

New and Uniform Edition.

WORKS, DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL,

OF THE

REV. THOMAS HOUSTON, D.D.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

1. PARENTAL DUTIES.
2. THE ADOPTION OF SONS.
3. THE JUDGMENT OF THE PAPACY.

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WORKS

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL

OF THE

REV. THOMAS HOUSTON, D.D.

**PRINTED BY THE
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FOR

ANDREW ELLIOT, . . .

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WORKS

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL

OF THE

REV. THOMAS HOUSTON, D.D.,

KNOCKBRACKEN.

In Four Volumes.

VOL. I.

PARENTAL DUTIES.

THE ADOPTION OF SONS.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE PAPACY.

EDINBURGH:

ANDREW ELLIOT, 17 PRINCES STREET.

1876.

GENERAL PREFACE.

THE Works, Doctrinal and Practical, which are now issued in this uniform edition, were written at different times during a lengthened ministry, in the occasional intervals of leisure which the author was able to command from pastoral and other engrossing labours. They have little pretension to literary merit, and were published, not with the view of acquiring distinction or honour, but in order to supply, in some sort, a felt want in the Church, and to furnish instructions on fundamental subjects connected with the Church's mission in the world, and the spiritual benefit of families and individuals. The issue of none of these works was resolved on without frequent solemn consideration. As they were penned in a prayerful spirit, the labour proved beneficial to the author himself, irrespective of the effect which their perusal might have on others. In their publication, the great object was to promote His glory, who is ever wont to choose the weak things to confound the things which are mighty.

Of several of these works,—such as *Parental Duties*, *Youthful Devotedness*, *Practical Treatise on Baptism*, and the *Adoption of Sons*,—it may be in some measure declared that there are no books in the language that discuss the subjects of which they treat in the same full way of didactic instruction, and for the like practical objects and ends. It may therefore be hoped that they will be found of permanent value in Christian families, and to persons in

different positions in the Church. The other works were given to the public with the design of embalming the memory of devoted servants of Christ, and of erecting a monument to the Divine power and faithfulness manifested towards them,—of ministering spiritual consolation to believers in times of trial and suffering,—and of holding forth a testimony and warning against prevailing evils and threatened dangers.

The different volumes, when first printed, met with such acceptance throughout the Church that the edition was speedily exhausted ; and evidence was not wanting, in a variety of instances, that their circulation in this and other countries was followed by beneficial spiritual results. For such tokens of Divine approval, the author would ever desire to be devoutly thankful ; and he would give the praise wholly to Him who frequently employs the weakest human instrumentality to advance the glory of his great name. All the works included in this collected edition have been, for a greater or less number of years, out of print. Inquiries have of late been often made concerning them ; and parcels and single copies have been sought for in these lands, and in various parts of foreign countries. When considering how it was possible to meet this demand, the author was strongly urged by Christian friends of various religious bodies, in whose judgment he had confidence, to emit, under his own superintendence, a uniform edition of his principal works, doctrinal and practical ; and to do this by endeavouring to secure such a number of subscribers for the series as would fully meet the cost of publication. When proposals for this object were issued with considerable diffidence, and at first in a limited and private way, these were met, far beyond the anticipations of the author, by the ready and cordial

response of persons of various religious names, and in different ranks of society—some at once subscribing for three, five, or six copies, and some few for ten copies, of each of the four volumes. To those who evinced so deep an interest in the undertaking, and who have manifested such a catholic Christian spirit, the author desires to express heartfelt gratitude; while he regards this kindness as laying him under renewed obligations to keep “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” and to seek the highest good of all who are of “the household of faith.”

When, some years ago, the author was urged to reprint several of these works, he designed, before complying with the request, carefully to revise them, and in some cases considerably to enlarge them. This intention, however, he has been constrained, in the present instance, to forego, partly from want of sufficient leisure, and partly because the demand of the age is for brief, condensed instructions on religious subjects, rather than for full and lengthened discussions. The works are, therefore, republished as they were first emitted, with the exception of a few necessary corrections, and some brief explanatory or corrective notes. That the separate volumes of the series might be, as nearly as possible, of the same size, a somewhat different arrangement in the order of publication from what was first contemplated, or that might seem most natural, has been adopted. While it could not be expected that, in some cases, the sentiments propounded and advocated in these works would fully accord with those entertained by some of the excellent persons who readily subscribed for them, as they themselves at once admitted, the author feels no necessity to offer an apology for openly stating and vindicating what he honestly believes to be in accordance with

scriptural truth. He would ever unfeignedly rejoice that, while the points on which evangelical Christians differ are not immaterial, those on which they are agreed are numerous and fundamental; and that, in the way of candid and manly discussion, existing divisions will in due time be healed. His earnest and constant aim would be, that, "speaking the truth in love, he may grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ." Towards brethren of the household of faith, of whatever name, the fervent aspiration of his heart is, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

* * After the present series shall have gone into circulation, should the desire for it to any extent be expressed, a supplemental volume of the author's pamphlets on public questions and controversial topics may be issued. A volume of *Selected Discourses on the Glory of the Redeemer and the Christian Life* is in a forward state of preparation for the press. At the request of esteemed Christian brethren, a *Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, after the manner of that on *Baptism*, which is included in the present series, is in preparation. These, if emitted, will be of a like size and price as the volumes now given to the public. Desiring to be duly impressed with the solemn thought that this labour is work for life's eventide, the author would earnestly bespeak the prayers of brethren in Christ in every place on his behalf. Whatever man may plan, the execution is alone of God. As we go forth to sow seed, in the hope that it may grow when the hand of the sower moulders in dust, only by influences from above are the fruit and increase. To God, only wise and merciful, be all the glory!

PREFACE TO VOL. I.

THE first work in this Volume—PARENTAL DUTIES—was first published in 1844. Some time after, it was reprinted in America by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, and it yet has an extensive circulation throughout the United States. The present may therefore be regarded as the *third edition* of the work. The Treatise on ADOPTION, which was the latest issued, will, it is hoped, be found a book suitable for devotional reading,—ministering light and comfort to the children of God in times of darkness and conflict. THE JUDGMENT OF THE PAPACY, which aims to present, in the light of Scripture prophecy, a delineation of the rise, character, and doom of the Papal system—important for the witnesses for truth at all times—has a greatly enhanced interest from the recent blasphemous assumptions of the Papacy, and from the political movements that have taken place since it was first published. Whatever slight modifications may be made in the exposition of the prophetic times, the grand features of the delineation remain unaltered, and the prospects for the future are of the deepest interest and importance to all who seek the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth.

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I.

PARENTAL DUTIES

AND

*THE BLESSINGS RESULTING FROM THEIR
FAITHFUL PERFORMANCE.*

P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following work has long been impressed with the conviction, that the declension or revival of religion throughout the Church, is inseparably connected with the state of domestic society. If the family relations are not under the pervading influence of genuine Christianity,—if the duties which they suppose are neglected or heedlessly performed,—the most injurious effects must follow in other departments of religious practice; and the consequence can scarcely fail to be,—a barren and deceitful profession, without any holy principle, or the attractive graces of Christian character. On the other hand, a healthful condition of domestic piety will impart a salutary and elevating influence to other social duties, and the Church and the commonwealth will reap the benefit in increased purity, peace, and prosperity.

It has been justly observed, that “Christian families are as certainly the nurseries of the Church upon earth, as she is herself the nursery of the Church in heaven.” The seed-beds uncultivated, or suffered to be overrun with weeds, the tender plants will be choked in their growth, and future vigour and fertility will in vain be expected. The fact that has become matter of common and painful observation—that many of the youth of the Church do not tread in the steps of professedly religious parents—attests the extensive neglect of parental duties. Whence is it that so few baptized youth, even when the forms of religion have been strictly observed, give early indications of devoted piety? Whence, that when aged and venerable members of the Church are removed by death, so few of the young of Christian families come forward to fill their places? How is it, on the contrary, that a large number of this class manifest aversion to practical godliness, and rank

with the careless, the worldly, or the profligate? The cause, it is feared, will be found in the omission, or formal and lifeless performance of parental duties. Children, whose early conversion to God has not been prayerfully and earnestly sought,—who have not been trained to godly practice,—and whom parental instruction and example have not attracted to wisdom's ways, cannot reasonably be expected to display the amiable lustre of Christian character, nor to be distinguished by self-denial, and consecrated zeal in God's service.

The writer has been desirous to contribute his mite to remedy evils which are too palpable to escape observation, and which he has often deeply deplored. Fully persuaded that anterior to any powerful revival in the Church, and as a principal means of promoting it, there must be a revival of family religion, his aim has been to awaken a sense of parental responsibility,—to excite to neglected duty,—and to present such considerations and encouragements to those who occupy the most important of earthly relations, as, under the Divine blessing, may induce them to labour for God, and for the present and eternal welfare of the precious souls that have been committed to their care.

The tendency of our age is manifestly to withdraw attention from duties which are retired and unobserved, to works which court public observation,—to overlook what is secret and noiseless, and to delight in what can be seen of men. Yet among the former, lie many of the well-springs of human society, and from them issue forth streams, that are diffused through innumerable channels, to purify or to pollute the community. In endeavouring to supply an antidote to a prevailing taste of the day,—in attempting to direct attention from the exciting subjects that are discussed on the arena of controversy, to the cultivation of domestic duties,—the writer would not be understood to undervalue efforts to propagate or defend any article of the truth as it is in Jesus, or to oppose its application to existing systems, civil or ecclesiastical. On the contrary, he regards the faithful discharge of parental duties as intimately connected with the maintenance of the Redeemer's testimony, and as essential to its unimpaired transmission to future generations.

The design of the following work was suggested by instructions communicated on the occasion of administering the ordinance of baptism, and in pastoral visitation. At one period, the author had contemplated the publication of a more

brief and general view of parental obligations and duties; while latterly, a work of larger dimensions on the domestic relations seemed preferable, and some materials were arranged for this purpose. This will account for the somewhat extensive outline of topics presented in this little volume, and, at the same time, for the cursory manner in which various subjects are handled. The present size was chosen, as rendering the work more easily accessible to the poorer members of the Church, while it was hoped that it might yet supply a view of parental duties, and of considerations by which they are enforced, not unworthy the attention of Christian parents of any rank in society. Designed as a *family book*, to furnish a manual for parental direction and encouragement, the author has to express his regret that frequent engagements in pastoral and other public duties, during the time when it was in course of preparation, left him little leisure to render it so full or complete as he could have desired.

Ours is an era of momentous changes. Days of evil are approaching, and our own and our children's safety can only be found in the chambers of the covenant, and in the path of duty. A great work is to be accomplished by the Church, before the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations. Upon Christian parents, much of the preparatory work for the upbuilding of Zion, and the establishment of the Mediator's kingdom devolves; and the faithful performance of their arduous and important duties will do much to draw down a present blessing upon the heritage of the Lord, and to sow the seed of the Church's future increase and prosperity. With the earnest desire to subserve this high and holy design, the author commits this display of Parental Duties to the favourable regards of those for whose special instruction and encouragement it is intended, and to the blessing of Him who can render the feeblest effort to advance the glory of his great name, instrumental in conferring extensive and lasting benefits upon the Church.

PARENTAL DUTIES.

INTRODUCTION.

“ For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment ; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”—GENESIS xviii. 19.

THE transactions recorded in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis are among the most remarkable and striking that are contained in the Old Testament history. The testimony borne to a public servant of God in the nineteenth verse is most honourable and illustrious. To terminate the unseemly strife between his servants and those of his kinsman Lot, directed by eminent piety and practical wisdom, he had taken up his abode in a comparatively unpopulous and infertile region, while his friend had selected his residence in the populous and well-cultivated valley which contained the “cities of the plain.” Self-denying sacrifices, made for the maintenance of brotherly concord and communion, are amply compensated by internal peace, and by peculiar manifestations of Divine favour. Abraham had willingly surrendered to his kinsman a portion of the rights secured to himself in the promise of the covenant ; and God graciously confirmed to him the whole, accompanying the renewed grant with special tokens of approbation. “ The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward : for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it ; for I will give it unto thee.”¹

¹ Genesis xiii. 14-18.

On the other hand, Lot was severely chastised for a choice in which worldly aims and carnal considerations predominated. Sodom and the neighbouring cities were characterized by abounding sin and gross immorality, and the cry of their wickedness had ascended to heaven. The servant of the Lord, in a situation which he had voluntarily chosen, was forced to be an eye-witness of evils of enormous character, whose progress he was unable to arrest. He was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked;" and as he dwelt among the Sodomites, "in seeing and hearing," this righteous man "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds."¹ His family suffered severely from the contagion of prevailing wickedness. His daughters were allied to the men of the place, who were evidently unconcerned about the abominations of the land, if they were not partakers in them, and were hardened against solemn warnings. His wife was a worldling and an unbeliever; and stricken by a sudden and fearful visitation, she was set up as a monument of Divine displeasure to succeeding ages. He himself was at one time taken a captive in war; he subsequently fled out of Sodom, with the loss of property, the violent disruption of domestic ties, and under other severe chastisements; and the aggravated sin that afterwards stained his conduct, is plainly traceable to the influence of Sodom's heinous wickedness.

The cup of the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah was now full, and they were doomed to tremendous desolation. At a period when a written revelation was unknown, the destruction of these devoted cities, like that of the antediluvian world, was designed to be an awful and impressive testimony to the holiness and rectitude of the Divine government, and a standing monument of the sure retribution that will overtake the workers of iniquity.

We are informed in this chapter of the Lord's special favour vouchsafed to Abraham, at the time of this approaching vengeance. While the clouds were collecting for a tempest of wrath, and ere they discharged their contents, a Divine gracious appearance was made to the venerable patriarch. Indulging in greater freedom and familiarity, and displaying less grandeur than characterized former manifestations, the celestial visitants declared to him and his family the Divine acceptance, and a peculiar blessing. One of the three personages who appeared to him in human form, as he sat at his tent door, and con-

¹ 2 Peter ii. 7, 8.

descended to accept of his hospitality, was unquestionably the Messenger of the everlasting covenant—the Redeemer of men, in the garb of his future incarnation. Throughout this remarkable interview, He is accosted in terms of the deepest reverence—He is styled the LORD, or Jehovah,¹ and He owns as his the vengeance which his hand was about to execute. Accompanied by two created angels, the ministers of his will, after He had announced to Abraham the birth of the son of promise, and detected and reprov'd the unbelief of Sarah, the Divine visitant turned his face toward Sodom, and meditating vengeance, his steps were directed towards the devoted city. The patriarch, evidently aware of the dignity of his august guests, though ignorant of the special design of their visit, and desirous of protracted intercourse, “went with them to bring them on the way.” It was on this eventful occasion that the Lord discovered towards his servant complacential friendship, and bestowed upon him distinguished honour. As if reluctant to proceed in the execution of judgment, without opening his design to his friend and favourite,—as if unwilling to part with any secret concealed,—He asks, “Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?” As a proof of eminent favour, He introduces him as it were to his cabinet council, and makes known to him his mind. And as a reason, not a little singular, why there is conferred upon him this peculiar honour, He utters concerning him the illustrious testimony recorded in the verse to which we have referred.

In the subsequent part of the chapter, we are informed of Abraham’s remarkable intercession for Sodom; and we have an instance at once of the wonderful condescension of the Hearer of prayer, and of the eminent distinction enjoyed by the righteous. The patriarch pleaded that the vengeance might be averted. He stood in the breach to arrest the sword of judgment; and while, with the deepest reverence and humility, he approached the throne of grace, he sought with holy boldness and importunity, Divine forbearance and merciful deliverance for the righteous. Encouraged by the gracious access that was allowed him, he becomes more and more urgent; and in each successive petition, he improves the answer he had obtained, by entreating still further displays of long-suffering and compassion. On this memorable occasion, the prevalency of the prayer of faith was remarkably discovered. The Lord bent down his ear to hear,—He permitted his

¹ Verses 3, 17.

servant to renew and enlarge his requests, and to "command him concerning his sons and the work of his hands,"—and Sodom's destruction was held in abeyance till Abraham's supplications were ended, and till Lot, by a special interposition, had been conducted forth from the devoted city.

The striking testimony borne to the patriarch's character stands intimately connected with this instance of condescending intercourse and enlarged liberty in prayer. The Angel of the Covenant presents it as the reason for revealing his mind,—“for I know him ;” and it forms the appropriate introduction to the holy boldness and near access with which Abraham was favoured at the mercy-seat. A particular part of his character and example is selected, and on it is enstamped the mark of Divine approbation. We are not told here of his knowledge, or faith, or love, although for these graces he was eminently distinguished ; he is not commended as a skilful warrior, though his arms had shortly before vanquished the victorious kings of the country ; nor is there mention made of his riches and extended possessions. But his *domestic piety* is taken as the ground of special approval and high commendation ; and through it not only are present privileges bestowed upon him as the confidant of Heaven, but future blessings are granted to his posterity for many generations.

The God of Abraham is still the covenant God of his people. In the administration of his grace, and the dispensation of his providence, He bestows blessings in connection with approved character. Of the different relations in which his people are placed, none is more closely associated with the enjoyment of gracious benefits than those which exist under the domestic constitution. Sustaining Himself the endearing character of the “God of all the families of Israel,” setting “the solitary in families,” and placing them like a flock under the Great Shepherd, He watches over them with unremitting care, accepts of their worship as a sweet-smelling savour, and regards them as a blessed inheritance. Moreover, He constitutes the families of his people the channel for diffusing abroad the bounties of his benevolence ; and wherever the household is ordered for God, and domestic duties are performed aright, there descends the blessing from above, like the dew upon the hill of Zion,—and thence will issue, as from a copious fountain, countless streams to refresh and purify society. The “house of the wicked,” on the other hand, “shall be overthrown.”¹

¹ Proverbs xiv. 11.

Domestic relations being perverted, and domestic duties neglected, the parent becomes a curse to his family ; children again are a scourge to parents ; and the household, as if itself blighted of Heaven, spreads around and perpetuates an influence pestilential and destructive. Such being the effects that flow from the domestic institution—effects which extend to all the other relations of human society—need we wonder that the estimate of character should be taken from the manner in which domestic duties are performed ; or that the enjoyment of eminent privileges should be suspended upon their proper performance ? It has been justly said, that a man is what he is in his family. The household is the sphere of duty and trial, a field of incalculably important labour, in which shall be reaped joyful and blessed fruits, or experienced vexation and misery, according as its cultivation is promoted or neglected. Here grace is exercised and increased, and its benign influence is felt ; or, devoid of principle, and insensible of obligation, the head of the family entails a heritage of misery upon those who should have found in him a guardian and benefactor. There is therefore singular propriety in estimating the character from the performance of domestic duties, and in connecting the blessing of the household with parental fidelity.

The subject thus viewed presents an epitome of parental duties, and exhibits the blessings consequent upon their performance. Our earnest desire is to be instrumental in awakening parents to a sense of their responsibility, that the hearts of the fathers may be turned to their children, and of the children to their fathers, that the threatened curse may be averted.¹

THE FAITHFUL DISCHARGE OF PARENTAL OBLIGATION IS ACCOMPANIED BY MANIFOLD TOKENS OF DIVINE FAVOUR, AND IS FOLLOWED BY CONSEQUENCES THE MOST SALUTARY TO THE FAMILY, THE CHURCH, AND THE WORLD, BOTH FOR THE PRESENT AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

This proposition shall be discussed in the following order :— Chapter I. The nature of parental duties ; Chapter II. The manner of performance ; Chapter III. The consequent blessings ; and Chapter IV. Motives and encouragements to parental fidelity. May the subject be blessed to the conviction and direction of parents, and to the revival of true religion in families, that sons unborn may arise and inherit the blessing of faithful Abraham !

¹ Malachi iv. 6.

CHAPTER I.

NATURE OF PARENTAL DUTIES.

THE distinction bestowed upon Abraham was the fruit of sovereign favour. God "called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him."¹ He took him from Ur of the Chaldees, and brought him forth from an idolatrous country and kindred; He engaged in covenant to be his God and portion; and by special gracious influence, the patriarch was led to appropriate the promises, and to rely upon Almighty power for their accomplishment. "He believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."² All the goodness and mercy that afterwards followed him—all the blessings in providence that he enjoyed—and all the excellence to which he attained, were the results of distinguished favour. He was not justified by works, that he might have nothing whereof to glory before God. Faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, not while he was in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. "The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."³ The whole history of the patriarch declares that his eminence of character, and the blessings in his lot, arose not from any natural excellence which he possessed, or from works of righteousness which he had done; but solely from sovereign gratuitous mercy, of which his vocation, and faith, and obedience were the blessed fruits.

Nor are we permitted to doubt that the revelation of God's mind to him flowed from the same fountain; nor that the foundation of the commendation that he received was the grace exercised towards him, and the internal spiritual operations of which he was the subject. He was the Friend of God, and therefore were the Divine purposes revealed to him; and his bright example in the household was the appropriate fruit of that faith for which he has been celebrated. "The

¹ Isaiah li. 2. ² Genesis xv. 6; Rom. iv. 3. ³ Rom. iv. 2, 10, 13.

secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." To those who by supernatural grace become the friends of God, He still communicates his mind. Prophetic foresight they may not expect; but in communion with God, and in sure promises, they have intimations of the future—they have acquaintance with the movements of providence—and as from a lofty mount of observation, they discern the signs of approaching judgments and mercies. Domestic piety is the result of peculiar favour, and the fruit of supernatural grace. God commends in his people the dispositions implanted by his Spirit; and the faithful performance of important duties arises from strength communicated from on high. To this source are we to look for parental faithfulness and family blessings. "Without me," says the Saviour, "ye can do nothing." Destitute of his special aid, and of the grace and blessings which He alone can communicate, we can perform no acceptable service. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." By the grace of God we are—in any relation, and for strength and acceptance in any work—what we are. And especially is a living operative faith indispensable to the discharge of parental duties—a work of self-denial and difficulty, and in which we are altogether dependent upon Divine grace for strength, acceptance, and a blessing.

Assuming this as a fundamental principle throughout the discussion of the subject, we remark—

SECT. I.—The solemn dedication of the household to God is implied in commanding them to know the Lord.

The patriarchal history is distinguished by frequent instances of solemn dedication. The God of glory appeared once and again to the father of the faithful. He revealed himself unto him under suitable characters, and as sustaining the most valuable and endearing relations. When He called him from his father's house, He proposed himself to him as his "Shield and exceeding great reward;" and again, when He gave him the covenant of circumcision, He said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."¹ He even enlarged the gracious offer, so as to include posterity in the promised inheritance, for He added, "I will be a God to thee, and thy seed after thee."² These declarations were the pro-

¹ Genesis xv. 1; xvii. 1.

² Genesis xvii. 7.

posal of the everlasting covenant to the patriarch ; and they required on his part joyful acceptance and holy obedience. By faith he embraced the offers of mercy, and took hold of the covenant, dedicating himself to the God of salvation. The Church had previously existed in the families of the descendants of Seth ; and though under the Abrahamic covenant it obtained a more visible organization, yet still its duties and privileges had a peculiar relation to domestic society. The patriarchs, as the name imports, were the heads of families or tribes. While the covenant so frequently renewed with them confined the grand promise concerning the coming Saviour in a particular line, it gave a special interest in it to the families of their descendants. The dispensation from Abraham to Moses differed from that which preceded, inasmuch as, instead of making the proposal of covenant blessings to separate families, it was extended to collections of families under one head,—and it embraced posterity, with their progenitors, as included in the federal compact of duty and privilege. Solemn dedication was essential to the participation of covenant benefits from the beginning ; and under every part of the former economy, it was frequently and strikingly exemplified. Performed in faith, it has, moreover, a special respect to the family.

Circumcision, the sacramental sign and seal of that covenant in which the seed are specifically mentioned, was the appointed ordinance for devoting the offspring to God. It was to be extended to all the males of the household, under a fearful penalty, and it remained the covenant in the flesh,—the outward token of consecration to God. Wherever the patriarchs sojourned, and wherever they experienced deliverances or mercies, they erected *altars*, frequently designating them by significant names, where they renewed their acts of personal dedication, and engaged their domestics to the Divine service. At a later period, it was enjoined that the house newly built should be dedicated to God before it became the family residence ; the first-born of men and beasts were claimed as the Lord's ; and the first-fruits of trees and of fields, and of all the increase, were to be set apart for a sacred purpose. Thus impressively was it taught the ancient people of God that they were not their own ; and thus were the members of the family, their residence, and all that pertained to them, separated from the world, and surrendered to Him who esteems it his glory to be styled the "God of all the families of Israel."

The shadows of the former dispensation have vanished away, but the substantial realities remain; and all that is spiritual in privilege is enjoyed under the New Testament, equally as under the Old, and is even increased to believers under the "ministration of the Spirit." The Abrahamic covenant is still the charter of privilege and the covenant of duty to the Church. The administration is different, but the spiritual benefits are the same. Baptism is a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, as was circumcision to the descendants of Abraham, and, like it, is an ordinance appointed as a visible means of dedication to God. This initiatory seal of the covenant is provided not only for individuals but for families. In the early records of the New Testament Church, we read of baptism being dispensed to whole households. Lydia, the Philippian jailor, Stephanas of Corinth, and their respective families, on their separation from the surrounding idolatry, and professing faith in Christ, were baptized, and thus visibly sealed as the Lord's.

The institution of baptism subserves valuable purposes to the families of God's people. Placed among the most solemn rites of our holy religion, while it is a precious means of grace to the Church collective, it is a special privilege to those who occupy the domestic relations. Therein Christian parents enjoy the privilege of taking hold of God's covenant for themselves and for their offspring, and of dedicating both to Him who proposes himself as their Shield and their everlasting Portion. They are permitted to draw near to God, and to come even to his seat. In a most impressive and affecting manner, the Lord condescends to look upon parents in their manifold infirmities, and upon children in the helplessness of infancy,—the lively emblem of that act of wondrous condescension and love, in which He passes by his people when cast out in their blood, and says to them, Live. Encouraged by his own invitation, parents should bring their infant children to Christ for a blessing; and embracing his gracious offer for themselves and theirs, they should surrender them to the Lord, with the views and feelings of the devout Hannah. "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."¹

Everything connected with the baptismal ordinance implies such a surrender. When properly administered, children are presented in the sanctuary as at Shiloh, that they may be num-

¹ 1 Samuel i. 27, 28.

bered among the people of God, and publicly recognized as pertaining to the fellowship of the visible Church. The name of a triune God is named upon them, in token of their being solemnly dedicated to his service, and of taking him as their sure and only portion. The appointed symbol of the blood of the covenant is applied to them, to mark their separation from the world, and to seal and ratify their engagement to be the Lord's. Godly parents cannot but regard it as an inestimable privilege thus to devote objects endeared to them by the most tender ties to the God of their salvation,—to Him who is the portion of their cup and their everlasting inheritance.

To the infant seed of the righteous, too, this early dedication is an eminent advantage.¹ While in unconscious weakness they are brought within the pale of that society to which the Lord is a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst, they are introduced to the fellowship of "the excellent of the earth," and commended to their prayers. A pledge the most solemn is publicly given before many witnesses for their training for heaven. The seal of redeeming love is applied to them. They are placed in the arms of the compassionate Shepherd of Israel, and are taken engaged wholly to be the Lord's. Although baptism is not regeneration, we deny not that this great change may sometimes accompany the outward ordinance; and we doubt not that the God of the families of Israel frequently remembers to his people for good the covenant of their youth. Like a stream running under ground, blessings springing from this source afterwards encompass their lot, and refresh their souls.²

The surrender of children to God in baptism is frequently renewed by those who, by faith, are the children of faithful Abraham. If a "life of holiness" be a "life of repeated acts of self-dedication," as says a venerable expositor,³ then Christian parents may be expected often to yield themselves to God. Impelled by the mercies of God—the most powerful of all motives—and feeling this to be their reasonable service, they will give their bodies as a living sacrifice, and devote their hearts and lives—their time, talents, and influence—to Him

¹ See an excellent little work by the venerable Dr Malan of Geneva, entitled "*La Famille Baptisée*," in which the advantages of baptism to the infants of Christian families are exhibited and illustrated with singular propriety and beauty of expression.

² See Buchanan on "The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit," pp. 225-236.

³ Matthew Henry.

from whom all have been derived. The self-dedication of a parent is inseparable from the dedication of his household to God. His children have been given him of the Lord, and are as a part of himself. His domestics, possessions, and influence in his family, are entrusted to him in stewardship; and when the obligations to personal holiness are felt, there will be cherished a deep and habitual concern that these objects should be holy. Acts of solemn dedication recognize the all-important fundamental truth that we are not our own, and that none related to us, and nothing we possess, are our own. Thus do we come out and are separate; thus are the families of God's Israel distinguished from others; and thus do they voluntarily claim connection with those who are emphatically designated "a peculiar people, a holy nation,"—the one family which in heaven and earth is named after Christ.¹ Recognizing God's sovereign right to them and theirs, godly parents resign all to him,—and in feelings of adoring gratitude and admiration, say with the dying son of Jesse, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee?" "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"²

The children and household are set apart as sacred; and the first great step is taken for leading them to keep the way of the Lord. It is as it were guiding their feet in the way of God's precepts,—the way of holiness and the path to heaven. The pledge is given and ratified with all solemnity, that they shall be treated as God's heritage, and trained as heirs of his glory. And, besides, it is the appointed means of placing infants, when they are capable of receiving instruction, under the teaching of Him who has access even to the infantile mind, who gathers the lambs in his bosom, and who "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings perfects praise." Viewed in this light, dedication is a first and most important means of commanding children and the household to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment. Surrendered to God, and committed to him for a blessing, we are encouraged to hope that He will condescend to undertake the charge. If not by calling them in infancy, at least by the means which He has provided and revealed, and by his gracious providence, He prepares those that are his chosen, and that have been dedicated to Him, for his service, and for the enjoyment of

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 15.

² 1 Chron. xxix. 14; 2 Sam. vii. 18.

himself in grace and glory. Christian parents are warranted to plead the baptismal engagement as a prevailing argument in seeking blessings for their children ; and those who become partakers of the grace of salvation, often delight to mention their own early dedication to God, with praise and thanksgiving.

SECT. II.—*Early and diligent instruction of children is a principal duty of Christian parents.*

A pious expositor has properly remarked, "Those that expect family blessings must make conscience of family duty. If our children are the Lord's, they must be reared for him. If they wear his livery, they must be trained for his work." Among the direct means of commanding a household to keep the way of the Lord, a principal place is to be assigned to parental instruction. This duty is the subject of explicit and reiterated command in the Sacred Scriptures. Under both dispensations, its obligation is prominently exhibited and powerfully enforced. Israelitish parents were directed thus to rear their children as the seed of the covenant, and thus to perpetuate the remembrance of Jehovah's wonderful works. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life ; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." "I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children." Again : "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." And presenting the most solemn and weighty motives to obedience, the Lord addresses the seed of Abraham, "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes, and ye shall teach them your children."²

The practice of godly Israelitish parents accorded with these repeated precepts. At a period long subsequent to the delivery of the law at Horeb, the inspired writer of the seventy-

¹ Matthew Henry, on Genesis xviii. 19.

² Deut. iv. 9, 10 ; vi. 6, 7 ; xi. 18, 19.

eighth Psalm ascribes the transmission of divine truth, through succeeding generations, to parental fidelity, shown in obedience to God's command,—“I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children.”¹ And Hezekiah, when under the powerful influence of the Spirit, and expressing lively gratitude, speaks of parental instruction as the approved means of perpetuating the knowledge of Divine truth, and of exciting to spiritual worship,—“The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth.”² The obligation of these precepts rests upon Christian parents equally as upon the descendants of Abraham. The duties are moral in their nature, and the motives and encouragements to obedience remain in full force under the New Testament dispensation. The Christian economy takes for granted parental instruction as a divinely appointed instrument for the transmission of revealed truth; and as it contemplates a wider diffusion of the truth than did the Mosaic ritual, the obligation to impart it is proportionably strengthened and increased. Parents are commanded to bring up their children in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord,”³—this comprehensive precept implying scriptural discipline and government, and the instruction of the young concerning the character, works, and ways of God, by which they may become wise unto salvation.

Children, being naturally under the power of darkness, as they come into the world, are without any innate conceptions of Deity, and utterly ignorant of those great truths that concern man's duties, or his immortal destiny. On all that pertains to the soul's welfare, they are involved in worse than Egyptian darkness. The god of this world has blinded their eyes. Guilty as well as depraved, the human mind is naturally averse to the light, and hates it; and of whatever expansion its powers are susceptible, or whatever knowledge on other subjects it may acquire, if uninstructed in Divine things, it will remain in ignorance, without God, and without hope in the world. Unlike the animal desires and appetites, the want of spiritual food creates no craving; and the person destitute of

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 2, 3, 5, 6.² Is. xxxviii. 19.³ Ephesians vi. 4.

the knowledge of God, of himself, and of salvation, will continue to wander farther from the light, and to pursue his downward, desolate path to the blackness of eternal darkness. Parents should contemplate their children as in this melancholy condition; and they are to regard it as a main part of their duty towards them, to be instrumental in rescuing them from its degradation and horrors. They are the *natural instructors* of their offspring, and they have opportunities of insinuating truth into their minds that are denied to others.

None of the high ends of their creation can be answered without knowledge; and for usefulness in the present life, and happiness in the next, suitable instruction is indispensable. "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." "The children and the household" can neither "keep the way of the Lord," nor "do justice and judgment," if they are untaught in the nature of the way, or uninstructed in relation to duty and obligation. The commendation of parental fidelity, in the case of Abraham, supposes a course of diligent and sustained education; and it evidently implies that upon parents devolves the duty of communicating it. Parents should consider themselves as the appointed instruments to lead their children in the way they should go, by enlightening their understandings and impressing their hearts. In truth, this is an office that cannot properly be delegated to another. Some parts of intellectual training,—some portions of the instruction that qualifies for the duties of the present life,—may be imparted by others; and there are, doubtless, many cases in which the whole of what is commonly termed *education* must be deputed to those whose office and attainments qualify them above parents for the important work. But while parents are, in some measure, to direct and superintend all the education of their children, on themselves it properly devolves to impart religious instruction. Theirs is necessarily the work of instructing their children in relation to their ruined condition, and of leading them to the knowledge of Christ, whom to know is life everlasting. While they are to watch, with jealous care, lest anything in common education should be opposed to the doctrines of revelation, and lest any bias should be contracted hostile to the Gospel of Christ, they should regard, as peculiarly their care, the religious training of their offspring. Whatever aid they may receive from others, the responsibility is eminently their own, and they should betake themselves to the work as of unspeakable magnitude and importance.

¹ Proverbs xix. 2.

Instruction, to be suitable, should be commenced *early*; and parents have access to their children's minds at a period in which no other persons have, and in ways which the hand of a stranger cannot reach. Like some of the organs of the body, the mind of infancy is developed much sooner than is commonly imagined. It has been affirmed that children, at the early age of *four years*, are capable of understanding the principal doctrines of the Gospel; and the chief elements of mental and moral character which, in ordinary cases, remain permanent, are probably formed before the term of boyhood has expired. Of what exceeding importance, then, is it to begin instruction early, and to preoccupy the soil which would be otherwise a sterile waste, or be overgrown with noxious weeds, with the plants of righteousness!

Instruction should proceed on the principle that its *subjects are possessed of an immortal nature*, and that they are *accountable to God*, and to be reared for his service. It is the training of those who have been previously dedicated to God. It is the education of their higher nature for its immortal destinies. The *authority of God* is not only to be kept constantly in view as enjoining the duty, but is frequently to be presented to the minds of children as supplying the grand reason for their obedience. Parental instruction has, moreover, a *bearing upon eternity*; and it must fail of effecting the desired results, if it does not proceed at every step upon an impression of the worth of the soul, of the danger of its loss, and of the unutterable joys or miseries which are to be its everlasting portion. Early and faithful instruction requires wisdom and assiduity in those who communicate it. Important truths must be brought down to the level of children's capacity, and presented in a form pleasing and interesting. Children are proverbially the creatures of impression; and the education imparted to them, to be effective and salutary, should be conducted so as to engage the attention, and impress the conscience and the heart. This is, in truth, a principal secret of success. If we feel ourselves, we shall rarely fail of making others to feel. When the attention is enlisted, and the mind impressed, the intellects even of children will be opened, to a wonderful degree, to comprehend the truth; and the impressions made on the heart of childhood will influence the man of future years. The subject is, in a high degree, worthy of painstaking and skill, and will amply repay all our diligence. A human being is to be rescued from sin and misery, fitted for the service

of Heaven's King, and qualified to be a blessing to fellow-men. An immortal spirit is to be educated for glory. Is not such an object calculated to task every energy, and to call forth the most diligent and sustained exertions?

If any withhold instruction from their children, or impart it in a careless, irregular manner—and we fear that many nominally Christian parents act thus, on the plea that they have not leisure, or that they have not the ability—we beseech them to consider seriously, whether these excuses can be sustained as valid, if their children grow up ignorant of God, or estranged from his ways, and are lost hereafter. If they perish, they may be assured it will be in a great measure through parental neglect. God designs that all parents should find time to take pains; and no apparently necessary engagements,—no encumbrance “with many things,”—will be sustained as a proper excuse for neglecting this “one thing” so “needful.” Nor is intellectual superiority so much required for the work, as moral ability. The heart impressed with a sense of parental obligation, and of the momentous consequences that must result from the duty neglected or faithfully performed, is the grand requisite. The sincere, humble Christian parent, who makes the spiritual instruction of his children everything,—who places it above his own ease and gratification, and above any worldly prospects to them,—will generally succeed, and reap an abundant reward of his labour.

To impart knowledge to the young that will be profitable or lasting, there must not only be *diligence* in teaching, but instruction should likewise be communicated in a manner *persuasive* and *attractive*. The Israelitish parent was to teach his children when he sat in the house, and walked by the way; when he lay down, and when he rose up.¹ Tender minds require “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.”² Instruction in the way of life, to be productive of salutary fruits, must be sustained and systematic; and parents are to account it their privilege and duty to inculcate as well as to teach, to recal what has been previously learned, and to renew the impression of truths that have been admitted into the mind. God himself draws “with bands of love, and cords of a man.” The Great Teacher administers “milk to babes,” as He “gives strong meat” to them who are of full age. He taught as his disciples were “able to bear,” and his instructions still descend as “the rain on the mown grass,” and distil as the dew upon the tender herb. This should be our

¹ Deut. xi. 19.

² Isaiah xxviii. 10.

rule and model, in training the young in the way wherein they should go. Wisdom's ways should be seen and felt by the young as pleasantness, and all her paths peace.

Parental instructions are, furthermore, to be addressed *to the heart* as well as to the intellect; and the culture of the moral nature must ever form a principal part of all well-conducted education, whether domestic or public. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" should be taken as a fundamental inquiry, even in instructing children in tender years; and all pains should be taken to render instructions familiar. It is possible to communicate even the great doctrines of the Gospel in a manner so plain, that he who runs may read; and where the teacher himself has an "understanding of Him that is true," and above all, where his heart is under the power of Divine things, he will generally be at no loss to make himself understood, even by persons of very limited capacity. The heart and conscience cannot but be a principal subject of faithful parental education. If the seat of feeling, the interested witness and arbiter of moral actions, is unimproved, a sense of duty will be imperfectly felt, and the "issues of life" will not flow forth in the spirit and conduct.

The effects of the patriarch's paternal precepts and authority exhibit the nature of Christian instruction, and the great subjects which it comprehends. His children and household were instructed to "keep the way of the Lord," and to do "justice and judgment." These expressions evidently imply that they were made acquainted with the great subjects of supernatural religion—instructed in their duties to God, and trained to moral habits and virtues. Such, too, is the import of the Apostle's direction to Christian parents,—“Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”¹ *Admonition* not only signifies careful teaching: it implies, also, exhortation, reproof, correction; it imports a heartfelt concern of parents about their children, and the enforcing of instructions by all proper motives and arguments. It is “the admonition of the Lord,”—that which He enjoins in his Word,—that course of instruction of which the Word of God is at once the directory and foundation; and it is the tender, affectionate dealing of a “nursing father,” which exemplifies the Lord's treatment of his people. The “way of the Lord,” which the household should be taught to keep, is the way of the Divine commandments, and these relate to all duties to God and to man.

Though parents cannot impart grace to their children, they

¹ Eph. vi. 4.

may train them to *correct habits*. Through careful instruction they may acquire a detestation of lying or injustice, or meanness, and a habit of declaring truth, acting with honesty and integrity, and exhibiting whatsoever is lovely and of good report. The Christian's end is to glorify God in all his actions, however minute, and his duty is to adorn the Gospel of Christ in his whole deportment. Parents should never regard the inculcation of proper habits as beneath their attention. Whatever tends to advance the temporal and spiritual welfare of their children, whatever is beneficial to mankind, or aims to promote the Divine honour, is included in the admonition of the Lord,—and in all this, overlooking nothing, however apparently little or immaterial, they are to bring them up.

But the instruction which parents are to communicate to their children pre-eminently respects the great truths of revelation,—those which concern the character of the Object of worship, and pertain to the soul's eternal destinies. The great design should be to render them "wise unto salvation." By nature ignorant of all that is most important for man to know, they are to be instructed in the doctrine of their lost state, and the nature and consequences of sin. They should be taught the character of God, and impressed with a sense of his perfections. They should be early informed of that wondrous method of recovery for fallen sinners, into which angels desire to look, and led to Him who is "the way, and the truth, and the life." They should be instructed in the nature and necessity of the new birth,—taught the way of God's commandments,—and told of the judgment to come, and of happiness and misery unending beyond the grave. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."¹

On themes like these, the constant aim of parents should be to deliver the lessons as from a heart deeply interested, and so as to produce a powerful and lasting impression upon the heart. Coldness and formality here cannot fail to be most pernicious. The effect upon the young will be to lead them to conceive that the parent himself feels no lively concern in the truth inculcated, and that they are of insignificant value or importance. If we would command the household to "keep the way of the Lord," we must teach them the excellency, suitableness, and all-sufficiency of the Saviour. We must show them that He is the portion of our own souls, and that from Him we expect and desire all abiding support and

¹ Proverbs ix. 10.

consolation. With a heart filled with the love of Divine truth, parents will exercise a constraining influence over their children, and will be honoured to guide them to Him who is the teacher sent from God, whom to know is life everlasting. Parental instruction should be generally conveyed in a *catechetical form*. Our venerable translators of the English authorized version of the Scriptures, seem to have recognized the importance of this method of teaching, when they gave the marginal reading of the command respecting training children, in the twenty-second chapter of Proverbs, "catechize." Without adverting to the obvious adaptation of this way of instruction to the capacity and habits of the young, we may remark that "a form of sound words" learned by children in youth, is frequently of immense value in preserving them from being led away by insidious error, and in establishing them in the profession and love of the truth. Even before their judgment has been fully developed, it is of importance thus to instruct them. What was early imprinted on the memory may afterwards enlighten the understanding and influence the conduct. It is matter of observation that those who, in youth, were early instructed in a scriptural catechism, have generally been kept from embracing novelties or plausible errors in religion; while others, from the want of such training, have readily been carried away with shifting winds of doctrine. The lessons of the Shorter Catechism have contributed to preserve the truth, even in periods of declension,—they have been instrumental, again, in reviving it; and to a singular extent, in different countries and ages, they have served to advance the cause of pure and undefiled religion. Regular catechizing should be regarded by parents as a divinely appointed and approved way of instructing their children. It should be essayed in entire reliance upon a blessing from on high; it should never be allowed to become a formal service, or an exercise of memory alone, on the part of the children. On the contrary, all pains should be taken to make them thoroughly understand the answers which they give, and all diligence employed to impress the practical import of the truths that are communicated. Catechetical instruction will thus form a valuable part of parental training; and children so educated will often furnish pleasing evidence of an intelligent and steadfast attachment to the way of truth and righteousness.

The Sacred Word is the grand *instrument* of leading the household to keep the way of the Lord. It is able to make

wise to salvation. As a light from heaven, it reveals truths which none of the princes of this world know, and discloses mysteries which, although adapted to the youthful mind, angels cannot fully understand. Containing the dictates of unerring wisdom, it is the only infallible rule of faith and practice,—the directory of conduct, and the charter of hope. It is, moreover, strikingly suited to the instruction of the young, and admirably fitted to realize all the great ends of Christian education. By this means, a young man learns to “purify his way.”¹ In the use of the Bible, as the great instrument of instruction, children are made to feel their responsibility; and the authority of God, the value of the soul, and the means of its recovery and happiness, are presented in a manner calculated to attract the attention, enlighten the understanding, and impress the heart.

The Bible is emphatically the book of childhood and youth. It contains the elements of natural knowledge, exhibiting effects in connection with their causes, and pointing continually to Him who worketh all in all. It displays the true philosophy of the mind, and presents a simple, sublime, and unchangeable system of morals. And herein the amazing scheme of salvation is revealed with wondrous simplicity,—that scheme which is destined to be the song and science of eternity. No proper knowledge of the way of the Lord can be obtained elsewhere, and none can keep it without having constant recourse to the Divine directory.² The instruction which faithful parents impart will in all its parts be scriptural. In the Bible, God himself condescends to speak to the sons of men, and the Great Shepherd has become the teacher of babes. He has here answered the request which the godly Manoah preferred about his promised child. He has taught parents “how to order” their children, and what to do unto them.³ They should gratefully receive the information, and faithfully employ it. Regarding it as an unspeakable privilege to be allowed to come to the fountain of Divine truth, and to bring their children with them, they should draw forth for them living water. They should lead them to Him of whom the Scriptures testify, and through whom the blessed promise is accomplished,—“All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.”⁴

¹ Psal. cxix. 9.

² For a fuller statement of the argument for employing the Scriptures as the basis of all education, see the Author's *Two Discourses on National Education*.

³ Judges xiii. 12.

⁴ Isaiah liv. 13.

SECT. III.—*Family worship is an important duty of Christian parents.*

The altars which the patriarchs erected in the places of their sojourning were not only expressions of their gratitude, and a means of personal dedication;—they were intended, besides, to engage the household in the work of religion, and to interest them in the promised blessing. The family was called to take part in building them; and the significant names by which they were designated implied the extension of the benefits connected with them to posterity. On a memorable occasion, Jacob accosted his household, and said, “Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.”¹ At another time, the same patriarch erected an altar, and called it “El-elohe-Israel”—the Lord—the mighty God of Israel.² These actions, as far as their moral principle is concerned, still invite the imitation of Christian parents. It is not enough to dedicate their children to God in secret, or when they are in unconscious infancy. They must lead them to the altar, renew the solemn act in their presence, and teach them to regard it as their highest interest and honour to yield themselves to the Lord. It is not sufficient to pray *for* children—we must pray *with* them, and show them prayer as an evident means of enjoying all covenant blessings, and as our highest and most valued privilege.

A primary design of parental dedication or instruction should be the *conversion of children*. Until this great change is effected, they remain children of wrath, under the curse, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise. No amiability of disposition—no outward knowledge, or acquired notional views of Divine things—no correct habits superinduced by instruction—can alter the spiritual condition; and with none of them should parents rest satisfied in relation to their children. “*The redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*”³ The translation of the soul from darkness to light—the introduction

¹ Genesis xxxv. 2, 3.

² Genesis xxxiii. 20.

³ Psalm xlix. 8.

of a child into the family of heaven, and the evidences of having passed from death unto life—should be to parents objects of anxious and incessant solicitude. In the spirit of the patriarch, when he fervently prayed, “O that Ishmael might live,” Christian parents should plead particularly for the spiritual life of their children. They should “travail as in birth,” till Christ be formed in them. And cherishing in their own spirits habitually this great concern, they should impart it to their children, that they too may be brought to feel it. Frequent solemn instructions on the nature and necessity of regeneration should be closed with fervent prayer, in company with the child; and the unrenewed members of the household should be made to feel, that their ingathering to the fold of Christ is to the head of the family a subject of constant concern.

The *worship of the family* should be conducted with reference to this end; and with this view, children and other domestics should be brought to the family altar. The obligations to this great duty are numerous and weighty. The recognition of Jehovah in his gracious character as the God of the families of his people—ascribing to Him the homage due to his name—the blessings which households daily need, and which, through this channel, they frequently receive; and the fearful curse denounced against the families that call not on God’s name—present reasons the most powerful for its diligent observance. The requirement of Divine revelation, and the example of the saints in every age, exhibit family worship as an eminent means of securing the best blessings for the household, and of extending the hallowed influence of true religion beyond its pale. Without a domestic altar, the family can in no sense be regarded as a religious family. God is to be acknowledged in the various relations in which He has condescended to reveal himself to the sons of men; and in one of the most endearing of these is He to be habitually owned, and the tribute of willing homage rendered to his name. The best times of the Church—seasons of eminent revival and refreshment—have been characterized by the regular solemn performance of family worship. In the dwellings of the righteous has been heard the voice of joy and melody; and, like the morning and evening sacrifice of God’s ancient people, the followers of the Lamb have been careful to present the daily offering of prayer and praise in their families. As David on a day of peculiar favour returned to “bless his house,” so Chris-

tian parents have drawn down the blessing upon their households, while their own spirits have been abundantly refreshed. Stated domestic worship, combined with diligent instruction, exemplifies "the church in the house;" and wherever it is faithfully maintained, there the fulfilment of the gracious promise may be expected—"I, saith the Lord of hosts, will be a wall of fire round about thee, and the glory in the midst."¹ Family religion is a principal part of the glory that dwells in the land; and the households that are distinguished for it are peculiarly under the protection and blessing that are enjoyed near the mercy-seat. The house of Obed-edom, and all that he had, were blessed for the ark's sake.² A similar recompense of reward is still dispensed by the Holy One of Israel to the families of the righteous, in connection with domestic worship. At the family altar there is enjoyed communion with God;—there He dispenses the blessing,—and there He dwells with his people, bestowing upon them and theirs the manifold tokens of peculiar favour.

Every view that can be taken of the ordinance of family worship warrants us to consider one of its principal designs to be the conversion of every individual composing the family. This should be a subject of habitual concern to those who are, by Divine appointment, "kings and priests" in their household. For this frequent and fervent supplications should be offered at the throne of grace; and parents should never rest satisfied, till they obtain some clear evidence that their children and servants have been translated into the family of heaven. Nor should we be contented with doubtful evidences on a matter of such thrilling interest and unspeakable moment. Gentleness of manner, a kindly disposition, filial obedience, may exist, disconnected from the grace that bringeth salvation; and parents should beware of mistaking these for a spiritual renewal of heart and life. Till such a change is experienced, children remain under the curse, bond-slaves of the destroyer, and in continual danger of being consigned to inconceivable ruin. Christian parents should always act under the solemn conviction of the misery of such a condition. The family devotions should call down the blessing upon domestic instructions; and besides impressing upon those who engage in them the value of the soul's salvation, parents should put the work into the hands of Omnipotent agency, that can alone effectually renew, and preserve, and bless.

¹ Zech. ii. 5.

² 2 Sam. vi. 12.

That the services of domestic worship may be instrumental in subserving this high purpose, two things are indispensable;—they should be performed with scrupulous *punctuality*, and *formality* should be carefully avoided. No multiplicity or variety of engagements—no plea of inability for conducting devotional services—no backwardness, from the presence of servants or strangers—can be sustained as valid excuses for the occasional or frequent neglect of a duty, on which so much of the benefit or happiness of the family depends. To limit family worship to one part of the day, and to omit it, at times, from the interruption of business or society, is to neglect Heaven's standing institute, and to postpone the spiritual welfare of the household to the trivial, fleeting interests of the world. It is, in fact, to substitute a human invention for God's appointed ordinance, and to render the spiritual and eternal interests of a family subservient to mere worldly caprice or convenience. Ability for duty is obtained in the way of diligently observing it, and never by neglecting it; and obstacles and interruptions will give way before those whose faces are towards God's altar, and whose heartfelt purpose is that of the veteran Joshua—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."¹ David might have pleaded multiplicity of engagements, and pressing public duties, as an excuse for neglecting family worship, on the day that he returned to "bless his house;" and the "father of the faithful" had doubtless many temptations, in his frequent journeyings, to omit at times the devotional exercises of the family. But the saints of God have ever regarded their true interest, and the blessing of their households, as connected with seeking God's face; and amidst difficulties and trials, they have considered daily domestic worship as at once the most valuable work in which the family can be employed, and as the most effectual means of promoting its genuine prosperity.

An irregular attention to family worship cannot fail to lessen in the minds of domestics a sense of its importance. Omitted in the morning or evening from indolence, or upon some urgency of worldly affairs, children and servants will naturally regard its observance as of little consequence; they will think it may be omitted upon other occasions—their attendance will be reluctant or constrained; and the duty will thus come to be altogether laid aside, or to be observed only according as worldly interest or convenience may dictate. On the other hand, the regular presentation by the household of the morning

¹ Joshua xxiv. 15.

end evening sacrifice is calculated to impress the members with a sense of its indispensable importance. They will learn betimes to associate all their duties and enjoyments with the family altar; and children and servants receiving thence the blessing, will themselves be led to choose the way of duty, and to experience wisdom's ways to be pleasantness, and all her paths peace.

Next to the punctual observance of family worship, Christian parents should take special heed that it be performed in a *devout and impressive manner*. If there is formality or deadness here—if the Word of God is read in a hurried, careless way—if prayer and praise are offered so as to give evidence that the heart is not engaged—if the temper and disposition displayed are incompatible with the exercises of devotion—the great design of family worship will be frustrated, and the effect will be either to teach domestics to cherish a cordial dislike to religion, or to become mere formalists or hypocrites. If gracious effects are to follow from family devotion, much—very much—will depend on the manner of conducting it. Religious duties which are social should be observed in a solemn, impressive, and yet attractive form—they should realize to attendants the Divine presence, and have yet nothing in them repulsive: they should exemplify the gracious liberty and boldness with which the saints are privileged at the mercy-seat, and exhibit, at the same time, the work of religion as pleasant and delightful. The excellent Philip Henry is said to have been accustomed always to spend some time in his closet, seeking for special grace to conduct domestic worship, before he engaged in its performance.

Peculiar wisdom, meekness, and holy fervour are required to render the worship of the family a means of blessing to the household. Babes must be fed with the sincere milk of the Word—the unruly warned—providences improved—and the instructions of the word applied. The parent, when worshipping with his family, should be characterized by the earnestness of one pleading for the life of his children, and should display the holy confidence of a child approaching to a Father who is able and ready to help. In the spirit of the patriarch, offering up at God's command the child of promise, he should commit his household to God; and in all the other duties of religion his aim should be to excite, encourage, and attract those under his care to divinely appointed ordinances. This is unquestionably one principal design of the parental relation. Parents are,

by precept and example, to point out the way to God and to heaven, and to lead in that way. As when the Egyptian princess restored the infant Moses to his mother, so God says to every Christian parent, "Take this child, and nurse it for me."¹ Believing parents, regarding Divine ordinances as their own well-springs of comfort and of saving benefit, should lead their children to them, that they also may become partakers of rich and heavenly consolation. Thus will they be instrumental in bringing them to Christ, and in habituating them to the ennobling services of religion: thus may they fulfil the Divine directions, and realize the gracious promise—"Instead of the fathers, thou mayest take the children, and make them noble princes in all the earth."²

SECT. IV.—*Training the household to practical godliness.*

The conduct of Abraham, which receives the Divine commendation, evidently implies a high regard to practical religion. He commanded his children and household after him to "*keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment.*" It was not enough with him to communicate to them the knowledge of the doctrines of supernatural religion, or of the ways of providence; he did not esteem it sufficient to impart to his family notional views of the object of worship, and the way of acceptance; he guided their feet into the way of duty, and he trained them to walk in the path of the Divine commandments. The "way of the Lord" intends the whole course of holy obedience. To "fear God and keep his commandments" has in every age been the "whole duty," as well as the whole privilege of men.³ The patriarch led his household to walk in all duties to God and to man—to be serious, devout, and diligent in attendance on religious ordinances, and to be honest and upright in their conduct toward men—to cherish a continual sense of obligation to God and concern for his honour, and to act with fidelity and integrity in all that pertained to fellow-men. He instructed them to maintain a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men; to walk in all the commandments of the Lord

¹ Exodus ii. 9.

² Psalm xlv. 16.

³ Eccles. xii. 13. In the original there is no word corresponding to the word "duty"—the supplement of the translators. It is literally, "the whole of man," and may suitably be rendered "the whole privilege, interest, or happiness of man."

blamelessly, and to observe whatsoever is honest, pure, lovely, and of good report in human society.

To lead children and a household in such a course requires assiduous training. To talk merely of the way of duty, or at times to lead into religious exercises, cannot be regarded as sufficient to prepare the young for the service of religion, or the practice of morality. The explicit command of Heaven is, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."¹ Training supposes patience and attention—the adapting of instruction to the capacity and condition of the child; and it obviously implies that the subject of instruction is habituated to the service required. It is to "draw along by a regular and steady course of exertions"—to make trial of walking in the approved way—and to accustom to the performance of the duties prescribed. It carries in it the idea of continued watchfulness and unceasing care. Such training aims to render necessary labours pleasant, by superintending proper *habits*. Even in the inferior creatures, evil propensities may be overcome, and they may be fitted for useful services by diligent training. In the education of youth, we have to deal with a nature, fallen indeed, but possessed of vast capacities and varied susceptibilities; and proportioned to its rank in the scale of existence, its solemn responsibility, important duties, and high destinies, should be the dread of marring its culture, and the concern to conduct it aright. Children are to be trained for the Lord's work, as soldiers are taught to acquire skill in handling their arms, to keep their ranks, to endure hardships, to obey orders, and to be animated in every service by the prospect of ultimate victory and reward. Herein multitudes even of religious parents are greatly deficient. They do something, perhaps, to promote their children's religious welfare, but they cannot be said to *train* them in the way of life. They instruct them at times—they take them along with them to religious ordinances, and occasionally they reprove and correct them. But they do not lead them along by watchful and sustained efforts. Their exertions in their behalf are desultory and irregular, and, by indolence and inconsistency, they often mar the effect of even good instructions.

One topic connected with this parental training merits attention, as we fear it is generally and greatly overlooked. Children should be early led themselves to make religion their work, and to engage in the ready performance of religious duties. It is not enough to pray *with* them and *for* them—

¹ Proverbs xxii. 6.

parents should see that they themselves pray, and that not in the mere forms which are taught to lisping infancy. They should be instructed in the nature and privilege of prayer, informed of their spiritual wants, and led to the fountain of all gracious supplies; and parents, by causing them to pray in their presence, should see that their children are actually cultivating communion with the throne of grace. The same course of faithful training is requisite in relation to all other religious duties.

Much earlier than is generally imagined, the obligation of the baptismal vow descends upon the young. As soon as children are capable of conceiving the character and perfections of God, and of entertaining a sense of their own accountability, they should be trained to recognize the baptismal covenant by a public profession of religion, and by actively engaging in all religious duties. Parents very generally err in this matter. They consider it sufficient to tell children of their duty, without seeing whether or how they perform it; and on the plea that it is too early, they do not insist on their making a public profession of religion, by entering personally the membership of the Church, and coming to the Lord's Table, till they have arrived at mature youth, or even reached the period of manhood. Now this is obviously anything but a faithful training of children in the way they should go. Parental indolence and neglect, and, above all, an overweening concern of parents about a provision for their children in the world, lead to this fearful dereliction of duty. But whatever is the cause, the consequences of this negligence are most ruinous. Emerging from childhood, with opening powers of mind and conscience in active and constant exercise, and surrounded by countless and powerful temptations, the young are left without a proper sense of their obligation to God, and are suffered to pass over a number of years, in the utter neglect of many duties to which their early dedication had pledged them. The melancholy result is easily declared. Children learn to cherish an increasing aversion to practical godliness, and they fall a prey to the destroyer. Untrained in the way they should go, they depart from it even in youth; and, although "the children of the kingdom," they grow up ignorant of its nature, undesirous of its privileges, and only fitted for final rejection. Would parents deprecate this dread consummation for their offspring? Let them lead them early into the way of holiness; and ere the world assails with its

hold, and diffuse blessings throughout the world for ages to come. Animated by the hope of promised success, and warned that all negligence or unfaithfulness will be visited by fearful retribution, let him diligently and perseveringly employ the means of Divine appointment. So will he accomplish the designs of his high vocation. Parental fidelity will evidence that he is by faith a child of faithful Abraham. The blessing of Abraham's God will descend upon him and his seed. His work will be rewarded. In life, his family, blessed through him, will be to him a blessing. At death, like another venerable patriarch, he will have comfort in committing his household to the God of their fathers, assuring them of his promised protection and blessing. And in the language of joyful confidence and triumph, he will be enabled to declare to the generation following—"This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death."¹

¹ Psalm xlviii. 14.

CHAPTER II.

MODE OF PERFORMING PARENTAL DUTIES.

THERE are means graciously provided for the proper discharge of parental duties,—there is a way clearly marked out in the Divine Word, whereby parents may lead their children to God's service, and may themselves obtain the commendation which was given to Abraham, the father of the faithful. The efficacy and the blessing are only of God. *Paul may plant, and Apollos may water*, but it is God that giveth the increase. Nevertheless He has appointed and revealed the means of domestic nurture and admonition, with which He has connected his blessing. In the natural world, instrumentality without Divine energy is of no avail. The husbandman may cultivate the soil, cast the seed into the ground, and assiduously watch over its growth; but without the genial influences of the sun, and the fructifying rains of heaven, and other unseen agencies by Him who appoints fruitful seasons, there will be no harvest to reward his toil. So in things moral and spiritual, "neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."¹ The means of moral and spiritual cultivation are adapted to the end designed; and while of themselves they can produce no salutary effect, they are yet, in the declared purpose of God, so conjoined with supernatural gracious agency, that we have the warrant to employ them with the fullest confidence. This is God's established and declared connection, "*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*" Much, very much, of parental success in the training of children, is connected with maintaining a habitual and simple-minded reliance upon the power and blessing from above, "without which nothing is strong, nothing is holy." But much too will depend on the *manner* in which instructions are communicated, and the religious services of the family are performed. Among those who are acquainted with the business of public instruction, it is received as axiomatical,

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 7.

that method is indispensable to success. Without it men of distinguished abilities will be disqualified to teach others, and the best instructions will fail of cultivating the intellect, and of improving the heart.

If this is generally admitted in common education, it is still more applicable to the work of moral and spiritual instruction. The young are to be trained as immortal beings, and for a work the most important, beneficial, and ennobling in which it is possible to engage. From the earliest period, they are to be led forward in a course becoming their responsibility and their relation to the Author of their existence, and befitting their eternal destiny. They are to be recovered from a state of misery and ruin, guarded against countless evil influences, and educated for the lofty exercises and inconceivable felicity of the kingdom of heaven. And the whole household is to be ordered as the heritage of the Lord—to be instructed and governed so as to exhibit “the glory dwelling in the land,” and as a nursery to prepare worshippers for the upper sanctuary. Need we say, that for such a service there are required consideration, diligence, and faithfulness? A holy dread of marring the work through neglect or imperfect performance; an earnest desire of success, and an humble and constant reliance upon the Divine direction, support, and blessing are indispensable to the right use of appointed means; and all who desire for themselves and theirs Divine favour, will, with such dispositions, employ their efforts to train their household in the good and right way. We proceed to notice some of those means which are connected with the proper instruction and government of the family.

SECT. I.—*Parents should act habitually under a deep sense of their solemn engagements concerning their families.*

The head of the family stands in a federal relation to the members of his household. He has solemnly vowed for them to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; he has engaged to rear them for God and for heaven; and in the name of the God of Israel, and before many witnesses, he has given a sacred pledge for himself and his house, that they shall serve the Lord. Not only in the baptismal covenant has he entered into such an engagement; it has been frequently renewed and ratified on other occasions. The believer cannot but feel con-

strained to devote his household to God. Having himself subscribed with his hand to the Lord, and regarding Him as the Fountain of his being and happiness, he cannot withhold from Him aught that he has. His children and household, to whom he is bound by ties the most endearing, will be specially surrendered to his gracious Benefactor; and, as often as their cases are presented at the mercy-seat, will their dedication to God be renewed.

To cherish constantly a deep sense of this solemn surrender is a principal means of discharging faithfully parental obligation. A Christian is excited to all duty when he becomes fully sensible that he is not his own; but, as bought with a price, that he is bound to glorify his Master in body and spirit, which are his. Having opened his mouth to the Lord, he feels that he must not go back; having consecrated all his talents to the service of a glorious Master, he would regard it as impious and sacrilegious after vows to make inquiry—to appropriate as his, or to withhold through negligence, what has been voluntarily and unreservedly yielded up for a sacred purpose. Impressed, on the contrary, with a sense of covenant obligation, actuated by love to Christ, and animated by the hope of a glorious recompense of reward, he delights in the consideration that he is no longer his own, and that he has been separated to a special holy calling. Similar will be the feelings and views entertained by the godly parent in relation to his household.

When the covenant was renewed with Abraham in terms that included posterity in its benign provisions, the command was given to the patriarch, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect."¹ The direction referred to the whole course of holy obedience. It included the spirit and deportment of a devoted servant, under the approving eye of his master; and it aimed at ultimate perfection of service and character. The precept had a manifest respect to the domestic constitution. The man after God's own heart, as he expresses his earnest desire after the Divine gracious presence, declares, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."² Such will still be the resolution of the faithful parent respecting his family. Having brought his children to God's altar, and devoted them to God, he will labour to cherish on his spirit a constant sense of this dedication. His children were given him of the Lord. He has yielded them back to Him by voluntary and hearty surrender. He has solemnly vowed not to regard them as his

¹ Genesis xvii. 1.

² Psalm ci. 2.

own, not to educate them for himself, not to train them for the world, or its pleasures or pursuits, but to rear them as the servants of Heaven's King, and as denizens of glory. Like the pious Hannah, he vowed in the presence of the ark of the covenant, and before the Lord in Shiloh, that, as long as his children lived, they should be "the Lord's." If the ends of this dedication are to be attained, the solemn act must be frequently remembered, and the impression of it cherished on the spirit. A principal design of exacting an oath is, that the authority of the Supreme Being, and a sense of a future account, may be felt on the conscience, and a vow is universally understood to impose a superadded obligation. A due sense of the parental vow will exercise a subduing purifying influence on the whole conduct of those who have made it. Even a heathen satirist¹ declares that a sacred reverence should be cherished in all that pertains to the interests of youth. The vow of parents, when properly felt, will impel them to regard their families as set apart to a sacred purpose, to refrain from everything in conduct that is inconsistent with holy dedication, and to task all their energies, and employ all available means, for obtaining the desired results.

To children, too, the sense of early dedication, impressed on their minds by parents who have first felt it themselves, may be of incalculable advantage. If the youthful Hannibal felt the obligation of the oath which his father made him utter in childhood to oppose the enemies of his country, and was impelled by it, even to the end of life, to seek their destruction, may not the children of Christian parents be led to entertain an early sense of the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and to such a feeling of their infantile dedication to God as may influence their whole conduct? Godly Israelitish parents gave significant names to their children, and frequently inserted some attribute or title of God in their names. The design probably was, that they might connect the remembrance of their covenant God, and of his gracious works, with the objects of their most cherished affections, and thus impressively teach children, too, their obligations to special distinguishing goodness.

In this spirit Christian parents should perform all duties towards their offspring. They should always look upon their families as dedicated objects, and should labour betimes to make them sensible that they are under engagements to be the

¹ Juvenal.

Lord's. The effect would be most salutary if this feeling were generally prevalent throughout the families of professing Christians. The head of the household, true to his character as the priest of his house, would view himself as called to stand at the altar of God. His children and domestics would appear to him as sacred offerings to be presented with holy hands, and never to be alienated from Him to whom they have been devoted. And from such a surrender he would be excited and animated to spend and be spent, that its important designs might be accomplished. A proper sense of the vow to God would impel to the diligent performance of every parental duty; and by the blessing from above, the objects of parental solicitude would be brought to rejoice in their early consecration to the service of God. A due sense of the importance of duty, it has been said, is half its performance. In domestic relations the remark is peculiarly apposite. The instances are few in which parents, cherishing a habitual and powerful impression that they and their children have been dedicated to God, have lived in the neglect of the means of moral or religious cultivation, or in which parental diligence has been disappointed.

