." And therefore death is not, as it is commonly phrased, a debt due to nature, but to the justice of God; and hence, though all creatures in this lower world die, we never speak of

a mortal beast, or a mortal bird—we only call *Man* mortal; and the reproach is just—because he alone *became* subject to dissolution, and *chose* to die. They are mortal by destiny, but he by guilt.

—The consequences of Death are various; and they are affecting.—Death is a solemn event, as it is the termination of all our worldly affairs. It disconcerts every scheme our busy minds had formed; it breaks off the purposes of our hearts; it bids the labourer leave his spade, and the author his pen; it orders the preacher to descend from his pulpit, and the king from his throne. However attached to scenes and businesses to which we have been long accustomed, it tells us to take a farewell of fields and valleys, house and garden; and excludes us for ever from all the concerns beneath the sun.

—Death is a solemn event, as it breaks asunder all the tender and endearing ties formed between husband and wife, parent and child, benefactor and friend, pastor and people; and reduces us to a state in which new and strange affinities commence; and we “say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.”

Death is a solemn event, as it degrades and destroys that fine piece of Divine workmanship, the body. However fearfully and wonderfully made, it weakens our strength in the way, and consumes our beauty like a moth; the eye sparkles no more; the hand forgets her cunning; the tongue is silent; the blood congeals; our flesh becomes loathsome; and however valued or loved before, survivors are thankful for a grave to bury their dead out of their sight.

But death is a much more solemn event when considered in relation to another world. For, my dear

hearers, you will observe that death is not the extinction of being, but only the termination of one mode of it, and the commencement of another: it is a transition from a temporal to an eternal state; from a state of trial to a state of decision and retribution. For while “the dust returns to the dust as it was, the spirit returns to God who gave it;” and the Divine fiat runs, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that 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.”

Death, therefore, is, beyond all comparison, the most momentous event that can ever befall us—for “*after Death is the Judgment:*” a judgment so *impartial*, that “everyone shall receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil:” a judgment so *dreadful*, that the impenitent shall “call to the rocks to fall on them, and the mountains to cover them:” and yet a judgment so *certain*, that God has not only revealed it in his own Word, but attested it in the sinner’s conscience—hence his backwardness to self-inspection, his dread of solitude, his regrets and fears after the commission of sin. Whatever he pretends, he is no stranger to those feelings through life: but he is much more subject to them when he comes to die, Then former diversions cease, the delusions of imagination subside; and the eyes, as they close on external things, open interiorly, and begin to penetrate the secrets of an invisible world. It is called “The king of terrors:” and what fear has such torment in it? It is called an “Enemy;” and if it be allowed to come against us with all the force sin gives it, instead of being overcome by us, it will be more than a conqueror over us.

But from among these desolations and triumphs of death—how numerous are they all around!—we hear a voice saying, “I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die: Believest thou this?” Yes, blessed Saviour of the world, we believe that thou hast “remembered us in our low estate;” we believe that thou hast interposed on our behalf, and said, “Deliver them from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom;” we believe that “in thy love and pity thou hast redeemed us.” “Thou hast once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God!”

My Brethren, *He* is said to *die*: we, as his followers, are only said to *sleep*. Death stung him; but, as it is fabled of the bee, left his sting in him. We may therefore safely defy the harmless foe, and exult in the language of the Apostle, “O Death, where is thy sting?” Yea, Death is not only deprived of a power of injuring us, but has obtained a power of doing us good: “to die is *gain*.” No wonder, therefore, Doctor Gouge often said, he had two friends in the world—Christ and Death: “Christ,” said he, “is my first friend, and Death is my second.” It is impossible for the Christian at present to estimate the Extent of his obligation to Death. Death delivers him from all the evils he feels or fears. It grants him the full possession of all the promises of God, It is the day when the tempest-tossed mariner reaches the desired haven; the day when the weather beaten traveller arrives at home; the day when the heir of immortality comes of age, and gains “the inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him.” It is the angel

that draws back the veil, shews him the path of life, and introduces him into His "presence where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore."

