

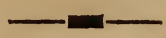


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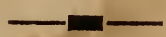
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Smith

AN
EPITOME
OF
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY,

EMBRACING THE DEFINITION; THE EXPLANATION; THE PROOF, AND THE
MORAL INFERENCES, OF ALL THE DOCTRINES OF REVELATION,
FROM THE EVIDENCES OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD FROM
THE LIGHT OF NATURE, DOWN TO THE CON-
SUMMATION OF ALL THINGS.



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PREFACE.

As I consider myself responsible for the sentiments and language, which, in a few instances, I have taken from others ; and as this work is presented to the public in essentially the same form and style, in which it was delivered to my people in the summer and fall of 1827 I shall make no apology for the omission of the usual signs of credit.

INTRODUCTION.

It is no more than justice to state, that I am induced to give to my people this course of sermons on Systematic Theology, from motives which have stood the test of long and matured reflection, and which, I trust, will abide the decisions of that day, when I must review the spirit in which I have written, and the influence of my writings on the sentiments and conduct of my fellow creatures. I have not entered on this work, with the vain conceit, that my talents and acquisitions are pre-eminent. Nor am I at liberty to conceal from a people, the dearest to me on earth, the beauties which I have discovered in that volume of truth given to us by the Father of lights. I cannot betray so much ignorance of human nature, as to believe that this, or any other production, without the influence of the Spirit, will change the sentiments of him who is so fixed in his opinions by education or prejudice, by ignorance or interest, as to be impatient of investigation, and the application of sound reasoning and rules of interpretation, to the sacred oracles. To the braced and bigotted mind, an infant in the science of human nature, knows that scripture reasoning and moral demonstration are as unavailing as the fables of antiquity.

I have several objects in view. I wish to exhibit truth as systematic and harmonious ; and to show its relations,

dependencies and symmetry. I wish to place before the candid and inquiring mind, that faith which was given to the church, and has been perpetuated, without mutilation or corruption ; and which will, when cordially embraced, exert an elevating and happy influence on the whole features of the moral affections and religious character. I wish to show, that faith and feeling are inseparably connected ; and consequently, that belief is as important as practice. It is a not a little alarming, that many injudicious christians undervalue the faith of the saints, and in their rage for catholicism, surrender the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. The most plausible and the most successful attacks that are made on the church, are, to produce prevarication and skepticism in professing christians. If their doctrines can be dispensed with, they become an easy prey to licentiousness and apostacy. Let the church dispense with doctrinal and sentimental preaching for fifty years, and there would only remain a few illegible traces of her former magnificence.

I wish to detect and expose the misrepresentations of scripture truth, and wipe off the unmerited reproach which the faith of the saints has endured for ages. It is an important fact, which demands particular notice, that those who are unfriendly to the orthodox, have always given a false statement of their sentiments ; and of consequence, their refutations have been refutations of ideal, and not of real christian belief. The people on whom these misrepresentations are palmed, no more believe them, than their professed antagonists. There is not, to my knowledge, a volume extant, in which a correct and candid refutation of the doctrines of grace is attempted.

There have been numerous attempts to refute doctrines, which were charged upon certain denominations of sound christians, but which they are as forward to combat as their opponents. I wish to put into the hands of sound and gospel believers, an undiguised and honest expression of their faith, divested of misrepresentations and sophistical objections. It is not expected that christians in laborious occupations, with few literary means, and with little more than time enough for devotional purposes, can, without maturity of christian character, conduct an able and irrefutable defence of the doctrines of the gospel. They may be useful, intelligent, and the pillars of the church; and yet be unable to remove the false colouring given to their sentiments, and defend the truths which they firmly believe and cordially love. This illustrates the importance of enlightening a people in the great system of divine truth. This can be done only by exhibiting the doctrines of the gospel separately, and then showing their mutual connection and dependence. No man becomes a scholar by listening to a lecture which delineates the whole system of natural and moral philosophy. Too many objects crowded into the mind at once, confuse and bewilder it, and enfeeble all its operations. It retires from the scene distracted and distressed, and finds relief only in oblivion of thought. Who could make a skillful mechanic by teaching the whole art at once, even if the instruction were a thousand times repeated? In science, philosophy, and religion, it is by receiving facts, in their detached parts, that we obtain a correct view of their relations, dependencies, their proportions and beauties.

To my church and people, I will add, I hope you will come to an examination of these sermons, with an unbiased and devout, a critical and christian spirit ; and, as my plan forbids an extensive and full discussion of the subjects which I shall examine, I shall submit the several topics to your patient and persevering research, desirous that your minds may be influenced by a supreme desire to know the will of God. I shall endeavour neither to follow nor to avoid the tracks of any man or any class of men, who have written systems of divinity, and to escape the charge of imitation or of singularity, I shall leave the writings of great and good men, and follow the instructions of the Holy Ghost, given us in the scriptures. In relation to the spirit of my labors, I must leave my people to judge for themselves. I pledge myself to be uninfluenced by human authority, on all essential doctrines, and will neither worship nor curse the image of my own denomination, nor that of others. The truth shall be the object for which I pray, and for which I labor. The only deference I shall pay to my reason, will be to make the best application of the rules of interpretation to the truths of the Bible. You shall have my best endeavors to understand the will of God ; and then I will leave you to embrace or reject at pleasure. While I shall attempt to justify the ways of God to man, and to show the consistency and beauty of divine truth, I shall demand your faith in revealed truth, on the authority of the great Lawgiver. When I have proved a doctrine from scripture, by fair and unsophisticated reasoning, you are bound to believe it, simply on the authority of God. The authority of God, I shall consider superior to the prejudices of

education, the jealousies of sectarianism, or the cavils of unbelief. Enlightened, speculative faith, is a belief in all the testimony of God ; and saving faith is a cordial assent to the truth of the gospel. But to notice the endless queries which exist, from the atheist to the arminian, and from the socinian to the fatalist, would be a work as useless as it would be thankless. As to the spirit in which these sermons are received, I can only say, that I could wish all to receive them with an inquisitive mind and a devout heart ; and to try them by the infallible criterion. If any man speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in him. We are never to hear the word of God as an amusement, or as a mere pastime ; but as solemn, animating and glorious truth, the value of which demands our attention and study—our gratitude and love.

The plan which I shall pursue is very plain and natural. I shall first define the doctrine. In giving the definition, caution will be used, to adopt a phraseology perspicuous and precise. The words of a definition ought to be such as mean just enough and no more. Every reflecting person must be sensible, that much time, talent, and temper are often lost, because the truth under consideration is not plainly set before the hearers. The speaker, for want of clear and distinct views of the object at which he would aim, wanders from his subject ; and the hearer, if ignorant of the import of the sermon, will not discover the force of reasoning : for, it is in the obscurity of terms and the defectiveness of definition, that error always takes refuge, and concealment never fails to lessen her deformities. It is this mode of reasoning from definitions,

that will ultimately correct those errors which are so industriously propagated in the earth, expose their sophistry, and fill the world with light. Definitions only will assimilate the type of human sentiments, and calm the raging elements of moral feeling. Many ardent disputants are determined to disagree, when, if a definition of the point in question were laid on the table, they would seize it with equal avidity.

2ndly, I shall explain the definition. Here my object will be to clear the doctrine of misconstruction, and place the definition in its true light. I shall here take the liberty to explain the sense in which I use language, and show the reasons for such use of it. This is a privilege which justice gives to every writer, and of which every minister who seeks the improvement of his people, avails himself.

3dly, I shall prove the doctrine from scripture; and although every point shall rest on divine testimony, yet I shall not be denied the aid of corroborating testimony from other sources. In adducing proof, I shall feel myself bound to urge no passage which is not directly in point, and shall consider one proof text as substantial as a thousand. The force of argument and the weight of conviction, must be regulated by the nature of the proof, and not by the number of passages. No truth, precept, or injunction of inspiration is the more convincing from its repetition. God needs speak but once to be believed. I do not mean by this, that God has never repeated the same truth, but that the repetition does not alter the first declaration. A multitude of passages, which have

no relation to the subject, adduced in support of a point, can convince only the ignorant and unthinking: the rational and intelligent man demands but one single incontrovertible text. The certainty that God has said it once is satisfactory; and he who requires the repetition of it, doubts the veracity of God. Nothing has done more injury to the cause of truth, than arguments loaded with passages of scripture, which have little or no relation to the subject under discussion. It is a pity that a good cause should be abused, by subjecting it to suspicion; and that the authority of God should be doubted, without repeated attestations and numerous proofs. Hath he said, and will he not do it? I will state to you the rules of interpretation, which I shall apply to the scriptures adduced. I shall first give the plain and literal meaning. If any difficulty then remains, I shall examine their figurative language. In doing this, I shall place myself in the land in which the scriptures were written, and take a view of the scenery which surrounds me. To understand the figurative language of Job, I must know the geography of Chaldea. To understand the figurative language of David, I must know the history of Palestine. In interpreting scripture allusions, I must have some knowledge of the arts and sciences, the manners and customs, the religious, ceremonial and civil polity of the Jewish nation. I must acquaint myself with the history of the Jews. Biblical archæology is divided into sacred, political, and domestic; and embraces every thing worthy of notice and remembrance, whether it be merely alluded to, or treated as something well known. If the meaning of a passage cannot be determined by its plain, literal sense,

nor from an examination of its figurative language, I shall examine the context, and let the subject determine the sense. The next principle of interpretation will be to compare scripture with scripture and ascertain its import by parallel passages. If any obscurity then remains, the different senses in which the same word is used, must be examined. There are few words in scripture which are invariable in their signification. The word righteousness will serve for an illustration, which is used in at least fourteen different senses. If I am yet in doubt, the text must be left in reserve to the development of the final day, when we shall no longer see in part and know in part.

4thly, I shall show the moral duties which every doctrine enjoins. It is a fact which goes far to establish the divine authority of the scriptures, that there is not in the whole system of divine truth, a single doctrine which has not its moral deductions. Every duty is appended to a doctrine. Practical religion is the fruit of doctrinal religion: and one cannot exist in its highest perfection, without the other. If the doctrine of Divine Existence falls, the duty of homage and worship falls. If the doctrine of depravity is false, the grace of humility is hypocrisy. This very important and inseparable connexion between faith and practice, doctrine and duties, I intend fully to illustrate in the course of my sermons.

This then is my plan: Definition, explanation, proofs and moral deductions.

I have not adopted this method in imitation of my predecessors, nor to claim the honor of discovery or invention, but as the most natural and plain arrangement

of the system of divine truth, suggested to my mind by my own reflections, and studies on the scriptures. I have adopted this plan in preference to all others, because I have never seen a work written against a true and honest statement of orthodox sentiments. Our sentiments have been mis-stated, then palmed upon us, then triumphantly refuted, when the representations of the doctrines were as abhorrent to our faith and feelings, as to those of any other class of beings on earth.

Another consideration which has induced me to pursue this plan, is, that both the friends and enemies of truth, have sometimes unhappily blended and confused doctrines, which are totally distinct. This has produced confusion in some, skepticism in others, and unbelief in others.

Another consideration is, that by many, doctrines are greatly undervalued; and multitudes, from weakness of moral principle and timid indecision, have fallen into the fatal sentiment, that there is no connexion between doctrines and duties, faith and practice. Thus, as the pillars erected by the Apostles, have been worn away by time, and sacrilegious temporising, the piety of the church has fallen, and religion without doctrines can no more exist in a healthful and flourishing state, than the human body can exist, when all its supporting pillars, its sinewy ligaments, and its nutritious conductors are destroyed. If there is no doctrine, there is no duty. Incorrectness in faith, is as dangerous to the interests of the soul, as immorality of conduct. Reason and scripture regard the feelings and views of the heart, as essentially concerned in determining the character and destiny

of man. If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. Faith is a condition of salvation, and faith is an exercise of the understanding and heart. I have a few more remarks to offer, before entering on the work, which I have pledged myself to this church and congregation to undertake. I propose to give you a Systematic Epitome of divine truth. It is essential to profit and success in this investigation, to inquire what we are to understand by the word system. We may believe a thousand detached truths, and yet see no system about them. We see system displayed in every piece of complicated machinery ; in the happily constructed edifice, in which every part has its utility, its relations, and its dependencies. We see system in the mechanism of a watch, and in the mechanism of a world, where all things are mutually dependent and mutually combined. Divine truth has system. It is a golden chain ; and if one link be broken, the whole beauty and harmony are lost. This system begins with the existence, perfections, and prerogatives of God ; and proceeds on, examining the revelation, which he has made of himself to man ; the creation of the world ; the creation of man ; his primeval character ; the apostacy ; his subsequent character ; the plan of recovery ; the several steps by which this plan is carried into execution ; its author ; the death of the human family ; the resurrection of their bodies ; their final and irreversible destinies ; and the winding up of the scenes of the last judgment, and the surrendry of the mediatorial office and kingdom. Such is the wide and interesting field we are to explore.

Though I enter on this work, with an unshaken belief of the sincerity and purity of my motives, and can say,

if I ever formed a design on my knees, it was this, yet I must acknowledge, I feel myself poorly qualified to present to you the beauties of the moral world; and to examine a subject, fraught with so many deep and incomprehensible truths. I can look only to the Father of lights, and solicit an interest in your intercessions. But I must remind you, that should the success of my undertaking, produce in my mind, a happy disappointment, and God be glorified in these feeble efforts, still the labor will be lost to the careless and inattentive hearer. Wherever the truths of the law, or the glories of the gospel, are published, there will be an influence, either healthful, or unhealthful. The enjoyment of the gospel is not less animating than solemn.

I would therefore entreat you, my hearers, to come to the examination of the truths of the scriptures, with an humble mind, deeply imbued with the spirit of inquiry, and desirous to know the mind of the Spirit. We may speculate on the Bible, but it should be devout speculation. We may reason, but our reasoning should be accompanied with proper views of the weakness of our powers, and of the infallibility of divine testimony. In short, the knowledge and the love, the pleasure and the profit, the honor and the reward of truth, should be found in the same heart, that God may be glorified and the soul saved. May we all know, what can be known of God and his truth here on earth, and enjoy the brighter vision of his face in heaven.

Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.

SERMON I.

DIVINE EXISTENCE.

HEB. 3, 4.

For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

We have a knowledge of our own existence, and of the existence of objects around us by intuition. This knowledge is obtained by the senses, and not by process of reasoning. Our knowledge of past events is derived from testimony of various kinds; such as oral tradition, and well authenticated records. The most clear and conclusive knowledge which we possess, is mathematical. The reason of man is not so biased and perverted as his moral powers; and its conclusions are capable of demonstration. Intuitive knowledge, a knowledge of material existences is perfectly satisfactory; and, by common consent, he is considered in a state of mental derangement, who denies, either what he sees, or feels, or tastes, or smells, or hears. This kind of evidence is said to be incapable of proof, because this knowledge is obtained without any reasoning. The objects come in immediate contact with the senses.

Now we, and the world with all its furniture around us, were created by God.

I will proceed to prove that there is an author, who is the first cause of all things. God is a being who existed

before all things, and is uncreated, and uncaused in all his attributes. By him were all things created, visible and invisible, material, mental, and moral. But his nature will be more clearly explained in the proofs which I shall adduce of his existence and perfections. This world must have been either self-existent, or self-created, or created by some being. If it were self-existent, it would not be mutable; for it is seen intuitively, that what is self-existent, must exist of necessity, and a necessary existence is an immutable existence.

But we see the impress of mutability on all things. The mind of man is subject to endless fluctuations; and the face and furniture of creation, are not what they once were. The doctrine of self-existence denies any influence, or any control from external sources. An acknowledgment of mutability, is an acknowledgment of a superior, controlling power; and in that case, it cannot be self-existent. But there are changes in nature which cannot be accounted for on the ground of any established laws of nature; for almost all of these laws have been counteracted and suspended; and this could not be done, if there were no superior, upholding power. Self-existence is uncontrollable existence. There are no marks of self-existence about this world. If it was self-existent, it must have been eternal. An admission of its origin, would be an admission of a creator; for every thing which begins to exist, must have a cause of its existence, which would destroy its self-existence. It would require an astonishing credulity to believe the mechanism of this world eternal, when all things proclaim its changeableness and its dependence. To suppose that it created

itself is still more repulsive to enlightened reason. What idea can you have of a being's commencing his own existence before he exists? Though I would pay some deference to those rare geniuses who have employed such good talents in so bad a cause, I must confess, that there is so much smoke about their self-creating scheme, that it extinguishes my sight. One thing is certain, if they had only waited until they had created themselves, the world would not have been troubled with their sophistry. But even on supposition that the work is commenced, how is it to be carried on? Can matter beget motion? and even on presumption that it can, can motion beget mind? It might produce friction; but friction cannot generate intelligence. There are two infirmities about the scheme of self-creation: one is, that you can never commence the work; and the other is, that you can never carry it on. And if the world is not self-existent, nor self-created, it must be the work of some being. I would here just remark on the word chance, that, by common consent of all reasoners at the present day, it means nothing more than the operations of principles and agents, invisible to us; and that it always supposes a prior cause. If chance does not mean the concealment and incomprehensibility of the efficient cause, it has no meaning at all. Chance and fortune, and fate, are terms, which have served at all times, as cloaks for human ignorance; and before mankind were favored with the light of divine revelation, they had an imaginary importance, which has now happily vanished. Believers in divine providence, no longer conceive the events of the world as left to themselves, or under the control of any

unintelligent or unconscious agents ; but ascribe the whole to an overruling mind, which, though invisible to the bodily eye, may be clearly traced by the mental eye, wherever we turn ourselves. I conceive, that christians cannot use these terms, unless in trivial matters, and in conformity to general usage without disparagement to the Divine Being. And such use ought to be considered as a kind of profaneness. There is no justice in its application to any thing but secondary causes. It is evident from what has been said, there is a great author, or first cause, in whom are all things, and by whom all things consist. That he exists neither by permission, nor by dependence, but necessarily and unavoidably. He existed previously to the creation ; and conducted it by his own power and wisdom. I shall not waste a moment's labor in attempting to prove who this being is. You may call him God, Creator, or First Cause as you please. We simply mean him by whom all things and all creatures were made. That the invisible things of God, are clearly seen by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, is a sentiment written on all his works. The man who doubts the evidence of the divine existence, drawn from the works of creation, is willing to sacrifice good sense to caprice ; and, in opposition to the decisions of his enlightened judgment, to adopt a faith, refuted by reason, candor, and experience, and to labor under an inexcusable delusion. When we admit an author of all things, there is no solution of the perplexing objections to other systems. The existence of a God is the pillar of all religion. As every object in creation must be traced back to him, so all the

arrangements and relations in the material world, have one common author, and must be referred to the Great Original. There are other proofs to be adduced from the works of nature in support of the divine existence. There is not a more legible truth, than the design every where conspicuous in the works of God. Earth, air, fire and water, and all the infinite functions in animate, and combinations in inanimate matter, and all the physical and intellectual powers of man, display design. Design is conspicuous in the sun, in the heavens, in the seasons of the year, and in the constitution and mechanism of the smallest vegetable, and the minutest insect. If there is design, there must be a designer: and there can be no designer, without being and intelligence. If it be objected, that the same difficulties lie against theism, as against atheism, that is, that it is just as absurd to admit the self-existence of Deity, as the self-existence of the world, my reply is at hand. There is no clue of reasoning by which we can come at a commencement of the divine existence. This world evidently began to exist. The history of the human species, shows that they had a beginning. The progress of the arts and sciences shows that this world has had its infancy. If there were any thing in the divine character, which indicated increase, or diminution, or change, it would be difficult to conduct an argument in favor of the self-existent, first cause of all things. This world looks like an unfinished edifice, in the hands of the architect of the universe. It has not yet reached its perfection of beauty. Every thing we behold is effect: the cause is invisible, but must exist. And if God were in any respect like the creatures of his

power, we should, from the reasons which we have adduced, be obliged to admit, that he is not the first cause, and self-existent. But it is no matter how remote the Author and Designer of the world is, if the secondary causes were ever so numerous, they must all be traced back to their primary cause. Now I have a curious piece of mechanism before me,—call it a world. There are every where in it marks of design. Its whole machinery is adapted to certain ends which it accomplishes. And you cannot destroy the convictions of my mind and the persuasions of my moral and intellectual nature, that this world is the workmanship of some intelligent being. It would not destroy my faith, to tell me that I did not see the world made; that there are some apparent irregularities in the machinery of the universe, nor that some parts of the machine are invisible and incomprehensible; nor that I am told, it is the effect of some possible combinations of material forms; nor that there existed in things a principle of order; nor that it is the result of metallic nature: nor would it avail any thing to tell me, I know nothing about it. All nature declares, there is a God. And whatever influence revelation may have exercised in forming my opinions, and whatever clearness it may have given to my reasonings and conclusions, it is still true, that the existence of a God is provable from the volume of nature. Without admitting the existence of a first cause it is extremely difficult, if not impossible satisfactorily to account for the existence of this world: there is therefore, not a little plausibility in the argument that the admission of a first cause, is the easiest way to account for the existence of this world.

That this is the easiest way to account for the existence of this world, might be rationally inferred from the constitutional pre-disposition of man thus to account for its existence, and the universal prevalence of this sentiment.

Having proved the doctrine of divine existence, I proceed to inquire,—what are the legitimate inferences, or moral duties, drawn from this doctrine. This doctrine establishes the dependence of all things. If they are not self-existent, they are dependent. The same power which brought them into being, must support them, or they return to their native nonentity ; for if this world and its inhabitants could not give themselves existence, they could not maintain their existence. To suppose that God gave to created objects and created beings, capacities to perpetuate their existence, is nothing less than to suppose a being may be both dependent and independent—both created and self-existent, which is a plain absurdity. If all created things are dependent, then man is so. His powers of body, of mind, and of heart, owe their constant support to God. In him we live, and move, and have our being. If God were to withdraw his supporting hand, every organ of the body would cease to perform its office : the lungs would cease to respire, the heart to beat, the mind to think, and the affections to love or hate. The weakness of man, and his incapacity to manage his own powers, are demonstrative proof, that he has nothing but a dependent existence. This would be a strange world, if its inhabitants were uncontrolled and uncontrollable. Changes, and influence, and persuasion would cease, and unalterable union, or inefficient discord, would reign universal.

And if man is dependent, he is accountable. It is impossible to conceive of dependence without obligation. Wherever there are moral existences and relations, there are obligations founded on those relations. The pauper is bound to respect his benefactor, because he is dependent on him for support. The child is bound to revere and love its parent, because the parent supplies its needs, and provides for its comfort. Since man possesses neither an underived existence, nor exercises an entire control over his powers, but is the property of his Creator, he is bound to pay him homage and reverence. Homage, in the technical sense, was an oath taken, or a service performed, by the tenant to his lord, on being admitted to his land ; or by inferior princes to a sovereign, whereby they acknowledged his sovereignty and promised fidelity. In its extended and figurative sense, it comprehends every solemn mark of deference, by which the superiority of another is acknowledged. As nothing can be more just than an acknowledgment of our dependence and accountability, so nothing can be more ungrateful and wicked, than a denial of the property of God in us, and his right to dispose of us as he pleases. Is it a fact, that man is a creature, feeble, and dependent on the Supreme Being ; possessing not a particle of unborrowed existence, or an uncontrollable prerogative ; and yet shall he be unwilling to recognize his relation to the God of nature, and to pay him that respect and honor, which no spirit but that of disaffection and rebellion could withhold ? Has he created, and does he uphold us in being, and are we in the possession of every blessing which his munificent hand can bestow ? And shall we lavish the unmerited praise of these blessings on

ourselves? Surely not. Then a respectful deference to his exalted existence, and correspondent gratitude for his unmerited favors, are the duty of all his creatures.

The kindred duty of reverence is due to God. Reverence arises from a contemplation of the superiority of the Supreme Being; and partakes of a mixture of awe and fear, produced by a consciousness of weakness and dependence. If God created, then he has power either to punish, or to bless us. His wrath is dreadful, and his favor is life. And who can conceive of higher obligations to reverence, than those which rest on beings who are the entire property of another? To trifle with the names, attributes, or prerogatives of God; or to deny the obligation of dependent and accountable creatures, is daring impiety in man. God is the father of the human family; and we, as obedient children, ought to contemplate his character, and admire his excellence. He should be held in high esteem for his superior glory. And the man who refuses him the homage, worship, and reverence, which are his just due, is the more inexcusable, because the doctrine on which they are founded, is written with the clearness of a sun-beam, and is carried by the messengers of creation around the world, leaving on every plain the footsteps of the Creator, and inscribing on every mountain the evidence of his existence. If you wish to know whether you ought to worship God, open your eyes and inspect the objects within the reach of your vision. To doubt, is stupidity; to deny, is infatuation. He only is rational who reasons. I have not pursued this chain of reasoning with the prospect of convincing the sceptical atheist; for I would say to those pro-

fessing a disbelief of the existence of God, as Raffles once said to the French infidel, "If your profession is true, you are a fool; and if not, a liar." The atheist is an atheist for reasons which demonstrations can never remove; and therefore argument, or even attention, is a waste of time and talents, and a departure from the dignity of man. The best way to treat a man who wishes to assume a puerile independence, and to build a reputation on singularity, is to leave him undisturbed, to live and die in his temple of folly. The most powerful defence of truth in such a case, is silence and neglect. I have adduced these arguments to show the thoughtful portion of my congregation, the futility of objections; and that the belief of the divine existence is capable of irrefutable proof. The great pillar of all genuine religion stands secure. The foundation is a rock, and cannot be removed. I have as yet brought forward no proof from the scriptures, because I have not yet shown the authenticity and inspiration of them. I must first gather all the evidence there is of the existence and perfections of God, from the book of nature. It is presumed no one will deny the authenticity of this book. I have introduced this proof to set the divine Being before your eyes, that you may study your duty and your happiness, and place your hope in God. Carry with you, into every department of life, and into every secret recess, a sense of the divine presence. The doctrine of the divine existence, in its practical effects, is more extensive than any other. To deter us from sin, let the impression prevail, that God is present to view the motives and dispositions which operate in every heart.

SERMON II.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, FROM THE WORKS OF CREATION.

ROM. 1, 20.

For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

Having proved from the light of nature, the existence of God, I now proceed to an examination of the same volume, in search of the character of that being who created the world.

We can form no conception of any being without attributes or qualities. These properties of his nature constitute his existence. An attribute, or property of God, is known by his operations. Divine operations discover divine faculties and dispositions. The first instruction we receive from the light of nature, is the doctrine of the unity of God. After all the variety and complication in the machinery of the universe, there is evidence of unity of design, and harmony of prosecution. It is hardly conceivable, that a variety of beings, distinct and separate, should pursue the same plan, by the same means. Unity of end, proves unity of design. And unity of design proves unity of designer. The whole creation is the workmanship of the Great Architect.

The works of nature prove also the personality of Deity. I use personality in a sense distinguished from what is

called nature, and sometimes a principle. Those who use these phrases, seem to admit an efficacy, while they exclude the agent. Any thing which can contrive must be an agent ; and any thing which has consciousness and thought, must, of necessity, be a person : because consciousness and thought constitute personality. This being, to be a person, must perceive the end, or purpose, and have wisdom to devise means, and power to put them in execution. He who thinks, chooses, and acts, is a person. Without these qualities, it would be utterly impossible to account for the existence and constitution of the world. God is one, and God is a person.

But the three principal attributes of God, which are demonstrable from the light of nature, are his wisdom, power, and goodness. Wisdom is ability to form plans, and to devise means for their accomplishment.

The perfection or imperfection of this faculty, is to be determined by the degree of skill manifested in the selection of means, and by the degree of success attending them. Wisdom in God is infinite. When he prepares his means, he takes into view all the possible changes which can take place ; and not only adapts means to ends in the happiest manner, but he governs these means with an uninfluenced sway. The means, in every case, invariably accomplish the end. They are adequate means, adapted to the certain accomplishment of the end. The only difficulty in adducing proof on this point, arises from the multitude of witnesses, and the abundance of evidence. The universal laws of self-defence and self-preservation, prove, that he who had wisdom to

design, had wisdom to devise the best method, and the best means to carry these designs into effect. If he who formed the arrangement of this world, had not been infinite and infallible in his choice of means, there would have been some disappointment and derangement conspicuous before this time. Many plans would have been abandoned ; and the order of the world would have been broken up. But there is no imperfection in the great system of means, however they may look to weak and fallible man, because God is infinite in wisdom.

By the power of God, is to be understood his ability to create, or to accomplish all his designs, and to manage the affairs of his kingdom. We call this power omnipotent, because it is sufficient to perform all things. It can do every thing possible. It is called infinite, because it can perform works utterly incomprehensible to the human mind. It required an effort of power to create this and surrounding worlds, which is totally incomprehensible to a finite mind. And the constant agency necessary to maintain this world, is equally beyond the comprehension of the mind of man. There are no conceivable limits to the divine power. The bringing of existence from nonentity ; the making of a world so vast and immeasurable, and maintaining it without aid, prove his omnipotence. Every display of magnificence and grandeur about us, is evidence of divine power. Human power is limited and restricted. It can only mar the materials with which it is surrounded, or, by the application of one material to another, furnish some mimicry of imitation. But all the principles and all the materials are furnished to our hands. We can only separate,

and combine, and produce a few changes. But what is this power compared with that of him who spake and it was done ; the efficacy of whose words gave birth to the world ; and whose unwearied arm supports and governs it. That power must have been omnipotent which hung the worlds in clusters around the heavens ; which moved the silken chords of attraction and gravitation, and which holds these worlds in their orbits as they play around their centres ! That power must be omnipotent which fixed the finer organs of the unnoticed insect ; adorned man with his ennobling faculties ; shakes the waters of the ocean, and flings the lofty mountains into the skies ! These are but a part of his ways. The thunders of his power who can understand ?

But we are furnished, from the volume of nature, with evidence not only of the unity, personality, wisdom, and power of God, but also of his goodness. And here a field opens, in which intellect may range, and piety may enjoy her ceaseless gratification. Goodness in God is a disposition to make his creatures happy. And if this simple fact be admitted, that every piece of workmanship, displays the character of its author, we shall find in the vast field of material, and intellectual nature, abundant proofs of the goodness of God. And here I need lay no claims to independence or invention, but follow the track of ages. Every age and condition of men since the creation, have been surrounded with testimonials of divine goodness.

The first proposition to be established, is, that in a vast majority of instances in which contrivance is discoverable, the design of the contrivance is beneficial. All nature

may display contrivance, but sensitive and animal creation are principally concerned, in proving the benevolence of God. If inanimate nature has a speech, it has no medium by which it can communicate its language, or its feelings. If it has any, they are totally unknown to us; and cannot therefore, furnish any proof of the goodness of God. And here it may be remarked, that no evidence is more clear and direct, than that which is drawn from the parts of animals. With a very few exceptions, their different organs have a known, and intelligible subserviency to the use of their possessors. Now consider the vast variety and number of animals, the different numbers of each, their figure and fitness, their complexity and faculties, the dependence and relation of these parts, and the success of them in promoting their felicity. Such are their faculties for gratification, and such their actual pleasure, as to prove this a happy world, after all the infirmities and derangements of animal functions. You may begin with the smallest, and most inconsiderable grade of animal beings. In the spring or summer, walk out at mid-day, or at evening, and see the regions of air teeming with sportive insects; you will see a perfect display of life and animation, in the wilderness, or by the water side. When you see the myriads of flies that swarm in the air, or the myriads of bees that cover the flowry plains, the chattering birds that play in the air, or warble in the grove, the young which begin to exercise their faculties, and the flocks and herds that graze on the mountains, and pursue their wonted indulgence, who can doubt that they have gratification and happiness of an animal kind? Have they no capacities for enjoy-

ment, and have they no sources of gratification? While the various insect tribes, are enjoying an instinctive and constitutional pleasure, in the air, plants are covered with millions extracting their juices. It cannot be, that they are not highly gratified. If they have no gratification, why are they so untiring in their pursuits? The same indications of happiness will be found in the waters. Shoals of fish will show their gratification by darting through the liquid element, by sporting in its bosom, and by throwing themselves from its surface into the air; and all, without any purpose, or motive but obedience to constitutional instinct, and self gratification. Others exercise their faculties on the earth, by running and sporting, by feeding, and indulging in the other sources of pleasure and amusement, for which these unintelligent millions were designed. The child is highly delighted with the ability of speaking, without knowing the use of language. This is proved by his incessant repetition of words, or sentences, which to him have no meaning. The same gratification is obvious in his first successful attempts to walk. But it is not for youth only that God has provided faculties and sources of enjoyment. While the aged are repeating the trifling incidents of past life, or dozing on their couches, the youth are following the chase, or inspired with hope and ardor, pursue the enterprises of life.

But when we add to the argument, that we not only see innumerable creatures in the enjoyment of animal happiness, but hear the same report from other sections of creation, we have a still more grand and adorable view of the goodness of God! It is goodness illimitable! What are pleasurable objects of vision? What of taste? What

is it that falls with harmony and melody on the ear? What are those pleasing sensations awakened by the rose, the pineapple, and the spice? What the melting of the peach on the tongue? Are not the constitution of the senses, and the objects of their gratification, so many witnesses that God is good, and his tender mercies are over all his works? Nothing has yet been said respecting the moral and intellectual faculties of man: the one calculated to investigate his works, and unfold the mysteries of Deity; and the other to embrace his character, and enjoy his smiles. These faculties alone are sufficient to prove the goodness of God. If the author of all things did not intend to render his creatures happy, he has made a very great mistake, for in this world, happiness by far exceeds misery.

When God created the human species, he intended either their happiness, or misery, or he was indifferent about it. If he had intended our misery, he would have made every sense a pain to us, and placed us amidst objects offensive and distressing. Every thing we should taste would be bitter, every thing we should see, deformed and loathsome; every touch, would find a sting; and every sound would be discord. If he were indifferent about our happiness or misery, we must attribute to our good fortune, a word destitute of sense or science, both the capacity of our senses to receive pleasure, and the supply of external objects, fitted to produce happiness.

But this is too much to be attributed to accident. Here we are brought back to our former conclusion, that contrivance proves design, and that the predominant ten-

dency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer.

The first proposition which was laid down in support of the goodness of God, was, that almost universally, that is, in a great majority of instances, in which contrivance is discoverable, the design of the contrivance is beneficial.

I here add another argument in support of divine goodness. God has given pleasure to animal sensation, beyond what was necessary for any other purpose than that of pleasure, when the purpose, so far as was necessary to subsistence merely, might have been effected by painful operations. Now the bestowing of those faculties on animals, which are necessary to their existence and support only, does not prove the Creator to be either benevolent, or malevolent. But when we find other properties added for the express purpose of uniting happiness with utility, this additional, pleasurable quality, proves the design was good. There is a felicitous adaptation of the organ to the object, as every one must have experienced, in receiving palatable and nutritious food. And when we take into view all the different tastes of animals, their relish for such qualities of food as their constitutions require, and the pleasure of taste which pervades the whole family of animal creation, from the exquisite sensibility of man, down to the lowest forms of animal existence,—there certainly is a language, which speaks volumes in vindication of the goodness of the Creator. Had he been a malevolent being, he might, and unquestionably would have diffused the racking elements of his nature through his whole empire. But in-

stead of this, we see almost all the animal creation, pursuing, without interference or infringement, the happiness for which they were designed. The humming insect, the warbling songster, the grazing flocks and herds, and man with a more exquisite organic existence, enjoy a pleasure above what is necessary for their subsistence. Their instinctive foresight, their self-defence, their sportive gambols, and pleasurable emotions, declare that he who made them, is good. It is, as I before said, almost impossible to do justice to the evidence of the divine goodness, drawn from the intellectual, and moral nature of man. Our views are so much regulated by the light of revelation, and the influence of the gospel on this subject, that it is difficult to draw the line between natural and revealed truth. But as this subject will be resumed in my subsequent discourses, I will omit it for the present.

God has endowed man with faculties, capable of discovering and appreciating the excellence of his character. But lest my candor should be called in question, I must notice some objections to the goodness of God. The two cases which require the most particular notice, are the venomous, and voracious animals. These properties in animals, must be referred to design, because their animal structure, their instinct, and adaptation, are such as prove, that they were intended for poisonous, and voracious animals. Why the fangs of vipers, the stings of wasps and scorpions? And why the talons and beaks of birds of prey? Why the structure of the shark's mouth, the spider's web, and the numberless weapons of offence, belonging to different tribes of animal insects. We cannot remove the difficulty, by saying these de-

structive properties were not intended. The most candid solution is, that though these evils exist, they exist to a small extent only, and through the imperfection, and limited nature of our powers, we cannot see the design in all its bearings. When viewed in connexion with other things, they may be needful provisions. As far as the animals and insects possessing these faculties, are concerned, the faculty complained of is good. They subserve a very valuable purpose to them, the purpose of sustenance and self-defence. The venomous qualities of a few serpents, serve as a defence to the whole race; and the places where these evils exist to the greatest extent, are regions, to which men are driven by their folly, or wickedness, while the more fertile regions of the earth, are deserted and left unmolested. The territory of the beasts is invaded, and then the defence they make is complained of: the case then of venomous beasts stands thus: the faculty is good to those to whom it is given; it is an evil of small extent, and may answer a thousand valuable ends of which we are ignorant.

And on the subject of preying beasts and birds, I would say, that their desire for animal food, and the capacities they possess for obtaining and digesting it, are kind endowments bestowed on them. The pursuit of their prey forms their pleasure, and their employment. The way in which all animals come to their end, is by acute disease, and violence. Animals generally live but a short time: they have no provisions for lingering disease; and the loss of life is to them, a trifling evil. And besides, we have learned by the help of the microscope, that almost the whole of our food is possessed of a low de-

gree of animate nature. Were our organs of sight a little more acute, we should discover in the food and vegetables we eat, a life and motion, which would induce us to believe, that we are ourselves almost carnivorous and voracious. It is said that every drop of water we drink, contains several thousand animalculæ. Besides, it is obvious that the God of nature intended some animals as sustenance for others, from the rich profusion and superabundance in which they exist. Another thought is, that these animals exist in greatest numbers where they are the least annoyance to man, and most needed by those for whom they were intended. And if there were no way to destroy these animals, the provisions of nature would not be sufficient to support them. So that the goodness of God is conspicuous in the provision for their dissolution.

On the goodness of God as displayed in the structure of the human mind, I can only say, there are internal and pleasurable emotions, which cannot be attributed to either of the five senses. Many of these pleasures are indefinable: the sportsman and the fisherman have pleasure, but they know not in what that pleasure consists. This pleasure does not belong to the five senses. There is a mental pleasure arising from the contemplation of things new, great, or beautiful, attended with no pain to counterbalance it. Man has more understanding than is necessary for preservation. The pleasure of choosing and prosecuting is a source of enjoyment. Now the moral and intellectual powers of man, show that the Maker of them, made something more than necessary provisions for human existence, and that their contrivance is declarative of the goodness of their author.

On the subject of the introduction of moral evil, I have only to say, that it devolves upon the objector to show, that its ultimate results will not be illustrative of the divine benevolence. How far could it be arrested without an interference with a greater good? Besides, moral evil arises from a derangement of the original constitution of man; and cannot be the result of natural contrivance. But all its effects and bearings on the great plan, will finally show, that the wisdom of God is as much superior to that of man, as his goodness. As to bodily pain, when considered in itself, it may be called an imperfection of nature. But it may be justly doubted, whether this is not, on the whole, a blessing. In the first place it should be remembered, that pleasure greatly counterbalances pain. *And an occasional and moderate degree of pain, is more than compensated by the greater degree of happiness which succeeds. It makes us cautious of danger; and leads the mind to useful and virtuous reflection. Beside the primary intention of the maker was not principally to inflict pain. A tooth was made to masticate and not to ache. The body was made to enjoy and not to suffer. And pain is often the consequence of transgression; and this gives us proper views of justice and retribution. All these imperfections, may yet, in the progress and consummation of the Creator's works, prove to be perfections; and these difficulties illustrate the wisdom and complication of the works of that God who is infinite in goodness. The result of the whole investigation, is, that the contrivance of this world proves the goodness of its author,—his disposition to make his creatures happy.

I infer from this subject that God ought to be loved. Man is the prince of this creation. It was intended for his use, and subjected to his control. We are the only beings capable of tracing our own existence, and that of others around us to their proper origin, and of understanding their proper uses. And as man is the highest intelligent, endued with the noblest powers, and designed for the noblest ends, so he should assume a character, the most amiable and exalted. And to whom can he commit his soul with more safety, than to him who has made so many provisions for his happiness; and multiplied the evidences of his love to him. If there is any thing on earth lovely in your view, why should not He engross your affections from whom all loveliness is derived? It is unkind in man to divert the current of everlasting goodness that flows down to him. Then I beseech you, my dear hearers, in gratitude and love, to attribute every thrill of joy, and every gush of pleasurable emotion, to the great and good Author of your being. O love the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. O love the Lord, for he is good; and his tender mercies are over all the works of his hand. May none of us fall beneath the weight of abused and incensed goodness; but as we are clothed in love, may we be sanctified by grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON III.

INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

2d TIMOTHY, 3, 16.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

It is not my object in this sermon to inquire into different kinds of inspiration ; whether there is an inspiration of superintendency, in which the mind of the inspired writer is left to the use of all his resources of knowledge, language and style, but is guarded against wrong communications ; or whether there is an inspiration of elevation, in which the mind of the writer is raised supernaturally, and forms conceptions and utters language, beyond the efforts of natural genius, or ordinary excitement ; or whether there is an inspiration of suggestion, in which the writer was furnished with thoughts and language, which he could not have obtained without special aid. Whether these, or the more simple definition of inspiration, be correct, namely, that the Holy Spirit dictated to the minds of the inspired penmen, all the sentiments they have expressed, and the words in which they have expressed them, I shall not now attempt to determine. I mean by the inspiration of the scriptures, that the holy men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

I have before me a Volume, containing sixty-six books, which I declare to be the inspired revelation of God.

And it contains every thing necessary for our faith and practice. This is the only true and inspired record that God has given to his creatures. The Apochryphal writings I condemn as spurious, because part of them are false, and part of them are absurd, and they were never admitted into the canonical scriptures. Some of the events recorded in them are true; and the same may be said of profane history, and of many other writings. A record must be something more than true to be inspired; it must bear the sanction of God.

I have asserted, that the scriptures are inspired. This no man is bound to believe, unless it can be proved. To establish the truth of the Bible, I must prove its authenticity and inspiration.

1. I am to prove the authenticity of the scriptures. God might have made a revelation of his will to his creatures; and that revelation might have been interpolated, and mixed with human productions. That this is not the case with our present volume of divine truth, is evident from several considerations. If these books were not the very writings which they claim to be, and if they were not written by the very authors whose names they bear, and who were inspired of God to write them, then their authenticity fails. The scriptures were early collated into a volume. The ancient scriptures were approved by the Jewish Sanhedrim, and read in the synagogues from sabbath to sabbath. There was a catalogue of them composed and circulated universally; and that catalogue embraced all that are found in our present volume, and no more. Early commentaries were written on the

sacred text ; and they were extensively quoted both by religious, and profane writers ; and their genuineness was acknowledged by the friends and enemies of christianity. The same proof may be adduced in support of the authenticity of the New Testament. Ignatius, who lived forty years after the ascension of Christ, speaks of the gospel as sacred writings. Eighty years after this, Clement of Alexandria, and after him a long list from Eusebius down to Dioclesian, speak of this volume by different names : some calling it the gospel, some the sacred scriptures ; and others the divine writings. Polycarp calls them the holy scriptures, and oracles of the Lord. Justin Martyr calls them gospels ; Dionysius, scriptures of the Lord ; and Iræneus, divine scriptures, divine oracles, scriptures of the Lord, and evangelical and apostolical writings. I might furnish you with a long series of quotations, and a catalogue of names of those who read and expounded the scriptures in public. And I might furnish you with a list of the names of commentators, who, from the first to the ninth century, made compilations, and compared scripture with scripture, and translated the bible into several languages. Now if these books were not an authentic record, why were they not challenged by that host of learned and able opposers of the christian church ? Why did they not doubt whether any such men lived, or whether any such events transpired ? Their own writings prove that they were disposed to overthrow christianity. And if the bible were not what it claimed to be, it would have been the easiest thing possible to overthrow it, by denying its authenticity. A man must be destitute of common candor to

doubt whether this be precisely the same book that existed in the days of the apostles, and in the time of Ignatius ; for we have the ancient writings, and might collect from them almost the whole scriptures. You might as well doubt the existence of the Roman Empire, or the Grecian Republic, as to doubt whether we have the same religion that the apostles and primitive christians, labored, and suffered and died to establish. They gave up their former habits, pursuits and sentiments, and without the compulsion of civil power, or the hope of temporal gain, experienced a renovation of faith and conduct. It is therefore evident that we have precisely the same book, that has for ages been admitted as an authentic record, by the friends and enemies of christianity. I pass now to the proof of the inspiration of the scriptures.

That those who wrote the scriptures did declare themselves moved by the Holy Ghost to utter the declarations which they made, follows by consequence, if they are an authentic record. The writings themselves claim the faith of mankind in their divine authority to teach.

Now if the writers were not inspired, they were false, and by consequence base men. And what motive could wicked men have in propagating truths subversive of wickedness. They have denounced the severest judgments against impostors and deceivers. It is almost impossible, and totally incredible, that bad men should be engaged so deeply in a good cause. It is still more remarkable that wicked men should persecute and slay the heroes of their own party. And if the friends of this religion were impostors and deceivers, then its founder, the Lord Jesus Christ, was the basest of them all ; and

this is an aspersion at which the feelings of a wretch should recoil.

And that the revelation of the bible is supernatural and divine, is evident from the consideration, that the doctrines which the inspired men taught, are beyond the ability of the known principles and powers of the human mind to discover. No natural enthusiasm, nor flights of imagination, could have unfolded those subjects which the scriptures have done. We must have recourse to some method to account for the production which is before us ; and if we can account for it in no other way, than that in which the writers of this volume have done, we are compelled to admit their testimony.

An inspired writer does not cease to be a man, nor does he cease to think, and reason, and make use of the knowledge which he possesses ; but every word he utters, on the subject which he is inspired to write, is under the guidance and influence of the Holy Ghost. So that we are perfectly safe in receiving it, and God is answerable for its truth. The following are some of the evidences of the inspiration of the bible.

This book reveals God worthy of himself. It reveals just such a being as we discover from the book of nature. Such is the blindness and depravity of man, as to make a revelation necessary ; and we should expect that the same goodness which had provided for our happiness, in the constitution and arrangements of nature, would pity our dark and bewildered state, and write in more legible characters the truths which depravity had obliterated. It confirms the instructions of nature, and makes further

discoveries of the perfections of the same Being. This book represents God as possessed of the most exalted perfections, and unsullied excellence. It would be no derogation from the excellence of the divine character to attribute this book to him. Nothing can be more deserving of praise, and nothing more commanding of influence, than that character which the bible ascribes to him. God is here represented as the parent of the human family ; the sovereign and judge of his people ; the friend of virtue, and the enemy of vice. He claims no attribute, or prerogative to which his character does not entitle him, and the exercise of which, any loyal subject would regret.

God is represented worthy of himself.

2. This book gives man his true character. Man is a being of whom we know much ; and are, therefore, capable of judging of the justice or injustice of every description given of his character. This book gives us a history of man from his creation, and of all the passions and principles, which have operated in forming his sentiments, and directing his conduct. Now every one who will faithfully examine the delineations of the scriptures, will find a thousand things said about the affections and the heart, which he has never developed to his dearest friends. And that moral nature which works within will convince us, that we are the very beings to whom this book was directed. If there were one false statement, one unjust delineation there to be found, we could detect it. But it has locked the lips of a world in silence. And He who has there described man, is infinite in knowledge, for there are truths revealed in the scriptures,

which were never seen by mortal eye, and which none but the searcher of hearts, could ever have revealed. And can any doubt from whom that book came, which tells them truths which their own conscience approves ? There we see man as he has appeared in every generation, and as he will appear when time shall be no longer. I know the author of this book is true, and I know He is omniscient.

3. I prove the inspiration of the scriptures, by the miracles which have been wrought in confirmation of their truth. I give no credence at all to those pretended visions of impostors, and to the forgeries of fabulous religion. A miracle, which suspends, or counteracts the laws of nature, must be wrought in the open light of day, and in the presence of a sufficient number of witnesses ; like that which was performed by Moses, in dividing the waters of the red sea, and in smiting the rock. Like that of Joshua in the passage of Jordan, and stopping the sun in his course, until the enemies of Israel were subdued. Or like those performed by Christ, in turning the water into wine, calming the tumultuous sea, and feeding thousands who sought his instructions, with a few loaves and fishes. Or like that which was wrought by Paul, when he shook the venomous serpent from his hand.

Such miracles as these prove that he who performed them, received authority from God to teach and command obedience. Such were the circumstances of these miracles, that it would require more credulity to believe them impostures, than to believe them genuine. When the character of a prophet, or of an inspired writer is once established, his instructions are clothed in divine

authority. It is nothing less than God speaking to his creatures. Now I say, false prophets and false teachers never wrought miracles. There were always dark and suspicious circumstances about their pretended miracles. They were deceptions and frauds. Not a pretended miracle can be pointed out, which was any thing more than a mere unsuccessful attempt at imitation. Where have these pretensors come forward, and in the open light of day, in presence of thousands, performed miracles? No man that does good can speak lightly of Christ. God did authorize and empower the inspired writers to perform miracles, which they never could have done, without the favor and assistance of God. And God never did lend his aid in sanction of any unreal and false religion. That book then must be from God which bears the impress of his own seal.

4. I prove the inspiration of the scriptures from prophecy. No one can infallibly predict a future event, without a knowledge of all the operations in nature, and the arrangements in providence, on which the fulfilment of that prediction depends. All the circumstances and means which have any relation to the event spoken of, must be taken into consideration. Now man cannot predict with certainty, the events of a year, or month, or week, or day. He may form some opinion respecting some future events, from the knowledge he has of the laws of nature; but these laws have no such uniformity as to warrant a great degree of assurance. And every person who pretends to prophecy from his own sources of knowledge, or his whimsical enthusiasm, impiously assumes the prerogative of Deity; and generally suffers

in this life, the opprobrium, which his temerity deserves. And he will be unable at the day of judgment, to justify his rashness. Whosoever, therefore, predicts an event which is beyond the ken of man, and which takes place according to the prediction, is entitled to the belief, that he has had a communication from God ; and has had access to the counsels of Him who declares the end from the beginning ; and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. The inspired writers did predict events : and these events have transpired as they were predicted. The birth of Cyrus was predicted, and his name given him, one hundred and eighty years before he was born. The captivity of the Jews in Babylon, was predicted, long before they were driven into captivity. The birth, life, sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ, were predicted, and all the minute circumstances of his illustrious character were foretold : and they took place, as it may be proved, by history both sacred and profane, at the time and in the manner they were predicted. The destruction of Jerusalem, the dissolution of the civil and religious polity of the Jewish nation, as well as the dispersion, and distinct existence of that nation, were all delivered in prophecy. And the Jews are a living testimony to the truth of these declarations at the present day. As they could not possess omniscience, God must have made communications to them, and there is no reason to doubt, that those communications were made at the time, and in the manner, that they have declared. And as those prophecies have been long fulfilling, and some of them before our eyes, we

are inexcusable, if they do not admit the authenticity and inspiration of the book which contains them.

5. I prove the inspiration of the scriptures, from their tendency to promote morality and religion. No volume of writings was ever attended with such happy and powerful effects, in renovating the human heart, and forming the human character, as this. Unaided by wealth, or by the power or patronage of the great, it has extended its influence through the earth, and, by its institutions and sanctions, has reclaimed multitudes from sin, and given them eminence in virtue. The effects of the scriptures on the morality and religion of mankind, can be accounted for in no other manner, than by supposing God has ordained them as a means in the hand of the Spirit, to produce happy and surprising effects on the moral condition and prospects of the world. God has clothed the truths of this book in efficacy, which he would not have done, had it not been a revelation of his will.

God would not thus bless the works of forgery and imposition. No man that ever adopted this book for his guide and counsellor, has lived an immoral life. It purifies the heart, and sanctifies the life. It uniformly promotes happiness; and gives to the pious, rational hopes of eternal blessedness. Not a disquieting vice, nor a jarring principle of our nature, escapes detection and exposure. It commends and rewards every degree of piety; and condemns and punishes every degree of sin. The tendency of the scriptures, and the actual effects of them, are an argument in favour of their inspiration.

6. The unexampled spread of the scriptures, under the most embarrassing circumstances, is another argument

in support of their divine inspiration. The Bible has been burnt more frequently than any other book ; yes, more frequently than all other books, yet it has spread, with a rapidity which has astonished the atheist, and confounded the infidel.

Though the grand enemy of this sacred volume, has in various ages and countries, employed the most brilliant talents, and the most learned pens, to disprove and decry its precious truths ; and though infidel sentiments have been accommodated to the age and capacity of all, from the illiterate child, up to the adept in the arts and sciences, yet the Bible has been, and is now swiftly spreading its blessed influence, in face of all the opposition of the united powers of darkness. The laudable and increasing effects which are made at the present day, to supply every family in christendom with a copy of the Holy Scriptures, and to translate them into the various languages of the earth, afford lucid proof, that the bible will ere long, have free course, run and be glorified. There are other arguments, too numerous to receive any considerable degree of attention in this work. The brevity and fulness of the scriptures ; the agreement of the writers among themselves, all bearing testimony to the same facts, or similar ones ; the candor of the writers in recording their own faults, and writing their own confessions ; the diversity of style ; the different manner of reasoning to come to the same conclusions, are evidence of the divine inspiration of the scriptures. The inspired writers discover no appearance of concert, or of attempts to deceive ; and the candid mind cannot indulge such suspicion respecting them. Add to these testimonies

the convictions of the pious in all ages of the world, and that conviction which follows every man who is conversant with his Bible,—and the evidence is overwhelming, that this is the very Bible, which the Lord has declared, by the mouth of the prophets, and the apostles, and that it is true ;—all true, excellent, and inspired. It is to be received with a degree of confidence, which ought to be placed in no other production. Our faith in the inspiration of the Bible is increased when we reflect, that those who lived in the countries, and at the time the events recorded took place, never presumed to question the authenticity and inspiration of this book. And that those who have assailed the bible in subsequent ages, have never conducted a candid argument against it ; but have indulged in a few low and uncandid sophistries.

The inspiration of the scriptures, then, is established.

1. I infer from this subject, that we are bound to exercise gratitude to God. The instructions of nature are so faint and illegible, that we should never have known our characters, or duties, or our dangers. We should never have known a single truth concerning the plan of salvation ; nor that life was attainable. We should never have known the high and virtuous feelings, which we ought to exercise towards God and his creatures, without this blessed book. What few and feeble instructions there were on the face of nature, were incapable of being understood through the blindness of human depravity. The Bible then is one entire expression of the goodness and compassion of God to man. It is a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path. And we ought most gratefully

to hail it, as the kind directory of a heavenly Parent, to guide us to life.

2. I infer, that this book is the only rule of faith and practice. We must believe all its truths and doctrines; we must practice all its commands, and abstain from all its prohibitions. By this rule, we are to try our own faith, and feelings, and actions, renouncing as unworthy of christian belief, all testimony brought from other sources, except that of corroboration. So far as they go to illustrate and confirm the truths contained in the bible, so far we are at liberty to believe them, and no farther. We should pity, and pray for those who trust in another gospel, and adopt the inventions, and fanciful theories of men, but are never to follow their pernicious ways, by whom the way of truth is evil spoken of. This book should regulate all our affections, correct all our views, and form our characters.

3. The scriptures should be studied. Every man and every child that can read, should be furnished with a copy, and should daily and studiously examine its contents. This is not only the fountain of light, but it is also the fountain of life. It contains treasures of everlasting love, and exhaustless wealth. They need the more study, because the corruption of the human heart renders them unpalatable. This is the reason so few understand them; so many pervert them; and such a vast majority of the world exchange them for the opinions of men. There are no attainments in this world so valuable as the knowledge of the bible. None therefore, demand more study and attention.

The last inference which I adduce from the authenticity and inspiration of the scriptures, is, that they should be received in faith. God has given you, my hearers, a true record. There is nothing false in the bible. Then do not come to this book, and modify and mutilate its precepts. God has revealed just truth enough ; and we must receive it, just as it reads. If it interferes with other sentiments which we have embraced, we should lay them aside as false and erroneous, and believe the revelation of God. If you attempt to expound the scriptures, be cautious that you do not adulterate their meaning to make it accord with some other imaginary notion, which you have embraced. God has never asked us what he should reveal ; nor does he permit us to dictate him. Then let us all receive this book without hesitation, or doubt ; and obey its commands, fear its denunciations and trust its promises. And O may the light which beams from these sacred pages, conduct us all to heaven, where faith will be swallowed up in sight, and we shall see and enjoy God, without a medium or a cloud.

Open this sacred volume—and you may at any time, walk in the garden with Adam ; sit in the ark with Noah ; witness the faith, and share the hospitality of Abraham ; stand on Pisgah's eminence, and view the promised land with Moses ; drop the sympathetic tear over the complicated sufferings of Job ; command the fidelity, and admire the godly courage of Daniel ; rise with the sublimity of Isaiah ; stand on the mount of transfiguration, and exult in the overpowering charms of the God incarnate ; blush at the bloody and direful scene of calvary ; behold the blushing sun, the bursting graves, the rising saints,

the quaking earth ; and the triumphant rising, and glorious ascension of the Son of God ! Nay more.—Open this volume, and you may witness the torments of Dives in hell, and the ineffable felicity of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.

SERMON IV.

NATURAL ATTRIBUTES.

EXODUS 3, 14.

And God said unto Moses, I am that I am.

Having established the authenticity and inspiration of the scriptures, I shall now make use of them in pursuing my investigation. I must here remark, that there is a distinction between attributes, perfections and prerogatives. I have before said, that an attribute is a faculty or quality in God, which is discovered by its effects or operations. A perfection designates the quality of an attribute. If an attribute is unimproveable, excellent and infinite, it is a perfection. A prerogative is a right with which a person is invested by his attributes or perfections. When we see an incomprehensible display of power, we say the cause must be omnipotent, because no effect can exceed the cause: for the moment the effect exceeds the cause, it ceases to be effect. We say the sun is the cause of light and heat, because these are effects of his rays. We say every piece of mechanism, and every monument of architecture, are the effects of human ingenuity, because these are the known productions of such ingenuity. We say the heart of man is depraved, because his moral conduct proves his heart to be the source of moral corruption. Thus we reason

from effect to cause. Proceeding on this principle, we classify the attributes of God, because we classify his operations.

The sovereignty of God, or the government which he exercises over his works, is not an attribute, nor a perfection, but a prerogative. It is a right with which his attributes and perfections have invested him. It is reasonable and expedient, that he have the control of his works, because his property in his creatures, and the qualifications he possesses, render him the only desirable and safe being to rule.

I have said we classify the attributes of God. We divide them into natural and moral, or communicable and incommunicable attributes. His natural attributes are those which, considered in themselves, are neither amiable nor unamiable ; and which render him the object neither of aversion nor complacency. There is in omnipotence, in itself considered, nothing either lovely or unlovely ; nothing either desirable or undesirable. If we connect omnipotence with a moral quality, it immediately becomes a lovely, or a dreadful attribute. Omnipotence under the control of a malevolent disposition, would spread dismay and consternation through the earth ; and under the control of a benevolent disposition, would spread joy and gladness. But a natural attribute, disconnected and alone, is neither lovely nor unlovely. Now the moral attributes of God, are those qualities which render him lovely and desirable ; an object of confidence and delight. They are the affections of Deity, which he has exercised in the provisions which he has

made for the happiness of his creatures. The reason that they are called communicable, is, that some of these attributes may have striking resemblances in his creatures. The love, mercy and compassion of holy beings, are qualities which resemble the same disposition in God, though in him they are infinite. Most of his communicable attributes are moral. His incommunicable attributes have no resemblance in the works of his hand, such as uncreated existence, self-existence, and independence. There is nothing in man which bears the least similitude to these attributes. It is as certain that they are incommunicable, as it is that he cannot create an uncreated being.

It is obvious that attribute is an arbitrary term; for, as I have frequently remarked, that our knowledge of an attribute is obtained by the operations of the Divine Being, there may be as many attributes as there are operations. The scriptures, however, have furnished us with a list of these attributes.

There are twelve divine attributes; seven natural, and five moral. His natural attributes are, self-existence, eternity of existence, immutability, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and wisdom.

Self-existence is an underived, uncreated, and independent existence; an existence not received from another being: and it is incapable of change, increase or diminution. Rev. 11. 17. which art, and wast, and art to come.

Eternity of existence is an existence without commencement and without termination. Deut. 33. 27. The

eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, amen. The immutability of God is the unchangeableness of his nature, his attributes and his purposes. Change would imply imperfection in knowledge, wisdom, or power, and would deny an existence of necessity. If this is a world which he made and governs, he foresaw every event and every change which would take place in it. None can teach him, and none can disappoint him. It is true, that known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world, and he can declare the end from the beginning. There can be no change in his mind, in his intentions or designs. Malachi 3. 6. I am the Lord, I change not. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; James 1. 17. God then is immutable in his nature and designs. God is immoveable amidst the endless changes which are taking place in his creatures, and in the works of his hand. Not all the apparent convulsions and disorders abroad, can produce a change in the designs and heart of Deity.

The omnipotence of God, as I have before explained it, is his ability to accomplish all things possible and desirable. When it is said God cannot do impossibilities, it is meant that he has no inclination to do wrong, and is prohibited by the laws of his attributes, and not by any want of power. He cannot lie, because he never desired nor designed to do it. He cannot do any injustice to his creatures, because he is never influenced by any dispo-

sition but a regard to the general good. This inability is not a natural but a moral one. He has power sufficient to consummate the wretchedness of every intelligent he ever created ; but his moral attributes guard him against the least infringement on the rights and happiness of the great whole. Omnipotence is ability to do all things consistent with his perfections. It is ability to work with or without means. Rev. 1. 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. Rev. 4. 8. They rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. The evidence of his omnipotence is conspicuous in every object which meets the eye, and in every emotion which works within the human mind.

Creative power, which gives existence without materials or means is the highest conceivable effort of omnipotence. He spake, and it was done. He said, let there be light, and there was light. By him were all things made ; and without him was not any thing made that was made. The same omnipotence upholds all things : God has never abandoned a work which he has undertaken.

Omniscience is an attribute inseparably connected with the other divine perfections. It is a knowledge of all things past, present, and future. A perfect and infallible knowledge of every thing which ever has transpired, does now, or ever will transpire. Omniscience is a more comprehensive term than foreknowledge. Foreknowledge is a knowledge of future events only, while omnis-

science has no restrictions. If God is omniscient, he knows all things. He knows every minute event and change which will ever take place, in the progress and consummation of his plans of government. To suppose that he has made a world material, intellectual and moral, and that he sustains and governs it, and yet is ignorant of its operations and final results, is a puerile sentiment. John. 3, 2. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. Heb. 4. 13. But all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. The transactions of ages past, and ages to come, are in full view before him, and his eye beholds with a single glance, all the plans and purposes of his creatures, and all the secret emotions and motives of their hearts. There is no place where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves. If God does not possess this knowledge how can he judge the world in righteousness ?

On the day of judgment, not the most secret virtuous emotion of a pious heart will pass unrewarded, nor the most specious inscrutable thought of a sinful heart, will escape merited punishment. O, there will then be an exposure of cavillers at sin, and of that spirit of practical atheism, which views crime as odious principally because it is exposed to human view. There is an astonishing perverseness in the feelings of that man who is regulated by the opinions of his fellow creatures, and not by a sense of the divine omniscience. To a well regulated and consistent heart, the omniscience of God is a most powerful restraint. Thou God seest me, is an impression which the good man always carries with him. Eve-

ry one should say with David, O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

The omnipresence of God is his all pervading being. He exists a conscious, and voluntary being, at the same time in every place and in every world, in heaven, earth and hell. There is no sequestered retreat, nor dark and deep concealment where God is not with us, He stands present, the spectator of every scene that is acted on the earth. He is in the counsel chambers of nations, in the assemblies of his saints, around the domestic fire, and embraced within the walls of every designing and unhallowed association, beholding the evil and the good. God is present with his church, and his people in every cell of suffering, in every closet of secrecy, and around the bed of every dying christian. Psalms, 139. 8. If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there—If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. There is no locality in the divine presence. Men and angels and archangels, and sainted spirits, are local in their nature, residence and capacities. They can exist in one place only at the same time. A change of situation produces absence of being. But it is not so with God. His presence must

be as extensive as his agency. He cannot be present to support and govern, and yet absent in person. For it is a self-evident proposition, that where a being is, he must exist. God then is omnipresent : he exists in all beings and all places at the same time.

The infinite wisdom of God is his ability to form the best designs, and to devise the best means for their accomplishment. God has therefore formed the best of all conceivable designs ; and devised the best of all conceivable means for accomplishing them. Man is often unsuccessful in his attempts to accomplish his plans, because his wisdom is limited and fallible ; and there are many remote and inscrutable causes beyond his comprehension and control. In God wisdom is illimitable and infallible ; for the means he ordains, never fail of producing the effects which he designs. Psalm 147. 5 Great is our Lord, and of great power ; his understanding is infinite. Speaking of the works of God, the Psalmist says in Psalm 104. 24. In wisdom hast thou made them all. Again, says the great Apostle to the Gentiles O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ; how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.

I have now completed my expositions and proof of the natural attributes of God. God is self-existent, eternal immutable, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and infinite in wisdom. These attributes are natural and incommunicable, and they do not prove God to be either desirable, or undesirable, either amiable or unamiable

If he is self-existent, he can neither fear nor experience any interruption from any source. He exists nei

ther by the will, power, nor consent of any other being. He can never be influenced by superior intelligences, for there are none. It is preposterous to suppose he will make counsellors of his weak and dependent creatures, whose wisdom and power compared with his, do not bear the proportion, even of an atom to a globe. He stands unmoved, untaught, uninfluenced, amidst the tossing elements of worlds : for he is God, and there is none else.

If God is eternal, what can his creatures, who are of yesterday, and who have a derived and dependent existence do, but revere him who is from everlasting to everlasting. What but humility becomes us, when we count ages on ages, until we are lost in the calculation, and drowned in the eternity of divine existence. There never was a time when he commenced his existence ; and there never will be a time when it will terminate. God was as perfect in his nature and designs, in his faculties and felicity, millions of ages ago, as he will be millions of ages hence. If God is unchangeable, who can doubt the accomplishment of his designs, the fulfilment of his promises, and the stability of the christian's hope. If he were changeable, there would be no safety in all his vast dominions. His caprice might build an edifice, and his caprice might dash it to atoms. Though you might lie down in slumbers enjoying the friendship of your God, yet you might awake encircled in his wrath. These would be the calamities of a changeable God. There would be no ground for the confidence of his creatures. All would be doubt and uncertainty through his extended dominions. But now his immutability is a broad and

immovable basis, on which the hopes of his creatures may rest. He can never change. He can never abandon a work which he has undertaken. All the reasons which could be brought forward for abandoning his undertaking, were actually before him, and operated as powerfully as they could, before he commenced the work. He has never uttered a threatening which he will retract, nor made a promise which he will not fulfil. Come ye sons of men, and put your trust beneath the shadow of his wings, and rest in the confidence of him who never changes.

God assigns it as a reason why he would not cast off Israel, that he had once loved them. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness have I drawn thee. I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. If God is almighty who can infringe on his prerogatives, or prevent the accomplishment of his plans? What is the arm of persecution? What the plots and machinations of his enemies? What is fallible man in the hand of omnipotence? There should not be a glimmering of hope in the heart of that man who is under the frowns and denunciations of an omnipotent God. Nor should there be a trembling nerve in all the sacramental host of God's elect, who are bought with blood, and sealed with oaths and promises. If God is omnipotent, he is able to punish and reward. And why should his enemies triumph, as though God had no ability to punish and to destroy. And why should his friends indulge in pensiveness and despondency, as though God were unable to gratify the desires of his heart, and the desires of his friends? No: if every sanc-

tuary were converted into a seat of corruption, and melted down in flames ;—if the fire of persecution were kindled in every district of the earth, and our prisons were filled to overflowing, with helpless and innocent sufferers, or the church were driven to the caves of the mountain, I would not then believe that the heart of God was changed, or his arm weakened. Leaning on the omnipotence of his power, I would wait in assured expectation, of a developement which would reflect honor on his wisdom, grace, and glory. I can never believe, that the affections of God will be ungratified, while he is omnipotent. If God is omniscient, why should bold presumers dare to hope for concealment or escape ? He knows their conduct ; he has seen it all. However trifling you may deem the crimes which you have committed, or however thick the covering which hides them may be, God will reveal them in the day of decision. You may elude the scrutiny of man ; for he is ignorant. But you cannot evade the piercing eye of Omniscience.

He counts the volitions of our hearts. He hears the respirations of our affections. Then fear not, ye innocent sufferers, God knows it all. Have your motives been misrepresented ; your counsels and kindness despised ? Have you suffered while the guilty have escaped ? The omniscient God they cannot deceive. The perjury of witnesses, and the slander of enemies, are understood. God will be just in his awards. In view of the final retribution, you should exercise no solicitude. You will need no eloquence, but the eloquence of innocence ; and no advocate but the Saviour. Omniscience blasts the hope

of dissemblers, and leaves no ground for disquietude in the friends of Christ. You need not tell God your sufferings, your necessities nor your joys. He is omniscient.

If God is omnipresent, he surrounds the path of his enemies and his friends. Therefore the hopes of the former are groundless, and the fears of the latter are vain. He will go with his enemies down to darkness, and fix their just and irreversible doom. He will be with his friends in trial, affliction, and in the valley and shadow of death, and accompany them to mansions of blessedness.

If he is infinite in wisdom, none can improve his plans, or baffle his skill. Success will attend his way, victory mark his course, and triumph crown the scene. For the weakness of God is stronger than man, and the foolishness of God is wiser than man.

SERMON V.

MORAL ATTRIBUTES.

1 JOHN 4. 16. God is love.

Having discussed the subject of the natural attributes of God, I proceed to an examination of his moral attributes. By moral attributes, I mean the dispositions affections, or communicable qualities of his nature; or, in other words, such dispositions as God can produce in his creatures. He can give them a resemblance to himself. It might be said that his natural attributes are as communicable as his moral ones. It is true, there is a resemblance between existence and self-existence, and between power and omnipotence; but the resemblance is very faint and distant, and it is not a resemblance which will ever increase. Man will ever be just as dependent as he now is. But it is not so with the communicable or moral attributes of God. Those holy dispositions and tempers which God imparts to his creatures, will be ever increasing. The natural attributes of God are referrible to no law, and to no principle of action; whereas his moral attributes form a law of his nature, and have established the laws by which his moral creatures should be governed. This law is written on their natures, and more clearly revealed in the scriptures. We proceed to the classification of his moral attributes, considering an attribute as an operation, or mode of developing divine

dispositions. When the text says, God is love, I do not understand it to mean, that there is something lovely merely in God ; nor that love is an attribute simply ; but that love is the sum of all his moral perfections. I said in my last sermon, that God has twelve attributes ; seven natural, and five moral attributes. This has been the usual arrangement. This classification, you will perceive, is arbitrary. The moral attributes of God, are holiness, goodness, mercy, justice and truth.

The holiness of God is his moral purity. This purity is infinite in extent. It is the entire absence of all impurity in desires or designs ; and the presence of spotless love. Holiness is love itself, and may be properly considered as embracing all his other moral attributes. When we learn that God is entirely destitute of sin, and that his affections never swerve for a moment from the general interests of the universe, and that perfect, unabating love ever reigns in his bosom, it may well be said that God is holy. No injustice stains his throne, and no impurity tarnishes his perfections. Every charge brought against the wisdom, equity and excellence of his works or ways, betrays the weakness and folly of the allegation, and the presumption and irreverence of man.

God is infinite in love.

The next moral attribute, is divine goodness. The existence of this attribute, you will recollect, I proved from the light of nature. The disposition of God to make his creatures happy, is visible in the constitutional capacities of his creatures for enjoyment, and in the provisions which he has made for the gratification of those capacities. But this expression of divine goodness is

faint, compared with that which is manifested by the immortality of the soul with which he has endowed us, and the provisions which he has made for our recovery from sin. If any one is disposed to restrict goodness to the expression of divine kindness, made on the face of nature, and the term benevolence, to the same principle developed in the work of redemption, I shall have no objection.

The goodness, benevolence, tenderness, and kindness of God, must be resolved into the simple definition, of a disposition in God to promote the greatest good of the universe. David has explained this attribute of God. Psalms 145. 6—9. I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works ; and men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts, and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. After the apostacy and rebellion of man, God was under no obligations, except those imposed by his goodness, to provide for his recovery. Goodness gave the Saviour ; Goodness made the atonement ; arrested the arm of justice, and procured the sovereign display of his infinite beneficence. We then look on the goodness of God as preventing the execution of his justice, as staying the floods of desolation, which were about to be poured on the world, and as scattering blessings in rich profusion, through the human family. Goodness has prepared the feast of immortality for man, and spread it before him.

Every law of righteousness, every offer of grace, every promise of salvation, every passage of scripture that points to the path of life, every victory over sin, and every triumph in glory proves the goodness of God.

The next moral attribute is mercy. Mercy and grace are used in the scriptures interchangeably. And each of these words is more limited and restricted in its import, than goodness. Goodness is a more general and extended expression of divine love. The mercy of God is his pity and compassion for the miserable, whether that misery be temporal or spiritual. The grace of God has a more special reference to the gratuitous gift of salvation through the Redeemer. Or, in other words, grace is a favour bestowed on the ill-deserving ; such as God bestows on all whom he saves. Mercy is, with more propriety, applied to men, than grace. But these distinctions, when applied to God, are human and arbitrary. We ought, therefore, as the Holy Ghost has done, to use them as synonymous. A merciful God looks down on man, imprisoned in his depravity, enslaved by his lusts and passions, a captive sold under sin. He sees all our natural powers, as reason, judgment, understanding and conscience, veiled in the darkness of moral depravity, and he commissions the Spirit to change the heart and sanctify the soul. This is an act of grace. It is totally unmerited ; and is a sovereign act of his love, in bestowing on the ill-deserving the richest benefits. This is the common meaning of the word grace, the forgiveness of sins, and acceptance in Christ. Mercy is often used in scripture, in application to the interposition of God in the deliverance of captives and sufferers. Mercy breaks the

prisoner's chains, and the arms of oppressors ; weakens the power of usurpation and tyranny ; hears the cries of the innocent, the widow and the fatherless, and brings up the sick from the borders of the grave. But in nothing is it so visibly displayed, as in the deliverance of captives from the bondage of the prince of darkness, and in bringing them from the dominion and condemnation of sin, into the glorious light and liberty of the Son of God. This is mercy displayed on the basis of grace only, and is boundless and eternal.

The next moral attribute of God is justice. General justice does not essentially differ from benevolence. It is the disposition to enact equitable laws, and the equitable execution of them. Distributive justice consists in rewarding the virtuous, and in punishing the vicious according to their conduct. Distributive justice properly embraces what are sometimes called remunerative and punitive justice.

Remunerative justice is rewarding the virtuous exactly according to their merit. Punitive justice is punishing the vicious exactly according to their demerit. Vindictive justice is the exercise of punishment in the support of law. Every law has a penalty, a punishment threatened to a violation. And law without a penalty is mere advice. It has no sanctions and no authority. Now a law founded in equity, and productive of security and happiness, ought to be maintained. And punishment inflicted with special reference to its honor and dignity are called vindictive. As vindictive, when applied to man, is generally associated with a revengeful and re-

taliating spirit, I would suggest the propriety of using the word, vindicative instead of vindictive ; as the word vindicative more clearly embraces the idea of vindication, or support of right. It is obvious that God is never the subject of unkind affections. He is always influenced by the same motives, and the same spirit. Every exercise of justice is for the good of the universe. When he punishes the sinner, and when he confines him in endless darkness, he is influenced by love to the general interests of the universe. He will not inflict a single pang which the good of the universe does not require. He is seeking the highest good in the highest display of his glory ; but he is met and opposed in his work by sinners. He takes them out of the way, and casts them into hell. I do not mean by this, that the damned will be useless materials in the universe. They will be unwilling instruments of promoting the general good. And while the love of God is written on the flames of hell, it is an unchangeable truth, that the wailings of the lost will advance the divine glory, as well as the hosannas of the redeemed. If he did not exercise his justice in the punishment of the guilty, he would abandon his own glory, and the highest happiness of the intelligent universe. When he executes vengeance on his enemies, he does it with as much kind affection, as he exercises in rewarding the redeemed in heaven. His breast is filled with pity and compassion, towards the very objects, whom he punishes. He has none of that complacency in them, that love of delight, which consists in the mingling of kindred and holy spirits, and which he exercises towards his saints. He punishes them with no designs of cruelty,

or injustice ; but treats them according to their demerit. That is, he punishes them just as much as they deserve, and no more. Now the justice of God does not differ essentially from his love. It is love to the happiness of the universe, exercised in destroying the opposers of that happiness ; in removing the obstacles in the way of the accomplishment of his benevolent designs to his church. And all those expressions which represent God as possessed of anger, indignation and wrath, are forms of speech which show the effects of his justice, and concern for the universe. The effect of wrathful passions in man, is the infliction of punishment.

Now God inflicts punishment on his incorrigible creatures to an inconceivable extent, and of eternal duration. And though the effects of his justice resemble in some respects, the effects of wrathful and ambitious men and monarchs, yet there is no resemblance in the disposition of the two. There is no difficulty in reconciling disciplinary punishment with the benevolence and love of God. The parent may correct his child in the most tender and affectionate spirit, solely with reference to the reformation of the child. And no man would hesitate to justify the ways of God to men in all those afflictions and distresses, which advance their holiness and happiness. But there are punishments which are not disciplinary ; punishments which are not designed, and have no tendency to reform the suffering. The infliction of death on murderers is not intended to reform them. It puts them beyond the reach of human influence, and reformation. Most of the punishments of God in this life, are disciplinary, intended to correct the hearts and lives

of his creatures. I dare not say, that this is the intention of all the punishments inflicted on men, even in this life. And I know, God has no such object as their reformation in punishing the wicked in hell. The justice exercised in their punishment is entirely vindicative, to support the honor of his laws, the dignity of his government, and to teach the universe that he is just as well as merciful

There are two reasons why God will punish the finally impenitent : One is that his glory requires it ; the other is, that sinners deserve it. The infliction of the penalties of justice is a pure act of love not to individuals in particular, but to intelligents in general. There is not a particle of love in God nor of holy love in his creatures, which does not overlook personal and individual interest, when it is put in competition with the general good. God feels no such love in his own breast, as partial and selfish love. If he loves himself supremely, it is because he is the sum and source of all the excellence in the universe. If he should love any other, or all other beings more than himself, his love would be unjust ; because in so doing, he would prefer a less to a greater good. His loving real excellence in his own character, according to the value of that excellence is not selfish, but impartial and disinterested benevolence. And if he loves moral excellence according to its worth, and he himself is the uncreated, exhaustless source of all moral excellence, then he loves the supreme and grand expression of his glory, which all beings will conspire to make at last. He exercises the love of complacency towards his creatures just in proportion to their assimila-

tion to himself, and their admiration of his plans and purposes, and no farther. God will punish none of his creatures to exceed their demerit, nor to a degree which will not display the loveliness of his character in the highest colours.

The next moral attribute of God, is truth. If truth and faithfulness were made distinct attributes, they could mean nothing more than veracity and faithfulness. The most natural, and correct division of truth therefore, is into veracity and faithfulness ; that is, God is true to his declarations, and true to his promises.

The veracity of God is simply this. All that God has said concerning the past, present, and future, is true ; just as it has transpired, is transpiring, or will transpire. In all the revelation which he has made, there is no ambiguity, no concealment, no evasion, no false colouring, it is all a true and perfect record. Every thing which he has declared, will come to pass ; every thing that he has promised, will be fulfilled ; every thing that he has threatened, will be executed ; and every thing which he has predicted, will be accomplished. Not one jot or tittle, shall fail until all be fulfilled.

Faithfulness of God.

The faithfulness of God, is his being true to his promises. The scriptures are replete with promises to the righteous ; and the unbelief of men, and even the best of men, subjects them to doubt whether God will perform all that he has promised. There is so much darkness, at particular times, about the dispensations of his providence, and so much agitation and corruption within their

hearts, that christians often doubt their perseverance, though God has promised to keep them, and bring them to heaven. And they sometimes doubt whether the church will become as prosperous and triumphant, as is represented in the scriptures. The prophecies and promises are so slow in their accomplishment, and some of them have been so much perverted by interpreters, that the mind is left in perplexity and skepticism. But all these queries and doubts are unnecessary : God will do all for his church, and all for his friends that he has promised. He has declared it, and it shall come to pass. Psalm 89. 30—33. If his 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 the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

Having considered the moral attributes of God, I must be indulged one or two reflections before I close. I have said all his moral perfections are embraced in the term, love. Now the goodness, mercy, justice and truth of God, are only different forms, or modifications of the same principle. What is goodness but a general expression of divine love, manifested in providing for the happiness of his creatures ? What is mercy, or grace, but the love of God displayed in alleviating the distresses of the miserable, or pardoning and saving the guilty ? What is justice but love to the universe, displayed in rewarding the righteous, and punishing the wicked according to their deeds ? And what is the veracity of God, but his love, displayed in the truth of the whole declaration, and

the whole revelation of his will, given for the instruction and benefit of his intelligent creatures? His truth is a lasting basis on which the confidence of man may rest. What is his faithfulness, but the pledge of his love, calculated to cheer and comfort the desponding mind? Indeed all his moral attributes are love to the universe, operating in different ways, and with regard to different objects, and different beings.