SECT. II.—*Frequent and fervent prayer with and for children.*

The Christian's rule of duty, as well as his exalted privilege, is to "pray without ceasing." Placed in the important station of a parent and the head of a family, there is a double reason why he should abound in prayer and supplication. The souls of his household are entrusted to his care, and on his instrumentality it in a great measure depends, whether they are to be the victims of ignorance and misery, or the possessors of endless glory. In a work of this kind, a sense of inability, and of entire dependence upon Divine agency, is indispensably requisite. Prayer is the appropriate expression of a feeling of helplessness and want; it is committing to God what of ourselves we cannot keep, depending upon Him to accomplish what we cannot do, and resting wholly upon his direction and blessing, without which human instrumentality is nothing. The *spirit* of prayer, essential to the proper performance of all duties, is especially necessary to the Christian parent, for the nurture and admonition of his household. Here, if he has recognized the importance of his station, and the obligation of

his vow, he must feel at every step urgent and pressing wants, and be sensible of his own insufficiency. To renew the heart of a child he has no power; nor can he guard him from manifold dangers, or fit him for a life of usefulness, or a state of felicity, without supernatural aid administered to him every moment. Under a trembling anxiety lest the work should miscarry in his hands, and an earnest desire that his seed may inherit the blessing, he will in prayer bring them to Jesus, and importunately seek for them the participation of covenant blessings. All his efforts to promote their welfare for time or eternity will be undertaken in this spirit; and feeling that without this all other means are unavailing, and that the secret of all desirable success lies in the Divine favour and agency, he will continue instant in prayer, that the Lord's work may appear unto his servants, and his glory unto their children. He will pray for and with his family; and the impression which his spirit and conduct will make upon the members of it will be, that he is a man of prayer, and that their best interests are frequently carried, as the weightiest concern of his heart, to the mercy-seat.

God has remarkably owned exertions for the advancement of his glory that have been made in the spirit of prayer; and the instances on record of parents that were thus accepted, and of their offspring that were blessed, are numerous and encouraging. Prayer is the appointed way of inheriting the blessing; and the Divine assurances of its enjoyment in the way of prayer are remarkably full and explicit. "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to his will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." ¹

In the spirit of prayer, Hannah, even when afflicted with domestic trials, surrendered her child to the Lord; and in the devotedness of Samuel, the Church has been reaping the answer to her supplications till the present time, and will continue to reap it, as long as it shall have existence upon the earth. Moses was preserved in infancy by parents who trusted in the Divine promise, and who doubtless waited in prayer for its accomplishment. His deliverance afterwards by the daughter of Pharaoh, his preservation and escape from the

¹ John xiv. 13, 14; 1 John v. 14, 15.

temptations of the Egyptian court, and his singular choice of affliction with the people of God, in preference to the treasures of Egypt, as well as his preparation for the exalted office of lawgiver and king in Jeshurun, may be ascribed, in a great degree, to their prayerful instructions and pious example. David, the sweet singer of Israel, on several occasions makes grateful mention of his mother, as "the handmaid of the Lord," in terms that evidently imply his having enjoyed the benefit of parental piety. Who can tell how much of his public eminent usefulness is to be ascribed to this instrumentality? Who can say how much of the training, that, under the blessing of the Spirit, prepared him for being the penman of the songs of Zion, which have been in all ages the food and consolation of the heirs of glory, resulted from maternal devotedness? The examples as well as the precepts of the New Testament equally point to the intimate connexion between parental prayer and domestic piety. The parents of John the Baptist, the mother and grandmother of Timothy, and the mother of Him who was emphatically the "seed of the woman," were illustrious for faith, and were instruments of unspeakable blessing to the world.

Parents are encouraged to pray with and for their children, not only from the Divine promises, exceeding great and precious, but from what the Saviour has already done, in answer to parental supplications. It deserves remark, that many of those miracles of mercy which He performed in the days of his flesh, stand connected with parental concern about the welfare of the household. The blessing was, moreover, doubly communicated. Children and domestics were healed, and the faith of the applicants was approved and commended. The Syrophenician woman, the centurion whose servant was sick, and Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, are among the most affecting instances of the Saviour's compassion, and of his ability and willingness to relieve the distressed, and comfort the wounded in spirit; and these are associated with parental prayerfulness. With sympathizing tenderness the Redeemer heard the petitions of the afflicted supplicants. With infinite readiness He delivered from the power of the destroyer those whom they brought to Him; and, as if specially delighting in such applications, He conferred distinguished approbation upon those who presented them, and exhibited them as encouraging examples to others till the end of time. Once only is it recorded by the Evangelist that Jesus was "*much displeased*" with

the disciples whom He had chosen ; and this was when they would have hindered parents, who were his auditors, from bringing their children into his immediate presence for a blessing. His holy displeasure still goes forth against all parents and others who oppose an obstacle, of whatever kind, in the way of children coming to Him. His command—simple, striking, and of universal application—is, “ *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God ;*”¹ and the tender action with which it was accompanied when first uttered gives great and high encouragement to ready obedience. Jesus took the little children into his arms and blessed them ; outstepping the request of maternal affection, and displaying the riches of his benevolence and his affectionate concern for helpless infancy.

Prayer is the principal means of bringing children to Christ for the blessing. Without it other instrumentality will prove useless ; and frequently, when other means of parental training are found inefficient, the earnest supplications flowing from a father’s pity or a mother’s affection have been honoured for the conversion of children, and for promoting their safety, and comfort, and usefulness. The prayers in the family that promise to be productive of real and permanent benefit, must be *with* them as well as *for* them ; and they should be *fervent* as well as *frequent*. The head of the household should not only pray for the members of the family in particular, when they are assembled round the domestic altar—he should also take them apart, and pray for them separately. Like the patriarch Job, he should daily offer the sacrifice of prayer for each child of the family in secret, and present his case by name at the mercy-seat ; and taking him apart, he should pray with him from tender years. Thus may a child be impressed with a sense of the Divine presence, and the necessity of his soul’s redemption, even before he arrives at years of judgment and reflection ; and as the answer to such prayers, we cannot doubt that, in many cases, the grace of salvation is communicated in childhood, or bestowed in future life. Leigh Richmond records the impression made upon his mind by the prayers of his mother, when tried with a solemn bereavement, when he was only five or six years of age ; and the excellent John Newton relates, that the remembrance of his mother’s prayers never forsook him, though she was removed by death before he had passed his seventh year. Even when running in the paths of folly, they were a restraint upon him ; and to them may be

¹ Mark x. 14.

ascribed, in a great measure, his future conversion and eminent usefulness.

Parental prayer, for and with children, should be *fervent*. It should be pleading for the precious life. It should manifest habitually the earnestness and importunity which characterize the supplications in behalf of a child when under the hand of disease, or in the view of death. With similar importunity, should Christian parents carry the case of their children's souls to the throne of grace, and seek for them the blessing. Embracing in their thought and concern their original state of alienation from God, the dangers with which they are surrounded, and the unspeakable excellency of redemption. they should wrestle in prayer for their children, that they may be made partakers of the Divine nature, and escape the pollution of the world.

Do any plead exemption from this duty, on the ground of backwardness, or inability, or other engagements? None of these excuses can be sustained as valid. None of them is fit to meet the eye of Him who is God of the families of Israel. and to whom we must render account for all our obligations and privileges. On whatever ground parental prayer for and with children is omitted, the neglect is grievous, and the consequences are frequently most injurious. Hereby formality, indifference, or hardened contempt of religion, is generated in early life; and upon parents themselves, and upon their children, are visited, in righteous retribution, the omission of an all-important duty, and the misimprovement of a valuable privilege. Why should parents—whether male or female—be ashamed or reluctant to pray with their children? They bear their image; they are related to them by ties the most tender and powerful; they will live in their children afterwards, either in honour or infamy; and they must stand with them in the judgment. To neglect duty from a false principle of shame, is wrong in any case; but to neglect it in a case where all familiarity of intercourse is required, and where religion should be exhibited as most honourable, is doubly culpable. It tends directly to lead the young to be ashamed of Christ and his cause; to refuse to confess Him before men; and, in short, to live and die without God, and without hope in the world.

The promises to prayer are full and encouraging. To Christian parents and their seed they furnish the highest inducements to parental fidelity; and they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him

shall He teach in the way that he should choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth." "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons; and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." "Call upon me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."¹

SECT. III.—*The exercise of parental authority.*

The approving testimony which was given of Abraham represents him *commanding* his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment. This evidently implies the interposal of authority. The patriarch diligently instructed his family; and being a distinguished believer, prayer about their most important concerns would not be neglected. But he did not regard the performance of these duties as fulfilling the whole of his obligation to his household. He was called to govern as well as to instruct; he had to guide and direct, as well as to present the domestic offering on the altar of prayer; and the promised blessing came upon him and his posterity, through the faithful and judicious employment of parental authority, equally as through the diligent use of other means entrusted to him as the head of a household. The Christian parent has authority delegated to him by God, for the proper exercise of which he is deeply responsible. He is a king and a priest in his family; and these combined offices require the exercise of authority for discharging aright their appropriate functions. It were easy to show that upon the wise government of the family depend, in a great measure, its order, comfort, and outward prosperity. Self-government is intimately associated with due regulation and control in the domestic relations. The waywardness of childhood left unrestrained, the young will become the prey of their own impetuous passions; and before reason and conscience can assert their supremacy, evil habits are formed, and depraved inclinations ripen into maturity. Viewing the subject in a still higher aspect, we regard proper parental government as a divinely appointed means of spiritual benefit to a family. The command to which we have repeatedly adverted, is to "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." In

¹ Psalm xxv. 12, 13; Isa. xlv. 11; Jer. xxxiii. 3.

the original, the first word in the precept is taken from a root that signifies to *correct*, and it implies authoritative restraint, in instructing and directing the household in the path of duty.

The proper exercise of family government subserves the great design of leading children to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings.

It cannot, it is true, convert the soul to God ; and the habit of subjection to parental authority superinduced is different from the submission of the heart to the sceptre of Immanuel, and may exist entirely separate from it. Still it is a valuable means towards effecting this desirable end ; and, in ordinary cases, the child who has become the dutiful subject of a well-ordered rule in his father's house, is thereby placed in more favourable circumstances to receive the yoke of Christ, than he who has been allowed, unrestrained by parental control, to follow the bent of his natural appetites and passions. To all who desire the spiritual welfare of their children, this is a subject of absorbing interest and importance. Observation daily shows us many buds of promise nipped in infancy, and blighted, through injudicious management, by the absence of proper restraint, or the irregular exercise of parental authority. Eli's sin is recorded in fearful characters, as that of a good man who, by undue indulgence, brought ruin upon his family,—who honoured his sons rather than God,—who gently expostulated and reprov'd, when he ought to have impartially judged and severely punished. The parent's authority is delegated to him by God to be exercised for his glory, as in his sight, and as by one that must render an account. It should be uniformly employed with firmness and affection, and with the steadfast aim to promote the usefulness and felicity of the members of the household.

The first object of parental government should be to secure the *child's absolute and unreserved subjection*. Without this, the bonds of authority will be relaxed ; instructions that cross the natural inclination—and many of the highest and most salutary are of this character—will be rejected ; and youth will become, in a great degree, the victim of its own waywardness and perversity. In this, as in other domestic duties, parents should begin early ; and they should lay it down as an established principle, that the unreserved and ready obedience of children should be held indispensable. Here many Christian parents are greatly in fault. They view children as not the proper subjects of restraint and discipline till they are capable of exercising reason and reflection ; and they permit their

authority to be set at nought, and their commands to be gainsaid, under a foolish and improper idea that children, in early life, require indulgence rather than restraint. Both these assumptions are wrong ; and the domestic government conducted upon such principles cannot fail to be productive of serious and lasting injury. Habits are formed in tender infancy ; and experience has established the fact, that even in the first year or two of a child's existence, dispositions are contracted which frequently distinguish him in future life. Nowhere are we told in the Scriptures that restraint or correction should be withheld from a child, for discovering an evil temper, or a perverse disposition, till it can reason and be sensible of moral distinctions. On the contrary, the whole current of Scripture testimony warrants a parent to restrain the earliest indications of depravity. Right reason calls him to take the case in hand, as soon as the twig may be bent to a proper direction ; and to preoccupy the soil of the infantile mind with the seeds of submission and virtue, before the tares that are indigenous shall have taken deep root, and sprung up to rank luxuriance. Infants may be trained to yield implicitly to the look and voice of the parent ; and if we wish them to be afterwards in subjection in the family, or to grow up in obedience to Christ, we must labour to bring them up early to regard the parent's command as imperative, and parental authority as absolute and uncontrollable.

The want of this early and firm control is often followed by consequences the most injurious. Complaints of the insubordination of children, when in more advanced youth, may be traced, in a thousand instances, to parental indulgence, or to relaxed and irregular domestic government. Children were permitted to indulge wayward dispositions in infancy, and to resist parental authority with impunity in childhood, and the blame of their subsequent disobedience properly lies with the parents themselves.

The government of the household should be conducted with *affection combined with firmness*. It must be far removed from undue indulgence, and should be so directed as to manifest affectionate concern for the best interests of the household. It should be ordered so that the exercise of natural affection will be controlled and directed by judicious regard to the child's benefit ; and all selfishness and love of ease must be mortified. The Divine requirements are most explicit on this subject—
“He that spareth his rod hateth his son : but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” “Withhold not correction from

the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."¹ Undue *severity* in parental government is as injurious as improper indulgence. Fathers are enjoined not "to provoke their children to anger, lest they be discouraged;" and the direction is repeated, in a connection that would seem to imply that such provocation is calculated to frustrate the great end of religious training.²

Family government must, in the nature of the case, be *absolute and supreme*, and yet it ought *never to be capricious or despotic*. If parents rule with severity,—if they correct in passion, or to gratify temper,—if harshness characterizes their domestic government, the inevitable result will be, that their domestics will ascribe to religion a spirit severe and unsocial. They will learn to dislike its restraints, and when removed from the control of parental authority, to which they only yielded a reluctant submission, they will become more confirmed in disobedience and irreligion.

Parental government, we only wait further to remark, should be *uniform and impartial*. In both these respects many Christian parents are greatly to blame. They begin well, but their progress is not uniform. At one time, they are strict to a fault: at another, they vibrate to the opposite extreme. What they forbid one day, they allow the next; what calls forth punishment at one time, is permitted at another, without subjecting to reproof. There is no certainty in their administration. They are fretful in their temper, and fluctuating in their disposition and judgment. Children will speedily notice this uncertainty in parental rule, and will readily learn to despise authority which is so capriciously exercised. This is an evil which should be carefully avoided. Having determined in their own minds what is right, parents should hold the reins of government with a steady hand. What they are, and what they require to-day, they must be and require to-morrow. And throughout, in ordering, correcting, and rewarding, they should maintain an even and uniform tenor of conduct, discovering that they act on fixed principles, and that they have always before them the great ends for which they have been entrusted with parental authority.

Everything resembling *partiality* in domestic rule is, moreover, to be carefully shunned. There may be marked differences in the characters and dispositions of the members of

¹ Proverbs xiii. 24; xxiii. 13, 14.

² Colossians iii. 21; Eph. vi. 4.

a family ; and a parent may find it impossible to regard them in every respect alike. Some children are gentle, affectionate, and obedient, while others are stubborn, ungainly, and perverse. So far as parental love consists in *complacency*, a father may love a dutiful rather than an undutiful child. This is not, properly speaking, *partiality* : it arises from moral discrimination, and a parent cannot altogether avoid it, even if he would. But to indulge one child more than another—to punish one and exempt another—to be quick to discern a fault in one, while blind to the faults of another—this is partiality, which, wherever it is shown, will mar the beneficial designs of parental government. The Sacred Scriptures exhibit in striking colours the baleful effects of such misplaced affection in a family ; and the character and conduct of Esau and Absalom were an impressive and fearful rebuke to the partiality of parents otherwise eminent for piety. Parental favouritism destroys domestic harmony, and inflicts a double, and often a lasting injury upon a family. It mortifies and prejudices the children who are overlooked ; and it frequently perverts the objects of an unjust and misguided affection. In many instances favourites, instead of repaying to their parents greater gratitude and respect, are the first to despise their authority ; and they sometimes bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

The true model of parental rule is the Divine government, as exercised towards the members of a peculiar family, that in heaven and earth is named after Christ. The God of the families of Israël governs the household of faith in infinite wisdom and love, consults their benefit in every act of his administration ; and whether He corrects or rewards, aims continually at the present and future good of the heirs of salvation. Thus should parents conduct the government of their families. So will their authority be sustained and respected ; a blessing from on high will accompany its exercise ; their commands will ensure a ready obedience ; and the deportment of the household will attest the excellency of a faithful domestic administration.

SECT. IV.—*A holy and consistent example.*

The force of example is universally admitted in subjects connected with mental and moral cultivation. Example is precept embodied in action ; and while it shows the practic-

ability of applying the lessons communicated, it exercises an attractive and subduing influence upon the subjects of instruction. Precept, it has been properly observed, directs, while example draws. On the article of moral and religious training, we have the highest authority for inculcating the importance of example. The Sacred Volume frequently enjoins upon those who teach others the necessity of having their own character and conduct a living commentary upon their instructions. This they are taught to consider a principal way of benefiting others, and as that without which their labour will be, in a great measure, unavailing. Christians, in their different stations, are commanded to let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven. Ministers of the Word are exhorted to be examples to their flock ; and in various departments superiors in gifts and office are instructed to maintain a conversation becoming the Gospel, as a powerful means of leading their dependants and other inferiors to follow them, in all godliness and honesty.

Much of the instruction contained in the sacred oracles is, in fact, conveyed in the way of impressive example. The history and biography with which the Scriptures abound are given in order to exhibit abstract and important truths in the living conduct. In every walk of duty there are presented, in attractive and impressive narrative, examples for imitation, or courses of conduct to be avoided. Character, the proper fruits of principles, and the consequences of different modes of action, are constantly presented in familiar instances. We are less informed what the persons brought under notice in the Bible said, or what instructions they communicated, than we are shown how they acted, what spirit they manifested, and what conduct they displayed. And, what adds uncommon weight to this method of instruction, the Saviour himself has left us an "example that we should follow his steps." His principal design in coming into the world, it is true, was to finish transgression and make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. But still, having assumed our nature, and being in all things made like unto his brethren, He furnished a perfect model, to which his people are to seek complete conformity. The "mind which was in Christ Jesus" should also be in us : and we are enjoined to be "followers," or imitators "of God as dear children," and "to walk in love." "as Christ also loved us," and gave himself a ransom for us. Practical godliness is.

in fact, just constant study and transcription of the example of Christ. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."¹

Thus, all-important as the Scriptures represent the power of example, it is evidently of great importance to employ its influence in parental training. Children can understand the language of conduct before they are capable of judging of the truth of abstract principles. They are the ready interpreters of a parent's looks and actions, and are proverbially quick-sighted to observe inconsistency in his conduct. The young are creatures of imitation; and parents, by their example, should aim habitually to draw their children to the admiration and practice of whatsoever is pure, and amiable, and excellent. The head of a household should be able to address his domestics, and his conduct should always say, "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ Jesus." The example of parents will teach when words cannot; it will speak when they are absent, or when they have been removed by death; and it will either impede the whole work of instruction, or it will impart a mighty and salutary influence to all the lessons imparted to the household.

The exhibition of a harsh violent temper by a parent will naturally prejudice children against religion; and a worldly spirit, and formality displayed in connection with a religious profession, will generate like dispositions among those who have the opportunity of frequently and closely observing them. It is fearful to contemplate even the possibility of a parent's sins being transcribed in his children; and yet, even among religious professors, it is but too apparent that such a case is by no means of rare occurrence. To this may be traced the acknowledged and lamentable fact, that the children of professors frequently discover less concern for religion, and display less of a devotional spirit, than others, and, in some instances, become utterly irreligious and profligate. Their parents laid the snares into which they have fallen. Parental example misled them to their ruin. The fruits of early instructions were thus blighted, and the exercises of religion were regarded as a mere formal and lifeless drudgery;—the youthful heart rejoicing in emancipation from a service in which it felt no delight, and which a parent's conduct taught to regard as the service of an austere master. Professors of

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

religion, by their example, often entail upon their children and domestics formality, irreligion, and infidelity; they confirm them in their natural aversion to spiritual religion, and are instrumental in their eternal condemnation. "The children of the kingdom are cast out," while their rejection may frequently be ascribed to the effect of example that never presented religion under an inviting or attractive aspect, but always in a manner repulsive and forbidding.

Parents should be sensible that their children and domestics will form their idea of religion from observing *their* spirit and conduct. Their manner at the domestic altar, and their deportment in the family, will be the model and measure which they will copy in the closet and in society. They should, therefore, endeavour to show, by a consistent holy example, that with them religion is everything; and they should aim to present the service of God to their household under an attractive and alluring aspect. Their whole conversation should constantly teach that "wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

The household will have numerous opportunities of observing the parent and the master in diversified circumstances and relations—in prosperity and adversity—in health and sickness—in the solemn services of the sanctuary and of the household, and in the business of life—amidst reproach and opposition of enemies—in life and death. In all these conditions he should exemplify and reflect the mind of Christ in mild and alluring lustre. His path should be that of the just, which "shineth more and more to the perfect day." His conversation should be in heaven, and his life should declare to all the excellency of the believer's character, and the pre-eminence of his portion. The examples of the saints in all ages have been of unspeakable benefit to the family and the Church. They have been a principal means of attracting others to the standard of truth; and the blessing of Abraham has descended upon children and children's children, in the way of following holy parental example.

SECT. V.—*Parental duties require for their performance much self-denial, watchfulness, and circumspection.*

The first lesson of genuine discipleship is to deny one's-self. Indispensable in all parts of a Christian profession, self-denial

is peculiarly required for the proper discharge of parental obligation. The business of domestic training demands at every step painstaking, diligence, and devotedness. Parents know how to deny themselves when the temporal condition of their children is concerned. They will submit to toil, and cheerfully undergo privation and suffering, in providing for the health and comfort of their offspring. And if a child is under disease, or exposed to danger, parents will part with ease, and sacrifice their own health and comfort, to effect its restoration or rescue. The common sentiment of society concurs with Divine revelation in inculcating the necessity of such a concern and provision. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."¹ While parents deny themselves to promote the temporal welfare of their children, it is melancholy to reflect that comparatively few, even of those who make a religious profession, practise self-denial to secure their spiritual and immortal interests. Some, through the indulgence of criminal ease, suffer the proper season to pass without sowing the seeds of mental and moral culture. Others indulge in the pleasures of society, or are devoted to business, so that their attention to the training of their children is irregular and fitful; while a large number consider it sufficient to bring the young to be present at religious duties, or occasionally to address to them formal instructions, without any attempt to expand the intellect, or to impress the heart. It must be apparent that no salutary fruits can result from such imperfect training. Patience, consideration, and habitual attention are requisite in dealing with the young; and it has been justly remarked, that to adapt instructions to the capacity of the youthful mind, is an attempt worthy of a philosopher. Much more is the wisdom that descends from above needed, when the conscience is to be awakened and pacified, the understanding enlightened in Divine things, and the heart impressed.

Parents should early teach children lessons of self-denial, by displaying it in themselves, in attending to their instruction, and in their concern for their spiritual welfare. Of Abraham it is testified, that he sojourned in Canaan, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the "heirs with him of the same promise."² Here was self-denial strikingly exemplified. The patriarch asserted no claim to the possession of a land secured to him by federal donation; he bought no fields, built no houses, and

¹ 1 Timothy v. 8.

² Hebrews xi. 9.

took no part in the politics of the country. He journeyed up and down in the land of promise, as in a strange country, subjected to numerous privations and inconveniences. All his concern was to appropriate the promise for himself, and to instruct his son and grandson in the excellency of the promised inheritance, and to train them for its enjoyment. Christian parents, to be successful, must thus be denied to themselves and to the world. They must be denied to every selfish feeling respecting their children. Called as they are to nurse them for God and for heaven, they should be willing to relinquish ease, and to forego all friendships, connections, and prospects, that would injure their spiritual interests.

Holy vigilance and circumspection are required in directing and giving effect to parental instruction and government. Parents need diligently to watch over their own spirits, as they should carefully and faithfully watch over their children. They are their natural guardians; and they cannot be instrumental in preserving them from temptation and danger, or in leading them in the way they should go, without maintaining about them unceasing vigilance. While men sleep, the enemy sows tares; and many a parent has been left to mourn, in bitter and lasting regret, the heart of a child luxuriating in destructive principles and perverted passions,—the sad consequence of his own neglect and unwatchfulness. Those who would enjoy the blessing from on high upon their household must watch continually; and all their conduct in their family should be characterized by holy circumspection. The minds of children are more susceptible of right impressions at one time than at another. Circumstances are constantly occurring, which, by parental vigilance, may be turned to profitable account; and the young are exposed to innumerable dangers, from which parental circumspection is required to protect them. Thousands have their principles poisoned, and their minds perverted, because their parents neglected to exercise this vigilance. Their intentions about their children were good. They instructed them in Divine things, and they were not altogether neglectful of prayer in their behalf. But they left them, in a great measure, to follow the bent of their own inclination. They were not careful to guard them against evil company, and to protect them against the vanities of the world; and their instructions were ill-timed and irregular. The melancholy consequences are easily told. Children speedily learn to cast off parental authority. They become an early prey to evils against which

parental vigilance might have guarded them. They go with the multitude in the ways of folly, and their hopeless destruction reveals the fearful doom to which the neglect or the culpable indulgence of parents conducted them.

Without a measure of holy vigilance and Christian circumspection, the duties of the household can never be rightly performed. Parents should walk in a perfect way within their house. To them the direction applies with peculiar emphasis —“ Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”¹ The enemy of souls well knows when to seize the opportunity of marring Christian instruction, and of thwarting parental training. Parents must watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. They must guard their precious charge from the snares of the wicked one ; and in discharging every duty which they owe to their household, they must aim to be circumspect, redeeming the time because the days are evil.

Yet, with the most vigilant concern, they should constantly cherish distrust of their own powers, and should seek for themselves and their children the guidance of the wisdom that descends from above. Of themselves they are wholly insufficient for the proper performance of any of their important duties. Even in relation to the things of the present life, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps ; and parental training will assuredly fail of realizing any good fruits, if those who conduct it lean upon their own understanding. There is all encouragement, however, in bringing children to Christ, and in depending on Him who can own and bless the feeblest instrumentality. Let parents learn daily to place their children under the guardianship of the Shepherd and Watchman of Israel. Let them look to Him for direction and strength in relation to their own duty, and for protection and blessing to their children. He is faithful who has promised. He will remember mercy to them that fear Him and keep his commandments through many generations. “ The children of his servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before him.”²

¹ 1 Pet. v. 8.

² Psalm cii. 28.

CHAPTER III.

BLESSINGS CONSEQUENT UPON PARENTAL FIDELITY.

IN keeping God's commandments there is a great reward. Arduous and solemn as are the duties of the parental relation, the end to be accomplished is most valuable, and the reward is beyond expression excellent and glorious. The intimations and promises of the Divine Word are full and most encouraging on this subject. A child trained in the way he should go, it is declared, shall not, when he is old, depart from it. Upon Israelitish parents it was enjoined concerning God's precepts—"Ye shall teach them your children;" and the rewards of obedience are proposed in the numerous cheering promises that follow (Deut. xi. 19-21, 26). In terms at once forcible and affecting, God's earnest concern about parental fidelity is displayed in connection with blessings to be conferred upon parents and their children through succeeding generations. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"¹

The testimony given to Abraham, to which we have frequently referred, is singularly expressive. It proclaims an established Divine constitution, and intimates the way in which new covenant blessings flow to the families of mankind. The patriarch is commended for parental fidelity: he is presented as a bright example of one who faithfully instructed and wisely governed his household; the design and salutary effects of domestic training are declared; and it is added, "That the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." That which the Lord had spoken of Abraham comprehends all that He had announced to him in the way of promise, in the federal transactions between him and the patriarch. It respected the gracious relations in which Jehovah proposed himself to his servant, and the various blessings that were

¹ Deut. v. 29.

guaranteed to him and his seed. Numerous, comprehensive, and precious as these were, they chiefly respected *three* great privileges: a numerous seed—Christ the Saviour to come—and Canaan, the land of promise. The covenant had unquestionably a primary reference to spiritual blessings. The seed, numberless as the sand and as the stars of heaven, was the redeemed multitude,—a number which no man can number, destined to shine as lights in the firmament of glory. The Seed in whom the nations of the earth were to be blessed was Christ, the Author and Fountain of blessing; and Canaan, the glory of all lands, was a suitable emblem of heaven,—the better country which all the patriarchs desired,—the “city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Subordinate to these leading promises, and inseparably connected with them, were those which respected the outward condition of Abraham’s posterity, and the preservation, provision, and comfort of the household of faith. It was declared that his seed should possess the gate of their enemies; that they were blessed who blessed him, and cursed who cursed him; that he should have ample and comfortable provision—enjoy deliverance from all his foes; and that through him the nations of the earth should be made partakers of innumerable blessings. In the passage to which we have referred, it is plainly intimated that all these blessings are enjoyed in the way of parental faithfulness. This is a Divine constitution; and whatever view we take of the covenant, its precious benefits and enlarged privileges are communicated in connection with parental devotedness and domestic piety. In the gracious arrangements of the Mediator, this is the ordained channel through which the blessing flows to the Church and the world. By means of domestic piety, true religion has been preserved and continued in the earth; and thus the distinguished advantages conferred upon the seed of promise by the Abrahamic covenant are to be obtained.

Before pointing out the extent and fulness of the blessing, we may briefly notice the relations which Abraham sustained to future generations, as discovering the nature of their interest in those things of which God had spoken to him in promise. The patriarch may be regarded in a *threefold* aspect, and the promise is, we conceive, addressed to him in each of these relations.

First, *As the individual head of a family.* This is clearly the primary view in the passage. God had called him, when in

youth and alone, from Ur of the Chaldees, and had blessed him. The revelation and the promise that were graciously given him were adapted to him as an individual, and to the peculiar trials to which he was exposed. "*I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*"¹ As his defence against all dangers, God condescended to propose himself as his servant's shield, and to compensate him for all that he was required to relinquish in forsaking his father's house and his native country. He offered himself as his great reward, the portion of his cup, and his inheritance for ever. A subsequent Divine manifestation contemplated the patriarch in a family relation, and the promise was suited to his condition. "*I will be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee.*"² The same interest in the benefits of the covenant was guaranteed to his descendants as was secured to himself; and Isaac and Jacob were "heirs with him of the same promise," as they were trained by him to keep the way of the Lord. That which God had spoken to Abraham in Mesopotamia, in the plains of Mamre, and as he sojourned in Canaan, came upon him and his descendants, but still in the way of parental piety. The Abrahamic covenant was not designed to be of temporary duration. The Spirit expressly testifies, that being before "confirmed of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul it, that it should make the promise of none effect;"³ and the purpose of its continuance is declared, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ."⁴ The "father of the faithful" may be regarded, in the federal transaction, as the representative of the heads of Christian families, and the same connection between duty and privilege is established with them as with him. The God of the families of Israel still speaks to Christian parents. They should command their children and their household after them to know the Lord. The blessing of Abraham cannot otherwise be fully realized by the family; and whether the promise respects their outward provision and deliverance, or their spiritual benefit, thus only may they expect to enjoy abundantly the promised inheritance. In all ages parental fidelity has been singularly rewarded. The comprehensive promise to Abraham has found its application to domestic associations; and families have been prospered and blessed, according as their natural guardians have led them in the way of the Lord, and as children and domestics have followed faithful instructions.

¹ Genesis xv. 1.² Genesis xvii. 7.³ Gal. iii. 17.⁴ Ver. 14.

Secondly. The promise was addressed to Abraham, *as connected with the Church of Christ*, and as, though in a subordinate sense, federally its head.

Abraham is said, by way of peculiar distinction, to be "the father of them that believe," whether they be Jews or Gentiles. The covenant with the patriarch is still the great charter of the visible Church. God that dwells in Zion is styled the "God of Abraham;" and the Church, as founded upon the covenant which was made known in Ur of the Chaldees, is compared to an "olive-tree," spreading, verdant and fruitful.¹ The natural branches are broken off in the penal rejection of the Jewish people; Gentile believers are grafted in; and when the mysterious purpose of Heaven in Israel's dispersion shall have been fulfilled, the natural branches shall be restored, and shall yet partake in the fatness and fertility of their own olive-tree. The olive-tree is the same in all ages; and when all its lovely branches, natural and engrafted, are collected together, each in its place, it shall appear most beautiful, the joy of all the earth, and shall shake with prosperous fruit, like the trees of Lebanon. The enjoyment of privilege is connected with duty; and the Church collective, or its constituent parts, may only expect the pleasant heritage in the way of holy obedience. Thus are churches and congregations blessed, and thus have they real prosperity. Families are the nurseries of the Church; and not only do they furnish supplies to its membership from age to age, but upon their spiritual condition it greatly depends whether congregations are as gardens which the Lord has blessed, thickly planted with the trees of righteousness, or are blighted and unfruitful. The vow of the Church to perpetuate the remembrance of her exalted Head has respect to domestic society. "Instead of the fathers, thou mayest take the children, and make them noble princes in all the earth."²

The loveliest and most devoted sons of Zion have generally been those who enjoyed faithful instruction, and who were early dedicated and trained in the family to the service of God. Decay of religion in the Church is almost always associated with the neglect of domestic training; and the absence of holy zeal and spirituality is the mournful evidence that family religion has been neglected. Revival in the Church must begin in the family, and the maintenance of a faithful and unimpaired testimony, and its transmission to succeeding generations, are connected with the instruction of children in

¹ Romans xi. 17-25.

² Psalm xlv. 16.

the way of holy obedience. Hence, when the Psalmist earnestly pleads for the revival of religion, he seeks it as associated with early piety: "O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."¹ The testimony established in Jacob, and the law appointed in Israel, are transmitted by means of the Divine command laid upon fathers. "that they should make them known to their children."² And times of covenanting and of manifold blessing to the Church are, in the announcements of inspired prophecy, connected with the effusion of the Spirit upon the seed and offspring of Jacob. This forms a main ground of our hope concerning the future revival and prosperity of the Protestant Church. Notwithstanding the decay of first love, and the neglect of first works, mournfully apparent in many quarters, family religion is still maintained in various places, and has to some considerable extent been of late revived; and pious parents are assiduous in training their children in the way of God's commandments, making known to them Israel's testimony and law. Such efforts can never be in vain. In the dark times that are now passing over the Church, these are sowing those seeds of truth and godliness that contain the germ of valuable principle and practical piety, and that are destined, in a future day, to bud and blossom, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

Thirdly, *The welfare and prosperity of nations were promised in the same connection.* To Abraham it was said, when the covenant was renewed, and his name was changed, "A father of many nations have I made thee." "I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee;"³ and once and again was it declared to him, that in him and his seed the nations of the earth should be blessed.⁴ He who was addressed as the father of a family, and as standing in a peculiar relation to the Church, is regarded also as a ruler or civil head—the father of nations, the progenitor of kings. To him in this capacity is the promise spoken, and through him it is addressed to civil rulers in their official character, and to nations, as such, until the end of time. The obligation rests upon them equally, as upon individuals, to *command* the rising generation to know the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment. Civil rulers are to their subjects, in some respects, as parents to their families: and a nation, as a moral person, having a continued identity, is prospered or punished according as true religion is promoted.

¹ Ps. xc. 14.

² Ps. lxxviii. 5.

³ Gen. xvii. 5, 6.

⁴ Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18.

or as the moral and religious interests of the young are neglected. Families are the schools of virtue for the citizens of the nation. Parental fidelity and domestic piety are at once the honour and safeguards of a state; and from these peaceful retired sources issue many of those streams that purify and fertilize a land.

The state of domestic society will almost universally be found characteristic of the national condition; and the prospects of the commonwealth, whether for blessing or judgment, may be not obscurely discerned from the family. At the present eventful crisis, the importance of this subject can scarcely be over-estimated. Throughout Christian nations, there has been a wide-spread and general neglect of true religion on the part of rulers; and faithful parental training and domestic piety are mournfully decayed, or in many cases unknown. The baleful consequences are seen in extended miscry, profligacy, and popular commotion, and in impending judgments which threaten national destruction. The ruin of the Israelitish commonwealth may easily be traced to the corruption of the family; and to Jewish parents and rulers disobeying those precepts which required them to promote the truth, and to train the rising generation in the fear of the Lord. The present state of modern nations, and the evils that threaten them, may plainly be ascribed, in a great measure, to a similar cause. Domestic prayer and instruction, and godly parental example, are almost unknown in France and in some other continental countries; therefore does immorality abound, and the foundations of society are gone out of their course. England, with all her advantages, is evidently in a state of moral decay; and judgments upon the nation for abused mercies and privileges are to be apprehended. If there is one cause more than another that has contributed to produce this alarming state of things, it is the neglect of early religious training. The evil is manifest; and it deeply concerns those who perceive and lament it to attempt its removal. National blessings are only to be enjoyed in the way of national obedience; and the increase of domestic piety would diffuse countless benefits throughout the community. It will be the means of preparing a race of virtuous, disinterested, and public-spirited citizens; it will check the evil in its bud, cast the purifying salt into the fountain, and draw down the blessing from heaven upon the national society and its measures. In no other way will a state enjoy real and permanent prosperity. The promises to

Abraham, the father of many nations, implying particular providential protection, power, and prosperity, will only come upon nations when parents command their children to keep the way of the Lord, and when rulers exercise their authority in training a people to God's service.

However interesting and instructive are the two last-mentioned aspects of the application of the promise, for the present we pass them by, and confine our attention to the blessing enjoyed by children, as the fruit and reward of parental fidelity. What God had spoken was brought upon Abraham when the blessing was conferred upon his seed. While parents may expect, and shall assuredly obtain good to themselves, in the faithful performance of duty, they are chiefly to look for a full reward in the blessing upon children, and on children's children, in their usefulness in this world, and in their felicity in the world to come. They live and labour for posterity. Enough for them if their work is owned by Him who sits upon the throne, and, through the Divine acceptance of their designs and labours, if it is said, "It shall be done in thy son's days." We observe concerning this blessing,

SECT. I.—*The conversion of children is frequently the fruit of faithful parental instruction.*

A principal object of a Christian parent's concern, we have seen, is the spiritual welfare of the children that God has given him; and their early conversion to God, as the first great step in securing it, must appear to him a matter of no ordinary importance. The conversion of the soul is its passing from death unto life—the entrance upon the path that leads to glory—the great change which contains the germ of all that is excellent in character, and carries with it the guarantee of safety and ultimate felicity. Thus momentous and important being the sinner's conversion, the Christian parent cannot but earnestly seek it for his children. All his first duties towards his household will have this as a principal design. Their deliverance from the wrath to come, their introduction into the kingdom of Christ, will be a primary object in the early surrender which he makes of them to God, and in his daily prayers, instructions, and example. The Christian parent has frequently brought his child to Jesus, and his most solemn desires have been presented to God, that he might be numbered among the lambs of his flock.

The compassionate Saviour often grants to his people in this matter the desire of their hearts. What they commit to him in believing dedication He receives, and will keep till the day of his future coming and glory. The promise is to believers and their children; and the terms in which it is expressed, all-comprehensive and gracious, encourage parents to expect the blessing which they earnestly seek for their children. "*I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*"¹ The same covenant offer which forms their warrant to plead for mercy, and to expect it with humble confidence for themselves, is presented in relation to their offspring. When there are eminent parental piety and faithful training, children frequently afford hopeful evidences of early conversion. God graciously gives to godly parents the soul of a child as a prey, in answer to their fervent prayers: He confers upon them thus a first instalment of their "*wages,*" for nursing their offspring for Him.

We do not deny that the God of the families of Israel acts as a Sovereign here, as He does in the ministry of the Word, and in the government of providence; nor would we absolutely affirm that children never depart from the way in which godly parents have trained them with all fidelity. But we are warranted, from the whole testimony of Scripture, as well as from the observation of Divine providence on the subject, to declare that there is a special blessing annexed to parental faithfulness in the education of children. In cases of failure, some neglect on the part of parents is frequently observable. Undue indulgence on the one hand, or harshness and severity on the other; one parent thwarting the plans of the other, and irregularity in parental training, or inconsistency in conduct, will mar the best instructions, and render designs for the benefit of children abortive. Yet even where success follows, no ground is left to any to glory. It is sovereign grace alone that disposes and enables to be faithful in domestic as in other duties; and they who received that for which they travailed as in birth—their children's souls as a prey—will be most ready to disclaim all idea of merit, and to exclaim, "Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake!"²

The conversion and early piety of children is an object worthy of the earnest desires and devoted painstaking of parents. There seems no reason to doubt the justness of the sentiment of a valuable expositor,³ that where the faithful ministrations of

¹ Genesis xvii. 7.

² Psalm cxv. 1.

³ Scott.

the Word are enjoyed, the conversion of the young may, in most cases, be traced to parental dedications and prayers, and their future edification to the ministry of the Gospel. Thus has it been in the history of many who have obtained a good report in the Church ; and the instances of Timothy, and Baxter, and Doddridge, and many others, whose names are in the Book of Life, furnish a confirmation of the statement. If this view be correct, with what importance does it invest parental cultivation ! How eminent and glorious the reward ! The soul of a child given to the prayers and tears of a parent ; an immortal spirit delivered from death, and in the dawn of its existence enstamped with the Divine image, or imbued with principles that shall expand to glory, honour, and immortality ! How should parents aim at being instrumental in effecting this great change ; and beginning early, how should they seek with all importunity, and labour with all diligence, that Christ may be formed in the hearts of their children the hope of glory ! The happy issue will abundantly repay all their toil ; and the joy of children's conversion will far transcend the joy that swelled the bosom when they were born into the world.

SECT. II.—*A godly race is thus perpetuated.*

The promise respecting the continuance of piety among the descendants of faithful parents was repeatedly, and under a great variety of forms, held out to God's ancient people ; and, being strictly moral, Christian parents are warranted likewise to claim it as a part of their gracious heritage. They are commanded to instruct their children in God's testimony and law. The result of obedience is, that posterity will walk in the way of Divine precepts. The generation to come is brought to know them, even the children that are born, "that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." The covenant with David secured spiritual blessings to posterity, in connection with the faithful performance of parental vows,—“If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.”¹ And this being an exhibition of the covenant of grace, the promise pertains to all believers, and is realized in the way of parental piety and fidelity.

The heads of Christian families ought to be sensible that

¹ Ps. cxxxii. 12.

they live not to themselves. Nursing those who are the future hopes of the Church, and training them for the service of God and the enjoyment of heaven, they become the benefactors, not only of their own country and time, but also of coming ages. One generation rises to praise God's works to another, and to declare his mighty acts.¹ God has established a connection between parental fidelity and extensive blessing to the Church ; and it were not going too far to affirm, that the piety of the household is a means more honoured than any other, for raising up and continuing on the earth a holy race. We deny not that God, in his sovereign grace, brings others to inherit the blessing, and that even from families where neither precept nor example was on the side of true religion. He is found of them that sought Him not. They "come from the east and west," and "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," while the "children of the kingdom" are "cast out."² The young of a neglected and degraded population, collected in the Sabbath school, or arrested by the aggressive ministrations of devoted men, and the youthful converts from heathenism, frequently present examples of shining piety ; and thus at times is the Church revived and her membership renewed.

But whatever accessions may occasionally arise from this source, and however great may be the future increase, when the isles shall wait for the Redeemer's law, and the fulness of Jew and Gentile shall be brought in, the spiritual seed of the Church, in ordinary cases, arises from parental piety and faithfulness. Children are dedicated to God ; they are trained early to the Redeemer's service ; the seeds of Divine truth, which the hands of godly parents sow, are watered by their prayers and tears ; and a holy example, continually exhibited before their eyes, attracts them to wisdom's ways. The blessing from on high owns this instrumentality, and renders it effectual. Children trained to regard the Redeemer's service as honourable and delightful, emulate and sometimes excel the piety of their parents. Their children enjoy similar advantages ; the blessing not only extends from one generation to another, but it enlarges and multiplies as it descends ; and long after the humble and devoted parent has rested from all earthly labours, the fruits of his instructions and example are reaped by the Church and the nation.

The view of the Divine character, and the encouraging

¹ Psalm cxlv. 4.

² Matthew viii. 11, 12.

promise presented in the second commandment, exhibit the rewards of parental obedience. God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation ; while to show that He has more pleasure in blessing than in punishing, and especially to declare the blessings that flow to posterity through the practical piety of parents, He is represented as "showing mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments." A judicious and pleasing writer has justly observed, in reference to this part of the Divine dispensation,—“A good man not only leaveth an inheritance to his children's children, but, to the most distant period, the influence of his piety, and of the care of that God whom he worshipped as his God, and the God of his seed, may be traced. It is like the root of the tree which gives life and beauty to everything that sprouts from it, however remote, or the fountain which sends the salutary influence of its waters to the farthest extent of its course. We are told that when Gideon was dead, the Israelites showed no kindness to his house, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel ; but while public benefactors are forgotten, and the children of the good are often neglected, and even oppressed, by those whom their fathers served, the precious ointment of the Almighty's blessing not only refreshes the head of a good man, but descends to the skirts of his garments, and is felt by his latest posterity.”¹

Sometimes in the same family, distinguished piety continues to flourish through a number of succeeding generations. The “unfeigned faith” that characterized the youthful Timothy had dwelt before in his “grandmother Lois, and in his mother Eunice ;”² and was at once the fruit and the reward of the devotedness of these eminent females. The descendants of those who have witnessed a good confession for Christ frequently form the preserving and purifying salt of a country for ages ; and the testimony of the Church is upheld, and her purity maintained, by the posterity of godly men, who accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than all earthly treasures. Sometimes this reward of parental piety is immediate, and sometimes more remote. It is related of Dr Milne, the excellent Chinese missionary, that, on the last day of his life, he was overheard by a person who stole softly to his bed, ejaculating, “Lord, grant that my children may arise and fill their father's

¹ Belfrage's "Exposition of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," p. 224.

² 2 Tim. i. 5.

place." The prayer of the dying servant of God was heard and answered; for although he left to his children no earthly inheritance, God put it into the heart of a benevolent individual in the East to send them to Scotland to be educated with his own children, and after a distinguished course at the university, they have tendered their services as missionaries to the heathen, in the land where their father laboured and died.

Christian parents should consider themselves thus placed in a position honourable and highly important. On the faithful performance of the duties towards their children, to which their vows and affections should constantly prompt them, depends, in a great measure, the perpetuation of the seed of the righteous in the earth; and on their instrumentality it rests whether their offspring are to be numbered among those who are to the Lord a praise and a name in the world, and who are accounted his "peculiar treasure," or to have their place with those children of the kingdom who are doomed to final rejection. Let them lay to heart their obligation, and contribute their influence, that a holy race may be continued. Thus shall their children, and children's children, dwell in the land that God promised to their fathers; they shall become the first-fruits of a harvest of blessing; and ages to come shall reap the multiplied benefits that result from parental godliness. "The seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever."¹

SECT. III.—*Posterity often become eminently useful, and are peculiarly blessed in their lot and labours.*

The children of faithful parents not only become frequently the subjects of converting grace, and a godly seed is continued, but they are rendered eminently useful to others. A secret blessing is connected with early dedication and religious training. Blessed themselves, the children of pious parents become a blessing to those with whom they are connected; and while the Church enjoys the benefits of their consecrated zeal, even the irreligious of the world are constrained at times to behold and acknowledge the excellency of their character, and the peculiar favour with which they are encompassed. A selfish and unnatural kinsman was compelled to testify of Jacob, "I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for

¹ Psalm xxxvii. 28, 29.

thy sake."¹ The house of Potiphar was blessed for Joseph's sake ; and even in prison, when the word of the Lord was sent and tried him, he obtained favour with men, because the Lord was with him. Who have been the most eminently useful individuals in every age? Who are they who have advanced the truth, benefited the Church, and performed services of the most profitable and enduring character? With few exceptions, they have been the children or descendants of godly parents. The Scriptures record the character and labours of Moses, and Samuel, and David, and John the Baptist, and Timothy : they declare their distinguished usefulness, and distinctly connect it with parental devotedness. The annals of the Church, since the canon of inspiration was closed, exhibit a similar connection. Some of the most illustrious reformers—the worthies of Scotland, and those whose writings have been signally blessed to the Church—owed much of their usefulness to the prayers and example of parents who had devoted them to God, and who preferred Zion's good to their chief earthly joy. The mother of Dr M'Cric,—the late distinguished historian of Knox and Melville,—after accompanying her son some part of the way, when he was about to enter the university, kneeled with him by the wayside, and commended him to the protection and blessing of the God of Jacob. This was but a single expression of the pious concern which a godly mother had all along cherished about him ; and it is impossible to say how much of his future eminent usefulness in the Church is to be ascribed to the instrumentality of maternal piety.

It is matter of painful observation, that many of the young live only to themselves. They are trained for the world, and they follow the path of pleasure, or profit, or ambition. Though acquainted with the principles of religion, they make no religious profession ; or if, in compliance with custom or the solicitation of friends, they enter the fellowship of the Church, they become unfruitful professors, and instead of exercising an influence to win others to the ways of wisdom, their character and conduct operate as an obstacle and stumbling-block. Through them the ways of religion are evil spoken of, and the name of Christ is reproached. In a great many instances, the young who act thus are the children of parents who are themselves formalists or at ease in Zion, whose example was a constant contradiction to their instructions, and who, unmindful of their solemn vows, nursed their offspring for themselves and for the world, rather than for God. On

¹ Genesis xxx. 27.

the other hand, there are some of the youth of the Church, who, from early life, gave evidence of a distinguished devoted spirit, and are singularly useful in their day. They engage early in the service of religion; the dew of their youth is given to God; they consecrate their talents to the Master whom they love; and, whatever their hand finds to do, they do it with their might. They live not to themselves, but to Him who died and rose again. They become benefactors to the world, and through them the Church is increased, edified, and refreshed. They are the sons that "grow up in youth as plants," and "daughters" that are as "corner-stones," "polished after the similitude of a palace."¹ Whence arises this remarkable difference? It is owing to the blessing that rests upon those who command their children and household to know the Lord, but which is denied to others. What they themselves earnestly desire to do for the house of the Lord is often done by their children; and what they are incompetent to effect, the little ones whom they nursed for God are afterwards qualified and honoured to perform. Parental dedication is accepted, and parents enjoy a double honour, in the object of their affections being the selected instruments for building up the sanctuary, and diffusing the savour of the Redeemer's name throughout the earth.

Designed for usefulness in the Church, the children of godly parents are blessed in their persons. They are preserved in life, and by strange and gracious providences obtain the qualifications that fit them for their work, and are conducted forward to their appointed sphere of labour. Amidst dangers they are kept, through temptations they are led in safety, and difficulties that seemed insurmountable are removed. With fewer natural advantages than are enjoyed by others, and, it may be, even without any mental superiority, they are rendered polished shafts in the Divine quiver, and become the instruments of accomplishing works of extensive and lasting benefit in their generation. Even when parents are gone, the Lord takes them up. The blessing of parental prayers and dedications rests upon them, when the breasts that nursed them, and the arms that fondled them, are laid in the grave. They are preserved, provided for, and prospered. A special gracious providence is round about their paths, and their footsteps are ordered aright. A blessing descends, too, on the works of their hands. Satisfied early with God's mercy, and adorned with the beauty of the

¹ Psalm cxliv. 12.

Lord, their labour of love is owned and accepted, and the work of their hands is established.' While others of more eminent talent 'are rejected, and their works, although commanding human applause, are accounted as nothing, the prayerful efforts of humble and devoted servants contribute greatly to advance the Divine glory in the earth.

Of those public servants of God, whose works praise them in the gates, and who speak by their labours when they are dead, not a few have been the children of godly parents; and they themselves have been ever ready to acknowledge with gratitude, that they inherited an unspeakable blessing from parental prayers and example, and that hence too they derived much of their public usefulness. Incalculable is the good which a single individual may thus be the means of conferring upon society. While he lives, it will issue forth like a purifying and refreshing stream. It will continue to flow on while he is gone; and for ages to come, it will go forward in the diffusive blessings of a high and holy benevolence. Christian parents standing at the fountainhead of these healing waters should feel their solemn responsibility; and as the dispensers of blessings to the world, they should consider it alike their honour and their duty to engage their children in a service that brings with it its own reward, and that is doubly blessed; blessing them that labour, and those who enjoy the fruit of their labours.

SECT. IV.—*The children of pious parents that are led astray are thus sometimes restrained and recovered.*

The fruits of parental instruction do not always come to maturity in a sudden. As with other labourers in the Redeemer's vineyard, parents are required to sow in hope, and sometimes to wait, amidst disappointments and trials, the expected harvest. To show the power of innate depravity, to evince the weakness of all instrumentality, and to stir up parents to a constant sense of the necessity of Divine influence, the children even of godly parents sometimes give painful evidences that they are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and that they despise all good instruction. Such instances should incite to greater diligence, and lead to more fervent prayer and supplication. They should induce parents to consider seriously the manner in which they have discharged their obligations to

¹ Psalm xc. 14, 16, 17.

their offspring, and speedily to rectify whatever is amiss; but they should not cause them to sink down in discouragement, or to relinquish their work in despair. The instances are not few in which the conversion of children takes place, after a time of wandering, as the fruit of the seed that had been previously sown by parental hands, and watered by parental tears. Christian parents, it is true, should never rest satisfied with distant prospects of future piety in their children. The spiritual interests of those whom God has given them are too momentous and absorbing to be left to uncertainty; and they should continue to travail as in birth, till they have some comfortable evidence that the objects of their tender solicitude have been plucked as brands out of the burning, and have been numbered in the family of heaven. But while the blessing desired may be delayed, the hope of future fruits of their labour should raise them above discouragement. God is not unfaithful to forget a "work of faith and labour of love," however weak may be the instrument that performs it, however lengthened may be the period of hope deferred. The prayers and counsels of godly parents are often a check to thoughtless and wayward children. Even in the season of folly, they are thereby held back, as by an unseen hand, from courses that would harden them for ever, or would lay a gravestone upon their future repentance. Augustine was reclaimed from error and profligacy, and became a burning and shining light in the Church, as the fruit of the prayerful and anxious concern of an eminently pious mother. The reproof tendered to her by a Christian minister, when she gave way to despair, in the prospect of her son being lost, may still supply encouragement to parents to labour and hope to the end. "Woman," said he, "it is impossible that a child of so many prayers and tears should be lost."

Nor are the children for whom many believing prayers and tears are offered often left to wander in sin unchecked, or given over to final impenitency. When early instructions appear unavailing, subsequent amendment sometimes gives evidence that backslidings have been healed; and parents while they live are called to rejoice over children that appeared lost being found again, and over those that were dead being made alive. And even should this joyful discovery not be made to them in time, the tidings of their children's conversion may be carried to them in glory; and their felicity will be enhanced as they join the angelic choir in rejoicing over a repenting sinner, when

that restored one is the child for whom they prayed, and for whose welfare in life and death they were intensely concerned.

SECT. V.—*The joint participation by parents and children of heavenly glory is a last and crowning blessing, consequent upon parental piety and faithfulness.*

Heavenly felicity is enhanced by being social, and by its unfading and inconceivable pleasures being shared in a state of holy and exalted fellowship and communion. The saints sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Sometimes godly parents are consoled under the bereavement of children by the evidences of their early piety, and by the thought that, as a part of themselves, they have gone before to take possession of the heavenly inheritance. In their translation they receive an earnest of future bliss; and like a good man,¹ on the death of a promising child, they can rejoice in trouble, in the anticipation that their own flesh and blood will be among the first to welcome them to glory. Trying to the hearts of Christian parents as may be the death of their children, when it is accompanied by manifestations of youthful piety, it should be taken as itself a high reward of faithful parental instruction. The dedication that was early made is thus seen to be accepted,—the Redeemer, to whom little children were brought, only asserts the claim to his own, and removes his lambs to his immediate presence in the heavenly fold. The course of tuition for an heir of glory is completed under parental instrumentality. A lovely flower which had just begun to bloom is transplanted, to flourish for ever in the paradise of God. The child of a household is removed from a father or a mother's embraces, to become an attendant in the palace of the King of glory. What higher approval could there possibly be of the instrumentality employed in his education? What more distinguished honour could be conferred upon a family? Well might the devoted Elliot—the missionary to the North American Indians—say, when he spoke of the conversion and final safety of his children, “My assured belief is that they are all either *with* Christ or *in* Christ. Three of them I had hoped to have served my Master on earth, but they were taken to serve Him in the upper sanctuary; and what was I, to oppose my Master's will?”

¹ Ebenezer Erskine.

The hopeful death of a child is designed to loosen the ties that bind parents to the world, and to lead their affections to things above. The heavenly country is endeared to the heart, by being the abode of objects of tender affection. Like David, Christian parents should learn to say with joy of children that have died in hope, "We will go to them, but they will not return to us;" or as Beza, when Calvin was no more, "Now is heaven more sweet, and earth less dear." But however alleviating and consoling the thought of children having gone before their parents to heaven, the joy of re-union with them in that happy country is inconceivably greater. The land of Canaan was promised as a possession to Abraham's seed; and though the patriarchs had no inheritance in it, yet so great was their desire after its full enjoyment, that they sought that their dust should be carried thither; and even in death, they gave commandment concerning their interment in the land of promise. Believers are characterized by "seeking a better country, even a heavenly." A principal concern about their children was to rear them for heaven; and even in anticipation, it was often refreshing and animating to their spirits, that they would meet with them in glory, and be "a whole family in heaven."

The realisation of these desires, however, will vastly surpass all our present conceptions. Parents will receive again the objects of their fondest affections, arrayed in the beauties of holiness, and glorious beyond all that they sought for them in prayer and anticipated in hope. The joy of recognition in the abodes of bliss will be a part of the great recompense of reward, and will amply compensate for all the anxieties and trials that were theirs in watching over them and nursing them for God. Presented themselves to the Father with exceeding joy, they will bring with them their children, and say with thrilling delight, as they stand with them before the throne, "Behold we and the children whom God hath given us." They will see the Redeemer as He is; and surrounded with his glory, they will point Him out to their children as the blessed object to whom they and theirs owe everything, and as the Alpha and Omega of all their praise. With the wonders of redemption, and the mysteries of Providence fully unfolded, and with the unspeakable riches of glory in view, they will hold converse with their children,—now fellow-heirs of bliss,—on those blessed realities which they could but imperfectly apprehend on earth.

It is true, the saints will know each other after the flesh no longer, when admitted to glory. The covenant relationship to

the Elder Brother, and to the brotherhood of faith, will take the place of all natural ties. But still in the holy, happy society of the redeemed in heaven, we cannot doubt that their felicity will be enhanced by those sharing it together who were tenderly related on earth, and who had joys, and anxieties, and trials in common on their pilgrimage to the celestial country. Though they neither marry, nor are given in marriage in heaven, the joy of husbands and wives at the everlasting espousals of the Lamb, will transcend the delight of their union on earth. Ministers, and those whom they were instrumental in gathering to Christ, will exult in their future meeting and recognition. In the presence of the four living creatures, the four-and-twenty elders worship Him who liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns prostrate before the throne. A believing people are to faithful ministers their "joy and crown of rejoicing" in the day of Christ Jesus. If such be the increased felicity of the parties in other relations, when they join "the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven," how great will be the happiness of parents and children, when they shall stand together upon the sea of glass mingled with fire before the throne, having gotten the victory, and having obtained the crown of righteousness! Happy is the family now whose members are united in the Saviour's love, and travelling onward together to the heavenly country; unspeakably more happy will they be, when they have successively come home to the Father's house, and sit down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb. All that parents thought or spoke of in instructing their children, will be then felt as a glorious reality. In the joy of their Lord, they will sing together the new song.—they will mutually taste the sweets of redeeming love—they will exult in a communion with God, with fellow-saints and holy angels, and with each other, that can know no interruption, and shall never come to an end. If the aged patriarch was overcome at the tidings that the son of his love was living, and in honour in Egypt, and exclaimed, "It is enough; my son Joseph is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die!"—should not Christian parents now rejoice in the prospect of meeting their children adorned with the crown of eternal life, and advanced to sit as overcomers with the Redeemer upon his throne? The expectation of this blessed consummation should sustain them in trials, animate their prayers, raise their hopes, and lead them to press continually to the mark of the prize of their high calling in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER IV.

MOTIVES AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO LEAD CHRISTIAN PARENTS TO DILIGENCE AND FAITHFULNESS IN COMMANDING THEIR CHILDREN AND HOUSEHOLD TO KNOW THE LORD.

THE *motives* to the faithful performance of parental duties are numerous and powerful. They are furnished by a consideration of the authority of Him who instituted the domestic state, the relation of parents to their offspring, and the consequences to children, to the Church, and to nations, from parental faithfulness or neglect; and they bring into view the solemnities of the coming judgment, and the vast interests of eternity. The *encouragements* which the Word supplies to Christian parents are sufficient to sustain them under their weighty responsibility, and to animate them in the discharge of arduous duties. Of the motives which the Scriptures present to lead parents to command their children and household to know the Lord, and to walk in the way of godliness, we notice,

SECT. I.—*The frequently intimated will of God.*

This is declared in express and repeated commands. Parents are directed to teach diligently God's ways to their children; they are enjoined to "train them in the way they should go;" they are bid to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." These are expressions of the authority of Him who is the God of all the families of Israel; and they evidently enjoin duties primary and fundamental, the neglect of which will be accounted rebellion against God, and will be visited by his displeasure. Many *implied precepts* inculcate parental duties; such as those which enjoin families to worship God, and to cultivate domestic peace, godliness, and morality; those which respect duties to inferiors; and those which concern the transmission of the truth to posterity. Examples, having the seal

of Divine approbation appended to them, are held forth for the imitation and encouragement of Christian parents. Particular petitions for children, dictated by the Spirit of God, are recorded in the volume of inspiration, and reiterated promises are given as our encouragement to offer them in their behalf. And the compassionate Saviour is represented as cherishing a tender regard towards the young of his people, and as specially enjoining them to be brought to Him for a blessing. They are the "lambs" whom, as the Shepherd of Israel, He "carries in his arm, and bears in his bosom." Children are "an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward;" and his standing merciful command is, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

Thus various and frequent as are the intimations of the Divine will concerning the religious education of children, we need scarcely observe that parents are hereby taught to view their obligations to their family as greatly momentous, and should be incited to all diligence and fidelity in discharging them. In fact, no class of relative duties occupies a higher sphere in the prescriptions of Divine revelation—none are more frequently and solemnly enjoined—none are enforced with more commanding and impressive sanctions. Disobedience must, therefore, be peculiarly heinous, and the fatal consequences to children and families are incalculable. In the passage to which we have frequently referred, parental instruction, and the proper exercise of parental authority, are evidently exhibited as a primary duty—that which gives a tone and direction to other duties, and on the due performance or neglect of which a blessing or a curse is entailed upon posterity. Arduous as is the work, it should always be remembered that grace sufficient is promised. In the way of duty, strength for the performance may be expected. The promise is to parents and their children, and as many as the Lord God shall call. While parents should regard, with reverence and godly fear, the Divine authority, and should often reflect upon the weighty obligations resting upon them to rear their households for God, they have encouragement to trust to Almighty power, and to cling to the Divine promise. Neither can ever fail any who are in the way of dutiful obedience. "Work, for I am with thee, saith the Lord of hosts." "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."¹

¹ Haggai ii. 4; Isaiah xlv. 3.

SECT. II.—*The consideration of the parental relation itself supplies a further motive to the faithful performance of parental duties.*

Children are nearly and tenderly related to their parents ; and their interests in soul and body, and for time and eternity, should be near to their hearts. They are partakers of the same flesh and blood—parents are the instruments of their earthly existence—many of their natural features are enstamped upon their minds—and, what is exceedingly solemn and affecting, they share their moral likeness, as having received through them the taint of original depravity, and as being partakers with them of the same fallen humanity. Parents live again in their children ; and either for honour or infamy—as persons who have been a blessing in the world, or have lived only to themselves, through their offspring—their names will descend to succeeding generations. The relation that exists between a parent and his child puts the parent in possession of an influence that is almost boundless. It brings with it authority joined with affection ; and entwining the interests of children with the tenderest feelings of the heart, and connecting them with a parent's comfort and happiness, it supplies a motive the most powerful and constraining to the faithful discharge of all parental obligations.

Let not a parent allege, as an excuse or palliation of neglected duty, that he has little or no influence over a stubborn child ; let him not exhibit the waywardness of his child, as the proof that he is devoid of power to control his habits or influence his conduct. In all probability, parental neglect at first laid the foundation of the perversity of the child. The work of training was not commenced early, or it was marred by the irregularity and inconsistency of the parent. There is the influence of conduct and example, and this, we have seen, is even more powerful than that of precept ; and where it is either wanting, or does not uniformly act in favour of virtue and religion, it need not be thought wonderful that parents should have to complain that their authority secures from their children little respect or submission. Painful as are such instances, they by no means prove that the parental relation does not furnish one of the strongest motives for the proper performance of parental duties, or that it does not supply peculiar facilities for training the young in the way they should go.

Look at the national characteristics of different countries, and behold the extensive influence that parental instructions and habits exert upon the human family. The mental and moral condition of the inhabitants of various nations, the distinctive peculiarities of their character, and much even of their outward state and circumstances, may be traced to domestic culture and example.¹ That other influences combine to mould the character and to affect the conduct and condition, we do not deny ; but many of them even operate through the medium of parental education. That which distinguishes a native of Turkey, or India, or China, from the inhabitants of other countries is, in a great measure, the impression which was early made upon the mind and character through the parental relation. The son walks in his father's steps ; and thus servility, and treachery, and idolatry characterize a people throughout many generations. Hence is it that nations continue for ages under superstition and oppression ; and the dark places of the earth are filled with the habitations of cruelty. It is matter of common and painful observation, too, that, in Christian countries, the children of neglected families in large towns, or in the country, follow the footsteps of parents, who have cruelly hid themselves from their own flesh ; and who, while they neglected their mental and moral culture, left them a prey to all kinds of pernicious influences that were prevailing around them. And in those cases, where there is in families a form of religion without its power, or where some palpable neglect or inconsistency is associated with the observance of religious duties, few become so hardened or careless as the children of those professors who display not exemplary piety in the domestic circle.

There is generally more hope of the conversion of a profligate, than of the child of an unholy professor. Prejudiced against religion by the example of a parent, he will speedily endeavour to cast off its restraints, and will become more callous to shame or reproof, and more bent upon sensual indulgences, than those who never came in contact with religious exercises. These cases, and many others that might be noticed, show that the parental relation establishes an influence over the

¹ "Great care and pains must be taken to acquaint children betimes, and to affect them with the Word of God, and the wondrous things of his law. Nor will anything contribute more to the prosperity or perpetuity of religion in a nation, than the good education of children ; if the seed be holy, it is the substance of a land."—*Henry on Deut. xi. 19.*

young of vast power—an influence which may be productive of the most beneficial results, or may cause immense injury. Let parents habitually regard their children as a part of themselves; let them view their interests for time and eternity as inseparably connected with their own; let parental affection, elevated and sanctified by Christian principle, urge them to diligence and fidelity in the instruction of their children. The relation which they sustain towards them presents one of the most powerful considerations to enforce the performance of parental duties; and the affection for their offspring, which has been implanted in their hearts, is designed to lead them to employ all proper means for securing their happiness. These means are clearly revealed and fully supplied to Christian parents. As they would not be found destitute of natural affection, and be instrumental in the injury and ruin of those who are so nearly and tenderly related to them, they are bound to employ them faithfully, and thus to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

SECT. III.—*The fearful evils of parental neglect are replete with warning, and furnish a solemn and powerful consideration to urge to the diligent performance of all parental duties.*

The iniquities of the fathers are frequently visited upon their children. The young, neglected by their natural guardians and instructors, become a prey to the innate evil propensities of their own heart, and to the numerous malignant influences with which they are surrounded. If untrained to good, they are reared up for the perpetration of wickedness; if the seeds of piety are not early implanted in their minds, and they are not drawn by precept and example towards the path of virtue, the natural weeds of sin and folly will spring up to rank luxuriance; evils indulged in tender years will acquire the power of strong and irresistible habits; and the course of conduct will be unprofitable and wicked. It is fearful to contemplate a child thus growing up a rebel against God, becoming a mere sensualist and worldling, and at last sinking down to the blackness of darkness for ever. Parents may be assured, that if children perish through their neglect they will severely suffer for it. The influence which they might have exercised for the most valuable objects, but which was perverted, will in future years

react with fearful power upon themselves. No maxim is of more extensive application than this : "What a man soweth, that shall he also reap ;" and in no relation are there more disastrous fruits reaped than in the parental, when the early religious training of children is overlooked.