But are all who die thus blessed? Far from it. In order to enjoy these immunities and advantages, we must be found in a certain state, According to the sacred writers, this state consists in our being found in Christ; that is, in a state of union and communion with him, In consequence of this, we partake of his righteousness for our justification, and his Spirit for our sanctification: the one giving us a title to heaven, the other a meetness for it. These always go together: and the one is as necessary as the other. Hence our Saviour has told us, "Except a man be born again, he cannot *enter* into the kingdom of God." It is in vain therefore to deny, to question, to philosophize—It is the decision of one who cannot be deluded and who cannot deceive: the nature of heaven demands it: the work of heaven demands it: the joy of heaven demands it: and hence he adds, "Except a man be born again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God."—It would be impossible for him to enjoy it, even were he to possess it: for happiness results not only from the excellency of the object, but from its adaptation to the possessor; from its suitability to his faculties, its congeniality with his dispositions, its accomplishment of his hopes and wishes. "Marvel not therefore that I said unto you, ye, *must* be born again." Found in this state, we are secure, we are happy. According to the voice from heaven, "Blessed are the dead that die *in the Lord*."

And thus blessed we are fully persuaded is our departed brother, whose remains we are consigning "to the house appointed for all living"—not as to a

place where the body will be lost, but a quiet dormitory, in which it will rest till the morning of the resurrection; when, waked by the archangel's trump, it will arise and shake itself from its dust, and put on its beautiful garments, and arise to meet the Lord in the air. Or, to vary the image—we commit this seed to the earth, where it will not be destroyed, but will revive and flourish: “It is sown in corruption; it shall be raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body—there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”—

—It would be needless, not to say improper, to anticipate what will be much more suitably delivered next Lord's-day afternoon by our revered Friend and Brother, who has engaged to deliver a sermon appropriated to the occasion. But I cannot resist, what my convictions and feelings equally prompt me to remark, that I now lay my hand on the mortal remains of—one of the most amiable of men—one of the most holy and consistent professors of religion—and a distinguished minister of the Gospel, whether we consider his qualifications or his usefulness.

We are called to “*mark* the perfect man, and to *behold* the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” And in such an age of rebuke and blasphemy, when so many fail of the grace of God and dishonour the Redeemer's name, and when so many even in the ministerial office fall by their iniquity to the disgrace of their character and station—it is a delightful satisfaction to attend the concluding scenes of one whose reputation was unsullied, at whose funeral there is nothing to conceal, nothing to palliate; and concern-



ing whom the spectators, however numerous, are all ready to acknowledge, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."—I do not wonder to see you weep. "This grief becomes you, and these tears are just: not to mourn would argue the guilty insensibility of the Jews, condemned by the prophet, who, when the righteous perished, and merciful men were taken away, laid it not to heart."—He is indeed disposed of infinitely to his advantage—his warfare is accomplished—he has entered the joy of his Lord: but his gain is our loss. We have lost a protector, an intercessor, a benefactor, a teacher, an example. The world sustains a loss; the country sustains a loss; the church feels a loss; religion feels a loss, and comes and mourns along with us. The sons and daughters of indigence and affliction are bereaved: friends sigh. ... I feel it easier to weep than to address you. Forgive the egotism, *I* have lost a friend—a long known, a tried friend—with whom I have taken sweet counsel—whose advice has directed me—whose approbation has stimulated me—and with whom, from my first intercourse with him, I felt a peculiar oneness of mind, which every succeeding interview has only increased. At the grave of a parent, not by birth, but adoption, I lately cried "my father, my father!" I now cry "alas, my brother!"—"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been to me"—O! how earth is impoverished! O! how heaven is enriched by such removals as these! How they loosen us from the world, and enable us to enter into the spirit of Thomas when he said, "Let us go away that we may die with him!" Well, we shall join them again. They will soon receive us into everlasting habitations.

Even now the interruption of our union is in appearance rather than reality.

“The saints on earth, and all the dead,  
But one communion make;  
All join in Christ, their living head,  
And of his grace partake.  
In such society as this  
My weary soul would rest;  
The man that dwells where Jesus is  
Must be for ever blest.”