Now what are the moral deductions drawn from this subject?

They are all those obligations, which pure and boundless love can impose on dependent and accountable creatures. If God is love, and is continually manifesting himself as such to his creatures, that love ought to be reciprocated.

If God is good, man should receive his blessings with gratitude; and enjoy them innocently and purely, according to his revealed will.

If he is merciful, or gracious in pardoning guilty men, they should be humble, in view of their guilt and unworthiness; and grateful, for so many unmerited gifts. If God is just, we ought to fear to sin, to tremble for our iniquities; and, acknowledging the justice of that sentence which condemns us, to flee by faith to the blood of sprinkling for justification. When we plead for mercy, we should be sensible, that the laws of God would be magnified and glorified forever, if we were lost. In view of this attribute, the guilty and unpardoned, can have no hope to escape their merited punishment.

If God is true, none should presume to question the truth of the revelation, which he has made ; nor to expect an abatement of his requisitions.

Every truth in the Bible, should be cloathed in living reality ; and every requisition and every threatening, should be applied to our hearts with as much solemnity, as though the transactions of eternity, were passing before us. And if God is faithful to his promises, the dependency of christians is groundless and criminal. To view God as liable to desert his own work, and to cease to love and bless his friends ; to view him as throwing away in wastefulness, the atonement,—all the blood and sufferings of his son, and the patience and persecutions of his saints, is unworthy business for the christian. No, God cannot change, his love to his kingdom is eternal. Its interests are guarded by all the perfections of his character. Then dismiss your fears, ye followers of the Lamb. He who has promised that he will bring again Zion, will give the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. This God is faithful and true.

SERMON VI.

MODE OF DIVINE EXISTENCE.

1. JOHN. 5. 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven ; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one.

Having examined the natural and moral attributes of God, I enter on the discussion of the mode of the divine existence. And here I will observe that I shall not attempt to explain the doctrine of the Trinity ; that is, I shall not attempt to show how it is that three persons exist in one God ; but give a plain and scriptural statement of the doctrine.

God has a triune existence. There is such a distinction in the Godhead, as renders it proper to say, there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and yet these three persons are but one God. It is necessary in this place to notice a few false representations of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Trinitarianism is not tritheism, or a belief in the existence of three gods ; but a belief that three persons exist in one God. It is not a trinity of gods, but a trinity of persons. The Godhead does not consist in three, separate, and independent beings, but one being existing in such a manner as to be distinct in persons, and yet in-

separably connected. We ought to have in our minds, a clear and marked difference between the triune of distinct persons, and the triune of distinct beings. On the other hand, the doctrine of the trinity is not three appellations applied to the same being, to designate three different operations or offices of God. The doctrine of the trinity is something more than the same God developing himself in three different ways : for God discovers his character in a thousand different ways, and the different modes of his operations, are more properly a discovery of his attributes, than the mode of his existence. To suppose that the personalty of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, consisted in their possessing a portion of Deity, would destroy the trinity of the Godhead.

I will then first attempt to prove that there is but one God.

2. Show that this doctrine does not at all, militate against the doctrine of the trinity.

Besides the unity of design apparent in all the works of nature, there is an absurdity in supposing, that there are more Gods than one. An infinite being must fill all in all, and if there were a thousand gods, they must possess the same empire. I can conceive no advantage in admitting the existence of several infinite beings, since their dominion must be one, and the same as that of a single God. If more than one God claims the universe, those claims must interfere ; and we cannot suppose, that the whole creation belongs to the great Creator and Proprietor himself, and at the same time, to another. But the scriptures abound in positive declarations of the

unity of God. It is true the term god is two or three times in scripture applied to frail men, but those passages are too explicit to admit of mistake. Moses was as a god to Aaron. That is, God made communications to Moses, and Moses made them to Aaron. As far as imparting instruction was concerned, Moses sustained the same relation to his brother Aaron, that God sustained to Moses. Rulers, and those who are invested with authority, have been called gods; because their investitures and exaltation, their authority and prerogatives, gave them a relation to their subjects, resembling in some respects, the relation of God to his creatures. The poverty of language gave rise to this manner of speaking. Wherever this phraseology occurs in relation to the elevation, investitures, and privileges of men, it is used with a degree of caution which secures the candid reader against misconstruction. But the unity of God is established by the most unequivocal testimony from the Bible. And the reason that the candid inquirer after truth, finds such entire satisfaction on this point, is very obvious. In a world as idolatrous as this, men have always been exposed to polytheism; a belief of the existence of a plurality of gods. This is a sin to which the Israelites were addicted; and therefore, in almost every exposure of their crime, it was necessary to bring to light the doctrine of the divine unity. There is scarcely an assertion in the Bible, respecting the unity of God, which is not made in contradistinction to idols. It was the prevalence of idolatry, which gave occasion for the use of those expressions on which we found our proof of the unity of the Godhead. Even while God was delivering the law

to Moses on Sinai, the Israelites were making a graven image at the foot of the mountain. The following passages prove the unity of God. Deut. 4. 35. Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord, he is God ; there is none else beside him. 1 Tim. 2. 5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Ephesians. 4. 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. This doctrine rests then on the positive and unequivocal declaration of scripture. The prophets of the Lord have always repelled the claims of every other being to any degree of independence. God has visited with special judgments, those who have presumed to infringe on his prerogatives, or to encourage defection from his rightful government. He destroyed the altars, and the worshippers of Baal. He cut off the witches of Canaan. He smote Herod, for taking to himself the glory which was due to God alone. And in every case of aggression on his prerogatives, he has employed his servants, his providences, and his power, to convince the world, that he is the only living and true God. It is unnecessary to spend more time in proving a doctrine which is too plain to be denied ; and, which none but the atheist, is disposed to question.

2, I proceed to show that the unity of God, does not at all militate against the doctrine of the trinity. The unity of God, destroys tritheism, or the doctrine of three gods : for it is a contradiction in terms to suppose there are three gods, and yet but one God. This is as impossible as that three worlds should be one world only ; or that three men should be but one man. Yet this does not prove, that there may not be three persons, or agents,

and yet but one God. We do not contend for three gods in one God, but for three distinct persons, or agents, in one Godhead. There is such a distinction in the Godhead as to render it proper to address the Deity by the appellation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to render it proper to offer up prayer, praise, or divine worship to each of those persons separately, or to all of them conjointly. And this distinction, as I have before observed, does not imply a plurality of gods; nor does it mean merely the different attributes, or operations of the same God.

The Deity of the Father may be proved from his names, his attributes, his works, and the worship ascribed to him, as I have shown in a preceding discourse. He is called Lord, Lord God, I am that I am, Jehovah. He is the creator, preserver, sovereign, and law-giver. Dan. 4. 34, 35. And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou? Jesus Christ is called God, in Isaiah, Matthew, John, Romans, and in many other places. He is called Jehovah in Isaiah. He is said to be eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. He is creator, the object of worship; and christians are blessed in his name; and the ordinance of baptism is performed in his name. He is

the author of the resurrection ; the prophet, priest, and king of his people ; and will be the judge of the world. He existed in a complex character, both human and divine. Of his human nature it is said, he was born of Mary ; supported as other men ; died on the cross, and arose from the dead. As a Saviour, he died to make atonement for all men ; offers salvation to all, and applies it to a part. His obedience to the divine law was perfect ; his death on the cross, vicarious ; and his intercessions for the saints, prevalent. The Holy Ghost is the creator of all things ; the author of regeneration, and of all holy exercises. He performed the work of revelation ; and the saints are blessed in his name : and in his name believers and their seed are to be baptized to the end of the world. And now I ask how there could be such an intermixture of names and attributes, works and worship, if there was not an identity of being ? And that this triune distinction is not predicated of his attributes, is obvious from the fact, that they are mentioned distinctly and separately : and no one can show that the Son, or the Holy Ghost, means merely an attribute. But if they are merely attributes, why are attributes attributed to these attributes. Then the attributes of the second and third persons in the trinity, would be attributes of attributes. This idea is still more shocking and absurd, when we hear of their negotiating, and covenanting with each other, and transacting business in which they claimed a perfect independence, and still acknowledge a mutual, and inseparable connexion. And the different offices they exercise, prove no inferiority of excellence, or of prerogatives. God the Father, acknowledged the

Deity and equality of the Son. For when he bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him. Now if he prohibits the worship of any other God than himself, and commands men and angels to worship Christ, then Christ is one with him. And Christ acknowledges the equality of the Holy Ghost, when he says, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Now it is not a little remarkable, that the same evidence that proves these three persons to be one God, proves them to be equal. If they did not possess the same names and attributes, and perform the same works, and receive the same worship, neither of them could be proved to be God. The same source of evidence that proves the deity of one, proves the deity of the three persons in the trinity. Now as the same nature and degree of testimony, which proves the deity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, is used to prove the deity of the Father, therefore, if the deity of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost, cannot be established, the deity of the Father cannot be proved, and atheism follows. It is very questionable in my mind, whether the spirit which denies the deity of either person in the triune God, is not the spirit of atheism. There is a spirit of defection at least, in him who admits the Godhead of the Father on certain evidence, and denies the Godhead of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, on the same evidence. I would be an atheist, or a trinitarian. I cannot here omit informing my audience, of the ground of that torrent of odium and reproach, which has been poured on orthodox sentiments. Because we maintain

the personality and deity of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we are charged with a belief in the existence of three gods. When we as firmly believe the unity of God, and contend for it as strenuously as any class of men. It is plurality of persons, and not plurality of gods for which we contend. It is said to be mystical, blind, and unintelligible. But I conceive, when taken as a matter of revelation, there is no truth more plain. It is true, that we can fathom neither deity nor many of his works. The only staggering mystery about admitting this doctrine, is, the unbelief of mankind. We never represent this truth, the unity and trinity of the Godhead, as having been discovered by the sagacity of the human intellect. It is a matter of revelation, and is just as capable of being understood as any other truth revealed in the scriptures.

The doctrine of the trinity is the foundation of all the hopes which are precious to man. Take away this doctrine, and the religion of the world could never rise above deistical idolatry, and cold and phlegmatic philosophy. Were it not for the Son, there would be no redemption ; man must have lain in his prison of sin and ruin, having none to atone for him ; none to reveal to him the way of life ; none to subdue his moral corruption, and none to conquer his enemies. None but the second person in the adorable Godhead, was adequate to cancel the demands of divine justice, and honor the divine law. Divest the Saviour of his distinctive personality, and you render him inadequate to the salvation of man. This doctrine, then is the chief corner stone in the christian edifice.

Take away the deity and personality of the third person in the trinity, and who could be found adequate to change the heart, to new-create the soul, and make an efficacious application of the atonement to the dying sinner? The effort of the triune God, in the production of this world from nothing, was not greater, than that effort which gives spiritual resuscitation to the soul.

Now divest the eternal spirit of his names, his attributes, his works, and the worship ascribed to him; divest him of any thing which constitutes his Godhead, and every sheet of revelation will be a blank; and every groan of Calvary an empty sound. If such were the case, in vain would the Father reign, and the Son would bleed in vain for man. There must be a being adequate to renovate the heart, and to apply the atonement; and he must have power to conquer the rebel's heart, and subdue the rising enemies of the soul. This is the light, my hearers, in which you should view the doctrine of the trinity. Not as a doctrine of notions and forms, not a child of sectarian bigotry, but a doctrine on which the whole church rests as the chief corner stone. If I received Christ as merely human, and as dying to prove his sincerity in the belief of the doctrines which he taught, and to sanction his instructions, I could see no more efficacy in his sufferings and death than in those of a martyr.

Destroy the vicarious death of Christ, and there is no rational hope for the sinner. And when the deity of the Holy Ghost is questioned, the possibility of an application of the atonement is questioned. From the first intimation of a Saviour to our first parents, until the clear devel-

opement of his character and offices, at his incarnation and death, his proper and perfect divinity, and his proper and perfect humanity, have been considered as the foundation of his church, and of all pure religion. This view of the mode of the divine existence, is at an infinite distance from the gross and absurd notions of heathen polytheism, and from Sabellian and Arian deism. There is such a distinction in the Godhead, as makes it proper to say I, thou, he. While the Father can say I am God, and there is none else, he can also say to the Son, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and let all the angels of God worship him ; and he can also say, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. Well, then, may all admire this triune God, as furnishing the highest pledge of the salvation of the church, and the only hope of sinful man.

Let me, then, in closing my discourse, affectionately caution my hearers against a rash and irreverent handling of the divine character. Our investigations should be modest and humble. There is but one safe guide, and one inextinguishable light : that is the Bible. An admission of its testimony will correct all misapprehensions, and draw from the creatures of divine power a tribute of homage. But if we unhappily mingle with the train of those, who, with unhallowed lips, assail the divine character, and presumptuously arbitrate on the rights and prerogatives, and even on the existence of God ; and dispute his reign and doubt his veracity, we must meet the charges on the last day. The spirit that investigates the divine character, should be deeply imbued with humility ; for pride and impiety close the avenues

of the soul, and divert the streams of divine love, as they descend to us. But if, happily, by a life of piety and obedience, we enjoy the friendship of the Father, the communion of the Son, and the fellowship of the Spirit, we shall ere long be admitted to those joys, of which such as deny the mediation and intercession of Christ, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, will be forever deprived. Happy is he who knows the true God, and Jesus Christ, whom to know aright is life eternal. Such shall sweetly join in the doxologies of eternal praise.

SERMON VII.

DEITY OF THE SON AND THE HOLY GHOST.

HEB. 9. 14.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.

Having in my preceding discourse, briefly stated the doctrine of the deity and personality of the Son and the Holy Ghost, I shall in this sermon, further illustrate and defend this doctrine.

There is an admirable propriety in the complexity of the Saviour's character. To negotiate with man, it was proper he should possess all the attributes of a man, soul, mind and body. Birth, increase of stature and of intellect, knowledge, ignorance, infirmity, hunger, thirst, uneasiness, pain, and death, prove him to be a man—an entire and a perfect man. And to negotiate with God, it was proper that he should possess an equality with the Father. If he was a created and dependent being only, he could not cancel one demand of justice. He could only give back to God an existence which had always been the property of the Father. Beside, every created, moral intelligent, is under law. To reward holiness and punish sin, are immutable pillars of the divine government. And it is inconceivable how God could, con-

sistently with the laws of his kingdom, punish a holy being, unless that being possessed an existence literally his own, and an existence of which he could dispose at pleasure. If the Saviour is the self-existent and independent God, he can negotiate with the Father. He can bargain, and stipulate, and adjust conditions, which imply no condescension in the Father, and no compulsion in the Son. He might say to the Father, the only condition on which I will suffer and die, is, that you shall accept my sufferings and death, as an atonement for the whole world, and apply this atonement to the elect for their redemption. Christ might demand salvation for himself, as man, on the ground of sinless obedience. His perfect obedience formed both the ground and the condition of his own salvation. And with equal justice he could demand the reward of his labors, the salvation of his people. His entire and perfect humanity, and his entire and perfect divinity, form a chain which connects the upper and lower world, and opens the door of access to the Father. All those passages of scripture which speak of his ignorance, weakness, investitures, or dependence, are applicable to his humanity and official character only; and all those passages which speak of his deity, are applicable to his deity only. Christ frequently used the phrase, son of man, in application to himself. By this phrase, he always intended to assert his humanity. The Jews, who were well acquainted with the language in which he spoke, always understood by this phrase, that he intended to assert his humanity. It is worthy of remark, that this phrase, or its equivalent, is used in application to the Saviour, more than sixty times in the New

Testament. Christ used another phrase in application to himself, by which he meant to assert his divinity ; that phrase is, son of God. This, or its equivalent, is used in application to him, more than fifty times in the Evangelists. If the testimony of Christ in relation to himself is admissable, who can doubt, that he was truly and properly man, and truly and properly God ? As he was a complex being, the proof of his Godhead does not destroy his humanity ; nor does the proof of his humanity destroy his Godhead. He was God and man in two distinct natures, but one person. He was the Messiah ; the mediator between God and man. Every thing could be affirmed of Christ, that could be affirmed of a perfect and entire man, and of a perfect and entire God.

This removes all difficulty in interpreting scripture which relates to this subject. I have before said, that the deity and personality of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, are established in the same manner as those of the Father. Now if the same names, attributes, works and worship, which are applied to the Father, and which are forbidden to be applied to any being but God, are applied to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, it follows inevitably, that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God ; one with the Father, and equal in character and perfections. I proceed then to prove, that the same names, attributes, works and worship, are ascribed to the Son, that are ascribed to the Father.

1 John 5. 20. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true,

even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

Rom. 1. 2. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Rom. 9. 5. Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is overall, God blessed forever. God over all, is God Almighty. The Father applies his own name to the Son : Heb. 1. 8. But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. In these passages, the names applied to the Father, are applied to the Son, in an unrestricted and unqualified manner.

The attributes of the Father are applied to the Son in the following passages. John 1. 1. In the beginning was the word. Here the eternity of the Son's existence is asserted. In the beginning, is from eternity, before all things. Rev. 22. 13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Heb. 1. 10—12. And thou Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish ; but thou remainest : and they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. This text proves the eternal existence, the creative power, and the immutability of Christ. The omniscience of Christ is proved by the following and similar passages : Rev. 2. 23. All the church shall know, that I am he which searcheth the reins. By reins, in this passage, is meant the most secret operations of the soul. John 16. 30. Now we are sure that thou knowest all things. When Peter had been

interrogated three times, respecting his love to the Saviour, he replied, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.

In proof of the omnipresence of Christ, we read, Mat. 18. 20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Mat. 28. 19, 20. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Amen. When Christ was conversing with Nicodemus, a Jewish ruler, face to face, he said, John 3. 13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.

The omnipotence of Christ is declared in the following passages: Phil. 3. 20. He is able even to subdue all things to himself. Rom. 9. 5. Who is over all, God blessed forever. His creative power is declared in John 1. 3. 10. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. He was in the world, and the world was made by him.

He is the preserver and upholder of the universe. Col. 1. 16, 17. All things were created by him and for him, and by him all things consist. Heb. 1. 3. Upholding all things by the word of his power.

His prerogative to forgive sin, to raise the dead, and to judge the world, is expressed in the following passages; Mat. 9. 2—6. Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee. But that ye may know that the son of

man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then saith he to the sick of the palsy, arise take up thy bed, and go unto thine own house.

1 John. 5. 28, 29. The hour is coming in the which, all that are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. 2 Cor. 5. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. But not only the names, attributes, and works, which are ascribed to the Father, are ascribed to the Son; but the scriptures ascribe to the Son divine honors. The same God who denounces as idolatrous and blasphemous any act of homage, or worship, given to created and finite beings, has commanded his creatures to worship the Son. John 5. 23. That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. Heb. 1. 6. And when he bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him. Rev. 5. 12, 13. Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. Add to these testimonies of the deity of Christ, the insertion of his name in the apostolical benediction, and the expressions of trust and confidence, which his followers have placed in him, and our convictions rise still higher, that those who could say I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me; in

the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk ; Lord, Jesus receive my spirit ; to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that are in every place, call on the name of Jesus Christ, believers in his supreme divinity. They could say to the world, at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. On the strength of these passages, I must say, that if the deity of the Son fails, the deity of the Father is incapable of proof.

I now proceed to the proof of the deity and personality of the Holy Ghost. There are passages of scripture which speak of the Holy Ghost, in the plain and unimpassioned language of narration : and in these passages, the names and attributes, the works and worship, ascribed to the Father and Son, are also ascribed to the third person in the trinity. He is not spoken of as an attribute, nor as an emanation, neither is he spoken of in any figurative language, capable of perversion or evasion, but as God, truly divine, and truly distinct from the Father and the Son. Acts 5. 3, 4. Peter said, Ananias, why hath satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land ? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. Heb. 3. 7. Wherefore the Holy Ghost saith, to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Acts 13. 2. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Acts 10. 19, 20. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, behold three men seek

thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting; for I have sent them. John 16. 13. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. John 14. 16, 17—26. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. We are now prepared to judge, whether there is not as clear and marked a distinction between the Holy Ghost and the Father, as between the Son and the Father.

The Holy Ghost is said to lead, to teach, to command to commission, to convince of sin, to change the heart, to enlighten, to forbid, to sanctify, and to be invoked. Mat. 28. 19. Go teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. 2 Cor. 13. 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. It is then sufficiently established, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is one God; and that there is such a distinction in the Godhead, as makes the application of the personal pronouns, I, thou, he, to either of these perfectly proper: and that to these three distinct persons, may be applied, separately, or conjointly, the same names, and attributes, works and worship. The limits of my plan, will suffer me to pre-

sent to the mind of the candid inquirer after truth, the prominent features of the subject only, and point him to the materials of which he may build a house, which no winds can shake, and which no floods can overthrow. The views we entertain of the Godhead, will powerfully influence our moral feelings, and christian conduct. There are articles of christian belief which exert on us but a feeble influence. But our views of the source of being, the eternal God, will give a deep and lasting complexion, to the features of the soul. They will direct every current of the affections ; and the magnitude and purity of the heart, must be graduated by the character of the object, in which it concentrates. If the Son and the Holy Spirit are God, it imparts a value to every official transaction in the plan of redemption. It gives weight and dignity, efficacy and commanding influence, to all that is revealed concerning the triune God. Besides, this article of revealed truth, is the sun around which all other doctrines hang in clustered excellence. The character ascribed to God, gives complexion to every doctrine of christian belief. The doctrine of the trinity, is the foundation of all that is sound in faith, precious in feeling, and dear to the hopeful subjects of a blissful immortality.

I have a word to say on the official character of Christ. He has a tripple office : he sustains the office of prophet, priest, and king. He is a prophet, for Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet, shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me ; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son,

who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. These passages prove that Christ as a prophet, reveals to his church, by his word and spirit, in divers ways of administration, the will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation. On his priestly office, the scriptures are equally explicit. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences. So Christ was offered to bear the sins of many, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. These passages prove, that our great High Priest has offered himself a spotless sacrifice to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people; and to offer perpetual intercessions for their salvation.

And in relation to his regal office it is said, Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins. And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man, according as his work shall be. For he must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of his Son. Thou shalt break them with a rod of

iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces, like a potter's vessel. Thus we see that Christ assumes this three-fold office ; and God acknowledges it to the salvation of his people.

When we view the order and harmony of the universe, the vast and complicated system of this world, and the provisions in nature for the security and happiness of man, we trace them back to the wisdom, power, and goodness of God the Father. And when we contemplate man as lifting up his head from the dungeon of depravity, to the world of light, and as invited away from the scenes of darkness and despair, to go and sit with Christ on the right hand of God, we contemplate the Saviour as having cast up an high way for the ransomed of the Lord. And when we contemplate sinful man as leaving his prison, and arising from his grave of moral death, to light, and life, and love, the Spirit appears in all his benign agency and influence.

SERMON VIII.

CREATION.

GEN. 1. 27.

So God created man in his own image ; in the image of God created he him : male and female created he them.

The only authentic record we have of the creation, is given by Moses, in the first chapter of Genesis. This is very brief. I will give you the order of this work in a few words. God first brought from nothing into being the substances of which he formed all his material works. These then lay in wild disorder and confusion. There was nothing brooding over the bosom of chaos, but darkness and derangement. God then began to bring this confused mass, which was without form and void, into order and harmony ; and to construct a world, which was to stand a living demonstration of his infinite wisdom, power and goodness. The first day, he created light. This light appeared and disappeared periodically, and was therefore called day : the intervening darkness was called night.

We should remember, there is a difference between this light and the light of the sun. This light was not connected with that great luminary which was created three days after. This was probably a luminous appearance imparted to the atmosphere for the time being, and

which disappeared on the creation of the sun. The work of the second day, was the formation of the firmament. By God's creating the firmament is not to be understood, that the component elements did not then exist ; but they were a void, a dark abyss, destitute of arrangement and utility : and even the air, here called firmament, had no power to keep the waters by pressure, in their proper places, nor to raise the evaporating particles into the skies. The spirit of God spread around the earth, the curtains of the heavens ; and thus furnished an element, in which the lungs could move, and in which all the various objects of the atmosphere could be accomplished. The firmament separates the waters in the clouds from the waters on the earth.

The common theory is, that there are three heavens : the atmosphere we breathe ; the sensible heavens, or air which bounds our vision ; and the invisible residence of God. On the third day God gathered the waters together into fountains, lakes, seas, and oceans, and fixed their bounds. And the earth which had hitherto been immersed and fruitless, was now dressed in all its varied beauties ; and received a constitution to propagate all its herbage and trees after their kind. On the fourth day, God made the sun, moon and stars, to illuminate the earth, and to furnish the inhabitants with signs, seasons, day and night, means so important in the regulation of all our transactions, and in the promotion of order and happiness. On the fifth day God filled the waters with every living creature that moves in them ; and gave them power to bring forth the fowls which fly in the midst of heaven. On the sixth day God commanded

the earth to bring forth all its variety of living creatures and creeping things. And on this day he also created man, the noblest of all his works ; and gave him dominion over all his creatures in the lower world. Man was the only being of whom he could say, he had created him in his own likeness. He pronounced all his works good, very good. But by good he did not mean morally good, or holy, but fit and proper, admirably adapted to the ends for which they were designed. Good, in the sense in which a watch, or a house, or a mill, or a farm, is said to be good when it answers all the designs and desires of its possessor. But before God had created man, there was no piece of workmanship of his hands, except angels, which possessed a particle of the intelligence, reason, or mental and moral endowments resembling his own divine nature.

He created man in his own image. To the material part, which he took from the earth, he gave exquisite sensibilities ; to the body he gave a mind, possessing perception, reason, understanding and conscience ; and, in addition to this, he endowed man with a soul, capable of choosing and refusing, of loving and hating : and thus constituted him a voluntary, moral, and accountable being. Man thus constituted, has capacities for discovering, appreciating, and admiring the blessed character of his Creator. Such capacities could be found in none of his other creatures. There was not a being on earth, except man, who could catch a glimpse of the divine character and perfections ; or form the least conception of any such being. They had no faculties either to discover the Godhead, or the nature and source of moral

obligations. How then did God create man, or what is the meaning of the phrase, created man in his own image? In the first place, man resembled God in his intellectual faculties. He had reason and foresight. He could discover many of the laws and operations of nature; and could adapt means to ends according to the extent of his wisdom, which bore a very faint resemblance to that of him who is wise in heart, and mighty in power. While animal creation in general, were governed by instincts, appetites, and inclinations, man could regulate his desires, and manage his interest by nobler powers of mind. He is endowed with nobler intellectual gifts, and a nearer approximation to God. It is true he possessed no faculty in infinitude; but however humble the distance at which he stood from his creator, and however faint the resemblance which he bore to him, he possessed the principal intelligence of this world, as God possesses all the intelligence of the universe. He bore the image of God also, in the authority with which he was invested. All his powers and prerogatives were delegated, yet he was constituted lord and governor of this lower world. All things were put under his feet. It is probable, that all animals obeyed man until after the fall, or after the flood, from an intuitive affection. Subsequently, they were subjected to man through fear, which was the consequence of sin. By the fear which man saw in animals, after the apostacy, he might learn, that by sin, he had not only become odious to God, but a terror to the subjects of his own dominion. Man could not subject the tribes of earth to his control by the strength of his own arm; for his muscular energies bore no proportion to

many tribes of beasts. Man's dominion over the various animal tribes was fixed by a wise decree of the Creator. As man was created lord and monarch of this lower world, he faintly resembled him who has a just and undivided dominion over all worlds and all creatures. He bears the image of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. But there is a more important sense in which man was created in the image of God. I refer to his moral nature, and his original moral purity. Man was made with a heart which could love or hate God, and all other moral beings. The moral faculty of man could discover the difference between right and wrong ; and be pleasantly or unpleasantly affected with moral obligation ; and this faculty in its primeval state was pure and sinless. When Adam came from the hand of his maker he possessed not a single sinful emotion of soul. He loved God supremely, and incessantly. He had no selfishness, no sin. His motives, desires, employments, and gratifications, were perfectly innocent. There was nothing to interrupt his communication with his Maker ; not a cloud to darken his prospects, nor to dampen his joys. He was as sinless as an angel, and as holy in his sphere, as God is holy. He needed no change of heart to fit him for heaven. And yet it could be said of him, that he was a holy man only. He was not an angel : he was not God. He was created dependent and accountable. In short he was a man possessing a corporeal, mental, and moral existence, placed on the earth, in the fertile Eden of Armenia. He was created a free moral agent. Not an independent agent ; for he was totally dependent ; and all his volitions and actions were under

the divine control. But God gave him a free and voluntary existence, which could act in view of motives, and at the same time, he could be acted upon without the least infringement upon his free agency. Though there may be no difference between the present and primeval state of man in point of freedom, yet we are not to judge of his former, by his present state, since the fall has produced an astonishing derangement in body, mind and soul. But in our present inquiry, we are principally concerned with the primitive state of man. Man originally possessed a holy nature ; exercised holy dispositions ; and performed only holy works. We may better ascertain the meaning of the phrase, created in the image of God, by comparing the moral attributes of God, with the moral dispositions of Adam. To the extent of the limited capacities of our first parents in their state of innocence, there was a perfect harmony between their designs and desires, and those of the divine being. Theirs were finite ; his were infinite. But in proportion to his intellectual and moral capacities, Adam was as holy as his Maker. He loved God with all the heart ; and was supremely devoted to the glory of the universe, and so far as his rank and nature would permit, he was exalted and spotless. He had a human nature, connected with a sinful soul, but it was not degraded and deranged by sin ; because it had never been employed as an instrument of impurity. Whether the body of Adam was constituted mortal, in anticipation of the apostacy ; or whether it would have been immortal, had he maintained his allegiance inviolate ; or whether it would have undergone a change similar to that which will be effected in-

stantaneously on those who remain alive on the earth when the last trump shall be blown, is uncertain. I think it plain from scripture, that if Adam had continued in holiness, neither he, nor his posterity would have experienced that pain and distress which are occasioned by death. Had he never transgressed the divine law, the punishment due to transgressors could not have been inflicted on him ; and consequently he would not have been subject to pain or distress. Sin brought death into the world, and all our woes. The threatening embraced all the evils which ever have been, or ever shall be experienced by the human family. The principal difficulty in forming just conceptions of the primeval state of man, arises from the fact, that we were never conversant with such a state. Could we ascertain all those minute changes in mind and matter, in material and immaterial creation, produced by the fall, we might carry back the investigation, until we came to considerable accuracy on the subject. But it is certain there was then in existence, neither mental, moral, nor corporeal infirmity ; and man was pure without a spot.

The earth brought forth her fruit without excessive toil. It required but a moderate, and healthful degree of exercise to cultivate it. There was nothing to divert the minds of the happy pair from the service of God. They were absorbed in the will of God. He was all in all. It cost them no labor to keep their hearts on him ; and no tears of grief and penitence were mingled with their offerings. Sorrow and pain were words known only in imagination, or by faith. The breath of the destroyer had not wilted a plant of paradise ; nor a frown

of God rested on the possessions of man. All he knew was pleasure ; all he enjoyed was blessedness. Every beast, bird, and insect, appeared in the attitude of praise ; and were known only as the production of infinite benevolence. There was no fruit of bestial, or human ferocity ; and no rose of nature withering in consequence of the insect's sting. But the beauties in which creation dazzled, did not half equal the smiles which rested on the soul of man. He, noblest of all, enjoyed peace without sorrow, and life without toil. There was added to the infinite displays of divine love, around paradise, their own felicity, moral, divine, uninterrupted and complete. This is man in his original state : perfectly holy, perfectly happy. He was not a God, because he was created, dependent, and accountable. He was not an angel, because he had a human body and inhabited this lower world. Neither angels nor man were confirmed in holiness at their creation. They both had a period of probation granted them : and perhaps the same period of probation assigned them during which, if they persevered in holiness, they were to be confirmed in eternal happiness. Some of the angels probably fell before Adam. There is this difference between the fall of man and the fall of angels : While the fall of the latter involved the actual and personal transgressor in depravity and ruin ; the fall of the former, entailed sin and misery on millions of unhappy sinners. As the fall and its effects are reserved to the next discourse, it is not necessary to speak of them particularly in this place. There are several considerations connected with the original state of man, which I have not mentioned. I have said that Adam

was a free moral agent, possessed of power to obey, and power to disobey. He had probably been made acquainted with the consequence of disobedience, in the case of fallen angels and with the intended attack on his allegiance to his creator. He must have known all that could be known without actual experience of the effects of disobedience and sin. But all this, and the still more powerful security which communion with God affords, did not banish the fell destroyer from his happy empire. But one thing is certain : Adam needed no evidence of the goodness of God. It would have been easy to prove his goodness, if we had seen the happy adaptation of all the parts of a machine so vast, so curious, and complicated as this world presented to view, before a chord was struck, or a note of divine love was heard. The eye could view not merely this adaptation to make the highest expression of divine goodness ; not merely a world in the attitude and hope of receiving the happy pair,—the sun had but just commenced his course ; the wheels of nature had but just began their motion, when the first breeze which was wafted over the earth, was laden with the songs of Paradise. To the upper heavens God added the lower paradise. The whole creation now stood forth in testimony of the excellence of him whose goodness fills the earth. So that the prime angel who holds the trump of God, could stand in the midst of the earth and say, The earth, O Lord, is thine and the fulness thereof. Every objection which is brought against the goodness of God, is drawn from sources which did not exist when this world came from the hand of its creator. Sources which can be traced only to the forbidden, and

guilty ravages of sin. I do not present this world to you marred, and defaced as it now is, by the monster vice ; though even now the lineaments of its high origin are not totally defaced. But I would place before your minds, a world unblemished by sin, in all its primeval splendor ; and man in spotless garments, enthroned in innocence, with a joyful, happy, and painless world at his feet ; and in the midst of this parade, God, and angels dwell. Such was this world, a stranger to sorrow, sin, and death, when it came from the hand of its Maker. Every object bore the impress of his infinite excellence ; and such would it now be, had man been true, and Satan, that arch deceiver, been driven from Eden's pale.

SERMON IX.]

THE DIVINE LAW.

MAT. 22. 37—40.

Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets.

If man is possessed of reason, judgment, intelligence, and moral affections; if he acts in view of motives, and is voluntary in his choices, then he is dependent and accountable. And if he is dependent and accountable, he is under law. The promulgation of law is only the development of obligations which arise from the relation of beings. If God created, and supports man, he is under the government of God. Moral government is a government which takes cognizance of moral actions. A perfect moral government, is a government in which moral conduct is treated according to its merits and demerits. Such is the divine government. Man is an intelligent, dependent, moral, and accountable being; and therefore the proper subject of law. The law which man is bound to obey, may be written, either on a faculty of the mind, or on tables of stone. The law of God is summarily comprehended in the law of the ten commandments. God has given several laws to his creatures. He gave one

law to Adam, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He gave him another law, requiring him to keep the Sabbath. He gave him another, requiring him to offer sacrifices. He gave a law to Noah, forbidding him to murder. He afterwards gave a code of law to the Israelites, comprising the moral, ceremonial, and civil laws. The moral, or divine law, is the one mentioned in the text, and is the one in which we are most deeply interested.

It will be the object of this discourse to shew the perfection and excellence of the divine law.

To form clear and consistent views of the divine law, it is necessary to consider the character of the lawgiver, the character of those to whom the law is given, and the relations which subsist between the lawgiver and his subjects.

If the law of God is arbitrary, laying claims on his creatures which nothing in the nature of the case can justify, its justice and excellence may be called in question.

But if its requisitions grow out of the relation which man bears to his Maker, and which man bears to his fellow man, its claims are just and reasonable.

God is the creator, the upholder, and the constant friend of mankind.

Man is a dependent and accountable creature. The relation he bears to God, is that of a creature to a creator, that of a child to a parent.

These positions establish the claims of the law. If there had been no law given, man would have been

under obligations to render precisely the same homage and obedience which the law requires. The law has imposed no new duties on mankind.

These obligations existed antecedently to the promulgation of the law ; for the claims of the law are founded on the relation of beings. Adam was bound to obey the law. Moses was bound to obey it, before it was delivered to him on Mount Sinai. And wherever there can be found a being, sustaining the same relation to another being that man sustains to his Maker, there are obligations of the same nature and extent, as those which the law imposes. There is something in the very constitution of man, that acknowledges the justice of the divine requisitions. Man has a moral nature, or a conscience, a disposition to approve of that which is right, and condemn that which is wrong. This moral nature admits the claims which the law makes on him. It makes the same distinction between virtue and vice that the law requires. The sum of the law, is to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. Is this unreasonable ? God is the author and supporter of our existence and the source of all our happiness.

Our neighbor is endowed with the same faculties, sustains the same relations to God, and possesses the same importance in the scale of being with ourselves. His happiness is as valuable to the universe, and as dear to himself as our own. We are not bound to love God nor our neighbor merely because God has commanded it, but because the very constitution and relation of beings demand it. Is the child bound to love and respect his

parents merely because they require this love and respect?

Is there not something in the very relation of children to parents, on which these claims to love and respect are founded? The law, then, is perfectly reasonable in its claims. It is just what it should be, just what it must be. It grows out of the relation of beings.

The law, then, is a transcript of the divine character; a portrait of his perfections; nothing but an expression of his benevolence to man. It commands man to seek the highest and most durable happiness. It commands him to seek it in the only possible way he can obtain it. Any change in the nature and extent of its requisitions, would render it unworthy of God, and unfit for man. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

The view we have taken of the subject, leads me to remark,

1, That the law is immutable.

If the law is founded on the relations of beings, if it recognises nothing more than those relations, and the claims which such relations create, there can be no change in those claims until there is a change in those relations, and there can be no change in those relations, until there is a change in the constitution of things, and in the characters and relations of beings. So long as the character of God, and the character and relations of man, remain the same, the claims of the law will remain the same.

If the law were arbitrary, it might be changed at the pleasure of the lawgiver, because it would be founded on

the will of the lawgiver. But the law of God has its foundation, not merely in the will of the lawgiver, but in the constitution of things.

Has the character of God been changed? Have the character and condition of man been changed, in any of those relations on which the law grounds its claims? If not, the law is the same; immutable. It may be said, there was an abatement of its strictness after the apostacy; that the apostacy changed the human character, and therefore rendered such an abatement necessary. But, I ask, when was the law given? before, or after the apostacy? The law was given more than two thousand years afterwards. And was it a developement of the relations and duties which then existed, or of those which had existed before the fall? Were its claims laid on man in his present state, or in some previous one? The apostacy did not render man less dependent, less accountable, or less a subject of God's moral government.

The apostacy did, it is true, strip man of his purity and bliss, but it did not at all destroy those relations on which the law founds its claims.

They remain in full force. Does an offence against God, or ten thousand offences against him, abrogate our obligations to love him? Will any man's conscience permit him to plead his guilt as an excuse for sin? If not, then the very constitution of the human mind approves the claims of the divine law. It is true, the will of God produced the constitution and relation of things, and his will gave the laws founded on these relations.

But we have other testimony that the law is immutable.

Every man feels in his own breast that his highest happiness consists in compliance with the claims of the law, in an approximation to those beings, who are perfect in their obedience and worship.

Every attempt to obtain substantial happiness in any other way is fruitless. The reason is obvious, the very constitution of beings recognises no road to happiness except that which the law points out. The only terms that can be proposed, are, to love God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves.

We are assured then that none of those relations on which the law founds its claims are changed, and that every endeavor to become happy, which does not recognise the law, is violence offered to the constitution of beings. The law is therefore immutable.

2. The law is good.

The excellence of a law is to be determined by its tendency to promote happiness, and prevent misery, to promote virtue, and suppress vice.

That regard to the happiness of his creatures, which God has manifested in the works of creation and providence, furnishes an assurance that a law proceeding from him must be good. But in the case before us, we are not called to the exercise of faith, or to believe a truth inexplicable and incomprehensible; the law is presented to us not merely on the authority of the law-giver. It invites to examination. The reasons of its existence and requisitions are plain, and intelligible to every candid inquirer.

It requires men to cultivate those affections, and pursue that course of conduct, which would result in their highest happiness. It is reasonable that man should love God and his neighbor, if it is reasonable man should be happy.