Among men, it has been justly remarked, there is scarcely such another instance of absolute power on the one hand, and of entire dependence on the other, as at first exists in the relation between parents and their children. The infant is helplessness itself, dependent on parental kindness for everything necessary for its existence and welfare ; and under parental control and direction in all that concerns the formation of future character and the conduct of life. The child gradually rises from this state of dependence, and every succeeding day of its life is working out more and more its emancipation. And just in proportion as parental authority and example are applied to the proper training of children, or as in their exercise their best interests are overlooked, so will the effects be salutary or injurious. The child rises to manhood ; freed from parental control, he will bring down upon the head of a parent the blessings or curses which his conduct has taught him to procure. He will either repay to parents and to society in blessings the pains employed in his early culture, or will be to the one the fearful scourge of criminal neglect, and to the other a withering curse. The continuance of such an influence forms an afflicting and aggravating consideration, when, through the neglect or the evil instruction and example of parents, children are led into the paths of folly and wickedness. Parents ! you are connected with your children by bonds that you cannot sunder. You cannot say concerning a profligate or perverse child, "I will leave him to his own way. I will disown him. I will have done with him for ever." The attempt may be made ; but the yearning of parental affection, and the overflowing of parental feelings, will prove it to be ineffectual and vain. The cord that binds you to your children is too strong, either for their unworthiness or your resolution to break asunder. God himself has fastened it, and no circumstances in life can ever fully dissolve the tie. Even death is unable to loose it. Parents will linger over the grave of a lost child ; and as the sense of neglected duty, or recollections of unfaithfulness rise up to view, the heart will be wrung with anguish ; and no distance of time will be able to efface from the mind the remembrance of influence perverted, or opportunity ne-

glected.¹ The lamentation of the king of Israel over a lost son, expresses at once the strength of parental affection, and the bitter sense of his former undue indulgence,—“O Absalom! my son, would to God I had died for thee, my son. O Absalom! my son, my son.”² When parents have a religious profession and character, the evils resulting from the neglect of some parts of the duty which they owe to their children, from something defective or improper in the mode of performance, or from blemishes in their temper and deportment, are frequently grievous and fatal. Undue severity either crushes the spirit of children or provokes them to resentment, and renders them wholly averse to religious principle and obligation. Hence parents are warned against *provoking their children to anger*, and are commanded to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If religion is only, or chiefly, presented to the young under a repulsive aspect, and duties are enforced only by stern and despotic authority, the natural consequence will be, that the first opportunity will be seized to cast off its restraints, and to rush headlong into courses of youthful folly. Improper indulgences, on the other hand, never fail to bring ruin equally upon the objects of perverted affection and upon their parents. Possessed of a corrupt nature, a child left to himself will assuredly go astray. To check evil at first is easier than to restrain it afterwards; and many a parent has bitterly lamented the progress of evils in his children, to which his own injurious and culpable indulgences gave the first impulse.

The sin of Eli is held out in the Scripture as a terrible example of the evils of parental indulgence. Because the aged priest honoured his sons more than God, the priesthood was rent from his family, his two sons were cut off in their sin, Israel was discomfited before the enemy, the ark was taken captive, and the parent himself, overwhelmed by sorrow, was suddenly carried off by death. Many a child, foolishly spared from early correction, and indulged in youthful propensities, has grown up in confirmed irreligion, and has brought a parent's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

The inconsistency and misconduct of parents form a snare for the feet of their children; and the display of an unmortified spirit, in connection with the observance of religious duties, is calculated to excite in a household aversion to religion, and to

¹ See “Abbot on Parental Duties;” from which work several of the thoughts expressed in this section are taken.

² 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

turn away their steps from the ways of godliness. We have known the children of some parents who made a high profession becoming utterly regardless of religious obligation ; in some instances, avowing infidelity, and in others their conduct marked by debasing immorality. The causes of such melancholy defection are not difficult in many cases to discern. Parents had frustrated the instruction which they gave, by an example unbecoming their profession ; they had exhibited a worldly or a censorious spirit before their children ; they had trained them to serve Mammon rather than God ; and they had manifested no concern to display before their household the living, attractive influence of the religion of Christ. Need we wonder at the fruits which have followed ? Are not filial disobedience and irreligion the native consequences of parental inconsistency and neglect ; the genuine fruits of a spirit and manner in parents opposed to the religion which they professed ? Indeed, whenever a child is perverse, rebellious, neglectful of religion, or addicted to wicked practices, it may be concluded that there has been something wrong in the training of parents, though we may not always be able to discern what in their conduct was reprehensible. If a child is ungovernable, parents should consider that to them it is entrusted to render him tractable. For this purpose, they should watch and pray continually, avoid every inconsistency in their own spirit and deportment, and temper correction with Christian prudence and tenderness. Betimes, they should consider their own deficiency rather than their child's ; and in self-denial and assiduity, employ the means with which God has connected the blessing.

The evils of parental neglect or irregularity are of alarming extent and frightful magnitude. They are seen in the irreligion, profligacy, and ruin of children ; they entail misery upon the family ; they are the rods that most severely punish parents ; and while the Church is left to deplore the defection and irreligion of those who were baptized within her pale, the world is confirmed and hardened in ungodliness and infidelity. Nor are these evils confined to the present state ; they extend to endless duration. Children neglected here are ripened for destruction, and are given over to the fearful retributions of a lost eternity. As parents would deprecate such a doom, let them habitually avoid the conduct that tends to ensure it. Let them, cherishing a holy dread, attend with all diligence to their solemn and important duties. They will then be preserved from the fearful infliction that awaits slothful and

negligent servants. Thus may they be instrumental in delivering their children from the paths wherein destroyers go, and of guiding their steps into the way of happiness and peace. Instead of a curse, they and theirs shall inherit the blessing; and while others are snared and fall, they shall rejoice together in deliverance from all evil, and in the enjoyment of an abundant and everlasting recompense of reward.

SECT. IV.—*The Divine example furnishes another powerful motive, as well as a comprehensive directory, for the performance of parental duties.*

One of the most endearing views of the Divine character is that in which He is presented as a Father, and his people are exhibited as his children—the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. His love towards the redeemed transcends all comparison or imitation; for earthly parents do not need to be reconciled to their children, nor do they love them as enemies, and no gift that they can bestow bears any resemblance to the unspeakable gift of God's well-beloved Son. The Redeemer, to whom parents are encouraged to bring their children, takes the title of the "Everlasting Father." When He was about to ascend to the throne of his glory, He held forth the paternal character of God as the source of boundless and perpetual blessings to his people: "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;"² and no relationship is more frequently exhibited in Sacred Scripture as connected with all that is encouraging in promise and precious in privilege. The Lord's method of training his children for his service and glory peculiarly claims our attention, as it furnishes to Christian parents the most impressive direction and the most attractive example. Parental relationship exists not among holy angels; and while its existence among the human family supplies an advantage to us above the angels for studying the mysteries of redemption, the fact that God himself has condescended to assume a covenant-relation as a Father to the redeemed, and that for them He exercises paternal love, authority, and compassion, is fraught with unspeakable comfort to the people of God. Herein is presented the great model of all parental duty. Parents are required to be imitators of God, as

¹ Isaiah ix. 6.

² John xx. 17.

dear children.¹ Their success in domestic instruction and the blessing for their household must be sought in conformity to the Divine method of government and instruction.

God's *kindness and compassion* prevail in all his treatment of the heirs of salvation. Upon them He bestows, in sovereign grace, every blessing that can contribute to their real profit and happiness. In weakness or distress He pities them, his bowels of compassion yearn over them, and his almighty arm is extended to relieve them. The Redeemer illustrates the Divine love to the saints by the kindness of earthly parents: "If ye then, Being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"² And the Psalmist celebrates the tender compassion of God in terms borrowed from the paternal relation: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."³ Our heavenly Father instructs his people—employs diversified and suitable means for this purpose—engages their hearts, and adapts his communications to their condition and capacity. All the children of Zion are "taught of the Lord." "The sincere milk of the Word" is presented to babes, while "strong meat" is administered to them that are of mature age; and all are guided by the Divine counsel until they are received into glory.

The government and discipline of the "household of faith" are conducted in mercy and love, and are exercised with a *constant regard to their spiritual benefit*. Not being susceptible of passion or weakness, the Father in heaven never afflicts willingly, nor grieves the children of men. His severity is mixed with goodness; in the midst of wrath He remembers mercy. Corrections from his hand are in love. In mercy to their souls, He restrains his children when they wander; and He chastises them for their profit, that they may be "partakers of his holiness."⁴ There is always a "need be," when they are in "heaviness through manifold temptations." Indulgences that are injurious are mercifully withholden; what is really good for them the Lord will assuredly give; but even their importunity will not prevail with Him to obtain what would obstruct their spiritual welfare.

Forbearing and forgiving them in love, and exercising

¹ Ephesians v. 1, "Be ye followers of God," &c. The original word properly signifies "imitators."

² Matthew vii. 11.

³ Psalm ciii. 13, 14.

⁴ Heb. xii. 10.

towards them continual long-suffering and compassion, He yet trains them for his service and glory by the *discipline* of the covenant. He brings them under the rod, and chastises and rebukes every child whom He receiveth. His paternal character is eminently conspicuous in the *chastisements* He administers. His bowels are moved for them. He does not consult their inclinations, but their welfare. The rod is not spared for their crying. Correction is continued till the heart is weaned from its idols, and the child is won to the path of filial submission and obedience. Even when correction is applied, the Father loves his children intensely. He waits for their return with interest and desire; and instead of chiding continually or cherishing anger still, He welcomes them back, and rejoices over them to do them good. In all his procedure towards them, his aim is to deliver them from sin; to lead them to a service which is perfect freedom; and, in the way of dutiful obedience, to confer upon them substantial and lasting happiness. He instructs, warns, and corrects his children with tenderness. He is earnest and importunate in dealing with them, presenting to them motives the most awakening and affecting. And with unceasing care, He leads them in the way of righteousness, gives them line upon line, and precept upon precept; and receives them at last to an inheritance undefiled and unfading, reserved for them in heaven.

What a high and impressive example is thus exhibited of approved parental character! What lofty motives are thus furnished to parental fidelity! Christian parents are directed and encouraged to look to the God of the families of Israel, not only for support, but for direction in their all-important duties. While his authority enjoins them to rear their children for God, his blessed example, in his paternal dealings with his adopted sons and daughters, is their bright model, and exalted encouragement in duty. If they would themselves be the children of God, and if they would have their offspring numbered in the family of heaven, they must imitate the Father in heaven. Their household should be instructed and governed, as the Church of the First-born is nourished and ruled by her glorious Head. The administration of the household should resemble the management of the one great family that in heaven and earth is named after Christ. Parents have the promise of abundant gracious aid, in seeking conformity to this Divine model. Their children dedicated to God, and nursed for Him, shall be translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Parents become workers together with God. Their ministry, however humble, is owned and blessed ; and aiming themselves after likeness to Him who is a Father and Portion to Israel, they are approved instruments of training up a race to serve the Lord, and of entailing upon posterity the richest and most glorious inheritance.

SECT. V.—The Nation and the Church at the present time particularly demand the faithful discharge of parental obligations.

Without adverting particularly to the numerous evils that afflict the nation, they may, in a great many instances, be directly traced to the neglect of the religious education of the young—to the perversion of domestic instruction and example. Hence is it that the vast masses of the people grow up in ignorance, have no due sense of moral and religious obligation, and embrace principles and follow practices which are subversive of all right government and order, and which are ruinous to themselves and others. Hence is it that multitudes are involved in a dark and cheerless infidelity, and revolutionary and destructive principles are openly avowed and strenuously propagated. These have sprung from the want of scriptural education ; they are the native fruits of popular ignorance and irreligion. To the neglect of parents, ministers, and civil rulers, may be ascribed the infidelity and error, the Socialism and Chartism, that, in different parts of the nation, threaten to bring ruin to an incalculable extent upon the community. And hence it is that, in our own country, millions are held under the chains of a dark and degrading superstition. Men clothed with authority have refused to acknowledge God, or to submit to the Lord's Anointed ; and while they adopt a low system of worldly expediency as the standard of government, they overlook or neglect entirely the moral and spiritual interests of the people. The ministers of religion have, in many instances, left them untaught, and the young have been permitted to grow up ignorant of scriptural principles, and exposed unprotected to the hateful and demoralizing influences that are everywhere so prevalent. Family religion has, in consequence, to a melancholy extent disappeared ; and parental authority and example have become the chief instrument of inuring the young to insubordination

and immorality. "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course." "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved." "The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish."²

The main remedy for this deplorable state of things is found in the moral and religious education of the young. Almost the only hope that remains of averting approaching judgments from the nation lies in parental fidelity, and the revival of domestic piety. The testimony of a judge at the Monmouth assizes, when convicting persons who had excited the community to rebellion, was, that nothing could save the country from disorganization and ruin but the most strenuous and persevering efforts to instruct the rising race in the principles of religion and morality. If we would be instrumental in saving the nation, we must go to the root of the evil. Sabbath schools, which have been appropriately styled "*a desperate remedy for a desperate disease*," have done much to preserve the children of the poor from irreligion and vice, and to train them up in the way they should go. It is an honourable testimony to their efficiency, that in scarcely a solitary instance have the youth taught in these seminaries been convicted of crimes that are injurious to society. Sabbath schools are intended to supply parental neglect. They are a substitute for the want of domestic education; and their principal excellency consists in the system of instruction pursued in them being thoroughly scriptural. The supplement which Christian benevolence has devised suggests the means whereby the moral maladies of the nation may be healed, the root and sting of its natural evils extracted, and national calamities averted.

Let domestic piety be encouraged by the legislation and example of men of power and influence; let parents be excited to train up their children in the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment; let the fire of heaven be lighted anew upon the family altar; and let scriptural instruction be publicly and generally promoted. Thus may the destroying scourge pass away, and evils that are of the most threatening aspect

¹ P's. lxxxii. 5; P's. lxxv. 3.

² Hosea iv. 1-3.

cease to prevail. A return to neglected duty will propitiate the favour of the God of nations; the day of his long-suffering will be protracted; and He will come and leave a blessing behind. Domestic piety is the true source of public virtue, and is intimately associated with national greatness. If the nation remains blind to its true interest,—if it will not become sensible that it is chiefly a *moral* remedy that is required for the numerous evils that oppress it,—if rulers, infatuated to their destruction, still refuse to “kiss the Son,”—it becomes the solemn special duty of those who would be safe in the day of coming visitation, to betake themselves with all earnestness to the discharge of duties, the neglect of which has been the pregnant source of innumerable woes to the nation, and the continued neglect of which threatens to overwhelm it with a deluge of judgment. Faithful Christian parents are the best patriots and benefactors of their country. By their pious exertions, they are training up those for whose sake guilty communities are spared,—training up a race that may be instrumental in bringing back a revolted people to allegiance to their rightful Sovereign; and sowing seeds of righteousness that, in a future day of enlargement and blessing, shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the land with fruit.

Parents that are faithful will be hidden in the day of vengeance. They and their household will be numbered among the *marked* ones, who are preserved when destruction is commissioned to begin at the sanctuary, and to slay indiscriminately throughout the city.¹ For a season, the progress of retributive inflictions may be arrested, and the nation may be spared for the sake of those godly parents and righteous families that dwell therein. And even when the cup of national provocation is full, and judicial inflictions are commissioned to take their course, the children of the righteous shall be hidden in the king's pavilion in the evil day; and the seeds that have been sown by pious parents shall spring up and bear precious fruit in succeeding generations.

Important as a means of national preservation and blessing as is domestic piety, it is, if possible, still more important as an eminent instrument of revival and prosperity to the Church. Few truths can be stated of more universal application than this, that according to the religious condition of families, so is the state of religion in congregations and churches. The Church takes its tone from the state of the household. If

¹ Ezek. ix. 6.

domestic religious instruction is unheeded, and the family altar forsaken, if parental duties are only performed in a trivial, irregular way, the membership of the Church will speedily degenerate into formality and hypocrisy, and the living and sustaining principle of true godliness will gradually disappear. There are few more prolific causes of the declining state of practical religion throughout the Church in our day than the want of family religion. Parents are not duly impressed with a sense of their obligation to dedicate their children to God, and to nurse them for Him. They are not concerned to seek earnestly their conversion. They do not regard religion as "the one thing needful" to them and theirs; and their example is not calculated to show to those who are about them the pleasantness of wisdom's ways. Children, in consequence, grow up without any engagement of heart in Divine things; and if they make a profession of religion at all, they embrace only a mere lifeless form, and they afterwards live at ease in Zion, and hold the truth in ungodliness, if they do not become utterly apostate. They are generally characterized by a worldly, selfish disposition. They know nothing of the spirit of prayer or self-dedication. They live to themselves, and have no heart for efforts that tend to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. And, like the members of one of the primitive Asiatic churches, they have "a name to live while they are dead;" or as those of another, "they are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot."

The state of family religion supplies an index by which the claims of various bodies of religious professors may be estimated. Judging by this test, we are constrained to conclude, that in large portions of the religious community, and even where a high profession is made, the state of practical godliness is lamentably low. Where even office-bearers of the Church neglect family worship in their houses—where those who are admitted to the highest privileges of the sanctuary, habitually neglect their vow for their children in baptism, and, in direct contradiction to it, may be truly said to rear them for the devil, the world, and the flesh—where the young grow up untrained to religious duties, and addicted to vanity—there cannot be real spiritual prosperity in the Church, whatever may be the pretences advanced to orthodoxy in principle or religious activity. On the other hand, parental assiduity and faithfulness prepare a seed to serve the Lord, and are frequently owned as an approved instrumentality of revival. The children of parental prayers

and tears, who are early instructed in God's law and testimony, often excel their fathers; and the work of building up Zion, on which the hearts of godly parents were set, unaccomplished in their day because of the Church's apathy or unbelief, is done in their son's days.

Christian parents should betake themselves to their arduous duties under this animating prospect. The Church greatly needs revival. The conversion of sinners, and the increase of holy principle and habits among the members, are among the primary objects of Christian attainment, for which all should pray and labour. Would we see the captivity of Zion recalled, and the dry bones revived, we must begin with the young. Our work is greatly with them; for a formal, lukewarm, worldly spirit has so sadly and so long characterized the present race of professors, that we need scarcely expect great things to be done by them, or for them, in the advancement of the power of godliness. As the race of Israel that saw God's wonders, and yet murmured and rebelled, were rejected in their unbelief, but their children, schooled in the wilderness, came in and possessed the land of promise, so our aim should be to prepare a right-hearted and devoted race, who may be fitted and honoured to share in Zion's future enlargement and glory.

Parents! you have here presented a motive worthy to enlist all your energies, and to quicken you to the most strenuous and persevering exertions. Revival should begin in the family, but when it is real it will not rest here. It will diffuse its influence like leaven throughout the fellowship of the Church, and will secretly and yet powerfully act till the whole mass is leavened. Think not that your sphere is limited. When the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt, in a period of reformation under Nehemiah, the pious heads of Israelitish families repaired *every man over against his own house*. God owned these labours, and, despite of the attempts of enemies, conducted the work to a prosperous issue. So will it be with labours of faith and love, in the sphere of domestic duty. The humble, unnoticed work of maternal piety, in nursing children for God, has been frequently owned as the instrument of revival to the Church. God has already accepted these labours, and He will yet accept and honour them. On you, Christian parents! it depends, in a great measure, whether the Church is to continue in her low circumscribed state, or to put on her "beautiful garments," and to arise and shine, because of her arisen glory. The children whom God has committed

to you to train are the hopes of the Church ; and according to your training will they either become a dead weight upon her membership, or a holy agency to carry forward the ark to its resting-place in millennial glory. Oh ! consider your deep responsibility in this particular. Think of the present solemn and eventful era. And as you profess to pray for the coming of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the upbuilding of Zion, take the objects of your dearest affections, and teach them to love the habitation of God's house. Habituate them to labour and self-denial for the promotion of the Redeemer's cause. Accustom them to regard this as a principal end of their being—the noblest pursuit of their life. Endeavour to render them men of prayer and holy devotedness ; of single-hearted integrity and simplicity, willing to suffer cheerfully for Christ's sake, and to count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. Thus will your prayers and labours be owned for reviving the Lord's work in the midst of the years ; and your children so trained, while you live, or after you are gone, will be as a dew among many people,—a happy means of abundant fertility to the heritage of the Lord.

SECT. VI.—*The consideration of the separation of parents from their children by death, and of their meeting in judgment, furnishes a powerful incitement to all parental duties.*

The ties that bind parents to their children, however tender and powerful, must soon be severed by death. Before many years, parents ! you must see these objects of affection deposited in the grave, or you must bid them farewell when they stand weeping around your deathbed. If you are possessed of proper feelings under the influence of Christian principle, in their afflictions you will be called to a severe trial. Inheriting through you a corrupt nature, their sufferings are the consequences of sin ; and parents may see in them the punishment of their own transgression. They should not only sympathize with them tenderly as their own flesh and blood, a part of themselves afflicted ; but in their children's troubles they should accept the punishment of their own iniquity, humble themselves under the rod, and be stirred up to earnestness in seeking their children's salvation. When the visitation issues in their early removal by death, none but a parent's heart can

should be taken as a continual warning against all parental indolence,—against everything in the instruction and conduct of parents that is calculated to prevent the spiritual benefit of their children.

On the other hand, the joy of parents meeting in the judgment with children that were dedicated to God, and nursed for Him, will crown all their hopes concerning them, and will vastly surpass all their present expectations. The objects of their endeared affections rise to a blessed immortality. Parents receive them again, far more lovely than ever they were upon earth. Standing together at the right hand of the Judge, and taking their place in the general assembly of the firstborn, the joys of recognition will be lost amidst the glories that beam from the tribunal. Their own bliss will be enhanced by the presence and fellowship of their children; their own crown will be more bright and glorious, as they behold each child receiving from the hand of the Judge the crown of righteousness. And with thrilling delight, they will hear the approving sentence pronounced upon those whom they reared for God and heaven,—“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.” Godly parents, and children to whom they were instruments of spiritual good, meet then, never again to be separated. They enter together into the fulness of joy that is at God’s right hand; and at the fountainhead of felicity, they drink of endless and unalloyed pleasures. Parents receive the full reward of their fidelity, and children reap for ever the unspeakable blessings that flow from the instructions, prayers, and example of believing parents. The prospect of this happy consummation should sustain parents in every trial, and animate them in their self-denying labours. With this great recompense of reward in view, they should press to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The joys of glory will recompense all their toil. The reunion with their children in heaven will far transcend all their present desires; and the joint participation with them of endless felicity will be the abundant reward enjoyed by those whom the King of heaven delights to honour.

We only wait to notice *two* encouraging considerations to animate Christian parents in the performance of duties with which their own and their children’s happiness for time and eternity are intimately associated. In the *first* place, *Divine*

support is guaranteed in the way of obedience. Faithful parents will, while engaged in their arduous work, receive strength and direction,—they will enjoy comfort and success. All that is required is a sense of the importance of the duty, and a ready mind for its performance. The promise is all-supporting: “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”¹ He who called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees upheld him by his power, and brought him to the land of promise; He who was his “Shield and exceeding great Reward” is still able and willing to work for the accomplishment of his people’s desires; and to faithful parents He will do exceeding abundantly above all that they can ask or think. Let them depend on his promise, and confide in his strength. He will fit them for duty, work all their works in them, open the minds of their children, and crown their labours with success.

And, *secondly*, we have reason to believe that *whatever is sincerely and heartily dedicated to God, He accepts.* There is no instance on record of his rejecting those who have come to Him,—none in which the surrender that parents have made of their children to Him has been refused. On the contrary, He outdoes parental desires; He exceeds parental requests and expectations. The compassionate Saviour embraced in his arms and blessed the little children whom disciples would have kept at a distance, and whom fond mothers only ventured to request Him to touch. Believing parents! you have ample encouragement here. He whose character it is to receive sinners, will not refuse the pledges of your affection when you commit them to his hand. You should bring them to Him with humble confidence. He will take them and bless them. Remembering their dedication for good, He will himself supply the means for their preservation and instruction. He is infinitely more ready to give than his people are to ask. That which has been committed to him He will keep; and the covenant of his people’s youth, He will remember for ever—the Word which He has commanded to a thousand generations.

¹ Deuteronomy xxxiii. 25.

CONCLUSION.

To Christian parents, this subject *addresses inquiries* at once solemn and searching, while it exhorts to the diligent performance of their duty. The example which has been considered presents an instance of domestic piety, and of parental instruction, government, and example, amongst the most illustrious that are on record. Abraham's conduct in his household is the subject of special Divine approval, and the happy consequences of his fidelity are recorded both in the page of inspiration and in the history of the nations of the world. Christian parents ! can the testimony borne to the patriarch be given of you ? Living under a clearer and more enlarged dispensation of mercy, your obligations to duty are proportionally increased, and you are called to special fidelity and devotedness in the domestic circle. Your character must be estimated by the manner in which your duties to your family are performed, and the enjoyment of special privileges may be expected only in this connection. You will not be owned as the friends of God, if you do not labour to honour Him in your house. You will not be favoured with special communications of his mind in times of trial, if you command not your children and household to know the way of the Lord ; and the great blessings held forth in the promises you cannot expect as the portion of your family, if you do not bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I beseech you to consider seriously the magnitude and extent of your obligations, and to ask yourselves how you have endeavoured to discharge them. You should frequently review your spirit and conduct in other relations, but this you should make a principal concern, as God himself makes it. Your children are naturally in darkness ; and on you they are dependent for the instruction that may make them wise unto salvation. Have you been diligent and faithful in teaching them the good and acceptable way ? Are you giving them line upon line, and precept upon precept ? Are you conducting them to the holy oracles of God, the fountain of truth, and leading them to Christ

Jesus, the great Teacher sent from God? Do you instruct them diligently about God and heaven; and is your constant aim to impress the heart, and to purify and direct the conscience?

You should examine, moreover, the character of your domestic worship, and of your government and example in your family? If the fire is not kept burning upon the domestic altar; if religion is not presented to your children in an attractive aspect; if your family rule is unduly severe, or lax and unsteady; and if your example is inconsistent or injurious, then will your children be placed in a condition, in some respects, worse than that of families where the form and profession of religion are unknown. Let frequent searching scrutiny be made in relation to all these subjects. Thousands of parents fatally err, and thousands of families are undone, by the assumption, that parental duties are easy, or that self-examination and watchfulness are not necessary to their performance. No mistake could be more deplorable, none attended with consequences more melancholy and mischievous. Hence it is that many parents, who make a religious profession, satisfy themselves with a mere negative or external religion in their children; are pleased with the indications of a mild spirit or peaceful demeanour, instead of a change of heart; and are content with their observance of outward ordinances, instead of the active and devoted service of the Redeemer. Let me exhort you to guard against evils that are lamentably common in our day. Set apart special seasons for taking account of your duties toward your family. Examine yourselves, as in the Divine sight, respecting the spirit and manner of their performance. Entertain a jealous and solemn concern about the state of practical religion in your household. Remembering that it will take its tone and character, in a great measure, from yourselves, be it your study to be at all times "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Your family is your sphere of labour and trial. In it, you may do much for God and your children; or your conduct will be followed by results to yourselves and others the most disastrous. Under a responsibility so solemn and arduous, you are required to watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Make diligent and frequent inquiry how the matter goes with you and yours; how God is honoured in your house; whether you are walking in his sight, and living under his blessing; whether your family is growing in vital religion, and advancing towards the reward and enjoyments of the faith-

ful. Thus will you be preserved from formality and self-deception; you will be excited to diligence and activity in all domestic duties; and those for whose welfare you are deeply concerned will give evidence that your labour has not been in vain in the Lord.

Secondly, You should seek *Abraham's faith* to enable you to walk in his steps, and to realize to you and yours the promise of Abraham's God. The possession of living faith in the Messiah to come constituted the distinguishing excellency of the patriarch's character, led to his fidelity in every relation, and secured to himself and his seed the enjoyments of the blessing of God's covenant. By faith he was numbered among the "elders" that "obtained a good report." Seeing Christ's day in promise and type, he rejoiced in spirit. He embraced the promises as the earnest of a future glorious inheritance. "He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

To this holy principle are expressly ascribed his self-denial and his concern to have his posterity joint partakers with him of the benefits of the covenant. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."¹ Believing in the faithful word, and rejoicing in the promised Seed, he exhibited before his family the faith that overcomes the world. Training them, too, to live above it, his principal concern was that they should be interested in the promise; and that he might have converse with them as fellow-heirs of the grace of salvation. The same principle is indispensable for you, if you would discharge aright your solemn trust. Without faith, in any condition, or in any work, it is impossible to please God. But Christian parents require an eminent measure of this grace, if they would be instrumental in rearing up a godly seed, if they would obtain for their offspring the great blessings which were promised to Abraham. Theirs is peculiarly a work of faith and a labour of love; and without the lively exercise of these two graces, it cannot be performed. The personal piety of parents is intimately associated with the education and discipline of the household; and the blessing from on high generally comes upon families only in this connection. In the performance of every part of parental duty, the vigorous exercise of faith in the Redeemer, and in the word of promise, is required; and without it neither will the work be performed, nor the desired success follow.

¹ Heb. xi. 9.

If children are dedicated to God, and brought to the Saviour for a blessing, it must be in confidence on his gracious paternal character, and in assured belief in his encouraging promise. Instructions must be communicated, by mixing faith with the words spoken, and in dependence upon the great Teacher himself to open the understanding of the young, that they may know the Scriptures, and be rendered wise unto salvation. Prayer for and with children must be the prayer of faith—the effectual fervent prayer that availeth much. And domestic rule and parental example should be conducted under the influence of a living faith upon the Saviour, if they are to be productive of any salutary and lasting effects. For all this great work, mere human wisdom and strength can avail nothing. Without direction and power communicated from on high, parents are entire weakness. Relying upon their own abilities for success, the most distinguished must fail. The blessing is wholly the Lord's; and it behoves parents, while they employ divinely prescribed means for training their children in the way they should go, to be denied to their own wisdom, to have no confidence in the flesh, and to cherish a constant dependence upon the Redeemer for acceptance and success.

Many are the instances in domestic management, in which Christian parents are called to “walk by faith and not by sight.” When children are in tender infancy, and cannot be expected to exhibit evidences that a work of grace has begun; when they are under affliction, or are early removed by death; when religious instructions appear to be followed by no salutary fruits; when answers to prayer are deferred; and when parents are taken away from their children,—in all these, and many other cases, the principle, which is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” is indispensably required. Why should we particularize? For the whole work of parental duty, for the trials of the household, and for the enjoyment of promised blessings, heartfelt dependence upon the Saviour's word and character is required. While parents draw the strength for duty from Christ, children should see exemplified in them the work of faith. They should act before their household as “seeing Him who is invisible;” they should be distinguished by the self-denial, devotedness, and godly sincerity, which spring from habitual converse with things unseen and eternal.

Christian parents! you should ever remember the Saviour's answer to a father's application, when he presented to Him the

case of a distressed child,—“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”¹ Look habitually to Jesus, “the Author and Finisher of faith.” Recognize his authority, trust his promise, and depend with confidence upon his grace for strength, acceptance, and blessing. “According to your faith, it shall be done unto you.” In proportion to your reliance upon the Divine promise, and upon Him who is given “a covenant of the people,” so will you be animated to holy exertions for the spiritual improvement of your household; your comfort under trials will abound, and your work will be rewarded.

The prayer of faith cannot remain unanswered—the work of faith will be accepted and prospered. Begin, go forward in dependence on the Saviour’s grace and promise. Seek an increase of faith; and in humble confidence and joyful hope, be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Possessed of Abraham’s faith, like the patriarch you will be excited and encouraged in the performance of all domestic duties; and yours will be the blessing of Abraham’s God. He will be “a God to you and your seed after you;” and to you and yours there shall be an abundant fulfilment of those things which the Lord has promised.

This subject likewise suggests solemn and affectionate *counsels to the youth of Christian families.*

If so many and so momentous are the duties of parents towards their children, then it is not surely going too far to say, that a weighty obligation rests upon the young of Christian families to receive and obey the instructions, and to follow the example with which they have been favoured. Yours, beloved youth! has been no mean privilege. To you may be applied the Saviour’s declaration, “Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.”² In the sovereign disposal of Divine providence, you have been placed, by no choice of yours, in a connection in which your best interests have been cared for from the dawn of your existence. You were born of Christian, and not of heathen parents. You were dedicated to God in helpless infancy: the seal of God’s covenant was impressed upon you, and a pledge was given, in solemn circumstances, that you would be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This training you have been privileged to enjoy.

¹ Mark ix. 23.

² Matthew xiii. 17.

Many parental anxieties have centred upon you ; many earnest prayers have been offered on your behalf ; and to you have been addressed instructions by line upon line, and precept upon precept.

The Church's hopes are directed towards you ; and even the world around expects from you a profession and deportment becoming the young of religious families. You are "the children of the kingdom." To you much has been given, and assuredly much shall be required. Will these expectations be disappointed by your carelessness and neglect, and your final doom be thus fearfully aggravated ? Or, will they be fulfilled in your early dedication to God, and in your open and decided attachment to religion ? A great load of responsibility rests upon your parents in relation to your instruction and guidance—your usefulness and welfare for time and eternity. It remains with you either to lighten it, or greatly to increase it. If you defer the serious consideration of Divine things till a future season ; if you refuse to give God your hearts, and to confess Christ before men ; if you only yield a formal constrained attention to religious duties, and make religion no heart concern, nor devote to it the morning of your days, you will reap no blessing, and the advantages you have enjoyed will only serve to aggravate your condemnation. From "the unprofitable servant" his misimproved talent shall be taken away, and given to him that hath ten talents.

Delay on your part is inexpressibly dangerous. One of Satan's principal attempts against the Church, is to thwart the design of early religious training ; to lead the young of Christian families to cast behind their back all good instructions, or to become mere formalists, and to defer the concerns of personal religion till a future period. In this policy, he has in all ages been too successful ; in our own day, thousands of the young of religious families are deceived, and finally and irretrievably ruined. Of all the devices of the arch-enemy, there are few more fatal than this, that children who have been solemnly dedicated to God, should entertain no feeling concerning their baptismal vows ; that those for whom many prayers have been offered should themselves continue prayerless ; that parental exhortations and warnings should be unheeded ; and that, surrounded and pursued by mercies innumerable, from infancy to mature youth, the heart should be unaffected, and the person remain a wanderer from God, is melancholy to an awful degree, and the consequences are,

generally, exceedingly deplorable. Neglecting religion, and despising God's authority, the young in such a case become hardened. They are given over to their own hearts' lusts. They fall into temptations. Not unfrequently they remain callous to all right impressions ; while afterwards, in the course of life, or the relations which they have chosen, they reap the fruit of their doings.

How appalling to contemplate the aggravated doom of those who, having been often reprov'd, harden themselves ! How tremendous their final rejection ! How overwhelming the horrors of the punishment from which attention to parental instruction would have saved them, and which shall be dreadfully aggravated by the stings of an awakened conscience ; by the tortures of the remembrance of all their youthful frowardness and rebellion !

Let me beseech you, my young friends, in the bowels of compassion, to hasten your escape from the wrath to come. Consider your danger, and delay not to accept of the salvation graciously provided, and which has often been presented to you in alluring offers and tender invitations. Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come. "Yield yourselves to the Lord ;" give Him your hearts ; devote to Him the prime of your days ; and you will find in your happy experience, that wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. It is the exhortation of Divine counsel that addresses you, "*Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth ?*"¹ Take God as the guide of your youth, and you will be preserved from innumerable dangers, and your feet will be guided into the way of comfort and happiness. To you is addressed the assurance of Divine wisdom, "*I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.*"² Why should you linger long as those who are slothful, or defer the work of faith and repentance to a future period ? You may never enjoy a more favourable season than the present. "*Now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.*" Your delay is a practical rejection of the offered mercy—since it comes to you, as it does to all, as a present and not as a future salvation. The time which you propose to yourselves for the serious consideration of Divine things may never arrive ; and even should it, every delay will render future repentance more difficult, if not remove the hope of it entirely.

¹ Jeremiah iii. 4.

² Proverbs viii. 17.

On the other hand, consider how excellent and desirable is youthful piety. By the early recognition of your baptismal covenant, and the early improvement of parental instructions, you will reap a double blessing. With your youthful powers consecrated to God, with affections warm and energies unimpaired, you will be prepared for a course of distinguished service. You will escape numerous temptations, and be preserved from the path wherein destroyers go. Your lot will be sanctified; and of outward things, all that is really good and salutary for you shall be conferred. "*They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*" The command and the promise are inseparable, and they contain the assured guarantee of support and provision that cannot fail. "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"¹ The blessings of parental piety shall descend upon your heads; and the fervent prayers that were breathed around your cradle, and that have never ceased to follow your path, will be answered in the dews of heaven shed upon your lot—in gracious benefits bestowed upon your hearts and crowning your life. Your fathers' God will be your God; and the mercy which parents enjoyed will be remembered to children, and to children's children, through many generations. May you begin early to know the God of your fathers! May you serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind; and while you exhibit the lovely and attractive graces of early piety, may you enjoy, here and hereafter, the gracious inheritance which the Lord promised to Abraham and to his seed!

Finally. Let parents, keeping constantly upon their minds a sense of their solemn obligations, cherish dependence upon Divine direction and support in their arduous duties, and anticipate the glorious rewards of obedience. Considering the tender and powerful ties by which you are bound to your children, and surveying the field of duty, with the incalculably momentous consequences of fidelity or neglect, you may well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" You are never permitted, however, to use the language of despondency or despair. The grace of the covenant is sufficient for you; and relying upon it, Divine strength will be perfected in your weakness. The compassionate Saviour, who has commanded you to bring your children to him, encourages you to hope that He will accept of the surrender, and bless them. While He feeds his flock like a Shepherd, He manifests peculiar sympathy

¹ Psalm xxxiv. 10; Matthew vi. 33.

and tenderness towards the young and the weak. He gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom.¹ For his people, He performs all things perfectly, and does for them "exceeding abundantly above all that they are able to ask or think."

You can never think too much or too deeply upon your duties to your household; nor can you give yourselves to their performance with too much earnestness and devotedness. The salvation of your children from death, and their engagement in God's service, the revival of true religion in the Church, blessings to the Church flowing onward for ages to come; and above all, the joint participation with your children of endless glory—these are the high objects presented to Christian parents, to animate their exertions and encourage their hopes. This is "the mark of the prize of the high calling" to which they should continually press forward; forgetting the things that are behind, and in the prospect of its coming glory, resolutely and cheerfully encountering obstacles and difficulties, however arduous or numerous. Yours, Christian parents! is a work of no common importance, and it should occupy no inferior place in your thoughts. It should enter into all your plans, and possess a high and commanding place in all your pursuits. Your family is your appointed sphere of labour, and your work therein will assuredly be a principal ground either of your future punishment or reward. Children, if neglected, will become your scourge and tormentors. If they are trained aright, they will be as the staff of your declining age, and as your crown of honour; and may be the means of embalming your memory, long after you have been gathered to your fathers.

By all their desires and hopes of blessing for children, and children's children; by the prospects of the Church revived and prosperous; by the honour of the God of the families of his people; and by the joys of re-union with their children in heavenly glory, let parents be excited to diligence and fidelity and holy zeal. Entering upon their self-denying work, under the consciousness of their own inability, and conducting it in habitual dependence upon promised grace and strength, their labour will not be in vain in the Lord. In due season, they shall reap if they faint not. The conversion of their children, in answer to prayer, and of which they shall be acknowledged the instruments, will amply reward their anxiety and solicitude.

¹ Isaiah xl. 11.

Their filial obedience will soothe their woes, and comfort their hearts. Blessed and happy in their union on earth, they will have hope in their parting; and the joys of eternity will gloriously compensate for all labour and sorrow that were encountered by the way. Awake then, Christian parents! to a proper sense of your vast responsibility. Gird your loins for a work, which, whether as regards its subjects or its results, is among the most important on earth; and go forward in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness alone. "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever."¹

¹ Corinthians xv. 58; Isaiah lix. 21.

II.

THE ADOPTION OF SONS:

*ITS NATURE, SPIRIT, PRIVILEGES,
AND EFFECTS.*

A Practical and Experimental Treatise.

THE ADOPTION OF SONS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Fatherhood of God, and the Sonship of believers, are subjects of transcendent importance to every human being. Both are presented in the most impressive light in Divine revelation, and are intimately connected with all right views of the glorious Object of worship, and with our character and condition in time, and our hopes for eternity. The most forcible appeal of the Jewish Lawgiver to Israel, as he reproved their rebellion, and claimed their devoted obedience, was made to rest on God's paternal relation towards them—"Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people, and unwise? Is he not thy Father, that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?"¹ This, too, Jehovah himself declares to be the sure foundation of restoration and spiritual blessing to penitent Israel—"They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born."² To stand in the peculiar relation of sons to God is ever represented throughout the Scriptures as the most wonderful distinction of human beings, who were by nature alien, rebellious, and helpless. They are thus brought out of the mass of perdition, to form a society of ransomed ones that is holy and indestructible; they have an interest in the unchangeable love of the Father, and are made partakers of all the blessings which it confers. When the redeemed are represented as *living temples*—the "habitation of God through the Spirit"—the fatherly relation of God to them is declared to be the foundation of all that is excellent in their character and blessed in their hope: "Ye are the people of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will

¹ Deut. xxxii. 6.

² Jer. xxxi. 9.

be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."¹ In the view of a relation so distinctive and glorious, of its origin in the eternal love of God, and of its effects in the future blessedness of the saints, need we wonder at the Apostle's lofty exclamation, and the joyful confidence of hope which he expresses, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."² The *moving cause* of believers' sonship is thus declared to be God's love;—and this sovereign, great, effective, and unchangeable, so that it can never be adequately expressed or conceived. This love is "given" or "bestowed on us," not on the footing of any worth or merit, nor of any amiable quality in us, but solely through gratuitous affection and favour. The certain result is, that "we should be called" children of God—not by an empty title, but that we should be truly what the designation imports,—the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and sharers of the illustrious honour and glory which are inseparable from such a relation. Considering the Fatherhood of God in covenant to his people, and their spiritual sonship, there is no subject of meditation and self-trial of more absorbing interest, none that is more fitted to draw forth heartfelt trust; to supply the most constraining and animating motives to all holy living and devoted obedience; to minister strong consolation to afflicted ones and mourners in Zion; and to inspire a more joyful and blessed hope. Is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ indeed our Father? There is no measure to the love, grace, and pity which He will show us; there is nothing within the compass of his power which He is not prepared at all times to do on our behalf. Are we the called, adopted children of God? Then have we the fullest, strongest ground to confide in his mercy, and hope in his salvation; as we are bound to walk worthy of Him who has called us to his kingdom and glory. Then should we give all "diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."³ "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."⁴

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 16-18.

² 1 John iii. 1, 2.

³ Heb. vi. 11.

⁴ Romans viii. 17.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY OF GOD.

“Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.”—EPHESIANS iii. 15.

“But I said, How shall I put thee among the children? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me.”—JEREMIAH iii. 19.

THE title “Sons of God” applied to believers supposes a family of which the God of all grace is the Father and Head. The word Adoption, like the original term *υιοθεσια*, implies the reception into a family of one who did not belong to it by birth. He is “put among the children,” and, according to the full import of the word, he enjoys by transference the full right and privilege of sonship. That we may see the excellency of this position, and the nature of the relations more clearly, it behoves us to consider, first of all, the family that in heaven and earth “is named after Christ.”

Among human beings the family state is the most characteristic and interesting. It was instituted in Paradise by God himself, who ordained marriage for man’s help, and solemnized and blessed the first conjugal relation. Even after sin has entered, disturbing the harmony of God’s works, and marring and polluting all human relations, the family is the home of our affections, the centre of tender associations, that which moulds the character of individuals, and shapes, in a great measure, their future destinies,—it is the well-spring of diversified pleasurable enjoyment. In the division and allotment of ancient Israel, distinctive character and prophetic blessing were associated with the *tribe*, which was the family in relation to the patriarchal progenitor or ruler; while in the subordinate divisions, individual families were preserved separate and distinct, and marked to honour and blessing, or to rejection and a curse, according to the covenant with their ancestors, and the character which distinguished them. How honourable was it to be of the seed of Abraham and of the race of Israel, or to

be sprung of the house of David! Even in our own day, heraldic distinctions of the family are eagerly coveted; while to have the privilege of a pious ancestry, or to be a member of a family which, however lowly in the world, is one of the Israel of God—saints serving Him in holy dedication here, and to be gathered together at length in the Father's house in heaven—is an honour beyond all earthly dignity and glory. The family of God is incomparably the most illustrious in the universe; and to belong to it is a distinction and honour compared with which the loftiest station in human society, and the most glorious material things in the universe, sink into mere insignificance.

In the creation of the heavens and the earth, God at first formed two families of intelligent moral beings—angels and men—separate one from another, and each immediately dependent on himself as its Creator, Preserver, and Sovereign Head. When a part of the angelic family had rebelled, and were cast out of heaven, and the whole human family had become apostate in the first man, their federal Head, Jehovah, made provision that his glory should not be totally eclipsed in his intelligent offspring. In the riches of his sovereign grace, He took the portion of the angels that had kept their first estate, and those whom He had chosen to eternal life of the fallen human family, and formed them into one holy family, placed under Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, and the whole in heaven and earth named after Him.¹ Thus was the Divine Redeemer glorified in being appointed the vital Head of the Church, and “Head of all principality and power,” for her benefit; and the purpose was securely laid that, “in the dispensation of the fulness of times, all things in heaven and earth should be gathered into one, even in Him.”² In virtue of this gracious, all-wise arrangement, the angels that had stood in their integrity were effectually preserved from all possibility of future apostasy and rebellion, and were brought, as “elect angels,” into most intimate union with the Mediator and Surety of the covenant. They were thus shown “the manifold wisdom of God,”³ and were enabled to contemplate with more profound wonder the mysteries of human redemption. By the constitu-

¹ Ephes. iii. 15.—The *naming* of the family may be either after God the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ. With Calvin, we refer it to the latter, as the Lord Jesus is the nearer antecedent, and as this appears to be the more natural interpretation.

² Ephes. i. 10.

³ Ephes. iii. 10.

tion, too, of this holy happy family, effectual provision was made for the recovery and eternal salvation of fallen sinners of mankind. The redeemed are exalted in dignity above man's primitive condition in innocency, by being brought into near and most tender relationship to the Second Person of the Godhead—their Elder Brother; and by being associated with holy angels—the elder children of the family, henceforth to be always “ministering spirits to them that are heirs of salvation.”¹ How glorious is this family of God in its Head and members, in its character and privileges and future destiny! God the Father, the First Person of the blessed Trinity, is its Father and Head, as from Him, in his economical relation to the covenant, emanates the whole wondrous design of love and mercy. Christ Jesus, the Eternal Son, is the Elder Brother, having all the right of the First-born—entire dominion over the family, the goods of his Father's house in his possession and at his disposal, and the blessing in his hands to confer. Angels that excel in glory are a constituent part of the family, ever ready to execute Christ's command, and to act as ministers of his will, to carry forward the purposes of his love and the designs of his providence. To the saints especially do they minister with watchful tenderness and unremitting care. They joy in their conversion, mingle in their solemn assemblies, bear them up in their hands, encamp around them in difficulty and danger, and at length convey their disembodied souls to glory, and swell for ever the chorus of the new song of the redeemed, ascribing all glory and worth to the Lamb slain.

The “spirits of the just made perfect” in heaven are another part of this family; while the saints who are now “the excellent of the earth,” and those who are yet to be gathered into one in Christ, form the rest of this chosen and blessed society, that, separated from the world, are destined to shine forth in “the beauty of holiness,” and to enjoy the most exalted fellowship with the blessed Godhead throughout eternal ages.

This family into which adopted children of men are brought is characterized by *peculiar and excellent properties*. It is a *separate society*. Called out of a world lying in the wicked one, and each individual responding to the Saviour's gracious and powerful invitation, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and I will receive you,” they regard a state of holy separation as the law of their existence, to be practically followed in all their relations, in their whole spirit and conduct. The

¹ Hebrews i. 14.

“King’s daughter” forgets her own people and her father’s house, when the King “greatly desires her beauty.”¹ Though the separation which characterizes the family of God does not require us to live as ascetics, or to do violence to natural or social relations, yet is it always real and distinctive. The sons of God are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”² Their country and citizenship is in heaven.³ Their honour and safety alike are here. “Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.”⁴ The declaration of the parting benediction of Moses is the perpetual characteristic of the spiritual Israel—the family of God. “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.”⁵

In the expressive terms of a precious fragment of Christian antiquity, “Christians are not separated from other men by country, nor by language, nor by customs. They dwell not in cities of their own, nor make use of a peculiar dialect, nor affect a singular mode of life. They live in the cities of the Greeks or the barbarians, as each one’s lot may lie; and with regard to dress and food, or other matters of everyday life, they follow the customs of the country, yet they show a peculiarity of conduct wonderful and striking to all. They dwell in their own native land as sojourners. They take a part in everything as citizens, and yet endure all things as if strangers. Every foreign country is as a fatherland, and every fatherland as a foreign country. They live in the flesh, but not according to the flesh. They pass their time on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the established laws, and yet raise themselves above the laws by their lives. They love all, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown, and condemned. They are killed, and made alive. They are poor, and make many rich. They are in want of all things, and abound in all things. They are dishonoured, and amid their dishonour are glorified. In a word, what the soul is to the body, that are Christians in the world.”⁶ It is a *holy family*. This is its grand characteristic. “Israel was holiness to the Lord.” “Ye are a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood.”⁷ God, its Father, is “glorious in holiness;” Jesus, the elder

¹ Ps. xlv. 10, 11.

² Hebrews xi. 13.

³ Phil. iii. 20.

⁴ Num. xxiii. 9.

⁵ Deut. xxxiii. 28.

⁶ Epistle to Diognetus, 5, 6.

⁷ Jer. ii. 3; 1 Peter ii. 9.

brother, our great High Priest, has inscribed on the girdle of his golden garments, "Holiness to the Lord."¹ The angels, who form a part of the family, stand in their original purity, "ten thousands of his holy ones." The adopted from men are spiritual associates to the Lord. They are called to be saints. The vow of holy consecration is upon them, and one day they shall appear "in the beauty of holiness"—as "the dew from the womb of the morning"—"without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Again, it is *loving*. The Father of the family is "Love"—infinite, eternal, unchangeable. His sovereign, gratuitous love moved his choice of them that were to be redeemed from among men, and gave origin to all that is done for their redemption and final felicity. Christ's love to his saints is self-sacrificing, unparalleled, and transcendently wonderful. Of holy angels and saints, whether on earth or glorified in heaven, love is the ruling principle of their hearts, that which actuates their whole spirit and conduct. They love the Father with supreme affection, and delight themselves in Him. The love of Christ *constrains* them to live to Him alone. They have complacency in fellow-saints, as bearing the image of the same Father in heaven, and as partakers of the common salvation. And, in the spirit of genuine benevolence, they love their enemies and pray for them, and do good to them that despitefully use them and persecute them.

The family of God is, finally, the *blessing of the world*. To Abraham was given the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."² Blessings of every kind—all that are substantial and enduring—not only come from God, and through Christ, the Mediator; but by the Divine family named after Christ, and in connection with them, all blessings—temporal, spiritual, and eternal—are dispensed, and to be enjoyed. Believers are "the lights of the world," and "the salt of the earth"—the preserving, purifying, and all-quickenng principle in the mass of human corruption, and the light that dispels the darkness of error and sin, and that shall ultimately fill the whole earth with the effulgence of God's glory. To the family, thus separate, loving, and holy, the assurance is given, "I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing."³ Every member of this "household of faith" should be always

¹ Exod. xxviii. 36.

² Gen. xxii. 18.

³ Ezek. xxxiv. 26.

ready to present to others the invitation of Moses to Hobab, his father-in-law, to unite in the happy fellowship, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee."¹

¹ Num. x. 29, 32.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SONSHIP.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”—JOHN i. 12.

“And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people ; there shall they be called the children of the living God.”—ROMANS ix. 26.

OUR introduction into the family of God, and our participation in its privileges, is by *Adoption*. The special act which is designated by this term bears a striking analogy to a practice which existed from remote antiquity. This is referred to in the early records of Sacred Scripture ; but it is particularly prominent among the institutions of the classic nations of Greece and Rome. As evidences of the early origin of the practice, in the family of Abraham, a child who was not the offspring of the patriarch and Sarah his wife, was, at least for a time, regarded as entitled to bear the family name, and seemed to be heir of the family possession. The infant Moses, rescued from a watery grave, became the adopted son of the royal princess ; and the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, by the benediction of Jacob, their grandfather, were assigned a place among his own children, and ranked afterwards with them as the heads of tribes, and in sharing the promised inheritance.

Among the Greeks and Romans, the practice of adoption was fully recognized and regulated by law, and was reckoned of great importance in the matter of domestic settlements and inheritances. In some of the Grecian states, as in Athens, it was only a citizen that could be adopted by any one ; but in Rome the selection was less limited. In the case where the head of the family had no children of his own, nor the prospect of having any, he might adopt one of another nation, or take a slave of his household, and after conferring on him his freedom, give him his own name, and constitute him the heir of his pos-

sessions. While this might, in the first instance, be done in a private way, afterwards, to give it validity in law, it required to be declared and registered before the prætor or city magistrate. Then the adopted son was regarded and treated in all respects as the natural child of him who adopted him. Henceforth he bore his name, and was heir-in-law of his property.

The spiritual adoption into the family of God has been well defined to be "an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God."¹ It has been considered by some eminent theologians as a part of a sinner's justification, and by others as an effect flowing from it.² The explicit statements of Scripture would rather seem to view adoption as a distinct gracious blessing, a certain illustrious step of dignity added to justification.³ A subject that had offended may be freed by his sovereign; a criminal may be pardoned, but he is not thereby taken into the family. It is by a further act of compassionate and loving favour that he is put among the children. Connected with justification, though distinct from it, adoption has been described as "a gracious declaration of God, by which he admits those who are justified into his family as sons, and communicates to them the prerogatives and privileges of sons of God."⁴

The assured promise to the overcomer is, "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."⁵ This "white stone" is symbolical of the pardon of sin. The "new name"—that which designates a son or daughter of the Lord Almighty—is *in* the stone, as inseparable from it, and an additional gift, revealed by the Spirit to the consciousness of him on whom it is bestowed, and evidenced to others afterwards by the fruits of holiness in the life. This adoption of sons is properly a Divine *act* and *declaration*. As the fruit of sovereign grace and love, "we are called the sons of God." Chosen in Christ "from before the foundation of the world," the elect are said to be "called" in God's eternal purpose,⁶ as if the gathering together of the children of God scattered abroad were already effected. They were "chosen in Christ" as their covenant Head, with whom they were united as co-heirs with God.⁷ First in the gracious purpose of the Father,

¹ Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 34.

² Junius terms Justification *via adoptionis*.

³ Mæstricht—*Theoret. Pract. Theol.*

⁴ *Ibid.*—Tom Sec. c. vii. pp. 724, 725.

⁵ Rev. ii. 17.

⁶ John xi. 52.

⁷ Gal. iii. 21; Rom. viii. 17.

they were given to Christ, the Mediator, to be redeemed and brought into sonship. Their names were inscribed in the roll of the covenant—the Lamb's book of life—under the name of the only-begotten Son, the First Elect; and out of it they can never be erased. They were “predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren,” “having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”¹ The adoption of the elect thus originates from God's eternal love and sovereign grace. Its objects were children of wrath and aliens from God; of the family of the evil one, and under condemnation. Yet, in the Father's eternal decree, they were chosen in Christ; associated with Him before the foundation of the world; predestinated to sonship; and all this as expressive of his wondrous love towards them, and his infinitely gracious and tender interest in them. All the persons of the blessed Trinity had a part in this amazing transaction. In the constitution of the covenant of grace, each person of the Godhead fully concurred in the important design, and condescended to occupy a distinct place in carrying it into accomplishment. The First Cause, or the Adopter, was the Eternal Father, to whom it was befitting to have the saved standing in the relation of sons. The Second Person of the Godhead, the proper and only-begotten Son of God, had the elect given him, to be redeemed, to bear his image, and to be “many sons” to be brought “to glory.”² And the blessed Spirit is himself “the Spirit of adoption,” by whose agency they are brought into the family, by whom they are led, and whose inward witness attests their sonship. Thus the grand source and moving cause of the believer's sonship is the superlative love of God in Trinity. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” “That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”³

In this gratuitous choice of the elect, we see the marked distinction between *civil* adoption and *spiritual*, and the transcendent excellency of adoption into God's family. The will and consent of those whom God adopts are not required, as in the case of the ancient human custom. It is “not of him that willeth,” but “of God that showeth mercy.” God has the sovereign right to select whom He will to bring them into his family, and the efficacious influence of his grace makes them

¹ Rom. viii. 29; Ephes. i. 5. ² Heb. ii. 10. ³ Ephesians ii. 7, 8.

willing in the day of his power. The adopter among men had no son or heir, and hence he took an alien into his family, investing him with his name and the rights of sonship. God, on the contrary, besides his only-begotten Son, his "fellow" in the participation of the Divine nature, and "Heir of all things," had innumerable holy spirits whom He had created, to reflect his likeness and promote his glory. Unlike civil adoption, there was no excellency in the adopted of God to influence the choice of them; there was nothing to attract the Divine regard toward them; there was in them no worth or worthiness. Instead, they were "children of wrath, even as others"—transgressors from the womb—rebels and enemies. There were many objections against their adoption, many arguments against it, and none whatever for it. God himself speaks as if non-plussed in the view of their character about conferring upon them this great distinction. "How shall I put thee among the children!"¹—so sinful, disobedient, abominable—among them who are the loved ones of the Father, who bear his image, and who shall share his blessedness for ever? Again, in civil adoption, though the name and rights of a son may be given, the nature of a child cannot be imparted, nor the qualifications for enjoying the inheritance; but those whom God adopts, He makes "partakers of the Divine nature." They are conformed to the image of his Son, endowed with a disposition becoming the relationship they bear, and are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. There were cases in civil adoption wherein the relation and its rights might be set aside; but those who were predestined to be children of God, are without fail called and justified, and brought to life eternal. Thus, pre-eminent above all human relationship and privilege, the adoption of believers should ever present to the heart matter of adoring wonder, and gratitude, and praise, to the riches of God's grace, that predestined sinful, lost human beings to so excellent and honourable a distinction, and that instates them in the possession of all its unspeakable privileges.

2. The *meritorious cause* of the adoption of sons is *the redemption of Christ*. The "Captain of salvation" was made "perfect through sufferings, that He might bring many sons to glory."² "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive

¹ Jer. iii. 19.

² Heb. ii. 10

the adoption of sons.”¹ Deliverance from the curse and bondage of sin is essential to sonship. Those who were to be brought into God’s family were fallen under guilt and condemnation, and utterly unable to free themselves from this ruined condition. That they might be rescued from wrath and misery, and fitted for a place among holy ones, it was requisite that their vast debt should be paid, and that they should be redeemed from the curse. For this purpose, the Mediator and Surety, God’s eternal Son, was sent forth. He voluntarily assumed our nature. “He was made of a woman.” He was “made under the law,” as a broken covenant, to fulfil its condition, and bear its dread penalty. This He did by the spotless obedience of his life, and by his vicarious sufferings and death, that the guilty might be freed from condemnation, the lost recovered, and that those who were aliens and enemies might be reconciled and receive “the adoption of sons.”² Thus alone could lost sinners be adopted into the household of faith. By no other process could they enter the family. Naturally they were not of it, and could never of themselves become members of it, but they were brought into it. They required to be freed from their legal burden, and from the bondage of sin, before they were adopted. Their emancipation from this servitude is virtually their adoption. This could only be effected through the obedience and death of Christ. He died to redeem them; and as the reward of his finished work for them, “they receive the adoption of sons.” The original word³ may denote to “receive again,” or more properly to “receive into possession from a source.” Through the death of Christ we are brought into a new sonship, higher and more exalted than that which Adam possessed in the earthly paradise. By faith in the redemptive work of Christ, we, who were servants and bondsmen, are gifted with the character and privileges of sons. How marvellous the way in which our freedom has been wrought, and in which we are brought into the family of God! How unspeakably great and precious is the ransom price paid for our deliverance, and for the privileges which we are given to enjoy! Before any could be delivered from wrath and obtain sonship, the Son of God, who was in the bosom of the Father, came into the world, and was unspeakably abased in our humanity. He bare our sins on his

¹ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

² This, in the original, is not υλιτος, a natural sonship, but υιοθεσια, sonship conferred.

³ απολαβωμεν.

own body on the tree, and for us He was made a curse. The full penalty of the violated law, and all that the justice of heaven could demand, He suffered. The innocent suffered that the guilty might go free. Through the redemption wrought by Him, the objects of his love are rescued completely and for ever from wrath, and are brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. How manifold and great are their obligations to consider the solemn appeal, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."¹ The burden of their praises on earth and in heaven must ever be, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."²

3. The actual possession of sonship is by *the Holy Spirit through faith*. Sinners that were aliens from God, and dead in their trespasses and sins, are reconciled by the blood of Christ and quickened by the Holy Spirit. Adoption and regeneration are intimately and inseparably connected, though in several respects they differ. They flow from the same infinite source of Divine love and grace ; the same persons are both the adopted and the regenerated, and are brought into this condition at the same time ; and in the one case and in the other they obtain a meekness for the inheritance of the saints in light. Whether adoption precedes regeneration or follows it, it is not important to determine.³ These two great changes may be distinguished, but cannot be separated. Adoption is a *legal* act, the change which it implies is *relative*. Regeneration is an internal change, by which we become partakers of the Divine nature. The privilege, however, and image of the sons of God go together. The great agent in the one case and in the other is the Spirit of God. They who believe are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God."⁴ Called to

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

² Rev. i. 5, 6.

³ This matter is discussed by Charnock in his "Discourse on Regeneration." He says, "The new name in adoption is never given till the new creature is formed. Yet they are to be distinguished. Regeneration, as a *moral* act, gives us a likeness to God in our nature ; adoption, as a *legal* act, gives us a right to an inheritance. Regeneration makes us *formally* his sons by conveying a principle (1 Pet. i. 23) ; adoption makes us *relatively* his sons by conveying a power (John i. 12). By the one, we are installed in the Divine affection ; by the other, we are partakers of the Divine nature."

⁴ John i. 13.

the distinction and privileges of sonship, they are spiritually quickened ; their nature is changed, and they are new created after the moral image of God. The grand *instrument of regeneration* is the Word of truth—the Gospel of salvation. “Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.”¹ By faith implanted in the heart, and brought into operation by the Spirit, the Word is received, and the great things revealed in it are appropriated. Especially is Christ Jesus “the Author and Finisher of faith,” embraced as the foundation of trust, the centre and source of all joyful hope. When the Comforter comes, his office is to “glorify” Christ, and to take the things which are his, and reveal them to the heart.² By a living faith we apprehend the revelation, behold the Saviour’s glory, and receive the things that are his by sharing with Him the inheritance of sons. The grand Gospel invitation and offer are, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”³ We are called to come out from a natural state of guilt and alienation from God, and to separate from the world lying in the wicked one, and from all ungodliness. Quickened by the Spirit, and drawn by a discovery of the Saviour lifted up, we are inclined and enabled to make this separation. We forget our father’s house, and willingly forsake all for Christ. In the act of renunciation, we are received by our heavenly Father, and become “the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.”

The pregnant expression of the Evangelist declares clearly and fully the way in which we are brought into sonship : “For as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe in his name.”⁴ This bespeaks the enlarged freedom and extent of the precious relation. “*To as many*”—of whatever name or nation, Jew or Gentile, and whatever their previous condition or character. The privilege becomes certainly ours by faith. Christ offers himself ; and the primary duty or first acting of faith is to accept Him in his person, offices, and gracious relations, and not merely the benefits which He brings. We believe in his name, and repose implicit confidence in Him, as He is proclaimed in the Gospel—the Prophet, Priest, and King of the covenant ; we embrace the salvation promised as the treasure and portion of the soul, and we rest with satisfaction upon

¹ James i. 18.² John xvi. 13.³ 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.⁴ John i. 12.

Him alone for all blessing in time and eternity. In thus receiving Christ, we commit our all to Him ; we cast ourselves, and everything that concerns us, upon Him. The grand act of true saving faith is *acceptance and appropriation*. It is embracing Christ on the authentic offer of the Gospel. It is looking to Him as lifted up, and being attracted to Him as the moral magnet of the heart. It is appropriating Him in all that He is and for all that we need, and relying upon Him as God's unspeakable gift for the abundant supply of all our wants. By this faith of the operation of the Spirit, we are vitally united to Christ ; and such is the nearness and undecaying nature of the union, that we are identified with Him in name and in the participation of all covenant privileges. "Believing in his name, we become *the children of God*."¹ Faith in Christ is the grand mark of distinction in the family of God. Those in whom the Spirit has implanted it are given "power" (ἐξουσία)—the privilege or capability, "the *inner-enabling*—to become the sons of God." The adoption itself is this power or dignity. In the act of believing with the heart, they are adopted into God's family, and placed in a new and gracious relation, of which they are never afterwards deprived. The adopted children of God are born "not of blood," not of any eminent human birth, not by the natural will, which is fleshly and depraved, nor after the way of civil adoption, or by any power which men exercise over their fellows, as by persuasion or eloquence, or by the mere presentation of truth to the mind. The work is of God alone ; not of man, "but of God." Not outward relation or standing in the Church, no pious parentage or external baptism, makes us children of God. Those, and they only, who embrace Christ Jesus as He is freely offered in the Gospel, give evidence that they are born of God. The Spirit who works this faith in the heart produces true repentance as its immediate fruit. The wanderer, awakened and recalled, becomes sensible of his lost condition, and says, "I will arise and go to my Father, and say, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants."² The Father prevents the returning penitent with yearning compassion and tender mercy, embraces him with

¹ This is the original expression, and not "sons," as in the authorized version. It is more comprehensive in its import, and marks, too, the mode in which we become such—namely, by regeneration, or the new birth.

² Luke xv. 17, 18.

loving-kindness, and welcomes him, as a lost child restored to the family, to all the entertainment of the Father's house. His former backslidings are healed, his folly and sins for ever forgiven. He owns him in the fullest sense as his child; and his restoration to the privileges of sonship He delights to hold forth as the ground of sacred joy to the whole family. "Let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."¹ The prophetic announcement to be fulfilled in the future conversion of the Gentiles is accomplished in the effectual calling of all who are brought into the family of God. "It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."² The Spirit being the efficacious agent in regeneration and adoption, it concerns us earnestly to seek his presence and power. Our first great business is to believe on the Lord Jesus as He is offered in the Gospel. Faith working in the heart by love, producing true repentance, and generating works of holy obedience, marks our sonship, making it clearer to our own consciousness, and enabling us to shine as lights in the world. "the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation."³

¹ Luke xv. 24.² Romans ix. 26.³ Philip. ii. 15.

CHAPTER III.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

“Our Father, which art in heaven.”—MATTHEW vi. 9.

“He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.”—PSALM lxxxix. 26.