The close of the life of this man of God corresponded with its course, and is worthy of our notice. He had retired to Canterbury after the rupture of a blood-vessel; but finding at length that his recovery was despaired of, he expressed a wish to be taken home to expire among his own people. He conceived that he ought to edify them in death as well as in life, and hoped to be able to bear a final testimony to the truth and importance of those doctrines which he had publicly preached. His wish was indulged. He reached home on the Tuesday, and died on the Wednesday; professing a hope full of immortality, and addressing pertinent instructions and admonitions to those around him. “Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing!”

We here see the excellency of the religion described and recommended in the Gospel. It always appears profitable; but how does its glory shine forth in those dark scenes which nothing else can illuminate, nothing else can cheer, nothing else can gild! O! how desirable is it, when nature is dissolving, to be able to say with Jacob, “I have waited for thy salvation. O Lord!” when the body is mouldering back to dust, to exclaim with Job, “I know that my

Redeemer liveth:" with Simeon to feel a Saviour in the arms of our faith raising us above the love of life, and the fear of death: to look backward, to look forward, and exult with Paul, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith—Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day!" "Where is the individual that will not withdraw from these mansions of the dead, and immediately and earnestly pray, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!!"—



**PREFACE TO MEMOIRS**

OF

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

MRS. SARAH SAVAGE,

ELDEST DAUGHTER

OF THE

REVEREND PHILIP HENRY, A.M.

BY SIR J. B. WILLIAMS.



## PREFACE.

IN November last, going to Shrewsbury to preach for the Swan Hill Sunday School, I called upon my amiable and worthy friend, the Editor of the following sheets. He shewed me a number of manuscript volumes, filled with the diary and remarks of Mrs. Savage; and intimated some design of publishing a selection from them. I was so impressed and delighted, after hearing various extracts, indiscriminately taken, that I applauded the wish, and endeavoured to accelerate the accomplishment of it, Having therefore rendered myself in some measure responsible for the publication by my opinion and advice, I the more readily comply with his desire in writing a few words by way of introduction.

The relationship of this good woman will deservedly bespeak some peculiar attention to the following pages: for who, without sentiments of love and veneration, can think of PHILIP HENRY, her FATHER, and of MATTHEW HENRY, her BROTHER?

The Daughter and the Sister was worthy of her excellent kindred, She possessed much of their piety, and no inconsiderable share of their talent. She had their familiar acquaintance with the Scripture; their prompt remembrance of its significant phrases; and their easy and pertinent accommodation of them to events. She had the same devoutness of remark; the same sprightliness of observa-

tion; the same degree of quaintness—just sufficient to awaken notice, and aid recollection, but not enough entirely to offend good taste.

She was “a gracious Woman, and she retains honour.” By the providence of Him who has said, “Them that honour me I will honour,” after serving her generation according to the will of God, and falling asleep, her memory, at the distance of more than a century, is blessed; and her works, written in the closet, praise her in the gate.

The species of writing in which she so largely indulged was far more common in her days than it is in ours. It has been abused, and rendered ridiculous by its minuteness and too frequent publication: yet, properly conducted, it would prove eminently conducive to usefulness. It would promote communion with Providence, and bring a man within the reach of the Promise, “Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.” It would secure the habit of retirement, and the practice of self-inspection. It would enable the writer, in review, to compare himself with himself, and awaken humiliation and repentance, when, instead of growing in grace and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour, he found that he was standing still, or had left his first love.—And though we have not the formality of the thing in the Scripture, we have many indications of the principle: as in the names which Joseph and Moses imposed upon their children; in the stone which Samuel reared and called Ebenezer; in the pot of Manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, laid up in tile ark; in the command—“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led