With his present constitution it is the only way he can be happy. A law then which brings into view those relations, which really exist, and enforces those duties which are absolutely essential to the peace and welfare of the world, cannot but be good.

Such is the divine law. It is good because it imposes no obligations incompatible with the highest happiness which we are capable of enjoying. What does the law demand? It demands that purity in affection and life, which would diffuse tranquility and bliss through the universe. It enjoins precepts calculated to promote the highest felicity of the world. Imagine for a moment a community, or a world influenced at all times, by piety towards God, and by benevolence towards man; see love to God leading them on in the pursuit of the highest happiness of the universe, guarding them against every infringement on the rights of their fellow creatures, and then say, would not this be a happy world? How would this empire of holiness rise, and spread its blessings and triumph, until it had chased away the vile passions which have agitated, and the crimes which have polluted the world. But all this happy state of things the law tends to produce. Were its commands duly regarded, we should see selfishness and pride, and fraud and violence cease, and this world become the abode of justice and condescension and love. Friendship and piety would

beam from every countenance, and devotion would ascend from the hearts of an obedient world. In such a world, God could look down with complacency ; and in such a throng angels could mingle their kindred raptures. Such is the state of things the law has a tendency to produce.

Is not the law good ? Is not that law good which would raise man from his degradation and assimilate him to his maker ; which would attach him to the throne of the eternal and to the dearest interests of the universe ? the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good.

The whole scheme of salvation by a redeemer, testifies that the law is good. What else is the gospel, than an expedient provided by God, to raise man to that perfection and happiness, which the law has a tendency to promote ? The gospel sanctions its excellence. The gospel differs it is true, from the law, but not in the perfection it requires, not in the object it would promote, viz. the restoration of man to purity and happiness, but it differs in the provision it makes for the pardon of the guilty. The law is good. It is an expression of divine benevolence, it has a tendency to promote the highest happiness of the universe ; and the gospel is nothing more than an expedient to maintain its honor.

3. The penalty of the law is just. Some penalty is essential to the existence of a law. Remove the penalty from a law, and it becomes advice. God might request his creatures to be obedient, but if he did not threaten to punish disobedience, it would be nothing more than advice. We can form no conception of any law,

either civil or divine, without a penalty. It is penalty that sanctions it, that gives it existence as law, or penalty is an essential appendage to law.

The law of God then must have a penalty annexed to it. What is this penalty?

What is the punishment the sinner deserves, and wherein does its justice consist? The penalty is everlasting exclusion from happiness, and everlasting confinement in misery. Is this penalty just? That penalty is just which is exactly adapted to the demerit of the crime, which punishes the criminal just as much as he deserves and no more. Sin alienates the heart of man from God; and its direct tendency is to strengthen the alienation. And if it makes a man an enemy to God, is there any thing in the exercise of it, calculated to diminish that enmity? If sin grows stronger and stronger every moment of its existence, when will the sinner be less deserving of punishment? Sin tramples on all those sacred obligations, which the relation of beings imposes; and tends to spread division and discord through the universe. We are not to judge of the guilt of the sinner from the mischief which he actually effects, but from the mischief he would effect if uncontrolled. How do you ascertain the degree of guilt in any given case? by the act, or by the disposition?

Is there no criminality in an attempt to commit murder, though the attempt should not be successful? And how is the degree of guilt to be determined? By the dispositions and designs of the heart, or by the degree of success in accomplishing these designs? When we

are told that the carnal mind is enmity against God ; that it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be, are we to determine the degree of its guilt from the evils it effects, or from the evils it would effect, if unrestrained and invested with sufficient power ? Sin is opposed to the holiness of God and the holiness of other beings, and to the happiness of the universe, and if possessed of power, it would not rest until every act of loyalty to the king of heaven ceased, and all holiness and happiness were banished from the universe. It is true, the sinner will never effect his purpose ; not, however, because he has no disposition to do it, but because God reigns, and governs, and bounds his opposition.

And is it not just in God to arrest this destroyer of human happiness, and confine him in eternal chains ? Would God manifest a suitable concern for the universe, if he were to let sin go unpunished ? God is not an idle spectator of the conduct of his creatures.

I have said that penalty is essential to the existence of a law, and that that penalty is just which is exactly adapted to the demerit of the crime ; that punishes the sinner just as much as he deserves, and no more. It is obvious that the guilt of the sinner must be ascertained by the evil he has a disposition to effect, and not by the evil he actually effects. The sinner has a disposition at heart, to put every being in the universe in misery, and not only to confine him in misery, but to retain him there forever. Now, what is the punishment that ought to be inflicted on a being that is disposed to spread universal and endless misery ?

This leads me to remark,

4. On the impropriety of those harsh representations, which are given of divine justice. Every representation of the divine character and conduct, should be in accordance with his spotless and glorious perfections. God is not a tyrant; hard hearted and cruel. Compassion, everlasting compassion, beams from his throne. And when he sends the sinner to hell, he is not less lovely and compassionate, than when he receives the saint to heaven. What is divine justice? Is it revenge or cruelty? Far from it. It is an expression of his love to his own glory and to his church. God is accomplishing his designs of love to the world. The sinner opposes these designs. God removes him out of the way. This is divine justice. I repeat it, God is seeking the happiness of the universe. This is the object of his purposes and councils; and the man who opposes his designs must be destroyed. The reason why God destroys the sinner, by plunging him down to perdition, is not to gratify a revengeful disposition, but to secure his own glory and the glory of the church.

Do you consider that prince cruel, who punishes a mob, not because he delights in the sufferings of the mob, in itself considered, but because he loves the peace and tranquility of his people? Is it not an expression of his love and regard for the rights and happiness of his people? Would he not be deficient in concern for the highest interests of his subjects, if he were not to punish rebellion? But if he punish these rebels, it will be an act of justice; and who in the nation can impeach such justice? None but those whose interests and persons

are likely to suffer by it. I ask then, if, viewing the justice of God in this light, it is not as lovely as his mercy ?

Are not his justice and mercy directed to the attainment of the same object ? It is love that leads God to punish the sinner. If he withholds punishment, he neglects the highest happiness of the universe. For, I repeat it, the sinner is opposed to the highest happiness of the universe ; and if, when the highest happiness of the universe is at stake, God should treat him in the same manner he does his friends, he would neglect to maintain his own honor, and to support the cause of virtue.

We see, then, that the sentence of eternal misery is perfectly consistent with the love and benevolence of God. It is an expression of love to all holy beings, by confining their enemies, and setting bounds to their wrath and malice. God can look down on those miserable spirits now in perdition, and say, I have no pleasure in your death, in itself considered. It was love to the peace and happiness of my kingdom, that led me to confine you there. O that you had been wise ; that you had understood ; that you had sought my ways !

And now, will you charge me with making God a cruel and malignant being ? Why does God confine apostate angels ? Love to the peace and happiness of heaven requires it. Why does God punish the finally impenitent ? Love to the church and to the best interests of the world, requires it.

5. This leads me to remark, that those systems of religion which do not recognise the law, are essentially defective. They are defective, because they

leave out of sight the duty and danger of mankind. By the law we obtain a knowledge of the divine character. Without a knowledge of the law, there can be no true knowledge of God as the creator and supreme ruler of the universe. Without a knowledge of the law, we can have no true knowledge of the human character, of the odiousness of sin, and of the necessity of salvation by a Redeemer. A correct knowledge of God is the foundation of all genuine religion. The law gives us this knowledge. It exhibits the divine character and prerogatives in their true light, and distinguishes the religion of the Bible from all the systems of error and imposture which have been palmed on the world.

It is the duty of ministers to preach the law plainly and faithfully; and it is the duty of people to hear it with candor and impartiality. That minister, who neglects to exhibit the claims of the law, will forever blind and perplex his hearers, and keep them in ignorance of the perfection of God, and of the nature and extent of their sinfulness. They will sleep on in carnal security unmoved by the dangers which threaten, and the mercy which invites. God has made us moral agents, and governs us by motives. The law presents these motives.

It has strewn the path of the obedient with the richest rewards. But around the path of the transgressor, the lightnings flash and the thunders roar. He may pass on in his course, thoughtless and secure, but it ends in perdition.

The servant of Christ must not conceal these dangers. However painful the disclosure may be to his hearers,

he must remove their ignorance, tear off the mask of self-deception, and expose the delusion.

If mankind will go down to ruin, they ought to know that they do it willingly, and wilfully ; in actual violation of the demands of the law, and in opposition to the remonstrances of their own consciences. And why should a people wish to employ a minister to deceive them—to destroy their souls ? Why wish those obligations and dangers, which give pain, to be concealed until the light of eternity shall burst on their minds ?

6. We see the reason, why those who never preach the law, never witness revivals. Those preachers who contend that the benevolence of God, and the mercy of the gospel, are the most convincing, and indeed the only proper subjects of religious discussion, must be ignorant of the philosophy of the human mind, and still more ignorant of the philosophy of the human heart. Hope and fear, are the two grand avenues to the heart. If you excite fear, or raise hope, the man will act. But there is in the unregenerate heart, no foundation upon which motives of love can operate. I grant that motives of love will influence a heart filled with love to God. Such a heart can appreciate the love of God, and the mercy of the Saviour. But the carnal heart has never discovered the beauties of divine benevolence, and redeeming love. For the natural heart discerneth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The natural heart is the seat of fear. There is some foundation upon which motives of terror may operate. It is true the goodness of God displayed in creation, and redemp-

tion, has subdued the hearts of many sinners ; but it did it by turning their thoughts on themselves, to view their ingratitude, and guilt, and danger ; and this is equally the work of the law on the heart. If terror ought not to be held up to mankind, why have our legislators never learned, that a sheet written on the utility, consistency, and importance of a law, would more effectually secure the obedience and virtuous conduct of our citizens, than the multitude of penalties which are appended to our laws ? And why did Paul confess, that the law was a school-master to lead him to Christ ? It is the law which makes us feel our guilt, and our need of a Saviour ; and leads us to the humble inquiry, what must we do to be saved ? God be merciful to me a sinner, will never be heard where the law is not known, and where its claims are not felt. Paul teaches us that, without the knowledge of the law, there is no knowledge of sin. You can no more reach the heart of the sinner with offers and mercy, than you can reach the heart of the true patriot with bribes. His fears must be excited. The law must be preached. Besides there is another irresistible argument in support of the sentiment, that the law should be preached. The Saviour always preached the law. To the lawyer who tempted him, and asked him which is the great commandment in the law, he said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. To the youth who anxiously inquired of him what good thing he should do that he might inherit eternal life, Christ said, thou knowest the commandments. That is, thou knowest what the law requires. And to the lawyer who asked him,

Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life, he said, what is written in the law ? How readest thou ? and when the lawyer had given a summary of the law, Christ said unto him, this do, and thou shalt live. He said I came not to destroy the law, or the prophets. Christ not only preached the law, but he obeyed it : and we have his example in justification of preaching the law, and of adopting it as a rule of life. In addition to this, we have the examples of the apostles. The law taught Paul the necessity of regeneration, and led him to Christ. After his conversion, the law taught him the nature and extent of his obedience. Are we bound to follow the example of Christ, then we are bound to obey the law. He who perfectly obeys the law, and he who perfectly follows Christ, are perfectly alike. And if this law was fit for Adam, in his primeval state, and for angels in heaven, and is founded in the fitness of things, it is fit that it should be the criterion of moral character, both in saints and sinners.

SERMON X.

APOSTACY.

GEN. 3. 6.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat; and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat.

The fall of man is a subject on which, much time, talent, and ingenuity have been employed. And while it is fraught with intricacies, it is very plain when considered as a narration, or mere matter of fact. Man was innocent; and he became guilty: he was holy; and he became depraved. This then considered as a mere matter of fact, is as plain as possible; and is capable of demonstrative proof. But when the manner of his fall is taken into consideration, a wide field is open for the play of imagination, and the speculation of fancy. It is the general opinion, that sin had its origin in heaven, in the breasts of aspiring angels. And while some suppose that it arose among the lower ranks of celestial intelligences, who proudly and ambitiously aspired to higher honor and dignity than those which their creator had assigned them; others think it arose from a desire to wrest from the Son of God the glory of his embassy, when the question was asked in heaven, who shall be commissioned to save

man? But how sin could spring into being among a class of beings purely intellectual and holy, is at least difficult of solution. Indeed it is impossible to account for it unless God caused it. Their only existence was a holy one; and holiness cannot beget sin. But we are more immediately concerned with the fall of man. And here I would observe, that before the fall of man, there were sinful intelligences, who had intercourse with this world. They found man accessible. He was as we have shown, sinless, yet free, and voluntary in all his choices. He was in a covenant of works, and not in a covenant of grace. So that he did not, as some suppose, fall from grace; for, before the fall he was not, he could not be a subject of grace. He stood by merit alone, while as yet, it was not known to him that there were provisions for pardon in case of disobedience. The fall of Adam was an event, which God saw best in the system of things, should take place, though the act of transgression was in itself considered, offensive in his sight. God had some intention in creating man just as he did; and he had some intention in governing him, just as he has governed him. If God did not anticipate the apostacy of Adam, he was deficient in knowledge; and if he could stand by an idle spectator, and see the fair world which he had made, marred and mangled, when he had power to crush the foe, he was deficient in goodness, and love to his creatures, unless he saw that the fall of man was on the whole for the best. Can it be said, I love a friend, when I stand by and see him tortured, or torn in pieces, while I have power to destroy his enemy? God had created the world for his own glory. And on

supposition, that the best interests of the universe, were not to be promoted by the fall of man, the divine Being, for a time deserted his own work ; and was so destitute of love to the universe, that he had no goodness, or regard to the happiness of his creatures. Now an event may have a very important bearing on the great system, which in itself, and by itself, is undesirable and odious. God might, and undoubtedly did choose to have the fall take place, though the enmity and wretchedness in which the fall involved the human family, are most dreadful. God can bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, order from confusion, and make the wrath of man praise him. Prov. 16. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself ; yea even the wicked for the day of evil. Did God ever do any thing without intention ? and is it a mishap of Deity, which has let sin, with all its millions of evils, into the world ? You will all grant that God intended something in the creation of man ; and what were his intentions ? Have these intentions been gratified, or disappointed ? I will make a single statement, and leave you to your own deductions on the subject. When God created our first parents, and placed them in Eden, he either intended they should fall, or he intended they should not fall, or he was indifferent about it. If God designed they should not fall, he is disappointed ; for they did fall. If he was indifferent about their fall, he was indifferent about sin, which is contrary to all the testimony of scripture, and to all the tenure of his providence. God has condemned, threatened, and punished sin ; and his soul abhors it. And if God was not indifferent about the fall of man, nor had not designed that he should not fall,

then he designed that he should fall ; and he therefore caused him to fall ; for there cannot be a fourth proposition. God either determined he should fall, or that he should not fall, or he was indifferent about it. When I say God determined Adam should fall, I do not mean that God forced him to fall, or that he took away his free agency, and accountability ; but God determined he should fall freely and voluntarily, of his own choice. In causing men to choose, God does not take away their free agency ; so far from it, that this is the only thing which makes them free agents. Free agency consists in choosing. God causes them to choose ; and thus makes them free agents. That God did cause the apostacy to take place, I think I am able to prove from scripture, to the satisfaction of every candid mind. It will be readily granted by all who believe in the doctrine of the trinity, that Christ was as a Saviour slain from the foundation of the world. That is, there was an eternal relation which the persons in the trinity bore to each other ; and that this relation must be brought out to the view of intelligent beings. Long before time began, Jesus Christ existed possessing the office and character of Saviour. And now I ask, a Saviour of whom ? of holy beings ? But they needed no Saviour : they are already pure and holy. And did Christ from eternity, possess the character and offices of Saviour, and is that character never to be manifested, and are these offices never to be exercised ? They never could have been exercised unless sin had taken place. Sin was the occasion of manifesting the character and offices of the incarnate God. The Saviour would never have visited the earth ; and an-

gels and men, would have been forever ignorant of the second person in the trinity, if sin had not taken place. And is it possible that God had prepared a Saviour, before man was created, and had slain him in his own mind, before the foundation of the world, and yet did not know, or did not design that there should be an occasion for manifesting Christ? The very fact that Christ was prepared from the foundation of the world, to make atonement for sin, proves that God from eternity, intended that man should sin. For why should he make provisions for an event which was never to take place. Again it will be admitted that the Holy Ghost existed in the character of sanctifier from eternity. But a sanctifier of whom? Of holy beings? They need no sanctification, they can have no sanctification: for they are, and always have been perfectly holy. And if the Holy Ghost was a Sanctifier from eternity, there must be some sinful beings to be sanctified. But if sin had not taken place, there never would, or could have been unholy beings to be sanctified; and consequently the Holy Ghost never could have had an opportunity to exercise his office. On supposition that sin might not have taken place, the second and third persons in the trinity might have been forever concealed from the view of men and angels. But the declarative glory of God, consists in displaying the divine character in the view of moral and intelligent beings. If sin had never taken place, the Saviour and the Sanctifier of men, would not have been manifested; and even the beauties of the Godhead could have never shone with their divine lustre. Sin was the occasion of

bringing out to the view of the intelligent universe, the beauties of Deity.

Again, without sin, we cannot conceive how the moral attributes of God, could have been displayed before created intelligences. What is divine justice, but the punishment of the guilty? But without sin, none could have been guilty. What is mercy, but kindness exercised towards the miserable? But without sin, none could have been miserable. What is grace, but a free favor bestowed on the ill-deserving? But without sin none would have been ill-deserving. It is therefore plain, that without sin, many of the moral attributes of God, could not have been displayed. Who ever heard of an innocent creature suffering punishment, or receiving pardon? It was never known that God was merciful, until miserable creatures were visited with mercy. It was never known that God was gracious until after the apostacy.

When man was ruined and wretched, God interposed; and though he deserved nothing but wrath, God withheld deserved punishment, and bestowed undeserved gifts of salvation. Grace is pardon and salvation, conferred on the guilty. The song of redemption was never heard in heaven, until man had sinned, and was bought off from suffering the penalty of the law, by the blood of Christ.

But there is another view which we may take of the apostacy of man. It has before been observed, that the fall of man took place under the government of God; and that he possessed power to prevent it had he seen

best. He has not prevented it, he therefore saw best not to prevent it ; and by consequence, saw best to have it take place. We know, that sin took place under his wise and gracious reign ; and there is an easy and correct way to reconcile it with his spotless character ; and that is, by supposing God will dispose of it in such a manner as to produce more good than could have been produced without its introduction.

It may not promote the personal happiness of the transgressor, but it will advance the great interests of the universe. The great object of God in the introduction of sin, was not to render his creatures guilty and miserable, but to display to the intelligent universe, the perfections of his character. God never rejoices in the misery of his creatures in itself considered ; but he chooses to glorify his perfections with sinners as well as saints. An event is very different when considered by itself, and when considered in connexion with the interests of the universe. I have always doubted the propriety of the expression, that God permitted, or suffered sin to take place. Permitting and suffering, imply that he had rather it would not take place ; yet as he could not do any better he permitted it to take place. He chooses to have it otherwise, yet since he is driven to the necessity of choosing one of two evils, he permits things thus to exist. The principal reason for which I object to the terms permit and suffer, when used in application to the existence of sin, is, that these terms are never so employed in the Bible. Terms as clearly expressing causation, as any which are used in any language, are employed in the scriptures in application to

the existence of sin. In Isaiah it is said, the Lord forms the light, and creates darkness; he makes peace and creates evil. Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it? He turned their hearts to hate his people; to deal subtilly with his servants. I might bring forward a great number of passages in which the agency of God is spoken of, in the causation of sin. I know not, that we are even justified in saying, that one event which ever took place, would have contributed more to the happiness of the universe, if it had been different. I dare not tell God, that there might have been a better world made than this; and that it might have been governed on better principles. It is true that I, with my weak and limited mind, should have driven Satan from Paradise, and crushed him before he had effected the apostacy of man. But does it follow, that because I, a weak and fallible mortal, should have done thus, that the plan of God is defective?

How is it that God let Satan into this fair and happy world which he had but just completed, and filled with peace? How could he let the fell monster enter Paradise, and draw away our first parents from their allegiance to God? How could Satan enter God's world, and plant in the hearts of Adam and Eve, the most bitter enmity against Jehovah; and poison the fountain of moral being on earth, so that vile passion, and crime, and sin, and death, should reign through every rank? Even thousands of infants partaking of the moral corruption, have suffered and died. All the sorrow, pain, and misery, which ever have been, are now, or ever shall be endured by the human family, are the effects of sin. Every

sufferer may trace his pains, distresses, and miseries, to the depravity of the human heart, the effect of the apostacy. But why all this sin, misery, and death, if no good could result from it? If the existence of natural and moral evil is not on the whole for the best, it is extremely difficult to account for its existence; and it is impossible to reconcile it with the goodness of God. But on the ground that it is best, all things considered, that sin should take place, it is perfectly easy to account for its existence, and perfectly easy to reconcile it with the goodness of God.

The sins of Adam are not imputed to us in such a sense, that we are to answer for his sins. We can no more be made answerable for Adam's sins, than he could be made answerable for ours. His acts are not our acts; and his sins are not laid over upon us; but in consequence of his apostacy, we are all born with corrupt natures. In consequence of Adam's first transgression, all his posterity are constituted sinners. His sin was not the cause, nor the reason of the sin of his posterity, but the occasion of it. That stream which began to flow in Adam, has descended from generation to generation, spreading its dreadful effects, through all grades of earthly intelligences. How is it, I again ask, that sin has entered the world, sundered the cords of union, separated man from his Maker, filled prisons and hospitals, poor houses and asylums; crimsoned the fields of conflict, and spread devastation and death through domestic, social, and civil community, and in the world to come has created a dismal hell? Had you possessed the government of the world, would you have suffered such a

state of things as this? Would you have admitted sin, with all its evils into the system? Would you not have annihilated Satan as he approached Eden? or barred the gates of that holy place against him? or would you not have strengthened the holiness of our first parents, so that they might have endured the shock of temptation unmoved? And where is the man who dares indulge the thought, that he could have given the affairs of this world a better arrangement? Who dares charge God with a neglect of his works? Who, with want of wisdom to plan, and goodness to choose, and power to execute all his wise and benevolent purposes? This world is the property of God; and if it is not well planned and governed, it is because the divine character is in some respect deficient. Who will take it upon himself to point out that deficiency?

It is true sin is odious and detestable. God hates it and every holy being hates it; and the wicked will hereafter hate its effects. But God had wise reasons for bringing it into existence. Some of those reasons now lie concealed from our view. It may be said of some of his ways what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. In various parts of the volume of truth, God has told us that here we see only in part, and know in part. The grand plot of the drama, is not yet developed. But O, how I tremble for the man, who is unwilling to acknowledge the agency of God, in all the affairs of the universe! And how I tremble for the man, who can blasphemously arraign the divine Being, and impeach his character and conduct, as though he would even improve the plans of Deity, and teach God knowledge!

If there is any thing wrong in the plans and government of the universe, it must be charged to God ; for he is the sole Creator, proprietor, and governor of all things. There may be unholy dispositions in the hearts of free, dependent agents, for which they are accountable ; but if the great arrangements of the universe are defective, the Lord is answerable. How often do we see our fellow creatures manifest, either in actions or words, their disapprobation of the providence of God and of the constitution of things. Some men imagine their own personal interest more valuable than the interests of all other beings ; and if God has seen fit to promote the interest of millions in preference to that of a single individual, his conduct is called in question, and his character impeached. It is true, man should never love sin in himself, or in others. But there is a vast difference between humble and godly sorrow for sin, and charging God with folly because he has seen fit to bring it into the system. There is an essential difference between the intention of God in the introduction of sin, and the intention of the sinner in transgression. In the introduction of sin, God intends the greatest good of the intelligent universe ; in the commission of sin, the sinner intends his own private happiness, though it should be to the destruction of the happiness of all other beings : God designs good ; the sinner designs evil.

In closing this discourse, I shall attempt to obviate some objections which have been raised against the foregoing sentiment on the introduction of sin into the world.

1. It is said, if God determined sin should take place, and has an agency in the affections and actions of wicked men, they are not free agents, and consequently not blameworthy. The answer to this objection is plain and easy. God has no such agency in the actions of either good or bad beings, as to destroy their praise or blameworthiness. We might just as well say, because God has an agency in the affections and actions of holy beings, he destroys their praiseworthiness, as to say, because he has an agency in the affections and actions of sinful beings, he destroys their blameworthiness. God can bring about any event he pleases, without the least infringement on the free agency of man. I know that I am free, and so do you. You feel free; and treat your fellow creatures as free. And God commands and threatens, rewards and punishes men as free and accountable. Adam and Eve were free in eating the forbidden fruit; and every holy or sinful action and volition of the human family have been free. But free agency does not exclude God from the government of the world, nor from an agency in the hearts and lives of all rational beings. If God has no control over the choices and actions of men, how can he accomplish those prophecies, which depend on the choices and actions of men. Besides, if God does not control mankind, he does not know what end will be accomplished by all his works. Phil. 2. 12, 13. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Psalms 105. 25. He turned their hearts to hate his people. Here men are said to

act, and to be acted upon : God working in them, and they working at the same time.

2. It is objected, that the introduction of sin is inconsistent with the goodness of the divine Being. We read God is good, and his tender mercies are over all his works. This objection is made on the supposition, that God had no wise reasons for the introduction of sin, and that he will make it subserve no valuable ends. It supposes further that the object of Deity in the introduction of sin, was only to make his creatures miserable. Now I grant, if God does not promote any valuable end by the admission of sin, if he had not good reasons for having it take place under his government, that it cannot be reconciled with the goodness of God. If the only object is, to have man sinful and miserable, it destroys the goodness and benevolence of God. But if God secures a display of his glory, and promotes the interests of the universe in a more effectual manner than could otherwise be done, it does not militate at all against the goodness of God. God never did, and he never will inflict a single pain on his creatures, because he delights in their sufferings, in themselves considered ; and he will never let a single sin exist, which will not on the whole, be for the general good. And why should he ? The hearts of all men are in his hand ; and he turneth them whithersoever he will. He always employs all his power, wisdom and love, in the pursuit of the highest good of the universe. And not an action, or an event will ever take place which is injurious to the great system. All sin, misery, and wretchedness, he will cause to result in the advancement of his glory ; though sinful beings do not

mean so, neither do their hearts think so. They mean sin for evil; God designs it for good. Nebuchadnezzar afflicted the children of Israel to gratify his malignant and ambitious heart; but he was all the time accomplishing the divine will, in punishing that wicked nation, that they might be reformed and brought back to God. It is God who hath said this, and not man. Isaiah 10. 5—7. The same is true of every sin. The sinner does not mean to glorify God; he means evil: he means to destroy the cause of God. But Jehovah means to be glorified by the conduct of the sinner. He will overrule it for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. But the sinner is just as guilty as though God had no power to make it answer a good end.

3. It is objected that if God will be glorified in the sinful actions and affections of men, then we may just as well hate God, as love him. So much is certain, God will be glorified even in the damnation of sinners. Rev. 19. 3. And again they said Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God, that sat on the throne, saying Amen, Alleluia. Here the righteous are said to rejoice not in the misery of the wicked, but in the display of divine justice, made in their punishment.

There are voluntary and involuntary, willing and unwilling instruments of divine glory. The voluntary and willing instruments of his glory, are those who love and rejoice in the character and service of God: the involuntary and unwilling instruments of his glory, are those who hate his character and service, and suffer the just

demerit of their sins. It is utterly impossible for a man to wish to glorify God, while under the influence of a sinful heart. He opposes his glory, his counsels and his love. But it is consoling that he cannot wrest himself from the hand of Deity. And if God cannot make use of him as a monument of mercy, he can use him as a monument of justice : so that there will be no useless materials in the universe. Ps. 145. 10. All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. Ps. 76. 10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. . And what will be the effect of all this wrangling with God, finding fault with his ways and impeaching his wisdom. It will never change the mind or the plan of God. He is of one mind, and none can turn him. And should we deny the agency of God in all beings, and in all worlds, because our limited minds cannot comprehend the natures and relations of all the Creator's works? How illy does it become vain man, dissatisfied with God, to strive to banish him from the world ; to deny his agency in all things, and multiply absurdities and contradictions, to involve the divine character in guilt. All these exertions are like the efforts of an insect to throw the earth from its orbit. To say we may as well practice sin as holiness, if God intended sin should take place, is plainly absurd. For we know God condemns sin, and our own consciences condemn it. God never determined a single sin should exist, only as it is the voluntary and wicked act of the sinner. It is an unchangeable ordinance of heaven, that the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. * Man is incapable of acting in view of the great plan of the universe. That

plan is the rule of the divine conduct ; the revealed will of God is the rule of human conduct. It would be impious to believe that God has not wise reasons for all his conduct ; and it would be equally impious to think of justification in the sight of God, while neither the heart nor the life is conformed to the divine requisitions. It is true, God will make use of every incorrigible wretch of the human family, to complete the glory of the universe, however unwilling he may be to contribute to such an object. But no thanks to the sinner. If any man is disposed to make use of divine sovereignty, and the agency of God in the sinful volitions, choices, and actions of wicked men, as a cloak for his sins, let him think again, that God exercises no such agency as to destroy his freedom or accountability. Let him reflect, too, that it is in vain to attempt to wrest the sceptre from the hand of God. He does reign, and he will reign, God over all, blessed forever. O become reconciled to God, and adore the wisdom and perfection of his plan.

4. It is said, if sin is for the general good, the more there is the better. The objection itself is illogical ; for who does not see, that more than enough of any thing, is too much ? Does it follow, that because sin is necessary, and for the glory of God, therefore universal impiety would promote his glory ? Because the general good required the fall of some of the angels, does it follow, that it required the fall of all angels ? The glory of God did not require so much sin in the world at the fall of Adam, as immediately before the flood. Nor did it require as much immediately after the flood, as at the crucifixion of Christ. We cannot see how Christ could

have been crucified and slain, without wicked instruments to perpetrate that dreadful deed. Who may not see, that the enormous sin, committed in crucifying the Lord of Glory, was the occasion of the highest expression of love to man, that ever was manifested. If at any period of time, there should be more sin in the world than there is occasion for at that period, the glory of God would not be promoted. Because there is just pain enough in the human family, it does not follow that it would be better for every man to be in agony. It must be obvious to every one, that though sin is necessary to the general good, and was introduced by him whose wisdom, goodness, and power, are never to be impeached, yet if it should exceed the bounds which infinite wisdom has prescribed, it would be as calamitous to the universe as it is to those who practice it. It would be just as inconsistent for God to give it a more extensive existence, as it would be to impair his own glory, or to take away the voluntary enmity of the sinner, and thus destroy his guilt.

SERMON XI.

MESSIAH AND ATONEMENT.

GEN. 3. 14, 15.

And the Lord said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field : upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

This denunciation against the serpent contains the first prophecy and promise of a Saviour. The serpent may have been originally the most beautiful and harmless of inferior animals. But as he became the medium of the temptation and apostacy of our first parents, as a punishment of his temerity, and as a monument of divine displeasure against sin, he has become one of the most baneful and offensive of the animal creation. He occupies the lowest grade, and receives the least mercy from man. But lest he should triumph over his momentary success, God pledged himself, that though the serpent had succeeded in effecting the apostacy, and would continue to waste the heritage of God, yet a deliverer should arise from the seed of the woman, who should gather a church which should gain a final victory over the prince of darkness. He should, by open violence and persecution, by secret machinations and slander, by artful temptations and pernicious heresies, wage war against the

seed of the woman, and unsuccessfully contend against the exertions and prayers, the patience and holiness of the saints. God had threatened our first parents with death in case of disobedience. They disobeyed; and the penalty was immediately executed in part. The question here arises, why did not God instantly inflict on them punishment equal to the demerit of their crime? and if there was a moment's interval between the commission of sin, and the presentation of the Saviour, was God during that moment just? The only answer to this question is, that the second person in the trinity, in anticipation of the fall, had existed in his official character. So that as the redeemer and the atonement then existed in the divine mind, God could treat sinners as he ever has treated them since,—arrest the punishment due to sin, as far as he pleased, and execute it as far as he pleased. The stipulations between the Father and the Son, concerning the salvation of man, existed antecedently to the fall; and there never was a time when it was not consistent for God to extend mercy to the guilty. Still the developement of the plan of salvation and of the Mediator, was not made until this text was given. This passage does not describe the character of the Mediator, nor the time of his incarnation. It directs man to a method of escape from deserved punishment, though it does not give him very clear and definite views of the author of salvation, nor of the several steps by which his deliverance is to be effected. This was the twilight of revelation; and nothing could be seen, but a few distant, and diffuse rays. The dispensation of types was soon introduced; and the mental vision of man became more

clear. Sacrifices and the paschal lamb were typical of the Lamb of God ; and the divers washings, the waters of purification, and the sprinkling of blood, derived their virtue and significancy from the atoning blood of Christ. The prophets used a phraseology in relation to the second person in the trinity, more and more clear, until all doubts respecting the lineage and incarnation of the Saviour vanished. Moses, Isaiah, and the minor prophets, were so full and clear as to give an unshaken stability to the faith of those who longed and looked for his appearance. The time of his advent was pointed out. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come. Every one might know from this prophecy, that the crumbling of the Jewish nation, and especially its dissolution and dispersion, proved that the Messiah had come. Many of the miracles which he was to perform, were likewise noticed. He was to open the prison doors, and loose the chains of the prisoners ; to unstop the ears of the deaf ; to open the eyes of the blind ; to raise up those who were bowed down with disease and infirmity ; and to raise the dead. He was to preach the gospel to the poor, and to declare the acceptable year of the Lord. The entire state of the Jewish nation ; the anticipations of the most pious in the church ; the voice of prophecy ; the signs attending his birth and ministry ; the testimony of John, and the perfect correspondence of his character and conduct with the types, shadows, and predictions of the ancient scriptures, placed his character in an unquestionable light. After all, the light from the Old Testament was so faint and glimmering, as to leave many in

doubt even at his advent. But those doubts were the result of carelessness, ignorance or prejudice. The light of the scriptures was sufficient to satisfy an enlightened, unprejudiced and inquiring mind. Nothing is more plainly predicted than the character and offices of Christ. He was to be the descendant of Abraham and David, and his throne was to stand forever. He was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea. To his countrymen he was to be as a root out of dry ground, without beauty, or comeliness; a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief. He was to be despised and rejected of men; to come unto his own, and his own receive him not. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. The kings of the earth were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. David gives us a description of the character and conduct of him who was to betray the Saviour; and Isaiah, the evangelical prophet, has detailed the transactions of his crucifixion. Daniel predicted, that the Messiah should be cut off, not for his own sins. This subject is so variously and frequently mentioned in the ancient scriptures, that from a general description of Christ, you may descend to a most minute and particular one. Christ was the end of prophecy; the illustrious personage in whom all predictions concentrated, an object towards which the eyes of all the pious were directed: He was the chief corner stone laid in Zion. A rock of offence to the carnal Jews, but elect, precious to all the promised seed, whether Jews or Gentiles. This Saviour

long predicted, and long held up to man in types and shadows, at length assumes a body—was born in Bethlehem, and suffered on Mount Calvary. The third day after his crucifixion, he arose from the dead, and commenced the work of intercession for his church. He finished his sufferings, and abolished the ceremonial dispensation on the cross. From this time the old dispensation gradually disappeared, and the new dispensation gradually received its perfection. The atonement was completed, when the Saviour expired on the cross. This is the only transaction which makes it consistent for God to pardon sinners. As the penalty of the law which man had broken, consisted in sufferings, it is obvious that the atonement was made by suffering. The blood of Christ, the cross of Christ, the suffering of death, tasting death, and laying down his life, are phrases of similar import. They all refer to that affecting and overwhelming scene, in which God displayed his hatred of sin, and his love of the law; and which rendered it consistent for him to exercise mercy towards the guilty. Christ as mere man was under obligation to obey all the laws of God, and without perfect obedience he could not be saved. This obedience he rendered, and thus secured his own salvation, and qualified himself to be a spotless and vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world.

The Deity of Christ could not have suffered. His human body and human soul, could not have suffered in the sense in which a sinful being suffers; for he had no guilt, and consequently no remorse, no self-condemnation. But as he was the substitute for sinners, it was necessary he should endure the penalty annexed to trans-

gression, though he endured neither the quality nor the quantity of sufferings which sinners would have endured had they been sentenced to eternal perdition. He endured the sufferings of sinners so far as an innocent being could endure them. But as he was perfectly innocent, and as his Deity could not suffer, he could not endure that remorse and self-condemnation which sinners must have endured. And as he could not have undergone precisely the same quality and quantity of sufferings, which sinners must have endured, had they been doomed to everlasting misery. It is therefore evident, notwithstanding all the dignity which the Deity of Christ, imparts to his sufferings, the atonement must be considered as a symbolical exhibition. That this view does not destroy the value of the atonement, or derogate at all from its importance, is clear from the fact, that this is the only transaction which renders it just for God to forgive sins. Rom. 3. 25, 26. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness ; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. While we should suppress excessive inquisitiveness as to the quantity of suffering which the Saviour endured, it is sufficient for us to know that they were excruciating, and sufficient to answer the purposes of God in their infliction. That the Saviour suffered extremely is evident from the consideration, that he bore the sins of the world in his own body on the tree ; that he was wounded for our transgression, and bruised for our iniquities ; that he sweat, as it were drops of blood in the

garden of Gethsemane ; that he said, my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death ; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?

To the objection, that this view of the atonement depreciates its value, and would render the sufferings of any human being equally efficacious, I reply, that no mere human being is sinless. And if he were sinless, still as he is under law, and dependent, his sufferings cannot be vicarious. God cannot punish the innocent, consistently with the principles of the divine government, unless that being is the property of himself, and voluntarily offers himself up to suffer. A created and dependent being, is the property of God ; and there can be nothing expiatory, or vicarious in returning to God the property which he has never alienated. There could be no atoning efficacy in the sufferings of a martyr, or of any mere man. But God manifested in the flesh, was every way adequate to make a complete atonement. He could say, I have power to lay down my life ; and I have power to take it again. Of him the Father could say, thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. In view of this atonement, God withheld the execution of the sentence denounced against Adam ; and through this medium, every blessing has descended to man. As God had pledged himself to punish transgression, it was inconsistent with his perfections to extend a single favor to the guilty, unless some method could be devised to honor the law, and maintain the purity of the divine character. Man was barred from heaven by the depravity of his own heart, and the inflexible justice of the law. God had power and benevolence enough to pardon man, had

not his truth and law been in the way. The atonement could not change the ability or disposition of God to save. It only removed the obstacle which renders it incompatible with divine justice to forgive sin. Pardon, justification, adoption and sanctification, are all the effect of the sovereign good pleasure of God, exercised through the atonement. The atonement was made that God might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. By his perfections and veracity, God was prohibited the exercise of his grace and mercy. The law guarded the way of life. Now if this law could be honored, the way would then be opened for the exercise of pardon to the guilty. Christ being both human and divine, was the only being adequate to cancel the demands of divine justice, and bring in everlasting righteousness. He died to open the way for the Father to exercise mercy to any extent, and to as many individuals as he pleased. There was an understanding, and an agreement, between the Father and the Son, that the atonement should be efficacious in the salvation of the elect. This, we call, the covenant of redemption. And yet the atonement in itself was nothing but provision; and without an application by the agency of the Holy Spirit, none could have been saved. It should be remembered, that there is a difference between the atonement and the application of the atonement. By application of the atonement, I mean the different blessings which are bestowed on saints and sinners on account of the atonement. These blessings comprise temporal and spiritual mercies, and the gift of salvation. The evidences that the atonement is general, are the following :

1. All men are placed here in a state of probation. Every sinner on the first transgression, deserves to be cut off immediately, and to be punished forever. As the atonement is the only ground on which the penalty of the law could be suspended, and a probationary season granted to man, and as all men enjoy this probation, an opportunity to secure eternal salvation, the atonement must be general.

2. The invitations of the gospel are general, that is, made to sinners without exception. An offer, to be sincere, must hold out something valuable and attainable. An invitation to accept blessings which are not provided, is insincere; for neither the disposition nor indisposition of those to whom the invitation is made, can alter the nature of the invitation. It is therefore impossible, if the atonement is not general, to reconcile the preaching of Christ and his apostles, with honesty and sincerity.

3. It is made the duty of all who hear the gospel, to accept of Christ as their Saviour. But it cannot be their duty, if Christ has not died for them.

4. Those who refuse to accept of Christ as their Saviour, are condemned and punished for their unbelief. But how can they be justly punished for not accepting a Saviour who was never provided for them?