SONSHIP implies Fatherhood, and this relation, sustained by Jehovah to the family of the redeemed, is suggestive of the most endearing associations, and fraught with the greatest blessings. It is fitted to elevate the mind, excite the tenderest affections, and lead to assured confidence and joyful hope.

In an extensive sense, God is a Father, and is so revealed in his works as well as his Word. The paternal relation among men aids us in contemplating the loving relation in which God stands to his creatures: it is a shadow and representation of the Divine Fatherhood. Fatherly dispositions and dealings are ascribed to Him. By creation, He is the Father of intelligent beings. Angels are those “sons of God” that shouted for joy when “the morning stars,” at the dawn of creation, “sang together.”¹ Men are “his offspring,” and He is “the Father of the spirits of all flesh.” To ancient Israel “pertained the adoption,” and with them He expostulates, “Is He not thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath He not made thee and established thee?”² And in penitent confession and earnest supplication they plead, “Doubtless thou art our Father.” “Now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou art the potter, and we are all the work of thy hands.”³

1. But in a peculiar sense, far higher than these, is God the Father of the saints. His Fatherhood to them is a *gracious* relation, standing in the covenant of redemption, and fully exhibited in their union to Christ, the only-begotten Son. The prophetic announcement made by Nathan to David, “I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son,”⁴ refers to the Saviour to come, of whom Solomon was an illustrious type. The Father-

¹ Job. xxxviii. 7.

² Deut. xxxii. 6.

³ Isaiah lxiii. 16; lxiv. 8.

⁴ 2 Sam. vii. 14.

hood of God is eminently seen in the Eternal Son. In virtue of his filial relation to the First Person of the Godhead, Jesus is the "First-born among many brethren," and He himself is the "Everlasting Father." But although the Fatherhood of God to Christ may be regarded as the foundation of the fatherly relation of God to believers, it differs from it in the most essential manner. The sonship of Christ respects the mode of the Divine existence, and is necessary, eternal, and ineffable. The sonship of the redeemed, on the other hand, is a gracious relation, originating from the sovereign will and grace of God. Believers are children, not by nature, but by adoption and regeneration. They are said to be "partakers of the Divine nature"—not originally, or as viewed in the covenant, but as the end of receiving "exceeding great and precious promises." Through faith uniting them to Christ, and by the indwelling and agency of the Holy Spirit, the Divine image is renewed in their souls; and a new nature, conformable to the holy nature of God, is formed within them, with new spiritual tastes, capable of delighting in God, and finding supreme happiness in Him.

2. The Fatherhood of God to the saints is clearly seen *in the revelation made from the beginning*, and especially in the *full revelation of the New Testament*. The Redeemer promised from the beginning was, in the fulness of time, "made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."¹ He was, moreover, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."² He was presented in the mystery of his person and atoning work to the faith of the Church under the old economy, long before his manifestation in the flesh. The covenant of grace was the basis of God's merciful dealings with a fallen race from their earliest history. This covenant is the same, though the administration is different, under the Old and New Testaments. The Spirit was given in a more limited measure to believers under the ancient dispensation; but it was through his gracious operation that they who believed embraced the promises, brought forth in their lives the fruits of a living faith, and were animated by a blessed hope. As faith in God is the mark of sonship in all ages, the glorious object of trust and confidence must have been known to believers from the beginning, in his Fatherly character and relation. It is plainly inconsistent with the idea of a "household of faith"

¹ Galatians iv. 4

² Revelation xiii. 8.

existing from the earliest times, and opposed to many express declarations of the Word, to hold, as some do, that God was made known to the Church of old as only a Lawgiver and Judge, and was not revealed in his Fatherly relation till Christ came. When the seed of Abraham were taken to be God's peculiar people, to them "pertained *the adoption*, and the glory, and the covenants."¹ God was revealed to them as their Father in covenant; so by his "name Jehovah" was He known to them.² When Moses was commissioned to demand of Pharaoh their release from bondage, he is bid to declare, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my Son, even my First-born."³ Ancient Israel included the spiritual seed, and was typical of the people of God in all ages. The acts of their solemn and accepted worship recognized fully the Fatherhood of God, and were the utterance of the heart of the saints under the former economy. These celebrated his praise when they sang, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."⁴ They addressed Him in prayer, "Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever."⁵ And in times of great trial, they pleaded God's Fatherhood as an argument for deliverance and restored favour: "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."⁶

The covenant-dealings of God with his people, through the whole of the Old Testament, exhibit this as the predominant feature of his character. His pity, in compassionating their affliction and misery; his loving thoughts towards them; his gracious tenderness; his readiness to interpose for their help and deliverance; and his joy and delight in their return to obedience and holy fellowship—all display the Fatherhood of their covenant God. Notwithstanding their weakness, backsliding, and rebellion, He is not ashamed to be called their God and Father. Though, like some other aspects of the Divine character, and of the wondrous scheme of human redemption, the full, bright discovery was reserved for the dispensation of the Gospel, and the "ministration of the Spirit," excelling in glory, yet we can in no wise doubt that the Fatherhood of God was revealed to the saints of old, and taught by the Spirit to believers under the law. The Abrahamic covenant, the charter of the visible Church, holds forth the great

¹ Romans ix. 4.³ Exodus iv. 22.⁵ 1 Chron. xxix. 10.² Exodus vi. 3.⁴ Psalm ciii. 13.⁶ Isa. lxiii. 16.

fundamental promise, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."¹ This the law of types and ordinances could not disannul; and it yet remains the security of all gracious privileges, and exhibits God as standing to his people in all endearing relations. Among these, the paternal relation has ever occupied, as it will always occupy, a prominent place. It is to the believer, as it has ever been, the constant object of heartfelt trust, of gratitude, of prayer, of spiritual converse, and delightful fellowship.

3. The Fatherly relation of God to believers, and their sonship, *is in and through Christ*. He is the Eternal Son, and as set up from everlasting, He was ordained to be "the First-born among many brethren." He is the Head of the Church, the centre of unity to the family of God. From eternity, the Son was set King upon Zion, the hill of God's holiness. In all his work of obedience and vicarious suffering, He was owned as the Father's "well-beloved Son," in whom He was "well-pleased." The mind of Christ on earth is seen in all its workings, in the highest exercise of all holy graces—in faith, in resignation, in zeal, in complacency and delight, in communion with the Father, and in proposing, as his highest end, the advancement of his glory. The grand end of his advent—as it was of his Surety engagement—was to do his Father's will. From the earliest days of his ministry on earth, He was about his "Father's business." This was his meat and his drink. In his last agony he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Yet He resigned himself wholly to his Father's disposal—"Not my will, but thine, be done;" "The cup that my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?"²

By his resurrection from the dead, He was declared to be "the Son of God with power."³ And to express, in the fullest and most consolatory terms, the interest of the redeemed in his relation to the exalted Head of the covenant, to whom the ransom was paid, and their union and fellowship with Him in glory, He said, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."⁴ The Lord ascended to heaven, and returned to the Father, not merely as He left his bosom and came down to earth. He was, indeed, "glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was." But He had this additional glory on entering heaven: He ascended as the Son of man; his humanity was exalted above all created beings in heaven and earth. The marks of his sufferings and

¹ Gen. xvii. 7.² John xviii. 20.³ Rom. i. 4.⁴ John xx. 17.

the trophies of his victory, He wears as the *Lamb slain* in the midst of the throne—death and hell's mighty Conqueror. In glory, He has a brother's nature and heart still. His Sonship as a person in the Godhead sheds transcendent lustre on Him as the Son of man, and displays the inconceivable glory of that communion with the Father, which, as the Church's Head, He shares in common with his redeemed people. They are sons of God, indeed, in a different sense from Him, as the *only-begotten* and *well-beloved* Son of God. Still, their having the same exalted designation conveys the idea of their dignity and honour. He is the "First-born;" and they, too, receiving the *adoption* of children, are the "Church of the First-born which are written in heaven,"¹—sharing in all his honours, and partaking of all the privileges which He has the right to confer. Christ's resurrection, in which He was manifested to be "the Son of God with power," is the efficient cause of our regeneration, the source of our spiritual quickening and sonship. By our new birth, we have life in a risen Saviour. He has risen and ascended to a new, powerful, undecaying life in glory—sin and death being put away, and conquered by his one perfect sacrifice. We are risen together with him to newness of life, to know the blessedness of calling God our Father, and to enjoy for ever the glorious inheritance that is set before us in blissful prospect.

4. The Fatherhood of God, which believers enjoy through Christ, is to them *the source and assurance of all blessing for time and eternity*. They are entrusted to the Father's infinite and eternal love,² and nothing shall ever be able to separate them from it.³ He pities them as a Father does his children. Even when they are wayward and rebellious, as "a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke," and they are chastised with the rod of men, in yearning confession and tenderness, He heals their backslidings and restores them again. "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord God."⁴ His wise, tender, fatherly care is ever over them. He keeps them as the apple of his eye. The hairs of their head are all numbered. He knows that they have need of things temporal and spiritual, and this is reason sufficient why their heavenly Father should supply them at the most

¹ Hebrews xii. 23.

² Jer. xxxi. 2.

³ Romans viii. 39.

⁴ Jer. xxxi. 20.

suitable time, and in the most befitting circumstances. He *sons* them, even when they backslide from Him, as did the prodigal from his father's house; and when human friends "acknowledge them not," He is not "ashamed to be called their God." He is "a Father to Israel," when Israel is unbelieving and perfidious in the covenant. All blessings that His people need—temporal and spiritual—are supplied from the Father's love and care, and out of His bountiful fulness; and this is the great prevailing argument in seeking their enjoyment. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"¹ Some things that God's children ask are denied to them, because He sees that they would not be for their good. His wisdom is exercised in choosing the best time and way of giving. But what is really good and conducive to their best interests, and what they indispensably need, He will not withhold. When they ask, He will graciously give; and while they are yet speaking, He will hear and answer. If the love and care of earthly parents—even though they are sinful and evil—will prompt them to supply the pressing wants of their children, how much more will the heavenly Father, who is infinitely loving and benevolent, furnish all good gifts to them that ask Him?

Our Father in Christ brings his children to *the nearest and most blessed fellowship with Himself, here and hereafter*. When asked how He manifests himself to his disciples, and not to the world, Jesus, in his discourse in the "upper chamber," answered, "If a man love me, He will keep my Word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."² This is the gracious assurance that the blessed Trinity will maintain intimate communion with believers. The coming of the Father and the Son includes the Spirit, because He reveals the Son, and sheds abroad His love in the heart, just as the Son reveals the Father. The Father and the Son come by the Spirit, really and personally, but not visibly, and make their abode with believers. The Father is

¹ Matthew vii. 11.—When the evangelist Luke records the same discourse of our Lord, he gives the expression,—“give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him” (Luke xi. 13); as if to intimate that the gift of the Spirit is the sum and chief of all the “good things” which our heavenly Father gives.

² John xiv. 23.

recognized and embraced by the Spirit of adoption, which He has sent forth as the Spirit of his Son into their hearts. Such communion the saints here enjoy, in keeping Christ's Word and loving his name ; and in a far higher measure will they realize it, when they shall come to the Father's house of "many mansions" in heaven, and be admitted to glorious, uninterrupted fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for ever. "It is because He is our Father that we confidently expect good things from Him, that we trace all the light and love of past days to his paternal forethought and mercy," and that we cherish joyful anticipations of future blessedness. Well might Luther say, in contemplating his interest in the Fatherhood of God in Christ, "If I could only truly believe it, that God, the Creator of heaven and earth and all things, is my Father, I could conclude that Christ is my brother, and that all things are mine, Gabriel my servant, and Raphael my charioteer, and all the angels ministering to me in my necessities, and sent to my aid by my heavenly Father." Again, in his "Commentary on the Galatians," he says—"This little word Father, conceived effectually in the heart, passeth all the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and the most eloquent rhetoricians that ever were in the world. The matter is not expressed with words, but with groanings ; which groanings cannot be uttered with any words of eloquence, for no tongue can express them."¹

¹ Luther's "Commentary on the Galatians," p. 375.

CHAPTER IV.

RELATION TO CHRIST, THE ELDER BROTHER.

“I will make Him my First-born, higher than the kings of the earth.”—
PSALM lxxxix. 27.

“His name shall be the Everlasting Father.”—ISAIAH ix. 6.

THE Sonship of believers stands in near and very intimate connection with the person and work of the Redeemer. This we proceed to illustrate in a few particulars.

1. The Divine Fatherhood *may be ascribed to the second* as well as to any of the other persons of the blessed Trinity. Though it may be viewed as, in a peculiar sense, characteristic of the First Person in his economical relation, it belongs to the whole Godhead. God in Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the God and Father of the redeemed; and each of the sacred persons may be regarded as sustaining a fatherly relation to those that are predestined to the adoption of sons. As the “Seed of Abraham,” Christ is “the Father of many nations;” and the spiritual seed, which it is promised as the reward of his atoning work He shall see, are as “the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea,” innumerable. Those who are adopted in regeneration are “begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.” They are new created after his image, and receive from Him the nature of sons. They are “the children whom God hath given him,” and are “for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion.”¹ Thus Christ, the Son of God, sustains the fatherly relation to the adoption of grace, cherishes toward them all the love and tender compassion which it implies, and does whatever a Father’s heart and bowels of mercy prompt in their behalf.

2. Again, the spiritual *union* between Christ and his people is inseparable from their sonship, and leads to the enjoyment of all its privileges. In the effectual application of redemption

¹ Isaiah viii. 18; Hebrews ii. 13.

by the Spirit, believers are joined to Christ as the Head, by a vital, mystical, and indissoluble union. As they become one with Him in a sense nearer than any creature-union can fully illustrate, *his* God becomes *their* God, and *his* Father *theirs*. As indicating the closeness and excellency of this spiritual union, the parties have given to them the same names. He is the Son, and they are sons; He the "Heir of all things," and they "the joint-heirs with Him." It is a *vital conjugal* union. He is the living Head, and believers are the living members of his mystical body. They are betrothed to the heavenly husband in righteousness and judgment, in faithfulness, loving-kindness, and mercies for ever.¹ The Bridegroom and Head of the Church is the "King's Son," his ransomed spouse is the King's daughter, made "all glorious within," and brought into the palace and presence of the King to abide for ever.²

3. Christ is the *Elder Brother* of those that are adopted into God's family. As He took our nature, and is possessed of a common humanity with us, "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."³ As He is the Son of God, so by adoption they become the sons of God too. How loving and tender is this relation! How fraught with comfort and blessing to those who are admitted to it! Christ regards his saints with the love of a brother's heart. He takes the tenderest interest in all their concerns, and He never ceases to do them good. "A friend loveth at all times." "A brother is born for adversity."⁴ The first message of tender remembrance and affection sent to his disciples by the risen Saviour, recognized them in this relation. He used a designation that He had not employed in addressing them before. "Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."⁵ Exalted to the throne of the universe, He has a brother's nature and heart still; and with his brethren on earth—in all their privileges and enjoyments, in all their labours and trials—He manifests the tenderest interest and most cordial sympathy. It is their Brother's blood that pleads on their behalf before the throne. He ever invites and encourages their approach to his immediate presence. As Joseph, when he made himself known to his brethren, He invites them—"Come near to me, I am Jesus, your brother."⁶

¹ Hosea ii. 19, 20.

² Psalm xliv. 14, 15.

³ Hebrews ii. 11.

⁴ Proverbs xvii. 17.

⁵ John xx. 17.

⁶ Genesis xlv. 4.

The continual work in which He delights, and which is the burden of the praises equally of the Redeemer and his saints, is the making known of his name and salvation—"I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise to thee."¹ How greatly should we rejoice in such a relation! How zealous should we ever be for the interests of Jesus, our brother! How tender of his honour! Desiring and delighting in loving intercourse with Him, and in the familiar tokens of his love, the longings of our hearts towards Him should be, "O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised. I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate."²

4. The Elder Brother provides for the children of the family all that *is needful for their support, and comfort, and happiness*. Whatever his wisdom and love towards them dictates, and their wants, and conflicts, and trials demand or require, He is at all times ready to do on their behalf. His heart moves his arm of power, and as He constantly loves and rejoices over them with His whole heart, He is always prepared to exert the might of Omnipotence for their succour and salvation. The era of their adoption is their "time of love," when "He passes by," and says to them, "live."³ The Son makes them free, and they are "free indeed."⁴ In the day of regeneration they hear the voice of the Son of God, and are quickened;⁵ as at his second coming the dead shall hear his voice sounding in the caverns of the tomb, and shall live. He reveals to them the Father;⁶ and as the expression of the tenderest friendship, He imparts to them his mind and the secret of the covenant. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?"⁷ The "Friend that sticks closer than a brother" thus addresses his friends: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."⁸ Their life, secured by union to him and by his almighty protection, shall be brought forth to bright manifestation in the day of his glorious appearance. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."⁹

¹ Hebrews ii. 12.² Song viii. 1, 2.³ Ezekiel xvi. 6, 8.⁴ John viii. 36.⁵ John v. 25.⁶ John i. 18; Matt. xi. 27.⁷ Gen. xviii. 17.⁸ John xv. 15.⁹ Colossians iii. 4.

He will at length gather into one, in the Father's many-mansioned house, the children of God who are scattered abroad, and "present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."¹ The full measure of their eternal felicity will consist in the Elder Brother dwelling with his ransomed ones for ever. They shall be with Him where He is, beholding his glory. "His servants shall serve Him. They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."² Thus excellent is the relation of the children of God to the Elder Brother; thus eminent and glorious are the privileges which result from it. How much it concerns them that the life which they now live in the flesh should be by faith in the Son of God! How should they honour Him as they honour the Father, seek growing conformity to Him, and look for the blessed hope to be fully realized at the glorious appearance of the great God our Saviour; to dwell with the Son in the Father's house, and share in his dignity and blessedness for ever and ever!

¹ Jude 24.

² Rev. xxii. 3, 4.

CHAPTER V.

RELATION OF THE ADOPTED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.”—GALATIANS iv. 16.

“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”—ROMANS viii. 14.

THE Holy Spirit acts an important part in conferring the adoption of sons, and in investing with its high privileges. Of the covenant in which they were chosen and predestined to be the children, He was the consenting and approving party ; and the *whole application* of the redemption provided and purchased is committed to Him. Upon Christ Jesus, the Head of the redeemed family, He descended and rested “without measure,” anointing Him with overflowing fulness of gifts and graces for the accomplishment of his undertaking. “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord ; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.”¹ Rejoicing in the prospect of his work on earth, and of its blessed effects long before his advent, the Redeemer, in prophetic announcement, spoke of the Spirit’s plentiful unction : “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”²

The “oil of gladness” with which the Son was anointed is given in measure to his “followers,”—the brotherhood of the household of faith. They too have an “unction from the Holy One ;”³ and the Spirit’s holy grace that was upon the great High Priest of our profession is on all his mystical body. “Like the precious ointment upon the head, that was suffused upon Aaron’s beard,

¹ Isaiah xi. 2, 3.

² Isaiah lxi. 1-3.

³ 1 John ii. 20.

and that went down to the skirts of his garments,"¹ the Holy Spirit works all gracious works in the members of the adopted family, and is the efficient cause to them of all privilege and blessing.

1. He is the *Author of their regeneration*—the great change which accompanies and evidences their adoption. They are "born of water and of the Spirit."² While baptism, of which water is the significant emblem, is the outward symbol of embracing Christ and his religion, the Spirit is the great agent. Without the baptism of the Spirit, that by water is of no avail. Hence, when our Lord, in the discourse with Nicodemus, explains the nature of the new birth in the subsequent verses (vers. 6 and 8), the water is not again named, but only the birth by the Spirit is mentioned as being the essential energy which the water itself represents, and without which even the blood of Christ, symbolized by the water, can neither pardon nor cleanse us. Like the bones "in the valley of vision," "very many and very dry," men remain utterly lifeless and helpless until "the Spirit and breath" enter into them. Then they are quickened and stand up as part of "an exceeding great army."³ They that were dead in trespasses and sins are made alive; and where it was said, "Ye are not my people," it is declared, "Ye are the children of the living God."⁴

2. The Spirit *dwells in the hearts of those adopted sons*. God hath "sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts." They are "an habitation of God."⁵ This indwelling of the Spirit is *personal*, and is an eminent part of "the great mystery of godliness." That the third person of the blessed Trinity should, in his condescending love, take up his abode in a polluted human heart, and continue to dwell there, cognizant of all its waywardness and folly, until He has purged out all its defilement, and renewed it in the perfect image of God, is an amazing wonder of Divine grace, only to be likened to the humiliation of Christ in assuming our nature and appearing in "the likeness of sinful flesh." The Holy Spirit in believers is the bond, on Heaven's part, of their union to Christ and oneness with Him. Christ dwells in their hearts by faith, and by his Spirit which He has given them. They thus become "living temples," the chosen residence of a present Deity, and the scene of the manifestation of his glory. This indwelling of the Spirit in believers is, above his influences, the source and energetic

¹ Ps. cxxxiii. 2.

² John iii. 5.

³ Ezek. xxxviii. 10.

⁴ Romans ix. 26.

⁵ Ephes. ii. 22.

power of all gracious operations. He is the principle of spiritual life, giving faith and its appropriate functions. He is the inexhaustible Fountain from which flow "rivers of living water."¹

3. The Spirit *enstamps* on the souls of the children of God the *image of Christ*, and renews them day by day. The moral likeness of God, which was lost by the fall of the first Adam, is restored through "the second Man, the Lord from heaven." As we have borne the image of the earthly, so are we brought to bear the image of the heavenly. The Spirit enables us to grow up to likeness to Christ in all things. The sons of God are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This transformation is gradual, and at the same time real and abiding, and carried forward to glorious perfection. Through the Word, as in a glass, the Son is revealed, and the adopted members of the family, beholding with love and wisdom the glory of the Elder Brother, are "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."² This is a *royal likeness*, indicating princely descent and dignity. Each one of them becomes a King's son or daughter, as they are predestined heirs of a kingdom. This image of Christ, formed in the soul, is the concentration of all holy graces,—“the living fruits of the Spirit;” and its increasing development lies in the vigorous exercise of grace in the heart and life. The faith in Christ Jesus, by which we receive the adoption of children, is generated, strengthened, and perfected by the Spirit. The love, hope, and joy which spring from faith are the effects of his powerful operation. He too it is who alone efficaciously works patience, meekness, long-suffering, gentleness; and who enables believers to add to their faith "virtue, knowledge, temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity."³ The new spiritual nature of sons is imparted, assimilated to "the mind that was in Christ Jesus," and destined to reach its perfection in glory, by the transforming power of the Spirit.

4. The *leading of the Spirit* is a chief and excellent part of the fellowship which believers have with Him. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."⁴ Christ Jesus is Himself given "a Leader and Commander of the people."⁵ He is the "First of the family, the Head of the ransomed race." He is the pattern Son, to whom the

¹ John vii. 37.

² 2 Cor. iii. 18.

³ 2 Peter i. 5, 7

⁴ Romans viii. 14.

⁵ Isa. lv. 4.

Spirit, renewing our nature and dwelling within us, brings us into conformity. When Israel's Shepherd leads us out and goes before us, we are inclined and enabled to follow Him, by the internal powerful drawing of the Holy Spirit. He lovingly enlightens us, discovering to the soul the utter evil and sinfulness of sin, and the surpassing beauty of holiness. Especially does the Spirit lead to Christ, showing his suitableness and excellency, and enabling to come to Him as the Author of eternal salvation. He leads, moreover, to the conflict with sin, the enjoyment of peace with God, the precious means of grace, and to communion with the Father and the Son. He leads believers into the way of holiness and peace, and at length He "conducts them to the land of uprightness." While the believer prays, "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation," He is enabled to cherish the assured expectation—"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory."¹ How necessary and important is this gracious leading of the sons of God! As the Spirit speaks in the Word, and makes it the lamp to enlighten our path, we should hear and obey the voice thus speaking. Our grand duty and privilege are to cherish the internal motions of the Spirit as He works in the heart. We should not only *live* in the Spirit, but we should also "*walk* in the Spirit," as influenced, directed, and guided by Him.² By constant activity in the exercise of the Spirit's graces, we walk in love, and make progress in the way of holiness. We should beware of *grieving* our heavenly Guide, who is our most loving and greatest Friend.³ The Spirit is at the same time our *Teacher* and *Intercessor on earth*. While Christ intercedes for us in heaven, the Spirit works within us, dictating our petitions, exciting holy desires, and filling our mouth with arguments. He is grieved by inattention to his Word, by the love of sin, by pride, selfishness, covetousness, malevolent passions, and, especially, by all that is opposed to the authority and mind of Christ. By following the Spirit's leading, and yielding ourselves wholly to it, we act in character as the sons of God, and walk in the way of true and lasting felicity.

5. Moreover, in all his *offices and operations*, the Holy Spirit evidences his love to the children of God, and his fellowship with them. He is their *Sanctifier*. He purifies their hearts by faith. He "purges" the living branches that they may bring forth more fruit. By mortifying the deeds of the body, He

¹ Ps. xxv. 5; lxxiii. 24.

² Galatians v. 25.

³ Ephes. v. 30.

removes whatever in them would mar the Divine image and render them unmeet for the heavenly inheritance. And He positively and efficaciously works in them, renewing and transforming their spiritual nature, so that they shine as "lights in the world," and appear in "the beauty of holiness," like "dew from the womb of the morning."

He is the *Comforter* promised and sent by the ascended Saviour. The blessed *Paraclete* at once *teaches, exhorts, is their advocate*, and imparts all gracious *consolation*.¹ All his graces in the heart are fitted to give holy joy and strong consolation. The truth which He communicates is the "joy-inspiring sound;" the light which He imparts is pleasant to behold. In sanctifying, He dispels the clouds of error, cleanses from sin, and removes all that hinders the joy of salvation. There is solid peace in advancing holiness; there is calm tranquillity and confidence in the Spirit's advocacy, and intercession in prayer, and in communion with God. Wisdom's ways, into which the Spirit leads, are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. The "God of hope" fills his people "with joy and peace in believing, that they may abound in hope, according to the power of the Holy Ghost."²

Again, the Spirit "*bears witness* with our spirits that we are the children of God."³ The great matter attested by a twofold witness is our sonship, and, as the consequence, our heirship and inheritance. The first that bears testimony on this all-important subject is "*our own spirit*." This is our conscience purified and enlightened by the Word, which is often termed in Scripture our *heart*. "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him."⁴ The powers of the mind, intellectual and moral, apprehending the evidences of saintship which the Word presents, may come to a comfortable conclusion that we are the sons of God. If I receive Christ by faith, I have "power," or *inbred ability* to become a son of God. Receiving Christ proves sonship, and entitles to all its privileges. The heart witnessing to the fact may come to the comfortable conclusion that one is a child of the family of God. "*To them that believe, He is precious*."⁵ A believer may say without presumption that he has the experience that Christ has been, and is unspeakably precious to him; and as

¹ The original term—*Παράκλητος*—is very comprehensive, denoting, in different aspects, a Teacher, Exhorter, Advocate, and Comforter.

² *Romans* xv. 13.

⁴ 1 *John* iii. 19.

³ *Romans* viii. 16.

⁵ 1 *Peter* ii. 7.

He is only such to believers, that he is therefore of the household of faith. If we love the brethren, saints as such, and because we discern the features of Christ's image in them, we have "passed from death to life." When we are made conscious that we love the people of God, and have delight in them just in proportion as they love Christ and resemble Him, we may be assured of our regeneration and adoption. We know that we love God, and give a real expression of love to Him by keeping his commandments. Even when sensible of the manifold imperfection and sin of our acts of obedience, we may have this testimony of our conscience, that the habitual desire of our heart and aim of our life are to keep the Divine commandments. If we know and love Him, this proves that He "first loved us," and "hath given us eternal life." We thus conclude that we are his children, and that the adoption of sons is ours.

But the Holy Spirit, as a Divine Person, also bears testimony to our sonship *to* and *with* our spirits. By presenting vividly the evidences of the new birth in the Word, working gracious dispositions in our souls, and invigorating and shining on His own work, He enables us to draw the conclusion on right grounds that we are children of God. Thus *He* witnesses to our own witness. But He also witnesses conjointly *with our spirits*. The Holy Spirit has immediate access to the minds He has made and quickened. He personally gives evidence by shining on Divine promises and invitations, showing us our interest in them, and applying them with a secret, all-subduing, and assuring power. He "sheds abroad the love of God" in the heart, and excites, in return, filial love to God, and assured confidence in Him. Sometimes He fills our soul with joy and peace in believing, and so works upon gracious affections that the person is constrained to cry out, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love."¹ At times, "the Spirit of grace and supplication" draws out the soul in prayer, and gives a sense of nearness to God, and the assurance of prayer being heard and graciously answered. He can bring to vivid remembrance the Word which Jesus has spoken, present Christ and his salvation in attractive beauty and lustre to the heart, and bring a sense of pardon and acceptance into the soul, like a draught from rivers of God's pleasures. He can show heaven opened, and the glories of the land of inheritance, so that the believer

¹ Song ii. 5.

cannot doubt of the Father's great love toward him, and of his own interest in the covenant, and the things of eternal salvation. Besides, the Spirit, making us more like Christ in spirit and disposition, and enabling us to reflect his likeness, bears witness to ourselves and others that we are the children of God. From all eternity we were predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son ; and so the Spirit, by producing this conformity, witnesses to our election, and thus, too, to our sonship. When such testimony is borne *to* and *with* our spirits, it brings its own evidence with it, and gives a certain and joyful assurance of the future glorious inheritance.¹ "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." "The assurance of grace and final salvation, being a fruit of saving faith, and not of its essence, may be at times wanting to the children of God, and, even after it has been enjoyed, may be obscured and interrupted. Yet it is attainable. Founded as it is upon the Divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, and the testimony of the Spirit of adoption with our spirits that we are the children of God, we may know our election of grace, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Finally, the Holy Spirit is to the children of God the *seal* and *earnest* of the heavenly inheritance. "He which establisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God ; who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption." "In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance."² The Spirit, as a Divine Person, dwelling in the heart, is himself this seal of the living God to separate and secure the saints, and likewise to confirm to them the inheritance of sons, and fit them for its full enjoyment. They are sealed *after* they believe ;

¹ "This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the Divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which those promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God ; which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he be a partaker of it ; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto."—*Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. xviii. sec. 2, 3.

² 2 Cor. i. 21, 22 ; Ephes. i. 13, 14, iv. 30.

and, like as the Son was sealed by the Father for his great undertaking and all his offices, the sons of God are sealed by "the Holy Spirit of promise" for the duties and privileges of their new gracious relation. As He makes them holy, and confirms to them Divine promises, He assures them of the love of the covenant, and clears up their title to the inheritance of the saints in light. As "an earnest" is, beyond a pledge, the begun enjoyment of future glory, his gracious work in the heart,—the spices flowing forth,—are heaven already in possession. As the fragrance of a land of spices is wafted over the sea to neighbouring countries, so the gales of the Spirit are as the breezes of heaven refreshing the heart. Like the large and luscious grapes of Eshcol, these are "the fruit of the land" of promise.¹ Different in degree, but not in kind, from the bliss in the Father's house in heaven, they give the strongest assurance, the experience of which the heart is conscious, that we number with "the many sons" that are to be brought to glory. So excellent is the "love of the Spirit!" So wonderful the fellowship which we enjoy in the congregation of saints! Never should we doubt his condescending love or undervalue his gracious operations. The work of the Spirit *within* us is to be daily tested and tried by his Word *without* us. And just as we experience the presence and graces of the Spirit in our hearts, so will we cleave to the Word of God, and delight in the ordinances of his house. Come, O blessed Spirit! enlighten and sanctify us by the truth. Witness with our spirits, when we are in darkness or doubt, to our sonship. Help our manifold infirmity in prayer² by thy powerful inward intercession. Make ready the heart, sealing it, and the inheritance to it, unto the day of redemption, and be thyself the "first-fruits" of heavenly blessedness!

¹ Numbers xiii. 23, 24.

² Romans viii. 26.—The reading sustained by the best MS. authority is in the singular "infirmity," not "infirmities." This is significant and expressive, for our greatest weakness, as all saints are ready to acknowledge, is in heartfelt spiritual prayer, which the Spirit alone can help us to offer. He is emphatically "the Spirit of grace and supplication."

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS—FELLOWSHIP IN THE ADOPTED FAMILY.

“ We being many are one body and one bread, as we are all partakers of that one bread.”—1 CORINTHIANS x. 17.

“ That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us : and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”—1 JOHN i. 3.

THE loving intercourse of the members of the same family, united by the tenderest ties, and cherishing a deep and constant concern in all that pertains to their common and individual good, furnishes an example of the most endearing fellowship on earth. It affords the finest scope for the vigorous and healthful exercise of the social principle. In mutual love, saints rejoice together in the prosperity and comfort of one another : they bear each other's burdens, co-operate cheerfully in promoting the welfare of the family, as, by cordial sympathy in suffering and trials, the evils of life are mitigated ; and there is joy experienced from the tenderness of friendship, even in seasons of sorrow and affliction.

The adopted family of God exhibits the fellowship of human beings in aspects more pure, elevated, and lasting, than aught that the nearest and most loving intercourse of earthly relationships holds forth to our esteem and admiration. The ties of grace, binding heart to heart; are stronger and more enduring than those of nature ; and as the result of union to the blessed Father and Head of the ransomed family, the children of God, called to the fellowship of the Gospel, display the excellency of their spiritual association. Next to communion with God himself, the fellowship of saints is one of the most exalted and endearing privileges that can be realized on earth. “ *I believe in the communion of saints*” is a fundamental article of our Christian profession.¹ It is inseparably connected with the

¹ Apostles' Creed.

enjoyment of spiritual benefit from the Word, the fruit and evidence of its saving power, and, as a practical principle, it largely promotes our edification and comfort in the Divine life. The Apostle John represents this communion as the end of the ministrations of the Gospel: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."¹ We are thus taught (1) that a principal design of declaring the Gospel, whether by preaching or private intercourse, is to bring believers to a holy fellowship; and (2) that this communion of saints is immediately connected with the highest fellowship with the blessed Godhead: it is an eminent means of introducing to its enjoyment. By believing the Word, we are brought to this fraternity of saints, and introduced into near and loving intercourse with the God of salvation, and to the enjoyment of its unspeakable blessings.

In the communion of saints, the members of the redeemed family feel a joint interest in matters of the highest importance. They are of one spirit; like-minded; have mutual joys and sorrows; are united in work and sympathy; and are made partakers of the same blessed hope.

1. The fellowship of the adopted family results from their *union* to the *one glorious Head*. They are children of the Father, whose image they bear, whose love has lighted upon them, and is shed abroad in their hearts; and his glory is the great end of their existence. Christ Jesus is to them the Head of vital influence and honour. By their union to Him, they are separated from the world, and incorporated into *one spiritual body*. They become thus not only members of Christ, but, at the same time "members one of another." The fellowship to which the saints are admitted with the Redeemer they delight to share with Him, and with all that bear his image. They have privileges and joys in common, live to the same high ends, cherish the like holy expectations, and are animated by the same blessed hopes. Hence result the offices of a sacred brotherhood. A loving interest and complacency in saints is a fruit of the new birth, and its certain evidence. It characterizes all who belong to the household of faith. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him."²

2. In the communion of saints, we are partakers of the

¹ 1 John i. 3.

² 1 John iii. 14; v. 1.

common salvation. However different their former condition, however diversified the features of their natural characters, they are now, through the grace that bringeth salvation, freed from the wrath to come; they are the chosen servants of God, enlisted in the same spiritual warfare, and made conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him that loved them. There is a community of the closest kind in joint privilege and blessing, as there is the ready communication of benefits to those who are brought into it. The rays of light interpenetrate each other, while they intensify and heighten the effect of the whole. Thus the children of the light and of the day, walking in truth and love, strengthen and comfort one another, and diffuse an attractive radiance around them. The redeemed walk in "the way of holiness," and go on from strength to strength till they appear before the Lord in Zion. This holy fellowship is effected *by the Spirit through the power of the Word.* "If there be any fellowship of the Spirit."¹ Believers, whatever was their previous state, are made "partakers of the Holy Ghost," and are, in consequence, "of one heart and one spirit." "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."² The Spirit impresses upon them the same image of holiness. He imparts like precious faith, and peace, and joy, and hope. By the Word of truth, which the Spirit employs as his great instrument. He assimilates their moral nature, and makes them one in heart and disposition, aim and pursuit, and end. The sons of God have fellowship with the blessed Spirit himself, when they cherish his motions, and walk by his guidance and grace. And, through Him, they realize communion with the whole family in heaven and earth named after Christ.

3. The fellowship of saints is enjoyed in their entertaining the same *views* and *sentiments* on the things revealed in the Word. The eyes of their understanding are spiritually enlightened. The "Father of glory" has given them "the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Him."³ They see light in God's light. Hence they have the like views of sin and salvation, of the glory of Christ, and of the excellency of his salvation. The grand principles of their creed and life are identical. All of them have been led to know the demerit and pollution of sin, the vanity and evil of the world, and the surpassing glory of the kingdom of Christ. The law of God is

¹ Phil. ii. 2.² 1 Cor. xii. 13.³ Ephesians i. 17, 18.

put in their minds and written on their hearts. They "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel."¹

4. In the *exercise of spiritual affections* the children of God realize the fellowship of saints. Loving the Father, they are constrained to love every one that is begotten of Him. Having been by nature at enmity with God, they were "hateful and hating one another;" but when saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewal of the Spirit, love becomes the ruling power in their hearts—the directing, governing principle of their conduct. Fellow saints are loved with a pure heart fervently. Brotherly love, rising far above that of benevolence to all men, is the love of complacency. In yearning desires for their growth in grace, usefulness and felicity, in tender compassion for their trials and wants, and joy in the salvation and honour of fellow-saints, believers manifest the love of the brethren, and partake themselves of the blessedness of such communion. This special love of saints refuses to be confined within the bounds of sect or party, or to be limited by earthly relationships of kindred or place. It flows out toward all who bear the image of God, and who belong to the redeemed family. By our love to the brethren, the evidence grows clearer and clearer that we are ourselves children of God. This, too, is the grand proof that attests our Christianity to the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another."² And through this likewise our spiritual consolation abounds, and we attain to a deeper acquaintance with the mysteries of the Gospel. "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."³

5. The communion of saints is maintained *in acts of joint spiritual worship*. The public services of the sanctuary, and those of the prayer meeting, are greatly valued, not only as ordained means of communion with God, but also as ordinances in which saints have fellowship with one another at the throne of grace; and not in these alone, but when hindered from coming together to any local meeting-place, and even when widely separated by distance, we have communion one with the other. In united prayers and praises, we come to our Father's throne, and receive blessings that are mutually

¹ Philip. i. 27.

² John xiii. 24.

³ Col. ii. 2.

needed, in answer to the prayers of the brotherhood of faith. This is often the realized support and joy of the communion of believers on earth. Separated as they are at times in the world, not having seen one another in the flesh, or parted so that they meet not here again, by mutual intercessory prayer they may meet daily in the presence-chamber, and be made conscious of receiving blessings in work and trial, in life and death, in answer to prayer.

6. The fellowship of saints is enjoyed when they are engaged in *common work and conflict*. Few things there are that unite human hearts in stronger and tenderer affection than labour in a work of importance and common interest. The mutual aid that we receive from others sharing in our trials, the interest taken in the progress of the work, in the difficulties overcome, or that are yet to be surmounted, and in the prospect of its completion,—all these go to strengthen the bonds of attachment, and to furnish motives for renewed activity and perseverance in labour. If this is felt in relation to work that only concerns this present world and its transitory interests, much more is it realized in joint labour in works that respect human salvation, and the advancement of God's glory and the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth. When engaged in such works, not only are we "co-workers with God," and with holy beings in a higher sphere—angels and the spirits of just men made perfect—but our capacity for sustained labour is increased, and our happiness is augmented. When the Apostle Paul offers to one of the primitive churches the highest commendation of a minister, Epaphroditus, it is in these words: "My brother, and fellow-labourer, and fellow-soldier,"¹—the epithets rising in intensity, each indicating the closest fellowship and strongest attachment. He is not only regarded with affection as a brother, but a colleague in toil, and a companion in arms, one who stood by him in scenes of conflict and danger. This communion of saints in the work of Christ is the subject of devout thanksgiving and praise. The Apostle gives thanks to God "on every remembrance" of the Philippian Church, "on account of their fellowship" *in regard to* "the Gospel."² This fellowship is more than participation in the privileges of the Gospel. Nor does it only mean community of interest, or entire accord. Rather it denotes sympathy and co-operation in all that belongs to the defence and propagation of the Gospel.

¹ Philip. ii. 25.

² Philip. i. 5. —So the original words may be properly rendered.

Such fellowship in arduous and honourable labour has often gladdened the hearts of ministers, when members of their flocks, male and female, have willingly aided them in performing the Lord's work. This, too, has sustained the missionaries of the Cross in their conflict with darkness and idolatry, and in labouring for the world's conversion. And often, in the last utterances of the dying testimonies of the martyrs of Christ, emphatic and grateful mention has been made of the privilege of communion in work and suffering with fellow-confessors.¹

7. The spiritual communion of the family of God is manifested in *sharing with one another all good things* that they may possess, and *in sympathy and mutual help administered in evil things*, in wants, afflictions, temptations, and conflicts. We bear each other's burdens, and willingly communicate to the necessities of brethren. The primitive Christians, after the Pentecostal shower of the Spirit, called nothing that they had their own, but "had all things in common." So we having received all that we have from Christ for the advancement of his glory, should willingly recognize the claims of the members of his mystical body to share in all that He has given us. Of earthly goods which we possess, we are only stewards to a sovereign Master. As exemplifying his rich overflowing benevolence, we should be ever ready to communicate to the necessitous, and we should esteem it an honour and privilege to be almoners of his bounty to the least of his brethren. Whatever spiritual gifts and graces we have received, we should regard as conferred upon us, that we may use them for the edification and comfort of all who are gathered with us into the same family of faith. Our own comfort and blessing will be found in the liberal communication, whether of spiritual

¹ When Dr Carey went out to India, on his mission to the heathen, Fuller and the brethren who remained at home pledged their support in his arduous undertaking in these terms: "When you go down to the deep well, we will hold the rope to keep you from sinking, or to draw you out when in danger." In the close of the last testimony of the youthful martyr, Renwick, the parting from earth, and the welcome to heaven, are in these words: "Farewell, beloved sufferers of the Lamb! Farewell, sweet societies and desirable general meetings! Farewell, night wanderings for Christ and all sublunary things! Farewell, conflict with a body of sin and death! Welcome, scaffold, for precious Christ! Welcome, heavenly Jerusalem! Welcome, innumerable company of angels. Welcome, crown of glory! Welcome, above all, O thou blessed Trinity and one God! O Eternal One, I commit my soul into thy eternal rest."—*Spiritual Support and Consolation in Difficult Times (Letters of the Rev. James Renwick)*. See vol. iv. of these Works.

gifts or temporal benefits. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Honouring the Lord with our substance, and with the first-fruits of our increase, our barns are "filled with plenty," and our "presses burst out with new wine." "The liberal soul shall be made fat," and "he that watereth others shall himself be watered."¹

Finally. The fellowship of the family of faith will be fully realized when the ransomed of the Lord shall at *length be gathered together in glory*. Then they are brought to the sanctuary above—the place of exalted worship. They share in the same triumphs, and sing the same loud and joyful songs of praise. Their knowledge is perfect and intuitive. They have the same bright and beatific views of the character of God—of the Person of Christ—of the government of Providence—of the wondrous scheme of human redemption. "The Lord is their everlasting light, and their God their glory." All that could mar the closest, tenderest, most exalted fellowship of the saints is for ever done away. There is no separation, nor distance, nor alienation of affection. All imperfection of views or estrangedness is unknown in the redeemed company, when they are brought home to heaven. Christ Jesus is the grand object of attraction—of life and glory to all its blessed inhabitants. Brought to stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion—having "his Father's name written in their foreheads"—they have all that can unite them to the living Head, and in the most endeared communion to the glorified members of his body—the Church, and to holy angels for ever. Their joys are one. One loud hallelujah to the King will be the burden of all their rapturous praise. Whatever works of practical benevolence may be the employment of glorified saints throughout eternity, we are sure these will not be fitful, or performed apart, by isolated effort, or in painful trial or sorrow, as on earth. Saints in glory will co-operate in the labours of celestial beneficence, and their advancement in capacity of enjoyment, and their progress in bliss, will be connected with their complete and unreserved devotedness to the will and service of the King of glory. "They go no more out." "They serve Him day and night in his temple," and "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to fountains of living water, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."²

¹ Acts xx. 35 ; Prov. iii. 9, 10 ; xi. 25.

² Rev. iii. 12. ; vii. 15, 17.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION.

“For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”—ROMANS viii. 15.

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”—GALATIANS iv. 6.

THE adopted children of God are distinguished from others by their spirit and disposition, chiefly in its actings toward their heavenly Father and their brethren of the household of faith. “The *Spirit of adoption*” is given them; and this not only raises them above themselves, and transforms their moral nature, but also enables them to realize and enjoy the high privileges which nearness to God confers. Contrasting the state in which saints once were, to that into which they are brought by regeneration and adoption, the Apostle expressly declares, “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”¹ The people of God, under the Mosaic economy, though heirs of the promise, were in their minority, and their state differed little from that of servants and slaves: “They were under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father.”² The law from Sinai “gendered to bondage.” The spirit of the dispensation was necessarily servile. “Every transgression and disobedience received,” often immediately, the award of punishment; and hence fear, anxiety, and apprehension of wrath frequently pervaded the minds of ancient worshippers. We too, Gentiles by nature, while unregenerate, were in bondage to the God of this world, to the lusts that warred in our members, and to the law which ruled our conscience. By the law was the knowledge of sin; and however imperfect was this knowledge, it was sufficient to

¹ Romans viii. 15.

² Galatians iv. 2.

convince us of sin, to excite the dread of punishment, and to lead us to despair of ever pleasing God or finding acceptance with Him. We were actuated by slavish, disheartening fear in the performance of all duties, and felt rather as the servants of a hard master than as the children of a loving and compassionate Father. The Gospel comes, "that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve the Lord without fear." Soon as we embrace it and experience its saving power, we receive, instead of the spirit of bondage generating fear, "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

The "Spirit of adoption" may be regarded as the *Holy Spirit* dwelling in the hearts of believers. The context would seem to countenance this view, as the parallel passage in Galatians iv. 6 expressly declares that the Third Person in the Trinity, the "Spirit of his Son," is sent forth into the hearts of believers. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The Holy Spirit is termed the Spirit of God's Son, not only as He proceeds from the Son equally as from the Father, but also as He was given Him without measure, and as He is sent by Him, the fruit of his atonement and intercession. He is in the hearts of believers the Spirit of sonship. As the Son of God, the Head of the ransomed family, has the fulness of the Spirit in Him, so the members of the household, sharing the honour of this high designation, are made partakers of the same Spirit. To indicate the perfect unity and intimate fellowship that subsist between Christ and believers, they are called sons of God; and the Holy Spirit that sanctified his humanity and dwelt in Him, in the plenitude of all holy graces, is given them—the seal of their sonship—to distinguish them from others, as a peculiar people and a chosen generation. The personality of the Spirit is clearly implied by the parallelism of the expression—the mission, first of the Son, and then of the Spirit on the part of the Father. The Spirit which dwelt in the Son is given to believers as the token of their adoption, for it is the bond of union to the Elder Brother, "the First-born among many brethren." He was sent into their hearts,—the centre of emotion of their inner life and power; and his special function is to work in them a fuller resemblance to Christ, the Son of God, and to lead them to manifest the mind and disposition by which He was characterized.

While the Spirit of Christ, "the Holy Spirit of promise," is

thus, in an eminent sense, the Spirit of adoption in believers, the privilege may be best apprehended by considering the frame of mind, the feelings and habits, which He generates. The mystery of the Spirit's indwelling is best understood by the inward state and feelings which He imparts and which He draws forth in the activities of the life. By Luther and others the genitive is regarded as that of the source, *a filial nature*,¹ or "the disposition which flows from sonship;" that which renders their adoption evident to themselves and others. The expressed contrast in the passage, Romans viii. 15—"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage . . . but ye have received the Spirit of adoption," is that between two opposite dispositions of heart and habits of mind. In the one case, there is a feeling or sense of bondage, producing fear; in the other, a free, loving, trustful, and hopeful spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot be said to be "the author of bondage," as some have alleged.² The spirit which produces slavish fear is, when we are regenerated and become sons of God, exchanged for the spirit that henceforth rules in the heart and controls the life,—a spirit befitting their calling and character, and indicating their future destiny.

The workings of the Spirit of adoption may be seen in various aspects. In relation to *God our Father in Christ*. It discovers his *paternal character*, and opens to the view of believers *his loving heart*. Christ Jesus reveals the Father; and when we are brought to know Him, we see the Father. When one of Christ's disciples inquired in the upper chamber, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour's emphatic reply referred to Himself as the manifestation of the Father, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."³

Christ Jesus on earth was the grand representative of God to man. His life is the bright exhibition of God as a Father. To his chosen disciples, when He companied with them, He always presented the Father rich in mercy and full of pity; and by his example, He inculcated toward Him love, confidence, and joyful expectation. In the Spirit of adoption, we see the God of nature and providence revealed in Christ as our loving Father. Beholding and admiring the wonderful works of nature, we can say, "My Father made them all." The mysteries of providence are unfolded in the sovereign control, and the manifold wisdom

¹ Einen kindlichen Geist.

² *Hodge on the Romans.*

³ John xiv. 8, 9; Matt. xi. 27.

and care of the Redeemer who reconciles us to God. The marvellous displays of his goodness in providence are made by the paternal hand of Him who makes all to work together for the good of his children. In their greatest afflictions, believers have cause to rejoice in the thought that their Father is at the helm, controlling the billows of trouble, and guiding them to the desired haven. When the thought of the majesty and greatness of God overcomes us, when we are terrified by his inflexible justice, and the sense of our sin and unworthiness makes us afraid, the Spirit of adoption enables us to look to Jesus as He reveals the Father, and in rejoicing confidence to exclaim, "I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation." "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation."¹

Again, this spirit persuades *us of God's love to us, and gives us access to Him with boldness.* The love of God is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit which He hath given unto us."² In the unspeakable gift of the Saviour, in his matchless person and finished work, we have a constant noon-tide manifestation of God's love to sinners. He "*rests in his love;*"³ all his actings toward his saints beginning in love, and ending in it as the glorious issue. The Spirit of adoption makes it clear to us that God loved us before we loved Him, and that our love to Him originated from his toward us. With an "everlasting love" He loved us, and therefore with loving-kindness has He "drawn us."⁴ In the grateful emotions of a filial heart we can declare, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love."⁵ In this spirit we draw near to God. "Through Him," the Mediator, as the "new and living way," we "have access by one Spirit to the Father."⁶ "In whom we have boldness and access, with confidence, by the faith of Him."⁷ With greater freedom and confidence than a child goes to its earthly father to tell its wants, make known its cares, and enjoy the tokens of his affection, may we, by the Spirit of adoption, come at all times to our heavenly Father, pour out our hearts before Him, and cast all our burden upon Him. "It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works."⁸

¹ Isaiah xii. 2; Ps. lxxxix. 26.

² Romans v. 5.

³ Zephaniah iii. 17.

⁴ Jeremiah xxxi. 3.

⁵ 1 John iv. 16.

⁶ Ephes. ii. 18.

⁷ Ephes. iii. 12.

⁸ Ps. lxxiii. 28.

The Spirit of adoption, moreover, inspires *a sense of reconciliation to God*. God was in Christ "reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."¹ Thus we are led to acquiesce in the whole blessed plan of redemption, the amazing device of the sovereign wisdom and love of God. We would not alter the least matter in the wondrous contrivance. We are well pleased with all that our Father has done and said in his Word, and with all that He requires of us. Especially do we delight in the Son, in whom the Father is ever "well pleased." God, in Christ, appears all-glorious and amiable, "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Through his blood, we have "redemption, even the forgiveness of sins," and we are "accepted in the Beloved." A sense of pardoning mercy prevents us from ever quarrelling with Divine sovereignty, and is the burden of our grateful praise, "Blessed is He whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities."²

The Spirit of adoption, thus viewing and resting in God as our Father in Christ, *excites into exercise all gracious affections*. It produces filial love toward Him: "We love Him because He first loved us." We love Him supremely, because of his transcendent excellence, and inasmuch as his gratuitous love is the basis and source of our love to Him. With the love of gratitude and delight, we love Him for the unspeakable benefits which He has bestowed upon us. Our love to God is that of a child to an excellent and loving father. It is the familiarity of grateful affection, producing freedom and holy boldness in the presence and service of God. Coming to our heavenly Father, we love Him with the whole heart, and rejoice in the prospect of being engaged in delighting in Him and praising Him throughout eternity.

This Spirit of sonship leads to *willing obedience to the authority of God, and to hatred to all that offends Him*. We serve Him "as a son his father." Obedience becomes pleasant and delightful. We "*run* the way of his precepts, when He has enlarged our hearts."³ To serve such a loving, condescending Father is felt to be the highest honour and privilege. In "keeping his commandments there is a great reward."⁴ According as we are conscious of the workings of

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19; Romans v. 11.

² Ps. xxxii. 1; ciii. 2, 3.

³ Malachi iii. 17; Ps. cxix. 32.

⁴ Ps. xix. 11.

the Spirit of adoption within us, we esteem our Father's commandments "in all things to be right, and we hate every false way."¹ Whatever would offend God or dishonour Him, we learn more and more to separate from and hate. Sin in ourselves, wickedness in the world, all that opposes the cause of Christ, "the works of the devil," are objects of detestation and abhorrence. Our love to God is shown in hating what He hates. Like Him, while we hate the sin, we compassionate the sinner, or only dislike him as he stands in opposition to the character and will of God. The measure of esteem of a loving and dutiful child toward others, is that regard which they manifest to the father who occupies the highest place in his affections. So the children of God learn, under the influence of the Spirit of adoption, to view all objects in their relation to God, their heavenly Father, to love what He delights in, and to separate from and hate whatever is opposed to Him. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies."²

This spirit is, moreover, displayed in *holy zeal for God's cause in the world*. When the Saviour, during his earthly ministry, purged the temple, it was in fulfilment of the prophetic announcement, "*The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*" All who by faith "receive power to become the sons of God," are made to drink into the same spirit. An enlightened zeal for the honour of God's name, for the purity, peace, and prosperity of his Church, for the destruction of evil in the world, and for the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth, is a feature of the mind of Christ, totally unlike the blind fiery zeal which leads men to contend for the interests of party, or to hate men's persons, or to persecute those that differ from them. Sanctified zeal is the fruit of the Spirit of truth and holiness. Like heaven-born charity, of which it is a manifestation, it "rejoices not in iniquity, but in the truth."³ All indifference in relation to the claims of truth or the avowal of error, and all neutrality in the cause of God, are wholly inconsistent with that zeal which is of the Spirit and mind of Christ. The Spirit of adoption working in the heart ever impels to holy decision, and to earnest effort for the triumph of truth and righteousness in the earth. Like the light increasing, it shines more and more unto the perfect day.⁴

¹ Ps. cxix. 104.

² Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22.

³ 1 Cor. xiii. 6.

⁴ Proverbs iv. 18.

As the pure flame that transmutes objects with which it comes in contact into combustible matter, so the fire of enlightened zeal which is kindled in the hearts of the children of God imparts its heat to others, and continues to glow with more intense vigour, even when the force of natural powers is decreasing, in the near prospect of the glory of the Lord filling the earth, and of perfect blessedness in the everlasting kingdom of their Father.

Finally. The Spirit of adoption *finds utterance in the strongest expression of filial love, submission, and confidence.* "We cry, *Abba, Father.*" The use of the synonymous Syro-Chaldaic and Greek words for Father, may be designed to express the harmony of Jew and Gentile in the filial worship of God.¹ Rather it is the heart-language of those who have been brought into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." The slave-child of old was not permitted to call its parent Abba. The Spirit of adoption alone, received and enjoyed, enables us to understand what true freedom is, and prompts us to its joyful expression. In this element of our inner life, "*we.*" one and all, the children of God, "*cry*" with vehement desire and firm confidence. Like as one who, under the power of excitement and strong emotion, when the heart is suffused with tenderness and overflows with earnest desire, employs the words of his mother tongue, so the believer pours out his heart to God in prayer, "crying, Abba, Father." The only begotten Son, when learning "obedience by the things which He suffered," in his last agony, employed these words, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt."² This was at once the utterance of his most intense desire, the expression of entire resignation, and the language of assured confidence. Learning from the Elder Brother, the perfect model of prayer, the children of God, when using the same words, express the importunity of request and pleading; the love and confidence of the heart are declared, and the mouth is filled with arguments.

The Spirit of adoption is not satisfied with a single or occasional cry, however earnest or vehement. Rather is this its *habitual expression*, this its interpretative utterance, even when audible words are not used. As children soothing earthly parents seek to prevail with them, by appealing to their paternal affections; so, under a sense of need, believers

¹ So say Calvin and Scott.

² Mark xiv. 36.

with freedom have access to God the Father. With boldness they come, by the blood of Jesus, into the Holiest of all, and cry, "O my Father, help me in trouble, deliver me from enemies and evil, supply my need, dispel the clouds and fears that oppress my spirit, cause thy face to shine upon thy servant; restore to me the joys of thy salvation." The whole desire of the renewed heart finds expression in the cry, "Abba, Father." The eloquence, power, and prevalence of prayer are here. It is the pleading of a child sensible of its own weakness, and that all dependence and confidence should ever rest in its Father's wisdom, love, and power; it is, at the same time, the strongest wrestling of one that has power with God and prevails. Well might Luther declare of this utterance of the Spirit of adoption, "Though it is a faint cry, yet it doth pierce the clouds, that there is nothing else heard in heaven of God and his angels." And again, "The little word 'Father,' conceived effectually in the heart, passes all the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and of the most eloquent rhetoricians that ever were in the world. The matter is not expressed with words but groanings; which groanings cannot be uttered with any words of eloquence, for no language can express them."¹

¹ *Luther on Galatians* (ch. iv. 6).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WORK OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD ON EARTH.

“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”—LUKE ii. 44.
“And I will spare him, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”
--MAL. iii. 17.

HOLY and devoted obedience is characteristic of all that constitute the family of God. The Elder Brother came into the world to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish his work. “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered.”¹ Angels delight in a perpetual ministry to Christ, the Head of all principality and power, and to them that are “heirs of salvation.” They do the will of God with alacrity, constancy, and delight; and they welcome the meanest services for the advancement of his glory, equally with the honourable work of ministering around the throne. The sons of God, redeemed from among men, are called to the service of a glorious Master. This is their distinction and honour in the world; thus they bring to him a revenue of praise and glory: and this, too, is the appointed way in which they reach the reward of heavenly blessedness.

The work of the children of God on earth is not only that to which they were appointed in his eternal purpose, and called by his authority and grace; but it is that, too, in which his power is continually put forth, and in which is displayed the bright manifestation of the glory of his perfections. The work is God’s, and they are his selected instruments for performing it. They become “co-workers with God;” and in the commencement, progress, and completion of their work on earth, His will be all the glory.

Believers are required in all places and conditions to be, as the Saviour, about “their Father’s business.” This is their first and grand concern—that to which their calling as sons was designed to separate them, and to which all other employ-

¹ Hebrews v. 9.

ments should be subordinated. Their whole work is the service of a son to his father, who feels the highest obligation to love him, reverence his authority, and promote his interests, and who, in serving him, knows that he thereby secures his own best interests. It is a loving, confidential service, in which those who are engaged in it are treated as friends, to whom the Master confides his plans, and makes known familiarly his counsels. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."¹

In doing the work of their Father on earth, the sons of God, first, *Seek to know the Father's will.* The obedience which they render to their heavenly Father is not blind or irrational. The will of God requiring it, while it is sovereign and supreme, is holy, and wise, and good. His commands in all things are right. It was from the perfect knowledge that the Son incarnate had of the Father that He constantly said, in full submission and resignation, "Not my will, but thine be done." The revealed will of the Father, contained in the Scriptures, makes known the whole course of holy obedience. The fuller and closer our acquaintance with the Word, the greater will be our freedom and delight in obeying the Divine commandments. The Word is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path. As we look to it, and use it for practical purposes, the course of duty becomes clear and pleasant; and, with the heart enlarged, we run the way of God's precepts. A first and chief concern of a dutiful child is to know his father's will, that he may be prepared to render a ready and willing obedience to his commands. Thus do the children of God love and study the revelation of the Father's will contained in the Bible. They "search the Scriptures," that they may know them. They read and hear the Word, that they may do it. And as "the Word of God" dwells in them "richly in all wisdom," their loving service rendered to the Father, who ever speaks to them *gracious commandments*, and encourages them by *exceeding great and precious promises*, is found to be freedom and perfect peace.

Secondly. *The authority of the Father* is recognized as *sovereign and supreme*, and his command is regarded as *the grand formal reason of obedience.* The children of God view their Father as the Lord of heaven and earth, the blessed and only Potentate.

¹ John xv. 15.

When He requires obedience to any of his commands, He asserts his claim by simply declaring, "*I am the Lord.*" Believers obey, not because they see fully reasons for performing a duty, or because they discern its beneficial results; but simply because He who made and redeemed them, and who has the exclusive right to the homage of their heart and life, has enjoined it. When Abraham received the command to go out from his native country, he immediately and unhesitatingly obeyed. "He went out, not knowing whither he went." There was given him no reason for the strange requirement. The country to which he was directed was not named to him, and he was not told the way to it. His faith consisted in his receiving the command as of paramount obligation—resting on the Divine promise, and depending on Almighty power and wisdom for its accomplishment. And when, subsequently, he was required to offer up the child of promise as *a burnt offering*, he recognized God's sovereign right to command the sacrifice, and by faith, "he that had received the promises," without questioning or delay, made the surrender required. They who by faith are the children of Abraham, in the same spirit, regard their Father's authority as supreme and all-controlling, and all his commands as holy, and just, and good. The joy of devoted service is experienced in yielding implicit obedience to Him who rules in their hearts, and who, at the same time that He is their loving Father, is unspeakably the best of Masters. "Therefore I love thy commandments above fine gold." "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right."¹

Thirdly. They seek *to do always the things that please Him*, as they *aim to glorify Him in all things*. Filial service seeks its reward, and has its strongest motive in obtaining the Father's approval. The sons of God, taught by the Spirit, and "filled with the knowledge of his will, keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."² The Master, whose they are, and whom they serve, has his pleasure in the truth professed and exemplified. His delight is in holiness. He dearly loves Zion's ways. In the person and work of his Son, He is ever well-pleased. In communion with his saints, He has complacency and rest. In these things saints find well-springs of spiritual enjoyment. Their work is all performed under the eye of the Father, who loves his own image in his children, and who regards their weakest efforts to promote his glory with the most tender and condescending interest. He

¹ Ps. cxix. 127; v. 28.

² 1 John iii. 22.

sends them forth to labour in the enclosed place which He delights to visit, and from which He gathers his pleasant fruits. His call to honourable service is; "Go, my son; work this day in my vineyard." Serving in his immediate presence, we are put upon a work from which the owner of the vineyard may derive a revenue of glory. The approving glance of his eye, the acceptance of the service, and the assurance that our work will conduce to the advancement of his glory, are our highest inducements to labour; and these form a present "great recompense of reward." The wisdom and understanding which the Holy Spirit imparts lead the children of God to propose this as their great end, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."¹ The sons of God, who are led by the Spirit, alone realize the great end of life—to "do all to the glory of God."² The Elect Servant, in whom the Father delighted, did always the things that pleased Him. In the different acts of his surety-obedience, it was declared, once and again, with a voice from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And at the close, He commended his work to the acceptance of the Father—"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."³ In the same spirit, those whom He calls not servants, but sons, seek not to please themselves, nor to walk as pleasing men. Their meat and drink is to do the Father's will. Their earnest desire and joy of spirit are to walk worthy of Him who has called them to his kingdom and glory. No higher honour can they expect, when the service allotted them here is completed, than to be enabled to declare, "We have glorified thee on the earth. We have finished the work that thou hast given us to do."

Fourthly. A principal part of their work is *to promote the good of the family*. They seek its peace, they labour for its purity. By "love, they serve one another." Bearing each other's burdens, they fulfil the law of Christ. They pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and earnestly desire the prosperity of Zion's palaces. By the power of the truth and love, and the influence of a holy example, they labour to bring others into the family. Like children rejoicing at the entrance of the latest born into the family circle, they have pure delight in the conversion of a sinner, and the addition of a saved one to the Church. The children of God, born in the Church, have their

¹ Col. i. 10.

² 1 Cor. x. 31.

³ John xvii. 4.

sphere of effort peculiarly *within* her. There they share lofty privileges, and are made themselves a blessing in the earth. They declare in Zion the work of the Lord their God. They fight the battles and achieve the victories of faith. The sons that Zion has brought up are the instruments of her deliverance and salvation. True to their character and obligations, they labour intensely for her revival and enlargement. Whatever would corrupt her fellowship or mar her spiritual beauty, they cannot but condemn and oppose. They are "repairers of former desolations," and "the restorers of paths to dwell in." The future universal establishment and glory of the Church are destined to be thus effected. The Lord's remembrancers "keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."¹ In the future increase and glory of this Church, the "barren woman is made to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children."²

Fifthly, *What is yet to be done* for the advancement and triumph of the Redeemer's cause in the earth *is eminently the work of the children of God.* All that has hitherto been effected for the spread of the Gospel in the earth, and the spiritual illumination of Jews and Gentiles; all the victories of truth over error, and superstition, and idolatry, have been accomplished by men taught by the Spirit, and actuated by filial love and devotedness. Men who were called to the fellowship of the Gospel, and who could declare, "Now are we the sons of God," were employed by the Saviour to make known his truth, and set up his kingdom in the world. The first victories of the Cross were won by those who were "led by the Spirit," and who received "the Spirit of adoption;" and all its subsequent triumphs have been through the same instrumentality. The rapid progress of the Gospel in the days of primitive Christianity is to be ascribed, in a great measure, to the circumstance that the first Christians, after the Pentecostal visitation, realized their sonship; and glowing with love to Christ, and with fervent desire to promote his glory, they dedicated themselves, and willingly surrendered all they possessed—worldly substance, influence, and personal effort—for the establishment of his kingdom in the earth. They were men "full of faith," and "full of the Holy Ghost." They went everywhere, in firm trust in the ascended Saviour, and the power of the Spirit, preaching the Word, and multitudes were "turned to the Lord." Their "line went into all the earth, their words

¹ Isa. lxii. 6, 7.

² Ps. cxiii. 9.

to the end of the world." Faith in the person, work, promise, and mediatorial authority of Christ, is the *principle* of Christian missions, as *love to Christ* is their *spirit* and *power*. The men in whose hearts these are in active operation are fit instruments for making known God's light and salvation to all nations. Such have been approved labourers for the world's conversion in past times. The revival of the Lord's work in the earth has been through such instrumentality; and in the future universal subjection of the nations to Christ, the agency acknowledged and blessed will be men baptized by the Spirit, and constrained by the love of Christ to live, not to themselves, but to Him who died and rose again.

The Church, endowed with faith in the Redeemer's promise and mediatorial Headship, will bring forth its appropriate fruits in love to perishing souls, in the cheerful, liberal dedication of substance and personal effort, and in wrestling, persevering prayer for the world's conversion. Numerous and suitable instruments will not be wanting for this great work, so soon as the Church will awaken to a due sense of its importance and her own responsibility, and whenever she shall ask in faith "the Lord of the harvest" to "thrust out labourers,"¹ and in united, fervent prayer shall plead—"Thy kingdom come," "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."² "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and make his face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving health among all nations."³ That which is mainly wanted to ensure the progress and success of Christian missions is, that the work be in the hands of the sons of God, and prosecuted in the spirit of faith and love, becoming their higher vocation. Then will worldly resources be supplied in abundance, and devoted men will never be wanting of those who have yielded themselves to the Lord, and who esteem life only valuable for the opportunities which it presents to advance his glory in the earth.