thee these forty years in the wilderness:" in the reproof—"Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee:" in the resolution—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Some diaries were written, either for the express purpose of meeting the public eye, or in the apprehended probability of it. When this is known to be the case, we cannot peruse them with the same degree of pleasure and confidence as when they seem written for their own sake, and betray no wish to produce effect. Nothing was further from the mind of Mrs. Savage than the public exhibition of what she wrote. It was solely inscribed for her own use and edification. Her views in it she has thus recorded:—"It is in my thoughts to do something in the nature of a diary, being encouraged by the advantage others have gained thereby. and the hope that I might be furthered by it in a godly life, and be more watchful over the frame of my heart when it must be kept on record. I would approve myself. to God, who alone knows my sincerity. To Him I have made known my request herein, and I heartily beg that what I shall at any time put down may be the workings of my heart, and that in nothing I may bear witness against myself." In this temper of mind the whole seems to have been penned: and nothing can be more pleasing or edifying than the perusal of such unstudied, undisguised representations of her conscience and her character.

The inspection shews us, that a dissent from the National Church may be founded in conviction, as well as education; and does not necessarily imply a fastidious or a factious disposition; that it does not

render its subject blind to what is good or excellent in the doctrine and liturgy of the Establishment, or prevent prayer for its success, or rejoicing in its welfare. It shews us, too, how little it encourages disaffection to civil obedience, or forbids "rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Could the diaries of Mrs. Savage's times be explored, what a contrast would be found between the sentiments such worthies confessed before God in their most sacred moments, and those charged upon them by their calumniating adversaries! Take the following extract from the journal of her honoured father, when deprived of his living for conscience' sake:—

"1663, May 29, A Thanksgiving day for the King's return; a mercy in itself, for which the Lord be praised, though I, and many more, suffer by it."

We perceive in these pages, that evangelical principles do not lead to licentiousness, but are friendly to every duty we owe to God, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves. Where do we here see any traces of—that bold familiarity with the Supreme Being—of that contempt of others, which cries, Stand by, I am holier than thou—of that relaxation of vigilance; that carelessness of conduct; that presumptuousness of hope, which in the minds and languages of many seem for ever identified with the doctrines of Grace?

We may see here somewhat of the nature and value of Christian experience. We are accustomed to speak of doctrine, experience, and practice: but though these are in a measure different, they are not separable: they resemble the colours in the rainbow; you can distinguish them, but you cannot limit; they imperceptibly melt into each other, Christian experience results from enlightened views of divine

things—which is no other than doctrinal belief: and it issues in the conversation and life—which is nothing less than practical godliness. Yea, these operate mutually, as cause and effect: for as our perceptions influence our feelings, and these our conduct; so practice increases our feelings. and these aid our judgment; for the exemplification of our religious views in our dispositions and actions renders them more clear, and more powerful. Hence the meaning of the term; for experience signifies knowledge derived from trial, in contradistinction to conjecture and theory. A Christian does not at first adopt religious sentiments, or engage in religious exercises, with a view to make experiments; yet a reception of the former, and an attention to the latter, have this effect. They put these things into a state of trial; and a new kind of evidence is obtained by the individual. He that believeth hath the witness in himself: and though it may not be convincing to others, it is very satisfactory to his own heart, and he is neither to be ridiculed, nor argued out of it. Hence says our Lord, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Hence men are invited to “taste and see that the Lord is good.” Hence Christians are represented as having “tasted that the Lord is gracious.” Hence David says, “Because Thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice:” and Paul exults, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.”

I here look into Mrs. Savage’s heart, and I see this satisfaction—yet not excluding many anxious and painful feelings: and the Christian is pourtrayed

in the Scripture, by his fear, as well as by his confidence: by his weeping, as well as rejoicing. A stone remains the same all the year: but what changes does the living tree feel, and what different aspects does it exhibit in the four seasons! I see in this subject of divine grace no vain, no proud pretensions; she nowhere says, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin;" "I have already attained, I am already perfect:"—but in every page she cries, "This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Amidst all her complaints of the want of more conformity and devotedness to God, we still see her—differing from others—a new creature—God's workmanship:—and we see reason why Christians, under all their acknowledged imperfections, are called "righteous," and "godly," and "holy," and "spiritual:"—for we see the complete state to which she aspired powerfully at work in its principles; already commenced in its preparations; already insured in its earnestness; already enjoyed in its foretastes.—We see "the path of the just, which is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The experience of Mrs. Savage shews us, that religion is not always begun abruptly, or in a manner bordering on prodigy. It is often derived, under the Divine agency, from pious education, family worship, parental instruction, holy example. Mr. Baxter goes so far as to say, that if these were discharged as they ought to be, even the preaching of the Word would not be the most common means of conversion. It is certain that many of the most