5. The atonement was a satisfaction to public justice; and from its very nature must be general.

6. All men do receive many blessings at the hands of God. These they receive in consequence of the atonement; for where there is no atonement, no mercy can be shown. Since many miseries, therefore, are betso-

ed upon all men on account of Christ's death, it follows, that Christ died for all.

7. The testimony of scripture is express and full upon this subject. 1 John 2. 2. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Heb. 2. 9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 2. Cor. 5. 14, 15. 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. John. 1. 29. The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 3. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. 2 Pet. 2. 1. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. But in what sense could the persons here spoken of as sent to destruction be bought, if no atonement had been made for them? 1 Tim. 4. 10. Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe. Rom. 5. 18. Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness

of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. The meaning of this passage is this : As the sentence of eternal death was passed upon all men in consequence of Adam's transgression, so the free unmerited offer of eternal salvation is made to all men in consequence of the atonement of Christ.

I infer from this subject,

1. That the atonement has not removed the guilt, nor changed the moral character of man.

I have before remarked that the atonement is simple provision, unapplied provision. The atonement was made wholly on God's account. It has not removed original or actual sin. All those notions, that the atonement removed the guilt and sinfulness of infants unconditionally and universally, and the guilt of adults conditionally, are sentiments, which have no support from scripture. The infant needs the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost on his heart, as much as the adult. And all our hope of their salvation rests on the agency of the Holy Spirit in applying the atonement, and not in any special provisions made for them in the atonement.

And all those arguments in support of universal salvation, built on the general nature of the atonement, are baseless. To prove the salvation of all men, we must prove something more than provision for the salvation of all men, we must prove that this provision will savingly be applied. The atonement simply considered, does not secure the salvation of one man. It only proves that God can save men. Now there is a great difference between proving he can, and proving he will save all men.

The former is easily proved ; the latter cannot be proved. The scriptures, and not the atonement, prove that he will make those provisions efficacious in the salvation of all that believe. He will bring just as many to repentance by his sovereign grace, as he has given to his Son in the covenant of redemption. Now it is vain to pervert the truths of the Bible, by incorporating into our views, human and unscriptural inventions. Let us receive the truth just as it is revealed. The atonement has not altered the moral affections of the human heart. The heart, if unchanged, remains the same as though no atonement had been made. And all those hopes of salvation, founded on the plenitude of the atonement, and not on the operations of the Holy Ghost, in rendering it effectual to salvation, are false and delusive.

I infer from this subject,

2. That those who perish are inexcusable. They are inexcusable, because there is no want of provisions. God is sincere in his offers, and reasonable in his requisitions. And in the atonement which God has made, he has made provisions for every outcast of our race. The gate of mercy and gospel grace, has been open from the day on which this text was uttered, until the present moment. The voice of prophets and apostles, and their successors in office, has been, there is a fountain opened for Judah, and for Jerusalem. Behold the Lamb of God. The voice from the throne of the Eternal, has mingled with that of the ambassadors of the cross, look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved ; for I am God, and there is none else. And the Lamb of God stood up in the last day, that great day of the feast, and cried,

saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. What can more clearly prove the inexcusableness of sinners, than this cloud of witnesses, all pointing to the Lamb of God, and proclaiming as with one voice, the ability, and the abundance of salvation, that dwell in him. Heaven is represented as gazing with amazement on the scene which displayed the love of God to man. And what bars the sinner from a participation of the joys of heaven? Alas nothing but his own wilfulness, his criminal, inexcusable wilfulness; and for this he is answerable, and not God.

I close this sermon by pointing you to this scene presented by a suffering and an atoning Saviour, as an unparalleled illustration of divine love. When man was helpless and hopeless, and as guilty as he was hopeless, God provided a Saviour for him;—not by plucking an angel from his throne, but his Son from his bosom. He did not wait until man was plunged in ruin, nor even till he had raised a hopeless, supplicating eye. No sooner had man fallen, than mercy fled to his relief. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

SERMON XII.

DEPRAVITY.

ROM. 8. 7.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

I have conducted my series of systematic sermons, down to the character, advent and crucifixion of the Messiah. I have proved the true Messiahship of Christ; and attempted to illustrate and defend the doctrine of the atonement. I am now to examine the doctrines of the gospel, or the doctrines which Christ and his apostles taught. The gospel is that system of truths contained in the scriptures, and more especially and clearly exhibited in the New Testament. The New Testament is a continuation of the Old. They are mutually interwoven and harmonious. The doctrines of the gospel, are called doctrines of grace, because they relate to the plan of salvation by grace; or because these doctrines are the means, in the hands of the Spirit, of the pardon, sanctification, and redemption of sinners. To illustrate the more clearly the harmony, and mutual dependence of these doctrines, I shall begin with the depravity of the human heart. The man who understands this doctrine correctly and scripturally, will see the consistency and necessity of the other doctrines; and will be less liable

to err in his faith and feelings. I know of no class of men denying the depravity of man, whose religious faith and feelings are entitled to any degree of respect, though there is a diversity of opinion, as to the nature and extent of this depravity. As it is one object in preaching to enlighten mankind, and to rectify their views, every thing that would confuse and bewilder the mind, ought to be avoided. The sinfulness of man should be delineated in true colors ; and justice and affection will admit of no exaggeration.

The difference between natural and revealed religion must be kept in view. And the moral powers of the heart, must be clearly distinguished from the natural powers of the mind, that there may be no blending of things which are different. The natural, or animal affections, are not depraved. Those constitutional, and instinctive affections, which we exercise towards our families and friends, are essentially different from moral affections. Our natural sympathies, or feelings excited by the sufferings, or joys of others, are similar to natural affections. That these are distinct from the moral affections, is evident from the consideration, that they exist in other animals as well as in man. And they may exist in a high state of perfection in that man, in whom moral sensibility is almost extinct. The affections with which a parent loves his children, are not the same kind of affections, as those with which the saint loves God. The man who hates God, may love his children as ardently, as the man who loves him. The natural faculties of the mind, are reason, memory, perception, and conscience. Reason is a power of receiving, comparing, and com-

pounding ideas. This power may be exercised independently of the heart, or will, and therefore is not moral. If we hear a man assert, that two and two are equal to four, we cannot avoid seeing the truth of the proposition, whether we wish to see it or not.

Memory is a power of retaining and recalling past ideas. This faculty may be exercised independently of the will, and therefore is not moral. If we hear what we have heard before, or see what we have seen before, we cannot avoid recollecting that we have heard or seen such things, whether we wish to recollect them or not.

Perception is a power of receiving ideas independently of the will. If we open our eyes in a clear day, we cannot help perceiving the visible objects around us, whether we wish to perceive them or not.

Conscience is likewise a power of receiving ideas and impressions, independently of the will. If we are credibly told that one man has killed another maliciously, we cannot avoid perceiving the criminality of the murderer, whether we wish to perceive it or not. The conscience is sometimes called moral, not because it is either good or bad in itself, but because it is the faculty by which we distinguish between right and wrong in moral conduct. These natural faculties or powers of the mind, are not depraved, though through the influence of the depraved heart, they are often devoted to wicked purposes. It is further evident, that the natural faculties are not depraved, because they are the same in all intellectual beings, whether sinful or holy. That three times three make nine is a conclusion of reason; which is just as clearly perceived by a sinful, as by a holy being. Other-

wise the saint and sinner in any process of reasoning could never come to the same conclusion. They could never agree in the settlement of their accounts. They could never agree on the value of any article. It therefore follows that the reason of man is not depraved. The same is true of all his other natural faculties.

I now come to consider the moral power or faculty of man. By moral, I mean, the exercises, or affections of the heart in view of right and wrong. Is there any thing in the feelings and conduct of mankind, any thing in the moral character of the world, or in the volume of truth, which can aid us in ascertaining the kind, and degree of human depravity? The answer to this question is very plain. There is abundance of evidence on this point, both in the character of man, and in the positive declarations of scripture. The universal prevalence of jealousy, suspicion, retaliation, and revenge, the broils, contentions, disputes, litigations, and crimes of every complexion, which have, from the first, bathed this world in tears, and converted it into a house of mourning and of misery, are evidences that the heart of man is depraved. The depravity of the heart, consists in its total enmity against God. All its affections, designs, desires, volitions and passions, are selfish, sensual, and at enmity with the character, laws, and government of God. All the bolts, and bars, and prisons, and penalties; all the securities, conventions, and civil tribunals, and all the restraints and prohibitions in which the world abounds, show the impurity of the human heart. Deduct the achievements of grace, and the moral world is universally corrupt. Different individuals are under different de-

degrees of restraint, from natural amiableness, or natural honesty, from the influence of timidity, or education, from rational convictions, and speculative knowledge, and divine influence : So that we are not to judge of depravity from what we actually see, but from what we should see, were it under no controlling power, and subject to no impassible barriers. Enough, however, is seen from the moral character of this world, to prove the moral and total corruption of the natural heart. Every generation has illustrated the spirit of disobedience, and its natural inclination to rebellion against God, and defection from his laws. There is nothing in the moral character of our world, which would justify a conjecture, that man has any native holiness. If men have native holiness of heart, why have they never asserted and proved it, and assumed a distinctive, and separate existence? Why has not some community, or some individual exhibited the loveliness of native purity? But it is vain to press difficulties, and multiply evidences from observation, when we have a more sure word of prophecy on this subject. The scriptures are full and explicit on this point. They tell us plainly in what it consists, its nature, and extent. We must rest our faith implicitly on the revelation of God. If the Bible tells us that the nature of depravity consists in infirmities, and the absence of holiness, we must believe it; and if it tells us that its nature is enmity against God, we are equally bound to believe it. And if the Bible says, this depravity is partial, then it is partial; but if total, then it is total. Let God be true, and every man a liar. We should come to this subject, with perfect candor, and deeply impressed

with the sentiment, that we are exposed to err in our decisions from ignorance of our own hearts, and too exalted notions of our own goodness. The proof of human depravity is greatly strengthened by the unanimity of testimony among the inspired writers. Before the flood it was said, every imagination of the thoughts of the heart, is evil, only evil continually. And after the flood it was said, the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. These passages plainly represent depravity to consist in a wicked or evil heart, and as total, and constant. The apostle in describing the depravity of Jews and Gentiles, who included the whole world, quotes the language of almost all the intervening prophets from Moses to Malachi. Rom. 3. 9—18. There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way: they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace they have not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. By this quotation the apostle did not attempt to prove that all men are profane swearers, or murderers, but that the seeds of the most enormous crimes are in every heart. The different shades of external conduct are to be attributed not to any difference in the native depravity of the heart, but to different divine restraints. Again, it is said in the text, the carnal mind is enmity

against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. These passages are incontrovertible in proof of the totality of human depravity; and clearly prove its nature to be enmity against God, and opposition to his laws. Now this enmity must be voluntary from the very nature of the affections; for they must be active or dormant. If dormant, they have no existence: for a dormant, or an inactive affection is a plain absurdity. It is like saying, a thing exists, and does not exist at the same time. This depravity which pervades all the affections of the heart, gratifies itself in overt acts so far as it can, under existing circumstances and restraints. Jer. 3. 5. Will he reserve his anger forever? Will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.

I do not say the natural powers of the mind, are depraved, and totally sinful; but the moral powers of the heart, the affections, the moral affectionate faculties of the soul. The soul of the unregenerate man, is totally averse to the divine nature. This depravity consists in enmity, aversion, or disinclination. The natural heart has no delight in God, or in his gospel, and no relish for the doctrines and duties of religion. This is just as true of the moralist and of the formalist, as of the openly vicious. Every unregenerate heart is enmity against God. And if mankind do not view themselves thus depraved, it is either because they have not studied and believed the scriptures, or because they have not had truth applied to their minds. But the Holy Ghost opens the sinner's heart to his view, and lets him see that iniquity which reigns in his soul. With such a view of himself,

the sinner finds no difficulty in believing the doctrine of total moral depravity. It becomes to him a self-evident truth. He sees in himself, the seeds of the foulest crimes that have ever stained the pages of history. He can see the reason that he has not been overwhelmed in disgraceful iniquity, is to be attributed to the restraints of God, and not to any native disinclination to vice. The affections of man are the waters of the same fountain, that was opened in the apostacy of angels, and resulted in the apostacy of man. These affections are ever at war with the character of God, the glory of the universe, and the peace and happiness of man. Thus the evidence is clear from scripture, that the depravity of man is enmity in its nature, and total in its extent.

There are other scriptural sources of evidences, indirect, but conclusive. The total depravity of man can be proved from the promises of God. God has promised eternal life to every individual of the human race who has the least degree of holiness. These promises are not made to men of eminence in religious attainments only, but the weak and feeble, truly pious, are included in the kingdom of God. The promises are made to all the truly pious, however limited their degree of sanctification.

Now if all men have a certain degree of holiness, they are entitled to the promises; and in that case, the threatnings of scripture are not applicable to any class of beings on earth, and its promises are a senseless blank. The promises of God are made to every individual who possesses the least degree of holiness; but the promises of God are made to none in a state of nature, it follows therefore that none in a state of nature possess

the least degree of holiness. They are then totally depraved. Because the destitution of holiness in moral beings, implies the presence of sin, a moral being must either love or hate moral objects. And if he has no love, his hatred is total.

Another source of evidence is drawn from the operations of the Holy Spirit in the experience of christians. He is said to convince the world of sin. And there is no sentiment which he more deeply impresses on the minds of all the subjects of his special operations, than the total sinfulness of their hearts. He divests them of their self-delusion and self-flattery, and draws out to their view, those tempers and dispositions, which they never before suspected to exist in their bosoms. Paul was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died. Until the Holy Ghost applied the law to his heart, and thus tried its dispositions and inclinations, he felt secure in his self-righteousness. But when the Spirit exhibited to his view, the hidden wickedness of his heart; he saw nothing in himself on which he could build a hope of heaven. The same has been true of every genuine conviction. Careless, and convicted sinners judge very differently on the nature and extent of their depravity. Thousands are insensible to the sinful operations of their own hearts. And when we take into consideration their unwillingness to come to light, and their studious concealment of their own hearts, we need not be surprised at their doubts on the subject of depravity. How should they have correct views of their own hearts, when they have never seen them? They cannot know without knowledge; they

cannot see without sight. The reason that sinners have such incorrect views of themselves, is, that they do not wish to see their entire enmity against God. But when the Holy Ghost awakens and convinces the sinner, he may just as clearly see the depravity of his heart as the saint. Experience is the conviction of the judgment; and the decisions of an experienced man, are always more valuable than those of an inexperienced one. The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Those who have been renewed in the spirit of their minds, are well qualified to judge of the native total depravity of their hearts. This doctrine has been proved in the case of every enlightened and gracious conversion since the foundation of the world. The language of the distressed soul is, I am lost, I am ruined, I am helpless, I am hopeless. I have no righteousness in myself, and I have no claims on the righteousness of Christ.

INFERENCE.

1. This subject teaches us the reason that the unregenerate cannot perform good works. A man's views of his works will depend entirely on his views of his heart. And no man has correct views of moral actions, who has not correct views of moral affections. It is the heart which gives character to moral actions. Now those actions are holy which come from holy affections, and those are sinful, which come from sinful affections. If a man has an unholy heart, all his affections and emotions, and by consequence, all his actions will be unholy. If he pray, or repent, or perform acts of hospitality, it all pro-

ceeds from a sinful heart. This sentiment is clearly illustrated in the first Epistle to the Corinthians thirteenth chapter. Here the apostle teaches us, that charities and gifts, and the faith of miracles, and martyrdom itself will profit a man nothing, if he is destitute of love to God. If impenitent sinners ever perform works merely from natural affections and sympathy, which do not come under the cognizance of the divine law, and which possess no moral quality, they are neither sinful nor holy. The man who believes in the virtue of the works of the impenitent, must either deny that virtue is holiness, or the total depravity of the heart, or he must deny that the heart gives character to moral actions.

It is unphilosophical and unscriptural to suppose a sinful heart can generate holy conduct. Because action disconnected from the affection, has no moral character at all. He who has correct views of the depravity of the heart, if consistent in his faith, must have correct views of all the other doctrines of grace. A good deed, whether it be a desire, a volition, or an overt act, must proceed from a holy disposition: and it is self-evident, that he who has not this disposition, cannot exercise it. God always determines the character of an act by the disposition from which it proceeds. And man does the same as far as he is capable. In the Bible, lust is called adultery, and hatred is called murder. The external obedience of the Pharisees was condemned because they had no internal purity. The simple act of taking human life, is not considered in civil law murder, unless it proceeds from malice prepense; else it were foolishness in judges and jurors, to inquire into the circumstances of any given

case. If the mere act of taking human life is murder, the executioner of the criminal, must be executed ; and the series of executions would not cease till the human family were exterminated.

It is evident therefore, that he who believes in the total depravity of the heart, and the sinfulness of all impenitent doings, is perfectly consistent in his faith.

2. I infer from this subject that regeneration is unconditional. If the heart, and conduct proceeding from that heart are totally sinful, and no actions are rewardable, but holy ones, it follows that none of the works of sinners are a condition of regeneration. The reasons of their regeneration are in the divine mind alone ; and this blessing is the fruit of his sovereign good pleasure.

3. I infer the necessity of special grace. If unrenewed sinners always effectually resist the common operations of the Holy Ghost, and their hearts consist in enmity against God, then the influences which change their hearts must be special.

SERMON XIII.

SOVEREIGNTY AND AGENCY OF GOD.

DAN. 4. 35.

And he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?

While some have indulged in speculations on the degree of influence and the quantity of agency, which God exercises over his works and creatures, others have given him only a superintending and general providence. They suppose, as the smaller affairs of his world need no care or direction, that to control the most prominent parts of the great system would be sufficient. I would here just institute the query, is man competent to judge what are the most prominent, and the most important parts of the great system? But I consider this division of agency, giving a portion exclusively to God, and a portion exclusively to man, as superficial speculation. By this I do not mean that divine agency is human, nor that human agency is divine agency. You may waste your lives in conjectures on the quantity of control exercised over an angel, or an insect, or an empire, or a sparrow, and it will amount to nothing. The scripture history of the divine government, is the only correct and satisfactory one. God is there represented as a sove-

reign over his own possessions, untaught, uncontrolled, uninfluenced. His government is not subject to the imperfections of earthly monarchies. He can never be under the influence of selfish, sinful, or malignant passions. He can never be governed by caprice or revenge. His natural attributes are under the direction of immutable goodness. His heart is inaccessible to impurity of motives. The innocent will not go unrewarded, nor the guilty unpunished, while he is Ruler and Judge. This is not true in the government of earthly monarchs. They may not have wisdom to devise, nor goodness to choose, nor power to execute. Their best efforts may prove abortive. And a visionary, selfish, or an incensed spirit, may sacrifice at its shrine the dearest general good; and ignorance, weakness, and selfishness jeopardise the public good, if supreme authority is vested in a single individual. Still no good man could object to an unlimited monarchy, if it afforded greater security, than associated counsellors. There is no individual who possesses the combined wisdom and sagacity of a world; and whose integrity and benevolence are guarded by a cluster of immutable attributes. But the Sovereign of the universe could not be benefitted by the counsels of his creatures, for he is in all and above all, God blessed forever. He alone is competent to the management of his extensive empire. If he could find a being better qualified to rule, his goodness would induce him to surrender the reins of government. But so long as he possesses supremacy of attributes, and supremacy of excellence, he will choose to reign, and every holy intelligence in the universe will choose to have him reign. The lan-

guage of angels and holy men, will be, the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. When I say, God is a Sovereign, I deduct from the term, every thing that implies abuse or oppression, and affix to his sovereignty every lovely and desirable quality. I consider it as embracing my most precious hopes. I am aware, that there are supposed to be more difficulties attending the sovereignty of God over moral and intelligent beings, than over the natural world. But I apprehend that the one is just as fathomable, and capable of comprehension and proof as the other. We must rely on scripture-testimony and follow scripture-history on this subject. The bible must determine the nature, and the extent of divine agency in natural objects, and intellectual and moral beings.

The sovereignty of God is his right to dispose of all his works, according to his own good pleasure. His agency is the exercise of his sovereignty in the government of all his works.

Divine decrees are the eternal and immutable designs of God concerning all things. These decrees embrace all his plans and purposes, and are the rule of his conduct. Even every wise man has a plan. And what would a husbandman, or mechanic accomplish, if he had no plans? By common consent, he who labors without designs or system, is considered either foolish, or crazy. Can we suppose that the everlasting God is destitute of the wisdom which he has given to his creatures? Nay, but, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Here it may be asked how extensive and how particular is the agency of God? That he gave to the natural world its structure and its laws; that he upholds them in being, and, at his pleasure, suspends and counteracts those laws, none will doubt. The sun, the earth, and the worlds which hang like sparkling gems through the air, are supported by his arm and touched by his finger. All the laws which regulate the operations and changes in the natural world, are under the divine control. With him are all the fluctuations of times and seasons, the variations of plants and herbage. God gives the grazing ox his meat, and provides for the raven of the wilderness, but man he clothes in richer gifts, and feeds with finer wheat. He is, by common consent, the parent of all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. He sends rain on one city and withholds it from another. He has an agency in all national revolutions. He raiseth up one king and putteth down another; and giveth the kingdoms of the earth to whom he pleaseth. The objects of his government are accomplished in all the political revolutions of the world; for the text says, he doeth his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. And this passage is a confession of the king of Babylon, who was taken from the throne, and sentenced to be a companion of beasts, until he would acknowledge the sovereignty of God over all his creatures, and was prepared by repentance and humility, for restoration to his sceptre.

God has disposed of the world as he saw fit. And though his enemies have sometimes triumphed, and his friends have sometimes been lost in clouds of darkness,

yet the result has proved, that God is adequate to the management of his own empire. And those shades in the scene which seemed incompatible with the divine character, have discovered the depths of his wisdom and love. There was never an edict issued from the national council, there was never a whistling ball on the field of battle; there was never a deposition, or a coronation of a mitred head, in which the sovereignty of God was not displayed. He is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, and he turneth it whithersoever he will. But the sovereignty of God is not only manifested in the political mutations of our world, but in the vast shades of moral character, which we discover among different nations. Why have some parts of America, and some parts of Europe, and most of Asia and Africa, been so many centuries enveloped in darkness, idolatry, and heathenism, while the pure light of the Sun of righteousness has been poured on the principal portions of Europe and North America? Could not God have reversed the scene, and made our land the land of images, of idols, of darkness and of death? Why has the Hindoo been left for so many centuries to the inhuman practice of murdering his children, and bowing down to his idols? Why does the Arab patrol the desert with the weapons of death in his hand? Why the Turk practice his cruelty, and infringe on the rights, and prey on the happiness of man? And why the millions of untutored savages, who inhabit the desert, unblest with the light of revelation, or the influences of the Spirit? Are we more meritorious than they? And has our hand gotten us this refine-

ment, civilization, and these political and religious institutions which have blessed our race and ennobled our characters? If we are more worthy, his unmerited munificence gave the virtue which he rewards. And why is there no more equality in the distribution of divine gifts? Has God bestowed his stores of benevolence on us? But giving doth not impoverish him, nor withholding enrich him. And why hath he not given equal advantages, civil and religious to every tribe and kindred on earth? Is there any thing in his character, government, or word, that binds him to treat all men alike? then he has departed from the way of righteousness and surrendered his sovereignty. As a righteous sovereign, he is bound to treat all men as well as they deserve; and when he exceeds the principles of strict justice, his mercy is entirely under his sovereign control. He can treat all better than they deserve, and thus stop every mouth. And he has a right to treat some better than others. None will doubt that God might, long ago, have placed a bible in the hands of every intelligent being on earth, and have filled the world with the light, and influence, and institutions of the gospel. And all the reason I can assign why he has not done it, is, Even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. I do not doubt, that he has good reasons for his conduct. But limited as I am in my views, I must rest in the sovereignty of his will. When I survey this spacious and crowded world, and walk amidst such moral and intellectual desolations, and see but here and there a lucid spot, proud and unreconciled unbelief asks, can this be an empire of the God of goodness, of mercy and omnipotence? But

even here, presumptuous man will either impeach his wisdom and love, or take refuge in the denial of his sovereignty. But this subject is not so unpleasant and repulsive in its general character, as when reduced to particular cases.

The objections against the agency of God exercised over matter, over the natural air, and the planetary world, are not so numerous, as those raised against his agency over the bodies of single men, and over mind. There are fewer objections against his agency over angels, than over men, over the minds of good men, than over the minds of bad men. The human heart after cheerfully following the sovereignty of God down through every grade of material nature, often says to him, hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy dominion cease. They are willing he should be a sovereign in the disposal of his natural gifts; that he should create one man wise, and another foolish, one man of a hale constitution, and another of a sickly one; that he should give one man wealth and another poverty; and at the same time revolt at the thought, of his bestowing grace upon one man, and not upon another. You could almost convince a world of the universal agency of God in his temporal gifts, in this single passage. Eccl. 9. 11. I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all,—God exercises an invisible agency in all these things.

I do not know any good reason that God should not be admitted to his intellectual and moral empire, as well

as to his natural empire. There is certainly no more difficulty or danger in giving him the control of the spiritual, than of the natural world. Besides, the scriptures as fully declare his agency over the hearts and affections of men, as over their bodies. It is just as easy to prove that God controls the volitions and choices, the thoughts and affections of saints and sinners, as to prove he has a particle of agency in any of the affairs of the universe. As to the consequences attending the admission of the universal agency of God, I have no fears. It is a scripture doctrine ; it must be admitted. And if it has an unpleasant effect on us, and excites unhappy feelings, it is because our hearts are not right, and we are not satisfied with the character of God, nor with the exercise of his prerogatives. I examine, prove, and defend this doctrine, as a revealed truth. If I may but exhibit it in a true light, and defend it in a proper spirit, I have no fears. God is my teacher, and the bible my guide.

I am to prove, then from the bible, that God controls in a perfectly sovereign manner the hearts of all men. He controls the volitions and choices of the saints. Phil. 2. 12, 13. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling : For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. God is here said to work in them to will and to do. But the agency of God is employed not only in the affections and conduct of saints, but also in the affections and conduct of sinners. Zech. 8. 10. For I set all men every one against his neighbor. Deut. 2. 30. But Sihon king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him : for the Lord, thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might

deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day. Here God is said to harden the spirit, and to render the heart obstinate. 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie : that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. I would not insinuate, that God exercises any such agency in holy or wicked men, as to destroy the praise or blameworthiness of their actions. He no more infringes on the free agency of the one, in causing their holy volitions and actions, than on the free agency of the other, in causing their sinful volitions and actions.

He governs all volitions and actions without changing their nature or voluntary character. Every thoughtful and candid man must perceive, that there are the same difficulties attending the admission of divine agency in governing the hearts of saints, as in governing the hearts of sinners : in both cases God must govern without taking away free agency. If the agency of God over the hearts of sinners destroys their guilt, then his agency over the hearts of saints destroys their virtue. If his agency takes away the viciousness of a wicked action, then his agency takes away the virtuousness of a holy action. We see, that it is just as easy for God to work in a sinner or a devil to will and to do a wicked deed, and at the same time leave him free, blameworthy and punishable, as it is for him to work in a saint or an angel, to will and to do a good deed, and at the same time leave him free, praiseworthy, and rewardable. As God has created intelligent beings, voluntary and free agents, he can exercise no such government over them, as to destroy

their free agency. So far as he takes away their free agency, he annihilates their moral existence : for free agency is freedom. Independence is not essential to free agency. If it were, God would be the only free agent in the universe. Free agency consists in choosing ; and if God causes his creatures to choose, he causes them to be free agents. As he causes both saints and sinners to choose, he causes them both to be free agents.

· Before I pass to the inferences which will be drawn from this subject, I will introduce a few of those sweeping and unqualified passages, in which the universal agency of God is clearly asserted. Isaiah 46. 10. Saying my council shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. Eph. 1. 11. Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Rom. 11. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.

1. If this view of divine agency is correct, we see that it is just and consistent with the divine perfections, and with the accountability of his creatures, for God to introduce sin into the system, as to introduce holiness. He has just the same object in view in the existence of sin, that he had in the existence of holiness,—his own glory and the greatest good of the universe.

2. This subject shows us the perfect harmony between human and divine agency. Man acts, and is acted upon. God accomplishes all his designs without the least infringement on his free agency. There is in every choice, volition and action of man, both human and divine agency. That this view perfectly harmonises with the sentiments of the inspired writers, is evident from scripture

illustrations. God hardened Pharaoh's heart ; Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Joseph's brethren sent him down into Egypt ; Joseph says, it was not you that did it, but God. On a certain day, God promised Samuel, that he would send him a man to be annointed king over Israel, the next day. On the day appointed, Saul, in search of his father's beasts, at the suggestion of his father's servant, directed his way to Samuel. Samuel told him that the beasts were found ; and that he was the very individual whom God, in the fulfilment of his promise, had sent down to him to be annointed king over Israel. God sent Nebuchadnezzar against the Israelites, to punish them for their sins, and then punished Nebuchadnezzar for the impurity of his motives in executing his will. The predictions of the scriptures, made it necessary that Christ should be crucified ; and the character of the traitor, and of the executioners, were designated ; and yet he was betrayed, crucified, and slain by wicked hands.

3. I infer from this subject, that the enemies of God, and of his church, are never safe. The Sovereign of the universe reigns, to conquer his enemies, and punish the incorrigible.

4. Another inevitable inference is, that the friends of God are safe. What are the powers combined against the church, the followers of the Lamb ? In whose hands have they deposited the treasures of their wrath ? What is the arm in which they trust ? Are they above the control of God ? Are they wiser than he ? Can they contend with the Almighty, and can they thunder with a voice like his ? Nay : they wither at his touch. No

design formed against God and his church, can prosper. He reigns the friend of the saint : and neither the affections of his heart, nor the counsels of his will can change. He says to every saint, as he said to Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. He reigns to complete the salvation of his church, and adorn her with the glories of her heavenly state.

5. We see that the doctrine of divine and human agency, is subversive of the sentiments of the Armenian, and of the fatalist. Such is the divine agency as to remove all cause of boasting. And such is human agency as to save the divine Being from aspersion.

6. This subject shows us the consistency of exhorting sinners to become christians. They possess all the natural powers that are necessary to embrace and obey the gospel. The only difficulty is in the will ; and as this is voluntary disinclination, it is culpable. And the question may be put to the whole world, with awful solemnity, why will ye die ?

SERMON XIV.

ELECTION.

EPH. 1. 4, 5.

According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

In my last sermon, I discussed the sovereignty of God, and am now to consider the same sovereignty in relation to the salvation of his people.

In the arrangements of the triune God, for the salvation of souls, it was necessary there should be provisions for rendering the atonement effectual, or all the obedience and sufferings of Christ would fail of promoting the holiness of mankind. The depravity of man would preclude every prospect, and every possibility of its becoming efficacious, without something more than mere atonement or provision. Accordingly, we find there was a covenant entered into between the persons of the Godhead, in which the Father gave to the Son an elect seed, and promised, that in consideration of his work, his sufferings, and death, he would bring them to repentance, cause them to exercise faith in Christ, and prepare them for heaven. This is called a covenant of redemption, made between the Father and Son, and embraced all that

ever have been or ever shall be saved. This covenant is recognised in passages like these : Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. All that the Father hath given me shall come to me. The parties of this covenant were equal, and it was made on the principles of strict justice. The covenant of grace exists between God and believers ; and is necessarily embraced in the covenant of redemption. When the sinner is regenerated, he is brought into a covenant in which God pledges himself to treat him better than he deserves, and to give him final and eternal salvation. This is the covenant of grace. The covenant of redemption was consummated in eternity ; and the covenant of grace is only a development of the covenant of redemption. Nearly and inseparably connected with the covenant of redemption, is the doctrine contained in the text.

Every doctrine which involves an inquiry into the administration of an infinite God, ought to be examined with modesty, humility, and implicit faith in divine revelation. Three points should be firmly fixed in the mind : the first is, that God often acts from reasons which are unrevealed and incomprehensible, and from motives supremely excellent, though inscrutable to us. The second is, that God treats the whole human family better than they deserve. And the third is, that he treats some better than others. He always acts as a good and wise sovereign.

In the discussion of this subject, I shall not be answerable for the misrepresentations of its enemies, nor of its professed friends. The doctrine of election is simply this. God from eternity chose in Christ a certain portion of mankind to eternal life, and they will be saved, and

no more. This is a scriptural view of the doctrine of election. In the stipulations between the Father and the Son, the number and the names of the elect were given ; and arrangements were made with the Holy Ghost, to bring them in at the time, and in the manner stipulated ; and to carry on this work unto eternal redemption. The reasons which God has for the selection which he has made, I cannot assign. But that he has made such a selection, I pledge myself to prove to you from the Bible. Let it be remembered, that he who replies against this doctrine, does not reply against man, but against God. I am only the medium ; God is the author of this truth. If I discuss it scripturally, he that opens his mouth against it, opens it not against me, but against God. In examining the scriptures in relation to this doctrine, we should lay aside all prejudice, and come to the law and to the testimony with humility and docility, and learn what the eternal God has said. Then follow me in the discussion of this subject.

I prove the doctrine of election from the text ; According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love : Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

In this passage, a choice is spoken of ; the time that this choice was made ; the persons chosen, and the purpose for which they were chosen.

Paul and the Ephesian church are the persons particularly spoken of. They were chosen long before

they existed, before men or angels were made, before the foundation of the world. They must have been chosen by God. For at the time they were chosen, they did not exist, and therefore could not have chosen themselves. They were not chosen and predestinated to live in sin, and thus go to heaven ; but they were chosen to sanctification, and predestinated, preappointed, or appointed from eternity to holiness, obedience, and eternal life.

This then is a fair interpretation of the passage. God chose them ; he chose them before the world was made ; he chose them in Christ Jesus ; and he chose them to salvation. He must have been the chooser, if there was any ; for we are too depraved to choose him. He says, John 15. 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever he shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you. God must have had this choice in eternity ; because he can have no new choices, or designs, otherwise he would be mutable, always changing and fluctuating. To suppose he does not choose an individual, until the individual has chosen him, is to suppose God has a new choice every time there is a case of regeneration. This supposition is contrary to the whole tenor of scripture.

2 Tim. 1. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. The Apostle here says of himself and of Timothy, and by inevitable inference, of all faithful ministers of Christ, and saints of God,

that their salvation is the consequence of the purpose and grace of God, which preceded their conversion, and even their birth, and was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began. This establishes the divine purpose or decree of election. The decree of a monarch, or of a court, is only the purpose of the one or of the other, written down. And the decree of God, is only his purpose, intention, or determination revealed in the bible, and is immutable like himself. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. This passage is applied to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia, which must have embraced a large portion of the visible church. They are called, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. God knows all things, past, present and future. And he knows every one that will ever believe, and be saved, because he knows he has made provision for their salvation, and for the application of that provision. And if he foreknew all things, he knows the number and the names of those who will be saved. And if he knows they will be saved, they surely will, and must be saved, and it cannot be otherwise. It has been said, if God is infinite, all things with him are possible : therefore it is possible with him to choose, not to foreknow every thing ; and, in many cases, to prefer ignorance to knowledge. My reply to this is, if he chose to be ignorant of some things, he must have known those things before he could have any choice about them.

Nor is the foreknowledge of God invalidated, by supposing all things an eternal now with him, for on this supposition every event, past, present, and future, is as infallibly fixed as it can be by predestination. If the birth, life, character, death, and destiny of every individual of the human family, who shall live in heaven, or suffer in hell, is present to the divine Being, then these things are unchangeably fixed. If it be said, that strictly speaking, there is no such thing as foreknowledge with God, I reply, he is the only being to whom the term can with any propriety be applied. Man's knowledge of future events, is received by faith in the testimony of divine revelation. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. The terms foreknew, and foreknowledge, as used in the bible, are applied exclusively to God. God knew he should create the world, before he should destroy it; and though he knew both these events at the same time, yet he knew one would take place before the other. He knew that his Son would be crucified before the judgment. And it is just as proper to apply time to God as to man. And in his view, one event must precede another, and one event must succeed another. Could God see that Washington was born the same day that he died? Since, therefore, it is just as proper for God to speak of the past, present, and future, as it is for man to speak of them, and since the Holy Ghost applies the word foreknowledge to God, I am perfectly satisfied, with the language of the bible. The passage, a thousand years with the Lord are as one day, and one day as a thousand years, does not mean that God knows no difference of time in the existence of

events which take place at different periods ; but it simply means that God will not delay to fulfil his promises at the time which he has appointed, though that time may not be the time which man has set. Every event which he knows will take place, most certainly and infallibly will. For to suppose it can be otherwise than he knows it is, or will be, is to suppose that he could know it, and not know it at the same time : a sentiment which furnishes its own refutation. To say he foresaw their repentance and faith, and therefore chose them, involves another difficulty. If he foresaw they would repent and believe, did he not foresee, that he would give them this repentance and faith ? Did he foresee they could exercise repentance and faith without his own previous arrangements, in furnishing a Saviour, and the influences of the Spirit ? And is it possible he would defer choosing them to salvation, until he had made provisions, and arrangements, and carried them partially into execution ? Would he do so much without the object or the end in view ? To suppose that God founds his choice of sinners on their choices of him, is to suppose, that he is dependent on the choices of his creatures for his own choices, which is a plain contradiction of scripture, and contrary to reason, and fact.

It will now be shown from several passages, that the election of God is the cause of the regeneration and the graces of the saints, and not their graces the cause of their election. I would just remark before introducing my quotations, that the word elect is used with a small variation of sense, though it always implies in God, a choice, or purpose. Christ is called elect, because he

was chosen and set apart from eternity, by God the Father, to the work of mediation and redemption. There were elect angels whom God chose to eternal life. The Israelites were an elect nation, chosen from all the nations of the earth. And Christ has a seed chosen to eternal life, and this election is eternal. Chosen us from the beginning. 2 Thess. 2. 13. From before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1. 4. It is absolute and irrevocable. Rom. 9. 11. For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. 2. Tim. 2. 19. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. It is personal, that is, it is confined to a certain number of persons. Mat. 20. 23. It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. Acts. 13. 48. And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Paul, in his first Epistle to Tim. 1. 15. Says it extended to the chief of sinners. In the text he says, they were elected in Christ, and in Eph. 1. 4. and 1 Thes. 5. 9. he says, they are elected to sanctification and holiness as the means, and eternal life as the end. Add to these passages the following scripture-phrases. Behold mine elect; mine elect shall inherit it. Elect shall long enjoy it. For the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened. If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Gather his elect from the four winds. Shall he not avenge his own elect. The faith of Gods elect. As the elect of God; elect according to the foreknowledge of God; elect precious. Israel hath not obtained

that which he seeketh after, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Add to these the passages in which the word election occurs. That the purpose of God according to election might stand. The election of grace; the election hath obtained it. But as touching the election, they are beloved. Your election of God. Make your calling and election sure. With these texts before you, can you think me visionary or enthusiastic, in preaching and defending the doctrine of election? Is there no such doctrine in the bible, or have I collected these passages from Grecian philosophy, or heathen mythology? I should not obtrude such a long list of scripture quotations upon you, did I not hope that your candor would lead you to respect the authority of God, and to revere and embrace a doctrine, which has long been opposed by the ignorance, selfishness, and misrepresentations of man. If I have any misconceptions on this subject, they are the most pardonable of all the errors of my faith; for I can give no fair and candid exposition of these twenty six passages of scripture, in which the words elect and election occur, unless I admit the doctrine, that God did from eternity choose a certain portion of mankind to eternal life, and they will be saved and no more. But it may be said, I have selected the most exceptionable passages there are in the bible. My only reply is, if they are worthy to have a place in the bible, they are worthy to have a place in my creed. I am not ashamed to believe and defend what God has revealed. And the man who will have the candor and patience to examine the scriptures in relation to this subject, I doubt not, will be fully satisfied of the truth

of the doctrine of personal election. I shall not stain my garments, nor hazard my last account to my judge, and deceive my beloved people, by concealing the truth of God, and building you up on error. But why should this doctrine be represented as hard to be understood, and hard to be believed? No doctrine is more plain; none more consoling. It may be asked then, why is it not more generally believed, and more extensively loved? I answer, for several reasons. Some blend it with several other doctrines; and thus render it unintelligible. They make no clear distinction between election, decrees, and reprobation. Whereas the doctrine of election respects only the salvation of those who embrace the Saviour. It is simply this, God extends mercy to some of the human family. And who can object to this? He saves whom he pleases, and does no injustice to others. He makes all men full and fair, and sincere offers; and who is to be blamed, if he leaves them to their own choices? The decrees of God are the rule by which he regulates his own conduct. The doctrine of reprobation is God's eternal determination to display the glory of his justice, in the everlasting punishment of the "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." 2 Pet. 2. 12. But these as rational brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption. 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Rom. 11. 7. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but

the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Prov. 16. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Now you cannot understand the doctrine of election, unless you consider it by itself, disconnected from other doctrines. It is, when considered alone, a simple revealed truth; and not only a plain, but an animating truth, as it is the only doctrine, which makes sure the salvation of any of the human family. If men were left until they choose God, they would never do it. If God has not chosen them, he never will choose them. He is unchangeable; and has no new choices, or purposes.