This work of the children of God is *honourable* and *ennobling*. It associates us with all that is glorious and excellent in the universe. In performing it, we give ourselves to carry into accomplishment the purposes of Infinite wisdom and love to our fallen race. We become co-workers with God, with elect angels, and fellow-saints in heaven and earth. The contrivance, effective agency, and glory of all that is done are the Lord's.

¹ Matt. ix. 38.—Such is the import of the original term.

² Ps. ii. 8.

³ Ps. lxxvii. 1, 2.

“We are his workmanship, created anew unto good works, which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them.”¹ “It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.”² “Thou, also, hast wrought all our works in us.”³ How elevating the thought that, however weak in ourselves, Almighty power is with us! “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”⁴ How honourable and ennobling to be employed in the work in which the blessed Trinity co-operate throughout all time! Like the Saviour rejoicing in spirit, the believer, confessing and thanking God, may say, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”⁵ With the Spirit shed on us abundantly, received as the Spirit of adoption, and witnessing to our sonship, we may know the power and happiness of our Lord’s assurance—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”⁶ And when we come to the close of our earthly labours, we are enabled to declare with joy, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”⁷

¹ Ephesians ii. 10.⁴ 2 Cor. x. 4.⁶ John xiv. 12.² Philippians ii. 13.⁵ John v. 17.⁷ John xvii. 4.³ Isaiah xxvi. 12.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRIVILEGES OF SONSHIP.

“ And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”
—ROMANS viii. 17.

“ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”—1 JOHN iii. 2.

By the grace of God in adoption, not only are we brought into the family of the First-born, but we are, at the same time, given “ the right to all their privileges.” These are so manifold and excellent ; they so far transcend in kind and degree all earthly benefits, that it is difficult to offer any adequate enumeration or description of them. Besides, they only who enjoy them can have any right conception of their greatness and value. They are “ the secret of the Lord ” that is with them that fear Him.¹ In the “ White Stone ”—the symbol of the believer’s pardon—is “ a new name written,”—that of a son or daughter of the Lord Almighty,—“ which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”² Adoption is itself the grandest distinction and highest privilege that God confers upon any human being ; and whether viewed in its origin, nature, the relation of the adopted to the blessed Godhead, the redeemed family, the spirit that characterizes the adopted, or their work on earth, it is a blessing of the most glorious kind. We cannot speak on this subject without declaring the riches of Divine benevolence towards the saints, and the peculiar honour and happiness which, in consequence, they enjoy. Already there have been exhibited much of “ the lot of the inheritance ” of the saints, and the foundation of all that remains to be possessed—the object of their fervent desire and assured hope. But as we may view the *relation in a family* separate from the *immunities which it confers*, it may be of use to consider somewhat particularly the privileges of sonship. Thus will the excellency of the state of adoption be more distinctly per-

¹ Psalm xxv. 14.

² Rev. ii. 17.

ceived; and those who are of the family of God may learn to appreciate aright their privileges, and to improve them in a life of holiness and spiritual comfort.

Our Westminster divines speak of the gracious act of adoption as, when it brings into the number of God's children, conferring, at the same time, "a right to all the privileges of the sons of God."¹ More fully in the "Larger Catechism,"² the enumeration of privileges is condensed from the "Confession of Faith" (ch. xii.), and adoption is described as "an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory." In both these statements, it is evident there is a distinction made between the *condition* or *relation* into which the redeemed are brought, and *the privileges* of which they are made partakers, in consequence of belonging to the family of God. These immunities and benefits are such as are worthy of their covenant God and Father to bestow, and such as are befitting the nature and character of the children of his love to receive. Their right to their possession rests on the meritorious righteousness of the Elder Brother; and when this is imputed to them, and they appropriate it by faith, they may justly lay claim to the full enjoyment, and cherish the comfortable assurance that, without fail, they shall be theirs in time and throughout eternity.

1. First among the high privileges of the children of God may be mentioned *an interest in the love of their heavenly Father*. From all eternity, He loved them with a sovereign, gratuitous, and unspeakable love. This love He *commended* to them, or set forth in the most attractive manifestation, "in that while they were yet sinners Christ died for them."³ The Divine love found them in their state of guilt and alienation, and conferred on them the adoption of sons. "Behold, thy time was a time of love." "I drew thee with cords of love, and bands of a man." "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."⁴ The love which led to their election from eternity and calling in time, in all its diversified aspects and manifesta-

¹ Shorter Catechism, Quest. 34.

² Quest. 74.

³ Romans v. 8.

⁴ Ezek. xvi. 8; Hos. xi. 4; Jer. xxxi. 3.

tions, is ever afterwards centred upon them. They are united to the Well-Beloved as their Head and Husband. They are to Him as the "apple of his eye," and are set as "a seal upon his arm and heart." With a Father's pity, He regards their weakness and distress. His bowels of tender compassion yearn over their waywardness and affliction, and even when they wander and backslide, his love goes after them, and restores them to their Father's house rejoicing. His dealings toward them are all in paternal love and mercy. "Having loved his own that are in the world, from the beginning, He loves them to the end."¹ The greatness, tenderness, and unchangeable character of the love of God to his saints can never be fully conceived or adequately expressed. Like the lining of the chariot of King Solomon, "love for the daughters of Jerusalem," the love of God in covenant towards the redeemed, is nearest to them in everything. Nothing can possibly separate them from it in time, in life, or death. And throughout eternity, the burden of their songs of praise in glory will be, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."²

2. They have *access with boldness into his presence*. A "new and living way" has been opened for them into the Holiest of all, and they have boldness to enter in by the blood of Jesus.³ As children to a father, they may ever come to Him, and use all freedom in drawing nigh. They are bid welcome to tell Him all their wants and cares, and to unbosom to Him all their thoughts and griefs, and the desires of their hearts. They may come to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in their time of need. "Through Christ, they have access by one Spirit to the Father."⁴ At all times they may enter the presence-chamber. Instead of being offended with their frequent complaints and requests, their heavenly Father is pleased with their importunity, and their prayer is "his delight." He anticipates their petitions by his readiness to meet them with his loving-kindness. There is no interposing veil now to bar their entrance into the Most Holy place. He that dwells between the cherubim is infinitely more ready to bestow blessings than his children are to ask them. "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."⁵ "This is the confidence that we have in Him,

¹ John xiii. 1.² Hebrews x. 19, 22.³ Isaiah lxxv. 24.⁴ Rev. i. 5, 6.⁵ Ephesians ii. 18.

that, if we ask anything according to his will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."¹

3. They enjoy *the surest Divine protection*. The Lord is their defence, and He brings them safety. He is a "wall of fire around them, and the glory in the midst."² As his "vineyard of red wine," the Church of the First-born is assured of the Divine protection and blessing. "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."³ For the protection and safe-keeping of the children of God, a special providence, ever watchful and gracious, is employed, like "the pillar and cloud of fire" that in the night stood between Israel and their enemies. The angel-ministry, as the host of God, encamps around them, preserving them from danger, and controlling all that threatens their safety, or would disturb their peace. Around the Church,— "the bed of King Solomon,"—are threescore valiant men, expert in war, "every man with his sword on his thigh, because of fear in the night."⁴ The Lord himself is their "shade at their right hand." And "as the mountains surround Jerusalem, so is He round about his people, from henceforth even for ever."⁵ The children of God are protected on all sides, and from evils of every kind. They are completely safe amid enemies and dangers, seen and unseen. Till their work is done, they are immortal, and none can effectually harm them. To every one of them the assurance is given of an absolute promise, resting for its accomplishment on the power and unchangeable faithfulness of Jehovah. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler."⁶

4. There is *abundant provision made for all their wants*. The supply for all the necessities of the children of God, temporal and spiritual, is laid up in the stores of the new covenant, and put into the hands of the Trustee of the covenant, the Elder Brother, to administer. Their wants were all foreseen and provided for, in the wisdom and love of the Father, from eternity. His name and memorial is "*Jehovah-jireh*,"—the Lord will be seen, the Lord will provide. The fountain of gracious supply is ever near, as it is accessible and inexhaustible. As a tender, considerate father provides for his children, and deals out supplies to their wants, according as his love

¹ 1 John v. 14, 15.

² Zechariah ii. 5.

³ Isaiah xxvii. 3.

⁴ Song iii. 5.

⁵ Ps. cxxv. 2.

⁶ Ps. xci. 4.

dictates, and in a manner conducive to their good, so the Father of the redeemed family makes the wants, great or little, of each child in it, an object of his deepest interest and constant concern. He that numbers the hairs of their head, has guaranteed to them, beyond fear of failure, all suitable temporal provision. "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." His knowledge of their necessities is sufficient to ensure to them the supply in season. Provision for all their spiritual wants is made in the promises of the covenant. It is laid up in the fulness of Christ, out of which is constantly dispensed what satisfies their most enlarged desires. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good."¹ Dwelling in the munitions of rocks, "their bread is given, and their water made sure."² Confiding in the ample provision made by the Father, and in its communication at the right time, and in the best manner, from the hands of their Elder Brother, well may the children of God trust without anxiety, well may they declare with a servant of God, who was in perils often, and in hunger, and thirstings, and nakedness, "I have all and abound; I am full," and assure brethren of the household of faith, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."³ In bestowing upon them the unspeakable gift of his Son, their Father has already given them what transcends all other blessings of grace and glory, and what is the sure pledge of the enjoyment of them all. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"⁴ "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."⁵

5. *Divine guidance and support are secured to them.* While angels of light are appointed to guard the saints, the Spirit is promised as their constant and infallible guide. They are led by Him into the way of peace, and are conducted in the paths of righteousness, in which the redeemed of the Lord walk, and in which "the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err."⁶ The Word of the Lord is a lamp to their path. His providence opens up their way, and makes them at times to hear a voice behind them saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," when they are prone to turn to the right hand or the left. Israel's Shep-

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 10.² Isaiah xxxiii. 16.³ Philippians iv. 18, 19.⁴ Romans viii. 32.⁵ 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.⁶ Isaiah xxxv. 8.

herd guides Joseph like a flock through paths of difficulty and danger, safely from the snares and onsets of enemies, and through the desert, till they arrive at the promised rest. By Divine counsels, they are led and guided, so that they do not stumble, or fail of reaching the land of inheritance. They are led in a way that is right, to bring them to a city of habitation. Trusting in their Divine Leader, and committing themselves to his sure guidance, they may declare with confidence, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."¹ They are upheld by Divine power, while they are led forward without fear. Their steps are kept from falling. While covenant grace is sufficient for them, Almighty strength is made perfect in weakness. The "Captain of salvation," who collects the host, and makes of enemies and rebels adopted children, goes before them, fighting all their battles, till He brings "many sons to glory."² How freely should they follow where He leads! How confidently rely on the guidance of paternal wisdom and love, that it will not fail them till they come to the land of uprightness!

6. *They are guaranteed deliverance and final victory.* The children of God are taught to pray, "Deliver us from evil." For them their Advocate on high constantly pleads, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil."³ The deliverance which believers need is from the powers of evil—devils and men—and from evil within and around them. They need to be rescued from the Evil One—from the curse of God's violated law, from condemnation, and from the power and pollution of sin in their own hearts. They are exposed to moral evils, manifold and potent, with which they are surrounded. The place of their sojourning is "this present evil world," from which they constantly need deliverance. It is evil in its character and spirit—in its customs and laws—in its aim and standard. The children of God are but strangers and pilgrims here, as in a foreign land; and they must overcome the world by faith, if they would obtain the heavenly inheritance. They are, moreover, exposed to physical evils of various kinds—sickness, poverty, affliction—"the numerous ills that flesh is heir to." At times they are tried with strong temptation, and are called to tribulation and suffering for the truth's sake. When evil around them is felt to be connected with sin within them, then they experience its power and malignity, and are taught the greatness and value of deliverance. The love of the Father has pro-

¹ Psalm lxxiii. 24.² Heb. ii. 10.³ John xvii. 15.

vided full and final deliverance for every one of his adopted children, and in due time it shall be theirs in sure possession. He is able and willing to deliver them. In and through Christ, He ransoms them from sin and the power of the destroyer. The Angel of the covenant delivers them from all evil. Present afflictions and trials are overruled, and made the means of spiritual good. Enemies are conquered, and are powerless to harm. Death, the culminating point of evil, is unstinged, and its power destroyed, and to the believer it is gain. All that to them is really evil was borne by the Surety; and when He was delivered for their offences, He rescued them from it all. The deliverance through Christ becomes theirs, as they are called to the conflict with evil. They have painful experience of temptation and indwelling sin; and they are beset with enemies and assailed with fears of being overcome of evil. But when they come in actual contact with what they dread, they are delivered. They are even now "conquerors, and more than conquerors."¹ Through their living Head, final and perfect victory is secured to them in joyful prospect. The "Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom."²

7. They are made *heirs of an everlasting inheritance*. True sonship is always, in the Scripture sense, connected with heirship. To Abraham, God said concerning his servant and steward, "This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."³ Our adoption into the family of God secures to us, beyond the possibility of alienation, a glorious inheritance. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."⁴ These words, put in the original in the way of special emphasis, declare in the most expressive manner the right, the certainty, and inalienable character of the possession. Being sons of God, they are "heirs of the promise," of "the grace of life," of "salvation," of a glorious "kingdom." "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."⁵ The argument of faith is unassailable and conclusive: "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; then an heir of God through Christ."⁶

This inheritance of the saints comprehends all possible good, and its possession ensures the highest felicity. Beyond the enjoyment of purchased spiritual blessings and of temporal

¹ Romans viii. 37.³ Gen. xv. 4.⁵ Galatians iii. 29.² 2 Tim. iv. 18.⁴ Romans viii. 17.⁶ Galatians iv. 7.

benefits secured in the covenant—above all created good, God himself, in his perfections and infinite fulness, is its blessed object. “*If sons, then heirs of God.*” Who can conceive the amount of enjoyment in such an inheritance! All that God is, all that He has, all that He has done and will do, the believer may claim, and it is amply secured to him. Nothing can be wanting that is needed to perfect his character and to fill up the measure of his happiness. Not only are the saints through their sonship heirs of God; they are at the same time “co-heirs with Christ.” They partake of the good of which Christ himself is the recipient. Whatever joy and blessedness the Son has in common with the Father, and the glory with which He is glorified, they shall share with Him for ever. At death they enter into the joy of their Lord. They sit with Him on his throne, “as He has overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne.”¹ They are with Him where he is, beholding and partaking of his glory. This inheritance, inseparable from sonship; is partly possessed here, but its full enjoyment is reserved for heaven. Believers, while on earth, like heirs in their minority, have their estate in reversion. It is declared—mapped out in the promise; the title is secured in the purchase of Christ; meetness for its full possession is now given; and at times the children of God, by the Spirit, obtain the pledge and earnest of the heavenly inheritance. By the resurrection of Christ, the adopted are begotten unto a *living hope*, of which the glorious object is “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”² In contrast with the richest and most desirable possessions of earth, which are decaying, defiled, and perishing, the heavenly inheritance is susceptible of no change, and is of stainless light and glory for ever. “In *substance*, it is *incorruptible*; in *purity*, *undefiled*; in *beauty*, *unfading*.”³ The future portion of believers is “the inheritance of the saints *in light*,”⁴ for which the Father has “meetened” them. The light of perfect knowledge fills the intellect; the beauty of holiness is thrown around them; the lustre of the Divine image is reflected from their perfect character, and the material glory of the heavenly dwelling is only surpassed by its spiritual splendour. This light of the saints’ future inheritance is liable to no interruption or diminution. The Lord God and the Lamb are the light of the heavenly temple. “The Lord shall be thine everlasting light,

¹ Rev. iii. 21.² 1 Peter i. 4.³ Alford.⁴ Col. i. 12.

and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”¹ The moral fitness for possessing this glorious inheritance is wholly the work of the Father. All that qualifies his children for their patrimony is from Him alone. By the pardon which He bestows, He confers the title; by the new nature which He imparts, He assimilates them to the state of bliss. He purifies them by his Spirit, enlightens and nourishes them by his truth, and animates them by a living hope. The whole preparation of the saints for heaven is thus a paternal process, as its boundless and endless felicity will be the full fruition of their covenant—God himself in all his ineffable blessedness. In the contemplation of these excellent and wondrous privileges, how should the children of God exult in their Portion! How should they live separate from the world, and overcome it by faith! How should they cherish, in every condition, and at all times, an humble, contented, confiding, and joyful spirit! Above all, as begotten to the heavenly inheritance, they should attest their growth in holiness, and the vigour of their spiritual affections, by giving utterance to the deepest emotions of their hearts, in thanks to the Father. This will be the clearest evidence that the meekness conferred is ripening to perfect enjoyment. When it shall have been fully attained, the consciousness that it has been reached through the amazing grace of their Father, and that the blissful inheritance is theirs for ever, will excite the most fervent thanksgiving and praise. No tongue will then be any more silent; the harps of glory will never be unstrung. No note of sadness or sorrow will mar the hallelujahs of the saints in glory. “The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”²

¹ Isaiah lx. 19, 20.

Isaiah xxxv. 10.

CHAPTER X.

THE GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE OF THE FAMILY.

“Out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.”—**MATTHEW ii. 6.**

“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?”—**HEBREWS xii. 6, 7.**

IN human relations, the father is the head of the household. The character of the family, as well as its future fortunes, depends greatly on the order established therein, the government exercised, and the discipline applied to restrain and correct evil. A wise, firm, considerate paternal rule, displayed in thoughtful and impartial discipline, has been universally acknowledged to be of the highest advantage to children. When these rise up to eminent usefulness, and families become a blessing in the land, these results are very generally ascribed to faithful parental rule; and, on the other hand, when domestic government is neglected or badly administered, children can only be expected to be froward and rebellious, useless to themselves, and sources of pollution to others.

1. The Divine government is seen in its most impressive and attractive aspect in the *household of faith*. It is that of a father over the children he intensely loves, and for whose welfare and usefulness he is constantly and tenderly concerned. This government is transcendently excellent, and is, indeed, the perfect model of all right rule in human relations. The Family and the State, which are both Divine institutions and moral subjects, are to be ordered and governed on the unalterable principles and according to the eternal laws of God's government; and it is only as the heads of either seek to conform their spirit and conduct to the order of the Supreme Governor, that they meet his approval and obtain his blessing. “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”¹

¹ Isaiah ii. 3.

Our heavenly Father, in the government of his people, first subdues them to Himself, and then sets up his throne in their hearts. They are the prey rescued from the mighty, the spoil taken from the strong man armed. In the day of their effectual calling, the weapons of their rebellion are taken from their hands, and willingly cast down at the feet of the Almighty Conqueror. By the Word sent out of Zion, as the rod of his strength and the sceptre of a Prince, He rules amid his enemies, and a "willing people come to Him in the day of his power."¹

2. The rule over the family of God is *delegated to the Mediator of the Covenant*. This is a chief of his prerogatives as the First-born among many brethren. In the ancient typical economy, the right of primogeniture carried with it lordship or dominion over the house of the father. The first-born was king and priest of the household. To him belonged a double portion of the goods of the father's house, and his was likewise, in an eminent degree, the paternal blessing. Nothing can more attractively display the exercise and privilege of the Divine government over the saints than that of its being in the hands of the Elder Brother. He that loved and chose them from eternity, He that died to redeem them, He that hath begotten them by the power of his resurrection, and that espoused them to Himself as their heavenly husband, rules in and over them. "The government shall be upon his shoulder."² He reigns in Jacob, and to the ends of the earth gloriously. The daughters of Zion go forth with joy to behold him adorned "with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, in the day of the gladness of his heart."³

3. The government of the saints is *internal and over all that concerns them*. The kingdom of God is *within* them.⁴ The Redeemer sets up his throne in their hearts, and He carries on His princely rule by bringing their whole mental and moral nature into willing subjection to His sovereign authority. The "haughtiness of man is brought down, and the loftiness of man is laid low, and the Lord alone is exalted."⁵ The dominion of Christ in His saints is *spiritual* in its origin, ends, and administration, and in the principles on which it is conducted. He reigns in the souls of His saved people; and it is by the indwelling and agency of His Spirit that He conducts His govern-

¹ Psalm cx. 2, 3.

² Isaiah ix. 6.

³ Song iii. 11.

⁴ Luke xvii. 21.

⁵ Isaiah ii. 17.

ment in and over them. The legitimate instruments of his rule, too,—the *Word*, the *Cross*, the *example of Christ*,—are all spiritual. Hence is their power to control, purify, and elevate the moral nature, and to govern the whole man. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”¹ “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.”² The King of saints reigns within his people, by putting “his laws into their mind, and writing them in their hearts.”³ Their understandings are first enlightened, and their affections are then drawn. He is revealed to their hearts as their covenant God, and they yield themselves to Him as his willing people. This gracious government operates to bring all into subjection to Messiah the Prince; and is the source of all that is holy and excellent in the renewed character, and of all that is pure and of good report in the life. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”⁴ Though the seat of the Saviour’s dominion in his saints is chiefly the inner man, it extends to all the external relations, to all that concerns their life, safety, support, comfort, and happiness. He that reigns in their hearts is, at the same time, Ruler over all. He is “Head over all things to his Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”⁵ In conducting his government over his redeemed Church and over every individual member thereof, the Mediator controls and brings down all their enemies, employs all elements and agencies to promote the good of his people, furnishes a suitable and seasonable supply for all their wants, and orders everything for the advancement of his own glory. His kingdom in nature and providence is the disclosure of his glorious purposes, and is subsidiary to his gracious dominion in the hearts of the saints. Their abundant comfort is, that the Father who loves them is supreme in heaven and earth; and that the Captain of salvation, who will “bring many sons unto glory,” has all authority and power delegated to Him, as all fulness dwells in Him, that He may uphold and protect them, supply all their wants, of whatever kind, and, at length, confer upon them the crown of everlasting salvation. How full of comfort and blessed hope to a believer is the thought that He is ever under the Divine fatherly government; that the same Almighty power which rules in his heart, transforming into the likeness of God his whole moral nature, controls all hostile influ-

¹ 2 Cor. x. 4.³ Heb. viii. 10.⁵ Ephes. i. 22.² Zech. iv. 6.⁴ Rom. xiv. 17.

ences, provides for all his possible necessities ; and that over death and the invisible world his Lord and Saviour has absolute dominion, as He will reign for his benefit throughout eternal ages !

4. The government of the family of God is distinguished by *excellent properties*, the consideration of which is fitted to minister support and strong consolation to the saints. It is *sovereign*, carrying into accomplishment always the good pleasure of the Father. Clouds and darkness at times surround his throne, and his way is in the mighty waters ; yet as Prince supreme, the blessed and only Potentate, He orders every event and conducts the whole administration. When we are unable to unfold his wondrous purposes, it behoves us to adore the depths of sovereign wisdom and grace. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !"¹ It is *gracious and loving*. In the covenant of grace, from all eternity, the plan of the mediatorial rule over the saints was settled. The Redeemer, who by his blood, shed as "a ransom for many," has obtained the sole right of dominion, performs all gracious acts in his princely rule ; and the blessed Spirit, in applying redemption, begins, carries on, and completes the reign of grace in the hearts of the heirs of salvation. The "hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of this house ; his hands shall also finish it ; and he will bring forth the headstone with shoutings, crying, grace, grace, unto it."² "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."³ The government of God over his adopted family is that of the most loving father over the children who bear his image, and with whom are the rest and delight of his heart.

5. This rule over the saints is conducted *to the best ends, and is efficient of the most beneficent results*. That God in all things may be glorified, was the grand purpose for which the mediatorial government was planned and established. This is effectually secured in every stage of its progress. The glory of God's wisdom, justice, holiness, power, and truth, is illustriously displayed in all that the enthroned Redeemer has done and will do, while He rules in heaven and among earth's inhabitants. The glory of the Almighty Lord shall continue for ever, and shall fill the whole earth ; and when the reign of the Mediator shall pass into the everlasting kingdom in

¹ Romans xi. 33.

² Zech. iv. 6, 7.

³ Romans v. 21.

heaven, He will come "to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe."¹ A dominion thus powerful and glorious cannot but be productive of the highest good to its subjects. Its grand aim is "good will to men." Divine benevolence dictates all the acts of administration; and ceaseless beneficence characterizes all its proceedings. "All things," both good and evil, hostile and friendly, work, and ever must, "work, for good to them who love God, and are the called according to his purpose."² The *end* of this gracious government is blessed beyond all conception. It is salvation complete and eternal, pleasure without alloy or diminution, bliss unspeakable and eternal. "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!"³

SECT II.—*Discipline of the Family.*

Discipline, which has been termed "the practical application of government," is instruction by means of correction and chastisement. The words in the sacred originals for *instruction* and *chastisement*, are either identical or closely related, indicating that correction is for the purpose of training or teaching, in relation to duty and to the course of life and conduct. The government of the father over his family is throughout conducted with the design, not only of preserving them from dangers and rescuing them from evils to which they are exposed, but likewise of subduing corruptions in their hearts, and of perfecting them in holiness. In human relations, the discipline of the household is an important and indispensable part of moral training. When it is conducted with wisdom and firmness, and tempered with love and tenderness, it tends powerfully to the formation of an upright character, and is ever found connected with future usefulness. "Chasten thy son, while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."⁴ "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."⁵ The chastisements of the children of

¹ 2 Thess. i. 10.

² Romans viii. 28.

³ Jer. xxix. 11; Ps. xxxi. 19.

⁴ Proverbs xix. 18.

⁵ Proverbs xxix. 17.

God are among their most precious privileges, and are special tokens of the Father's love toward them. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."¹ This is a fundamental law of the government of the house of God. The love of adoption is the cause of chastening, and this is its certain effect. Divine love and chastening are inseparable. "Whomsoever the Lord loveth He chasteneth." None are exempted. Divine instructive chastisement extends to all the family. Hence there is nothing of a penal nature found in the chastisements of believers. While the corrections administered by the Father are applied to them as being sinful, the end of them is to mortify sin that dwells within them, and to make them increase in grace and holiness. Unlike the punishments of the wicked, which are inflicted with a regard to justice, Divine chastisements are appointed to the saints in love to their persons; and in the way in which they are sent, and the salutary fruits which they yield, they furnish the most conspicuous proof of paternal love.

This paternal discipline of the children of God is—

1. *Through the Word and the institutions of the Church.* The Scriptures, divinely inspired, are profitable for "reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."² Much of the Bible is given expressly to exhibit the evil of transgression and to rebuke the transgressor. The ministers of Christ are sent to be reprovers; and this is a special part of their office, the due discharge of which is the test of their fidelity. The mission of the Comforter is to "reprove the world of sin;" and wherever his saving power is experienced, He works by and with the Word to "convince of sin,"³ chastise wandering and folly, and to bring to loving obedience. Conversion to God is turning at the call and reproof of heavenly wisdom—"Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."⁴ Equally with the Word, *the institutions of the Church* are designed to instruct by correction and chastisement. The ordinances of discipline are the provision of ecclesiastical government for the preventing, correcting, and removing of offences that corrupt the fellowship of the Church and mar her efficiency. While they are designed to promote the Church's purity, and thus to advance her real prosperity, to the children of God they are the means of special grace. In the separation of the precious

¹ Heb. xii. 6.

² In the original, the word rather means *to convict*.

³ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

⁴ Prov. i. 23.

from the vile, and the correction of evil in themselves. through the discipline of the house of God, believers behold with admiration the authority of Zion's king, and rejoice in the purity and beauty of the Church. "His fan is in his hand, and He will throughly purge his floor." "This is the law of the house. Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."¹

2. *Afflictions of diversified kinds* are to the children of God *disciplinary* and *medicinal*. Trouble of whatever kind—affliction of body, trials in the estate and relations in life, temptations and public trials—are not penal and wrathful, but disciplinary, and designed to "yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness." They are the common lot of the family of God, and a part of their designed preparation for future glory. Viewed as sent by the Father to the children of his love, they are fraught with comfort and blessing. "He doth not afflict willingly the children of men." Not for the sake of punishment, or as having delight in the pain and sorrow of his people, does the Lord visit their sins with rods and their iniquities with chastisements; but He does this to cure their follies, to heal their backslidings, draw them near to Himself, and render them partakers of his holiness. Concerning a wayward child, He says, in the tenderest compassion and yearning sympathy, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."²

3. These disciplinary chastisements of believers have *distinctive properties*. They are *necessary*. So it is frequently declared in the Word. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "Through manifold tribulation we must inherit the kingdom." The children of God, who are kept by Divine power for the inheritance reserved for them in heaven, are now, "for a season, if need be, in heaviness through manifold temptations."³ That the evil of former sins may be felt, that corruptions may be subdued, that they may be wooed to the path of duty, and that their nature may be transformed after the image of Christ, it is needful that they should pass under the rod of chastisement, and drink of the cup of affliction. They are in *covenant-love*. The sufferings of the Head are in God's everlasting purpose inseparably connected with the afflictions of the members, and both are designed preparations for the blissful reward. As

¹ Matt. iii. 12; Ezek. xliii. 12. ² Jer. xxxi. 20. ³ 1 Pet. i. 6.

the Captain of salvation was made "perfect through sufferings to bring many sons unto glory," so the perfection in bliss of these children is effected by their loving fellowship with Him in sufferings, and in their being made conformable to his death. Thus the mercy of the Father is ever kept to the Mediator, and for those whom He died to save; and his covenant stands fast with Him for evermore. The chastisements of the saints are from the *hand* of their *compassionate Elder Brother*. Well has it been said, that "the hands that were nailed to the cross never can do an untender thing." The hand of the Redeemer, while it chastises, at the same time sustains and upholds. "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me."¹ He sets limits to the chastisements of his saints, and makes at all times a marked distinction between them and the punishments of the wicked. Even when, for the iniquity of their covetousness, He smites them. He says, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners."² At the time when the vials of judgment are poured out upon the nations, the saints are hidden in the chambers of the covenant. Jacob is in rest and quiet, and raised above the fear of man. "I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."³ In *infinite wisdom and compassionate tenderness*, the Redeemer corrects his own. Like Joseph in Egypt, when dealing with his brethren, at times He "makes Himself strange to them," and "speaks harshly to them," not because He delights in their distress, but that He may bring them to repentance, and prepare them to receive blessings from his hand. His bowels yearn over them in all their trials, in every pang that his hand inflicts; and his language in every affliction is, "Come near to me; I am Jesus, your Brother." He that smites heals them, and the wounds that his chastising rod inflicts He tenderly upbinds. With the meek resignation of the aged father of Richard Cameron, when the head and hands of his martyred son were thrown to him in the prison, may the afflicted believer say of the Saviour in all afflictive trials, however sharp, "*I bless the Lord, who can never wrong me nor mine.*"

¹ Song ii. 6.

² Isaiah lvii. 16, 18.

³ Jer. xxx. 11.

4. The discipline of the covenant is productive of *precious fruits* to the children of God. It is ordered in sovereign wisdom, and the means employed are the best to effect the appointed end, and can never fail to conduct to a right and salutary issue. Fatherly chastisements are under the agency of the blessed Spirit, and He uses them for the purpose of renewing the moral nature and promoting the spiritual good of the saints: "He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."¹ The afflictions of believers, in the hand of the Spirit, work for the mortification of sin in their members, and for the exercise and increase of holy graces. Their faith is tested and strengthened by trial; their love is drawn forth and invigorated; and their hope is animated as it sees through the dark cloud the rainbow of promise. They learn to rejoice in tribulation. Especially are the *suffering graces*—meekness, resignation, patience, and fortitude, without which a holy character would be defective—called into exercise, and displayed in mellow and attractive lustre. "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed."² The results of paternal chastisement are every way beneficial to the saints both in relation to their present state and future blissful prospects. Though not for the time "joyous but grievous," they yield afterwards the "peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."³ When the correction is patiently endured, the harvest of precious fruits, patience, submission to the Divine will, weanedness from the world, purity of heart, heavenly-mindedness, is reaped. "The work of righteousness shall be peace." The fruit yielded by sanctified affliction is *peaceable*, as it is the evidence and pledge of our peace with God, and as it increases internal peace, so that we possess our souls in patience, and as it disposes and enables us to live peaceably with our fellow-men.⁴

Divine chastisements to the children of God serve wondrously to show the *fulness of the promise*, and to make its sweetness to be felt. "In faithfulness" the Father afflicts; and when his people are brought under the rod of chastisement, He is ever wont to give them the fullest proofs that his words of promise are "all faithful."⁵ It has been justly said, that "affliction is

¹ Heb. xii. 10.

² Romans v. 3, 4, 5.

³ Heb. xii. 11.

⁴ A servant of God who had been exercised with varied afflictions, bore this testimony, that "his joyfulest days were his mourning days."

⁵ Psalm cxix. 75.

the only blessing that the Lord gives, without requiring us to ask for it."¹ Yet when it comes, we receive, in the fulfilment of precious promises, "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The *sympathy and gracious presence* of the Redeemer are guaranteed to his people in their affliction, and form a chief part of the benefit which they realize under it. Long before his manifestation in the flesh, it was declared of Him, "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them : in his love and in his pity He redeemed them ; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."² He can be "touched with a fellow-feeling of their infirmity ; for He was in all points tempted or tried as they are, yet without sin."³ Having borne their sorrows, and endured their griefs, that He might unsting them, He knows them by the experience of their weight and bitterness, and He can thus regard their afflictions with the most cordial sympathy. When they pass through the waters of trouble, He is with them ; and when floods rise high, and threaten to overwhelm them, He limits and assuages their fury, and leads his people through them in safety to the haven of peaceful rest. The "royal road" of affliction is the patent way to the heavenly kingdom. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."⁴ Believers "for a season are in heaviness through manifold temptations," and there is a necessity for this, that "the trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."⁵ The path of affliction is that by which all the sons of God have passed to the heavenly inheritance. The Only-begotten suffered and entered into his glory, and those who are "joint-heirs with Him" are, "through great tribulation," to inherit the kingdom. The afflictive trials to which they are subjected form their disciplinary training for the glory to be revealed. Their endurance here will greatly enhance their future bliss. This will be to them rest after trouble and wandering, fulness of joy after manifold sorrows, and the rewards of victory after powerful and protracted conflict.

Reviewing the whole course of disciplinary instruction and paternal training of the family of God, well may each child of the household declare, "It is good for me that I have been

¹ *Bridges on Psalm cxix.*, p. 186.

² Isaiah lxiii. 9.

³ Hebrews iv. 15.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

⁵ 1 Peter i. 7.

afflicted.”¹ The correction was appointed in the transcendent grace and love of the “counsel of peace.” It is from Him who is goodness itself, and who is ever doing good. The hand that chastises is loving and tender; and the issues, whether here or in the world to come, are joyous and blessed. So have all the tried servants of God found the afflictions which are allotted to them by their heavenly Father. They have all been divested of the curse, and been sent to them as healing medicine. They have been a rod expounding the Word, and sealing precious promises; and thus has the Divine Teacher effectually applied both. Samuel Rutherford speaks of his enforced silence and imprisonment at Aberdeen as “his Patmos,” in which “the Lord daily feasted his poor prisoner,” and he declared that his *six months’ imprisonment*—“the hammer and file” of his sweet Lord—was of “more spiritual benefit to him than *nine years of his painful ministry.*”² Luther styles affliction “the *Theology of Christians*” (*Theologia Christianorum*), and says of himself, “I never knew the meaning of God’s Word until I came into affliction. I have always found it one of my best schoolmasters.” And the excellent Andrew Rivet, who passed through much afflictive trial, says towards the close of his course—making confession to God—“I have learned more divinity in these ten days that thou art come to visit me, than I did in fifty years before. Thou hast brought me to thyself. Before I was afflicted I went astray, and was in the world; but now I am conversant in the school of my God. He teacheth me after another manner than all those doctors, in reading whom I spent so much time.” Heaven to redeemed saints will be bright and glorious by contrast with the wilderness through which they passed to the land of promise, and their endless felicity will be enhanced by the remembrance of the afflictions which they endured on their way to its enjoyment.³ “Everlasting joy” settles on their heads, as a diadem of beauty, when “sorrow and sighing have

¹ Psalm cxix. 71.

² “If all the sad losses, trials, sicknesses, infirmities, griefs, heaviness, and inconstancy of the creature be expounded to be, as I am sure they are, the rods of the jealousy of a Father in heaven, contending with all your lovers on earth, though there were millions of them, for your love, to fetch it home to heaven, single, unmixed, you will forgive (if we may use that word) every rod of God; and ‘let not the sun go down upon your wrath’ against any messenger of your alliciting and correcting Father.”—*Rutherford’s Letters*.

³ See *Bridges on Psalm cxix.*, p. 173.

fled away." "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me. What are those which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."¹

¹ Isaiah xxxv. 10 ; Revelation vii. 13, 14.

CHAPTER XI.

WANT OF EVIDENCE OF OUR SONSHIP—SPIRITUAL CONFLICTS.

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”—ISAIAH I. 10.

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why are thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”—PSALM xlii. 11.

NOTWITHSTANDING the love of the Father toward the children of God, and the innumerable benefits which He confers upon them, they are at times in trouble and perplexity of spirit. Besides the afflictions of this present life, which they have in common with others—the members of a fallen race—they have distress of spirit, which is peculiar and often poignant, arising from want of light respecting their sonship, and the doubts, fears, and conflicts which in consequence disturb their peace and agitate their hearts. They are “children of light walking in darkness.”¹ Such a spiritual condition is not unfrequently the lot of true servants of God. Though the faith that is saving always has in it a measure of assurance, yet this rather respects the objects believed and trusted in, than the state and character of the person who believes, or his final salvation. To doubt of the truth of the Word of promise, or the love and faithfulness of God in giving it, or the ability and willingness of Christ to save, is unbelief, as it is the rejection of the testimony that God has given of his Son. But doubting concerning our own personal piety and salvation is consistent with true religion and progress in sanctification. It arises from calling in question or rejecting the evidence which is furnished by our minds respecting ourselves—an evidence which is at the best imperfect. Such doubting is, at times, not only reasonable.

¹ The title of an excellent treatise of Dr Thomas Goodwin, one of the most prolific and ablest writers of the Puritan Divines, is, *A Child of Light walking in Darkness*. (See *Goodwin's Works*, vol. iii. p. 321-349.)

but profitable, as it may bring a person to serious self-trial, produce penitence and godly sorrow for sin, and lead to seek a larger measure of grace. The expostulation with Peter, when he began to sink in the water, as he withdrew his single, steadfast look from Jesus, "Wherefore didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith?" plainly implied that he had faith; and that whatever were his doubts concerning himself, his immediate and constant duty was to trust in the Saviour for all support, deliverance, and blessing.

The children of God are brought into darkness, and go mourning and in heaviness, when the evidences of their union to Christ and sonship are obscured. In such a case, in their apprehension, they have not the character and marks of God's children. Clouds and darkness surround God's throne. He hides his face from them, and they are troubled. Their prayer appears to be shut out in his wrath, and He rebukes them in his hot displeasure. Their manifold transgressions testify against them, and their secret sins God sets in the brightness of his face. In such a forsaken condition, they refuse all consolation. They write bitter things against themselves. Divine promises, however pointed and gracious, are not for them. The threatenings of the Word against the unbelieving and impenitent, against formalists and hypocrites, fill them with terror. They go mourning all the day, they lie down in sorrow; and if they are kept from utter despair, they are without comfort, and hindered in all spiritual duties; and their work of glorifying God, and of usefulness to others, is greatly retarded.

The inquiry, whether the withdrawal of God's countenance from his children is sometimes in sovereignty, or is always in consequence of their sin, need not be discussed at length. It is the sentiment of Dr Wardlaw and others, that such a dispensation is always to be ascribed to the sin—neglect of duty, and careless and unfruitful walk—of the believer, and never simply to an act of Divine sovereignty. While it may be freely admitted that the provocations of God's people most generally serve to deprive them of the light of their Father's countenance, yet is it not inconsistent with his covenant-character and love that, in gracious sovereignty, He may at times permit his people to walk in darkness. Like as an earthly father hides his face from the child of his affections, to try whether he has a chief place in his heart; so God may withhold from his children special tokens of his love, to excite them to greater diligence and tenderness in the walk of holy obedience. The fact of God's

servants being at times in darkness and distress from want of clear evidence of their sonship, and from apprehension of the Divine displeasure against them, is attested by the case of distinguished saints recorded in the Bible. It is found in the experience of serious and devoted Christians in our own day; and it presents one of the most difficult and painful cases with which faithful pastors have to deal. In briefly considering it, and offering some directions respecting it, we shall notice, *first*, some CAUSES of felt desertion and distress of God's children. These are diversified, according to the peculiar temperament, habits, temptations, and conditions in life of God's people.

First, *Bodily organization and temperament* not unfrequently affect the mind, either in the way of exciting lively frames and pleasurable emotions, or of depressing the spirits, and bringing into mental distress and despondency. A state of vigorous and sustained health is often connected with a cheerful spirit and lively hopes; and when this is enjoyed by those who are subjects of grace, they not unfrequently realize tranquillity of mind, undisturbed by the fears and great depression of spirit that afflict others. On the other hand, an imperfect bodily organization—a morbid state of the animal functions, and the weakness or pain of disease—tend to repress the lively actings of the mind, to cause internal darkness and distress, and to induce a sense of desertion, and forebodings of evil. The cases of such servants of God as Brainerd and the poet Cowper, brought at times into the deepest spiritual distress and despondency, may be ascribed in part—whatever other causes were in operation—to constitutional temperament. In Brainerd's case, there seems to be little doubt that his frequent depressions and spiritual distress were intensified by a criminal neglect of the state of the body, while he was engaged in exhausting work as a missionary. In distress connected with temperament and constitutional tendency, a first duty is to consult for the recovery and preservation of health. The organ through which the mind acts should, in due dependence on the Author of life, be kept in tune. The mind should never be suffered to brood upon bodily maladies, as the tendency of this is to produce or intensify the evils which we deplore or would avoid, and to unfit the mind for spiritual exercises. "*A sound mind in a sound body*,"¹ which the heathen poet speaks of as a blessing from the gods, is, in a higher Christian sense of the phrase, intimately connected with the comfortable enjoyment of spiritual

¹ "*Mens sana in corpore sano.*"

privilege, and is an attainment to be sought after, if we would be preserved from spiritual darkness and disbelieving fears.

2. *Erroneous and defective views of Divine truth* often cause darkness, and lead to spiritual distress. The Spirit that guides the sons of God is the Spirit of light and truth. Never does He work savingly through ignorance or error; and the comfort and joy of salvation are not realized where false and mistaken views are entertained in relation either to objective truths or to subjective religion. Some persons lay undue stress on internal frames and feelings, instead of relying wholly on Christ's finished work for pardon and acceptance. Even true Christians, through indistinct views of the economy of grace, are liable to be elevated by unscriptural views and delusory attainments; and, when these fail them, to be unduly perplexed and fearful. The remains of "a legal hope" are found even in advanced Christians. It is exceedingly common to place dependence for peace and comfort rather on the Spirit's work *within* than on Christ's work *without* us. Imperfect and erroneous views concerning the covenant of grace, the perfection of the atonement of Christ, and the fulness, freeness, and unchangeable character of the purchased salvation, tend to mar spiritual comfort, to excite unworthy thoughts of God, and to generate fear and bondage of spirit. Christ's words are spoken to us that our "joy may be full." Clear and enlarged views of the covenant of peace, and of Christ's person and work, and constant recourse to Him as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," will free from slavish fear, and fill with joy and peace in believing. Correct spiritual knowledge of revealed truth is essential to Christian liberty and spiritual joy. "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, if you continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."¹

3. *The power of indwelling sin* causes darkness and perplexity. Sin remains in the regenerate; and while it continues unmortified, its constant tendency is to exclude peace of mind, to darken the evidences of sonship, and to excite doubt and despondency. The "lusts of the flesh war against the soul." The "law in the members" opposes "the law of the mind," and brings it "into captivity to the law of sin," so that even the child of God is forced to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"² The corruptions of the heart, manifesting themselves in vain thoughts and sinful imaginations, in evil passions and unmortified tempers, in pride, envy, and dis-

¹ John viii. 31, 32.

² Romans vii. 23, 24.

content, in evil-speaking, in yielding to temptation, in indolence and a worldly spirit, are utterly opposed to communion with God and to progressive sanctification. When any of these things prevail, internal peace and comfort are marred, and the soul is liable to be plunged into distress and perplexity. The felt power of indwelling sin, and the reflection that it has constantly adhered to all our mental acts, and polluted our best services, will often lead to unfavourable conclusions respecting our sonship, and excite painful misgivings, and distrust of the Divine favour. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other : so that we cannot do the things that we would."¹ An indolent Christian, and one that indulges an unmortified temper and a worldly spirit, and that does not watch against envy and evil speaking, may expect to be often left to walk in darkness. It is only in holy activity and in mortifying such deeds of the body, that we walk in the light of the Father's countenance, and that we are enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

4. The *agency of Satan* is a principal cause of the doubts and fears with which the children of God are beset ; and it is only by resisting the devil, and by constant watchfulness and prayer against his temptations, that we can hope for deliverance. It behoves us not to be ignorant of "his *devices*." He is Satan, the grand *adversary* of God and the saints. He is the cunning *serpent* to deceive and beguile, and a *roaring lion*, going about seeking to devour. He is the constant *accuser of the brethren* to God, and to their own consciences ; and frequently does he succeed, if not to bring them into despair, at least to diminish their comfort, and to retard their progress in holiness. In various ways, the Evil One seeks and obtains advantage over the children of God, in their present imperfect state of sanctification. He knows their weak side, their natural temperament and besetting sins ; and he lays hold of internal corruptions as a favourable position on which to plant his most potent temptations. If at any time vain and self-confident, the children of God are exposed to Satan's assaults. Thus, by painful experience, they are taught lessons of humility and modesty. Their physical condition and outward circumstances are made by the Tempter a ground of attack. The weak and hypochondriacal are tempted to doubt of their safety. Outward losses and afflictions are construed as tokens of God's displeasure against them. Satan's malignant in-

¹ Galatians v. 16, 17.

fluence is not unfrequently mingled with the natural sorrow of the mourner. The fever and bodily weakness that unhinge or prostrate the mind are taken advantage of by the Wicked One, to assail the child of God ; and even in the feebleness of death, he may not be exempted from the onset of the Destroyer. The varied workings of inward corruption, with the sense of personal demerit and shame, and the joy of spiritual privileges, are taken by the enemy as occasions of powerful temptations. He strives to harden the heart and sear the conscience, so as to lead a person to make light of sin. Again, he transforms himself "into an angel of light ;" administers opiates to lull the soul into false security, or to withdraw from entire trust in the grace that bringeth salvation. And if he fails in blinding the mind and hardening the heart, he will present, in dark array, former sins, representing them as great and aggravated beyond the power of grace to pardon ; and thus leading to the dismal apprehension of total rejection from God, and of endless woe.

From whatever causes the darkness and fears of God's children may arise, being under Divine control, there can be no doubt that they are made to subserve His purposes of wisdom and love. Thus those who fall into sin are reprov'd and punished ; they are drawn off from carnal confidences ; they attain to deeper humility. God's power and faithfulness are the more exhibited as the only sure ground of trust ; faith and other graces are thereby tried and strengthened ; believers are stirred up to pray more earnestly, to prize more the light of God's countenance, and to cherish a deeper sympathy with those who have been called to like trials ; and thus to be more eminently useful. And when they have passed through the depths of internal trouble, and have been delivered from their fears and distresses, they will see more brightly the glory of the Saviour's power and grace in working their deliverance ; and with fuller notes of joyful praise will they commemorate his wondrous goodness ; and their happiness will be enhanced for ever through the vivid contrast with former distress and misery.

The DUTY of such as walk in darkness, and have not a comfortable persuasion of their sonship, may be exhibited in a few plain, practical directions. To restore effectual spiritual comfort to those who go mourning is the province of the blessed Spirit, the promised Comforter ; and without his presence and energy, all human instrumentality will be vain and unprofitable. Notwithstanding, some practical hints may

be given, which, through his blessing, may serve to relieve internal distress, and to bring into the heart the joys of salvation.

First. *The causes of spiritual distress should be diligently searched out.* Our first duty is to examine ourselves respecting our spiritual state and frame,—to “search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord.” In general, it will be found that our own corruptions have obscured our evidences and caused the withdrawal of the light of the Father’s countenance. Our carnality of mind, yielding to temptation, want of watchfulness, pride, unbelief, and unfruitfulness, are main causes of our desertion and spiritual distress. By carefully searching these out, we may become humbled because of them; and by the mortification of inward corruptions we may be delivered from the bondage that leads again to fear, and may be brought to go on our way rejoicing.

Secondly. *A simple, childlike embracing, and trust in the promise of the covenant,* is a relief from spiritual darkness. Those who fear the Lord have as their main duty to “obey the voice of his servant.” Unto “the upright,” God assures us, “there ariseth light in the darkness.”¹ The promises of the covenant are not yea and nay, but are absolute and unconditional. Our first duty is to embrace and rest upon them, confiding in the grace and faithfulness of God, who gave them, to fulfil them. Though the desponding Christian is prone to put away from him the comfort of the promise, under the plea that the blessing offered is only for the regenerate and for such as walk in holy obedience, and not for one so froward and unsanctified as he is, yet reliance on the promise is a commanded duty, and we have the fullest warrant to believe God’s Word. It comes to us, not on the footing of any worthiness on our part, but wholly through the merit of Christ’s perfect work; and all our salvation is of free grace. We are certainly welcome, coming to Christ, to appropriate the promise, however sinful and unworthy in ourselves, and to claim all the blessing which it offers. Even where sin has abounded, grace much more abounds. God is honoured by our trusting Him, even when we cannot see Him; and He takes to Himself a revenue of glory by conferring upon his erring rebellious children the benefits held forth in his largest, fullest promises. “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”² The Spirit’s graces and their exercises are matters of assured promise; and we should come to God and plead

¹ Psalm cxii. 4.

² Romans v. 21.

the fulfilment of his faithful Word, that we may experience their operation. The promises of the covenant of grace were made from eternity to Christ the Head, and they flow through Him to the elect as his seed. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."¹ Assured trust in the promise is an eminent way of deliverance from internal trouble and distress, and of upholding the soul in confidence on the Rock of salvation.

Thirdly. *Active devoted obedience* often leads to peace and spiritual comfort. In doing the will of God, it is promised that we "shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."² "What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease."³ Active childlike obedience serves to banish doubts and exclude fears, by concentrating the thoughts upon the character and claims of Christ, the best of masters, and upon one's permanent obligations to love and honour Him. Delight is experienced in doing the Father's will, and the sense of gracious support and acceptance is a present and great reward. The best way to rise above disquieting doubts and fears is often to turn away from pondering evidences, and to betake one's self to active service. Engagement of the heart and spirit in God's work will elevate the mind and impart joy and peace in believing. "Those that honour God will He honour;"⁴ and where He is, "there shall his servants be."⁵ The experience of all true devoted servants of Christ has been, in a great measure, uniform, that in proportion as they gave themselves fully to the performance of commanded duty, they rose above discouragement and fear. Light has broken upon their path, as they have been brought to feel that their chief and grand business was to do their Father's will, and to have a single eye to his glory in all things. In general, the happiest persons in life have been those whom the love of Christ constrained to live not to themselves, but to Him who died and rose again. Whatever fears, depressions, and conflicts they have experienced at times, their death has generally been peaceful and triumphant when they have been found "abounding in the work of the Lord;" and their last works have been more than their first. Andrew Fuller relates that, in the early days of his ministry, a large number of his flock were in spiritual distress because of the want of evidences concerning their personal salvation. He studied, prayed, and

¹ 2 Cor. i. 20.³ Ps. xxv. 12.⁵ John xii. 26.² John vii. 17.⁴ 1 Sam. ii. 30.

preached with the object of clearing their doubts and imparting to them spiritual comfort, and still the darkness increased. He was, in consequence, himself distressed in spirit, and led to conclude that his ministry had not the seal of the Divine approval. At this time the mission to India, which had shortly before been started under Dr Carey, arrested the attention of Fuller's flock. All, both old and young, became deeply interested in it, and laboured personally for its advancement. The immediate effect was that spiritual doubts and perplexities were overcome. The people, he records, became all happy, rejoicing Christians, and he himself was the happiest of all. The reason of the change was obvious. They devoted themselves to the great work of making known God's light and salvation. They learned to exhibit a chief feature of the mind of Christ—zeal and self-sacrificing benevolence—and He blessed them with the light of his countenance.

Fourthly. *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in the Lord as a covenant God and portion*, dispel doubts, and are an effectual remedy against discouraging fears. The child of God, walking in darkness, is enjoined to "trust in the name of the Lord," and to "stay upon his God."¹ "The name of the Lord" designates the Saviour. Of the angel of the Divine presence sent to guide Israel, it was declared, "My name is in Him."² "This is the name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness."³ The immediate duty of the distressed and disconsolate is to trust in this blessed name. They should flee to Him for deliverance and safety, commit their whole case into his hands, rely with confidence upon his power and promise, and expect salvation from Him according to his Word, and to the glory of his perfections. To "stay upon" Him, means to lean upon Him for support when we are weak and helpless in ourselves. The great object of this reliance is "his God." It is God in his covenant-character and relations. We have the fullest warrant thus to appropriate Him, even when our evidences of sonship are obscured, and when clouds and darkness surround God's throne. The grand proposal of the everlasting covenant is, "They shall be to me a people, and I will be to them a God." The Saviour in his last agony, when under the hiding of his Father's countenance, yet gave utterance to the strongest language of appropriating faith, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"⁴ So has the child of God,

¹ Isaiah l. 10.

² Exodus xxiii. 21.

³ Jeremiah xxiii. 5.

⁴ Psalm xxii. 1.

when in fear and doubt, the certain warrant to take hold of God's covenant, and, believing on Christ, to trust his covenant-God for all that he needs for support, deliverance, and complete salvation. In the expressive language of Luther: "In the short words *My* and *Thy* lie the crown and cream of the Gospel. God may be withdrawn and hidden to sense, and yet my God still." Faith in Christ is enjoined as the first duty upon all to whom the proposal and offer of the Gospel comes. "This is," pre-eminently, "the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent."¹ To receive Christ and rest upon Him alone for salvation, is the first and last duty of every one who hears the Gospel. The offer of life and salvation to sinners, as such, is free and unhampered. All to whom it is addressed are assuredly welcome to come to Christ just as they are; and without money and without price, they may take the water of life freely. Christ is the "Light of the world," and those who walk in darkness are encouraged to look away from themselves to Him, and be enlightened. The great commandment and gracious promise are inseparably connected, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" In all cases it is our paramount duty, as it is our highest privilege, to look unto Jesus, the great Object, "the Author and Finisher of our faith."² We should ever trust Him, as we come to Him at first, to obtain rest. When our evidences are dark, and we want assurance, we should go to Him anew and embrace Him with the heart, that thus we may know that we have eternal life. In darkness and difficulty, we should hope in his Word, and wait for Him as those who look for the light of the morning. And for the increase of faith and the "full assurance of hope," we have only one way, to "trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." It is not from the working of faith in ourselves, but from the blessed Object of faith seen and laid hold on, that we are to receive light and consolation. The *direct actings* of faith upon the Divine promise, and on Christ and his salvation, are the appointed way to the joy of salvation. These bring into the soul a peace and rest which no reflection on past experience, no pondering of

¹ John vi. 19.

² "Looking unto Jesus." Heb. xii. 2. The original word, ἀφοσώμετες, involves the idea of looking away from ourselves and all other objects to Jesus alone. Isaac Ambrose works out this idea in his treatise on "*Looking to Jesus,*" which has been always much valued by simple-minded godly persons.

our evidences of grace, can ever yield. Samuel Rutherford judiciously remarks, that the act of believing on Christ brings with it its own clear evidence, as a person in simply beholding an object has the best evidence at once of the reality of the object and of his seeing it. While Peter went looking to Jesus he walked steadily on the water; and he only began to sink when he lifted his eyes off the Saviour, and brooded upon the tumultuous waves. Even so, doubts and fears prevail, when we look within, or brood on objects that cause distress and perplexities. These are relieved when faith again receives and rests upon a present all-sufficient Saviour. Faith is the clinging trust and confidence of a child reposing in the love and pity of a father who is able and willing to help. In laying hold of Almighty strength, we are delivered from enemies and dangers, we emerge out of darkness and distress, and attain to joy and peace in believing. Our grand duty is to trust Him directly, unhesitatingly, and with assured confidence. "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."¹

"But of thy power I'll sing aloud,
At morn thy mercy praise;
For thou to me my refuge wast,
And tower in troublous days.
O God, thou art my strength, I will
Sing praises unto thee;
For God is my defence, a God
Of mercy unto me."²

Finally. It is *by the Spirit, in the way of fervent prayer*, that the believer is enlarged in distress, and delivered out of darkness. Being in an agony, Christ "prayed the more earnestly," and "He was heard in that He feared." This was David's constant way. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee. O Lord."³ "When my heart is overwhelmed. I will cry unto thee."⁴ This, too, has been the way of support and deliverance for all God's saints. "Is any afflicted? let him pray."⁵ Present relief is obtained in pouring out the heart to God in prayer. Coming to the throne of grace, "we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."⁶ In waiting, wrestling prayer, the distress of the heart is relieved, and the sadness of the countenance is changed. The prayer of faith is never offered in vain. Gracious acceptance is guaranteed to

¹ Ps. lxxxiv. 12.

² Ps. lix. 16, 17—Scottish metrical version.

³ Ps. cxxx. 1.

⁴ Ps. lxi. 2.

⁵ James v. 13.

⁶ Heb. iv. 16.

the humble suppliant. The Divine answer given at the appointed time brings to the soul preservation from trouble, and fills the mouth with songs of deliverance. "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."¹ The Holy Spirit is the great agent of light, peace, and strong consolation. An eminent part of his office in applying redemption is to reveal Christ in his glory, so as to dispel darkness, and to gladden with the light of God's countenance. As the promised Comforter, He savingly enlightens the mind, wipes away the tears of mourners, gives the earnest of glory, and seals till the day of redemption. All that the Spirit does in leading the children of God—as the "Spirit of adoption" given them—and in that holy fellowship which the saints have with Him, of which we have already spoken,² is adapted to relieve believers in spiritual distress and fear, and to enable them to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. When "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," we "glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed."³ The Spirit of the Lord God upon Christ, and given to believers through Him, is sent "to comfort all that mourn," from whatever cause, and to "give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, that He might be glorified."⁴ This is his eminent work in the children of God. We honour Him by relying upon Him in all cases for its performance. The abundant grace of the Almighty Spirit is amply sufficient to free from the spirit of bondage, to give settled peace of conscience, and to fill with the animating and joyful hope of salvation.

The *issues* of spiritual darkness and distress to the children of God are made, through the wisdom and love of their Father, most profitable and blessed. Thus are they effectually taught the unspeakable evil of sin, and are led to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. They are brought to know the value of the consolations of the Covenant, and to look alone to the Redeemer's person and work for pardon and accept-

¹ Psalm xxxii. 6, 7.

² See chapters v., vii.

³ Romans v. 2, 5.

⁴ Isaiah lxi. 2, 3.

ance ; for all light, and strength, and blessing. Their inward distresses and conflicts qualify them for imparting consolation to mourners ; and the deliverances wrought for them become motives to greater activity and devotedness. Their final happiness will be greatly enhanced when viewed in contrast with the fears, and dangers, and distresses through which they passed on the way to its attainment. The rest in the heavenly Canaan will be the sweeter, that it was reached by lengthened travel through a waste howling wilderness, and by passing through "the swellings of Jordan." The songs of the redeemed in glory will make mention of severe trial, and affliction, and enemies, and ascribe deliverance from all these to our covenant God and Father. "Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net ; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads ; we went through fire and water : but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."¹

¹ Psalm lxvi. 10, 12.

NOTE.—Goodwin gives the following *reasons* why "the name of God, and what is in God, is a prop sufficient for faith to rest on :—*First*, Because the name of God—that is, God's attributes and Christ's righteousness, do sufficiently, and adequately, and fully answer all wants and doubts, all objections and distresses, we can have, or can be in." Referring to the proclamation of God's name, in Exodus xxxiv. 5, 6, he says, that every letter in that name answers to some temptation or trial that may befall us : "Art thou in misery and great distress ? He is merciful ; 'the Lord merciful.' The *Lord*, therefore, *able* to help thee ; and *merciful*, therefore *willing*. Yea, but thou wilt say, I am unworthy : I have nothing in me to move Him to it. Well, therefore, He is *gracious* ; now grace is to show mercy freely. Yea, but I have sinned against Him long, for many years ; if I had come in when I was young, mercy might have been shown me. To this He says, 'I am *long-suffering*.' Yea, but my sins every way abound in number, and it is impossible to reckon them up, and they abound in heinousness ; I have committed the same sins again and again ; I have been false to Him, broke promise with Him again and again. His name also answers this objection—He is *abundant in goodness* ; He abounds more in grace than thou in sinning. And though thou hast been false again and again to Him, and broke all covenants, yet He is *abundant in truth* ; also better than his Word, for He cannot to our capacities express all that mercy that is in Him for us. Yea, but I have committed great sins, aggravated with many great circumstances, against knowledge ; wilfully so. He forgives *iniquity, transgression, and sin* ; sins of all sorts. Yea ; but there is mercy thus in Him for a few, and I may be none of the number. Yes ; there is mercy for *thousands*. And He *keeps* it ; treasures of it lie by Him, and are kept, if men would come and take them. A *second* reason why his name is sufficient, though you have and see nothing in you, nor any promise made to any grace in you to rest upon, is, because all these promises made

to conditions in us, which we ordinarily look unto, are 'yea and amen' only in this his name, and his Son's name. As the worth of bonds depends upon the sufficiency of the man who makes them, so all these promises depend upon his name. Therefore, when you rely upon his name, having as yet no promise made to anything in you to rely upon, you then rely upon that which is the foundation of all these promises. You rely on that which all those others are resolved into, and which, therefore, is sufficient, though all the rest fail you in your apprehension. *Thirdly.* His mere name is support enough for faith, because it is for his name's sake and his Son's name's sake that He doeth all that He doeth—for nothing in us, but merely for what is in Himself. 'For my name's sake, and not for your sake' (Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 32). 'I am He that blotteth out thy transgression for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins' (Isaiah xliii. 25). If it be for his name's sake, He doeth all that He doeth, and fulfils all promises made to us, then when thou seest nothing in thyself to which any promise is made, nothing which may appear to be any argument or motive that He will pardon thee, then trust thou in His name; that because He is God, and hath mercy in Him, that therefore He will do it. For that which is the only or main motive to God himself to do anything for us, must needs be, when apprehended and believed, the strongest and surest ground for our faith also to persuade the heart that He will do it."—*Goodwin's Works*, vol. iii. pp. 327, 330.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FUTURE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD.

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”—ROMANS viii. 19.

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”—COLOSSIANS iii. 4.

THE adopted children of God are, to a great extent, in their present condition, unknown in the world. Though redeemed from the earth, and separated from others, they do not live apart from human associations, and they are not distinguished by an ascetic spirit and ascetic practices. Yet their character, principles, and the ends of their life are, in a great measure, unknown to the multitudes around them with whom they are conversant. They are “hidden ones.” The world knows them not, even as it did not know the Only-begotten of the Father when He tabernacled on the earth. Destitute of spiritual knowledge and of any principle of spiritual discernment, the ungodly see no excellency in the saints; and instead of regarding them with interest and affection, they cherish toward them aversion and hatred. The sons of God are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” Their names are often in obscurity, or cast out as evil. They are as “lilies among thorns,” their character not shining forth in its goodly proportions, their beauty marred, their usefulness hindered, and they receive injury from those with whom they commingle in society.

To themselves, moreover, the evidences of their sonship are at times not clear. Through the power of corruption within and the temptations of Satan, they are in darkness and bondage of spirit. Sensible of their unfruitfulness and manifold imperfections, they regard themselves as utterly unfit to enjoy the privilege of being put among the children;¹ and at times they fear lest they should have no part in the family inheritance. Considering the high calling of the children of God, and the

¹ Jeremiah iii. 19.

obligation which it imposes to devoted service to Him who has called them, it is sad to reflect how little resemblance they exhibit to their heavenly Father, and how little they do for filling the earth with his glory. Yet (1) their sonship is *a blessed reality*. "Now are we sons of God," though we cannot conceive the manner of that ineffable love which brought us into this excellent relation, nor adequately declare what we shall be hereafter; and (2) the family of the redeemed shall be one day *fully gathered*, and their *sonship will be brightly manifested*. The reality and excellency of the sonship of believers have been already discussed; we shall now notice briefly the *future manifestation* of their sonship. This is distinctly declared in various passages of the Word, and is held forth for the consolation of the children of God under present discouragements and trials as the object of their joyful hope. They walk in darkness now, but hereafter they "shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." They are for a "season in heaviness through manifold temptations," but their faith, when tried, shall be "found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."¹ They are often externally poor, mean, and despised. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?"² By others they are esteemed disreputable, they are reproached and contemned by the world. "As deceivers, and yet true." "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."³ Their *privileges*, too, as well as their character, are hidden. They eat of "the hidden manna," and have "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written," but this "no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."⁴ Their "joy is unspeakable and *full of glory*;" their "peace passeth all understanding," but both are hid in their heart. The "secret of the Lord" is with them, which the men of the world cannot unfold, and they can never fully declare or make others understand what they possess and enjoy. Their whole "life is hid with Christ in God,"⁵ not only in its fountain, and for safety and security, but as it is concealed in its nature, power, and excellency from others who are not partakers of it.

But however hidden, concealed, and unknown, the sons of God will be manifested at a period which has been definitely fixed. So exalted and wonderful is the future display of the character

¹ 1 Peter i. 7.

² James ii. v.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 13.

⁴ Revelation ii. 17.

⁵ Colossians iii. 3.

and dignity of the saints, that in one bright and most expressive passage (Romans viii. 19-24), it is represented as an object of interest and eager desire to the whole material universe. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," &c. The "*creature*" here does not mean the whole rational and irrational creation, including angels, and all things animate and inanimate, nor the body of believers exclusively, nor the heathen world as distinguished from them, nor the whole human race. For the "expectation" mentioned does not characterize men in general, and the context is not applicable to angels; and there is an obvious distinction made between the creature and those who have "the first-fruits of the Spirit." It denotes the material creation, the earth and its orders of being, animate and inanimate, man excepted. This is viewed as under the curse, degraded, brought into bondage, and groaning because of man's sin. By a vivid and expressive figure, creation is personified, and emotions and passions are ascribed to it which are peculiar to man. It is in a state of "earnest expectation," and "waiting" for a glory to be revealed in God's redeemed, which will reflect unspeakable honour upon all the objects of the lower creation. The compound original term (*ἀποκαταδοξία*) is singularly expressive and emphatic. It is taken from erecting the head, and stretching out the neck in eager looking. The intensive particle conveys the idea of earnest and persistent expectation—such an expectation as waits out the time and fails not till the object is attained. The object of this future desire and hope is "the manifestation of the sons of God"—the time when they shall appear and be owned in perfect saintship; the honour and dignity which shall be theirs, when they shall be displayed in their true character and glory as sons of the family of heaven.

The period for which the creature thus waits in earnest and hopeful expectancy has been regarded either as (1) that of the promised Millennium; or (2) that of the general resurrection and the final judgment. There is every reason to think that it is to the latter, and not the former, of these eras that the apostle's lofty description applies. Whatever glory shall be put upon the Church of the redeemed, on the establishment of Christ's kingdom of power at the millennium; whatever deliverance from physical evils shall be wrought on the earth, the travailing pains and groans of creation will not cease till the bodies of the saints shall rise in glory. Nor will the

corporeal state of Christ's faithful servants who reign with Him in the millennial period be such as to reflect honour and glory upon all created objects. The time of this manifestation is, beyond doubt, the second coming of the Redeemer, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and shall judge angels and men at his glorious appearance. It is not only, in a figurative sense, looked for by all the lower creation, as that which will be to it most advantageous, and reflect upon it the highest honour; but to the saints themselves it is the object of vehement desire—"We who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our bodies." The redemption of the bodies of the saints in their glorious resurrection from the dead is the set time of their manifestation, and the time, too, when "the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."—(v. 21.)