eminent and useful Ministers among the Puritans and Nonconformists were not converted from a course of profligacy, but were trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; from children knew the holy Scriptures: and the change in them was as gradual in its progress, as it was proved to be real and divine in its effects.

Many, I fear, are tempted to think suspiciously or loweringly of the acquisition of religion in this humble and unostentatious mode: and deem it far preferable that a man should have been led from the depths of Satan into the way everlasting; have felt a sudden violence; and, after enduring insufferable terror and anguish, be elevated into confidence and rapture. We are not to limit the Holy One of Israel; yet ought we to be careful not to draw universal conclusions from particular cases, or convert exceptions into general rules. It is one of the golden sentences of Mr. Henry, her brother,—“God is sometimes found of them that seek him not, but He is always found of them that seek him.” It is a mercy if God calls us by his grace in any way; but where the certainty of the change is so extremely obvious, the subject is too prone to rest convinced of the fact, instead of praying “create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” From the apparent magnitude of the change, he is too prone to feel as if it had finished a work which it only began. From the superior notice and wonder it excites, the more temptation is there to spiritual vanity and pride. The suddenness of the illumination frequently dazzles while it enlightens; and the man is likely to feel and retain a partial attachment to some one religious doctrine, according to the first direction his

mind takes under such a novel and powerful impression: and for want of those *relative* views which should accompany and qualify and direct his fervour, his zeal is seldom according to knowledge. Often, too, coarseness and freedom of manners result from former viciousness, of which the individuals themselves are not aware, but which expose them in their social, especially female intercourse. I never knew a professor of religion, or a preacher of the Word, who fell by certain temptations, but had been, previously to his connexion with the Christian world, the victim of vice.—Moral and virtuous habits produce delicacy and impose restraint. Former scenes of guilt will often revive in the imagination; and though they are not entertained there, yet by passing through the mind they defile it, and distress it. I have heard more than one pious character confess the pain and injury he has suffered from this quarter, even in his public and retired devotions, and who would have given the world to be free from the shocks he received from the hauntings of the ghosts of his old iniquities, To which we may add, that though morality is not religion, yet it is a social benefit—but the man called from the dregs of profaneness has to look back upon the injury he has done to others, and to mourn over effects which he cannot repair. He has led astray many that he may never be able to reclaim; and seeing those running the downward road whom he led into it and encouraged by his vices, influence, and example, how often, as he advances towards Heaven, which he is almost ashamed to enter, must he sigh and pray, “Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God of my salvation!”

These reflections are not designed to exclude any

from hope, however deeply they have transgressed; or to withhold esteem and confidence from those who have obtained mercy; but to remove a mistake by no means uncommon; and to induce those who have been preserved from vice to be peculiarly thankful that they were moral before they were converted; and to bless God for those early advantages which led them into connected and consistent views of religion; and that their characters were formed after models of excellency, placed constantly in sight, and endeared by all the claims of nature. They are designed also to call upon parents not to leave their children to a kind of religious chance; or to suppose that Divine grace is a thing perfectly independent of rational and pious means, instead of being connected with them, and conveyed by them, and in them. Let the command and the promise be ever in their mind: "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," Not that means are ever sufficient of themselves without the Divine blessing (and therefore there is as much need of prayer as of exertion); but when God has appointed the means, and engaged to bless them, our hope is well founded; and in the *proper* use of them we may expect success with as much certainty as, in nature, the sower expects to reap.