But this doctrine is often rejected, because it is misrepresented. As the doctrine of election has never been candidly and correctly represented by its enemies, there has never been a fair and candid refutation of it. It has always been misrepresented, and then declared to be our belief; when we as much disbelieve it in the form in which its enemies represent it, as they themselves. Neither Wesley, nor Clark have stated this doctrine scripturally, nor is it expressed in our articles of faith. Now when this doctrine is thrown into a disfigured and offensive form, and then set off with false colourings, and sophistical refutations, it is not surprising that the unthinking multitude, should join in the acclamation horrible! abominable! damnable heresy! Crucify him, crucify him! What object, ever so amiable and lovely, could not be shorn of its lustre, by the rough hand of unfeeling slander and misrepresentation? And these are the only means which can succeed in producing disaffection towards the doctrine of election. Let

this doctrine be stated as it is by its friends, and let the arguments which they adduce in support of it, be fairly laid before the public, and those who disbelieve it would contribute more to its spread, than its friends can do. It is not surprising, that men should succeed in producing a general rejection of this doctrine; for multitudes are prepared and anxious to embrace every effigy of an argument against it. And it is very easy by sophistry, or declamation, to make men believe, what they wish to be true, even in the face of irrefutable reasonings. God is unpalatable to our natural hearts: and every doctrine which has God in it, and brings into view his character, or prerogatives, must, for the same reasons be unpleasant. It is a truth which cannot be concealed, that this world is not pleased with its Maker. It is supremely selfish; and every infringement on its selfishness, irritates and distresses. Now every being who has supreme affection and confidence in God, will rejoice in the sovereignty of his grace; and feel more safe and happy in his hands, than in the hands of any other being.

When the master of the house was reproached for giving the same wages to him who had worked only one hour, as to him who had borne the heat and burden of the day, his reply was, is it not lawful for me to do what I will, with my own? Two shall be laboring in the field; one shall be taken and the other left. Two shall be grinding at the mill; one shall be taken and the other left. When the Saviour preached this doctrine to the Pharisees, by telling them, that the Prophet Elijah was sent to none but a poor widow in the city of Sarepta, the whole city were filled with wrath. There are evi-

dences enough, that none of us by nature love this doctrine. The pride of the human heart rejects it. We may understand it, and we may believe it, without grace; but without grace we can never love it. To be pleased and delighted with it, is a strong evidence of a new heart. Every man who intelligibly and cordially embraces this doctrine will be saved; because his espousal of it is proof that he has given up his selfishness and committed his soul to God. He who is pleased with God, must be pleased with the methods of his grace; and he who is pleased with the methods of his grace, and founds his hope affectionately and entirely on the sovereign mercy of God, can never be lost.

We can never assign, and never know the reasons of the divine distribution of the gifts of grace in this world. But if we are reconciled to the proceedings of God here, we shall unquestionably rejoice in the consummation and final display of this plan of redemption. Now if I am naturally opposed to the divine character, and to the plan of salvation by grace, then to become pleased with God, and with his sovereign good pleasure, is an evidence that I am changed. Besides the only contest between God and his creatures, is, whether God shall be what he is, and do what he pleases with his own. Proud man wishes some of the honor of his salvation. He is unwilling to be saved by grace. Selfish man wishes God always to act with reference to his good; and is unwilling he should pursue the general good. Now the heart of man will never come over on the side of God, and coincide with him in his views and government, until he is reconciled and sanctified. The pious man would

have no hopes of salvation, if God should leave mankind till they are disposed to love and choose him. With our depravity, we choose any thing rather than God.

The doctrine of election, then, is a consoling doctrine, as it is the only one which insures the salvation of any of our race. It is not a discouraging doctrine, because it does not in the least degree, infringe on the free-agency of man, nor close the door of mercy on any. It is simply this, that God chooses and saves sinners at the time, and in the manner he pleases; and does it without any injustice to his creatures. It will be said that by making the cordial reception of this doctrine, a test of christian character, I exclude from salvation, multitudes who give evidence of piety, but who deny this doctrine. I reply, by no means: those pious persons, who through prejudice, or indistinct views of this doctrine reject it, do acknowledge it in substance, and express it in their own language. They speak of God's thoughts of mercy towards them. But what are God's thoughts of mercy but his eternal purpose of mercy? They are astonished that God should call them into the gospel of his Son, and leave their neighbors in impenitence. And if they pass by in silence, or deem mysterious and inexplicable those passages which contain this doctrine, they dare not erase them from the Bible.

And now I will only add that I have no misgivings of heart, or of conscience, in the discussion of this doctrine, which I have now laid before you. My reasons for introducing so large a quotation from the scriptures, have been to divest my mind and my sentiments, of the influence of human opinions, and to let the inspired wri-

ters speak for themselves. Of all the doctrines of grace, this is the most humbling to man, and the most exalting to God. It is a most precious and consoling truth to the pious soul. I dare not doubt; I dare not question it; I dare not reject it. What God has revealed, we should believe. And most of all, should we believe in that doctrine which teaches us that the ravages of the apostacy will not be universal and eternal. Blessed be God, that he has chosen in his Son, a seed to serve him. Having fixed his heart on this work, and having purposed it in infinite wisdom and goodness, the sun shall never shine on this world, without shining on those who shall be guided by the Son of righteousness unto eternal day. Lord, may we love thy character, love the methods of thy grace, and love the choices of thy heart.

The inferences from this doctrine are, that saints should be humble; that men are not mere machines; that opposition to this doctrine is opposition to the word and will of God, and to the salvation of man; and that the ministers of Christ have abundant encouragement to preach the gospel, because it will certainly prove effectual to the salvation of souls.

SERMON XV.

SPECIAL CALLING.

REV. 19. 9.

And he saith unto me, write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Having proved, in my last sermon, the appointment of the people of God to salvation, I am now to discuss the manner of the divine proceedings, in fulfilling this appointment.

As the common grace of God, embraces all the favors which we enjoy previous to a change of heart, and his special grace, the blessings of salvation ; so all the operations of the Spirit, which do not change the heart, are called common influences, or common operations, and those which produce holiness and salvation, special influences. All we have to do, to ascertain the degree and character of the operations of the Spirit, on the hearts of sinners, in conviction and regeneration, is to examine the scriptures and christian experience. If the doctrine of special calling is a revealed truth, and if there are operations on the heart of man, which produce regeneration, then to be ignorant of these operations is to be ignorant of the evidences of adoption. Every degree of influence, which exceeds the ordinary operations of the Spirit, is emphatically special. But I shall use special

in the sense of saving. Those operations which change the heart, and result in the salvation of the soul, are special. Whether those convictions which result in regeneration, and those which do not result in regeneration, are the same, I am not able to determine.

I know not but the eye of Omniscience may see a plain difference between those convictions which result in conversion, and those which only agitate the mind, and then subside, leaving no happy or virtuous impressions. A decision on this question would not affect the subject under consideration. The temporal blessings we enjoy, the influence of our judgments, conscience, reason, education, regard to popular opinion, fear of punishment, and the invisible restraints of the Holy Ghost, comprise the common grace of God. The calls of the natural powers of the mind, of providence, and of the Holy Spirit, which do not effect a saving change, are common calls. All men are the subjects of the common calls of God. Comparatively, few have been the subjects of his special calls. I rest my faith in the doctrine of special calling, on the experience of christians, and scripture testimony. I place before you a christian, and ask for a narration of the divine proceedings in the conviction and conversion of this sinner. He was first alarmed; and alarmed, perhaps, by the same means which had a thousand times been ineffectual. Now if reasonings, or powerful appeals to the passions, or a clear exhibition of truth, has produced this effect, why did it not produce the same effect before, when the sinner was less hardened, and the same, or more promising means, were employed? What has effected this distress at this time,

and in this manner? This moral revolution cannot be accounted for on the ground of moral suasion and human eloquence. It was, then, produced by the influence of the Spirit, and the effect was in exact proportion to the degree of influence. That the passions may be excited, and momentary alarm be produced, by heated appeals to the conscience and to the heart, is unquestionable. But they do not produce a lasting effect, without divine influence.

But here is a sinner, convicted in a time of general stupidity, and without any extraordinary means; or a great number are convicted at the same time, unexpected even by the pious. And why this excitement, this general alarm? What was it that converted Paul, engaged in the work of persecution; the thief on the cross, railing on Christ, and several thousands on the day of pentecost? Whatever the means may have been, we must go beyond human efforts, to reach the cause of their distress and change.

There was an unusual degree of the Spirit accompanying the means of grace. Thus the converted sinner reasons. Something has presented truth to the mind in a new light. I never felt before as I now feel. These are strange, these are unaccountable emotions of heart. And though his conscience and reason admit the claims of God, and consent to the justice of his condemnation, yet the heart does not relish them. It opposes and resists those truths which give him so much pain. Sinners sometimes scarcely know the cause of their distress. It is all a strange work to them. And sometimes they

take measures to efface those impressions, and to rid themselves of those distressing sensations : and the very means they employ deepen their convictions, and increase their alarms. And those very means which naturally tend to banish seriousness from them, only forward the work of self-condemnation and remorse. Now from what can this arise, but from a spirit operating within, and pressing truth on the heart. There is no more efficacy in means than what is imparted to them by the Holy Ghost. Where the preaching of the apostles was efficacious, they say it was attended with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. I will not say, the sinner has never felt this distress before, but if he has felt it, it was the effect of the Spirit of God. You will find in every step of his increasing agonies, when he is condemning his prayers, his repentance, and all his doings, and when a sense of his helplessness and misery rises higher and higher, until the period arrives that the enmity of the heart is subdued, and the love of God is shed abroad in the soul, then we witness the display of special influence. The act of converting the soul, is an act which the sinner never before experienced ; it is therefore, uncommon, unusual, or special. It is a call which he never before had. A call so powerful and efficient, as to bring him from nature's darkness into God's marvelous light. No other call has resulted in conversion. This is effectual, and is an act of the divine Spirit. And what rational convert to Christ has hesitated to ascribe this work to the Spirit of God. Even the christian who denies a special call, recoils at the thought of taking the honor of his salvation to himself. He does not deny the

grace of God, and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost. It is special influence, because he never felt it in such a degree before ; and because it differs from those influences of which the unregenerate are the subjects. Who maketh thee to differ ? Who is the author of thy conversion ? Thou hast nothing but what thou hast received. Why dost thou glory as though thou hadst not received it ? It is true that the penitent differ from the impenitent, because they have accepted Christ and exercised faith in his name. Why did they embrace the Saviour ? If they were more inclined to embrace him than others, what inclined them ? Was it because they were by nature better than others, or was it because the Spirit operated more powerfully on them than on others ? By penitent sinner, I mean a christian, or one who exercises godly sorrow for sin. By impenitent sinner, I mean an unregenerate sinner, whether careless or convicted. This difference in moral character, must be traced to the different operations of the Spirit. And after all the cries of partiality, which may proceed from ten thousand lips, I appeal to christian experience for the truth of the doctrine of special calling. I ask, what is meant by partiality ? Partiality is injustice. If God does any injustice to his creatures, he is partial. He certainly does no injustice to the saints ; and he does no injustice to sinners, if he punishes them no more than they deserve. Partiality does not consist in treating persons differently. If it did, all the difference we see in the character, persons, situations and possessions of different men, would prove God to be partial. But partiality consists in treating men differently without good reason.

If it can be made to appear that God has no good reason for treating one man better than another, then it may be shown, that God is partial. But this can never be done.

The doctrine for which I am contending, is founded in christian experience. Those who have wrought themselves into religion, and by amendment of life and religious services, think they have gained a title to heaven, have only a false title, and a false hope. Christians are made by the Holy Ghost. This divine agent disarms the heart of its opposition, and overcomes, by an omnipotent energy, the resisting and unholy dispositions of the soul. If the heart is totally depraved, and its depravity consists in disinclination, or enmity to God, regeneration can never be effected without an irresistible and overpowering influence. This influence is extended to some of the human family, and is special. But we will turn from christian experience to higher authority, and examine a few passages of scripture on this point. And first we will examine the text.

Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. Now blessed, and blessedness in the scripture sense, is divine and holy enjoyment, spiritual and saving happiness, which are peculiar to holy beings. That man cannot be blessed and happy who only abuses the blessings of the gospel to greater hardness and impenitence. In him it will be a savor of death unto death. But all who are said to be called in the text, are said to be blessed. The call and the blessedness are inseparably connected. It can mean, then, nothing less than a call of such a nature, as to change the heart. A call so loud, so imperious, and irresistable, as to sep-

arate the soul from sin, and to bring it to the marriage supper of the Lamb, to eat and never die. Romans 8. 29, 30. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. In this text all who are said to be called, are said to be justified and glorified, which must embrace their salvation. But multitudes who enjoy the common calls of God, are never justified, nor glorified: it follows therefore, that the call spoken of in this passage, is not a common call, but a special call. 1 Cor. 1. 26. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. This is an irrefutable passage in support of special calling; for how could the Apostle say, not many wise, mighty, and noble, were called, if he meant common calls? For the whole world enjoyed the common calls of the gospel. But he speaks of those who were the subjects of a certain kind of call which did not extend to the wise, mighty, and noble of the earth. What could this have been less than a call which brought them into the gospel of Christ? Eph. 1. 18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. Here is a calling, a hope of God's calling, or a hope founded on the call of God. Have all men this hope? If not, then they have not this calling. Eph. 4. 4. There is one body and one spirit; even as ye

are called in one hope of your calling. All the pious are called into the same hope of immortal blessedness. But are all called to the hope of immortal blessedness? If not, then all have not this calling. Heb. 3. 1. Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and high Priest of your profession, Christ Jesus. Here they are called holy brethren, because they are partakers of the heavenly calling. To be a partaker of this calling, then, constitutes discipleship, the adoption of sons, by Jesus Christ unto himself. If I understand the passage, it is a calling which puts them in possession of heavenly enjoyments. If it meant common calls, then it would prove, that all men are fit for heaven.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Vocation means calling; the calling wherewith ye are called. Could this which was applied to the Ephesian church, mean a common invitation of the gospel? If so, it might just as well have been addressed to millions of impenitent sinners. It must have referred to those powerful influences of the Spirit, which renovated them, and led them to listen to the voice of God, and cheerfully and heartily to obey him. It was a call which qualified and required them to live holy lives. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling. The call here spoken of is holy not merely because it is a call of God, but because it is a call which produces holiness, and is inseparably connected with salvation. If all the calls of God were alike, then all would produce holiness; but all his calls do not pro-

duce holiness in those who are called, it follows therefore, that that call which produces holiness, is special, while that which does not produce holiness is common.

It is remarkable, that none of these forms of calling, which I have enumerated, are applied to the impenitent. They must include the saving, or special operations of the Spirit. No soul to whom this special, and regenerating call has been extended, will ever perish. It is a high calling, a holy calling, and a heavenly calling. The call is irresistible. I do not mean by this, that it cannot be resisted, but that it cannot be effectually resisted. If the heart is depraved, it will resist as long as it can. And the Spirit must bind the strong man armed, and spoil his goods. The influences of the Spirit, must be superior to the opposition of the heart, before the sinner will submit. To say the heart will choose God and make a cheerful surrender into his hands before it is changed, is to deny the depravity of the heart. If the heart is depraved, it is averse to holiness; and will maintain its aversion until it is obliged to surrender. And if the heart could resist and effectually banish the Spirit of God, there would never be a sinner converted. But when I say the sinner is compelled, forced, or obliged to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb, because he is specially called, I do not mean, he is carried like a block of marble, and placed in the spiritual building, but carried as a free, moral agent, by the divine and irresistible influence of the Holy Ghost. I have no authority to say that the Spirit either suspends, or counteracts the laws of moral agency, or infringes on the freedom of the will, in regeneration. We act and are acted upon at the

same time, and are free and voluntary though under the control of the Holy Ghost. And however humbling this may be to the pride of man, as it submits to God the question of his salvation, we may, and ought to rejoice, that with God is the residue of the Spirit; and that he has power as well as disposition to conquer the hearts of rebels and bring them home to himself. We have reason to adore the Deity of the Holy Ghost; for divested of his supreme divinity, he would be inadequate to subdue and renovate the heart of man, and sanctify it for heaven.

1. This subject cautions us against presumption. Because God can render the operations of the Spirit effectual, and in many instances, does give them a saving energy, it does not prove that he will be thus merciful to all. Many have been abandoned to hardness of heart, for resisting the Holy Ghost.

2. This subject shows us the importance of praying for the special influences of the Spirit. These alone can prepare the saint for heaven. The sanctification of the saints, is a continued, though not uninterrupted repetition of the special operations of the Spirit. It is further evident that christians should pray for the special influences of the Spirit, because, without these influences, no impenitent sinner will be converted; the churches of Christ would languish, and the visible kingdom of Christ would be annihilated.

SERMON XVI.

REGENERATION.

JOHN 3. 8.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

That a change of heart is necessary, is proveable from the doctrine of depravity, the universal corruption of mankind, and the ungodliness which has overspread the earth. None but the self-deceived, can avoid collecting evidence of the necessity of regeneration, from the emotions of their own hearts. And if a moral change is essential to salvation, the point to be investigated is, the character of this change. I have before defined moral to be the exercises of the heart, in view of right and wrong. By examining the nature and effects of this change, we may have scriptural views on the subject, and make a profitable application of it to our own cases. It is important for us to know whether this regeneration consists in baptism and ceremonial cleanness, or in an amendment of the dispositions of the heart, and of the conduct, or whether it is a mere reparation of character and a gradual, moral revolution, or whether it is an abolition of enmity, and the existence of holiness, or holy exercise. That it is a change of some character, all

admit. But in relation to the nature and extent, the means and circumstances of this change, there is a diversity of opinion. And though the superficial theologian may think this subject plain, and divested of all difficulty and concealment, yet I apprehend it is among the most intricate points of theology. I shall use the term regeneration according to the common acceptation, in the sense of change of heart, new birth, being born again. The words regeneration, new birth, and conversion, are often used, I fear, by those who are strangers to this work, and used in a sense, which is supported neither by scripture views, nor by lexicographers. The state of feeling which usually precedes regeneration, is in some respects peculiar. It is a state of extreme depression and anxiety, of alarm and distress. And these fears and agonies are not experienced in recollection of merely a few enormous sins, but in view of the total sinfulness of the heart. The convicted sinner views himself as justly exposed to the penalty of the law and of the gospel. Of all the numerous affections, or actions of his past life, not one will bear the test. He prays, and labors, but condemns his doings, and finds no peace. Sin, like an incurable disease increases in his view, and overwhelms him. As the Spirit enlightens his mind more and more into the nature and extent of the divine requisitions, and into the nature and extent of his sinfulness, all his doings afford him no relief, and no consolation. He is like a man, exerting himself to get out of the miry clay. The greater are his exertions, the deeper he sinks in the mire. When the sinner is in this condition, the Saviour appears for his liberation, and adopts him into his family.

Through the invisible operations of the Spirit, he is regenerated and sanctified. And it may be observed concerning this change,

1. That it is a change of the heart. An unregenerate man may be correct in his sentiments and views of religious doctrines and duties, though the influence of a man's affections over the powers of the mind, is generally very extensive.

There is no moral pollution in the natural powers of the mind ; such as reason, perception, memory, and conscience. They are often misguided by the sinful heart ; and they are just as obedient to a holy as to a sinful heart. There is no inherent native depravity in them ; and by consequence, they need no change. The heart is the seat of moral disease ; and in it, the change must take place. My son, give me thine heart. It should be borne in mind, that the heart, and the mind, are different faculties in man ; and that there is a plain distinction between the mind, or mental powers, and the heart, or moral powers. Though the faith and external conduct be correct, this is not sufficient, there must be a transfer of the affections from the creature to the Creator. This change consists in a removal of the enmity and selfishness of the heart, and in the exercise of supreme love to God, and impartial love to man. Though the process of this change, is invisible and indiscribable, yet the author and the means by which it is promoted, its nature, and its effects, are plain matters of fact and revelation.

No man can show me the treasures of the wind, nor the particles which compose it ; yet when I see it prostrate the towering trees of the forest, shake the solid dome,

and spread desolation through the fertile plain, it would require madness to disbelieve. But my knowledge of the wind is limited by its effects. So my knowledge of regeneration is known only by its effects. I see not the agent himself. I see the man who has been corrupt in life, corrupt in faith, the enemy of religion, and of religious institutions, suddenly changed into a meek, and lovely, a devout and obedient follower of the Lamb ; and he declares, the scriptures declare, and all ranks of the redeemed declare, that these are the effects of a change of heart. And on examination, I find that no other reasons can be assigned, adequate to produce such a renovation of character. Reason and philosophy, and moral suasion, have ever been incompetent to produce so great and desirable a reformation. The change which has taken place in the heart, cannot be accounted for, without admitting that it has partaken of a new, and divine nature. This change, then, must have been wrought in the affections of the heart.

2. I observe concerning this change, that it is instantaneous. The fruits of it may be gradual, and in all cases are so ; and the evidences of this change to its subjects, and to others, may be perceived at the time the change takes place, or at some subsequent period. There is a difference in the evidences of a change, and the change itself. The circumstances of regeneration, differ. The work on the soul, in some cases, is small and imperceptible ; and in other cases, it is clear and satisfactory. But the first act of sanctification, is sudden and instantaneous. One moment the man is a sinner, the next moment he is a saint. One moment he is an

enemy of God, the next moment he is a friend. Now this sentiment is proveable from matter of fact, and christian experience. It is evident, that the thief on the cross, from being a bitter enemy, instantaneously became a warm friend. The sentiment of instantaneous regeneration, may be proved even by the experience of those christians, who assume to doubt it. How often do men go into their chambers, their closets, and social meetings, distressed and desponding, and return rejoicing in hope. And it is vain here to talk of a difference between conversion and regeneration, where we are only inquiring for simple facts. But we have testimony respecting the instantaneousness of this change, which is subject to none of the objections which lie against human opinions, and human assertions. If the heart by nature is totally sinful, and if it has not a single holy exercise, then there must be a first exercise of love, and that exercise must be instantaneus. Whether the subject of it, perceived the first emotion of love, does not alter the case. This moment he is totally destitute of love, the next moment he is in possession of it. If this change consisted in the improvement of the natural dispositions, or in a certain elevation, or refinement of qualities then existing in the heart, the work might be gradual; but it is not so represented in scripture, nor is it so in fact. There is not a particle of holiness in the heart before a change is wrought. The present exercise is a perfectly sinful one, the next exercise is a perfectly holy one; this latter exercise is regeneration. The exercises of the heart are as quick as thought. This not only accords with reason, but with cases [on

divine record. How long was Paul, and the converts on the day of pentecost, and the thief on the cross, in experiencing religion? What period intervened between the calls of Christ to the sons of Zebedee, Matthew, and the other Apostles and their obedience to those calls? Were they reasoned into religion, or were they prepared by a course of religious education to receive and obey the call of Christ, or were their hearts instantaneously changed? The continent was soon overspread with the disciples of Christ. Regeneration, then, was not a long and tedious process, produced by speculative knowledge, and the observance of ordinances, or by a gradual, and external reformation, but it was an instantaneous moral change which renewed the heart. I observe concerning this change,

3. That it is a holy change. It is not only holy in its origin, but holy in its nature. It is not conversion which consists only in external reformation. Not conversion which consists merely in a change of sentiments. But a conversion which consists in the renovation of the heart and life, or a turning from the power of sin and Satan unto God. Holiness is the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and is always attended with an abhorrence of sin, whether that sin exists in the breast of the sinner, or of the saint. Whatever revolutions take place in the heart of man, if they are not holy, they are not regeneration. No excitement of passion, or attachment to a party, or zeal, or confidence, or profession, is pure religion. Pure and undefiled religion, consists in the love of complacency in God, angels, and saints, and the love of compassion for every son and daughter of wretched-

ness. A love which is not circumscribed by self-interest, a love, pure, and destitute of selfishness. It is holy : all its attachments are regulated by moral excellence, and all its disrelishes by moral impurity. It loves what God loves, and hates what he hates. This is the disposition which gives a relish for divine truth, a holy delight in those excellent doctrines of the bible which are so unpalatable to the natural heart. This is the disposition which desires to obey the divine commands, and to adorn with moral beauties the path of life. The holiness of this change, is conspicuous in the frames of mind it regulates, in the renovation of character it produces, and in the benevolent efforts it creates for the salvation of others.

4. This change is supernatural. A change of heart is not like the growth of the mental and bodily faculties, which reach their perfection by the gradual development of natural and constitutional tendencies. Regeneration is not necessarily connected with the use of visible means, and cannot be produced by any human efforts unaided by the Holy Spirit. It is a work beyond the power of man ; and interferes with all his selfish desires, and selfish plans. This change is effected by the influences of the Spirit, exerted in an unusual degree. If the influences which produce this change, are not essentially different from all others in kind, they are in degree. And if regenerating influences are supernatural, then that work which is the effect of them must be so.

There is nothing in the known powers and principles of the human mind, nothing in the means of grace, nothing in the common operations of the Spirit, and nothing in

all the institutions of the gospel, which can produce this change. We look to him who has power to control the passions of the heart, and to form them by special grace for special honor, to begin and complete the work of sanctification on the soul.

5. This change is effected by the influences of the Spirit, without destroying the free agency of the creature. I am not aware, that there is any thing unphilosophical or visionary in the sentiment that the sinner is active in regeneration, and that the irresistible and regenerating influences of the Spirit are incompatible with the highest degree of freedom, and voluntary power. In regeneration, the Holy Spirit causes the sinner to choose God. In choosing God, the sinner is free, and active. It appears then that the sinner is just as free and active in regeneration, as he is in the commission of sin. If the christian is free and active in the exercise of holy affections, he must have been free and active in regeneration; for what is regeneration, but the first holy exercise? It is just as easy to see that a person may be free and active in the first holy exercise, as it is to see that he may be free and active in any subsequent holy exercise. The influences of the Spirit therefore, in changing the heart, do not at all infringe on the free agency of man. This appears to be perfectly analagous with all the views we embrace of moral influence over the human family. The influence which parents exercise over children, and children over parents, is often productive of astonishing changes, without any infringement on their free agency. How does the general inspire his soldiery with patriotic zeal? And how does the

politician arouse the energies of the nation to guard and defend their rights, if there is no such thing as persuasion. And who ever thought of commanding the affections and suffrages of a free people by coercive measures? Our families and friends, and communities, are not governed by compulsion. The power of the parent, of the master, orator, and of the statesman; employed in persuasion, is not physical, but mental and moral. They employ argumentative, and persuasive reasoning. And is there any thing inconceivable in God's governing his creatures, with an invariable regard to their free agency? To suppose that he annihilates the voluntary powers of the mind or the heart, in regeneration is a totally gratuitous and unnecessary supposition, which has no support from the experience of christians, or from the testimony of scripture, or from reason, or from the character of divine operations.

The scriptures command men to make them new hearts, which is perfectly reasonable, if they are free and active in regeneration. The sinner in conviction and conversion, passes a voluntary decision on his own volitions and actions; and condemns, or justifies his exercises as though totally regardless of him who is operating in his heart. While he is under conviction, he voluntarily laments his guilt, and mourns with anguish; and when changed, he rejoices in the choice he has made of Christ, and voluntarily commits himself to his God and Saviour: nor is he sensible of an involuntary moment. If the conversion of sinners were invariably attended with a trance, or a suspension, or a counteraction of the laws of moral agency, there might be some ground to

question the correctness of this theory. But the fact, that God regards and treats his creatures through the whole work of salvation, as possessed of unimpaired voluntary powers, and that they thus regard themselves, goes far in support of the sentiment, that we are active in regeneration.

I would not insinuate that any human influence bears a perfect analogy to the divine operations. But so far as human influence is analagous to divine influence, it supports the sentiment that man is free and active in regeneration. The most distressing load with which the mind of the sinner is afflicted, is produced by the pressing demands of the Holy Ghost, to surrender himself into the hands of the Saviour.

This surrender is the act of the sinner. The love, faith, and joy, which he exercises are the infant graces of the new born soul. To say that the Holy Ghost repents, and trusts in Christ, and rejoices in hope, would annihilate the subject of salvation, and imply sinfulness and dependence in the third person in the trinity. Man, then, at all times, and under every degree of divine influence, is free. God regards him as free; he regards himself as free: and what right have we to differ from their decisions? Point me to a moment in your lives when you were involuntary. Show me an operation of the Spirit which was regardless of the agency of man, and it will either prove a miracle, or that man may be passive in regeneration. Until such an example can be produced, I shall regard myself and others as free and accountable, as praise or blameworthy for every act we do. This is the sum of my remarks on regeneration.

That it is a change of the heart ; a change in the moral affections ; it is an instantaneous change ; a holy change ; a supernatural or special change ; it is effected by the influences of the Spirit without destroying the free agency of the creature.

I infer from this subject, the propriety of urging sinners to make themselves new hearts. Regeneration consists in transferring the affections from ourselves to God, in choosing and preferring holy objects to sinful ones. Now this work is an act of the creature, as well as of the Holy Ghost. Every man has natural power to become a christian, and his moral inability is nothing but disinclination, and voluntary aversion. This is condemned by the word of God, and by his own conscience. Now if men are able to become christians, and there is no obstacle but indisposition, they ought to become christians ; and they are guilty and self-condemned for their impenitence. Every moment of disquietude which the sinner undergoes, is a proof that he ought to give his heart to God, and accept the offers of mercy. To say the sinner can do nothing, is false ; because thousands of sinners have accepted Christ, and thousands of others will do it. None who have used the proper means in a proper spirit, have ever failed. And while I exhort every man to make himself a new heart, I would cautiously guard him against those frames of mind, and those efforts which are unaccompanied by the Holy Ghost. When God commands us to make ourselves new hearts, he means holy and spiritual hearts. He never gives us liberty to build on formal, hypocritical, or false hopes. If the work is only performed in the

heart, there is no danger. You may change your minds, and your external deportment, and yet the affections may be unchanged. The first prayer of the sinner should be a petition for the special influences of the Holy Spirit.

2. I infer that the inattention of the sinner to the interests of religion, is inexcusable. If he has natural power to make himself a new heart, if while he is impenitent, his conscience loads him with reproach and remorse, if the commands of God imperiously urge the performance of this work, and if the worth of the soul is incomparably valuable, and the joys of heaven incomparably great, where is the palliation for a neglect so criminal and calamitous? He who neglects his friends, is unkind; he who neglects his family is unnatural; and he who neglects himself, is cruel: but he who neglects the purity of the heart, is like the man who wastes his estate and his health in sporting with the wind, or the visions of revery.

3. I infer the greatness of our obligations of gratitude to God for bringing salvation within the sphere of our attainments. Had God made no atonement for man, he would have been just. And after he made an atonement, and invited sinners to come and accept it, he would have been just not to send his Spirit to incline them to accept the offered provision. But of his gratuitous and boundless goodness, he has furnished us with every needed help, and every desirable facility to prepare us for eternal blessedness. And he that is athirst may come, and let him that heareth say come; and whosoever will, may come and take the waters of life freely. Millions of

souls have experienced this change. And were it not for the enmity of the heart, the voluntary disinclination of man, the whole world would rush to the arms of Christ, and be saved. Happy is he who hath a part in the first resurrection, who, previously to death experiences this change; for on him the second death hath no power.

SERMON XVII.

CHRISTIAN GRACES.

MAT. 12. 35.

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things.

Having discussed the work of regeneration, it is necessary in this part of the system, to examine the character of the saints. There are certain graces which constitute christian character; and without these graces no one can be a christian. The sum of the divine requisitions is embraced in the word duty. All God requires of us, is, to do our duty; that is to do what we ought to do. This duty comprises all the exercises of the heart, and all the external conduct of the life. The christian graces are simply those tempers and dispositions which the gospel imparts. These graces are the fruits of regeneration; and they are the progressive steps by which the soul is prepared for eternal happiness. Those exercises of the heart which we call christian graces, must necessarily commence at regeneration. They cannot exist in the heart before regeneration; for no one can exercise the disposition of a christian, before he is a christian. Nor can I conceive any difficulty in ascertaining the order of these exercises. If the love of God is imparted to the soul as the first pure and holy dis-

position, and if the exercise of that love is essential to its existence, then the first emotion of the new-born soul is love. Though the convert to Christ exercises love to God first, yet he may not be so sensible of loving God first, as he is of loving the moral image of God in christians. But it is not essential whether he be sensible of loving God first, or of loving holy men or holy angels first. The same disposition which takes complacency in God, will take delight in all holy beings. This love to holiness is the first exercise of the renewed heart. It would seem most natural for this exercise of love, to bring God into view as the first object of delight; because it came from God and tends to him. In the order of the christian graces, therefore, love must be first.

2. The next exercise of the renewed soul, is repentance. It may appear strange to some that repentance is ranked among the christian graces. They may have accustomed themselves to think that repentance is not only the first of the christian graces, but that it is prior to regeneration. There is indeed a kind of repentance, called in the bible, the sorrow of the world which worketh death, to which all impenitent sinners, from the externally upright, intelligent, and candid, to the sceptic, the infidel, and the atheist, are subject. Natural repentance is that sorrow which careless sinners sometimes feel, when condemned by natural conscience. Legal repentance is that sorrow for sin which the convicted sinner feels when he is enlightened by the Holy Spirit to see that he is exposed to the punishment which is justly due to every transgressor of the divine law.

There is a conscience in man which attributes his sufferings to his follies, and leads him to regret the consequences of sin, though he loves its nature. And this law of his moral nature, is more clearly revealed in the decalogue. And whenever the divine law is applied to the heart and conduct of man by his reason, and conscience, or by the Holy Ghost, it inflicts present distress, and forebodings of future misery. He shrinks from the consequences of sin, and mourns, not on account of its unpalatable nature, but for its bitter effects. He is sorry that he is a sinner merely because he must endure the penalty of transgression. The repentance which arises from fear of punishment, is called legal repentance, or the sorrow of the world which worketh death. But this repentance never destroys the love of sin ; and has not a single particle of holy, or virtuous feeling in it. The incorrigible sinner on earth, and the miserable in hell, exercise such repentance, without any happy effects on their characters or their prospects. But evangelical, or gospel repentance, is an exercise very different in its nature, and very different in its effects. Gospel repentance is that abhorrence of sin which arises from a disrelish of its nature. It is called gospel repentance because it is required by the gospel. This repentance which God requires, and which is a christian grace, is a holy and saving exercise. Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. The repentance here spoken of, is connected with salvation. This, like natural and legal repentance, is sorrow for sin, but for very different reasons. The one is a sorrow for sin because it is detestable in its own nature ; the other is sor-

row for sin because it exposes to punishment. The soul of the true penitent having been made like God, exercises the same kind of feelings towards sin, that God exercises towards it. Sin is abhorred by the pious man on account of its intrinsic evil. He cannot relish it because it is repugnant and unpalatable to his heart. He would hate it even if there was no punishment for transgression, if it were attended with no calamitous consequences. Holy, disinterested, gospel repentance is the only repentance which God requires, and with which he is well pleased. It is the feeling of a holy heart towards sin. If this repentance is a holy exercise, it could not have existed in the heart before regeneration, because there was no holiness antecedently to this change of heart. This repentance separates the soul from sin, produces tranquility of mind, and assurance of pardon, and acceptance with God, and a lively hope of future blessedness; whereas legal repentance never arrests a step of the sinner's progress in iniquity. Besides, the literal import of repentance is to turn away from sin, and to forsake it. And who turns from sin and forsakes it, but those who detest its nature? The highest state of anguish in those who are under legal and natural repentance, would subside in a moment, if the punishment due to sin, were removed. The christian would loathe, abhor, and forsake sin, if there were no punishment to be inflicted on transgressors. It is repulsive to the state of his affections. When he is brought to love God, he enters into the views and feelings, and interests of his Saviour. He sees sin arrayed against the kingdom of his master, the glory of his Father, and the happiness of his

creatures; and he finds that every sinful emotion of heart, impairs his peace, and fills his mind with disquietude. He therefore repents of sin as criminal and unpalatable, opposed to the character and glory of God, and to the holiness and happiness of man. This is the repentance which God requires, and which results in the salvation of the soul. It is a repentance peculiar to christians. God requires of his creatures no exercises but holy ones; and he plainly teaches us in the bible, that repentance is a condition of salvation. I have before shown that regeneration is unconditional. That is, as all the volitions, emotions, exercises, and doings of the unregenerate, are sinful, and as there are no promises of reward made to unholy affections, or actions; therefore, there is no work which they perform, by virtue of which they are regenerated. Christians are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. But though regeneration is unconditional, salvation is conditional. God has promised eternal life to every one who exercises love to God, repentance of sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And as sure as you exercise these christian graces, so sure has he pledged himself to save you. I am aware that there may be a query here suggested, whether there is any such thing as order in the christian graces. It may be said, after this moral change, the order of his exercises, will be regulated by the order in which objects are presented to his mind. If sin is the first object, presented to his mind, the first exercise will be repentance; if sinners, love of compassion; if God, or holy beings, love of compla-

gency ; and if the Saviour be the first object presented to the mind after regeneration, the first exercise will be faith and gratitude. But the most natural and scriptural order of the christian graces, is, love, repentance, and faith. We must love a being before we can be sorry for having offended him. And we must repent of sin, and condemn it in ourselves, before we can cordially trust in Christ as a Saviour from sin, and approve of his condemning it in the flesh. Christ taught that repentance is before faith. He says, repent ye, and believe the gospel. And Paul preached repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The next christian grace, is faith. Enlightened speculative faith, which is an exercise of the understanding, and which precedes regeneration, is a belief in all the testimony of God. Saving faith is a cordial assent to the truth of the gospel. It is an exercise of the understanding and the heart. The mediatorial character of Christ and his expiatory sacrifice, are so inseparably connected with man's salvation, that we can hardly conceive of a christian who is ignorant of Christ. As soon as the sinner sees the fitness of Christ to become his salvation, and as soon as he beholds his loveliness, he commits his cause to him, and throws himself into his arms. This surrendry is never made until the heart loves Christ,—and the heart never does love him until it is changed. Every degree of faith which is exercised before conversion, is merely speculation. Saving faith, that is a faith which is connected with salvation, is said to work by love and purify the heart. If it works by love, it must be inseparably connected with love, and

subsequent to it. This faith is the instrument by which the sinner embraces the Saviour, as the Lord his Righteousness. The subject of genuine evangelical faith, cordially and affectionately embraces all that is known of God. But as there is no other medium of access to the Father, and as there is no other method of salvation, but through Christ, as soon therefore, as the sinner is brought into the favor of God, and opens his eyes on the new world, Christ appears the chief among ten thousands, and the one altogether lovely. There is no state of the mind, before conversion which bears any striking resemblance to this. His faith operating by love, delights to rest on Christ. This faith is the substance of things hoped for. As the cluster brought from Canaan, was to the Israelites a foretaste of the riches which they were afterwards to inherit, so this faith is to christians a foretaste of that blessedness which they are hereafter to enjoy in heaven. It is the evidence of things not seen. That is, the believer's frequent experience of the fulfilment of the divine promise, and his implicit confidence in the faithfulness of Christ, is satisfactory evidence, that God will put him in actual possession of the unseen blessedness of heaven. The pious, believing heart, has known so much of God, and so highly appreciated his excellences, as to value the promises equal to the possession. As an individual holding an obligation against an honest responsible man, values the obligation as highly as the actual possession of the sum specified, so the believer esteems the promise of future blessedness, made by the immutable God, as an assurance of that blessed-

ness. Such faith cannot exist in a heart in which the love of God does not exist.

All the other christian graces are founded on the same holiness of heart, and assimilation to Christ. Devotion is the performance of all known duties from love to God. Prayer is an ardent holy desire that God would bestow on us, and on all others in state of probation, every desirable blessing. Humility is a just estimation of ourselves. It is not attributing to ourselves virtues which we do not possess, nor is it loading ourselves with degrading epithets. Nor does it consist in thinking ourselves inferior to our equals, or inferior to our inferiors; nor in thinking ourselves superior to our equals, or superior to our superiors. But true christian humility consists in cheerfully taking the place which God and justice have assigned us. Christian submission is an unconditional surrendry of ourselves into the hand of God. It is a willingness that he should dispose of us according to his pleasure. It is a satisfaction with the divine character and conduct. A single stipulation or condition on the part of the creature, would prove that his submission is insincere, and that his confidence in God is not entire. Unconditional submission, in all cases, involves a preference of a greater to a less good, and is the purest and most elevated benevolence, as it is totally subversive of selfishness; for selfishness is love of our own interest at the expense of a greater good. To love ourselves according to our value, is not selfishness, but disinterested benevolence. Disinterested benevolence is regarding ourselves and all other beings according to our and their intrinsic value.