The general judgment will be emphatically "the revelation of Jesus Christ,"¹ when the world's Saviour, unknown and despised by vast multitudes, shall come in power and great glory, and shall be revealed in transcendent lustre to the entire universe. His saints shall share in his glory. At "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour," they shall realize fully their "blessed Hope." His "revelation" is at the same time *their* "manifestation." The redeemed are all gathered into one "general assembly." The family of God is fully made up; and with a glory which was before inconceivable, they shine forth as a bride adorned for her husband. This glory is said to be "adoption,"² "even the redemption of the body," the two phrases being equivalent in import. The saints' glorious resurrection is included in their adoption, and is one of its most prominent parts. There is a beautiful progress and wondrous development in the adoption of the family of God. As predestined and chosen to this privilege, it was a secret in God's counsels of love from eternity. In our effectual calling, it is made known to us, but is a secret to all others. The glory of the saints' resurrection will reveal their sonship to all. "In election, God wrote our names in the book of life, which is his family register. In regeneration, He gave us a new nature, sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, and put us among his children. In the resurrection, He will openly acknowledge us as his children, and place us before his face

¹ 1 Peter i. 13.

² The original word has not the article.

for ever.”¹ When our bodies shall have been raised from the dust, and when both our souls and bodies are fully transformed into the likeness of Christ, then is the complete and glorious manifestation of our sonship.

1. The *relation* of the adopted to God the Father, and to Christ, the Elder Brother, is then *publicly owned*. The Saviour coming in great glory, and seated on his throne of majesty, confesses his saints before his father and his angels. They have been gathered to meet Him in the air, and are admitted as assessors with him in judgment. He welcomes them to his presence as the “blessed of the Father,” and owns them as his brethren, his elect spouse, and approved servants. His purpose, of love towards them—the grand object of his death for them and the ends of the Gospel ministration, are fully accomplished; and it is befitting that they should be acknowledged as the chosen of God, faithful, and those whom the King delights to honour. Here they were unknown, despised, and rejected by the world. Their greatest concern under trials and reproaches of men was that in their painful service they might be approved of the Master whom they loved and devotedly served. Their greatest fear at times was that they might not be found of Him in peace at his coming. In the day of the glorious revelation of Christ, the saints realize their highest hopes. They are owned by the King as faithful and tried servants to be rewarded, as of the “many sons” that are “brought to glory.” In the presence of enemies, and before an assembled universe, they are presented by the Saviour to His Father and theirs, with ecstatic joy, “Behold I, and the children that God has given me.”² What a wondrous manifestation is this, that those who were far off are brought nigh; that those who were rebels and enemies are now owned as friends and children, among whom God will dwell for ever!

2. In the future manifestation of the sons of God, their *character*, now perfected, is *conspicuously exhibited*. Their “righteousness is brought forth as the light, and their salvation as a lamp that burneth.” All that was defiled and imperfect is done away. The character formed by the intermixture of various elements, tried and matured by the exercise of various graces, is fully developed. What is weak and dark is done away, when that which is perfect is come. The children of God have reached the “stature of perfect men” in Christ Jesus. They are arrayed in “the beauty of holiness:” and assimilated to Him who is the First-born among many brethren.

¹ *The Believer's Triumph*, by Rev. James Smith, p. 170. ² Heb. ii. 13.

ren, they shine forth as refulgent stars in the upper firmament, reflecting the splendour of "the Sun of righteousness." The sons of God at the second coming of Christ, tested by the trials through which they have passed, refined and purified by the temptations and afflictions which they endured, display a character of diversified excellence and attractive beauty. The Redeemer will come at last, not merely to be seen and admired by his people, but, from what his grace has wrought in them, He will "come to be glorified *in* his saints, and to be admired *in* all them that believe."¹

3. Christ's glorious appearance will be the bringing forth *into noontide effulgence of the hidden life of his saints.* "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."² Christ's glory is now hid from the world. So the believer's inner life of communion with God is "hid with Christ in God" as the element and sphere in which it is exercised. At the day of his second coming, Christ, the Source and Essence of the believer's life, will gloriously manifest Himself, and then their hidden life shall be clearly and fully manifested. The supports, comforts, and power of the believer's spiritual life were, while here, but imperfectly known. Even Christians themselves do not always recognize the life of one another, and at times they stand in doubt of their own. Their full manifestation is at, and in the revelation of Christ—the Head of vital influence and of glory. When He, who is our life, shall be manifested, then our life, which was before weak, obscure, and hid, shall stand forth in the full manifestation of power and purity, of fulness of joy and transcendent glory. At Christ's appearance, and not till then, will the saint's life in Him be fully displayed. The new life which the Spirit imparted to their souls was in its initial stages, and in the progress of gradual development, up till this blissful era. It now has reached its state of glorious perfection. By the Saviour, as the glorified vital Head of the body, are brought forth in their full vigour, beauty, and lustre, all the members. The infinite Source and perfect Model of that life stands at the head of the ransomed Church, diffusing copious supplies of life to all the members, and shedding upon them the bright radiance of his glory.³ Then are believers, to a degree to which they could never attain while here, "complete in Him who is the Head of all principality and power."⁴

¹ 2 Thess. i. 10.

² Col. iii. 4.

³ See *Treatise on Colossians*, chap. iii. 4

⁴ Col. ii. 10.

4. In their future manifestation, there is put upon the *children of God unspeakable honour*. Their "present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."¹ The full revelation of their adoption, at Christ's second advent, for which the saints wait, will be "the redemption of their bodies."² Their ransomed spirits have been already rescued from the curse of the law, the power of sin, and the second death. Their future manifestation includes the complete deliverance from all "the ills that flesh is heir to"—from all disease, corruption, and dishonour. Thus is their "redemption" complete, obtained for them at an inestimable price, and effected by the exertion of Almighty power. When the Redeemer shall stand at "the latter day upon the earth," He will proclaim aloud glorious freedom to his people: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."³ The body is brought forth from the grave as a prisoner from his dungeon, and is ushered into the light and liberty of the "resurrection glory." That which was sown in corruption is raised incorruptible, that which was laid in the grave in dishonour is "raised up in glory." The redemption of the saint's body is its complete deliverance from all the defects of its earthly nature, and constitutes it a "spiritual body," glorified like Christ's.⁴ "The dead in Christ rise first,"⁵ and are immediately after seen seated with Him on thrones of judgment. He is the "First-fruits," and they that are Christ's are with Him at his coming, as the full ripened harvest of immortality. They are the displayed trophies of his victory, the "jewels" made up of his mediatorial crown, that shine in his light, and reflect brightly the effulgence of his glory. "This honour have all his saints."⁶ They were predestined to it from the beginning, and are secured its final possession by the work of the Spirit. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."⁷ This seal imprints upon them God's mark, by which they are exhibited as his, and it renders them safe and secure in respect to the honour and blessedness which are to be enjoyed at the future day of redemption. The seal of the living God can never be broken. His "gifts and calling are without repentance." The honour that awaits the

¹ Rom. viii. 18.

² Verse 23.

³ Heb. xiii. 14.

⁴ Phil. iii. 51; 1 Cor. xv. 51.

⁵ 1 Thess. iv. 16.

⁶ Ps. cxlix. 9.

⁷ Ephes. iv. 30.

saints in the day of their coming manifestation is *unspeakably great*—such as the Father puts upon the Son of his love—that which is befitting the Saviour to confer on his saints as the high reward of his finished work, and the full expression of his ineffable favour and love towards them. “They shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy.” “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”¹

Lastly. *The lower creation shall partake of the glories that pertain to the manifestation of the sons of God, and that attend the redemption of their bodies.* This is “*the earnest expectation of the creature.*” Now, the material creation, animate and inanimate, is “subject to vanity, not willingly”—by no natural principle of corruption or decay. It has been so subjected in accordance with the will of Him who rendered it subject, in hope that the creature itself should share in the glorious redemption of the saints. The present is the bondage and groaning in pain, and travail of the whole lower creation. “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now.”² The earth is cursed through man’s sin. The beasts are in bondage to cruel instincts, and are either oppressed by man’s dominion, or are hostile and destructive to their oppressor. Everything is perverted from its original design. The objects of creation are employed to minister to man’s evil passions and vices, to foster rebellion against the Creator, and as objects of idol-worship. Disorder and confusion abound everywhere, and the groans of creation resound throughout the world. But the condition of the creature is not hopeless. It shall yet be freed from the bondage of corruption, and delivered from a state of frailty and degradation. At the close of the present dispensation, the creature will be renovated and restored. In some way that we can but imperfectly apprehend, it shall partake of “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” It shall be delivered and introduced into the “liberty of glory,” which to the saints is the end and consummation of redemption. The groans of creation shall cease. Its travailing pangs shall be succeeded by freedom and joy. It shall share in something of the same liberty which characterizes the state of the bodies of the saints in their resurrection. The second Adam, in his glorious appearance, shall be “the Repairer of the breach;” and his future advent is “the time of the resti-

¹ John xii. 26.

² Romans viii. 23.

tution of all things." This lower world witnessed the humiliation of the Son of God, and sympathized with Him in the agonies of his death. It shall also witness the completion of his triumph, and shall share in the bright revelation of his glory: The material elements, that form component parts of the saints' bodies, will be glorified in the resurrection. The globe that we inhabit, that was defiled and degraded by man's sin, will be restored and renewed by the saints' resurrection. It shall be freed from the curse, and delivered from all the evil that came by sin, and from all that subsists by corruption. In an emphatic and glorious sense, it shall be brought into the sure freedom from blight and debility, from decay and corruption, from all suffering and pain, in which the children of God, when raised up in glory, shall exult for ever. There shall be "a new heaven and a new earth," wherein shall eternally dwell righteousness. The seraphim, in their lofty worship, as they veil their faces and cover their feet in the presence of the King, exclaim, "The whole earth is full of thy glory."¹ At the "day of the revelation of Christ" and of "the manifestation of the sons of God," this earth, with the things in it, being dissolved, shall be renewed and refined by passing through the fire of the general conflagration. It will be re-organized and elevated. Sin and all its effects being removed, it will appear more lovely than it did on the fair morn of creation, before the Destroyer entered among the works of God. Distinguished above other worlds as the theatre of the surpassing wonders of the incarnation and atonement of Christ, and as the place where the Church of the redeemed was gathered, where it suffered, triumphed, and was prepared for glory; it seems destined, in its future renovation, to shine forth the most glorious orb of the myriads that revolve in boundless space. The risen saints may have assigned them in it their blissful abode, where their happiness, in lofty communion with God and with holy angels, will embrace all the elements of ecstatic enjoyment, enhanced to them by the reflection that this earth was once the scene of their trials, and sorrows, and conflicts. The new heavens and the renovated earth shall stand forth as a glorious monument of the perfections of the God and Father of the redeemed. The saints, raised from corruption and glorified in soul and body, shall see in it bright displays of the wisdom and power of God, in frustrating the designs of Satan, and over-ruling all events and changes in time for his own glory and their good.

¹ Isaiah vi. 3.

They shall behold in the new creation the transcendent goodness and grace of God, subduing all evil, and shining forth illustriously over all his other works. Death is for ever abolished; and in the new scene of the saints' felicity are everywhere displayed the glorious triumphs of sovereign grace. The sons of God are manifested as heirs and rulers of this restored world. "Behold, I make all things new. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and He shall be my son." "They shall reign for ever and ever."¹

¹ Revelation xxi. 5, 7; xxii. 5.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FATHER'S HOUSE ; AND THE FUTURE HAPPINESS OF THE SONS OF GOD.

“ In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you.”—JOHN xiv. 2.

“ Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—MATTHEW xiii. 43.

THE purposes of God in relation to his children, and all his dealings toward them, look forward to their final home-bringing and rest with Him in heavenly glory. Predestined to the adoption of sons, they were chosen to life eternal. The Captain of salvation was made perfect through sufferings, that He might bring many sons to glory.¹ They were called, justified, and led by the Spirit in sanctification, that they might be glorified. As of ancient Israel, God said, “ I have called my Son out of Egypt ;” and in leading them through the wilderness, He carried “ them in his bosom as a nursing father beareth the sucking child,”² till He brought them to the land of promise ; so the Lord, in covenant-mercy and love, brings the redeemed from their natural state of guilt and bondage, conducts them in safety through the wilderness of this world, and ministers to them an entrance into the heavenly Canaan. This is the appointed end of all the dispensations of grace and providence to them,—the blessed issue of all their labour, and trials, and conflicts. All that befalls them in the path in which they travel, as well as all the changes that take place in their condition and character, are covenant-guidance, and the results are gracious and sure. “ He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.”³

We have already spoken of the “ inheritance in light ” which the adopted sons of God, as “ joint-heirs ” with Christ, possess. But this was viewed as realized in part here in the communion which, as members of the invisible Church, they have with Him

¹ Hebrews ii. 10.

² Numbers xi. 12.

³ Psalm cvii. 7.

in grace, and partly in the state into which their souls enter immediately at death. Their home-bringing is after the present dispensation has come to a close, having served the purpose of its establishment. The righteous go into life eternal, after the general judgment, and their final happiness is that which, in soul and body, they shall enjoy after the resurrection throughout eternity.

1. The state of heavenly felicity into which risen saints are brought is represented in various forms of expression in Scripture, as their admission to a *glorious place*. Though we should beware of associating with the future happiness of the children of God ideas taken from local relations on earth, yet it seems undeniable, from Scripture representations, that this felicity will be realized, not as a *state* which saints may enjoy in any part of the universe, but in a fixed and determined part of creation. This is the place where Jehovah dwells with his saints and holy angels, and where there shall be made peculiar manifestations of his glory. It is termed the "*Third Heavens*," the "*Heaven of Heavens*," "*the land afar off*." Whether this is a vast material world in the centre of all God's works, influencing the movements of all the planetary systems, or the "*new heavens and earth*" that shall emerge out of the general conflagration, it must be a material place, where the saints, in their glorified bodies, with the risen Redeemer, and those who entered heaven without passing through the gates of death, shall have their abode for ever. It is represented as a place of effulgent light, whence night and darkness are for ever excluded. It is the "*inheritance of the saints in light*." "The glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." It is called a "*city that hath foundations*"—permanent and undecaying—"whose Builder and Maker is God;" a "*country*" better than any earthly, of which ancient Canaan, on which the eyes of the Lord were perpetually, was the shadow and type; a *Kingdom of glory*, of which the saints are heirs, allotted to them before the foundation of the world, and given them by the good pleasure of the Father. It is "*the Palace of the King*," into which the bride, the daughter of the King, is brought with gladness great, to abide for ever. It is the *heavenly Sanctuary*"—not made with hands, typified by the ancient Holy of holies, into which the redeemed come for their exalted worship. Heaven is the "*Paradise of God*," where is the "*river of the water of life*," and the "*tree of life*" in the midst of it, under the shade of which the saved from earth are

gathered, to eat of its mellow harvest fruits,¹ renewed for ever. And, as more nearly associated with the idea of a family, heaven is exhibited by the Saviour Himself, in his last discourse of comfort, as his "*Father's House*," in which are "many mansions," that which He goes to prepare for them, and to bring them to which He will at length come and receive them to Himself. All those vivid representations prominently hold forth the heaven to which the children of God are looking forward as a glorious place, the end of their wanderings and conflicts—the blissful rest that remains for them at the close of their toilsome labour. It is the pilgrim's joyful destination, the loved *home* of the saints, to which "the children of God scattered abroad" ultimately return, where they shall see their Father's face in righteousness, and shall be for ever "satisfied with his likeness."²

2. To this glorious place *all the adopted sons of God will be finally gathered*. The nations of them that are saved enter into the city of God. The ransomed of the Lord return from distance and wandering, and come to Zion. "Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."³ How joyful the thought, how enrapturing the prospect, that all the children of the redeemed family shall be gathered together at length into the Father's house in glory! On earth, they were gathered into one "in Christ,"⁴ but separated, often widely, by time and place—divided by party names and distinctions, and not unfrequently unknown to each other, they could not be brought together in any local meeting; and even had this been possible, there was much to prevent their happy fellowship. But when the saints are raised up in glory, all that could separate or alienate them is for ever done away. As when the members of a loving family on earth, after being dispersed in different places, experience delightful joy when they meet under the paternal roof, in the home of childhood, so, but unspeakably greater, will be the joy of the children of God when they are gathered together at last in the General Assembly and Church of the First-born met in heaven. Then are they at home with their Father and God, and they behold his face in righteousness. None are missing of all the family; and of weakness, and imperfection, and estrangement, there is nothing to mar their blissful communion. Gathered from all

¹ Rev. xxii. 1, 2.—The original terms, which in our version are rendered "twelve manner of fruits," properly mean "twelve harvests," expressing the idea of fruits rich and fully ripened.

² Psalm xvii. 15.

³ Psalm lxxxiv. 7.

⁴ Ephesians i. 10.

ages, and from all countries, they are brought into one glorious meeting place,—the many-mansioned house in heaven,—a number which no man can number, of all kindred, and people, and tongues. The centre of their exalted fellowship is Christ the Lord, as He was the Head to whom they were united on earth. Wherever He is in his revealed glory, there is heaven in all its blissful effulgence. Brought home to his presence, the saints go no more out; and their gathering together in glory shall be amazingly enhanced, that however actively engaged in the service of the King, nothing can occur to estrange or separate them for ever.

3. The *Felicity* which will be the portion of the family of God thus gathered, which each one of its members shall fully enjoy, will be great, surpassing the loftiest conceptions which we can here entertain concerning it. It will consist in—

1. *Deliverance from evil of every kind.* Frequently it is delineated by *negative* terms in the inspired Word, because we are unable to set forth, in positive expression, the nature and elements of the saints' future blessedness. When the Apostle Paul was caught up into the third heavens, he heard and saw things which "it was not *possible* for a man to utter."¹ By no adequate form of words could he set forth the glory of the heavenly state, and the perfection of the happiness of the saints in heaven. And even could he have done so to those on earth to whom the declarations were made, he could have conveyed to them no intelligible ideas. The redeemed who, through great tribulation, have reached their lofty position around the throne, "hunger no more, and thirst no more; nor does the sun light on them, nor any heat."² The inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."³ No unclean thing can ever enter the heavenly city. There is a complete and everlasting separation between glorified saints and all that would injure or annoy, or mar their perfect enjoyment and felicity. The sight or thought of sin can never cause any disturbance of their joyful rest. "The Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it."⁴

2. Their *Holiness, as well as their knowledge, will be perfect.* "They are without fault before the throne of God."⁵ The redeemed brought home to heaven have "washed their robes,

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 4—Such is the import of the original term.

² Rev. vii. 16. ³ Isaiah xxxiii. 24. ⁴ Isaiah xxv. 8. ⁵ Rev. xiv. 5.

and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”¹ The Church of the First-born is presented to Christ “a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”² This constitutes a main part of the future felicity of the saints. Their perfection in holiness was the grand design of their election from eternity, as it was a primary object of the Saviour’s work on earth. Christ died to “redeem them from all iniquity.” His blood shed was a “Fountain opened” to cleanse them from all defilement. The work of the Spirit in them was the renewal of their nature, and their complete transformation into the likeness of Christ. This, too, was the object of their fervent aspirations, eager effort, and frequent conflicts. They knew that without holiness they could not see the Lord. The chief element of their enjoyment in religion here was holiness in heart and life, even though imperfectly attained ; and, amid their deep struggles with indwelling sin, they looked forward with earnest hope and expectation to the state of perfection in glory. In their gathering together in the Father’s house these hopes are fully realized. The pilgrims have dropped their defiled garments behind, and have put on shining raiments. The last remains of corruption have been purged away. When they are brought to the “*undefiled*” inheritance, there is nothing in them to dim its splendour. They shine forth in “the beauty of holiness ;” and as they see God, they reflect the moral purity of Him who has “presented them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy.”³ Their minds, completely sanctified, are full of light. They see no longer through “a glass darkly,” or by an imperfect medium, but face to face. They “see as they are seen, and know even as they are known.” In the perfection of their intellectual powers, glorified saints behold the grandeur of the material creation ; and the wondrous scheme of providence and redemption is fully discovered. The vision of God and his works, which they enjoy, is *intuitive* and *beatific*. The light of holiness and truth illuminates the understanding, affections, and conscience ; and the will, exulting in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, presents the homage of cheerful service to God. The Father’s house in glory is the “Holy of holies,” of which the inmost enclosure of the ancient tabernacle was the type. There the exalted High Priest, clothed in his robes “of glory and beauty,” appears with the inscription, “**HOLINESS TO THE LORD,**” beaming on his forehead. This is the true *Shekinah*

¹ Rev. vii. 14.² Ephesians v. 27.³ Jude 24.

--the dwelling glory that enlightens it for ever. The saints, brought in to the most Holy Place, in the immediate presence of the Lamb, behold his glory ; and, transformed into his likeness, enjoy unalloyed felicity.

3. *The fellowship of saints and holy angels will be perfectly enjoyed* in the Father's house in heaven. The communion of saints, which was imperfectly realized on earth, will be complete in heaven. All the children of the ransomed family are gathered into the house of their Father, in the presence of his glory ; and as the subjects of his ineffable love they have the nearest and tenderest fellowship with one another. Those whom distance divided on earth ; those who lived in different ages ; those who were mutually unknown or alienated in affection, and such as death parted, are brought together, where everything that separated them is completely removed. Amidst the clear and full revelations of glory, there appears to be no ground of doubt that saints in heaven will personally know one another, though no longer after the flesh. This enters into the idea of the highest state of social existence, and is essential to the saints' perfect felicity. The redeemed, brought to Mount Zion in glory, come, in the fullest sense, to "an innumerable company of angels," and those blessed spirits who ministered to them on earth rejoice in their admission to heaven, hold delighted converse with them, and swell the chorus of their song of praise, when they adore the Divine perfections, and ascribe all honour and glory to the Lamb. The saints "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," with prophets, apostles, martyrs, at the feast of bliss in the kingdom of heaven. Though there is no "Temple" in heaven, and ordinances, such as existed in the Church on earth, are no longer required, yet the saints in glory unite in the most exalted social worship. Much of their employment in heaven is enraptured and incessant praise. They converse together on subjects Divine and heavenly—on the perfections and character of God—on the wonders of creation, providence, and redemption ; on the scenes of the wilderness way ; the deliverances wrought for them, the victories won, and the great salvation attained. The saints' fellowship in heaven will, through oneness with Christ, be with the utmost peace and concord, the perfect unity of hearts knit together in love—all discordant and disturbing elements for ever excluded, and holy spiritual affections in constant and most vigorous exercise. In one delightful employment—that of exulting praise--glorified saints give united expression to their gratitude and joy ; and

while they have blissful communion with each other, their fellowship is, at the same time, with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. "They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness." "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom."¹ If such be the lofty fellowship of saints and holy angels in the Father's house, need we wonder that the servants of Christ while on earth have been sustained and animated betimes, amid trial and sufferings, in the assured hope of it?² Beza, the reformer, when Calvin was removed by death, spoke of a chief part of heavenly felicity to himself being the prospect of rejoining his loved brother and companion, and of conversing with him in glory on the mysteries of providence and redemption, concerning which they had often spoken on earth. Among the last utterances, too, from the scaffolds of Scottish covenanted martyrs, were a farewell to *fellowship meetings* on earth, and a joyful welcome given to the communion of saints in glory.

4. Transcending all other happiness which the saints have in heaven as the *fruition of God himself* as their portion for ever. When they become sons of God, they are made "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." So soon as they are received into the family, they enter upon their inheritance, and the enjoyment of God ranks the highest of their privileges while they remain in a state of minority. Believers enjoy God in glorifying him, by doing and suffering his will; and the measure of their conscious enjoyment is in proportion to their active devotedness and resignation to his sovereign appointment. The full and perfect fruition of God is reserved for the heavenly state. The saints there see God as He is, they are ever with Him; they are assimilated completely to his moral likeness, and are filled unto all his fulness.² The enjoyment of God is the enjoyment of all the persons of the Godhead, in all excellent and endearing relations. It is the fruition of the Eternal Father, as their Father in unspeakable love, of the Son as their redeeming Head and Husband, and of the blessed Spirit as their Teacher, Sanctifier, Guide, and Comforter. All Divine perfections are brightly displayed and honoured in conferring on the saints, and perpetuating to them, the felicity of heaven. In God's

¹ Psalm cxlv. 7, 11, 12.

² Ephesians iii. 19.—The proper rendering of the original is "filled" *unto*—not "with all the fulness of God."

light they see light. His blessedness is theirs, so far as finite natures are capable of apprehending and receiving it. This perfect fruition of God, to which the saints are predestined, and which they see only through a glass darkly while here, will confer on them a glory both in soul and body surpassing all conception and expression. Present afflictions, which are light and momentary, work out for them "a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory."¹ This glory is not only that which they behold in Christ, but it is revealed *in* them. Their souls in all their faculties are pervaded with it, and their bodies, fashioned after the body of the Saviour's glory, shine as etherealized vehicles for the pure spirits which inhabit them. As the result of all this, the bliss of glorified saints is *complete*. In their Father's presence is "fulness of joy," at "his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." As God is an infinite and inexhaustible good, the enjoyment of Him by his saints in heaven will open up to them fresh and ever-increasing sources of ecstatic bliss throughout eternity. The "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal," that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, as it flows on, gladdens the heavenly city; and the "Tree of Life," in the midst of the Paradise of God, to which the redeemed have near and constant access, restores to them vastly more than the happiness of primeval innocence. It bears twelve harvests of ripe and luscious fruits, continually renewed, and "its leaves are for the healing of the nations."

Finally. The felicity of the redeemed in heaven, in every part and degree of it, will *flow to them through Christ*. He will give Himself to them with all the diversified excellencies that meet in Him, for their full and everlasting enjoyment. When He brings them to heaven they shall not only behold his glory as their Sovereign Lord, but He shall entertain them as friends and brethren admitted to the nearest and tenderest fellowship with Him. The exaltation of the Redeemer in heaven is not that of a private person for Himself, but that of his people's Head. He is exalted in their name and upon their account, as the "First-fruits," and as representing the whole harvest. The members have the same relation and union with the Head that they had before, and they are honoured together with Him. Their union to Him will be nearer and more perfect than they ever could realize on earth. As He was about to finish his work, He comforted his disciples by assuring them that He

¹ 2 Corinthians iv. 17.

would come again and receive them to Himself, that they might be with Him. In fulfilling this gracious promise, He welcomes them to his and his Father's house, and to his and their glory. He leads them in the tenderest and most familiar manner to "living fountains of water;" and they share with Him endless delights. His joy is fulfilled in them when they are set down with Him at his table in his kingdom, and they are partakers of the rich feast which He has provided. The saints' intercourse with Christ in heaven will be vastly more intimate, and their access to Him more free than in their state of imperfection on earth they could possibly realize. The full acquaintance and glorious manifestations of love which Christ designs for his people, are reserved for the heavenly world. His "back parts," the imperfect and transient discoveries of his declarative glory, could only be seen here, but in heaven they shall see "his face" in righteousness, the full splendour of his glory, and "his name shall be in their foreheads." It was most probably, in reference to this, that the risen Saviour said to Mary at the sepulchre when she was about to embrace Him: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father;"¹ implying that the intercourse of his saints with Him would, in the future state, be most intimate and endearing. In heaven there will be nothing to hinder the fullest enjoyment of Christ by the saints; nothing to mar the satisfying of the utmost cravings of their souls. By this exalted communion with the Redeemer, the saints will have the most glorious union and enjoyment of God the Father. They are brought by Him to God; and being members of the Son, they are in some sort partakers of his relation to the Father. The Church brought home is "the daughter of the King," not only as she was begotten by his Word and Spirit, but also as she is the spouse of the Eternal Son. Thus the saints in glory become partakers, according to their measure, of the Father's love to the Son and his complacency in Him. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them."² "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."³ Through their nearness to Christ and partaking of his glory, the saints in heaven are advanced to an immensely higher, more intimate, and fuller enjoyment of God than otherwise they could have been. The infinite intimacy and communion between the Father and Son are expressed by his being "in the bosom of" the Father. The saints being in

¹ John xx. 17.² John xvii. 26.³ John xvi. 27.

Christ shall, in their measure and manner, partake with Him in the fellowship, and in all the ineffable blessedness that results from it.¹

¹ A number of the ideas which are presented in this last particular, are stated and illustrated in his own vivid and attractive manner, by President Edwards, in his discourse on *The Excellency of Christ*.—See *Works*, vol. i. pp. 688, 689.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRACTICAL USES OF THE ADOPTION OF SONS.

“I will spare them, as a man spareth his son that serveth him.”—MAL. iii. 17.

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”—EPHESIANS v. 1.

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”—PHILIPPIANS ii. 15.

THE doctrine of believers' sonship is eminently practical. As it is exhibited in Holy Scripture, it holds forth the most solemn warning, and presents the clearest tests for self-trial. And especially do our introduction to the family of God, and enjoyment of the high privileges of children, supply the weightiest and most affecting motives to all holy living. It were fearful, indeed, to have set before us the inspired account of the Divine grace and love that chose sinners to eternal life, the amazing work performed by the Redeemer, that they might receive the adoption of sons, the distinction made in their separation from others when they became the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and the future glory to which they are destined, and yet to remain indifferent and unaffected, without concern of heart to be numbered with the adopted, or to do their work and enjoy their privileges. On the other hand, the due consideration of this matter is fitted, through the blessing of the Spirit, to awaken sinners and to lead them to seek the grace and blessing of sonship. No other subject can furnish higher and more constraining motives to vigorous effort, firm trust, and assured and joyful hope.

1. It shows *the fearful state and misery of those who are not of the adopted family*. These are declared to be “the children of wrath,” “without Christ,” “far from God,” “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” “strangers from the covenants of promise,” “having no hope, and without God in the world.”¹

¹ Ephesians ii. 12.

They are "children of disobedience," under the malign influence of "the Prince of the power of the air," and they "walk according to the course of this world," and serve divers lusts and pleasures.¹ Their hearts are "enmity against God." They have no communion with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, nor any desire after the character and privileges of the First-born. Instead of this, under the dominion of the flesh, with its affections and lusts, they contemn things spiritual, and, like Esau, for momentary and base gratifications, make sale of the heavenly birthright. How fearful is such a condition! How inconceivably dreadful the future misery to which it inevitably conducts! They voluntarily renounce the inheritance of the saints, as they have no desire for their fellowship; and they are excluded from the prerogatives of children. Instead of the superlative love of God to his adopted ones, they experience his hatred and wrath; and, excluded from the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world for the blessed of the Lord, they are consigned to the curse of eternal reprobation. The redeemed are the sons of God and heirs of glory; others who obtain not the grace of adoption, are children of the Evil One—a "generation of vipers," who cannot escape the wrath to come. As there are only two classes in the world, the Family of God and the Seed of the Serpent, and each displays here the character that pertains to it and progresses to its final destiny, it deeply concerns us to labour to ascertain to which of these we belong. Indifference on a subject so momentous is the worst species of moral infatuation; and uncertainty respecting it is inconsistent with spiritual comfort and assured hope. With all earnest concern, we should flee from the wrath to come. Forsaking our Father's house and our own people, we should hearken to and obey the Divine command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."²

2. It exhibits *the glory and blessedness of the saints*, and equires from us a *frame of spirit and habit of life in accordance with it*. Not only are they called from darkness to light, rescued from the power of Satan, and born of God, united to Christ and justified by faith, but they have obtained "power to become the sons of God." This high distinction justifies the Apostle's emphatic exclamation, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be

¹ Ephesians ii. 2, 3.

² 2 Corinthians vi. 17, 18.

called the sons of God! Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."¹ In whatever light we contemplate this gracious relation and privilege, the glory and blessedness of the saints appear excellent and wonderful. He who adopts them into His family is the "blessed and only Potentate," "the King of kings, and Lord of lords."² They are "children of the Highest."³ The moving cause of their adoption was nothing in them, not creature-merit of any kind, but God's gratuitous, sovereign, incomprehensible love. The adopted, instead of having in themselves any claim on the Divine favour, are, "by nature, children of wrath, even as others,"—sinful, guilty, and rebellious. The price by which their adoption was procured, is far above "the great sum" whereby Roman citizenship was obtained, infinitely beyond all material riches. It was paid in the humiliation and sufferings of Him who was "in the form of God," and who became obedient to the death of the Cross for their ransom. They are redeemed by his precious blood; and that they might receive "the adoption of sons," the Redeemer was made of a woman, and made under the law, became as "a worm, and no man," and was even made sin and a curse for us.

How manifold and glorious are the *prerogatives* which, as the fruit of redeeming love, and as the consequence of their adoption, the children of God enjoy! They have the most honourable *names* and *titles*. They are "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," born of God, and the brethren of Christ. In their state and condition they are related by regeneration to the Son of God, as He is related to the Eternal Father, though in a different mode. He is the Eternal Son, the Only-begotten of the Father; they, by regeneration, are made partakers of the Divine nature.⁴ They share in Christ's official dignity as Prophet, Priest, and King of the covenant. Spiritually enlightened themselves, they become instruments of communicating the Divine will to others. They are a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation," and a "peculiar people." In possessions and immunities, all that the Father and Son have is theirs.⁵ Redeemed from the curse, and from the bondage and tutelage of the law, they are brought into the enlarged and glorious liberty of the sons of God. All creatures, intelligent and irrational, animate and

¹ 1 John iii. 1, 2.

² Luke vi. 35.

³ 1 Cor. iii. 22.

⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 15.

⁵ 2 Peter i. 4.

inanimate, are rendered subservient to their best interests. Angels minister to them; and all things, good and bad, friendly and hostile, work together for their good. The love and care of their heavenly Father provide for them, and confer on them all spiritual blessings. Sin shall not have dominion over them. In the end, all corruption shall be completely subdued and purged away. In their failings and conflicts, He spares them as a man his son that serveth him. In straits and sorrows, He relieves and comforts them; in doubts, He enlightens and directs them. He heals their backslidings, preserves their feet from falling, and loves them freely. In respect to *temporal* things, He makes provision for the supply of their wants before they are tried with them. He appoints their lot in life, and determines all that is needful for bodily sustenance and comfort. Never does he leave them destitute. In the sanctified enjoyment of all the creatures, the earth is given them in possession. Afflictions and adversities are to them the chastisements of a loving Father, and tokens of covenant-love. They are not punished with the world, as they cannot perish with it. He does not willingly afflict nor grieve them.¹ In all troubles and distresses, He pities them as a father his children. He hears their sighs and groans. He bottles their tears. He stands by their bed and turns it in their sickness; and He walks with them when they pass through the fire and water. Their death is precious in His sight, and He leads them through death to life eternal. As the sum of all these blessed privileges, the saints are fully assimilated to the only-begotten Son, and become heirs of God in Trinity, their covenant God and portion. They are "conformed to the image of his Son." Their risen bodies shall be "fashioned like his glorious body." At his future appearance they shall be fully like Him, seeing Him as He is. And, throughout eternity, this shall be the measure of their inconceivable felicity—they shall be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. To cherish a frame of spirit befitting this relation and these high privileges, is eminently required of those who are separated from the world and brought into the family of God. This disposition of heart, which the Holy Spirit alone can impart, will lead us habitually to contemplate and admire the greatness of Divine love, and the riches of that grace which confers upon unworthy, undeserving, and guilty creatures the adoption of sons.

¹ Lamentations iii. 33.

It will impel us to "show forth His praises" who hath brought us "into his marvellous light," and has called us to "virtue and glory." We should congratulate ourselves that we are the children of God, and should rejoice in Him, even now with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. In all things we are required to walk worthy of God, who has called us to his kingdom and glory, reflecting his moral likeness, that others may be led to glorify our Father in heaven.

3. It furnishes the *clearest and most decisive marks for self-examination*. On many, and the most weighty grounds, the great personal inquiry should be made, whether we are the children of God; and it claims an early and distinct settlement. Numbers who call God their Father are yet children of the devil. Great is the glory and blessedness of adoption; and, on the other hand, great is the misery of those who are destitute of this grace. Moreover, we may certainly know that we are the sons of God; and without some measure of this certainty, we cannot truly address God as our Father, or pray to Him with assured confidence. Yet such assurance cannot be attained without serious search and all diligence. For these reasons, it is required that we should hear and obey the Divine injunction: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."¹ The *marks* of sonship are plainly stated in the Word, and though they are numerous and diversified, and capable of different applications, according to the state and varying spiritual frames of believers, yet, through diligent self-trial and the agency of the Spirit, they may be so ascertained by conscious experience as to issue in assured confidence and joyful hope. The distinctive tokens of sonship are such as these:—*Living faith*, by which we appropriate God as our Father, and his Son Jesus Christ as our Saviour; *filial love and obedience*, earnest spiritual desire after communion with God, and his gracious presence; the *seal and earnest of the Spirit*, which, in different degrees and at divers times, is imparted to all the sons of God; *complacency and delight* in fellow-saints, and *filial trust in and access* to God as a Father, to which the Spirit gives utterance, enabling to cry, Abba, Father. If children, we shall have, moreover, the testimony of the Spirit witnessing with our spirits to our sonship. This testimony is no vain imagination or mere excitement of human passion, but the genuine internal record and utterance of God who cannot lie, speaking in

¹ 2 Corinthians xiii. 5.

the hearts which He has made his holy habitation and temple. Wherever it is given, the indwelling Spirit disposes and enables his subjects to live to God. He "convinces," on the one hand, "of sin," and leads to forsake it; and, on the other, he "convinces of righteousness," and leads to *walk in the Spirit*, in the path of holy obedience. By this Spirit we crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts; and, mortifying the deeds of the body, we are enabled to abound in the fruits of righteousness.¹ A due consideration of the obstacles and obstructions which hinder us from discovering the certainty of our sonship, will not unfrequently furnish some comfortable evidences of our sonship. A holy dread of sin, fear of apostasy, hypocrisy, and spiritual desertion, and reverential awe of the Divine Majesty—these are inseparable from the Spirit's leading the sons of God. The heart and spirit are confirmed in the belief of our own adoption through Divine *promises*, by the *power of God*, which keeps through faith unto salvation; and by the "*Spirit of grace and supplication*," which ever prompts, at all times, and in all duties, difficulties, and trials, to cry, "Abba, Father."

4. It supplies *the strongest motives to seek the blessing of sonship*. We have the fullest assurance that God is willing to take sinners into this honourable relation, and to confer upon them all its unspeakable privileges. He addresses them in terms of moving pity and tender mercy. "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?" When He asks, "How shall I put thee among the children?" He himself points out the way, "Thou shalt call me, My Father; and shalt not turn away from me."² Revealing himself as ready to adopt enemies and rebels into his family, He makes known the *means* by which they may infallibly obtain this dignity. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." The way is, moreover, *easy*. It is by faith, embracing Christ as He is freely offered to us in the Gospel, and through power imparted from Himself.³ Thus may sinners, lost and perishing, at once attain the state and privilege of adopted children, and escape for ever the misery of them that remain far from God, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The privilege of sonship, which was matter of the Divine purpose from eternity, and to obtain which the ransom-price was paid, becomes ours in spiritual regeneration, which is wholly supernatural and gracious. By an active living faith, we appropriate the Son of God, and are united to Him. Through this vital union we become the brethren and spouse of Christ, and share in one common relation, and in the same blessed privileges. God in

¹ Galatians v. 19-26.

² Jeremiah iii. 19.

³ John i. 12.

covenant is his Father and ours. If we would show that we value the adoption of sons, and would realize its precious blessing, we must earnestly, and with holy desire of heart, seek after all *the means* by which faith is excited, exercised, confirmed, and increased. Such are the reading and preaching of the Word, the use of the sacraments, acts of penitence, and continual prayer and supplication. While it is ever to be remembered that ordinances are only *means of grace and salvation*, and that they should not be rested in as *ends*, it is to be believed, at the same time, that being divinely appointed, they are adapted in infinite wisdom to the production of the desired result. By the blessing from on high, which is promised in connection with any of these means, persons may be brought out from the world, rescued from the power of the Destroyer, enrolled in the family of God, and become heirs of the heavenly inheritance. When such is the rich grace that confers the blessing of sonship, and such the means divinely provided and revealed whereby it is conveyed, how earnestly should we seek this grace! How diligently ought we to use these means! "After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."¹ "Thus saith the Lord. In an acceptable time have I heard thee; and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places."²

5. It leads to the *performance of all the offices of sons*. The natural relationship involves in it honour, reverence, love, and obedience to earthly parents; and in the ancient practice of adoption, the adopted owned a debt of gratitude and devoted obedience to his benefactor. The spiritual relation requires that we should be earnestly intent on the faithful discharge of all filial offices toward our heavenly Father. Whenever we become members of the family of God, we are constrained to manifest the highest honour and veneration toward Him who has placed us among the children. This honour will be displayed in fervent zeal for his glory, and jealousy of whatever would dishonour or offend Him. We owe Him filial fear, obedience, and submission—the devout invocation of his name, and full confidence in his paternal care and compassion. We

¹ 1 Corinthians i. 21.

² Isaiah xlix. 8, 9.

are effectually taught to be "imitators of God as dear children,"¹ and to seek continually to be holy as He is holy, and "perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect." As the only-begotten Son of God has procured for us, through his redemptive work, all the blessing, and is not ashamed to call us brethren—as in his filiation lies the foundation of our adoption—as He confers upon us both the birthright and the blessing of the First-born, and we are constituted fellow-heirs with Him,—we are under the highest obligation to give Him all love, honour, and obedience. His name should ever be to us as "ointment poured forth;" and as blessed in Him, we should call Him blessed with the high praises of our mouth, and the supreme homage of our hearts and lives. To the Holy Spirit—the great Agent of our calling, regeneration, and adoption, the seal and earnest of our sonship—we owe all reverence, honour, and dutiful submission. We should cherish his motions, follow his leading, and diffuse around the savour of his graces. We should bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and, surrendering ourselves to his holy influence, we should live as temples of the Holy Ghost, and a habitation of God through the Spirit. To fellow-saints of the household of faith, our brethren in Christ, we should manifest the tenderest charity and complacential delight. We owe them all offices of love and friendship, and are called habitually as members of the same body, in vital union with the One Glorious Head, to bear one another's burdens, and in heartfelt sympathy to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep.

The children of God, in the diversified duties which result from the relation in which they stand to their heavenly Father, to Christ the Elder Brother, and to the company of the redeemed, are especially required—

1. *To labour for the good of the Church.* The Church is the Elect Spouse of Christ—the "mother" of all believers. They are born in Zion. Under the shade of "the Apple Tree," their mother brought them forth; "there she brought them forth that bare them."² The Church is the grand instrument for making known God's light and salvation, and for blessing the nations. To her, the children of God on earth are indebted for all privileges and blessing. When called out of the world, they are brought to Zion. Their new spiritual life was communicated in connection with the ordinances of the Church; and through these they grow in holiness, and are nourished up to

¹ Ephes. v. 1—So is the meaning of the original term. ² Song viii. 3.

life eternal. Their advancing spiritual knowledge, their growth in grace, the maturity of their character, and even the blessing upon their temporal lot and stations, are through the Church of Christ. "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life."¹ Those who thus receive the greatest benefits through the Church and her ordinances, are surely under the highest obligations to seek her good alway. The spiritual prosperity of Zion is a blessing to all her true members. A season of gracious revival brings quickening, refreshment, and joy to all within the Church, as well as to others that are awakened and attracted to her fellowship. The children of God are bound to promote the purity of the Church, to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and to labour devotedly to "strengthen her stakes, and lengthen her cords," and to "stretch forth the curtains of her habitation."² The Church is the designed instrument of her own enlargement. Ever should it be borne in mind that it is not by adventitious and foreign aid, but by the holy lives and self-denying and prayerful efforts of her believing members that her fellowship is blessed, her boundaries enlarged, and the grand objects of her organization and mission are to be accomplished. The sons that she has brought forth are to be her first and most effectual help; and when a time of revival and enlarged blessing comes, she is represented as "a mother of sons full of joy," exclaiming, "Who hath begotten me these? These, where have they been?"³ The Saviour, when He displayed his authority and glory in purging the temple, declared, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." The like holy emotion must characterize the children whom God hath given Him. This is at once a sure mark of their sonship, and a chief part of the service which the faithful are required to render for the promotion of the Divine glory in the earth. "Go, my Son, work this day in my vineyard." "They shall prosper that love thee." "For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."⁴

2. They are to make *efforts for the promotion of the truth*. The gracious liberty of the sons of God is from the Son, and through the *truth*.⁵ The Word of truth wrought their deliverance from ignorance and the bondage of sin. It is the grand means of their sanctification, and through it they have fellow-

¹ Ps. cxxviii. 5. ³ Isa. xlix. 21.

⁵ John viii. 32, 36.

² Isa. liv. 2. ⁴ Matt. xxi. 28; Ps. cxxii. 8, 9.

ship with the saints, strong consolation and a joyful hope. The diffusion of truth in the earth dispels the darkness of ignorance, error, and idolatry that envelopes the nations. The victories of the truth are the triumph of Christ over his own and his people's enemies; and his dominion established in the earth is the reign of truth and righteousness. The abundant blessing of the latter days comes in intimate connection with obedience to Divine precepts. "Speak ye every man truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: love the truth and peace."¹ Those who have experienced the saving power of the truth as it is in Jesus cannot but be "zealous for the truth in the earth." It is the source of all peace, and hope, and joy to themselves—their richest and most valued treasure; and hence they cannot but earnestly desire that others may know it and enjoy its precious benefits. The "banner" which is given them they hold fast and "display because of the truth."² By fervent prayer, they seek that the Word of the Lord may have "free course and be glorified." And by personal, individual, and united exertions, they labour that ignorance, idolatry, and error—all "the wicked way of lies"—should be banished from the earth, and that the empire of truth and holiness be universally established.³

3. The children of God are the *appointed instruments of the world's conversion*. The world was created *by and for* Christ. The grand design of Infinite wisdom and love from eternity—often declared in the sure Word of prophecy—was, that "all ends of the earth" should "see God's salvation;" that "all kindreds of the nations" should do homage to the enthroned Redeemer; and that "the whole earth should be filled with his glory." To effect this blessed consummation, all movements and events in providence are rendered subservient. All agencies, friendly and hostile, are made to work out the accomplishment of the Divine purpose. Wars and revolutions throughout the nations remove obstacles to the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom. The Gentiles bring their riches and glory to Zion. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles bring presents," and gifts are offered by "Sheba's and Seba's king." "The flocks of Kedar shall be gathered" into the Church of Christ; "the rams of Nebaioth shall minister" unto her. "They shall come up with acceptance" on God's altar, and by them He "will glorify the house of his glory."⁴

But whatever means are furnished in providence for the

¹ Zech. viii. 16, 19.

² Ps. lx. 4.

³ Isa. ix. 7.

⁴ Isa. lx. 7.

world's conversion, or brought by the sovereign power of the Redeemer from those who own not his supreme authority, it is undeniable that the grand instrumentality for effecting this great purpose is that of those who, as children of God, have his kingdom of peace, and righteousness, and joy within them. They are called to make known his renowned fame, and to proclaim his salvation to the ends of the earth. The grand principle of Christian missions is *faith* in the person, atonement, and universal Headship of Christ; and their spirit is *love*—supreme to God in Christ, and the love of benevolence to all men. None are conscious of the exercise of this principle, and of the constraining influence of this spirit, but those who, believing on Christ, have become the children of God, and who have been taught by the Spirit to live, not to themselves, but to Him who died and rose again.

What has been termed the "era of modern missions" is yet in its comparative infancy. Slow has been their progress, and little their success, when compared either with the Church's obligations, the marked indications of the Divine purpose for the world's conversion, and the numerous facilities that have been presented in providence for the prosecution of this great work. Do we inquire the causes? Among the chief are the limited measure of the Spirit's influence upon the Church, and the want of a converted and devoted instrumentality for the evangelization of the nations. Soon as the plentiful effusion of the Spirit, promised for the latter day, shall be given, the isles shall wait for Messiah's law; nations shall be born in a day; the idols shall be abolished; and "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."¹ In the days of Apostolic Christianity—the season that immediately succeeded the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit—the tidings of the Gospel spread rapidly from land to land; great was the company that proclaimed salvation, and multitudes believed and were added to the Church. The primitive Christians realized the dignity and obligations of their sonship. When called to strenuous efforts and embittered sufferings, the conscious sense of their spiritual relation and privileges enabled them ever to glory in the Cross of Christ; and their ardent love to the Saviour impelled them to labour continually, and make cheerful sacrifices that they might bring the world into willing subjection to the dominion of the Redeemer. When a like devoted instrumentality shall be raised up, and the same

¹ Habakkuk ii. 14.

spirit shall generally take possession of the Church, there will be a real and rapid progress made in the great work of the world's conversion. Numerous lives will be freely offered on the altar of Christian missions for consecrated effort ; worldly substance will be largely dedicated, fervent united prayer will be poured out for the coming of the kingdom of Christ, and all subsidiary means suitable for producing the desired effect will be supplied. The sons of God will manifest intense concern that their Father's name be universally hallowed. Those who have become partakers of the Saviour's grace will yield themselves as willing labourers for advancing his renowned fame. The Jews, converted and restored to the family, will be the heralds of the Redeemer's cross to others, and their ingathering shall be the means of extensive and blessed revival to the Church and the world—"as life from the dead." With the prospect so bright and glorious of the world's future conversion, should not the children of God consider solemnly their manifold obligations, and act as becomes their high vocation? Should they not esteem it their high honour and privilege to consecrate themselves to the great work of bringing the world into willing subjection to Christ, and of establishing his kingdom in the earth ?

This demands of us *fervent prayer, personal, sustained, self-denying effort, the liberal dedication of worldly substance to the cause of Christ, and the full consecration of influence to the great work of the world's conversion.* That all nations may call the Saviour blessed, and the whole earth be filled with his glory, it is predicted : " To Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba : prayer also shall be made for Him continually ; and daily shall He be praised." The servants of Christ, feeling that they owe to Him everything, in consecrating themselves to his work, dedicate, at the same time, their substance for the promotion of his glory. They "abound" in the grace of liberality. They are brought to know the words of the Lord Jesus, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." They recognize all their store of worldly things as coming from God, and esteem it at once their duty and privilege of his own to give Him. Among the first and chief of their petitions, and that which influences all others, they daily pray, "Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth." Blessings of the highest value to themselves they seek in prayer, only as means for the accomplishment of the

great end of the nations being brought to obedience to Christ, and of the whole earth being filled with his glory. "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving health among all nations."¹

6. It supplies *all spiritual consolation, and the assured hope of final salvation.* The Spirit who regenerates the children of God is the promised Comforter, given to dwell in them and abide with them for ever. The faith by which they obtain power to become the sons of God yields "strong consolation," as they flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. Their relation to the Divine family is eminently fitted to impart to them all spiritual comfort. Their heavenly Father is "the God of all consolation" and "hope;" and He, in answer to prayer, fills them "with all joy and peace in believing, that they may abound in hope, according to the power of the Holy Ghost."² An interest in the Father's pity and unchangeable love, the absolute and unconditional promises of the covenant, their relation to Christ the Elder Brother, and the agency of the Holy Spirit in applying the purchased redemption, in dwelling in them, and sealing them to the day of redemption; these are all fitted, in an eminent degree, to inspire believers with assured confidence, to comfort their hearts in trouble and affliction, and to fill them with a blessed and joyful hope. Afflictions are sent in the dispensation of the covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure. They are the discipline appointed for correction and instruction, the sure token of the Father's love, and the means of perfecting the renewed character, and conferring a meetness for the heavenly inheritance. In the darkest night of weeping, the children of God have reason to rejoice, in that the Father dealth with them as sons. Nothing can possibly separate them from his love. Their afflictions serve to draw forth his paternal pity, and to move his bowels to compassion. Instead of forsaking or casting them off in the day of trouble, when they cry from the depths, He hastens to their relief, and He works for them oftentimes speedy and glorious deliverance. The time of trial and sorrow is not unfrequently that in which He gives fuller discoveries of his love, and in which they have the clearer testimony to their sonship. The inheritance reserved for them in heaven is not only kept by the power of God, but when for a season they are "in heaviness through manifold temptation," the "trial of their

¹ Psalm lxxvii. 1, 2.

² Romans xv. 13.

faith being more precious than gold that perisheth, is found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."¹ Here, too, is their designed and suitable preparation for the future heavenly felicity. Present afflictions, which are "but light and momentary," "work out a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory;" while they look not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal.² To the child of God it is ever all-sustaining and joyful that all that can possibly befall him—his severest afflictions, his sharpest conflicts, his heaviest trials,—are ordered in sovereign wisdom and love, so as to promote in the best manner the Divine glory and his own good for time and eternity. His prevailing desire is, that God, in all things, may be glorified; and this He is assured will be effected by means of all that he is called to do and suffer. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose."³

Finally. The *blessed hope* to which the children of God look forward rests on a firm foundation, and as "an anchor within the veil," is "sure and steadfast." It reposes on the person and work of the Mediator, on his unswerving promises, his intercession in heaven, his sovereign dominion over the invisible world, and his absolute authority over the universe. The objects of this hope are the attainment of perfect holiness, their admission to heaven at death, the glorious resurrection of their bodies, and their enjoyment of everlasting bliss. These, in connection with the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, and their sharing with Him in the dignity of his exaltation, and the glory of his everlasting kingdom, form the grand matters of believers' hope. This hope, begotten in them by the resurrection of Christ, at the time of their adoption, is *living, good*, such as *never to make ashamed*, and *joy-inspiring*. According as we cherish the spirit of adoption and "walk as dear children," it becomes more vigorous, and expands and shines more brightly to the perfect day. When our allotted work is completed, and conflicts and trials are ended, and our time of long waiting and expectation has come to a close, then will be fully realized all the glorious objects of the believers' blessed hope. "At the evening time it shall be light." "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness; I shall see thy face in righteousness." To them who have fought the good fight and finished the course, and kept the faith, the Lord, the righteous Judge,

¹ 1 Peter i. 7.² 2 Corinthians iv. 17, 18.³ Romans viii. 28.

will give "the crown of righteousness." In that day it shall be said by all the holy, happy family of God, and by each individual, as they are brought fully home to their Father's house, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him; and He will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for Him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation."¹

¹ Zech. xiv. 7; Ps. xvii. 15; 2 Tim. iv. 8-10; Isa. xxv. 9.

A P P E N D I X.

I.—THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

INSTEAD of the view of the Divine Fatherhood, which is presented in the Doctrinal Standards of the Reformed Churches, and which we have illustrated in this work, a number of philosophic theologians in this and other countries have assumed the doctrine of the *Universal Fatherhood of God* as the basis of their systems. This they regard as removing objections made by inquiring minds against certain parts of the scheme of Christianity, and as recommending the salvation which they exhibit to universal acceptance. Such writers as Wilson in the "Essays and Reviews," and Maurice and Robertson of Brighton, maintain that God is in the fullest sense the Father of all; that all men are alike his children; that his dealings with them are educational, designed to correct what in them is defective or evil, and to improve their character; and that, after a probation, more or less lengthened, of suffering, all his wandering children, even the most rebellious and depraved, shall be brought back to a Father's bosom, and admitted to felicity in his house for ever. Wilson speaks of the future Universal Restoration at the close of the Christian dispensation, and of that which it is its grand design to effect, in these terms—"When the Christian Church, in all its branches, shall have fulfilled its sublunary office, and its Founder shall have surrendered his kingdom to the Great Father, all, both small and great, shall find a refuge in the bosom of the Universal Parent, to repose, or be quickened into higher life, in the ages to come, according to his will."

Maurice holds that Christ was the archetype of all humanity when the worlds were made, and therefore that all men stand in the relation of sons toward God—not by virtue of their simple connection with Adam, but because of their common relation to Christ. He teaches expressly that God is *merely* the Father of all men in Christ, the Son. "Mankind are his children, not by adoption, or by grace, but by nature. Their sonship, too, can never be disannulled or done away. They can never be for a moment separated from the Son. Their being is *of* Him and *in* Him, and can neither be, nor be conceived of, apart from Him. Being thus necessarily and essentially one with the Son, and in Him united to the Father, no atonement, in a proper sense of that word, can be needed to bring nigh those who can never be far off; and no judicial condemnation can be pronounced on those who must ever be identified with the Son."¹ In one of the most vivid and eloquent of the sermons of Robertson of Brighton, when maintaining, in his peculiar way, the doctrine of the Universal Fatherhood

¹ Maurice's *Unity of the New Testament*, pp. 56, 540.

of God, he teaches that "the Elder Son," in the parable of the Prodigal Son, is a real Christian, perplexed with God's mysterious doings—one of those happy persons who have been filled with the Holy Ghost from their mother's womb, and who, on the whole (with imperfections, of course), remained God's servant all his life. For this is his own account of himself, which the Father does not contradict. It is not surprising that Mr Robertson, with his loose rationalistic sentiments, should give such an exposition; but it certainly does appear remarkable that Professor Crawford, in his excellent work on the "Fatherhood of God," should endorse an interpretation which the context plainly forbids.

The Universal Fatherhood of God, advocated by these writers, is substantially the doctrine of Unitarians, and was in part taught by some of the early Pelagian writers. The arguments adduced in favour of it are partly taken from analogy misapplied, and partly from figurative expressions of Scripture. In the former case, the name Father, taken from human relations, when applied to God, is made to contain all the ideas which are usually attached to the paternal character among men. Hence love and mercy so predominate, that all idea of penal punishment inflicted, through the demands of justice, upon rebellious sinners is excluded. The mercy of God is considered as triumphing over justice, and the common view of the ignorant and ungodly is substantially adopted by these philosophic theologians—namely, that God is too merciful to punish sinners with final exclusion from heaven, and that they will in the end, through the Divine clemency, be admitted to everlasting happiness, whatever were their characters and lives on earth. The reasoning employed in this case is a striking instance of what Whately shows on "Fallacies" in his *Logic*,—the influence of analogical terms, in leading persons into erroneous views in theology; and this, he adds, often happens, more from want of caution, than from any deliberate intention to deceive. A notable instance of this we have in the Lectures of Rev. John Scott Porter on the Atonement, in which he prefixes to several of them scriptural texts that speak of God in his fatherly character. These have no proper bearing on the subject discussed; but they are adduced for the purpose of setting aside the idea of penal suffering for sin inflicted by God on his Son.

The other method to which these writers resort for proving the Universal Fatherhood of God is quoting a number of passages chiefly from the Old Testament, in which God is spoken of as the Father of man in general, of Israel when backsliding and rebellious, and of the world lying in wickedness. It would furnish a sufficient answer to this argument to show that the term Father is frequently used in the Scriptures in a figurative sense. It is applied to a teacher—his pupils being styled sons (1 Sam. ii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 12, xxii. 14; Isaiah xxii. 21). At times it is used for a Deity worshipped—the worshippers being called sons or daughters. God is called the Father of Israel, as being the Founder and Protector of the nation (Deut. xxxii. 18; Exod. iv. 22, 23; Isaiah xliii. 6; Jer. xxxi. 9). The name Father again is used as synonymous with "Maker," "Creator" (Jer. iii. 27; Psalm lxviii. 5). In these cases, and others that might be adduced, it is palpably opposed to all right principles of biblical interpretation and of sound reasoning, to take a term which is used figuratively, and to employ it to express, in a strict literal sense, proper paternity, as is done by the advocates of the Universal Fatherhood of God. The doctrine which these theologians assume as the basis of their system strips God of some of his essential perfections, is wholly opposed to the doctrine of original sin,

denies the atonement of Christ in any proper sense of the term, and the eternal punishment of the wicked. It is, besides, brought forward by its leading abettors to support their favourite dogma of universal restoration. However plausible it may appear in modern speculation, it is alike opposed to sound philosophy, and the whole scheme of Divine revelation; and is subversive of the grand fundamental principles of the scheme of redemption by grace and through the atonement of Christ.

Several of the views presented in this note are taken from a work on the "*Fatherhood of God, and its Relation to the Person and Work of Christ, and the Operations of the Holy Ghost,*" by C. H. H. Wright, Dublin.

II.—ON THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS.

In Manton's "*Discourses on the Lord's Prayer,*" there are various views of the witness of the Spirit to the saints' sonship, presented with the clearness and fulness which distinguish the writings of that eminent Puritan. In answer to the question, "What is the Spirit's witness?" Manton remarks:—

"1. The Spirit beareth witness to our spirit, by laying down such marks as we, by our own spiritual sense and renewed conscience, feel to be right within ourselves. This is the main thing called the "Witness of the Spirit."

"2. He worketh such graces as are peculiar to God's children, and are evidences of our interest in the favour of God; and therefore it is called the 'Manifestation of the Spirit' (2 Thess. ii. 13); and the 'Renewing of the Holy Ghost' (Titus iii. 5). As John knew Christ to be the Son of God by the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him (John i. 32), so, by the Spirit's work and inhabitation, we know whether we are the children of God or not; whether we dwell in God, and God in us, because of his Spirit that He hath given us; that is, because of those graces wrought in us. And this is called 'the seal' of the Spirit; for the Holy Ghost, stamping the impress of God upon the soul, working in us an answerable likeness to Christ, is said to be the seal: then we have God's impress upon us.

"3. The Spirit goes further: He helps us to feel and discover those acts in ourselves. There is often a stupid deadness in the conscience, so that we are not always sensible of our spiritual acts. Hagar saw not the fountain near her until God opened her eyes; so we may not see the work of the Spirit without the light of the Spirit. We cannot see grace in the midst of so much weakness and imperfection. There is a misgiving of conscience, therefore the spirit of sanctification is a 'Spirit of revelation' (Eph. i. 17). The Author of grace is the best revealer and interpreter of it; He works, and He gives us a sight of it. As a workman that made a thing can best warrant it to the buyer, he knows the goodness and strength of it, and how it is framed and made; so the Holy Ghost, who works grace, reveals and discovers this grace to us."

"4. The Spirit helps us to compare ourselves with the rule, and accordingly to judge of our sincerity. The Spirit opens our understanding, that we may be able to discover the intent and scope of the Scripture. 'In thy light shall we see light.' We are apt to misapply the rule so as to judge of our own actions. 'I lie not, the Holy Ghost bearing me witness' (Rom. ix. 1), says the Apostle Paul, when speaking of some eminent thing wrought in him. We are apt to lie, and forge, and misapply rules, com-

forts, and privileges; but by means of the Holy Ghost bearing witness with our spirits, we come to have a certainty. There are so many circuits and turnings in the heart of man, that we are not competent judges of what is wrought in us. Therefore to the Spirit is usually ascribed the searching of the heart. 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?' (Ps. cxxxix. 7). 'Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God' (Acts v. 4). The Holy Ghost is particularly spoken of rather than any other person of the Godhead, because it is his personal operation to abide in the hearts of his people, and to search and try the reins.

"5. As the Spirit helps us to compare that which is wrought with the rule, the impression or thing sealed with the stamp, or the thing sealed, so He helps us to conclude rightly of our estate. For many times, when the premises are clear, the conclusion may be suspended either out of self-love, in case of condemnation; or out of legal fear and jealousy, in case of self-acquittal. Therefore the conclusion is of the Holy Ghost. 'Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and Him in us, because He hath given us of his Spirit' (John iv. 13). There is a great deal required to do to bring us to heaven with comfort. There needs a person of the Godhead to satisfy us, as well as to satisfy God, and help us to determine concerning our condition.

"6. He enlivens and heightens our apprehensions in all those particulars, and so fills us with comfort, and raiseth our joy upon the feeling of the sense of the favour of God; for all this is the fruit of his operation. Therefore it is said, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us' (Rom. v. 5). Those unspeakable glimpses of God's favour, and sweet manifestations of God's love in the conscience which we have, are given by the Holy Ghost. There is not one act of the soul but the Holy Ghost has a stroke in it for our comfort. In every degree all comes from God. So that if you would know what the witness of the Spirit is, consider what are the marks in Scripture? what graces are wrought in your hearts? How doth the Spirit help you to discern those graces, to compare them with the rule, to make accordingly in these things a determination of our condition? and what joy and peace have you therefrom wrought in your hearts by the Holy Ghost? For an immediate testimony of the Spirit, the Scripture knows of no such thing. All other is but delusion besides this."

Manton further shows, that there are certain *fruits* and *effects* which are the *sensible witness* of the Spirit to the soul. Of the fruits of the Spirit which evidence our sonship, he notices—

"1. *Prayer, by a kind of naturalness or delight in this duty of holy commerce with God* (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6; Zech. xii. 10). Whenever the Spirit of God is dispensed, the heart of that man will be often with God. The 'Spirit of grace' will put him upon supplication; he will be often acquainting God with his desires, wants, fears.

"2. *They will be mainly carried out to their inheritance in heaven.* They who are the children of God look after a child's portion; they will look for an estate in heaven, and cannot be satisfied with present things. Worldly men have their reward (Matt. vi. 2). If they may have plenty, honour, worldly ease, and delights here, they never look after heaven. A servant has his reward from quarter to quarter, but a child waits until the inheritance comes. So when we are begotten to a lively hope, when there is a heavenly-mindedness in us, this is a fruit of the Holy Ghost in the heart, whereby we may know that we are the sons of God' (Rom. viii. 23).

"3. *By a childlike reverence and dread of God, when we are afraid to*

offend God. When a child of God is assailed with temptation, his heart recoils, and he reasons thus: 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God? I dare not; my Father has forbidden me.' There is an awe of the heavenly Father upon him (1 Peter i. 17).—*Manton's Complete Works*, vol. i. pp. 51-54.

LUTHER ON THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

"This crying of the Spirit is nothing else than a mighty, strong, unwavering, trustful looking with the whole heart to God as a beloved Father by us, as his dear children. And by the childlike spirit there are described the power of the kingdom of Christ, and the proper work, and the true and lofty worship which are wrought in the believer by the Holy Spirit—to wit, the hearty calling upon God, and the consolation whereby the heart is delivered from terror and the fear of sin, and is made satisfied. Where the faith of Christ is, there the Holy Spirit works in the heart this consolation, and sure, childlike confidence. The witness of the Holy Spirit is just this, that by his operation our heart is possessed of consolation, confidence, and childlike prayer. It is not of ourselves, nor by the law, that we are able to esteem ourselves the children of God; but it is the witness of the Holy Spirit, who in our weakness testifies to this in face of the law and of the feeling of our unworthiness, and makes us certain of it. This testimony takes place, accordingly, in such a way that we also feel and are sensible of the power of the Holy Spirit, as He works in us through the Word, and our experience accords with the Word or preaching; for this thou must always feel to be the case with thee, when thou, in need and anxiety, receivest comfort from the Gospel, and overcomest doubt and alarm, that thy heart can firmly conclude that thou hast a gracious God."—*Luther*, vol. xii. pp. 1044-1046 (Walch).

BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH!

The following sweet poem is given in one of the concluding chapters of "*Earnest Hours*," by William S. Plumer, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Theology, Columbia, South Carolina. It is from the pen of an unknown author. We append it chiefly on account of its childlike, devotional spirit, and as expressing, in appropriate language, the spiritual desires of the children of God as they approach their heavenly home.

Behold, a royal Bridegroom
 Hath called me for his bride!
 I joyfully make ready
 And hasten to his side.
 He is a royal bridegroom,
 But I am very poor!
 Of low estate, He chose me
 To show his love the more;
 For He hath purchased for me
 Such goodly rich array—
 Oh! surely never Bridegroom
 Gave gifts like these away.

When first upon the mountains,
 I in the vale below,
 Beheld Him waiting for me,
 Heard his command to go.
 I, poorest in the valley,
 Oh ! how could I prepare
 To meet his royal presence ?
 How could I make me fair ?
 Ah ! in his love He sent me
 A garment clean and white,
 And promised brodered raiment
 All glorious to his sight :
 And then He gave me glimpses
 Of the jewels for my hair,
 And the ornaments most precious
 For his chosen bride to wear.

First in my tears I washed me—
 They could not make me clean ;
 A fountain then He showed me—
 Strange, until then unseen !
 So close I'd lived beside it
 For many weary years,
 Yet passing by the fountain
 Had bathed me in my tears.
 Oh ! love, oh ! grace, that showed it,
 Revealed its cleansing power !
 How could I choose, but hasten
 To meet Him from that hour ?