Finally. I have no wish to hinder the humbling sense of inferiority which persons acquainted with themselves will feel in reading these papers. There are certainly degrees of religious excellency. Even the good ground brought forth in the varied proportions of thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold. What a difference do we see between Abraham and Lot, with regard to lowliness of mind, self-denial, and a spirit

of conciliation! “What a difference between the Centurion, who took our Saviour at his word, and Thomas; who required every kind of sensible evidence!—And Christians are in honour to prefer one another. Yet it should be remembered, that what is written in such diaries as this, is the fruit of retirement and reflection, and the summary of the best feelings called forth in the presence of God. And whatever modern Christians think of *themselves*, I love not for *others* to view them as a race very inferior to those who lived in an earlier period. We know who has said; “Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.”

There may be the same degree of religious principle, while yet it is put forth in different ways. Even the constitutional temple will have some influence, as we see in the case of Martha and Mary. There was the same regard to our Saviour in each, but Martha was cumbered about much serving, while Mary sat at his feet to hear his words; and when, after the death of the brother, he was coming into Bethany, Martha went out to meet him, but Mary sat still in the house.—Nor should we forget that the providence of God often diversifies the direction of religious principle. At one time it peculiarly calls forth the passive, at another the active graces of the Christian: at one season it requires more of the private exercises of godliness, at another more of its public efforts: winter leads the sap down into the roots, while summer calls it up into the branches, and displays it in the blossoms and the fruit.

We readily acknowledge that, with regard to the more private and retired influence of religion, they



who lived in the days of Mrs. Savage were superior to the generality of modern Christians: but we make no scruple to say, many modern Christians are far superior to them in public spirit and active exertions. If the river spreads wide, or flows in various fertilizing currents, it cannot be expected to roll so deep. How little working, *comparatively*, do we find even in the feelings of many of these worthies towards the cause of God at large! Their own souls, their families, their particular churches—these drew forth their concern, but too much restricted it too, The present day exhibits a very different scene: and from a thousand public assemblies, convened for the very purpose, and evincing their sincerity and fervency by their efforts and sacrifices, we hear the exclamation, “Let the whole earth be filled with His glory.” There is indeed a danger that, keeping other men’s vineyards, we should not be attentive to our own; and that our zeal should expend itself so much abroad as to be extinguished before it reaches home: on the other hand it is true (though liable to perversion and abuse), that if we mind God’s affairs he will mind ours: and that, while doing his work, he that watereth shall be watered also. In the unprofitableness of those ministers, the barrenness of those churches, and the deadness of those professors, who from their selfishness, or sloth, or any doctrinal restraint, come not up to the help of the Lord, may be found, at this hour, illustrations of the truth of David’s words: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; *they* shall prosper that love thee.”

Had many Christians now living been contemporaries with Mrs. Savage, they would have devoted that

time and attention to religion in its retreats which seemed not so much called for abroad. And had many who lived in her days been born in ours, they would have sprung forth at the call of those institutions which we have witnessed; and, following the direction of Heaven, have fallen in with a state of things which demands the utmost co-operation and activity; and which not only allows, but demands, that every subject of Divine grace should be also its instrument and its agent: and when, by teaching poor children and adults to read and write, by dispensing Tracts, by aiding Bible and Missionary Societies, and by endeavouring to evangelize our own dark villages, Christians as well as preachers shall be named the "Priests of the Lord; and men shall call them the Ministers of our God:" when the promise made to the church shall be fulfilled, "They that be of Thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundation of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."

This is the glory of our day: and let not Christians be comparatively undervalued because they obey the obvious will of Providence, and are workers together with God. The period so long prayed for is arrived; and we are required to rise, even from our devotions, and serve. We could employ the hours in songs of praise, but the voice cries "Work while it is called to-day:" and you shall soon rest from your labours, and join those who dwell in His house above, and are still praising Him, Christians are now required not to sit still and record their feelings, but to endeavour to communicate them. They must not abide by the

stuff. The field calls for them, The harvest is come, and it is harvest weather, and the ears, ungathered in, will soon fall and perish. "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."

WM. JAY.

*Bath, May 2, 1818.*

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