The other christian graces which might be enumerated, are but modifications of those graces which I have considered and explained.

The christian graces, it will be readily admitted, often exist in a very feeble state. The devotions of christians are often interrupted, and their obedience is defective, and their resemblance to the Saviour is often faint and distant. Yet if sinless perfection is not the mark of the prize of the high calling, at which professors of religion aim, if they have not in embryo, the features of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, they are still in their sins. To be a disciple of Christ, it is essential that supreme love to God, and benevolence to man, reign in our hearts; and that there be a growing conformity to the revealed will of God. We must love God and his holy kingdom more than ourselves. Like Paul, we must glory in nothing save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we are crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto us. We must count all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. An exemplification of the christian graces in prosperity and adversity, in distress and reproach, in poverty and persecution, constitutes the beauty of christian character. This is that comeliness which adorns the souls of the redeemed in their state preparatory to heaven.

1. If what has been said on this subject is correct, we see that a change of heart does not consist in great and marvellous experiences. Neither extraordinary fear, nor excessive joy, nor uncommon dreams, nor sights, nor voices, nor high excitement of animal feelings, consti-

tutes the christian graces : for neither of these, is love to God, or repentance of sin, or faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such is the influence of Satan, and such the fruitfulness of the imagination, and such the deceitfulness of the human heart, as totally to destroy the weight of such supposed evidences of christian character. False hopes may create raptures which strikingly resemble the raptures of the genuine christian, and yet be only specious counterfeits. The suggestion of passages of scripture to the mind, such as son, or daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee, afford no evidence of a gracious state, for such passages may be suggested to the mind by the imagination, or by Satan for the purpose of deceiving and destroying the soul.

2. We learn from this subject, that there are tests of christian character. The tests of christian character, are the exercise of the christian graces, such as love, repentance, faith, humility, prayer, unconditional submission, and self-denial. The exemplification of these graces, affords the most satisfactory and most scriptural evidence of a change of heart. Without these graces, none have any right to think themselves christians. He who is not the subject of these graces, who has not experienced a genuine change of heart, who does not readily embrace the doctrines of the gospel, and illustrate their practical effects by a holy life, is not a christian. A destitution of christian character, is a destitution of religion.

3. The exercise of the christian graces affords the only rational hope of heaven. Christian hope is a holy desire and expectation of heaven. This hope is found-

ed on the promises of God. These promises are made to individuals possessing a character which is constituted by the christian graces; it follows, therefore, that they only who exercise these graces, can rationally appropriate to themselves the promises of God. All hopes, then, which are not founded on the promises of God, made to the character which is described in those promises, are groundless. Those, therefore, who do not possess the christian character, have no rational hope of heaven.

4. We may see, in view of this subject, that the gospel plan of salvation is consistent with itself. The hopes and promises of false religion are not graduated by the holiness of its votaries. It demands decision, zeal, and devotedness, but is indifferent about the source from which they flow. It admits of the exercises of the worst passions, and most embittered spirits. Only follow me, says the votary of this false religion, and espouse my cause, and I will not investigate your motives and feelings. But it is far otherwise with the religion of Christ. He will admit of no zeal and no devotion, but such as produce an increase of holiness and preparation for heaven. His promises are made only to the pure in heart; and he will never palliate nor excuse sin in his most devoted followers. Be ye holy, for I am holy. The spirit and character which he requires of his followers are just such as every man's reason and conscience tell him are necessary to salvation. This is the happy character of our religion, and the earnest of heaven.

SERMON XVIII.

PERSEVERANCE.

JOB. 17. 9.

The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Having in my last discourse, considered the character of the righteous, I shall now consider his condition, and prospects of salvation. It is certain that the saints, after regeneration, sustain a new, and important relation to God. This relation is to be ascertained by scripture. If the bible reveals any thing on the subject, it is either, that the salvation of the righteous, is possible, or that it is probable, or that it is certain. That the last is the doctrine of the bible, I shall attempt to prove.

All that are truly regenerate, will persevere in holiness, unto eternal life. This doctrine does not admit that the regenerate or righteous will live in the habitual practice of sin, and go to heaven; nor that they may not backslide, and need the grace of God to reclaim them from the snare of the Devil; but that not a single real christian will be left to final apostacy and ruin. The righteous will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour unto eternal redemption. Just as many as are regenerated will be saved. Nor does this doctrine assert that christians have power to keep them-

selves from falling and final apostacy. They can neither originate nor perpetuate their holy exercises and graces ; but they are saved by the promises of grace made in the gospel ; and are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. The doctrine is that they shall persevere, that is, continue to exercise the christian graces, though not without interruption, and practice virtue until they are qualified for heaven. The proofs which I adduce in support of this doctrine are the following.

1. God intends when he changes the heart of the sinner to save him. The supposition, that God sanctifies the soul in prospect of its apostacy, and more aggravated condemnation, is repulsive to every enlightened view of the christian religion. He does inflict on some men, judiciary blindness, hardness, and reprobacy of mind, but not on his friends. He visits his incorrigible enemies with strong delusions. But God has some object in new-creating the soul,—and who dares say, that that object is not kind and benevolent ? He rescues the sinner from his slavery and bondage to prepare him for his own service, and the enjoyment of himself. Isaiah 43. 21. This people have I formed for myself ; they shall shew forth my praise. Now is there any intimation in scripture, that God desires, or intends to give back the rescued captive ? And does it require any more power to keep him, than it did to obtain him ? If God, as can be most clearly shown, intends to prepare those whom he regenerates for heaven, and to receive them to himself, who will presume to say or to believe that he will be disappointed ? A change of heart seals the soul for heaven,

and proves that God has intentions of its salvation. As sure then as God is unchangeable in his intentions, and irresistible in his operations, all the regenerate will be saved.

2. The covenant of redemption proves the certainty of the saints salvation. I have before shown that the covenant of redemption, was made in eternity between the Father and the Son. That the Father, in consideration of the sufferings and death of the Son, gave him a certain portion of the human family, and promised to the Son that at the time, and in the manner stipulated, he would cause these sinners to bow to his sceptre, and make them holy and obedient children of his grace. Now if such a covenant does exist, and Christ on his part has performed the conditions, and the Father, ever since the apostacy, has been fulfilling the conditions on his part, and if the regenerate are the very individuals who were given to Christ, who can doubt the certainty of their salvation? You cannot separate them from the love of God, unless you can dissolve the covenant of the triune God, and break up the councils of heaven. The testimony of Christ on this subject, is, all that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me; and the testimony of the Father is, thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. They were given to the Son for purposes of salvation, and if they are not saved, the conditions of the covenant are not fulfilled. But as this argument will have no influence with those who deny the doctrine of personal election, and as they are free to confess that the perseverance of the saints would inevitably follow from the doctrine of personal election, I pass to show,

3. That the certainty of the salvation of the saints is evident from the covenant of grace, and from the promises of God. The covenant of grace exists between God and his children. It is called a covenant of grace, because God promises to those who embrace the gospel, undeserved, divine and sovereign mercy. To the righteous, he has made exceeding great and precious promises. Now a correct knowledge of the covenant of grace, and of the promises of the gospel, will place this subject beyond a doubt. This covenant differs from the covenant of works, or the covenant of the law. But if it secures no gracious influences, and gracious blessings, how does it differ from the law. None will doubt, that regeneration brings a man into a different relation to God. And what are the peculiarities and blessings of this relation? It gives him an assimilation to God, and a share in his friendship and favor. God exercises all the care and affection not only of a friend, but of a parent. He pities the infirmities of his children, pardons their sins, defends them from their enemies, and carries on in their hearts, the work of sanctification. He does not treat them as they deserve, but for the sake of Christ, they are treated far better than they deserve. The conditions of this covenant are not, do and live, disobey and die; by thy works thou shalt be justified, and by thy works thou shalt be condemned: but the conditions are, do and thou shalt be graciously rewarded; disobey, and thou shalt receive forgiveness by repentance, and faith in the blood of Christ. Thou shalt be visited with a rod, and punished for thine iniquity, but redeemed by a mighty arm. If the covenant of grace secured no pardon, how

would it differ from the covenant of works? God has not pledged himself in this covenant to connive at, or palliate the sins of his saints, but he has promised to bestow grace upon them, to secure their obedience, to afford all those gracious aids, and holy dispositions which are necessary to the progressive sanctification of the heart, to purity of the life, and to the salvation of the soul. This covenant does not secure the end without the means; nor heaven without a preparation for it. The promises of God which are appendages to this covenant, are very explicit.

God has promised either to secure his saints against temptation, or to give them grace to bear it, or to deliver them when tempted. The only danger of saints or sinners, arises from sin. Man is surrounded by the snares of Satan and his accomplices, and is subject to many infirmities which expose him to become the prey of his assailants. But if the promises of God have interposed and rescued him from danger, if friendship and communion with Christ, and the influences of the Holy Ghost have given him power to resist, or power to extricate himself, he is safe. But as it may be more convincing and satisfactory to the inquirer after truth, I will adduce a few of those promises of the saints' perseverance. 1 Sam. 12. 22. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. This passage was spoken in view of the relapsed state of the Jews. Even when there was an apostacy from God, there were assurances given to that people; that they were the people of God, that they were not chosen on account of their virtuous

deeds, nor would they be finally rejected for their vicious ones. He chose them for his name's sake, of his own self-moved goodness, to display the glory of his perfections.

Ps. 89. 32, 33. Then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. Two things in this passage are worthy of remark: the first is, that the faithfulness of God to his promises, required him to bring to repentance, and a holy life, those members of the Jewish Church, who were truly pious, though they were then in a relapsed state. And if he could not be faithful without bringing them back, then the promise embraces their recovery.

The other is, that all the punishments inflicted on the children of God are disciplinary, and all his judgments threatened or inflicted, are followed by promises and mercies. Prov. 24. 16. For a just man falleth seven times and riseth up again. Micah 7. 8. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. This is the consolation of believers, that God is unchangeable, and his affections and intentions of mercy are not graduated by the changes which take place in the saints. John. 3. 14. But whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst. But the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. This figure is very significant. To suppose the saint constantly in the act of drinking destroys the figure, and annihilates

the force of the Saviour's reasoning. He was representing to the woman of Samaria, the superiority of the water which he imparted, to that which was found in the well of Sychar. But how was it superior if his disciples must always be in the act of drinking? Did not the woman know that a man could never thirst if he kept the water of the well constantly at his mouth? The fountain which supplies the saint is not represented as descending to the heart, but as ascending from it. The heart is the fountain; and this passage represents it as an exhaustless fountain: it is a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

John 10. 27—29. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

I do not know how a man can read and understand this passage, and at the same time, doubt the perseverance of the saints. Christ says he knows his sheep. I give unto them eternal life, and none can pluck them out of my hand; and then adds, that his Father gave them to him, and he is omnipotent, and therefore none can pluck them out of his hand. One reason here assigned why they will be saved, is, that Christ gives them eternal life. Another is, that the Lord is Almighty, and disposed to save, and they are therefore, secure. No allusion is here made to their faithfulness, as a condition of their salvation. Their salvation was sure for a very different reason from that of their faithfulness. John 14. 19. Yet a

little while and the world seeth me no more. But ye see me, because I live, ye shall live also. Shall is a word which is almost always used when the certainty of the salvation of saints is spoken of; and may, can, and might, are seldom, if ever used in this connexion. John 17. 12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the scriptures might be fulfilled. There were none lost but Judas, who was given to him for purposes of judgment, and not of mercy, and whom the Saviour more than a year before Satan entered into him, according to the chronology of the bible, called a devil. But there is an important fact established by this passage, that saints do not keep themselves, but are kept by Christ. I have kept them in thy name. I wish to introduce five verses more from this evangelist. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. He that eateth of this bread shall live forever.

2. Thess. 3. 3. But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil. Heb. 9. 15. And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

And the same apostle says, chap. 10, verse 14, For by one offering, he hath perfected forever them that are

sanctified. Sanctification is holiness ; and all are sanctified who are regenerated, and how are they perfected forever, if they are not accepted as perfectly holy, and treated as holy on Christ's account, and not because they are sinless.

Read Rom. 8, from 27 to the close of the chapter. I introduce one text more. 1 Cor. 10. 13. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

God is faithful to his son, and faithful to his promises.

4. I prove the certainty of the salvation of the saints, from the manner in which the inspired writers account for apostacies in the church. They always account for them on the ground, that they who leave the visible church, never possessed genuine religion ; that they never experienced a change of heart. In the parable of the sower, none brought forth fruit unto perfection, but those who had an honest and good heart. Some of the seed sprung up and flourished for a season, but because there was no grace at heart, it withered away and died. In the parable of the foolish virgins, who had nothing but the lamp of external profession, the mere external appearance of religion, and no oil, no grace in the heart ; and the man who had not on a wedding garment, are cases of profession without a change of heart. These are all cases which prove apostacy from profession and privileges, but not from piety or holiness. There is not a shadow of evidence, from scripture phrasology, or from the history of Saul king of Israel, and of

Judas Iscariot, that they ever possessed a new heart. It is said, God gave Saul another heart, but the context immediately explains it to be a heart of prophecy. And the Apostle tells us, that Judas fell from a part of the apostleship and bishopric, but never intimates that he was ever sanctified at heart. Now if all the apostacies in the visible church can be accounted for on the ground of false conversions ; and in no case on record is it necessary to suppose that they did apostatise from genuine religion : and if the apostle has laid down the general principle on which we are to account for their dereliction, what right have we to say that any genuine christian ever has fallen or ever will fall from grace.

1 John, 2. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us ; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. Here the apostle considers desertion from the visible church of Christ, evidence that the heart was not interested in him. There is undoubtedly a religion founded on temporary excitement, and natural affection, which may be obtained and lost again. But no power can unchange the heart, but that which changes it ; and though the genuine christian may backslide and dishonor his profession, yet the same power which first delivered him from sin, will restore his wandering feet. We readily admit, that if the christian were left to himself, he would apostatise and perish, but by the grace of God, he is kept through faith unto salvation. The most exalted and holy saint on earth might, and would most surely, fall and perish, were it not for the provisions of grace. Leave

him to himself, and his destruction is inevitable. But the grace of God secures the interests of his soul. All those passages which seem to imply a possibility of the saints' apostacy, are motives of excitement and terror, presented to the christian's mind; and they are all true and important. If the saint did not love God and serve him unto death, he would go to hell. But does this prove that God will not enable him to persevere unto death. Where God has promised to save men on conditions, he has promised to make them comply with those conditions. But I must here be allowed the privilege of obviating a single objection to this doctrine. It is said a belief in the certainty of our salvation, tends to licentiousness. There would be some plausibility in this objection, if men had any right to believe themselves christians without evidence. But those who live in the habitual indulgence of sin, have reason to doubt whether they have ever been made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Persons have reason to doubt the genuineness of their hopes, in proportion to their want of evidence of a change. We do not, however, believe that an hour of darkness, or a pressing cloud, are sufficient to destroy the hope of him who is usually and supremely devoted to Christ. As the cultivation of piety and the influences of the Holy Ghost, give a good man more confidence in God, and greater assurance of hope; to doubt our perseverance seems to militate against christian character. It discovers want of confidence in God. The purer, and the more elevated are the joys of christians, the more firm and unwavering are their assurances, that they shall never cease to love and serve God. But it is evi-

dent from two considerations, that a belief in the perseverance of the saints, does not tend to licentiousness. First it is contrary to reason ; and secondly, it is contrary to fact. It is not rational to suppose, that a change of heart which consists in holiness, will make men love sin more ardently. This change produces a love of holiness, and a disrelish and aversion to sin. Now to suppose that those who have tasted the bitterness of sin, and have received a nature which abhors it, will practice it with greater avidity, is irrational and inconsistent. And is there any thing in the character and constitution of the human mind, and of the human passions, which will sanction the sentiment, that a certain prospect of good, and an assurance of success, palsies effort, and encourages sloth and indolence ? Does the prospect of wealth, cause the merchant, mechanic, or the husbandman, to be less vigilant and industrious in the labors of their hands ? Were two armies on the field, about to engage in combat and carnage, and should God with an audible voice, assure one of them of complete victory, does reason teach us, that the army receiving this assurance, would be less bold and intrepid in their attack ?

I know, there are railings of an expiring cause, and writhings of despair, but who would not be brave, were he exempted from injury and assured of victory. I cannot conceive of a greater incentive to action than assurance of success. The certainty that the church of Christ will be successful and triumphant, has comforted the saints, while laboring under the severest trials, and the most appalling discouragements. God, who has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, is faithful and

unchangeable. This promise has quenched the fiery darts of the adversary, and filled dungeons with joy.

Secondly, it is not a fact that a belief in this doctrine produces licentiousness. Are those men who most firmly believe and strenuously defend the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, the most licentious characters in community? It is vain to attempt to convince rational men of the truth of an assertion which is contradicted by fact. If the advocates of this doctrine, are licentious from the influence of this doctrine and not from the influence of depravity, the perniciousness of the doctrine is easily proved. Until this is established, men of candor and good sense, who value testimony more than caprice and prejudice, will judge for themselves. And how shall we dispose of that long list of martyrs, whose holiness of heart and life, whose labors and sufferings command the veneration of the world. They all believed in this doctrine. What was the influence of this doctrine on Baxter, and Brainard, on Buchanan and Martyn? Positive assertions cost but little; and no sentiment can be so absurd as not to have its advocates, but I would never tax the credulity of my fellow creatures, I would treat them as candid and rational, and capable of discovering the force of reasoning and the weight of evidence. And I hope I shall not forfeit my pretensions to candor by presenting a few difficulties which I discover in the opposite sentiment. If christians can fall from grace, how can it be proved? It cannot be proved from facts. There is no evidence that the apostates recorded in the bible ever possessed true piety. And they could not fall from what they did not possess. And the ex-

amples which may be brought are insufficient ; because we are not only incapable of knowing the good estate of any man, with infallible certainty, but we are forbidden to judge in cases beyond our scrutiny. And who but God can search the heart ? Who but God, can detect all artful counterfeits of christian character ? Who can ascertain whether it is a work of the heart, or only an excitement of the animal passions, and the persuasions of judgment ? Besides, apostacies are most frequent in revivals in which truth is concealed, and which are conducted by inexperienced and injudicious teachers. An experienced and discerning christian, would, at the time of their supposed conversion, have pronounced them spurious ; and would have doubted whether they had ever experienced genuine conviction, much more, genuine conversion. I am a friend to revivals. I believe in powerful, and holy religion ; but I tremble for the consequences of those revivals, which have much of human passion, and injudicious management, and but little of the Holy Spirit in them. It is to be expected, that false and spurious conversions will be followed by apostacies ; but this does not prove that genuine converts will apostatise. It is all explained by a single passage. They went out from us, because they were not of us. If it is not possible to prove for a certainty that a man is a christian, then it is not possible to prove that any one has fallen from christianity.

But on the supposition that it is possible for one man to apostatise, it is for ten, it is possible for the whole church to apostatise ; and the church of Christ might be annihilated, and the gates of hell might prevail against

it ; and one object of the blood, sufferings, and death of Christ would be lost.

To say that faithfulness is the condition of salvation, is not to the point. I believe as firmly as any man in faithfulness to Christ, and in this very doctrine, am proving that God has promised and covenanted to make his people faithful, and to give them grace to love and serve him. None suppose that saints are going to heaven, unless they go in the way of God's appointment. If by faithfulness, you mean a full and perfect performance of duty, I say no mere man since the fall has been faithful in this sense. But if by faithfulness, you mean, that habitual love, elevation, and purity of life, which constitute christian character, I say that christians are sure of this character, because they are sure of the increasing friendship, and aid of God, and grace according to their day. God has promised to enable them to love and serve him, and that he will never leave them, nor forsake them. They can do nothing of themselves, but all things through Christ strengthening them. God has promised them a religious character and the grace of perseverance. Nothing can pluck them out of the Saviour's hand. Neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor the temptations of the world, nor the insidious snares of Satan, nor their own sins ; for they are saved by the mercy of God.

I shall offer but one more argument in support of this doctrine. That is, the promise that the holiness of the saints shall hereafter be rewarded. Christ says, Mat. 10. 42. Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a dis-

ciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward. Here we are taught that the least holy service will be rewarded. But on presumption that an individual who should perform such an holy service, should fall from grace, and be sent to perdition, when, or where, or how would it be rewarded? If it be said, it is rewarded in the present life, then it may be said that all the holiness of the saints is rewarded in the present life. But the bible most clearly teaches us that the present life is a state of probation; and that the future is a state of rewards and punishments. The representations given in scripture of the last judgment, are conclusive on this point. Eccl. 12. 14. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Now if every secret thing is to be brought into view on the day of righteous retribution, every holy exercise of the christian will be brought into view, but if the christian has fallen from grace after possessing a holy character, how will his holy character then be regarded by the Judge of the whole earth, and what will be his reward?

1. I infer from the text and subject, that all efforts to destroy the church of Christ, made either by its professed friends, or by its avowed enemies, are vain. Not a single gem can be plucked from the diadem of Zion's King.

2. This subject teaches us the obligations of saints to exercise gratitude. They have a title to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for them in heaven, whither the forerunner is for them entered, even Jesus.

3. This subject holds out to sinners one of the most powerful inducements to become pious. If they will accept of Christ, they shall have an imperishable treasure. A treasure which none can take from them, and which they themselves will neither be able, nor disposed to lose.

4. This subject teaches us the consistency of the gospel plan of salvation. It first gives a christian character, then the rewards of the christian.

SERMON XIX.

SAINTS' DEATH AND GLORIFICATION.

REV. 14. 13.

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

I now pass from the character of the righteous and the certainty of his salvation, to the consideration of his death and glorification. If it is interesting to contemplate the commencement, and progress of the divine mercy, its consummation cannot be less interesting. The displays of mercy in this life, cannot half equal those which will succeed. The excellence of religion, is discoverable in the antidote which it affords for removing the anxieties of mind, and relieving the cares, disquietudes, and afflictions of life. It soothes the mind and supports it, while laboring under the loss of property, health, reputation, or even life itself. Religion confers on its votaries positive happiness in this life, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, and by imparting purity to the soul. It takes from the soul the stings of guilt, and makes it the dwelling place of pleasure and hope and rapture. As I have before remarked, it has a perfect adaptation to the condition and necessities of

men. But what adds superior lustre to the gospel, is, that it supports and comforts its friends in death, with hopes, and promises, and assurances of salvation. The christian cannot close his eyes on the scenes of futurity, by scepticism and blind delusion. He is a believer in divine revelation, and that is sufficient to annihilate every doubt on the doctrine of immortality, and of future rewards and punishments. He goes down to the grave without the possibility of surprise, or disappointment. If then he is peaceful and triumphant in this important crisis, he must be supported by rational views and christian feelings. We have abundant evidence that the christian in death often enjoys these supports. There is nothing miraculous in his departure to another world. He is not beyond the control of the laws of nature, nor exempted from the distresses, depressions, and derangements, incident to minds connected with gross and dissoluble bodies. But the same grace that sanctified his heart, and has hitherto kept him from apostacy, is now displayed in a more vivid manner. This world which has formed the principal interruption of his happiness, in death loses its power to interest and allure, and leaves the soul to implicit reliance on Christ. The Holy Spirit imparts special qualifications and graces to the expiring saint ; and as the soul is about to quit the frail body, and exchange this, for a holy world ; mortality, for immortality, it needs endowments of a different character, not to resist and repel, but to enjoy. Sin and Satan are now making their last unsuccessful attacks ; and grace is consummating its victory. This is a triumphant hour to him whose heart is the abode of faith, and hope, and

the influences of the Holy Spirit. The affections receive additional strength and ardour as they approach nearer and nearer to the Sun of righteousness. The Saviour manifests his special presence to his children as they approach the kingdom of their eternal residence. He comes down to invest them with the robes of his righteousness, and to introduce them to the presence of his Father and of his holy angels, and to the company of the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven. It is not surprising, when we consider his faith and hope, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the friendship and presence of Christ that the christian should triumph over his last enemy, death. The present joys, the bright and enrapturing prospects of immediate blessedness, the struggling out of sin and sorrow into peace and fruition, are a work of extraordinary interest and delight to the saint. And here the question arises, what are the scenes which immediately follow death. Does the soul pass immediately into glory, or does it sleep with the body in the grave until the resurrection, or is it confined to a painful and purifying residence in the future world, until the judgment, and the final surrendry of the kingdom of the Son to the Father, at the completion of his mediatorial work? It is a given principle in theology as in philosophy, that we are not to assume gratuitous and unnecessary notions, at the expence of simple facts. I see nothing to be gained by the admission of the doctrine, that the soul will exist in a torpid and inactive condition, in the intermediate state between death and the judgment. The soul in this frail state, gives no indications of wear-

ness, and experiences no intervals of torpidness. Its sleepless and busy powers, exist in full vigor, when fatigue has worn down the body, and closed every medium of communication. There is nothing then in the operations of the human soul, which would warrant an expectation, that there would ever be a suspension of its powers. I know these remarks would amount to nothing, were they arrayed against plain matters of revelation. No such revelation exists; nor could such sentiments have been propagated, if men were not gross and inclined to materialism. The constrained and fanciful interpretation given to two or three passages of scripture, are insufficient to sanction a belief in either the sleeping state of the soul, or a future purgatory. I will not attempt the defence of a sentiment that the happiness of the blessed, before the resurrection and the judgment, is as perfect, and exalted, as it will be subsequent to those events.

I am not able to say what influence the gathering of the redeemed from the earth, the union of the soul with a spiritual body, and the consummation of the divine plans and of the kingdom of grace, will have on the happiness of saints. I am inclined to think that all these and innumerable other considerations, will conspire to bless, and honor, and glorify the redeemed. But that the souls of the redeemed are not to ascend from the grave, nor from purgatory, to the judgment and heaven, I think capable of proof. Indeed there is a difficulty on the very face of the doctrines I am controverting. I believe that inaction in intellectual and moral existence is inconceivable. How can pure intelligence, incorporeal existence

sleep? There is something in man which is employed in curious combinations and reveries, even while the body slumbers. And sometimes its sportiveness destroys corporeal repose. Did you ever awake from sleep, refreshed and invigorated in body, and find yourselves unable to arouse your minds? In all cases in which we speak of a feeble, a wearied or a confused mind, the only infirmity exists in the defectiveness of the organs of communication. From the intimate connexion of the mind with the body, we attribute weakness to the one which belongs to the other. Mental irregularities may arise from organic disease and derangement in the material functions. And its limited and enfeebled operations in this state of imprisonment, are no argument against its expansive and untiring nature, when liberated. But as the doctrine of intellectual and moral suspension in the saints, is so undesirable, gratuitous, and immatured an opinion, I will pass to my proof, that a state of glory immediately succeeds death.

Write blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth. It will need no rules of interpretation to see, that from henceforth, is from the time of death. The moment the saint expires, he is blessed; and intellectual, and moral happiness is inconceivable without intellectual and moral existence. If the departed soul of the saint, descended to the pit of purgatory, or to the prison of the grave, it would not enter on immediate happiness. But this passage declares that those who die in the Lord, enter without interval or delay, into blessedness and glorification. The same apostle who wrote the text, saw under the altar, the souls of those which were slain

for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. Where was this altar? In the painful abodes of purgatory, or the dreary habitations of the dead, or was it beneath the throne of God in the realms of light? The same evangelist says of the pious representatives of the tribes of Israel, and when those beasts give glory, and honor, and thanks, to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever. And cast their crowns before the throne saying, thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure, they are, and were created. How could they cast their crowns before the throne of the Lamb, if their souls were dormant? There could not be much devotion in slumbering souls. The promise of the Saviour made to the expiring thief, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise, cannot be reconciled with any sentiment which does not admit the glorification of the saints, immediately after death. The day on which he suffered was to close in a few hours, from the time he made this promise. If this promise was fulfilled, the expiring penitent must have been glorified immediately after death. It proves as certainly the immediate ascension of the pious malefactor to glory, as it proves the ascension of Christ. The union which subsists between Christ and his disciples, is such, as to involve as much absurdity to suppose that his spiritual members are in a state of inactivity and suffering after death, as to suppose that Christ himself was in such a state. And why did not the expiring Stephen when he

looked up into heaven, and saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God, bid adieu to the joys he had already felt, to the joys of that glorious mansion, instead of commending his departing spirit into the hands of his Redeemer? And what are those hopes, and foretastes, and assurances, with which the Holy Ghost has inspired the breasts of so many thousands, but strong delusion, if death is an interruption of spiritual enjoyments? And how could Paul be in a straight betwixt two, having a desire so far as he consulted his own personal happiness to be absent from the body and present with the Lord? The departed saints have persevered unto death; and now they are claiming the promise of eternal life. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Enough has been said to show that saints at death enter on immediate glory. The inquiry then arises what is the character, the nature, and the extent of their happiness? The joys of heaven, are purely intellectual and moral. The knowledge and the love of God constitute the happiness of heaven. There is an entire exemption from pain, from disquietude, and from suffering. No darkness shrouds the mind, no mysteries enfeeble faith, and no chains confine the soul. Temptations to sin, intervals of doubts, suspended ardour of affection, and intensity of care, have no admission there. Redeemed saints look down on this world as a charmless spot, and as destitute of interest, only as it is the theatre on which God displays his love to souls, and prepares his church for his immediate and blissful presence. They enjoy perfect security, and uninterrupted peace. The company of the blessed adds greatly to their personal

blessedness ; for pure holiness is not selfish, but communicative and disinterested. Every redeemed soul, every harp of heaven, increases the tide of glory which fills the place. Every holy disposition of the soul, matured and perfected, may now behold the wisdom of all those inscrutable providences, which have brought the redeemed to heaven and adorned the glory of God. And while they vie with millions, in their homage, and praise, and admiration, of that wisdom and power, and grace, which have redeemed fallen man, how will they be lost in the glory which is constantly passing before them ! They know how to appreciate this glory, for they were once ignorant of it, and saw it only obscurely, through a glass darkly. They once believed the display of the divine mercy, was the high object of all the plans, works, and ways of God ; now they see it to be so. The mystery is now unfolded. Divested of the tenement of clay, the soul is permitted to take a more extended view, and to experience an astonishing increase of capacities. The saints view with amazement and gratitude the plan which has rescued them from merited anguish. While they gaze on the mysteries of redeeming love, their own salvation will be a mystery of mysteries. Their minds must dwell on their guilt and deserts, their enmity and ingratitude ; and when they stoop to behold the dreadful displays of justice, in the punishment of the incorrigible, they must feel, that the happy distinction of grace, demands perpetual praise. But happier, far happier, than the thought of exemption from pain, or communion of the blessed, is the contemplation of the unveiled vision of the Saviour's countenance, the unclouded

view of his enrapturing beauties ! Heaven has no glories compared with his. This Saviour, the saints now enjoy, not by faith, not through the medium of prayer, and the light of revelation, but they see him face to face. This crowns the whole scene with unspeakable blessedness : To be filled with all the communicable fullness of God, and to stand in his immediate presence with views so clear, and love to the eternal source, so ardent as to extinguish the lesser glories of heaven, must consummate the bliss ! But to be holy as God is holy, and to dwell in the perfection of blessedness, is not all the story of redeeming love.

The capacities of the mind, and the holy tempers of the soul, are destined to endless progression in holiness. All the forms of redeeming love will not be displayed, when millions on millions of years have rolled away. Not half the beauties of the Godhead will be unfolded, when all the saints on earth are gathered in, when the dead shall be summoned from their sepulchres, when the final congregation, both small and great, shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and when the last division shall take place, and the last sentence shall be pronounced on mankind. Even then the redeemed will be in the infancy of their knowledge, and in the infancy of their love. Yes, the time will come, in eternity, when their former raptures will appear but poor and meagre, and their former songs like the charmless music of the unskilful. O, how can we, prisoners of clay, who have scarcely a glimpse of the present joys of heaven, how can we dwell on its endless progression ! The short visit of the great apostle to that world, presented to his

mind unspeakable things ; and though he spent his life to propagate the religion of Christ, with a soul wrapt in seraphic fire, and loaded with the eloquence of the skies, he could scarcely touch the theme. His heart could feel, his mind think, his audience could see in the lineaments of his countenance, and in the trembling accents of his lips, the irrepressible emotions of a soul imbued with the love of God and the love of man. What was Paul while resident in the flesh, compared with what he now is ? And what is Paul now, compared with what we shall see him in the illimitable ages of eternity ? Would you learn the consummation of redeeming love, you must go down the long track of eternity, and view the church in her future glory. What more can I say ? The blessedness of heaven is pure, and peaceful, and eternal. How shall I give you adequate views of this subject ? Shall I point you to a description of it in revelation ? Shall I load my discourse with figures and epithets ? Or shall I present to your minds the triumphant language of departed saints ? And what if you never felt a kindred emotion, would the subject then be intelligible ? I know the christian can understand it, for experience has removed his ignorance and his doubts. Christians will understand it just in proportion to the devotion of their hearts, and the degree of their consecration to the service of Christ.

We learn from this subject, the riches of the gospel of Christ. It is not only rich in sanctifying the heart, in releasing it from its imprisonment, and confirming it in lasting holiness and happiness, but all the rich interpositions of divine grace here, are only preparatory to richer

joys. The great object of the Saviour, in suffering on the cross, and in converting and sanctifying the sinner, is to blend him in the last and glorious expression of infinite benevolence. And while he will answer the need which Christ has of him, and fill the chasm which would otherwise be in the works of God, he enjoys happiness of a nature and extent, of an excellence and devotion, which defy illustration by any comparison on earth. The inheritance of the saint in death and in eternity, is rich, for God has made it so. All will hereafter be accounted rich, who attain unto eternal life. And this life the christian has in his adoption, his progressive sanctification, his triumph over the grave, and his consummated felicity in heaven.

We learn from this subject the duty of christians. The future occupations and enjoyments of the saints, most loudly demand a preparation for that station, which they shall hereafter occupy. The saints should cultivate here the dispositions which they will then exercise, and become as nearly assimilated to heaven, as the impediments of this frail state of existence will admit. We are to exercise the same faith in the Redeemer's blood, the same love to God and love to man, to exhibit the same concern for the glory of God, and for the good of the universe, that we shall then do. We should give up all our powers of body and mind to the service of Christ, and make our life, and being, and happiness subservient to the great purposes of his benevolence. These, my brethren, are directions which will never deceive you. Do as Paul did : Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Then you will wit-

ness the completion of the plan of salvation, and experience the glory which is to be revealed in us. You will take a seat amongst the blessed, and reign with your Saviour forever.

SERMON XX.

RESURRECTION.

ACTS 24. 15.

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.

Having proved that the saints, after death, pass immediately into glory, I shall, without a waste of time or of argument, take it for granted, that the finally impenitent pass immediately from death into misery. And while one ascends to heaven, the other descends to hell. And though the happiness of the one and the misery of the other, are complete, yet they may not be the same in extent, that they will be subsequently to the judgment. Leaving the one in bliss, and the other in wo, until the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, and the closing scene of the mediatorial work, and the surrendry of the kingdom into the hands of the Father, I propose in this discourse to discuss the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. A gross and unthinking mind, a mind unenlightened by revelation, would, from the appearance of things about it, be exposed to believe in an annihilation of the body, if not of the soul. This inference would be drawn from the death of animals. There is a striking analogy between the death of man as an

animal, and that of other animals. And though there is nothing in nature which can be adduced as positive proof of the resurrection of the body, yet there is much to shield this doctrine from the charge of absurdity. There are a variety of curious changes in insects, which resemble the resurrection of the human body. The dissolution and reorganization which they undergo, are not less inscrutable, nor less incredible, than the resurrection of man. By certain mutations and processes, the worm becomes a butterfly, passing from lower to higher organic structure. Multitudes of conformations, both of animals and vegetables, may be conceived capable of existence and succession, which yet do not exist. Examine the cabinet of the naturalist, and you will find a multitude of phenomena of a similar nature. And where is the absurdity in hoping that man may awake from the grave invested with a new, and more exalted nature. I allude to these to show, that there is nothing in nature to invalidate this sentiment. I do not adduce them as proof of the resurrection. I am willing to admit there is nothing in nature, nor in the known powers and principles of the human mind, which could discover this doctrine. And on this admission, I found an argument in support of the doctrine of the resurrection. If there is nothing in the light of nature, nor in human philosophy, to create a belief in this doctrine, what gave it existence? The faith of mankind in this doctrine, is unquestionably founded on revelation. And if it is a matter of revelation, it is true; for God has revealed nothing which is false. The universal belief of the church in all ages, in this doctrine, is a species of evidence that its adoption is

congenial with piety, and that it is a communication which God has made to his people. I apprehend no plausible argument can be urged against the doctrine on the ground of its impossibility or absurdity. The simple fact, that it is a work of omnipotence and supernatural, places the objector under the necessity of proving that God has not ability to raise the dead; and from such ground any man of modesty would retire. It is not a little presumptuous in man who cannot comprehend his own existence, nor analyze the vital spark which gives activity to his frame, to attempt to limit the Almighty. It is true, that it is of little importance to know whether his future and spiritual body, is constituted of the same materials which formerly composed it, or of new ones. There are just as many difficulties attending the one supposition as the other. What if the bodies of the deceased pass through a thousand changes, from inert matter to vegetable, and from vegetable to animal, and what if, in these mutations, they are transported to different sections of the world, by animals, air, or by water, and mingle promiscuously with all the elements. There is no evidence that they are annihilated, there is no evidence that they pass the limits of this little world, which in the eye of God must be attended with less confusion in selection, than the selection of letters by the typographer. He might arrange the operations of the natural world in such a manner as to deposit the particles of the human body in their organic beds, or by a word, he could carry them back through all their changes, in a moment. Because the bodies of the saints in their intermediate state, may be answering some noble ends by passing

from one state to another, or from one body to another, it does not prove, that they will be either annihilated or lost when the Saviour shall call for them. The same bodies will arise. Nor is this subject at all perplexed, with these sceptical queries which are sneeringly and triumphantly urged against it. It is asked with what bodies do the dead arise? It is said, there is an entire revolution in the particles of matter, in every living human being once in several years, and shall we appear with a huge and massy existence comprising all the matter which has ever been secreted in our systems? Or shall we appear with the bodies we possessed in childhood, or youth, or old age, or at the time of our death? Shall we appear blooming and healthful, or emaciated and enfeebled with disease? The apostle has answered all these queries. God giveth a body as he pleaseth; and to every one his own body. Nor does the suggestion that the same bodies when raised, will be incapable of existence without sustenance, amount to a difficulty; because this suggestion overlooks entirely the change which is to be wrought on the material body. I am not aware that any who believe in the resurrection of the body, will advocate the doctrine, that this corruption will not put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality. I omit for the present, the strained and unnatural construction which has been given to the word resurrection, which makes it only a spiritual resurrection, or a resurrection from sin, or moral death, since I shall have occasion to allude to this point in several places in this discourse.

The proof I adduce of the resurrection of the body, is,
1. That many have arisen from the dead. I have here no allusion to those changes in the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, which qualified them for the immediate presence and service of God. They were probably the subjects of an instantaneous change, which resembled both the death and the resurrection of other saints. Nor to the conjectural opinions of some, that Samuel was raised from the dead by the hand of God, to confound both Saul and the witch of Endor, and that Moses appeared in the same state on the Mount of transfiguration that Elijah did. I cannot say that Moses did not undergo a change like that of Enoch, and that the reason why he could not be found, was not that he had gone into heaven with a resuscitated and spiritual body. I adduce positive proof that some have arisen from the dead, waving at present, the resurrection of Christ, and all those miraculous resurrections which only re-animated the natural body, and imparted to it the principle of vitality. Mat. 27. 52, 53. And the graves were opened, and many of the bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves, after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. This passage is very explicit. It states the time, the circumstances, and the proof. Their bodies arose; they came out of the graves; they travelled into Jerusalem, and were seen and known by many. There is no evidence from this, or any other passage, that the resurrection of these many, was a singular blessing bestowed on them, which will be denied other saints. It was more properly the scene of the final resurrection in miniature. The rising

Redeemer, to show the extent of his power, and the nature of his work, and to illustrate his union to his disciples, and their union to him, carried with him to heaven some of the first fruits of his labors. But it is sufficient for my purpose, that those who were acquainted with the propriety of language, and were under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, have said that many bodies of the saints which slept, arose.