I said, Delay no longer ;
 He surely will provide
 All for the toilsome journey
 Up the steep mountain's side.
 He sought me in the valley—
 He knows my utmost need ;
 He is a royal Bridegroom,
 I shall be rich indeed ;
 Rich in His pardoning mercies,
 Bounties that never cease—
 Rich in his loving-kindness,
 Rich in his joy and peace.
 So then I took the raiment,
 And the jewels that He sent,
 And, gazing on his beauty,
 Up the hillside I went.
 And still, with feeble footsteps,
 And turning oft astray,
 I go to meet the Bridegroom,
 Though stumbling by the way.

I soil my royal garments
With earth whene'er I fall,
I break and mar my ornaments,
But He will know them all.
For it was He who gave them ;
Will He forget his own ?
Ah ! for the love He bore me
He called ! Will He disown ?

He sent his guide to guide me ;
He knew how blind, how frail,
The children of the valley—
He knew my love would fail.
He knew that mists above me
Would hide Him from my sight ;
And in darkness groping
Would wander from the right.

I know that I must follow slow
Even when I fain would soar ;
That step by step thus upward
My guide must go before.
Keep close, dear guide, and lead me—
I cannot go aright ;
Through all that doth beset me
Keep, keep me close in sight.

'Tis but a little longer ;
Methinks the end I see ;
Oh ! matchless love and mercy,
The Bridegroom waits for me—
Waits to present me faultless
Before his Father's throne—
His comeliness my beauty,
His righteousness my own."

III.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE PAPACY

AND THE

REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

P R E F A C E.

A CALL to aid a congregation of brethren, by preaching on a public occasion, led to the preparation of the following work. As at the time that this service was asked and given, the movements connected with the Papal Aggression in these countries were in progress, the "Signs of the Times" were suggested as a theme not inappropriate. Although sensible of the wide application of which the phrase is susceptible, and of the difficulty, in the compass of a single discourse, of doing justice to the subject, the writer willingly adopted a theme for discussion which might exhibit the position of the testimony of Christ and of its friends, in relation to the manifold errors, and insidious or violent attempts of the enemy, and might likewise declare the duty and encouragements of faithful witnesses at the present eventful crisis. For such a purpose he regarded the passage in Daniel vii. 26, proclaiming the judgment upon the Little Horn, and the future prevalence of truth and dominion of the saints, as the most suitable that could be selected. The character, doings, and ultimate destiny of the Papacy—a subject which has always been of absorbing interest to the friends of evangelical truth—demand special prayerful consideration, from the circumstances of our own day, when the antichristian power is making extraordinary exertions to strengthen and extend its hated dominion, and when yet the tokens of its approaching irretrievable ruin are numerous and distinctly marked.

The writer chose this subject, not because the recent act of the Pope, in appointing a Cardinal Archbishop and subordinate bishops with territorial titles in England, appeared to him to be aught different from the policy which the court of Rome has all along been pursuing. Nor does he regard the grounds on which the Prime Minister of England rested his opposition to the Papal measure, and on which the indignant reclamation

of the English people has been uttered, as the proper position in which Protestants should entrench themselves to do battle against a cruel and inveterate adversary. The royal supremacy, and the assumed exclusive rights of diocesan prelacy, are alike without warrant in the Divine Word ; and the attempt is futile and vain to repel the well-concerted attacks of the Man of Sin, by upholding a system which is itself essentially unscriptural and antichristian, and which is destined to be removed out of the way before the establishment of the Redeemer's glorious kingdom.

Nevertheless, the recent attempt of the Papacy deserves, on various grounds, to be deeply pondered ; and the excitement that has resulted from it seems likely to be overruled to subserve purposes of great importance. It has manifested, more prominently than any event that has occurred during the last hundred years, the unchanged character of Popery, and the spirit and intentions of the Papacy. It has fairly unmasked the designs of a restless and insatiable persecuting power, and has spoken to the hearts of Protestants in these and other lands more loudly than many volumes written against Popish doctrine and intrigues. It has served to develop, in part, the conspiracy of the Papacy and of despotic European rulers to crush the liberties of mankind, and to pervert and undermine the free institutions of the greatest of Protestant nations. And it has wonderfully verified the intimations of prophecy, that the enemy shall gain an accession of power, and make his most daring attempts against the truth, and for a season prevail, on the eve of his final overthrow and destruction. It has convinced statesmen of their folly in trusting to the declarations and sworn pledges of the supporters of the Papacy ; and it has served to awaken the fears, and rouse the energies of Protestants, to contend earnestly for precious truths and endangered rights, and to resist, with resolute determination, the invasion of Antichrist.

We regard it as matter of unfeigned rejoicing that the excitement on the subject of Popish machinations, whatever direction it may take, is likely not to be temporary or evanescent. The character and plots of the Papacy will be exhibited more clearly than they have yet been. Earnest minds that love the truth, and that are resolved to maintain and defend it at all hazards, will be stirred to contend resolutely and perseveringly for the faith once delivered to the saints. The slumber of ages will be thoroughly broken. The sleep of false security that too long

enveloped Protestant churches and nations will be effectually disturbed ; and efforts more extensive and energetic than any that have yet been put forth will be made to rescue men from superstition and idolatry, and to save them from the impending desolation of mystical Babylon. The conflict begun seems destined to continue, and to increase in intensity until Popery—that system of complicated error and wickedness, that has long deceived and degraded the nations—shall be banished from the earth, and until the truths of the Gospel, and the principles of the testimony of Jesus, shall reach their full ascendancy and universal triumph.

Believing with many of the most eminent Protestant expositors, that the day of Antichrist's predicted downfall is rapidly approaching, the author considered it seasonable to direct the attention of the witnesses for truth to the circumstances attending the fall of the Papacy, and the clear indications that this important event is near at hand, as well as to the characteristics of the bright and blessed era which will be ushered in by the subversion of Babylon the Great. Instead therefore of giving to the public, as he was solicited, the discourse as originally delivered, the condensed outline then presented is here expanded and filled up, so as to exhibit a view of important and momentous events in providence, which claim present attention, and involve the expectations of faithful men and the hopes of the Church for the future.

To originality, either in the matter or order of discussion, the author lays no peculiar claim. His object was, instead of aiming at what is novel or striking, to expound the prophetic symbols, according to the proportion of faith, and to direct the Church to matters of present duty, and of solemn practical application. On the subject of the *Vials*—Heaven's last plagues on the antichristian earth—he is aware, that the views which he has advanced differ in various particulars from expositors whose judgment is deserving of all respect. What he has stated on this topic he offers with diffidence, and without dogmatism, convinced that much will remain obscure till the future day of Christ's glorious appearance will reveal it ; and cherishing the earnest desire that some able writer may yet arise, qualified to supply what is a desideratum in the Church,—a full and consistent view of the *Vials* which have been already emptied on the kingdom of Antichrist, or which are yet to be poured out in the coming vintage and harvest of the Latin Roman earth.

Persuaded that the leaven of Antichrist has been widely diffused throughout systems, civil and ecclesiastical, that are yet nominally separate from the Papacy, the writer has freely referred to evils in Protestant communities, which will be purged out when the glorious Mediator will take to Him his great power to reign. For what he has here advanced, he considers it unnecessary to offer any apology. He is conscious of no sectarian feeling in exhibiting corruptions in ecclesiastical society, and urging their removal. He loves his native country. While not insensible of the great evils that are connected both with the British constitution and administration, and earnestly seeking that they may be taken away, he regards both as comparatively the best in the world; and rejoices in the prospect that, in the fall of the mystical city, Britain shall be for ever separated from the league with Antichrist, and shall hereafter truly rank among the chief of the nations.

The principles that shall be brightly displayed in connection with the future dominion of the saints, form the grand articles of the testimony of Christ, as held by confessors and martyrs in past ages, and yet maintained by the witnesses testifying in sackcloth. However unpopular and disrelished these principles are now, they are "the Word of Christ's patience," reflecting honour upon those who hold them fast, and securing their safety in the hour of temptation, and they are destined at length to a glorious triumph.

That the King of Zion may countenance and bless this attempt to advance the glory of his great name, and render it subservient to the destruction of error, the promotion of precious truth, and the establishment of the kingdom of light and love, is the author's earnest desire!

NOTE.—The remarkable providential movements that have taken place throughout European nations since this book was first issued,—the abolition of Slavery in the American Republic, as the consequence of the Civil War; and above all, the issues of the Vatican Decrees relating to the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, and the POPE'S INFALLIBILITY,—have served wonderfully to confirm our faith in the inspired predictions, and to exhibit in a clearer light the principles that are contended for in this Treatise.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE PAPACY.

INTRODUCTION.

By a course of singular and eventful providences, the prophet Daniel, a man "greatly beloved," was called to occupy an important and influential station in two of the most renowned of ancient empires. Carried away, a youthful captive, from the palace of the kings of Judah to Babylon, he was advanced to high authority under Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful and illustrious of the Chaldean monarchs; and he continued to occupy a conspicuous place in the administration of public affairs, till the downfall of that dynasty, and under the first of the Medo-Persian rulers, who subverted it.

Like Joseph, whom he strikingly resembled in many traits of his character and in various parts of his history, he was taken from obscurity to rule over princes; he was gifted with eminent knowledge and wisdom; he was endued with useful and exalted piety; and he was honoured to be a chosen instrument in promoting the cause of true religion, of protection to the Church of God, when in the depths of oppression, and of enlargement and revival, when she was delivered from captivity. Later Jews have depreciated the character of Daniel as a prophet, partly because his prophetic visions were given *out* of the land of Israel, and partly because he speaks so clearly of the character and times of Messiah. But Josephus, the Jewish historian, styles him "one of the greatest of the prophets;" "for," says he, "he was wont not only to foretell future things, as other prophets did, but he likewise determined the time when they should come to pass." Although on several occasions his merits were overlooked, his services repaid by ingrati-

tude and neglect by the reigning powers, and enemies combined together for his destruction, the Lord, by remarkable displays of his wisdom and justice, drew forth his servant into public and prominent notice, and powerfully pleaded his cause against all his adversaries. Honoured with peculiar tokens of Divine favour, and with singular communications of the Divine will, he lived, eminent for piety and integrity, to a very advanced age; and his position at the most powerful and splendid court that was then in the world, was rendered subservient to the accomplishment of God's purposes of love and mercy towards the Church. The influence of Daniel with the kings of Persia contributed, it seems likely, not a little to the issuing of the edict of Cyrus, by which the Hebrew exiles were authorized to return to the land of their fathers, by which they were encouraged to rebuild the ruined cities of Judah, and to restore their ancient polity, and by which the way was prepared for the advent of the Messenger of the Covenant, the "Desire of all nations," to that temple which was to be filled with his glory.

By remarkable providences, the Church of God was brought to occupy a distinct and prominent position in each of the four great monarchies, which obtained in succession wide-spread, if not universal sovereignty throughout the world. Under the first (the Chaldean), Daniel, by interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and unfolding the mysterious hand-writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, on the eve of its downfall, was brought into auspicious notice, and exalted to dignity and honour. Under the Medo-Persian dynasty, Daniel at first, and afterwards Mordecai and Esther, were placed near the throne; and to a great extent, at least for a time, modified and directed the administration of the empire. The decree to exterminate the Jews, and its reversal under Ahasuerus, made the people of God known throughout the whole of that monarch's extensive dominions, and illustrated strikingly an ever-wakeful providence engaged for the Church's protection and deliverance. The interview of Alexander the Great with Jaddua, the Jewish high-priest, as related by Josephus, in which Daniel's vision of the "He-goat and the Prince of Grecia" was read to the conqueror, and applied to his victories, influenced his policy towards the Jewish people; while the subsequent wars of his successors, and the fame of the Asmonean princes, attracted attention to the Israelitish church and nation, till the termination of the Grecian dominion. In the days of the "last of these kings," the Roman power, the long-promised Saviour came, and sut-

ferred, and died ; the unparalleled wonder of human redemption was displayed ; and that kingdom was set up, which, ere the fourth form of empire shall have fully disappeared from the stage, will become the "kingdom of the mountain," and fill the whole earth.

The grand truth inculcated by this feature of the Divine government is, that while the scheme of providence is, as it appeared to the mind of the prophet Ezekiel, involved, intricate, and sublime, like a wheel within a wheel, and raised up to heaven, the centre of all its movements is the Church of God. For this empires rise and fall, changes and revolutions take place throughout the nations, and all things await, with earnest expectation, the joyful consummation, when Zion shall put on her beautiful garments, and the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

The seventh chapter of Daniel's prophecy furnishes a striking illustration of the grand truth which we have enunciated, and displays the Church of Christ as the centre of the most important movements that have taken place, or that are in progress throughout the world. It contains the first of Daniel's prophetic visions, exalted and significant as they are comprehensive. Rapt in the Spirit, the prophet beheld four beasts,—terrible, odious, and destructive,—rising in succession "out of the sea ;" the emblem of nations, heaving with changes and commotion. It was a representation of human power and extended sovereignty. To the mind of the holy seer, the vision of earthly glory appeared altogether different from the aspect which it presented to Nebuchadnezzar, as exhibited in the dream recorded in the second chapter of the prophecy. To the excited imagination of the powerful conqueror and ambitious monarch, it appeared a splendid and magnificent image, of colossal dimensions and dazzling brightness. To the prophet, it was exhibited in its true character as a ferocious beast of prey, in nothing to be loved or admired, in every view to be dreaded and abhorred.

After a more particular reference to the last of the four beasts, we have a graphic and impressive account of a scene of judgment, and the grounds of the judicial procedure are clearly and definitely exhibited. In the latter period of the dominion of the fourth beast, a new power rises up—at first weak and insignificant, but afterwards reaching an unexampled height of dominion, and putting forth arrogant claims to universal sovereignty and submission. The special object of the judg-

ment is this power, symbolically designated the "Little Horn." Because of its blasphemous pretensions and monstrous wickedness, it is judged, rejected, and destroyed; and then a scene of surpassing happiness and joy is ushered in, to gladden the nations of the earth. The Son of man, the exalted Mediator, takes to Him his great power to reign, and the last vestiges of antichristian power and idolatry are swept away, by the whirlwind of vengeance, from the presence of his glorious throne. The saints of the Most High are raised to the high places of authority in a renovated world, and the blissful reign of righteousness and peace is introduced, to be established and extended to the ends of the earth, and to continue till time shall be no longer.

In connection with this striking and significant vision, we may advantageously consider the present aspects of providence; and with the prophetic roll unfolded in our hands, we may catch a glimpse of futurity. While it is our duty,—specially important in our day, from the restless agitations of society,—to stand upon the watch-tower, and to mark the finger of God, as it points to the index of time, there are two principal ways in which we consider the "signs of the times," as ministering warning or encouragement, as directing to present duty, or exciting expectations concerning the future. We may either notice events as they pass, and mark their probable issues; or we may fix the attention upon an end which is distinctly revealed, and therefore certain, and we may consider how providential changes in society are contributing to its accomplishment. The latter method is evidently the more sure and satisfactory. An end fixed, definite, and glorious, is declared in the Scriptures of truth; and even the period is precisely marked, and frequently intimated, when it is to be expected. Guided by the lamp of revelation, we may contemplate, with an interest always fresh and increasing, the strange and ever-varying aspects of providence; we may consider all present changes and passing events as conducing to bring about the desired consummation, and as fulfilling the glorious purpose of Him who knows the end from the beginning, and who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.

The matters which are at present of deepest interest to the student of prophecy and the witness for truth are the character and destinies of the antichristian system, and the prospects of the Redeemer's cause and kingdom. During the prophetic period of 1260 years, according to the vision of the "little

book," in the eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse, there are only two parties on the stage—the Two Witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and the Beast making war against them and oppressing them. Around the scene of conflict, all the movements that take place in the world revolve, and in its issue all objects are deeply interested. While the witnesses are in sackcloth, the cause of righteousness and truth is low and depressed, the earth is afflicted by the judgments that are sent to scourge and destroy the power that oppresses them; and when their testimony triumphs, order and peace and righteousness shall universally prevail. It is, therefore, from the state of the conflict between Antichrist and the witnesses for truth that we may form the best estimate of the character of the present times, and may most confidently anticipate the future. This is the grand central movement, the event of most powerful influence upon nations and their destinies, which, rightly considered, supplies a key to the development of other intricate parts of the scheme of Providence. According as nations and their rulers favour and promote the cause of truth and the kingdom of Christ, so are they prospered. On the other hand, the kingdom that will not serve the Church, it is declared, shall perish.¹ Antichrist, deluding civil rulers, and impelling them to oppress faithful witnesses, deceives the nations and ruins them; and as long as the kings of the earth are intoxicated with the wine-cup of Babylon's fornications, they are degraded, enslaved, and broken by judgments. Freed at length from this miserable thralldom, the kings of the earth shall "hate the whore, and burn her flesh with fire." They shall become the executioners of Divine vengeance upon a system of darkness, idolatry, and oppression, which has long trampled upon men's liberties, and robbed them of their dearest rights;—the enemy of God, and, at the same time, the irreconcilable foe of man. The destruction of Antichrist shall be deliverance to the Church of Christ, and emancipation from the worst kind of thralldom to the nations. The grand impediment to the spread of the truth will be thereby removed, and changes of the deepest importance, and of the most salutary influence, shall assuredly follow. The re-gathering of Israel, the conversion of the Gentiles, the revival of genuine Christianity, and the dedication of national policy to the advancement of the cause of godliness and humanity, will be the happy and certain results of this much-desired and long-expected revolution.

¹ Isaiah lx. 12.

There are signs manifold, and distinctly marked, that indicate that this important change is rapidly approaching. The present *transition* period forebodes unusual events approaching, and teems with the elements of future systems. Great and extended as appears the power of antichristian error and delusion, there are evidences not a few that the Papacy is tottering to its downfall. Even the extraordinary efforts which it is putting forth in some countries to gain the ascendancy, and in all to extend its influence, are like the convulsive struggles of a giant, under restraint and doomed to perish, to burst asunder his chains, and to recover the liberty which he cannot again enjoy. Whatever temporary successes may follow some of the attempts of the Man of Sin, and however sanguine his votaries may be in their expectations, his former power and influence shall never be regained; and the days of his usurped and wicked dominion are nearly numbered. Impelled by infatuated counsels, he may yet make daring attempts to grasp universal sovereignty, and it is even possible that he may gain a brief ascendancy in some Protestant lands. But such attempts will serve more fully to develop his true character and designs, and will hasten his downfall and final destruction. An enslaved people will rise to assert their freedom; and indignant nations will reject the yoke of Antichrist, and trample under foot their oppressors.

Recent movements in these countries, by the Papacy and its abettors on the one hand, and by the friends of truth and constitutional liberty on the other, may be regarded as the first note of preparation for the last decisive conflict between truth and error; and as the precursor of changes more momentous than any which we or our fathers have witnessed. Our immediate and pressing duty is to ascertain fully the respective positions of the witnesses for truth, and of their adversaries.—to know; especially, the character and designs of the grand enemy with whom the evangelical churches are everywhere called to contend, to fix the mind upon the issue of the conflict, and to encourage our hearts in the assured prospects of victory that await the Lamb's company, the faithful servants of God. Thus will the soldiers of Christ nerve themselves with renewed strength for the battle. They that know their God will do exploits. The path of present duty will become more clearly defined; and anticipating a joyful future, the witnesses for truth will be animated in their work, and sustained in suffering, till their testimony shall fully triumph, and throughout the wide

world the trumpet-sound of victory shall proclaim—"HALLELUJAH; FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH!"

To exhibit the sure grounds of the Church's hopes of future deliverance and enlargement, to enlist the prayers and direct the energies of her friends, in a day pregnant with events and changes to be wondered at, the following delineation of the character and form of the antichristian system is presented from the Scriptures; and the attempt is made to display the character of the kingdom which shall be established on the earth, when the pomp and pride of mere human greatness and glory shall have passed away as a dream of the night, or as a vision of the morning. In the exposition of the prophetic symbols, we propose to show—

I. The character of the object which is to be judged and destroyed.

II. The judgment itself, and the destruction that follows.

III. The blissful change that succeeds.

IV. The stability and perpetuity of the future kingdom of Christ, and of the reign of his saints.

V. The present duty of Christ's servants in relation to these changes.

A condensed summary of these important matters is all that is designed in the following pages. The author's earnest desire is, that what he has written may serve to encourage the witnesses of Christ to finish their testimony, and to await, in prayerful and joyful anticipation, the dawn of a day of glorious deliverance and victory.

CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECT JUDGED AND DESTROYED—THE LITTLE HORN.¹

THE subject of the judgment is described with remarkable minuteness in the preceding part of this vision, and in the immediate context. It is designated a "Little Horn"—a kingdom small in itself, rising up among the divided kingdoms of the beast, and exercising unwonted power and influence; and its character and doings are vividly delineated. Verse 8—"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." And again, verses 24 and 25—"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

In expounding this representation, the following observations appear to be naturally suggested by the prophetic symbols and statements:—

1. *The power denoted by the Little Horn rises up under the Fourth Monarchy in its divided state.*

The fourth beast seen by Daniel represents the same object as the legs, feet, and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image.² It is particularly described in verse 7th of the seventh chapter. It has no distinct symbol among destructive animals, and is nameless; and it is represented as "dreadful, terrible, and strong exceedingly." Moreover, "it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and

it had ten horns." This is the apposite emblem of the Roman empire. Established as a military despotism, and strengthened continually by the subjugation or accession of smaller states, it wielded an iron sceptre over the countries and people which were reduced under its dominion. Cruel and destructive in character, and noted for extensive conquests, it trod down to the dust human rights and liberties, and oppressed the prostrate nations by severe exactions and a rapacious administration. It was "diverse" from all the other beasts, and "exceeding dreadful." The Roman dominion was conducted in a different manner, and by different maxims, from all the systems that preceded it; and the prowess of the Roman armies, and the destruction that marked their progress, rendered it an object of unusual dread to the surrounding nations. Its partition into the Eastern and Western empires verified the symbol of the "two legs" of Nebuchadnezzar's image, while the "ten horns" of the fourth beast, corresponding to the "ten toes" of the image, represented the Roman empire and policy, after its subversion by the northern barbarians, as continued in its divided state, in ten separate kingdoms. Previously to its downfall and dismemberment, it had been weakened by intestine commotions, civil wars, and conjunction with some of the barbarous races, which were the instruments of its subversion. Hence, in its last stage, it appears as "iron mixed with miry clay," and its "feet" "part of iron and part of clay"—a portion of its ancient strength and iron rule remaining, but combined with elements with which it cannot amalgamate, and which indicate its marked decay and final destruction.

In the Book of Revelation, chapter xvii. verse 12, the divided empire is thus described—"The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." The first beast—the civil power of the Roman empire—is previously described as having "seven heads," which, besides referring to the seven hills on which Rome, the seat of empire, was built, denotes the seven kinds of government which, in succession, conducted its administration. The ten horns, which seem to spring up on the last head, are ten distinct sovereignties, or successions of kings. They had "received no kingdom as yet," as they had not risen into existence when the Apostle wrote. They "receive power as kings one hour with the beast." The allusion here is obviously to the "second beast" of the Apocalypse—or the antichristian power—and "at the same

time," or "for the same period," as the phrase may be rendered, they exercise their dominion. They are separate powers, and yet actuated by the same spirit, and united in one design—to strengthen the hands of the Papacy, and to support its idolatry. Notwithstanding their frequent contests one with the other, and their clashing political interests, they are of "one mind, to give their power to the beast." They embrace its idolatry—submit to its enslaving dominion—defend and promote its wicked designs; and, directed by its will, and actuated by its spirit, they carry on war with the Lamb and his saints. These horns—being at the same time on the head of the beast—were not *successive*, as the "seven heads," but *contemporary* powers; and their continuance is till the period when the Mediator shall assume his great power to reign, and the antichristian system shall be destroyed.

The ten primary kingdoms into which the Roman empire was partitioned have been specifically mentioned, and the date of their separate establishment is matter of clear historical testimony. Machiavel, the celebrated Romish historian and jurist, enumerates the states that rose out of the fragments of the divided empire. These embrace the territories of most of the kingdoms of Europe, especially in its southern and western portions. It need not be told how closely the policy of European nations corresponds to the system of ancient Rome. The spirit of the Roman dominion is transfused into modern governments: might is frequently taken to constitute right, and the people are held in subjection by standing armies; the principle of Roman jurisprudence, borrowed from the Justinian code, has been adopted as the basis of their legislation, and the state maintains connection with corrupt and idolatrous systems of ecclesiastical polity, and debases religion by rendering it subservient to mere worldly interests. Notwithstanding many changes and partial ameliorations, in its essential spirit and principles it is everywhere the system of ancient Rome, the fourth beast treading down the earth, and breaking the residue under his feet.

Recent events have furnished a remarkable illustration of the truth and appropriateness of the prophetic symbols. The ten horns are in existence at the period of Antichrist's downfall. Now, for a length of time, one of these horns—the dominion of the Vandals in North Africa—had disappeared; and as the people who had obtained power in these countries were Mohammedan, and did not own subjection to the

Papacy, some modern expounders of prophecy began to call in question the correctness of the application of the symbol of the ten horns to the tenfold division of the ancient Roman empire. The conquests of France, however, in North Africa, and the formal establishment of the Popish hierarchy in Algeria, present a visible exhibition of "the ten kings" as still of one mind, agreeing to give their power to the beast. And as this has taken place at a time shortly preceding the subversion of Antichrist's dominion, it may be regarded as a striking instance, on the one hand, of God in his providence fulfilling his faithful Word; and on the other, of the power of the Papacy extending, immediately before its approaching destruction.

2. *The Little Horn obtains temporal power by the fall of three of the ten horns of the Beast.*

The little horn is said by Daniel to rise up among the ten horns, and before it "three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots" (ver. 8). In the seventeenth chapter of Revelation the same power is referred to under a different figure. We read of the beast that "was and is not," and he is said to be the "eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." Bishop Newton thus explains this singular statement—"A beast, in a prophetic style, is a tyrannical, idolatrous empire. The Roman empire was idolatrous under the heathen emperors; it then ceased to be so, for some time, under the Christian emperors; it then became idolatrous under the Roman pontiffs, and so continued ever since."¹ The beast that "was and is not" is thus imperial Rome in three aspects—as Pagan, Christian, and Papal.² The last form is the eighth beast, which is said to be "of the seven," or more correctly to be "out" of it,³

¹ "The apocalyptic beast is the arbitrary and impious power of the Roman empire. The *existence* of power is obvious to all. Its *unity* of character is not so evident. Let us paraphrase the words, and the obscurity is dispelled. *The beast was, and is not, and yet is.* Impious power *did* extend over all the empire—there *is not now any one* supreme power actually ruling the whole empire, and yet there are impious powers over all the nations of the empire, connected in such a manner as to make them still one great family. This is the plain matter of fact. It perfectly corresponds with the text, and with the history; and we take it, therefore, to be the true interpretation of the prophecy. HE unto whom the college of civilized nations have given the *presidency* among the several powers is the head; and the governments of the several distinct nations are the horns of the beast. The whole civil power of the empire is the beast with ten horns."

M'Leod's Lectures on Revelation, p. 321.

² *Dissertation on the Prophecies.*

³ ΚΑΙ ΕΞ ΤΩΝ ΕΠΤΑ ΕΣΤΙ.

to succeed it in a regular order. After the seat of empire had been established in Constantinople, the Exarchate of Ravenna was established in Italy, by supplanting the dominion of the Goths, and extended its power over Rome. According to Gibbon, it was "*the representative in peace and war of the Emperor of the Romans.*"¹ In the contest between the Eastern Emperor and the Bishop of Rome about image-worship, the Exarch of Ravenna was slain in a popular sedition, and the exarchate was abolished.

The Bishop of Rome had sought the aid of Charles Martel, who directed the affairs of the French monarchy, in his contest with the emperor; and as he espoused the cause of image-worship, and took under his protection the Roman Church, he was dignified with the title of *Patrician*; and to him, and his son Pepin, and grandson Charlemagne, was accorded the authority which had been exercised over Rome by the Exarchs of Ravenna, and the special protection of the Roman Sec. In the words of Gibbon²—"The reign of the Greek emperors was suspended; and in the VACANCY of the empire, the Roman ambassadors presented these PATRICIANS with the keys of the shrine of St Peter, as a pledge and symbol of sovereignty. Except an original and inherent claim of sovereignty, there was not any prerogative remaining, which the title of emperor could add to the *patrician* of Rome." This newly-acquired power may be regarded as the *seventh head of the beast*. It is said—"When he cometh, he must continue a short space."³ Accordingly, in about half a century from the time of Charles Martel, by the coronation of his grandson Charlemagne as emperor of the Romans, the empire of the west was restored, and the seventh head merged into the *eighth*, which, in terms of the sacred prediction, *is of the seven, and goeth into perdition*.

The territory of the exarchate comprehended three of the ten states or kingdoms of the divided empire—the Heruli, Ostrogoths, and Lombards; and this was assigned by Pepin to the Pope as his temporal kingdom—the state of the Church—the patrimony of St Peter. At the precise time indicated by the prophetic symbols, the eighth beast rises into power. The seven first forms of government had passed away, the imperial power was broken, the exarchate was subverted. Thus did the Papacy rise to temporal authority. "Take now," says Professor Gaussen, "the map of Italy, and look for the domi-

¹ *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. v. p. 284.

² Quoted by Dr. M'Leod—*Lects.*, p. 326.

³ Revelation xvii. 10.

nions of the Pope ; and see how many of the first kingdoms the pontifical territory occupies the site at this day. You will see that it has supplanted these three—the Herulis, the Ostrogoths, and the Lombards. And go to Rome itself, and see the Pontiff on the banks of the Tiber, in all his sovereign pomp, trampling under foot the ashes of Romulus in the Basilica of St Peter's, or in his own palace of the Vatican. You will see on his brow that Babylonish tiara—surmounted by the three crowns of the three horns, plucked up by the roots before him—those of Odoacer, Theodoric, and Alboin—he the only king in the world who wears this prophetic head-dress.”¹

The extinction of the Exarchate of Ravenna was virtually the three horns falling before the little horn. It required, however, the interposition of a foreign power fully to establish the little horn on its seat. The Pope had, by dethroning the rightful possessor, confirmed the throne of France to Pepin, the father of Charlemagne, and his descendants. The Lombards having invaded the northern part of the exarchate, Pepin, in gratitude to the Pope, compelled Astolphus, the Lombard prince, to transfer his territory to the Bishop of Rome. This was about the year 754—the era when the popedom acquired a temporal sovereignty, and the little horn was exalted to occupy the dominion which had previously been shared by the three horns of the beast that were fallen. Of the grant of Pepin, Gibbon speaks in the following terms :—“ The splendid donation was granted in supreme and absolute dominion ; and the world beheld, for the first time, a Christian bishop invested with the prerogatives of a temporal prince, the choice of magistrates, the exercise of justice, the imposition of taxes, and the wealth of the palace of Ravenna.”²

3. *The character of the Little Horn is fully seen in the Papacy, and in no other power that has existed in the world.*

Here the evidence is so complete as to amount to demonstration. On no other subject revealed in the Scriptures is there a more exact correspondence between the features as sketched by the pencil of inspiration and the living likeness. To those who are acquainted with the prophetic symbols, and with the character and history of the Papacy, the representations of Holy Writ must bring absolute conviction, that this, and nothing else, meets the requirements of the sacred description. Even the commentator in the Douay Bible admits that the

¹ *Gaussen's Geneva and Rome.*

² *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xlix.

“little horn” symbolizes Antichrist. “This,” says he, “is commonly understood of Antichrist. It may also be applied to that great persecutor Antiochus Epiphanes, as a figure of Antichrist.” It is evidently opposed to the whole connection and design of the prophetic description to regard the little horn as referring to Antiochus Epiphanes; for neither did he rise among the ten horns, which were not then in existence, nor did he supplant three, nor continue throughout the prophetic period of “a time, times, and the dividing of time.” Equally gratuitous and absurd is the Romanist pretence that Antichrist is not yet come, but that, as some monster or great enemy of Christianity, he is to arise at some future period, and his continuance will be of very brief duration.

The whole historical evidence *locates* the delineation, and renders it impossible to apply it to aught else than the Papacy. The features of character of the little horn strikingly exhibit an idolatrous, apostate persecuting power, and are each of them distinctly and strongly marked in the Romish Antichrist. The seat of this power is Rome, and no other place; for there is no other city that was founded on seven hills, and which was the metropolis of seven kinds of government, rising in succession, corresponding to the “seven heads” of the beast. Let us notice the different parts of the description, and the most casual reader must be struck with the singular exactness of the coincidence.

(1.) The Papacy rose among the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire on its downfall was partitioned; while, at the same time, it is diverse from them, as it is an *ecclesiastical* power. It had “eyes like the eyes of a man.” It has ever been distinguished for uncommon sagacity, watchfulness, and tortuous policy. The system has been well styled, “*The masterpiece of the policy that is from beneath.*” Through its priesthood, and various orders of devotees, male and female, the Papacy easily spies out all occasions of extending and establishing its power, as it is ever ready to avail itself of them. The infamous *Confessional* reveals to it the heart-secrets of its votaries, and enables it to turn to its purpose the plans and measures even of many who do not acknowledge submission to its authority. The court of Rome has always been distinguished for consummate craft and cunning; and above any other power in the world it has ever been remarkable for deep-laid contrivance and far-seeing policy, in asserting its extravagant claims, and

¹ See Appendix.

advancing its exorbitant pretensions. Occasionally this carnal policy, like all contrivances of the wicked, may overshoot itself; and when God intends to destroy it, it will be left to pursue infatuated counsels.¹ But still the notable characteristic of the Papacy is keen discernment of times and opportunities of advancing its interests, and remarkable wisdom in adopting measures for compassing its objects. It has a penetrating insight into the tendencies of the age, and the character of public movements; and it is never slow to avail itself of these to push forward its favourite schemes of power and aggrandizement. Even the recent measures taken by the court of Rome for promoting Popery in Britain, and thwarting plans of government for education and social improvement; and the attempts of the Papacy in Prussia, and other continental nations, discover an intimate acquaintance with the state of political parties in these countries, and remarkable sagacity in profiting by changes in men's minds, and the state of feeling throughout the community. Whatever may be the result of these attempts, they will assuredly be found to have been, on the part of Rome, no rash precipitate measures, but the contrivances of profound policy for the promotion of Popish interests and objects.

(2.) The little horn is said to have "a mouth speaking great things;" and in verse 25th it is said, "He shall speak great words against the Most High." How aptly does this describe the arrogant claims, blasphemous titles, and great swelling words of the Papacy! He sits in the temple of God, calling himself God, and exalting himself above all that is called God and is worshipped. He assumes the blasphemous titles—King of kings, God upon earth, our Lord God the Pope, Vicar of Christ, &c. He arrogates to himself all the attributes of Christ, and thus dethrones and dishonours the Redeemer. He claims infallibility, and to be sovereign above all powers on earth. He pretends to forgive sins; he sells indulgences, and he pretends to possess the keys of the invisible world, asserting that he can deliver souls from torment, and admit them to heaven at his pleasure. He thus speaks daring and blasphemous words against the Most High; and the judgment which shall hereafter destroy the power and desolate the kingdom of the beast, is sent "because of the great words which the horn spake."²

(3.) Again, this power is said to "wear out the saints of the Most High;" and they are represented as given "into his hand, until a time, times, and the dividing of time."³ In the

¹ "Quem Deus perderet, dementat."—*Horace*. ² Verse 11. ³ Verse 25.

Book of Revelation also, the woman in scarlet is described as being "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."¹ The persecutions, crusades, and massacres authorized by the Papacy, fully verify this representation. No other power has displayed so inveterate and cruel enmity against the truth, or has employed so unscrupulous and violent means to oppress and exterminate its friends; no other has persevered so long in a course of violence and bloodshed. Rome has been a persecutor on system; and even to our own day has continued to oppress and wear out the saints. If it has actually shed less blood in recent than in former days, it is simply because the power was wanting. The will still remains unchanged, as the condemnation to death of Maria Joaquina, and the treatment of Dr Kalley and the Portuguese converts in Madeira; the persecution of converts from Popery in Ireland, and the imprisonment of Dr Achilli by the Inquisition at Rome; and the recent incarceration and forced exile of Count Guicciardini, and other readers of the Scriptures in Tuscany, bear abundant witness. Rome, Pagan, cruel and sanguinary as it was, did not persecute the truth so systematically and violently as the Papacy has done; and a hundredfold more of the faithful witnesses of Christ have been slaughtered under the antichristian power than under the rulers of Pagan Rome. It is estimated by some that not fewer than *fifty millions* of the servants of Christ have been cut off by the Moloch of Popery. No wonder that Rome can boast of its uniformity, and of the prostrate subjection of some countries to its dominion, when such agreement has been compelled by the rack, and torture, and blood; when from these lands witnesses for truth have been forcibly extirpated; and the free expression of sentiment has been suppressed by the Inquisition, and Auto-de-fes, and wholesale massacres. In some countries, the power of the little horn has actually prevailed to banish the truth and wear out the saints; and that it has not succeeded everywhere in this design is to be ascribed neither to the lenient spirit nor gentle measures of the Papacy, but to the over-ruling hand of a gracious Providence, whose eyes are ever upon the truth.

(4.) The little horn is described, finally, as thinking to "change times and laws." Were this a mere secular power, as an independent sovereign in his own dominions, to amend or alter its own laws would be no strange assertion of its preroga-

¹ Revelation xvii. 6.

tives. But such is evidently not the import of the expression. In a twofold respect, Antichrist thinks to "change times and laws." He interferes in the legislation and administration of the other ten horns. He claims to abrogate laws which are, in any respect, opposed to his usurped authority, or which are against his interests. He absolves subjects from allegiance to their rightful sovereigns, places kingdoms under interdicts, and exercises a malign influence upon the administration of all states that succumb to his wicked authority. Even in Protestant nations that are leagued with Antichrist, legislation is influenced, to a large extent, by the Papacy. Laws are repealed that guard against its encroachments, until hardly any legal barrier exists to check its most daring innovations, and other laws are enacted which directly subserve its interests. But it is chiefly in attempting to change the times and laws established by Divine authority that the little horn exerts its power. This is a notable characteristic of the Papacy, such as has never in an equal degree distinguished any other power that has existed in the world.

In the second chapter of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, it is said of this power, "He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." The expression evidently means that he arrogates to himself the authority and honours which are exclusively God's, and that he makes alterations in the laws and institutions of heaven, which God alone has power to establish or disannul. The changes made by the Papacy upon *times* and *laws* of Divine appointment are numerous, and such as manifest incredible audacity and blasphemy. The whole moral law is virtually abolished by the wicked principles and false maxims of the Man of Sin, and the obligation of each separate precept of the Decalogue is relaxed. Hence we can easily account for the low state of morality in all Popish countries. The Sabbath is virtually abolished under the Papacy, as its observance is only required during the brief period of religious service in the churches, and by far the larger portion of it is given up to amusements and unrestrained indulgence. The precept of the Fourth Commandment is chiefly applied to the observance of festivals enjoined by the Church; and while the Sabbath, the time of God's special appointment, is neglected and profaned, the rigid observance of the vigils, fasts, and saints' days, enjoined by Antichrist, is exacted under severe penalties. It is said that more than one hundred of these human Sabbaths are imposed yearly upon the devotees of Rome,

while the command of Heaven, "Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy," is practically set at nought.¹

The Decalogue itself is mutilated and changed to serve the nefarious purposes of the Papacy. In systematic statements of Popish doctrines, the Second Commandment is made a part of the First, and the Tenth is divided into two. The Fifth Commandment is set aside by parents and children being required mutually to accuse and criminate each other when they are accused or suspected of heresy;² and by the same detestable authority, husbands and wives are compelled to violate the most solemn engagements, to subserve the designs of the Church. The celibacy of the clergy, and the forced vows of the monastery and nunnery, lead directly to the violation of the Seventh Commandment, and spread disgusting immorality to an incredible extent. The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, speaks of an apostate power that forbids to marry, and commands to "abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."³ Who but the Papacy forbids to marry, and commands abstinence and numerous fasts? Who but Antichrist has enforced, by its stern commands, under the highest penalties, what God has left only as voluntary matters? Pope Gregory Seventh (the infamous Hildebrand), in the year 1074, by means of a council obedient to his will, held at Rome, commanded the universal celibacy of the clergy; and thus spread a flood of loathsome licentiousness throughout Christendom. The law of marriage, moreover, is changed by the Papacy, by the dispensations which it grants to marry within the prohibited degrees, and by forcibly severing the bonds of marriage, to serve the purposes of the Church. Why should we pursue this enumeration? Every law and institution of

¹ Dens, in his *Theology*, asks, in relation to the Fourth Commandment, "What is taught by the third (fourth) precept of the New Law?" And he answers, "Principally these three things—1. That certain specified days are to be kept holy. 2. That they are to be kept holy by external Divine worship, by hearing masses. 3. That the same are to be kept holy by abstaining from servile labours." He asks again, "Which days are those appointed to be kept holy?" and he answers, "In the first place, are the Lord's day; next festival days." Here saints' days are placed on a level with the Lord's day, the obligation of both being represented as enjoined by the Fourth Commandment; and, as these festival days have clearly no warrant in the Divine law, it need not be said, this is taking away the Divine authority of the Sabbath.

² *Blanco White's Preservative against Popery*, p. 5.

³ 1 Timothy iv. 3

God is either abrogated, altered, or perverted, to suit the designs or advance the interests of the Man of Sin. Murder is not only justified, but even enjoined by the maxims of the Jesuits; and in certain specified cases, theft is declared, in the common books of Popish instruction, to be only a *venial* sin. Solemn covenants and vows are disannulled, and an oath contrary to the utility of the Church is said to be "perjury." Indulgences and dispensations to commit all sorts of crimes have been issued by the popedom, and have served to bring immense wealth into the Papal treasury.¹ The sacraments ordained by Christ have been grossly perverted and misapplied, and five other sacraments added, for which there is not the slightest warrant in the Divine Word. Purgatory has been invented to terrify the superstitious, and to extort from men's fears large sums of money to swell the coffers of Antichrist. The monstrous figment of the Mass has been brought in to exalt the priesthood, and to seal and confirm other unscriptural dogmas of the Papacy.

Laws the most express and solemn which ordain and regulate Divine worship, are changed and set aside by the Papacy. Instead of the one glorious Mediator, multitudes of saints and angels are brought in to usurp his place; and the dependence of Rome's worshippers is placed in them, above Him who is the only Advocate with the Father. The worship due to the Supreme God is given to saints and angels, to the consecrated wafer, to relics, and the wood of the cross. According to the testimony of an observant and shrewd writer,² "The Virgin Mary is the god of all Roman Catholic countries;" and it is said of Italy, "For one prayer offered to any of the persons of the Godhead, nineteen are presented to the Virgin Mother."

Thus the Papacy has all the characters that in the prophecy are ascribed to the little horn, in marked and striking prominence. Above all other powers, it has ever been distinguished for uncommon sagacity, for blasphemous titles, pretensions, and claims, for enmity to the saints, and persecution of the people of God, and for openly attempting itself to change times and laws of Divine appointment, and for leading others, seduced by its influence, to innovate upon Divine ordinances, and to trample under foot God's laws. The present aspect, as well as the whole past history of the Papacy, shows these to be essential and unchanging features of this wicked system. Never was a resemblance so exact and complete. If the description is not

¹ *Rome in the Nineteenth Century.*

² *Ibid.*

verified in the Papacy, it is impossible to find any power that has ever yet existed which answers to the terms of the sacred prediction.

4. *The time of the continuance of the Little Horn, and of its certain destruction, is definitely fixed and declared.*

Specific periods are mentioned in connection with Scripture predictions, to lead to prayerful expectation, and to direct the Church to suitable preparation for their accomplishment. God knows the end from the beginning, and what He has spoken shall surely be fulfilled. There are sovereign, wise purposes for permitting the existence and continuance of evil systems in the world; and when these shall have been accomplished, He will take vengeance upon the wicked, and bring upon them utter destruction. The length of Israel's bondage in Egypt was definitely fixed, and precisely foretold, long before the promised seed had gone to sojourn in the land of Ham; and so exact was the accomplishment, that we are told, "On the self-same day that the Lord spake to Abraham, He brought them out." The period of the captivity in Babylon was limited to *seventy years*, as announced to Jeremiah the prophet; and when this time was completed, the decree of Cyrus proclaimed deliverance to the Israelitish captives. The era of the Messiah's advent, and the time when He would be cut of, as the great Sacrifice for sin, were clearly foretold; and when Daniel's "seventy weeks" were fulfilled, these wonderful events had transpired. The period of the dominion of Antichrist is more frequently and specifically declared by the sacred penman than any of the grand events to which we have referred. The hopes of faithful witnesses and the fortunes of the Church are deeply concerned in the matter, and therefore are the prophetic periods declared with unusual minuteness. The destruction of the little horn will be followed by an event the most important that has ever gladdened the world—the universal establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom; and therefore is the date of this great moral revolution definitely fixed and fully declared,—that the hopes of the faithful may be animated and strengthened, and that the Church may be sustained and consoled in suffering and trial, cheered with the prospect of deliverance, and prepared for her Lord's coming.

The prophetic period of Antichrist's dominion is declared under a variety of expressions. It is termed "a time, times, and a half," or the dividing of times; it is mentioned as "three years and a half;" it is spoken of as "forty and two months."

and it is said to be "twelve hundred and sixty days." Now all these phrases express the same duration of the period. Reckoning according to the ancient calendar, thirty days to the month, the *three years and a half*, and the *forty and two months*, amount to twelve hundred and sixty days; and according to the prophetic style, of a "day for a year," as employed in Ezekiel,¹ the period of Antichrist's dominion the forty-two months during which the outer court and the holy city are trodden down of the Gentiles, is 1260 years.² It is true that Daniel afterwards mentioned 1290 days and 1335 days; but these additional years are only to mark the eras of important events that shall succeed the subversion of Antichrist,—such as the complete overthrow of every remaining hostile power, and the full establishment of the glorious kingdom of Christ upon earth.

The time of Antichrist's destruction is therefore definitely determined. If we can fix the date of his rise, we may with certainty declare the time of his downfall. Now, notwithstanding the diversity of sentiment that prevails among writers on prophecy, in reference to the beginning of the Papal power, we are inclined to regard the commencement of the seventh century as the period of the rise of Antichrist. The little horn could not come into existence until all the ten horns of the beast were developed. Now this could not be before the year A.D. 526, when the last of the ten kingdoms was formed by the establishment of the Lombards in Hungary.³ The Bishop of Rome obtained the title of Pope, and was constituted Universal Bishop and supreme ruler of the Church, by the gift of the Emperor Phocas, the murderer of his royal master and his family, in the year A.D. 606. It is remarkable that Gregory, who occupied the See of Rome before the first Pope, declared in his contest with the Eastern Patriarch, that whosoever should arrogate to himself the title and power of Universal Bishop, was to be regarded as the Antichrist foretold in Scripture, and was to be considered as "*the enemy of Christ*" by all Christians. Yet Boniface, his immediate successor, received the designation from a murderer, in gratitude for recognizing his usurpation, and was not slow to enforce his

¹ "I have appointed each day for a year."—Ezekiel iv. 6.

² Not less than *seven* times is the same number used in a variety of forms of expression, and applied to the same event—the continuance and subversion of Antichrist.—See Dan. xi. 35, xii. 7; Rev. xi. 2, 3, xii. 6, 14, xiii. 5.
Newton, Dissert. xiv.

arrogant claims upon the clergy and people throughout Christendom. The little horn, it is true, did not obtain temporal power, till, by the fall of the three states that formed the Exarchate of Ravenna, and the grant of Pepin, the Pope was proclaimed a temporal prince, and invested with the insignia of civil authority. But, by the act of Phocas, he obtained *absolute ecclesiastical dominion* over the Christian world, and "the saints, and times, and laws" were given into his hand. He then had the power to lord it over men's consciences, and to persecute the friends of truth, though the exercise of this power became more conspicuous afterwards. The title assumed, and the claim of headship and sovereignty which it involved, were manifestly a daring invasion of Christ's glorious prerogatives. They plainly declared the power that arrogated them as pre-eminently the Antichrist, the avowed and inveterate enemy of Christ and his people. It required no addition of temporal sovereignty to exhibit a character thus fully developed, though this temporal dominion might afterwards enable the Pope more effectually to accomplish his nefarious designs. Just as if the Papacy were now stripped of its temporal possessions, it would not thereby be the less that Wicked revealed, "that sits in the temple of God," whom "the Lord will destroy with the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming."

Here, then, we have a precise era fixed as the rise of the Romish apostasy. The "little horn," although in existence, was comparatively harmless, till the decree of Phocas was issued in A.D. 606, and till the Bishop of Rome was installed in the primacy over the whole Christian Church.¹ The predicted period of its continuance is 1260 years, during which "the woman"—the emblem of the true Church—is in the wilderness; the witnesses prophesy, clothed in sackcloth; the outer court is trodden down of the Gentiles, and the saints in the hand of enemies are greatly oppressed. If we add these 1260 years to the date in which the Papacy rose, we are brought to the SIXTY-SIXTH year of the present century; and this, in the judgment of a large proportion of the most eminent

¹ The Council of Florence declared the radical doctrine of the Papacy in these words: "That the apostolic chair and the Roman high priest doth hold a primacy over the universal church; and that the Roman high priest is the successor of St Peter, the prince of the apostles, the true lieutenant of Christ, and the head of the Church; that he is the father and doctor of Christians; and that unto him, in St Peter's chair, full power is committed to feed, and direct, and govern the Catholic Church."—*Barrow*.

expositors, is the time of the predestined downfall of mystical Babylon.¹

Our business is not to *predict*, but explain and apply the prophecies of the Bible; and we should therefore speak with humility and caution respecting the precise time when the mystery of God shall be accomplished. Still, whatever apparent obscurity there may be resting upon the date of the commencement of Antichrist's reign, if this is determined, there seems to be as little reason to doubt of the time of his downfall, as to question the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, at the expiration of the years spoken of to Abraham, or the restoration from the captivity in Babylon, at the end of the *seventy years* revealed to Jeremiah the prophet. "The times and seasons" the Father hath put in his own power; but He has intimated to us enough concerning them to encourage hope, and to excite to solemn preparation. "The vision is for an appointed time," and we should wait for it; for in the end "it will speak and not lie"—it "will come and not tarry." It is worthy of remark, that the Mohammedan apostasy—the Antichrist of the East, probably the "little horn" mentioned in the eighth chapter of Daniel—rose about the same time as the apostasy of the West. Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina was in A.D. 622—the beginning of the era of the *Hegira*; and the pretended revelations of the Koran, and the announcement of the impostor's commission from heaven, were declared some time previously. Thus the two grand impediments to the spread of Divine truth—the two great enemies to Christ and his Church—being contemporaneous in their rise, will in all probability fall together.² Their removal,

¹ Though the subversion of the full antichristian power did not take place in the year above stated as the expiry of the prophetic period, there can be no doubt that the events which occurred then, and in the three or four subsequent years, are important steps towards its final downfall.

² The following reasoning from *Faber's Dissertation on the Prophecies*, and from *Scott's Commentary on Daniel* viii. 9-12, in which Faber's views are adopted and expanded, appears very satisfactory in applying the symbol of the "little horn," described in the 8th chapter of the prophecy, neither to Antiochus Epiphanes, nor the Papacy, but to Mohammedan power:—

"The Holy Spirit, now proposing to describe the exploits of another great enemy to Christianity, recalls, in the vision of the ram and the he-goat, the attention of Daniel to the second and third empires, whose prophetic history had been already detailed, for the purpose of introducing another 'little horn,' which was to come up out of one of the principal horns of the Macedonian beast, as the former 'little horn' sprang up among the ten horns of the Roman beast."—*Faber's Dissert.* p. 190.

"It must be far more natural and reasonable to look for the little horn of

so near, although little expected either by the supporters of ungodly systems, or by the friends of truth, should be the subject of frequent and fervent prayer, and should excite to holy and devoted exertions. They who are the "Lord's remembrancers"¹ should "give Him no rest" till He destroy the oppressor, and arise and make "Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

5. The antichristian power, it seems likely, *will be increased and extended, immediately before its downfall.* This has generally been the case with other great persecuting powers, the enemies of the Redeemer's Church. Egypt had risen to the summit of greatness and prosperity at the time when the judgment of the ten plagues, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea, wrought deliverance for Israel. Babylon was in the zenith of its glory shortly before its overthrow, effected by the victorious armies of Darius and Cyrus. So was it with Nineveh and Jerusalem in the period preceding their predicted subversion. These powers and cities were lulled in security, apprehensive of no danger, trusting in their strength, and in a long course of coming prosperity, while the arrows of vengeance were preparing, and when desolation from the hand of the Almighty overwhelmed them. Thus, too, shall it be with Antichrist, the Babylon of the New Testament. "She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."² All the accounts which we have in Scripture of the

the he-goat, in the regions which formed the Macedonian empire, as broken into four divisions, than in any part of the Roman empire, even when extended to the same regions. It is plain that the rise of the Papal ecclesiastical authority, by which 'the saints of the Most High' were delivered into the hands of the Bishop of Rome, by the edict of Phocas, constituting him universal bishop, A.D. 606; and the first dawn of Mohammed's religious imposture occurred in the same year; and, in all probability, the two delusions will be terminated precisely at the same time. In neither case, as it appears to me, is the *temporal* dominion *exclusively*, or even *primarily*, foretold, but the *religious delusion*. It does not remain to be inquired, then, when the Pope became a temporal prince, or when Mohammed began his conquests. The little horn of the west and that of the east seem to have entered on the work of spiritual delusion at the same period. It being carefully kept in mind, that the *religious imposture* and its effects, in both cases, are *primarily* meant, and the *temporal* authority merely as subservient to them; it will not be any objection to this interpretation, that the dominion of the Mohammedans began to decline in a few centuries, and probably will be extinct before the close of the 1260 years; for the effects of the spiritual delusions will nevertheless remain till dispelled by the triumphant light of Divine truth; as will the Papal delusion also, however the Pope, and the dominion of the kingdoms supporting his ecclesiastical dominion, may be crushed."—*Scott's Commentary on Daniel viii.* 9-12.

¹ Isaiah lxii. 6; (Hebrew).

² Revelation xviii. 7.

state of this persecuting power immediately before its destruction represent it as increased in strength, proudly boasting of its enlarged resources, and meditating new schemes of conquest and aggrandizement. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation, the great red dragon that persecutes the woman and her seed—the emblem of the true Church—is described as coming down to the earth, “having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time;”¹ and in the last stage of “the war in heaven,” the “serpent casts out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.”² To represent some great and violent attempt which Antichrist shall make against the cause and friends of truth, just before his destruction, it is added, “The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”³ The ten horns are also said to have “one mind, and to give their strength and power to the beast, and to make war with the Lamb.”⁴ This has been their general policy during the whole continuance of the antichristian power. Deceived and misled by the machinations, and infatuated by the counsels of the Papacy, they have yielded their influence and resources to promote its designs, have placed themselves in hostility to the kingdom of Christ, and have persecuted, oppressed, and destroyed his servants. It is intimated, that up till the close of the conflict between Antichrist and the Lamb, this infatuation shall continue, and that the civil authority shall be prostituted to subserve Popish interests. The kings of the earth agree and give their power and strength to the beast.”⁵ These Scripture testimonies would seem to imply that, prior to the downfall of Antichrist, there shall be an

¹ Revelation xii. 12.

² Verse 15.

³ Rev. xii. 17.—The view given in the text of the last stage of the war between Michael and the dragon, as referring to the last attempts of the antichristian power against the true Church, is substantially that of Dr M'Leod (see Lect. xi.), and differs considerably from the sentiments of Newton, Faber, and Scott, who refer the preceding part of the twelfth chapter of Revelation to the persecutions under the Pagan emperors, and to the time of Constantine the Great, and who consider the “man-child” to have been Constantine himself. It is certainly a singular, though most perverted, application of the sacred symbols which is made by Faber, when he represents the last war of the dragon against “the remnant” of the woman's seed, “who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,” as a persecution of the royal family, and of the aristocracy, and splendid hierarchy of England!

⁴ Revelation xvii. 13, 14.

⁵ Revelation xvii. 10.

expansion of the system, and an increase of its power. The "deadly wound of the beast" shall be healed, the territory of the "Man of Sin," which was formerly lost, will be in part recovered, and an accession of numbers and strength will be the precursor of the fall of the Papacy.

For holy and wise reasons, God permits this increase and prevalence of evil systems, on the eve of their destruction. Their character and designs are thereby more fully developed, and their enmity to the truth more clearly seen. Their abettors are infatuated in their own counsels; and, as the punishment of their sin and impenitence, they are given up to blindness of mind and strong delusion. The Divine righteousness is thus more clearly displayed in taking vengeance, and the overthrow of the adversary, from the height of his prosperity, conveys a more solemn and distinct warning to the inhabitants of the earth, and to future generations. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, at the time of their abundant ease and prosperity, was a terrific instance of Divine interference to punish prevailing wickedness, which astonished the surrounding nations, and which will speak till the end of time. So the overthrow of mystical Babylon will teach a lesson of the Divine administration which shall never be forgotten. As of ancient Babylon, so it may be said of its modern representative, Papal Rome, "Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come upon her, saith the Lord." And again, "Because the spoiler is come up upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken; for the Lord God of recompenses shall surely requite."¹ The remark of the judicious Fleming is in accordance with the whole course of the Divine administration, as declared in the Word, "That Antichrist and his followers do this day seem to be at such an advantage, the Lord's work is, as it were, at a stand, yea, rather going back; this late reviving of anti-christian Prelacy in Britain and Ireland, with so visible a growth of Popery there, and so dark an hour upon the reformed churches abroad, I think, on very solid grounds, is a promising evidence of the near approach of a further stroke on that party. For it is clear, both from the Word, and God's ordinary way of procedure, how a sharp storm is usually previous to some remarkable enlargement of the Church, a very low ebb before the turning of the tide; yea, that every step of her ad-

¹ Jeremiah li. 53-56.

vance, whereby she hath gained ground on Antichrist, hath still had some conflict and wrestling going before; and thus the Lord by suffering doth ripen for such time of mercy."¹

The recent attempts of the Papacy to increase its power, and extend its influence, would appear to justify these views, and to warrant such anticipations. Towards the close of the last, and in the earlier part of the present century, the power of the Pope was greatly weakened, and the interests of Popery declined throughout the kingdoms of Europe. This was owing, in part, to a wide-spread infidelity, which, fostered in the bosom of Popery, was raised up to take righteous vengeance upon that complicated system of superstition and idolatry, and partly to the shocks of revolutions which aimed wholly to subvert all ancient institutions, and which shook, to its foundation, the social fabric; and partly, too, to the destructive revolutionary wars which swept, like a tornado, over the various kingdoms of the beast, breaking their strength, and drying up the resources from which they had previously furnished support to the Papacy. But no sooner had the storm passed over, than this wicked system began to raise its head anew above the troubled waters; and adapting its policy to the altered circumstances of the nations, meditated the healing of its breaches, and attempted new conquests.

The order of the Jesuits, which had been suppressed in almost all Popish countries by civil enactment, and even by the decree of the Pope himself, was, in the year 1814, re-established.² The downfall of Napoleon witnessed the resuscitation of Jesuitism, which is "the essence and spirit" of the Papacy, and which has not inaptly been compared to a sword, "whose hilt is at Rome, and whose edge is everywhere." Since that time, Popery has, in all nations, been in a state of restless activity, and has generally been advancing. Receiving in some places partial checks, and in others seeking to compass its designs in a covert, stealthy manner, it has, notwithstanding, been influencing, to a great degree, the policy of the nations, and laying deep plans, and prosecuting them with uncommon vigour and perseverance, to realize its darling scheme of universal and undisputed sovereignty. By attempts to pervert and destroy Protestant missions—as in Tahiti, and on the coast of

¹ *Fleming on the Fulfilling of Scripture*, vol. ii. p. 46.

² See Appendix.

³ There are two religious fraternities which are extensively employed by

Africa—by efforts against scriptural education, and to engross the education of the people by its own pledged servants ;³ and by the most determined resistance to evangelistic exertions in its own territories, as in Madeira and Belgium, Tuscany and the south and west of Ireland, the Papacy discovers its true character of intense hatred to the light, and shows that it is possessed of immense power of evil, and the will to exercise it, notwithstanding the boast of liberality and superior illumination.

Its grand attempt is upon Protestant nations, knowing that, if successful here, it will neutralize the protest of faithful men

the Roman Catholic prelates in Ireland in the education of the poor. The one, called the "*Sodality of the Christian Doctrine*," teaches chiefly on the Sabbath ; and the other, the "*Brotherhood of the Christian Schools*," pursues its labours for the rest of the week. The former was incorporated by a Papal Bull. The members are to be entitled to indulgences upon the following conditions : that they instruct children ; and that they *unite their intentions to the intentions of the church*, in praying, according to an established form, "for the extirpation of heresies, the concord of Catholic princes, and the exaltation of the faith." The other society is a regular order, resembling that of the Jesuits : the members are not monks, it being their duty to mingle in the affairs of the world ; but their rule is even more than monastic strictness. They are governed by a superior ; and bound by four vows, three of them the ordinary ones of poverty, chastity, and *obedience*, the fourth to dedicate their lives to the education of the poor. It is from these two fraternities—the select and sworn agents of the unknown policy of the Vatican, founded by Papal charters, and originated by the bishops of their respective districts—that teachers are chosen for our national schools.

FIRST REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON IRISH EDUCATION.

(See "*Ireland in 1846-7*," by Philip Dixon Hardy, M. R. I. A.)

At a conference of the Romish Prelates in Ireland, to consider the question of national education, the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted, declares plainly the kind of education which Popish dignitaries will sanction—"That, notwithstanding our anxiety for the diffusion of knowledge, (?) we can never give our co-operation and support to any system of education, intended for our people, in which the authority of their pastors will not be fully recognized, and that no system of education can, or ought to give confidence and satisfaction to the Catholic people of Ireland, which will not be based on Catholic principles, and placed under Catholic control." It is a pretty strong presumption that the national system of education in Ireland is regarded by the Popish priesthood as subserving their interests, when the late Pope gave it his sanction, under certain conditions and recommendations ; and when the proportion of teachers attending the Model Schools in Dublin is nearly *five* Roman Catholics to *one* Protestant. Such teachers as we have mentioned are fit instruments for employing the resources of the national treasury, as the effective means of diffusing Popery through the length and breadth of the land.

against its errors, idolatries, and blasphemies, darken or extinguish the light, and rivet its chains upon its deluded votaries. Hence in the chief Protestant nations, of late, every means has been tried to spread Popery, and to obtain legislation favourable to Popish interests. In the United States of America, the increase of Popish ecclesiastics, seminaries, and newspapers; the avowed influence of Popish dignitaries in elections, in the State legislatures, and in the question of education; and the promptitude and energy with which new territories are occupied, and the education of youth is engrossed by Papal agents, declare the design of the Papacy to oppose Protestantism in every possible way, and to pervert republican institutions, and to render them subservient to its mischievous purposes. On the European continent, the subject of *mixed marriages* is used to encourage apostasy from the ranks of the reformation, and to gain converts to Romanism. Several of the princes of Germany, whose ancestors were the most zealous in the cause of the Reformation, have, by intermarriages with Popish families, become pledged to educate their children in the delusions of Popery. The vacillating monarch of Prussia has been of late succumbing to Papal influence; the chief directors of his counsels are believed to be the tools of the Jesuits; and not only in the Polish parts of Prussia do the measures of the Prussian cabinet promote the cause of Antichrist, but in Pomerania, long noted for its Protestantism, such at present is said to be the dread of the speedy ascendancy of Popery and infidelity, and of the oppressions that will follow, that, we are told, numbers of the inhabitants meditate expatriation from the country to avoid the gathering storm.¹ England, as being the chief of Protestant nations, has long been marked as the grand field for prosecuting schemes to advance Popish objects and interests. In the extensive colonies of Britain—the seats of future empires—the Papacy has secured most advantageous positions. Its dignitaries have been largely endowed out of the imperial treasury, its priesthood are everywhere dispersed throughout the colonies, to seize as a prey the uncared-for emigrants; and the colonial governments are compelled to legislate, in many cases, in favour of Popish objects. The leaven of Antichrist diffused in some of the chief seats of learning; the power of Puseyism, that new form of Popery; the spread

¹ It is gratifying to remark that, owing to the restless scheming of the Jesuits against German unity, the policy of Prussia towards the Papacy has undergone a great alteration of late years.

of Ritualism in the English Establishment ; the repeal by liberal statesmen of statutes, framed in the reforming times, to guard against the insidious designs of the Papacy; the lavish expenditure of the public treasure to promote schemes of education, which directly subserve the interests of Popery; the promoting to official power in the nation of the devotees of Rome ; and the whole administration conducted so as to consult the protection and advancement of Popish interests, however inconsistent with the safety and welfare of a Protestant state, evidence the extent and power of the Papal conspiracy against Protestantism in Britain, and show how far British rulers have agreed to give their power to the beast.

The recent act of the court of Rome in appointing a cardinal, a prince of the popedom, to exercise authority in England, and in parcelling out the kingdom into ecclesiastical territories for Popish bishops, is no new or hastily-contrived measure. It is merely the development of a deep-laid design of the Papacy long cherished, and of councils planned with consummate skill to extend its malign influence, and to render the greatest of Protestant nations the instrument of promoting its ambitious and destructive schemes.

These manifold and combined attempts serve, however, to confirm the sure Word of prophecy, and supply a clear pre-intimation of Antichrist's approaching downfall. When Babylon shall be finally subverted, her destruction shall come as in a moment ; and vengeance, long delayed and long slumbering, shall burst upon her with accumulated violence. From the summit of her prosperity, she shall be hurled like a millstone into the sea, and the billows of judgment shall swallow her up for ever. After she has realized her darling wishes, and probably while meditating schemes of more extended conquest, she shall be overwhelmed with sudden and irretrievable destruction. The height of her preceding elevation, and the greatness of her former prosperity, will render her downfall the more conspicuous ; and, through future generations, she shall be exhibited as a monument of signal and desolating vengeance. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine ; and she shall be utterly burned with fire ; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

CHAPTER II.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE PAPACY.

THE seventh chapter of Daniel presents a sublime and striking exhibition of a scene of judgment, as immediately preceding the subversion and destruction of the power of the little horn. The "Ancient of Days" is beheld seated on a glorious high throne. Around Him are the symbols of supreme authority and uncontrollable dominion. Myriads of attendant ministers swell his train, and wait to receive his commands and to execute his pleasure. He assumes the seat of judgment, to call to account wicked and oppressive powers; and therefore is He clothed with terror, and the instruments of vengeance are collected around his tribunal. "His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." "A fiery stream issued and came forth before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened." The object of the judicial process, and of the vengeance that follows, is the beast; and because of its connection with the little horn is it adjudged to punishment, and doomed to destruction. "I beheld, then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."¹ And it is afterwards declared, "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end."²

Immediately after this judgment, a scene of surpassing interest and glory rises to view. Wicked and oppressive powers are utterly destroyed, and the winds of Divine indignation have swept them away. The "Son of man," the exalted Mediator, takes to Him his great power to reign. Enemies have been visibly put under his feet, and opposition or resistance to his sovereign authority is nowhere found. He is fully inaugurated in his royal seat, and the sceptre of righteousness

¹ Verse 11.

² Verse 26.

in his hand is stretched over the utmost limits of creation. All things are now seen in subjection under Him, and "his dominion extends from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." His sovereign Headship is universally acknowledged, and his kingdom lasts throughout all future ages, encountering opposition no longer—unchanged in its administration, and undecaying in vigour and glory.