2. I prove the resurrection of the body, from the truth, that in eternity man will still be man. In his original state of innocence and purity, man was not an angel, or a seraph, but man possessed of two parts, a soul and a body. He is still possessed of body and soul. And there is no evidence in the gospel, that either death, or judgment, or eternity will be such, as to destroy his distinctive capacities as man. In what the spiritual body will consist, how it will enhance the happiness, or misery of the soul, what its structures and capacities will be, I shall not presume to determine. Nor does this at all effect the argument. I simply say, man must differ from purely intellectual and moral beings ; and his spiritual body will differ from his soul. God will give it such senses as he pleases, and such a union with the soul, as will best answer his designs, and the promotion of his glory. Man will still be man, and if he once possessed a body, which was no incumbrance to his spirit, and which was no interruption of the enjoyment of the divine presence and smiles, who can say, that the body may not be resuscitated, and receive a perfection greatly transcending its original state.

3. I prove the resurrection of the body from the resurrection of Christ. Christ, in union with his Godhead, possessed a human body, and a human soul. These both suffered on the cross. His body only died. According to his own prediction, he arose from the dead on the third day. His material body arose. As evidence of his death, we have the testimony both of his friends and his enemies. On the subject of his resurrection, their testimony differs. After he was dead he was deposited in a new tomb, hewn out of a rock ; and lest his disciples should steal him away, and make a sham resurrection to verify his prediction, and to deceive the people, the entrance of the tomb was secured by a large rock, and that rock was sealed, that a discovery might be made if the rock was taken away and replaced. As a further security, a faithful and armed company of Roman soldiers were stationed about the tomb. At the hour predicted, the stone was rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre ; the rocks were rent, the earth trembled, the graves burst, and the dead arose, and Jesus came forth and appeared unto many—more than five hundred at once, and at different times, for the space of forty days, and then ascended to God. Now the evidence of his resurrection, would not have been half so strong, if his enemies had not been guarding the tomb. The captain of the band, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earth quake, and those things which were done, feared greatly and said, truly this was the Son of God. The only hope that now remained to the Jewish Sanhedrim, to the chief priests and scribes, was to destroy the evidence of his resurrec-

tion. To do this, they bribed the guard to swear falsely and to say, while we slept, his disciples came and stole him away. And perceiving that the very confession, that they slept, would, according to the Roman law, expose them to immediate death, they promised to bribe the governor also, and secure them from merited punishment. And what did they gain by this position?—the testimony of a band of soldiers, to events which transpired when they were asleep. How did they know what the disciples of Christ were doing, when they were in sound sleep? Such testimony is too frivolous to deserve regard; and yet it is enough in the mind of the Jews, even to this day, to invalidate the resurrection of Christ. Now that the resurrection of Christ, was a resurrection of his body, cannot admit of doubt. It could not be a resurrection of his soul,—a resurrection from sin, for he never had any sin; he was never spiritually dead. It could not therefore, be a spiritual resurrection. It is not possible that his soul could be arrayed before Pilate, smitten with a reed, nailed to the cross, pierced with a spear, wrapped in a linen cloth, and deposited in a tomb, and raised from the dead. Nor is it possible that his soul should eat and drink with the disciples of Christ, nor that it should exhibit to the unbelieving its wounds, and ascend visibly to heaven. These things cannot be affirmed of an incorporeal spirit. I know not how the supporters of the doctrine of spiritual resurrection only, can evade the force of such reasoning. If Christ had a spiritual resurrection, he must have had a spiritual death, he must have been a sinner.

I assume the ground of the Apostle in 1 Cor. 15 Chap. and maintain, that such is the union of Christ and his followers, that their resurrection inevitably follows his resurrection. Now if Christ be preached, that he arose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection from the dead; but if there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: yea, and ye are found false witnesses against God. Because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. This subject is fully discussed in the 1 Cor. 15 chapter, by the apostle. In this chapter, he is bold and irrefutable in his defence of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. He says, if this doctrine be not true, the christian church have perjured themselves; and dying in such a state will descend to perdition. And he declares positively that if this doctrine be false, the martyrs have gone to hell, or are annihilated. And another very important point is gained; the resurrection of Christ proves infallibly the resurrection of all his followers. I dare not say, on critical examination of this chapter that it proves the resurrection of the impenitent. It proves clearly the resurrection of the Corinthian church, and by consequence all the followers of the Lamb. For it is a fair principle of interpretation, that every passage which is addressed to particular characters, is applicable to all of the same character. Though this passage may not prove a uni-

versal resurrection, it does not follow that other passages do not prove it. The same writer declares the universal resurrection in the text. And whether reasoning from the universal consequences of Adam's sin on the natural body, and the universal consequences of Christ's death on the natural body, would not imply the resurrection of both just and unjust, as in the 22d verse, for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ, shall all be made alive, I will not assume to decide. The death here spoken of, is the death of the body ; and by consequence the life here spoken of is the life of the body, that is the resurrection of the body.

4. I prove the resurrection of the body from the express declaration of scripture. This is the last appeal I shall make. I lay no stress on the desirableness of such an event, nor on the seeming propriety of the righteous and the wicked appearing before God in the same bodies in which they have done and suffered the will of God, and in which they have made their bodies the instruments of iniquity unto iniquity. Indeed there seems to be a fitness in the saint's appearing in the same bodies in which they have endured imprisonments, stripes and martyrdom ; and there is a seeming fitness in the sinner's appearing in the same body which has been prostituted to sinful purposes. But all this would amount to nothing, if God has not revealed the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Mat. 22. 23. The same day came unto him the Sadducees, that say there is no resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said, if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. They here speak of seven

brothers marrying the same woman, and ask, whose wife she shall be in the resurrection. Jesus answered and said unto them, ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God. I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead but of the living. In this passage, the Saviour teaches and defends the doctrine of the resurrection. If it be said, that the resurrection here spoken of is a resurrection of the spirit, I reply, the whole difficulty of the Sadducees, was respecting the resurrection of the body. Luke 14. 13 and 14. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Acts 24. 21. Paul says, I cried touching the resurrection. John 5. 28, 29. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. They that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. I might examine twenty-seven other passages, in which the word resurrection occurs. No candid man needs any thing more than an attentive examination of the subject, to be free from doubt or perplexity. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body rests on the testimony of God. This doctrine has been proved from the following considerations: Some of the saints have been raised; in

eternity, man will be man, composed of body and of soul ; Christ arose from the dead ; and the scriptures expressly assert this doctrine.

In closing my discourse, I can only say, that all the objects to be accomplished by such a display, are inscrutable to man. This transaction may be designed to consummate and enhance the blessedness of the saved, and to consummate and enhance the wretchedness of the lost. It may endue man with new senses and new capacities, and thus present God to him in more vivid colours ; or it may qualify the saints to be more fully blended in the final expression of eternal glory. From the scenes with which it is connected, and the changes which it will produce, it must be a grand and inspiring theme ! What will be your emotions on witnessing the wide and silent domain of death, where have slept for years, and thousands of years, your friends ;—what, I say, will be your emotions, on witnessing this ruthless and charmless empire of the king of terrors, all at once liberated, and the sleeping millions rising into life, animation and beauty ! O, may we share in the first resurrection, for on such the second death has no power !

SERMON XXI.

JUDGMENT.

ACTS 17. 31.

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained : whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

The next scene through which we pass, after the resurrection, is the final judgment. The design of this day is not to convince the righteous of the certainty and duration of their happiness ; nor to convince the wicked of the certainty and duration of their misery. They can have no doubt, immediately after death, concerning the character of their destiny. At this time, there is a particular judgment passed upon all men, as some ascend into heaven and others descend into hell. The general or final judgment will take place at a future period. As to the length of time which will be employed in the transactions of that day, all that can be said, is that it will be sufficient to answer the designs of God in instituting it. Whether it will be twenty-four hours, or twenty-four years, it is impossible for us to determine. The certainty of such a day is enough to justify me in presenting several revealed truths, concerning the judgment, and,

1. Such a day is necessary. If man is to be judged and rewarded according to his deeds, it is obvious that his whole character must be taken into view. All his moral actions and moral influences must come into the account. It is equally obvious, that he is not accountable for actions which he never performed, and influence which he never exerted. Now no man's moral character is completed at death; that is, there is not a full exhibition of it to intelligent beings. His examples, sentiments, and writings, may live, and act long after his death. And the shade of his moral character will never be developed, till the last mention of his name is erased from the page of history, and the last glimmering of his influence shall cease to operate on the human mind. The wickedness of the moral characters of Voltaire, Hume, and Paine, can never be fully exhibited, until the last man dies, whose sentiments and morals have been poisoned by their infidelity. Their sentence and rewards are to be graduated by their malevolence; and this malevolence is disclosed by the lives, the conduct, and accumulated guilt of their votaries. All those votaries must be assembled on the day of judgment, to make a just and clear display of their guilt. And how can the judge assign the just rewards of the pious intentions and disinterested benevolence of Baxter, Brainard, and Edwards, whose writings have comforted the saints, and have been the means of converting the impenitent for generations since their decease, and are destined to exert a larger and a happier influence to the end of time, if those who have been blessed by their labors, be not present to illustrate their benevolence? The sparkling gems in their

crowns are multiplied by every rolling sun ! It is absurd to suppose that mankind are judged at death, and at the same time, that every intelligent being in the universe must see and approve their sentences.

In what an awful and interesting light does this place the domestic and social relations of life ! All our intentions, efforts, and influence, whether right or wrong, virtuous or vicious, as parents or children, as friends or fellow creatures, will then undergo a rigid scrutiny.

A general judgment is necessary, that God may justify his ways to man. Who can approve of his sentences, and not be present at the trials ? There is no evidence that the knowledge and capacities of man will be infinite. This would blend man in Deity, and invest him in equal robes. And if we are to approve of the divine conduct in the destinies of his creatures, all their volitions, actions, and influence, must be brought within the sphere of human comprehension. It is necessary then that we be present, and witness the transactions of that day, which we cannot do if men are judged at death. What do we know of the trial of Cain, or of Abel, or of any of the ancients, if it took place at death ? Besides, it is conceded that God governs the universe, and is the friend of virtue, and the enemy of vice. But in this life, the wicked are often rewarded, and the virtuous punished. And how can we reconcile this seeming indifference of divine providence with the benevolence and justice of God ? Why has God, who can annihilate the universe in a moment, left the ferocious persecutor to rob the church of piety and talent, and shed the blood of the saints ? The only correct solution is, that the present is a state of trial,

of probation, in which God leaves the human family to form such characters as they please, and the work of retribution and awards, is reserved to a future day. That day will show to man, the wisdom and equity of the divine proceedings, and remove the doubt and suspicion which have lingered about his providences. To take this world in its present state, and with its present appearances, to determine the light in which God views the moral characters of his creatures, would be a very unjust criterion. Wait till he has finished his work, and then judge of his character and of his sentences. His own hand will remove the difficulties, and show the glory in which his deep designs are clothed. The necessity of a judgment, is obvious from the imperfection of human character at death, from the incapacity of the human mind to determine the equity of those proceedings which do not come within the sphere of its action, and from the fact, that God does not invariably in this life, reward virtue and punish vice.

2. The decisions of that day will be infallibly correct.

God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness. That decision is equitable, which adapts rewards and punishments to the merit and demerit of moral actions. Such is the character of the Judge, that he is secured by his perfections against injustice, deception, or bribery. The Judge of the whole earth will do perfectly right. There can be no concealment or palliation. Every secret emotion of the soul, and every fruit of the affections, are plain before him. He looketh on the heart. And his verdict will be totally uninfluenced by the speciousness of appearance, or by

the management of defence. How can he err, before whose mind the whole mental and moral world is unmasked, and who has counted every respiration of thought. He can follow the first germ of affection, through all its choices, actions, relations and influences, and will reward the virtuous and punish the vicious just as much as they deserve. No matter how we may have been regarded by our fellow creatures, and what may have been our reasonings and speculations, and the decisions of conscience. No sentiments will stand on that day, but those which are founded on scripture. If our sentiments will then stand the scrutiny of the Bible, we shall abide the day of Christs' coming ; if not, we shall fall. For it develops the principles on which the final judgment shall be conducted, and the result of that awful trial. But no one need doubt the inflexibility of the judge, nor the infallibility of his decisions. The innocent have nothing to fear : the guilty have nothing to hope.

This scene will be the more deeply interesting, from the consideration,

3. That Jesus Christ will be the Judge. He is a Being best qualified for this work, from the complexity of his character, and the nature of his work. He possesses the perfections of God to secure him against error in judgment, and the character of man to feel for our infirmities. His labors and sufferings for us, must remove all doubts in regard to the kindness of his heart. He is above the influence of infirmity, caprice, or sinister motives. And it is deeply affecting to reflect, that he who was the sacrifice for sinners, for his enemies ; this very Saviour is by consent of the trinity, appointed the judge of the quick

and the dead. All judgment is committed unto the Son. The mercy seat will be changed into a judgment seat. And the lips of the same advocate and intercessor, must pronounce the awards of justice. We shall then see him, not an angel of light, not a created judge, commissioned to maintain the rights of his sovereign, but the same lovely, compassionate, and wounded Saviour, who has completed the work of pardon, and is about to close his mediatorial labours, and commit the kingdom to the Father. He is no longer the subject of contempt, calumny and persecution. The mockery and triumph of his enemies have ceased, and every mouth is silent before him. This is the babe of Bethlehem ; this the despised Nazerene ; but, O how exalted, how immeasurably exalted ! At his feet are crowns, and thrones, and dominions, and he is hailed Lord of all. He is encircled in the congratulations and praises of his friends ; and his enemies are harmless at his feet. This is your judge, ye saints of God. He whose love has redeemed you, and is about to crown you with eternal blessedness. This is your judge, ye enemies of the cross. He who has followed you with mercies and entreaties, and whose precious blood was spilt for your salvation. But now it is too late ; he can seal no pardon, he can remit no offences. He has finished the work assigned him, and will sit down on the right hand of the majesty on high. It only remains for him to pass through the vast concourse, dividing the righteous from the wicked ; to say, come ye blessed, and depart ye cursed, and then add, Father, I have accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do, and surrender the mediatorial kingdom. If angels cast a

glance of envy over the mission of the great Redeemer, signed and sealed in heaven, which cost them the joys of Paradise ; if the more obedient became the servants of the High Priest of our salvation ; if they hailed his incarnation in joyful triumph, and have aided the songs of the redeemed, in the house of their pilgrimage, what must be the raptures of the final coronation ! The joys of the righteous, and the sorrows of the wicked, will impart an awful grandeur to the scenes of the last day.

4. The numbers concerned in the transaction, will heighten the interest of the great day, to all who are concerned. There will be the millions of every character, and every age, who have slumbered in dust. The monarch, who has swayed his resistless sceptre, and whose throne has been graced by prostrate millions, now divested of his robe and his diadem, must answer for the motives which have inspired his breast, and the character and conduct of his reign. The minister of Christ must undergo a scrutiny no less solemn ! The manner in which he has discharged his embassy ; the ardor of his devotions ; the plainness and faithfulness of his ministrations ; the affection and uprightness of his conduct, must pass a momentous review. If he has exhibited obliquities of life, or indecision and temporising economy, and has immolated on the unhallowed altar of emolument, ease, and the friendship of the world, that self-denial, that integrity and decision, that sacrificing and sanctified spirit, which the Lord Jesus requires, how overwhelming will be the reward of his perfidy. None will stand before the Judge with higher investitures and responsibilities, and their rewards will be as peculiar and interesting as

their characters. If they have been faithful ambassadors of Christ, they may present their flocks to Christ with a joy uninterrupted by the lamentations of an unhappy and ruined people ; but if they have a character the reverse, their catastrophe will be measured by their fall from the heights of the sanctuary to the depths of perdition. There will appear the instructors and guardians of the rising generation, from those who mould the plastic, youthful heart, in the high-schools in the nation, to the humble parent who guides his household at his will.

Teachers must present to the bar their pupils ; and parents and guardians their children. It will not be enough on that day that we have lived to bless our sons and daughters with competency, and intellectual refinement. These very embellishments, which excite the admiration of men, may have been the means of disqualifying them for the favorable decision of their judge. For many things which are highly esteemed among men, are an abomination in the sight of God. What must be the emotions of those parents who have smiled at the incursions of vice on their domestic circles, and have amused themselves with those vicious toys which have prepared their children for the unquenchable fire ! Will it appear in the day of judgment, that total indifference to the religious education of your children, is a virtue ? And will there be any music in the wailings, which must be attributed to your indifference, either in whole or in part ? To escape the charge of partiality, and of a bigoted spirit, you may commit them to the merciless ravages of a depraved world, and rejoice that

they are the votaries of licentiousness, and scepticism, and that they are not restrained from vice, by any melting persuasions, or efficient authority of their parents,—but O the day, when the relations of men shall be investigated, and the abused and delegated power of guardians shall be submitted to the scrutiny of our judge—that day will effect a change in the reasonings of the impious, which ought to have been effected not by the terrors of eternal despair, but by the persuasive voice of inspiration and the genial influences of the Spirit. Parents you must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and answer for the complexion you have given to the moral views and feelings of your children. Those objects which sport about your fire sides, and share in the richest labors of your lives, and the choicest affections of your hearts, will meet you to proclaim to the world, the influence of your examples, your precepts, and your discipline on their destinies. Happy are those parents whose domestic arrangements are respective of that day.

Children too must experience a review of their conduct, at that eventful period. When their power to inflict by resentment and to wound by prodigality, will cease ; and all the wasted councils and lavished affections of their parents will appear as scorpion scourges to wreck and ruin the soul, while prayers, and tears, and entreaties, will form the bitter ingredients of their misery.

How great the contrast between him, who has valued the instructions and solicitude of parental affection, and by a deportment no less grateful to the hearts of his parents, than friendly to his own peace, has secured by promise and by oath the love of his Saviour. What atti-

tude of human nature is more lovely, than filial friendship, which supports the infirmities of age, and which prompted by the counsels of their parents, gives them joy when their sun is setting, and proves to be a pledge of departed excellence, that has not lived in vain. When all other joys are tasteless, and every beauty of nature is charmless, the virtues of our children, will add lustre to the glimmering spark of life. But precious the reflection that we leave them a valuable legacy to the world, and that we may meet them in peace, and dwell with them in heaven. But why should I reiterate, we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. I can only allude to a few of the more interesting and important relations of the human family. None will be absent from that august assemblage, however desirable absence or annihilation might be to any. The transactions of that day will be regulated by the immutable decree of heaven, and not by the desires of creatures. The summons of the Eternal will reach the mouldering nations; and the trump of God raise the dead. The sea shall give up her dead; death and hell, shall give up their dead, the earth terribly shaken by omnipotence; and the heavens melting down at the presence of the Saviour, will retire, that the dead may gather around the bar of God. But why should we talk of past ages, of successive generations which have slept in the grave. And why of the living who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air? I see mingling in the crowds of that day a small, but interesting group.—And it is my dear people,—those who now occupy these seats; and listen to the messages of divine love from his lips who; trembling in view

of the final retribution. Yes we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. We shall form a part of that great congregation. Some of our voices will probably join in the triumphs of the day, and others will swell the deep tone of endless lamentation. For which of these states are we prepared? Can any doubt the principles on which the judgment will proceed? The scriptures have settled it. They that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. Crowns of life await all that have made their peace with God, who by regeneration have passed from death unto life. Nothing is necessary to make that a scene of joy and triumph, but the removal of the depravity of the heart. We must cease to hate God and learn to love him. Faith in Christ, the sanctification of the affections, the love of God, the abhorrence of sin and ardent devotion are the only qualifications for eternal blessedness. If the heart has been changed, and created anew, the presence, and promises, and fellowship, of the Saviour, will remove the terrors of the judgment, and give it a safe and peaceful exemption from the demands of justice. An interest in Christ will not only free the soul from the fears and dangers of the trial of that day, but it will render all those works which have been performed in faith, and from that purity of heart, which has been imparted by the Holy Ghost, rewardable. There is a gracious reward annexed to every work done from purity of intention. Though grace has given the ability, and the disposition, and made supreme love to God, and disinterested love to man, the predominant purpose of the

soul, yet God in the riches of his mercy, bestows a gracious compensation on all the works of faith and labors of love. The righteous will be accepted in Christ, their substitute and their Redeemer, and enter into eternal blessedness, though in point of law and retributive justice, they merit eternal punishment, yet through him who has loved them and died for them, who has paid the ransom and pardoned the guilty, cleansed by his blood, and clothed with his righteousness, they are justified, sanctified and redeemed. If such are your claims to the blessings of the gospel you are safe ; you will love his appearing. Every display he shall make of his mercy, or of his justice, shall increase your endearment. And his approach in robes of grandeur, as the judge of the universe, will fill the largest capacities of your souls with joy.

The characters of the opposite company are easily described. With all their moral complexions, from the specious hypocrite, to the shameless infidel ; and from the rigid moralist to the reeling sot,—all that are unregenerate, and unsanctified in heart compose the congregation of the wicked. He that has not made his peace with God, must perish. The word has gone forth out of his mouth, and cannot return, be ye holy, for I am holy. The Saviour, as Mediator, has done his work. He has only to say to the trembling world ;—to you on my right hand, come ye blessed, and to you on my left hand, depart ye cursed into everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels.

SERMON XXII.

PUNISHMENT.

MAT. 25. 46.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.

To beings destined to a future state of existence, the nature and extent of that existence, cannot be uninteresting. All questions in relation to the immortality of man are put to rest by the volume of inspiration. The gospel has brought life and immortality to light. It has as clearly revealed the immortality of sinners, as that of saints. The duration of the one is commensurate with the duration of the other. The interminable punishment of the wicked, is a painful subject, but one which is too deeply interesting, and too plainly taught in the Bible, to lie concealed. Your attention is therefore solicited to the arguments which may be offered in proof of the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent. By the finally impenitent, I mean those who live and die without true gospel repentance, without a change of heart, without the blood of Christ applied to them by special grace. Every man by nature is impenitent, and the saints in heaven, and those on earth were once so. But they are not finally impenitent. Before their probation closes, they are brought to true repentance ; and their peace is

made with God. But that there are those who have died with opposite characters, and received opposite destinies, cannot admit of a doubt. We have the testimony of scripture, of our own senses, and of dying sinners. What then, is the state of those who die in their sins, and what is the proof, that they are eternally lost? The proof that they will be eternally lost, arises,

1. From the fact, that this is a state of probation. And what is a state of probation, but a state which God has given to man to form his character for eternity? With a nature inclined to disobedience and to pursue vice. God requires us to be holy and pursue a course of virtue. This constitutes a state of probation. If men were naturally inclined to obedience and virtue, there would be no such thing as trial. The characters of men would be infallibly and universally holy. It would require no effort on their part to be obedient, and they would be no more deserving of praise for virtuous feelings and conduct, than the angels of light. But God has made every provision for the formation of a holy character. He has given to man, a Saviour, weighty motives, an opportunity to make his peace with his Maker, the atonement of Christ, the invitations, warnings and threatenings of the gospel. The conscience, understanding, and the Spirit of God, are pleading. And in the midst of all these inducements to a life of piety, and with hearts opposed to the way of salvation, we are forming our characters. But there is not the least intimation in the Bible, that this state of trial extends beyond death. The principal passage, I believe, which is adduced in support of a probationary state beyond the

present life, is the one which speaks of Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison. And that very passage tells us when and where he preached to them. Christ by his Spirit in Noah preached to the antedeluvians, who are now imprisoned spirits. He did not descend from Calvary into the invisible place of punishment in the world of spirits. It was when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, for the antedeluvians to turn at the preaching of that holy man, who preached by the Spirit of Christ preaching in him. The boundary of probation is death. That last and solemn stroke, will fix our destinies for eternity. It is true, that God has in mercy, deferred the giving of his sentence, until we have finished our characters. And if there is no change in our characters after death, passing that important hour without preparation for heaven, all must be eternally lost. It is true, if there were any further state of trial, there would not be an absolute decision at death; but we have no intimation that there is such a state. The harvest is the end of the world, when all men will be ripe; the wheat for heaven, and the tares and chaff for unquenchable fire. The pious for eternal glory; and the unsanctified for eternal misery.

2. I prove the interminable punishment of the finally impenitent, from the desert of sin.

Every candid man will admit that the sinner will be punished as much as he deserves. The question then is what punishment does he deserve? What is the real desert of sin? All sin is the same in its nature and tendency. Its nature is enmity, and its tendency is to break up the peace and happiness of all holy beings. It would,

if not limited and governed by a superior power, sweep away the purity and holiness of all good beings. It would not only change the moral affections of every holy intelligence into hatred, but would increase that hatred forever. Who that views the effects of sin on the fallen angels, and on this world, which is full of contention and misery, can doubt that sin has a tendency to do infinite mischief. We know not how much mischief it will do, for God will prevent its progress when he pleases. But we do know how much mischief it would do if it had power. It has a tendency to produce infinite evil. Every particle of sin has this tendency. And if the disposition of sin is to plant enmity in the breast of every intelligent being, that enmity would have a tendency to increase forever. So that the misery which sin would produce, would be universal and eternal. And now I ask in the light of reason, how much punishment does a disposition to produce universal and eternal misery deserve.

3. Another argument in proof of the interminable punishment of the finally impenitent is drawn from the scriptures of truth. The proof from the bible is various. Some of the sources of evidence, are full and incontrovertible when considered independently; and others, though more remote, are not less conclusive. But the several sources taken together, will appear to the fair reasoner, and the candid inquirer after truth, overwhelming. The first class of passages which I shall examine are those which imply that a change of heart and preparation for heaven, are confined to the present life. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Because I have called, and ye have

refused ; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded it ; I also will laugh at your calamities, and mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call, and I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me. Then saith one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved ? and he said unto him strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are : depart from me ye workers of iniquity. These passages declare plainly, that there is a period beyond which if men pass, there is no recovery. There is a time when God will not listen to the calls of sinners, and a time when though they seek to enter into heaven, they shall not be able. That Christ will close the door while some are without, seeking in vain for admission, is clearly taught in the passages above quoted. They further teach us, that the time will come when their states shall be fixed ; and that period is when they pass the boundary of probation : either when they are given up of God, or when they are gone into eternity.

Indeed, on what ground can we account for the sufferings, prayers, and labors of Christ and the apostles, and christians in all ages, but on the ground that this life is a state of probation, and the only season for forming our characters. The scriptures have set it at rest ; a change

of heart must take place in this life, or the soul must be unchangeably miserable.

The second class of passages I shall examine in proof of eternal punishment, are those which express the duration of future punishment by implication. I pray for them, I pray not for the world. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. He hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. There is a sin unto death, I do not say ye shall pray for it. It is impossible to renew them again to repentance. If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. In order to understand this passage correctly, it must be recollected that the apostle is here speaking to the Hebrews, who considered Christ an imposter. He says, if we, Jews, sin wilfully after having received the knowledge of the Messiahship, of the sufferings, death, and atonement of Christ, there is no other atonement for sin. If we reject this only Saviour, we must perish eternally. Here we see, that a rejection of Christ is connected with eternal punishment. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace? The plain import of this passage is, that those who despise and reject the christian

religion, will deserve a punishment far more severe, than those that despised the Mosaic law. Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and and shall die in your sins : whither I go, ye cannot come. Whose end is destruction. He that sheweth no mercy, shall have judgment without mercy. That is, he shall be punished without mercy.

If there be some for whom Christ does not pray, then there are some who will not be savingly benefitted by his mediation. If the sin against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come, then those who commit the unpardonable sin, must be punished eternally ; for forgiveness is absolutely necessary to salvation. If men are in danger of eternal damnation, then they may be eternally damned. If saints are not required to pray for certain sins, then God will not pardon these sins. And if it is impossible to renew some men to repentance, it is impossible they should be saved ; for no man can be saved without repentance. If there remains no sacrifice for sin, to those who reject Christ, they cannot be forgiven ; for sin cannot be pardoned without a sacrifice. If their worm dieth not, then the soul is not annihilated. And if their fire is not quenched, their agonies and distress will be eternal. If those who die in their sins shall never see life, and if the finally impenitent can never go where Christ is, then they can never go to heaven, and must go to hell. The plain, honest, uncorrupted mind, would infer at once, from the

above passages, that there is such a thing as eternal punishment.

The third class of passages which I shall examine in proof of eternal punishment, are those which describe the future states of men in contrast. Men of the world, who have their portion in this life. I shall be satisfied, when I awake in thy likeness. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness, but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The wicked is driven away in his wickedness ; but the righteous hath hope in his death. And many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake ; some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt. He will gather his wheat into his garner, and will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Gather ye first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them ; but gather the wheat into my barn. The son of man shall send forth his angels ; and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father. Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. But cast out the unprofitable servant into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Come ye blessed ; depart ye cursed. These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life. At the very time the righteous are received, the wicked are rejected. The wicked have their portion in this life ; but the righteous have their portion in eternity. But how can the wicked be said to have their portion in this life, if they go to heaven after death. Their

portion, or happiness, in that case, would be in the life to come. Now all these passages speak of the different states of the righteous and the wicked in contrast ; but if the wicked and the righteous go to the same place, and are made subjects of the same felicity, there is no propriety in the great contrast between their characters and their eternal states, which are so variously and so abundantly mentioned in the bible. Besides, the inspired writers employ the same words to express the duration of the punishment of the wicked, that they employ to express the duration of the happiness of the righteous. The end of the one is peace ; the end of the other is punishment. When the hopes and anticipations of the righteous are realized, the hopes and anticipations of the wicked perish. The hope of a good man is an anchor which fixes his grasp on heaven. The hope of the wicked is the spider's web, which is frail and deceptive. Now if there had been any state of purgation in the future world, where the soul could be reformed and renovated, the inspired writers would not have been honest in omitting the least mention of such a state. There is not the least intimation of such a state, either in these passages, or in any other part of the bible. The Scriptures uniformly speak of a separation of the righteous from the wicked ; a direful, final, and unchangeable separation. It is inconceivable to me how a man with a single passage that I have quoted, before him, can doubt the eternal punishment of the wicked.

After the human family shall have passed into eternity, God will, in the winding up of the scene, call the pious dead from their graves, and change the pious who are

alive upon the earth. He will then call on death and hell to give up their dead. Christ will then change the mercy seat into a judgment seat. He will cease to dispense pardon, and in the last exercise of his authority, will assign to every man his just sentence, and then give up his mediatorial kingdom, and all things will be unchangeably fixed. This will take place immediately on his pronouncing the sentences, come ye blessed, and depart ye cursed. Now I challenge all the sophistry and wisdom of earth, to produce a shadow of proof that there will be a single change in human character after this period. That is, they who are then in a state of sin, will never pass into a state of holiness; and they who are then in a state of holiness, will never pass into a state of sin. There will undoubtedly be an increase of sin and punishment in the wicked, and an increase of holiness and happiness in the righteous; but there will be no change in the nature of their characters or of their states. Where are the passages that speak of another resurrection, another judgment, and another day of decision? All the righteous are now in heaven, and all the wicked in hell; and all the purposes of Christ's mediation and death, are drawn to a close. The story of the last judgment is so plain, that a child may understand it; and it is an incontestible refutation of all cavils about the future and interminable punishment of the wicked.

SERMON XXIII.

PUNISHMENT.

MAT. 25. 46.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.

Having, in my last discourse, considered some of the arguments which establish the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent, I proceed, in this discourse, to adduce other arguments in confirmation of the same doctrine.

4. The next class of passages which I shall examine in proof of this doctrine, are those texts which speak of the duration of future punishment, by the terms everlasting, eternal, forever, and forever and ever. Some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt. It is better for thee to enter into life halt, or maimed, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. These shall go away into everlasting punishment. They shall be punished with everlasting punishment. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, is in danger of eternal damnation. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the

blackness of darkness forever. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night. And they said, Alleluia: and her smoke rose up forever and ever. And the Devil that deceived them was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever.

Any attempt to make a distinction between the words everlasting and eternal would be perfectly futile, as in the language which our Saviour spoke, the same word is used for both. The word which is translated eternal, is purely the same word that is translated everlasting, and forever and ever. And it is just as fair reasoning, to say eternal is restricted to a limited time, and does not mean endless, as it is to say everlasting does not mean endless. For they are in the original Greek, the same word. The Saviour did not say, these shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal; but these shall go away into *aiōnion* punishment, and the righteous into life *aiōnion*: the same adjective is used in both cases. And if the term everlasting occurs in several places in the scripture, in a limited sense, the nature of the subject, always determines the sense in which it is used. If it is applied to any subject, or any object, it means as long as that subject, or that object endures. The nature of the object always determines the length of the time. The phrase everlasting mountains, means as long as the mountains endure. Everlasting hills, that is, as long as the hills endure. The everlasting bars that were wrapped around Jonah, that is as long as those bars endured. The everlasting punish-

ment of the soul, that is, as long as the soul endures. A general rule of interpretation, laid down by all good critics, is, that every term be taken in its literal sense, unless there be something in the subject, or connexion, which requires it to be taken otherwise. Now all critics agree that the Greek word in English letters, αἰώνιον, means always being, and is rightly translated endless, everlasting, or eternal. When punishment is spoken of in the New Testament, I know of no place, in which, either the sense, connexion, or the subject, requires everlasting to be understood in any other sense, than eternal. And if eternal punishment means limited punishment, then eternal life means limited happiness. And when the punishment of the wicked shall come to an end, then the happiness of the righteous will come to an end. The Saviour describes the duration of the two states of mankind, the state of the righteous and that of the wicked, in precisely the same language. The scripture is perfectly clear on this subject. He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. If destruction is remediless, if no remedy can be found, if neither the grace, nor mercy of the Saviour can reach the case of the self-ruined sinner, his destruction must be eternal. It was said of Judas, it were good for him if he had not been born. This cannot be true if he could ever be restored to the divine favor. Even if he were to remain in hell, a thousand, or a million of years, and then come out to enjoy an eternity of bliss, his existence would be a precious blessing. For an eternity of happiness, would more than compensate for any degree of misery

he could endure during a limited time. The inspired writers have borrowed all the images in nature, which can convey terror to the human mind. And after having exhausted the resources of imagery, a full conception of the duration and intensity of future punishment, is unattainable. However figurative the language may have been, one thing is certain, the figures are but faint shadows of the reality. It is vain to cavil at a truth so plainly revealed, and so consonant with reason. I must notice a few cavils which are made on future, endless punishment. It is said a finite being cannot commit an infinite evil. Has he not a disposition to commit it? And he is to be judged and punished according to the mischief he would do, and not according to what he will actually accomplish. To have a disposition to murder is murder, in the sense of the law, whether it be gratified or not. Want of power to accomplish a wicked design, does not destroy the reality and guilt of that design. It is said every thing that has a beginning must have an end; and as sin and misery have a beginning, they must have an end. On this principal heaven must have an end, and the soul itself must have an end, for it had a beginning. It is said, the soul is a part of God, and God cannot damn himself; and therefore, all souls will be saved. If the soul of man is a part of God, then it must have the attributes of God; such as omnipotence and omniscience. We have no idea of God, but by his attributes. And if the soul of man is a part of God, it must have some of his attributes. Now I put the question to every man, Of what is the Emperor of China now thinking? If you cannot tell, you have no reason to think,

however closely the soul may be imprisoned by the body, that it is any part of God. The soul was created as much as the body, and is limited, and always will be limited in its capacities. When it is said, God created man it does not mean, that he created his body merely ; for the body of man without a soul, is nothing more than a lump of clay. When it is said therefore, that God created man, it is meant, that he created all that constitutes him man, which must include both soul and body. It is said, God is too good to punish his creatures. But we know he has punished multitudes of his creatures, and is now punishing them. And if it is consistent with his goodness to inflict one degree of punishment, and if he may on the same principle inflict an hundred degrees, he may inflict eternal punishment. It is just as consistent for God to inflict vindicative eternal punishment, as it is to inflict vindicative temporary punishment ; and his goodness would just as soon have prevented the one as the other. It is said the atonement is general ; and therefore all will be savingly benefitted by it. But the atonement may be general and yet not a single individual savingly benefitted by it. It is not the atonement which saves men, but the application of it. Now the atonement would not have effected the salvation of a single soul, if God had not applied it. The atonement only renders it just for God to pardon sinners. Their salvation depends on the will of God, exercised through the atonement. God has given mankind property enough to have sent the gospel to every soul on earth. But this does not prove that this property has been devoted to this purpose. Neither does it prove because an atone-

ment has been made for all, that it will be savingly applied to all. Besides God has declared, that he will not apply the atonement to all. And though the atonement is ever so ample, without an application it would be unavailing. We might just as well attempt to prove, that, because there is light enough in the natural sun to illuminate the earth, there will be no darkness, as to say because the atonement is sufficient for all, none will be lost. It is said God is merciful and will therefore save sinners. It is true God is merciful, and will pardon sinners. But what sinners will he pardon? And what are the terms on which his mercy may be received? God will extend mercy only to certain characters, and on certain conditions. The finally impenitent never have these characters, and never fulfil these conditions; it follows therefore, that they will never obtain this mercy. There is no way in which the divine promises can be properly applied to the finally impenitent; nor can they ever be brought into the ark of safety. They have placed themselves forever beyond the reach of every thing which is precious to the soul. Who are the characters addressed in the text? The enemies of Christ, those who live without God, and without piety. I do not say that every impenitent, will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. But I do say, that every impenitent is in great danger of it. If any sinner be cut off in impenitence, or be forsaken by the Spirit of God, or be deluded by procrastination, or blinded by error, or confirmed in carnal security, or should any one rest on a false hope until summoned to eternity, his ruin must be remediless. He must become the prey of eternal misery. And these

shall go away into everlasting punishment. But what is this punishment? It is to be the subject of the most malignant and conflicting passions. It is to wage unequal and hopeless war against him who can inflict insufferable pains. It is to wrangle with conscience, moral existence, and God. It is to curse God, and heaven, and happiness, and long for annihilation. It is to possess an existence as miserable as the sinner deserves. It is to be cast into hell. Not to be cast into the grave, or into temporary perdition. But to be cast into punishment in the invisible world, into indispicable and endless anguish and despair. In that world of darkness, where no ray of hope can ever beam, is a gulf never visited by an angel of mercy! A cavern resounding only with the wailings of the wretched! Here the imprisoned soul must stay, not rest, till the uttermost farthing is paid. But what can pay the debt of love and gratitude which the sinner owes? Can an increasing enmity against God pay it? Can strong malignity, horror and blasphemy satisfy the claims of justice, and reform the transgressor? No, the feelings and conduct of the damned, will only increase the debt, and sink the soul deeper and deeper in perdition! Pay the uttermost farthing is the imperious voice of justice. No release until the uttermost farthing is paid. But ah, the separation, the separation! Separated from friends, separated from hope, separated from social friendship, and social blessings! Every tender tie sundered, all love and good will changed into the bitterest enmity. Separated from comforts and privileges purchased with the precious blood of Christ! Separated from God and heaven! No

peace in self-complacency, none in fellow-beings. All within is death ; and all without is execration and horror ! And retrospection will come in to make up the unutterable sum of this misery. Every view of the past will furnish a theme of immortal regret ? A glorious law violated—a glorious gospel despised—a probation wasted—the Spirit resisted—the precious soul ruined ! And the prospect is no less gloomy, than the retrospect ; for no light can break from the cloud of eternal darkness before them. And who are these miserable victims of despair ? These are the profane, the fraudulent, the liar, the selfish, the covetous, the giddy and the thoughtless. There are the mockers and despisers of religion ; there are the externally upright ; there are the formalist, the moralist, and the prayerless. There are the hypocrite and the deceiver, and all that forget God, and are not reconciled to him by the death of his Son. There is the parent who has watched over the smiling infant, the emblem of harmlessness. There is the sinner whose heart has become callous by the Sun of righteousness, and whose days have been spent within the shadow of the sanctuary. There is the child of many prayers and tears, descending to misery, with the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, inscribed on his forehead, the signature of his consecration to God. Will this be the situation of any of our race ? Ah, yes ! Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him ; for he shall eat the fruit of his doings.

The sinner is eternally lost, not merely because he will forever retain his enmity against God, nor merely

because he will never again be visited with the influences of the Spirit, nor merely because his probationary season is forever closed, but an immutable and irrevocable decision of the great Judge, has fixed his eternal state.

The sinner who dies impenitent is lost—and lost forever.

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ERRATA.—Page 53, 6th line from the bottom, for command
read *commend*.

Page 152, bottom line, for miseries read *mercies*.

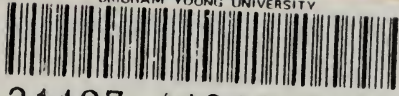
Page 191, 11th line from the bottom, for *is it* read *as it is*.

Page 231, 16th line from the bottom, for judiciary read *judicial*.

Page 276, line 14 from the bottom, for harmless read *powerless*.

Page 280, bottom line, for trembling read *trembles*.

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