This judgment-scene has been conceived by some to refer to the general judgment at the end of the world. But this evidently cannot be the object of prophetic representation. The Judge in Daniel's vision is the "Ancient of Days"—the designation of the First Person of the blessed Godhead. At the last judgment, the Judge will be the Mediator, for "all judgment" is said to be committed to the Son, and "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath appointed."¹ The "judgment" spoken of in Daniel is evidently prior to the happy millennium—the universal establishment of Christ's kingdom upon earth. The general judgment will succeed the consummation of all things, and is immediately connected with the universal conflagration, and the introduction of the eternal state of happiness or misery. Nor does Daniel's vision of judgment imply the personal advent of the Redeemer to reign upon earth, and the resurrection of the saints to possess with him temporal authority and dominion. A doctrine which is opposed to the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ,—which mars the tranquil and bright hopes of the saints in relation to their Lord's appearance—which subverts several precious doctrines of the Word—which is inconsistent with the declared design of instituted ordinances,—and which tends to damp Christian efforts for the world's conversion, receives no support from the expressive and sublime representation.² Systems, not persons, are here judged. As in the sixth Psalm, the command and counsel of the Father is, that the

¹ Acts xvii. 31.

² The system of pre-millennists, maintaining the personal coming of Christ *prior* to the millennium, and his personal reign on earth with his risen saints during that happy period, may be easily shown to be advocated by its abettors on forced and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, and to be wholly opposed to the testimony of the Word on certain subjects of vital importance. Thus, the sacred writers ever represent the Church as *complete* at her Lord's second coming; the means of grace, having served their object, then terminate; the intercession of Christ, and work of the Spirit for saving purposes, will then cease; the entire Church will either be raised from the

Lord the Son should sit at his right hand till his enemies shall be made his footstool, so the beast, one of the chief of these enemies, and the "little horn," that combined in itself the concentrated and long-continued hostility of the nations against the Lord's Anointed, is destroyed, judged, and reduced to prostrate subjection. This important event is befitting the scenic representation. The antichristian system so long existed among the nations, as the head of the opposition to the cause of Christ, and possessed such power to accomplish its nefarious designs, that none could cope with it, its crimes were so many, and its wickedness so great, as to justify a special Divine interposition for its subversion and destruction. This is the object of the judgment. For this the Father exalts the Mediator, and subordinates all to his potent dominion. "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen; He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries."¹

In various places of the Inspired Volume, important events are described in language which is evidently taken from the last judgment. Thus in Matthew xxiv., the removal of the Jewish dispensation and the destruction of Jerusalem are depicted in imagery which irresistibly fixes the mind upon the Judge of all assuming his awful tribunal—the dead raised, all nations congregating around the throne, and the solemnities of a dissolving universe. In the sixth chapter of Revelation, the subversion of Pagan Rome is likewise described by figures of terror, borrowed from the judgment of the great day. And in the eighteenth chapter, the fall of mystical Babylon is minutely represented with such circumstances of terror and dismay, as only the final day of retribution can adequately supply. There is a beautiful propriety in such scenic representations of the last judgment being transferred to Divine inflictions of vengeance, which occur at different periods in the history of the world.

dead or transformed; the wicked will rise from the dead; the righteous and wicked will together be judged; and, at the same period, (the second coming of Christ, the universal conflagration will take place, and the new heavens and the new earth will be introduced. These propositions, which are susceptible of the fullest proof from Scripture testimony, it is useless to add, are directly opposed to the sentiments of pre-millennists. The views of this party are clearly stated, and fully and ably refuted, by Rev. David Brown, in his excellent work on *Christ's Second Coming, will it be Pre-millennial?* (second edit.) p. 53.

¹ Psalm cx. 5, 6.

They exhibit the sleepless vigilance and unswerving rectitude of the Moral Governor of the universe. They loudly proclaim that there is a God that judgeth in the earth, and that although vengeance may be deferred, yet it slumbers not. Wickedness, though successful for a time, is marked for punishment, and crimes accumulating for ages do certainly at length wake up the bolts of vengeance. Besides, the wrath which is revealed from heaven, against evil systems and notorious offenders, frequently forestalls the judgment to come. It is so marked, terrific, and overwhelming, as to exhibit in the clearest manner the Divine estimate of the crimes which it is sent to avenge, and to manifest the final fearful doom of the ungodly. It is related that when Napoleon was compelled, amidst the horrors of a Russian winter sent before its time, hastily to abandon the Kremlin and evacuate Moscow, he exclaimed, when he beheld the city involved in one wide conflagration, and the flames overspreading the heavens, "If there is to be a last judgment, this is surely the likeliest to it of aught that has ever occurred."¹ The declaration thus extorted from the proud heart of the conqueror of Europe, when he was grasped in the hand of Divine vengeance, and his dream of universal empire was in a moment dispelled, if not, as many of his other expressions, the utterance of infidelity and the play of fancy, was like the voice of conscience anticipating a judgment to come, and foreboding its terrors. As the system of the Papacy has exceeded all others in complicated and monstrous wickedness,—as its iniquities have reached up to heaven, and have been of long continuance,—so the vengeance to be executed upon it shall be more severe and destructive than any that has hitherto fallen upon the earth. It will so strikingly resemble the wrath that shall be executed upon the ungodly at the last great day, as to impress human minds generally with the righteousness of God that owneth vengeance, and with the strictly retributive character of the Divine government.

The "judgment" which "shall sit" upon the little horn implies—

1. That the reformation of the Papacy is hopeless, and its destruction inevitable.

It is sometimes alleged by false liberals or interested partizans, as a reason for concessions to Popery, that the system has been gradually improved; that it is more tolerant, and less opposed to Protestant institutions than it once was; and that

¹ *Memoirs of the Russian Campaign*, by Count Segur.

the spirit of its abettors is unlike that of their fathers—bitter and persecuting—but is, on the contrary, mild, peaceful, and generous. Hence it is inferred that the system is susceptible of still farther amelioration, and that it will be hereafter so modified and improved by the advancing light and liberal spirit of the age, that there is no need of guarding against its encroachments,—no ground of apprehending danger from its extending power and influence. When the present Pope, on his accession to the popedom, relaxed somewhat the stern severity of his predecessor, and made some trifling concessions, he was hailed by credulous Protestants as a paragon of liberality; and it was at once boasted that the Papacy was started in a career of reform, that would go forward till all its harsh features were removed, and it would stand forth in attractive loveliness and beauty. It need not be told how short a time sufficed to falsify these fond anticipations, and to demonstrate what faithful men had all along declared, that the Popish system, like a stagnant marsh, spreading around pestilential vapours, received no healing waters from without, and could not of itself purge away its manifold pollutions. As with the sluggish, refuse waters in Ezekiel's vision, so it may be declared of antichristian doctrines and practices, "But the miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof, shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt."¹

The expectations of reform of the Papacy are futile,—the predictions of amelioration wholly gratuitous and unfounded. Neither Scripture, nor Popery itself, nor a proper view of the state of the case, affords the slightest grounds for indulging such anticipations. Everywhere in the prophecies of the Bible, both of the Old and New Testament, the destruction of Popery is foretold, and in terms too clear to be misunderstood; and not the least hint is given of its amelioration. "The judgment shall sit; and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end."² "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."³ "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."⁴

Popery itself reiterates the same thing, and proclaims that

¹ Ezekiel xlvii. 11.

² Daniel vii. 26.

³ 2 Thessalonians ii. 8.

⁴ Revelation xviii. 2.

its reformation is impossible. Assuming as its motto, "*Semper eadem*,"—always the same; boasting of its antiquity and its exclusive possession of truth, and staking its existence upon its infallibility, it cannot possibly reform itself. None of its fundamental principles can be altered, without undermining or abandoning the whole system. The supremacy of the Pope, as Christ's pretended vicar on earth, cannot be changed or modified, without overturning the chief prop of the fabric. The doctrines of transubstantiation, of absolution, of indulgences, and purgatory, are integral and essential parts of anti-christian error, and not one of them can be given up or amended, while the system itself is maintained. There is no middle course between God's truth and Rome's lie. The former is like its Divine Author, unchangeable, and rejects alliance with error in every form; and to adopt the one, it is necessary wholly to abandon the other. To hold Romish traditions involves a total denial of the inspiration and supremacy of God's Word; and the figment of the seven sacraments must be completely rejected, if we would receive the institutions of Holy Scripture. The whole system of image-worship and creature-mediators must either be abandoned, as utterly irreconcilable with Divine prescription, or if retained, it can admit of no modification, so as to stand with God's appointed ordinances. In fine, salvation by grace, which is God's revealed method, and salvation by human works, which is the plan of Popery, can never come into the least agreement. The Papal system can therefore never reform itself; but either men must everywhere forsake it, as the reformers did, or God will take vengeance by destroying it, for its irreconcilable hostility to his truth.

Nor will the Papacy be reformed from *anything external* to itself. On every side, it is fenced around against the salutary action of Protestant churches. Civil governments are unable to introduce into the system changes which the spirit of the age, or the progress of society, demands. It sternly resists the least interference of the civil power with its usages or institutions, and aims always to bend civil rulers obsequious to its will,—to render them the ministers of its intolerance. The Bible, that grand reformer, has no power to improve Popery. Instead of this, it is everywhere the object of relentless and perpetual hostility by the Papacy and its abettors. Pope Pius VII., writing to the Primate of Poland in 1816, declared, 'Bible societies fill me with horror; they tend to overthrow

the Christian religion; they are a pest which must be destroyed by all possible means." The same spirit of inveterate opposition to God's Word characterizes all the heads of the Romish system. Even the present Pope, on his accession, in his encyclical letter, denounced the spread of the Bible as an "unmitigated evil." The Sabbath, which reforms and blesses other communities, can work no salutary change in Popery, for wherever it prevails the Lord's day is set at nought, trampled under foot, and virtually abolished. Science and philosophy are powerless to reform a system which cramps the human mind, denounces free inquiry, and maintains dogmas unphilosophical and absurd.¹ And the intercourse of civil or Christian society is rendered inefficient for good, by the jealous vigilance of the priesthood, and the practice of the confessional. The spirit of the Romish priesthood is unsocial and

¹ The condemnation of the venerable Galileo, by the sentence of the Inquisition at Rome, for propounding the true theory of the solar system and the earth's motion, is a true illustration of the enmity of Popery to science. The astronomer, at the age of seventy, was required to recant the new astronomy, under the penalty of death. The sentence of the Holy Office has been preserved. The following language expresses the principal part of it:—"1. The proposition that the sun is the centre of the world, and immovable from its place, is absurd, philosophically false, and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to the Holy Scripture. 2. The proposition that the earth is not the centre of the world, nor immovable, but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is also absurd, philosophically false, and, theologically considered at least, erroneous in faith." For maintaining the condemned doctrines, Galileo's *Dialogues* was adjudged to be prohibited by public edict; he himself was sentenced to be imprisoned in the prison of the Inquisition for a period determinable at pleasure; and it was added, "by way of salutary penance, we order you, during the next three years, to recite, once a week, the seven penitential psalms, reserving to ourselves the power of moderating, commuting, or taking off the whole or part of the said punishment and penance." It is said that the aged astronomer, on rising from his knees after receiving his sentence, exclaimed, but so as not to be heard by his iniquitous judges, "And yet it moves!" The *Index Expurgatorius* at Rome, by which the reading of many of the best works on science, literature, history, etc., is prohibited under the severest penalties,—the irrational dogma of transubstantiation, the belief in mock-miracles, and in the efficacy of relics, etc., inculcated by the heads of the Romish Church,—exhibit still further the system as the irreconcilable foe to true knowledge; while the state of debasing ignorance in which the masses in all Popish countries are sunk, is the practical exponent of the principles of Popery on this subject. So late as the year 1828, the astronomical works of Galileo and Copernicus were to be seen at Rome in the list of prohibited books. The present Popish primate of Ireland, Dr Paul Cullen, when residing at Rome, in a periodical which he conducted, opposed the principle of the Newtonian philosophy, and taught that the sun is a globe of only about *six feet* in diameter!

selfish; and this spirit infused, to a large extent, into those who come under their influence, manifests itself in *hatred* to those who profess scriptural truth. It is a spirit of enmity and repulsion to Christians who walk in the light; and those who are actuated by it, either cling tenaciously to Romish errors and superstitions, or are led to cherish more embittered enmity to the truth, by embracing open infidelity. In fine, God will not, by any special influence from above, reform the Papacy. It is marked with the seal of rejection; and its abettors are given over to a reprobate mind and to strong delusions. A remnant God will gather out of Babylon, but Babylon itself is doomed to righteous vengeance. Unreformed, and incapable of reformation, it shall fall, abhorred of God and man, weighed down by its accumulated crimes and grievous abominations—the mark of the impoisoned arrows of Divine indignation.

2. The character and crimes of the Papacy will be so fully displayed, as to call for Divine interference for its destruction.

The method of the Divine government has been to permit wickedness to grow to its height before judgments are sent to punish and remove it. The patience and long-suffering of God are thus illustrated, and his inflexible rectitude is displayed. He is justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges. The Governor among the nations is never inattentive to human affairs, nor unobservant of the character and conduct either of individuals or communities. “His eyes behold the nations,” and the Divine forbearance speaks solemn warning to the workers of iniquity. “Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.” Not one of the deeds of the ungodly is overlooked by Him who sits upon the throne; and when the evil character of immoral systems is fully developed, and the crimes of communities, which have been increasing from age to age, become full blown, and especially when men outrage the long-suffering of God, and take encouragement from it to proceed to greater wickedness, then God’s vengeance is awakened to rid Him of his adversaries. “The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”¹

The cry of Sodom’s wickedness reached up to heaven, before the Lord descended to make inspection, and before a fiery deluge swept from the earth the cities of the plain. The destruction of the Canaanitish nations was deferred till “the cup of the Amorites was full.” And the overwhelming destruction that the sword of the Romans inflicted upon Jerusalem and

¹ 2 Peter ii. 9.

the Jewish people, was the Divine visitation for mercies and privileges abused, and crimes increasing from the earliest period till the day of retribution. Our Lord himself says of the Jewish nation in the days of his flesh, that "The blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the temple: verily, I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."¹

On this settled principle of the Divine administration, the judgment of the Papacy is deferred till its character is fully and extensively exhibited, and its hateful and multiplied crimes have become manifest. The last great visitation of judgment that will fall upon the earth, before the establishment of Christ's kingdom, shall be sent chiefly to avenge the crimes of the Papacy. Other systems, evil in character, and malignant in influence, have prevailed, and the rulers of the nations have been in open rebellion against the Lord, and against his Anointed. With contemptuous pride, and in blaspheming arrogance, they have said, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Therefore are they made monuments of Divine indignation, and dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. But it is eminently because of their connection with the Papacy that they are judged and destroyed. They were intoxicated with the wine-cup of the mother of harlots, and lived deliciously with her. They suffered themselves willingly to be deceived and misled by the Papacy. They pandered to its wickedness and oppression, and yielded their power and resources for the perpetration of its crimes. Hence their destruction is contemporaneous with the downfall and removal of the Papacy; and for this object it is chiefly sent. The "beast" is the emblem of despotic, oppressive civil power, that has long existed throughout European nations, and that has been the principal support of the Papacy. When the judgment is held, and the sentence of condemnation takes effect, the beast is said to be destroyed, because of the crimes of the little horn. "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."²

Popery weighs down and destroys the nations that are under its influence, and that yield their power to accomplish its iniquitous designs. Spain and Italy, Sicily and Venice, furnish instances of once powerful and prosperous nations degraded

¹ Luke xi. 50, 51.

² Dan. vii. 11.

and ruined by the Papacy ; and Austria, France, and the other kingdoms of the beast, are destined yet to exemplify the destructive effects of national policy and resources being prostituted to promote the interests of Antichrist.¹ It is not unlikely that some further exhibition of the character of Popery will be made, and that the Papacy will perpetrate some more daring deed of wickedness prior to its downfall. What may be the specific form of this exhibition—what may be the last dark crime that the Man of Sin shall commit, which shall proclaim “the cup of his iniquity” to be full—we may not now be able fully to declare. The beast may change his tactics, as he has done on some former occasions. Superstition may be revived, as in some places it has of late been, in all its horrors. The infidelity which Popery nurses into life and strength may be permitted to overspread Christendom, and may inflict fearful plagues on the nations. Jesuitism, by its diabolical policy, may yet set on foot new contrivances to effect its nefarious designs ; and despotic civil powers may, at the dictation of Antichrist, enact laws, and devise new measures of oppression against faithful witnesses. The employment of the civil power to suppress the truth, and to injure its friends, before its final triumph, seems to be intimated in various declarations of inspired prophecy. The “three unclean spirits” which proceed out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, “go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.”² “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them : for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings ; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”³

One last attempt of the Papacy against the truth seems especially to be intimated in the predictions of Holy Writ. This is the slaughter of the witnesses. It is declared in the eleventh chapter of Revelation (verses 7, 8), “When they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” The sad event here referred to seems evidently to intend a forcible suppression

¹ Since the publication of the first edition of this work, the issues of the Prussian war with Austria in 1866, and of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, have remarkably verified this anticipation.

² Revelation xvi. 13, 14.

³ Revelation xvii. 14.

of a faithful testimony, and violent persecution of those who maintain it. This, it is not obscurely intimated, will be by the instrumentality of the civil power in league with the Papacy; for the beast of the sea, and the beast of the abyss, or *bottomless pit*, are the same—the seven-headed and ten-horned beast. The period of the slaying of the witnesses is when “they shall have finished,” or, as the words may be rendered, “when they shall be about to finish their testimony.”¹ This would seem to imply that they shall be called forward to witness in behalf of some great principle concerning the Redeemer’s glory and kingdom, which will complete the testimony for truth, and will be a ground of suffering to faithful men. In all probability this shall be a definite testimony in favour of the great doctrine of the Mediator’s Headship over the nations—a truth always displeasing to corrupt civil rulers; and the last sufferings of the witnesses may therefore arise from disobedience to the powers that be—wickedly invading the province of conscience, and demanding of Christ’s faithful subjects a submission which it would be criminal in them to yield. They may be occasioned by opposition to unrighteous enactments, submission to which would interfere with subjection to the *higher law* of God speaking in his Word, which is universally and unchangeably obligatory. The friends of truth have no alternative. They must suffer rather than sin; and their constant duty is to obey God rather than man, when human authority arrogates a claim which only the Almighty Sovereign can advance.

The slaughter of the witnesses, there is strong reason to conclude, is yet future, as they yet prophesy in sackcloth—their testimony is not yet complete; and nothing has occurred to verify either the rejoicing of enemies, or the resurrection and ascension to heaven of the witnesses, which speedily follow their destruction.² This melancholy event does not necessarily pre-suppose the literal slaughter of the witnesses, or the shed-

¹ Καὶ ὅταν τελίσωσι τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν.—Rev. xi. 7.

² The view of Elliot, in his *Hours Apocalypticæ*, that the slaying of the witnesses was completed about three years and a half before Luther burnt the Pope’s bulls, is unsupported by any clear or satisfactory evidence. The declaration of the Papal Legate at the Lateran Council, that “HERESY IS NO MORE,” was far too trivial a matter—considering the empty boasting of the supporters of the Papacy, when they have appeared to possess undisputed power—to be characteristic of the slaughter of the witnesses. The author of the *Seventh Vial* adopts the sentiments of Elliot on this point, and these are satisfactorily refuted by Hislop, in his excellent little work, entitled *The Red Republic*.

ding of their blood to a large extent. ✓ They may be *politically slain* throughout the kingdoms of the beast—their testimony may be borne down and silenced. Persecution may be excited under the form of law; and the ceasing of the Protestant churches to testify against prevailing evils, or their succumbing to wicked civil authority, would go far to verify the prediction; while a few more resolute and determined witnesses for truth, who dare not be silent, may be called to seal their testimony with their blood. The truth may all the while be spreading, even in the kingdoms of the beast, like the roots of plants in winter penetrating more deeply underground, spreading more widely, and preparing for a more vigorous growth in spring. In other parts of the world, too—in distant nations—there may be an extensive diffusion of the Gospel, preparatory to the blessed harvest, when “they of the city shall be as the grass of the field.” But in whatever way the slaughter of the witnesses is to be effected, it seems undeniable that this complicated wickedness will be perpetrated at the instigation, and by the influence, of the Papacy. That oppressive power, which has already violently borne down and extirpated the truth from many lands, and shed the blood of saints in torrents, may yet succeed in its attempts against the truth, and may complete its own career of wickedness, and the oppression and guilt of the nations, by a violent suppression of the truth, and the slaughter of the faithful. While we would not prognosticate evil, or entertain undue fears, it behoves us to wait, in a solemn and prayerful attitude, the approach of events of unusual importance to the Church and the interests of truth. We are living on the eve of great and solemn changes. In the mysterious providence of Zion’s King, the power of the enemy may be increased, and his mischievous attempts be successful; and the saints may be called again to severe suffering, ere their cause shall eventually triumph. “Many good and great men,” says an able and eloquent divine, “entertain serious apprehensions of approaching evils, and cannot divest themselves of anxious fears, that the gloom will certainly thicken at the close, that the number of believers will be greatly diminished, errors overwhelm the Church, and true religion be reduced to an extreme point of depression.”¹ Our comfort however is, that the triumphing of the wicked will be short. This last development of Antichrist’s character and atrocious designs made—this

¹ Dr Livingstone; quoted by Dr McLeod, in *Lectures on Revelation*, p. 262.

last daring wickedness perpetrated—and the blasting judgments of Heaven shall descend, with lightning speed, and with the violence of the tempest, and shall sweep the oppressor from the face of the earth. The destruction of the grand adversary shall be the final deliverance of the Church, and the joyful and universal triumph of the truth. “Violence shall be no more heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.”¹

3. The exalted Mediator will himself inflict punishment upon Antichrist, because of multiplied crimes committed against his cause and people.

“All judgment is committed to the Son.” The Father, as the Head in the economy of the Divine government, brings all in subjection to the Mediator, and the whole administration is given into his hands. He rules among the nations, and executes the vengeance appointed for the impenitent and rebellious. As the vessels of a potter, He dashes in pieces the judges of the earth, and, in the day of his wrath, He strikes through kings that withstand Him. The subversion of mystical Babylon is especially the award of his justice, and the work of his power. The grand quarrel that has existed for ages in the world was between Christ and Antichrist. The dragon and his angels fight, and Michael and his angels. In the Book of Revelation, when the witnesses are spoken of, they are represented as engaged, single-handed, during the whole prophetic era of 1260 years, in conflict with a great system of wickedness and oppression, and against its manifold superstitions. All other objects and interests are withdrawn from the view, and the whole scene is filled with the contending parties, their struggles, and the final issue of their arduous and long-continued conflict. The kings of the earth, the potentates of Europe, yield their power to the beast, and make war with the Lamb: the Lamb at length overcomes them, and awards the victory to the “called, and chosen, and faithful,” who are with Him. The dragon’s rage is directed against “the woman and her seed”—the faithful Church, and the spiritual children who are born to her; and, for a lengthened season, he appears to succeed in the contest. The Church is wasted, and removed out of view, and manifold persecutions threaten her total destruction. But her glorious Head provides for her safety; and the testimony, sufferings, and devotedness of the faithful become the means of victory over her oppressors. “They overcame him by the

¹ Isaiah lx. 18.

blood of the Lamb, and the Word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives to the death."¹

The exalted Redeemer makes common cause with his servants. Against their great adversary, as with Amelek of old—a treacherous, bloodthirsty foe—He has indignation for ever; and, as the Kinsman Avenger, He pours out the vials of his indignation upon those who have spilled his servants' blood, or who have, in any wise, done them wrong. This is a fixed principle of his lofty administration. He arrested the steps, and paralyzed the arm of a violent persecutor, by a voice of majesty and terror—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And when at last He will sit upon the throne of judgment, and judge all nations, this will be the proclaimed law of his decisions: "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my servants, ye did it unto me."²

The destruction of the Papacy is the special work of the exalted Mediator, and there are the most powerful reasons why He should take vengeance upon that devoted system. Popery is essentially, and in every aspect, the Antichrist—the inveterate and irreconcilable enemy of Christ. It stands in arrayed hostility to his *character and offices*. Popery exalts the creatures above the Saviour—representing the Virgin Mother as the Queen of Heaven, and as commanding her Son,³ and ascrib-

¹ Revelation xii. 11.

² Matt. xxv. 40.

³ The worship of the Romish Church is essentially Mariolatry, or the idolatry of the Virgin Mary. In the Psalter of St Bonaventura, the expressions of adoration and prayer, which in the Psalms are addressed to the persons of the Godhead, are changed into addresses to the Virgin—the name Mary being substituted for the names and titles of Deity. Thus, instead of saying, "The Lord is my Shepherd," the worshipper is taught to say, "Mary is my shepherd." The present Pope has given the sanction of his authority to the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception" of the Virgin—a dogma which several of the most approved Romish fathers and writers formerly doubted and denied; and he ascribed his support under trials, and his restoration to his seat, not to God, but to the blessed Virgin.

The following account of conversations with a Jesuit Professor of one of the colleges in Rome, as related by Mr Seymour in his *Mornings among the Jesuits*, clearly shows that the worship of God is replaced by the worship of the Virgin Mary, in Popish countries, and at the very seat of the Papacy. "I stated," says Mr Seymour, "that from all I had observed of the religion of Italy, whether as exhibited in the churches, displayed in processions, or expressed in private—whether as exhibited in the forms of prayer, in the object of worship, in the books of devotion, or in the conversation of the people—that it appeared to me to be characterized by one great feature, which forced itself unceasingly on my mind. It seemed to me that all tended to the honour of Mary, rather than to the honour of Christ; and that it seemed to me to be carried to such an extreme, that I felt, in my

ing that power and homage to the Pope, his assumed vicar on earth, which belongs to Christ alone, and which it is the highest blasphemy to ascribe to any creature. He is dethroned from his mediatorial office, by exalting saint and angel-mediators. His priesthood is set aside by introducing human merits, and ascribing the virtue of his atonement to penances and bodily mortifications. The Roman pontiffs and the bishops and priests of Rome deny Christ his glory as a Prophet, by removing the key of knowledge, and preventing men from hearing the intimations of his will; while they arrogate to themselves more than regal honours, put on their own heads the diadem which He should exclusively wear, and promulgate laws and ordinances in opposition to the declared principles of his kingdom. Popery is *the enemy of Christ's Gospel*. It is a system of salvation by works, directly opposed to the

calm and sober judgment, that the religion of Italy ought to be called *The religion of Mary*, rather than *The religion of Christ*. . . . He stated that my impression was very natural; that such was really the appearance of things; that coming from Germany, where Christ on the cross was the ordinary object of veneration, into Italy, where the Virgin Mary was the universal object of reverence, it was no more than natural such an impression should have been created: that such an impression was very much the reality of the case; and that, to his own knowledge, *The religion of Italy was latterly becoming less and less the religion of Christ*; and that the devotion of the most Holy Virgin, as he called it, was certainly on the increase.

"I then added, that I had seen some remarkable things in a work by St Alphonso De Liguori. It was entitled *The Glories of Mary*, and, among other things, described the vision of St Bernard, in which he beheld two ladders, extending from earth to heaven—two ways by which the sinner could have access to heaven. At the top of one ladder appeared Jesus Christ; at the top of the other ladder appeared the Virgin Mary; and that while those who endeavoured to enter into heaven by the way of Christ's ladder, fell constantly back, and utterly failed, those, on the other hand, who tried to enter by the ladder of Mary, all succeeded, because she put forth her hands to assist and encourage them. I mentioned, also, that I had seen this as an altar-piece in a church at Milan, where the two ladders were represented, reaching from earth to heaven—Jesus Christ at the head of one, and Mary at the head of the other; and while none were succeeding by the ladder of Christ, all were succeeding by the ladder of the Virgin! I added, that this was degrading Christ, in order to exalt the Virgin, and that it was representing her as a more merciful and effectual saviour than the Saviour himself! I felt that I could apply no other language to this, than that I could not imagine a more hideous blasphemy than the language of Liguori, or a more frightful sacrilege than such a picture beside the altar of a church. . . . He answered, that it was their opinion—the opinion, too, of many of the fathers—that *God hears our prayers more quickly when they are offered through the blessed Virgin, than when offered through any one else.*"

† See Appendix.

Divine plan of salvation by grace. Human merits displace the work of Christ ; and the doctrine of a *doubtful faith*, and the terrors of superstition, rob the sinner of peace of conscience, and forbid him to realize the blessed assurance of hope. The Papacy is the declared *enemy of the Bible*. Denying it to be the sole rule of faith, and dreading the light which it would let in upon Rome's darkness, it opposes by every possible means the access of its votaries to the sacred oracles, and sets itself in determined hostility to the dissemination of the Scriptures. It is, in fine, the ruthless adversary and oppressor of Christ's people. It *wears out the saints*, sheds the blood of the witnesses of the Lamb, and aims at their total extermination. Thus opposed to all that the Redeemer esteems dear, the Papacy is a special object of his righteous indignation, and is destined to experience the full power of his vengeance. "Whom the Lord will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming." ¹ "In that day, the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent ; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." ² The judgment which the Redeemer shall execute upon the Papacy is the vengeance for his injured truth ; the vengeance of his temple, and profaned and down-trodden altars ; the retribution for cruel and multiplied wrongs inflicted upon his people. It will be all the more terrific that its execution will be a display of the fierceness of the wrath of the Lamb. When the appointed time of Babylon's doom is come, the glorious Mediator, rejoicing in the awful manifestations of his justice, shall exclaim, "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart ; and the year of my redeemed is come." ³

4. The judgment of the Papacy includes the destruction and removal of all those systems and powers that have supported Antichrist.

The judgment that is said by the prophet to "sit," is not so much that on *individuals* as on *systems*, and *communities*. Hence, various individuals and races who are connected with Antichrist, and had a share in its sins, escape without any marked punishment ; while, when its complicated wickedness is complete, the weight of the vengeance descends upon the generation then existing, and involves in irreparable ruin the

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 8.

² Isaiah xxvii. 1.

³ Isaiah lxiii. 3, 4.

thrones of iniquity. In the fall of Babylon the Great, the destruction of whatever yields to it active support, or is influenced by its policy, is necessarily involved. The "heavens and the earth" must be shaken to their removal, that the kingdom of Christ may be brought in and remain. These are political and ecclesiastical systems and powers, higher and lower, that subserve the cause of Antichrist, and that, as being carnal and earthly in their origin and character, can be shaken, and must give place to a kingdom that is spiritual in its nature, and incapable of being injured by the revolutions and convulsions that overturn mere human dynasties. It is the judicious remark of Dr Owen, that the principles and spirit of Antichrist are so inwrought with present systems that exist throughout the nations, that there must be a violent and universal shaking of all worldly systems and interests, before that wicked power shall be fully overthrown. ✓

✓ The Judgment of the Papacy will affect—

(1.) *Unscriptural civil powers, that support it.* Because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake, "the beast" is "slain," and "his body is given to the burning flame."² In the Book of Revelation,³ the judgments that are sent to destroy the Papacy are represented as falling upon the ten horns of the beast, and as accomplishing their ruin. Dynasties powerful and of long continuance are overturned,—sceptres and thrones are broken to pieces; and when the wrathful visitation has effected its purpose, a scene of wide-spread desolation is presented to view. The kings of the earth and their armies, that made war upon the Lamb—the rider on the white horse—are discomfited and broken, and the angel standing in the sun, summons "all the fowls of heaven to the supper of the great God; that they may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both great and small."⁴ These striking images picture forth the ruin that is destined to come upon the European kingdoms and their rulers that are in league with the Papacy, and that have prostituted national power and resources to advance its interests. It is the fourth beast, the Roman empire in its last stage, as hostile to the cause of Christ, and in league with his grand enemy, that is thus destroyed, and his body cast to the devouring flames. The little horn, the Papacy, deceived the nations, and intoxi-

¹ Discourse on *The Shaking and Translating of Heaven and Earth.*

² Dan. vii. 11.

³ Chaps. xvii. xviii. xix.

⁴ Rev. xix. 17-19.

cated their rulers. It deluded them by specious error, bewitched them by idolatry, and excited them to enmity against the truth of Christ, and to the oppression and persecution of his servants. It was their leader in tyranny, cruelty, and idolatry; and the civil authority throughout the kingdoms of the beast was the willing instrument of the Papacy in all its attempts to extinguish the truth, and to wear out the saints. The governments of Europe are essentially antichristian, despotic, and oppressive. Rulers refuse homage to the Lord's Anointed. They reject the Bible, the Statute-book of Heaven, in framing their laws and conducting their administration. The grand principle of their rule is the old Roman maxim, that "might constitutes right," and governing by means of a military despotism. Hence the interests of philanthropy are overlooked, and the religion and morality of the Bible are contemned. Laws are framed, and the administration is conducted to serve favoured classes, who wield the power of the state; while huge military establishments, and jails, and correctional police are required to coerce the masses of the people, who, from their education and morals uncared for, are chained in ignorance and held in vassalage.

The Reformation affected, to a very limited degree, the systems of civil rule throughout Europe. It was arrested in its progress by the arbitrary authority and the cupidity of rulers. Religion was degraded by being made a tool of state policy, and the Church was rendered the servile instrument of injustice and oppression. Upon "the scarlet-coloured beast" sits the woman, having inscribed on her forehead, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth."¹ Not only in former periods, but even to this day, the influence of the Papacy prevails in almost all the cabinets of the princes of Europe. Evangelical truth is discouraged, and faithful witnesses are oppressed by exclusion from office, iniquitous laws, and public burdens; while the interests of the Man of Sin are carefully consulted, his friends exalted to power, and state-treasures are profusely expended in advancing antichristian objects.

In the destruction of the Papacy, the civil power that was identified with its interests must also be destroyed. The "feet and the toes" of Nebuchadnezzar's image, symbolizing the Roman empire in its divided state, are broken to pieces by the power of the little stone, and reduced to powder; the wind sweeps them away as "the chaff of the summer thrashing

¹ Revelation xvii. 5.

floor.”¹ It is observable that when the *ten horns* are mentioned in the apocalyptic visions before their destruction, they are represented as *horns without crowns*; their authority is gone, and they are stripped of their dominion. At first the crowns were upon the seven heads of the beast, indicating that the supreme authority was exercised successively by each of the separate forms of government that had dominion in ancient Rome. Again, these crowns are transferred to the horns, denoting that the power of the empire is parted, and yet exercised in a weakened state, by each of the ten European kingdoms. But in the end, the crowns disappear, and the last fragments of a power, antichristian in its nature and exercise, that long opposed the Redeemer and prevented the establishment of his kingdom, shall be scattered by the tempest of Divine judgments. The beast and the false prophet, the deceived and the deceiver, are both taken, and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. The Lamb overcomes the kings, that, maintaining the quarrel of the Papacy, warred against him. The “little stone,” now become a great mountain—the kingdom of the Messiah enlarged and fully triumphant,—“breaks in pieces and consumes all kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

(2.) The judgment of the Papacy shall destroy corrupt ecclesiastical systems. Throughout Christendom the churches have, to a large extent, been pervaded with antichristian leaven. Brought into alliance with corrupt states, they have departed from the truths of the glorious Gospel, and have moulded their order on carnal and worldly principles. Unfaithful to Zion's King, they have awarded the homage and honour that are his exclusive due, to usurpers and oppressors, and have exhibited no public testimony against their most daring invasions. A worldly hierarchy has been established, to gratify the despots of the earth, and to enslave the heritage of the Lord. Even in the churches of the Reformation, many of the errors of the Papacy have spread to a great extent. The former glory has departed; and instead of occupying the honourable position of an uncompromising protest against Popery, many antichristian corruptions have openly invaded Protestant churches. Erastian state-control, exercised by civil rulers, takes away the independence, perverts the discipline, and pollutes the doctrine of all the Protestant churches on the continent.² An influential portion of the Prelatical

¹ Daniel ii. 35.

² The following observations, by Jeremiah Burroughs, in his *Exposition*

Church, boasting of exclusive apostolical succession, and repudiating connection with all churches that acknowledge not the same order, may be regarded either as the germ of the Papacy, or as one of the strongest props of that unscriptural power. The mysterious grace ascribed to the sacraments, the exaltation of a human priesthood, the rejection of the Bible as the exclusive rule of faith, open departure from the doctrines of the Gospel, with the adoption of many Popish rites and usages, indicate the revived power and extending influence of the Papacy; and forewarn, too, of the judgments that shall shake the ecclesiastical as well as the political heavens and earth. When the Redeemer comes to judgment with "his fan in his hand, He will thoroughly purge his floor." The "wood, hay, stubble" of human invention, even built on the good foundation, will be destroyed, and the consuming fire will make manifest every man's work, of what kind it is.¹ The interceding Angel, the glorious Advocate within the veil, fills his censor with "fire of the altar," and casts it into the earth. and there follow judgments of diversified character, "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."² These judgments are caused by "fire of the altar," as it is to avenge sins of the altar, the neglect and corruption of Divine worship, that they are principally sent.

(3.) *The business and customs of society have, to a large extent, been under Antichristian influence, and have subserved the interests*

of Hosea (chap. i. 10), show that the leaven of Antichrist extensively pervades the establishments of many Protestant nations:—

"This is antichristianism—that which shall oppose Christ as a Head, and set up another headship—as in all those four things named before:

"*First.* Whosoever shall obtrude any doctrine upon the Church to be believed, by their own authority, he is guilty of antichristianism, not whosoever shall preach or hold an error in the Church. But when any shall presume to obtrude upon the Church any doctrine that holds upon human authority, to be urged upon the authority of those that do impose it; this, I say, is properly antichristianism, for it doth oppose Christ in his Headship.

"*Secondly.* The intrusion of such offices and officers in the Church as merely belong to the spiritual man, such as are properly church-offices, that do not hold upon Christ the Head, but only hold upon them—this is antichristianism.

"*Thirdly.* The imposing of any ordinance, any new institutions that are, or hath been opened, upon the Church, belongeth to antichristianism.

"*Fourthly.* The imposing of laws so to bind the conscience as the laws of Christ do—here is antichristianism."—*Exposition of the Prophecy of Hosea*, 4to, 1643, p. 161.

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 5 9.

² Rev. viii. 5.

of the Papacy; and these, too, will be affected by the coming judgment, and will be greatly changed. The "mark of the beast" is imprinted upon "the forehead and the right hand" of the inhabitants of the Antichristian earth. "All—rich and poor, small and great, free and bond—receive it; and no man may buy or sell, save he that receives the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Extensive worldly business cannot be conducted throughout the nations, without incorporation or connection with antichristian systems. Ensnaring oaths of office bind men to their active support; and the way is barred against the introduction of faithful witnesses for Christ to the hall of legislation, or the bench of judgment, or the busy mart of commerce, without compromising, in some degree, their allegiance to Messiah the Prince, or defiling the conscience by unscriptural practices. While Antichrist is in power, the woman—the emblem of the faithful Church—is in the wilderness, unknown in the places of power, and devoid of influence in conducting the affairs of the nations. The witnesses "prophesy in sackcloth" during the whole of this period of misrule and oppression. Before the Church returns from her captivity, and the witnesses ascend to heaven in the sight of their enemies—raised to authority and influence in the nations—the business of the world is revolutionized, and customs that had long prevailed are abolished. When the beast is destroyed, his mark and image are completely and for ever effaced. The "merchants," as well as the kings of the earth, lament over the fall of mystical Babylon. The judgments that have recently fallen in various forms upon the social state of the kingdoms of Europe, striking commercial and agricultural interests, indicate Divine wrath against those who have received the mark of the beast in their foreheads and right hands, and presage still heavier inflictions to descend upon diversified worldly interests and pursuits, in connection with the subversion of Antichrist. The landed, commercial, and mercantile systems will be shaken, that they may be rendered subservient to the universal establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom. The glorious future will exhibit the business of the world—civil, agricultural, and commercial—conducted so as to minister to true religion. The "abundance of the sea shall be converted" to Christ. The kings of the earth shall bring their "glory and honour" to the Millennial Church. "The kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts."

¹ Rev. xiii. 16.

² Psalm lxxii. 10.

5. The Papacy will be destroyed by *gradual and increasing plagues of divers kinds.*

Thus the power of ancient Egypt, the prototype of the Papacy, was destroyed. Plague followed plague in rapid succession, and each heavier than the preceding, until Pharaoh and his host were swallowed up of the sea, and the most opulent and powerful of ancient kingdoms perished. The predictions of Holy Writ assure us that the course of judgment that shall be executed upon mystical Egypt will be similar. In Daniel vii. 26, it is declared, "They shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end." In the Vulgate, this passage is rendered, "*Ad delendum et ad perdendum usque ad finem*"—for "consuming and destroying it even to the end." There is an observable progress in the description. The judgment is a climax completed in total destruction. The instruments of vengeance first "take away the dominion" of the little horn; then his power is "consumed," and in conclusion, it is destroyed "to the end." The temporal power of the Pope, it is not improbable, will be first wrested from him. Either his enslaved subjects will rise to assert their liberties, and to dash from them a yoke long felt to be intolerable, or foreign powers will deprive him of a sovereignty, which was exercised for the most unworthy purposes. His power and influence over the nations exercised to deceive and enthrall them shall be taken away. By successive strokes will Babylon fall, and the judgment begun shall continue and make progress till the overthrow and ruin are complete. "The destroying agents proceed from destruction to destruction; from uprooting his power at one post, to uprooting it at another; and they continue till their work shall have been finished."

It is remarkable that the Apostle Paul, in the second chapter of Second Thessalonians, in speaking of the destruction of the Wicked Power, employs a term similar to that used by Daniel, to designate the second stage of the judgment, "Whom the Lord shall consume." The word *αναλυσει*, says Chandler, is used to denote a "lingering, gradual destruction; being applied to the waste of time, the dissipation of an estate, and the slow death of being eaten up of worms." Other celebrated critics take the same view. Benson, as quoted by Macknight, says, "If St John and St Paul have prophesied of the same corruptions, it should seem that the head of the apostasy will be destroyed by some signal judgment; after its influence or

dominion hath, in a gradual manner, been destroyed by the force of truth."

In the visions of the Apocalypse, this gradual destruction is distinctly foretold and minutely described. The judgment of the *vials* is evidently the last plagues poured out upon the Papacy; and with unusual particularity, the character, course, and termination of these wrathful inflictions are delineated, as referring to a doom of the most appalling character, and to an event pregnant with issues the most momentous. The angelic agents of judgment come "out from the temple," and from the immediate presence of its glorious Occupant, as receiving their commission from Him, and as employed in a work which He peculiarly owns as his. They are girt with "golden girdles," the symbol of purity and excellence. They inflict "the seven last plagues;" each succeeding visitation being more intense in character and destructive in its effects than that which preceded. As they advance to completion, they gather continually nearer to the heart of the fore-doomed power, till, when fully emptied of their contents, it is wholly deprived of life, and given over to final and irretrievable destruction. The judgments of the vials are to be regarded as inflictions of Divine wrath upon the Romish Antichrist; which, in succession, weaken and destroy various parts of the system and its supports, till the whole is brought to ruin and removed, as stricken of heaven. A proper and consistent account of these "last plagues" has yet to be written; and the eras to which they refer, and the special visitation denoted by the effusion of each separate vial, has not hitherto been clearly pointed out by any expositor. A few brief hints can only be given here on a subject which is specially important at the present eventful period, and which demands the prayerful investigation of the students of prophecy.

The vials being Divine judgments sent for the purpose of weakening and annihilating the power of the Papacy, are to be viewed as pouring out from the time that its influence began to decline, until it is finally overthrown and entirely removed. They cannot properly be regarded—as many expositors have done, especially Faber—as beginning to be poured out only at the commencement of the first French Revolution, at the close of the last century. It is observable that, in the apocalyptic visions, the description of the vials has a remarkable resemblance to that of the trumpets; especially the first four visions in each case have a striking analogy. The trumpets are sounded as the intimation of the various inflictions of Divine

vengeance upon the Roman Empire ; the first four referring to the different stages in the destruction of the Western empire ; the fifth and sixth exhibiting the judgments that issued in the ruin of the Eastern empire ; and the seventh pointing forward to the destruction which shall complete the subversion and ruin of the whole system. The object of the judgment of the vials is Rome Papal ; and as the sounding of each separate trumpet intimates that the peculiar infliction which it symbolizes is not to be regarded as a sudden stroke, but as a continued visitation, one trumpet sounding till the next begins, so the vials are not emptied out all at once. The contents of one are not fully exhausted till the other begins to be poured out. There are not only different judgments following in succession, intended by the separate vials, but there are separate stages of the same judgment, as each distinct vial pours out the wrathful elements which it contains. "The seven plagues," remarks Dr Johnson, "which, under seven distinct dispensations of Divine Providence, partly have been and partly shall be brought upon Papal Rome, shall be brought upon her in her public or national character, for the injuries which she hath done, and still shall do, in that character, to the persecuted Church of Christ during that period."

These judgments, which, as they descend upon the whole antichristian earth, dry up the resources of the Papacy, and weaken and waste it, must be viewed as properly commencing from the period when the system began to decline ;—they are continued, as it is gradually enfeebled, and finished only with its completed destruction.

The first vial was poured out, as we conceive, much earlier than the first French Revolution—the opinion of Faber—or even than the period of the Reformation, as is maintained by Fleming. In the thirteenth century, the Papacy was in the zenith of its power. Since that time, almost every event that has occurred has served to weaken it, and has tended to its final subversion. The effects of the Crusades—the overthrow of the Latin empire in the East—the resistance to Papal assumptions by various European sovereigns,—and the schism of the West,¹

¹ After the elevation of Clement V. to the Papal Chair, his court was removed to Avignon in France, in A. D. 1309, where it remained till A. D. 1377, for nearly seventy years. This period has been usually termed the "Babylonish Exile" of the Papacy. Under Gregory XI. the Papal Curia was again transferred to Rome. Soon after commenced the "Great Western Schism," which continued till the Pontificate of Nicholas V. in A. D. 1449. During that period there were two Popes, and sometimes three, reigning, and each claiming infallibility, and heartily excommunica-

—are events prominently marked in history, which may be regarded as corresponding to the strong figurative representations of the first two vials. The kingdoms, too, that had slavishly submitted to antichristian power, experienced various plagues, as Divine, wrathful visitations. Terrible pestilences, such as the “sweating sickness,” and other destructive epidemics; famines and wars destroyed vast numbers of persons, depopulated many countries, and thus enfeebled the interests of the Papacy. The “noisome and grievous sore” which fell upon men is sufficiently illustrated by these judgments. The decay of the maritime powers, such as Venice and Genoa, which had greatly prospered, while the Papacy was rising to universal sovereignty, may, in part, meet the representation in the account of the second vial, of the sea being as “blood, and every soul dying in the sea;” while the symbol may point generally to the destructive wars which convulsed the kingdoms of the beast, in which sometimes the Pope himself acted a conspicuous part, and which inflicted death and other evils, to an incredible extent, upon the nations. At this period there were great international wars; the maritime states were stricken. their foreign dependencies were taken from them, and their greatness declined, till it completely passed away. The Turkish power, rising in Europe, to destroy the restored empire of the East, spread desolation throughout many of the kingdoms of the beast, and by the vast slaughter which it inflicted, it might be said, “The sea became as the blood of a dead man, and every soul died in the sea.”

The “third vial,” the judgment upon the rivers and fountains, rendering them “blood,” and exciting the adoring praises of “the angel of the waters,” may be regarded as poured out, in the ruinous effects that followed these wars, in the troubles in Italy and Spain, France and Germany, and in the intestine commotions of Italy and other countries, often originated or stimulated by the extravagant and senseless conduct of the Popes themselves. Throughout the Popish countries, that had signalized themselves by persecuting the saints, there were frequent and destructive internal wars. The various states of Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and other European countries, which owned subjection to the Papacy, were almost incessantly the seats of war from the fourteenth century downwards,

ting the other. Different nations of Christendom took different sides in the contest; and it would puzzle the most ardent admirer of the Papacy to show, in any satisfactory manner, in what way the line of infallible successors of St Peter can be traced through this schism.

throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. England itself, while under the power of the popedom, during a part of the same period, was involved in civil war, and its strength weakened, and its advancement hindered; and afterwards, through Popish intrigues, it was several times brought to the brink of ruin. Or, in another view of the prophetic symbols, various events, that displayed the hateful character of the Papacy, and withdrew multitudes from its sway, and confirmed them in determined resistance to its tyranny and usurpation, illustrate the representation of the judgments under this vial. The opposition to the Papacy by Wickliffe and Huss—the wars of the Hussites and Taborites—above all, the display of scriptural light at the era of the Reformation—the withdrawal of many kingdoms from connection with Rome—the edict of Nantes, and other public measures—were like the judgments upon the fountains and rivers, drying up the resources of the Papacy, and inflicting upon this iniquitous power righteous retribution.

The “fourth vial,” which is poured out upon the *sun*, may be properly viewed as judgments upon some great central power, which may be regarded as the *sun*, or *heart* of the antichristian kingdom. The effect of the outpouring of this vial is twofold. It is a judgment upon the sun, or this central power itself, and it renders it the instrument of extensive and dreadful punishment to other nations. “Power was given to him (the sun) to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues, and they repented not to give Him glory.”¹ The object of this judgment is most probably France—at one period, and for a long time, a chief support of the Papacy, and still, to a great extent, as the sun to the continental European system. There is no other nation whose spirit and politics so influence the whole European social system. By the vial poured out upon the *sun*, the power thus designated is scourged and afflicted, and it is rendered a scourge to other nations. These judgments are not disciplinary, or for reformation, but wrathful and penal, as under them men blaspheme the name of God, and repent not to give Him glory. How strikingly all this has been exemplified in the history of France, the least acquaintance with the state of modern Europe will declare. The wars of France, even before the Reformation, embroiled the peace of Europe, and frequently scourged the nations. The conflicts between the house of Austria and the monarchs of

¹ Revelation xvi. 8. 9.

France were at once a judgment on France, and a severe visitation, through its instrumentality, upon other countries. The retributive character of Divine judgment has been conspicuously marked in the case of France. In the crusades against the Albigenses, the wars of the Huguenots, the Bartholomew Massacre, and the inhuman cruelties which followed the revocation of the edict of Nantes, torrents of the blood of faithful Protestant witnesses were shed in the quarrel of the Papacy. In the judgments which flow from the effusion of the "fourth vial," the blood of incredible numbers of the sons of France is shed; and by the wars which the French have waged in pursuit of the phantom of earthly glory, millions of the inhabitants of other kingdoms of the east have been slaughtered. If we date the commencement of this vial from the first Revolution in 1793, in the first gush of the vengeance, the sun is smitten, and scorches others with great heat; and blasphemy and impenitence are the predominant characteristics of those who inflict, and of those who suffer under these plagues. Infidelity, rampant and ruthless, inflicts terrific vengeance upon the votaries of superstition and idolatry; and intestine strife, executions, and wholesale murders, shed the blood of thousands of Frenchmen, while millions again were slain in the revolutionary wars throughout Europe. Reckless disregard of human life, equally as of social rights, marked the career of the French armies; and the nations of Europe despoiled, and trodden down to the dust, verified the sacred description, "Men were scorched with great heat." There was no healing balm for these wounds. The principles and spirit of daring infidelity and of fierce democracy had full scope; the authority of God was set at naught; and neither the social maxims which bind together human society, nor the sanctions of religion, had any place in the policy of those who were God's scourge, to punish despotic powers and an idolatrous people. Blasphemy and infidelity still extensively prevail in France; military ambition is the ruling passion of the French people; increasing wickedness has been the result of the judgments that have been inflicted; and the nation, in its successive upturnings, oscillating occasionally to superstition and idolatry, has been characterized by marked impenitence under Divine judgments.

Recent revolutions may be regarded as still the outpouring of the fourth vial; and it is likely that its dregs emptied forth will, at no distant period, not only inflict a dreadful judgment upon an impenitent, godless nation, but may also evoke the revolutionary infidel spirit of France—excited to tenfold

rage and violence because of the checks that have hitherto restrained it, to inflict more severe punishment upon guilty nations than any which they have hitherto experienced. This vial poured out on France, it is evident, has greatly weakened the power of the Papacy. From being a principal stay of the system, France, since the Revolution, has not been, nor will it ever again be, a source of strength to Rome. Whatever attempts the Papacy has recently made, or is now making, to gain influence in that kingdom, it is obvious that it has no proper hold upon the national mind of France. The schemes of the Papacy and the priesthood are both known, their policy detested, and their crimes abhorred; and it seems likely that the next convulsion which shall affect the French nation shall bring with it righteous and severe retribution upon a system that has long deceived it, and has long shackled and enslaved the people.

The "fifth vial," upon the "seat of the beast," indicates a judgment either upon the throne of Antichrist, or upon the immediate territory of the popedom. The object of the judgment here is the second beast, or the ecclesiastical power, and by it the priesthood is brought down, and the supremacy of the popedom is taken away. It is the terrific vengeance taken by a people upon the power by which they have long been holden in darkness and slavery. It will affect the whole kingdom of Antichrist, and bring intolerable anguish upon the impenitent. The hard-earned and recently suppressed liberties of the Roman people will be remembered hereafter. The spirit of the patriot is not broken, though, for a time, his cause is borne down. The storm of vengeance is even now brooding; and, in a little time, the indignation of a long-oppressed and much-injured people will burst forth around the very throne of the Papacy—"the seat of the beast." Like the slumbering volcanoes of Italy, the fires burning in the hearts of an enslaved and degraded people will find vent in deeds of severe, though righteous retaliation; and the seat of Antichrist will be shaken to its final removal and destruction.

From the days of the first French Revolution, contempt or hatred of the priesthood has extensively prevailed in many Popish countries, especially in France and Italy. The temporal power of the Papacy is virtually destroyed, and even his spiritual throne is shaken, and, in instances not a few, its existence has been in jeopardy, from the avowed spirit and open attempts of its nominal subjects. The trumpets proclaim the destruction of civil despotisms—the scene of the vials is

the Papacy and Western Europe—and, in their effusion, the destruction of that power and of all its supporters is secured.

The "sixth vial" gathers and concentrates the vengeance still nearer to entire destruction. It is poured out upon "the great river Euphrates," and the water thereof is said to be "dried up, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared." The "river Euphrates" here cannot mean, as some expositors² have alleged, the literal Euphrates, nor is the object of the judgment the Turkish empire. To explain and apply the symbol thus, were to break the connection of the whole prophetic representation. The *scene* of all the vials is the Latin Roman earth, and the *object* of them all is to weaken the power, and to accomplish the destruction of the whole antichristian system, civil, political, and ecclesiastical. By the river Euphrates is meant such an object or power as is to Papal Rome what the river Euphrates was to ancient Babylon—a defence, and a principal source of its riches and magnificence. This may be Austria, which has been "the belly and arms" of the Papacy, largely supplying treasures for prosecuting its ambitious designs, and ever ready to draw the sword in its quarrel.³ Or it may be, in general, the state—support furnished by corrupt and despotic states to uphold the antichristian system. The treasures of the nations have hitherto been lavished to support in splendour the Papacy and the priesthood, and to promote its missions and schemes of

¹ Revelation xvi. 12.

² This is the sentiment of Fleming, Dr Mason, and others. See Fleming's *Rise and Fall of the Papacy*; Dr Mason's *Discourse on the Sixth Vial*; and more recently of Wright on *Britain's Last Struggle*.

³ The Emperor of Austria claims, as one of his titles, to be "king of the Roman people." As the successor of Charlemagne, he is regarded as pre-eminently the Emperor of the West, and Protector of the See of St Peter; and besides the absolute dominion which he possesses over the kingdom of Lombardy and Venice—the fairest and most fertile part of Italy—and over several minor States, the Austrian despot intermeddles in almost all the internal affairs of the Italian peninsula. Austrian intrigues and despotic policy thwart the plans of Italian patriots for the regeneration of their country, and serve to bind, under hopeless oppression, the people of Italy. The Pope delights to speak of the Emperor of Austria as the eldest and most faithful son of the Church; and chiefly depends on Austrian power and influence for the continuance of his enslaving dominion. These things considered, the view given in the text of the scene of the sixth vial is rendered at least probable.

The short war in Northern Italy in 1859, by which Austria was stripped of its Italian possessions, and several of the ecclesiastical states were annexed to the kingdom of Italy, and the war between Prussia and Austria in 1866, have singularly verified the views given above of the outpouring of the Sixth Vial upon a principal support of the Papacy.

proselytism. Such a power overturned, such a support withdrawn, the magnificence of the system will pass away, its power of extension will be gone, and its downfall will speedily follow. The "kings of the east" can neither mean the Jewish people, nor Eastern sovereigns, coming to embrace true religion. The way is "prepared" for taking vengeance on Rome, not of accession to the Church. These eastern kings are the powers whose dominions lie eastward of Rome—the seat and throne of the beast. As the Medes and Persians, who came against Babylon, and who marched upon their prey through the dry bed of the river, came from the east of Chaldea, so the destroying agents will come from the east, to lay the Papacy desolate, when the river Euphrates has been dried up. Hungary, long injured and oppressed, when the Austrian despot is brought down, will rise to assert its freedom. The Slavonian race will yet emulate the deeds of their fathers, in the contest for liberty; and the nations professing the faith of the Greek Church will satiate their vengeance upon the usurping Archbishop of Rome, for injuries long since inflicted. The Russian power, destined to act an important part in the annals of the future, pouring down from the North, like the barbarous hordes which devastated Rome Pagan, and, it is probable, having become masters of Turkey—the possession of which it has long coveted—will lead on these kings of the east. Their way has been fully prepared by previous judgments. No obstacle will impede their march, and the destruction wrought by these instruments upon the power of the beast will be universal and irreparable.'

' That the Russian power is destined to act a principal part in the future work of vengeance upon idolatrous systems seems probable, not only from the extent of its territory, and its unique and aggressive policy, but from many plain intimations in the Scriptures of truth. Gog and Magog are represented, in the latter part of the prophecy of Ezekiel, as chief instruments of destruction—the one denoting the people, and the other their ruler. It is generally admitted that the descendants of Magog, the grandson of Noah, peopled the extensive regions of Tartary and the north of Asia, which are within the boundaries of the Russian empire. Though Bishop Newton seems to regard the Turks, originating in Tartary, as the people referred to under the designation of Gog and Magog, there appears to be stronger reason to apply the appellation to the Russian people and ruler. Russia already possesses much of the territories formerly owned by the Turks; its insatiable ambition is to grasp the fair possessions of the Ottoman which yet remain; and from the wide extent of territories stretched over large portions of two Continents, it is appositely said, in the day of future vengeance, to "come from the north parts" he, and many people with him, "all of them riding on horses, a great company, and a mighty army;" and to come up "as a cloud to cover the land."—See Ezekiel xxxviii. 15, 16.

The *last* vial completes the retributive vengeance. Accordingly, everything spoken about the preparation for its effusion, and all the circumstances connected with it, as well as the desolating effects which it produces, are indicated by figures of the most solemn and momentous significance. "THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS" issue out of "the mouth of the dragon," out of "the mouth of the beast," and out of "the mouth of the false prophet." These, actuated by diabolical craft and power, go forth to the kings of the whole world, to "gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty."¹ "The dragon" is the devil, the old serpent; "the beast," the civil power throughout the antichristian earth; and "the false prophet" is the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the priesthood and orders of Rome. These "unclean spirits" issue separately from each of these, though they are combined for mischief, and act in concert for purposes of evil. These spirits may be regarded as Atheism and Infidelity, directly proceeding from Satan, the father of lies; Absolutism, issuing from the mouth of the beast; and Jesuitism, the spirit of Popery, the grand device of the Man of Sin for supporting his usurped dominion, trampling down human rights, and rooting out the truth from the earth. These powers, potent for mischief, are in active operation at present; and when they shall have obtained their full influence upon the rulers of the earth, and throughout the community, the last dire attempt will be made against the Lamb and his company, and the last struggle of the witnesses with Antichrist will take place.² The prophetic representation shows how fearful will be the conflict. Infidel sentiments contemning God, and inimical to man; Absolutism, or its antagonist, the revolutionary spirit, held in check by the despots of the earth, and bursting forth with tenfold fury; and Jesuitism, reckless of

¹ Revelation xvi. 14.

² The late revolutions in Europe revealed the fearful extent and boldness of infidelity. Especially in Germany, the most gross and daring atheism was openly avowed. The token of admission to many political societies was a direct denial of the existence of a personal God; and it was openly proclaimed that human rights could never be secured, or human happiness reached, till the idea of a Divine Being, and all belief in Christianity, are banished from the earth. Within the last few months, the walls of Newcastle, in England, were covered with placards, announcing meetings for the open propagation of atheism. It is well known that the sentiments of many of the leading Chartists and Socialists, of whom there are large numbers in these countries, are atheistical. These principles have been rapidly spreading among the workmen and neglected masses of our large towns, and vast multitudes of infidel publications are assiduously circulated, and eagerly read by many of the population.

means, and eager to subject all to the iron despotism of the Papacy,—these, in separate or combined action, will form a terrific power arrayed against the friends of evangelical truth, and the advocates of social rights. The kings of the earth, deceived by these *unclean spirits*, and hearkening to their machinations, will make their last violent attempt to bear down the truth, and to support their tottering thrones, by extinguishing liberty, civil and religious. But it will be eminently unsuccessful.

The *seventh vial* will empty out the last dregs of the wrath of heaven prepared for the enemies of Christ and his people. It is poured out upon “the air,” the vital element, the seat of him who is styled “the prince of the power of the air,” and who is incarnate in the Papal system. Judgments fearful, diversified, and most destructive follow; and they are poured out, not to a limited extent, but they overspread the whole anti-christian earth. Voices, thunderings, lightnings, and a “great earthquake,” the tripartite division of the great city, the fleeing away of islands, the fall of nations, the hailstorm of wrath, indicate vengeance more fearful, and a destruction more widespread and ruinous, than any that has preceded. Terrific calamities of varied character, revolts of cities and nations, and internal commotions and confusions, will mark the downfall of Babylon the Great, when she shall drink of “the wine of the fierceness of God’s wrath.” And the revolutions and wrecks of nations will be the consequence of the great hailstorm from heaven, breaking up and consuming systems and powers that have long oppressed and destroyed the earth. These awful events are referred to under significant and expressive symbols in the judgment of the *seventh vial*; but as this is yet future, though rapidly approaching, it is only the occurrence of the events themselves that can fully declare the accomplishment of the sacred predictions.

It is thus, however, completely evident that the judgment upon the Papacy is progressive, cumulative, and overwhelming. It is sent to weaken and crush, in succession, the different parts of the system, or the powers that support it. Like an avalanche rolling from the mountains, gathering new strength as it proceeds, or as an inundation continually swelling higher and spreading on all sides, so will the predestined judgments come against mystical Babylon, till it shall sink under the billows of Divine indignation, until its place shall be found no longer upon earth, and not a vestige of its power and greatness shall remain. The preparation for this last infliction of wrath upon Antichrist is evidently in progress. France, Spain, and Italy

may be regarded as, in a great measure, separated from the Papacy, and instead of being to it a means of support, they indicate its weakness and decay. Austria is crippled and enfeebled, and the heterogeneous races comprehended under its iron dominion are ready to burst forth to assert their independence; while the revolutionary spirit in Italy is preparing to wreak its rage upon the Papacy for innumerable wrongs which it has inflicted upon a down-trodden and degraded people. Elements are everywhere at work, which only require to be concentrated and excited to vigorous action, that will overwhelm and ruin completely the mighty fabric of the Papacy. Another outburst of infidelity, another revolutionary reaction in France, the outbreaking of fierce democracy in Italy, Austria, and other countries, will accomplish God's designs of wrath against this accursed system and its supporters, and take away wholly its power to delude and destroy the nations. The last vials of vengeance are even now poised in the air, and the angelic agents only await the command of Him that sits on the throne, to pour them forth on the antichristian earth. The train which is to overthrow and scatter in ruins Babylon, that great city, is already laid, and only waits the application of the electric spark; and then this idolatrous and oppressive power shall be a perpetual desolation.

6. The last stage of the judgment upon the Papacy will be *its sudden and total subversion*.

The preparation for the complete subversion of mystical Babylon is going forward, from the effusion of the first vial till the last is ready to discharge its contents. As we have already seen, notwithstanding the various judgments that, in succession, weaken the Papacy, it may appear in increased power, and extending influence, at the period immediately preceding its final destruction. But this will not prevent the infliction of the predestined wrath. No purpose of man can successfully oppose the counsel of the Eternal, no human power can resist the might of Omnipotence, when arrayed for vengeance. Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon fell, as in a moment, from their towering greatness and glory when the cup of their wickedness overflowed, and their idolatries and oppressions of the saints were multiplied. In like manner we are assured the Papacy, the Babylon of the New Testament, will fall headlong to destruction. "Her plagues shall come in one day—death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her." 1

hour so great riches is come to nought." ¹ The overthrow and ruin of the Papacy are represented by the sudden and violent hurling of a millstone, by an angel hand, into the sea, and it is declared, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." ² The figure clearly indicates that the final destruction is not caused by consumption or gradual decay, but is momentary, irresistible, and irretrievable.

The same thing is intimated in the unexpected and wondrous changes that are consequent upon the resuscitation and ascension of the witnesses. ³ The European nations in league with the Papacy rejoice in the silencing of a faithful testimony, and in the removal of those who maintained it. Their rulers, after having inspected their dishonoured dead bodies, as if to assure themselves that they shall never rise to torment them longer, send presents, and the whole anti-christian earth is ready to celebrate a general jubilee over the slaughter of the witnesses, and for the success of their long-cherished designs; when, in an instant, the Spirit of life from God descends from heaven, reanimates the dead bodies of the faithful, and they ascend up to heaven in the sight of their enemies. Immediately, destructive and irresistible judgments succeed, involving in inextricable ruin Antichrist and all his supporters. "The same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." ⁴

All objections to this view of the subject, taken from present appearances, or from the long-established power and extended influence of the Papacy, are futile and irrelevant. God's providence has already accomplished the overthrow of other oppressive powers in a sudden and irresistible manner. The last visitation of wrath will be peculiarly the display of the power and justice of the enthroned Mediator—the irreconcilable enemy of wickedness, the blood-avenger of his injured saints. The judgment which He inflicts is the "vengeance of his temple;" the era of Babylon's downfall is the "year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion." The work of destruction is righteous retribution for manifold crimes, for idolatries and oppressions innumerable, for complicated wickedness crying to heaven. It is the Lord himself that judges the beast and false

¹ Ver. 17.

² Ver. 21.

³ Rev. xi. 11-14.

⁴ Rev. xi. 13, 14.

prophet, and casts their bodies to the devouring flame. "Strong is the Lord God that judgeth her." Some further and more daring attempt made by the Man of Sin—some new and more arrogant Papal aggression, or another act of Antichrist's perfidy and wickedness, perpetrated upon the cause and people of God; and the Lord, as a man of war, will arise and gloriously plead his own cause, and avenge his contemned glory, and the wrongs of his slaughtered saints.

To use the appropriate words of an able and eloquent divine—"The doom of Babylon is sealed. The hour is fixed, and at no great distance, when the seven-hilled city shall be tossed from its proud pre-eminence—when the triple crown of blasphemy shall be prostrated in the dust—when, like a millstone cast with an angel's might into the sea, the great city shall be thrown down to rise no more at all for ever. Do you demand security that it shall be so, before you comply with the command to rejoice in the prospect? What better can you have than this? 'Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.' The might of Jehovah, the strength of the Omnipotent, is pledged for the destruction of Popery. There is no room for despondency. He whose voice is obeyed by the wind and the waves—He to whom the planets in their courses, and the angels in their holy ministry, do homage—He who can rend the rocks with his Word, and shake the earth with his presence—He who has the roar of the thunder, and the impetuosity of the whirlwind, not less than the whispering breeze of love, at his command—even He it is that hath said—'Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her. With violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.' 'The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? 'The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.'"

The sound of Babylon's downfall will wake up a slumbering world. Powers destined to perish in her overthrow, and people enslaved by superstition and idolatry, will raise the cry of lamentation over her sudden and fearful doom. "The kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city

¹ Rev. William Symington, D.D., *Discourses on Public Occasions*, pp. 258, 239.

Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.”¹ Nations freed from enthralling servitude; churches delivered from lengthened oppression and persecution; and faithful witnesses resuscitated and exalted, will rejoice in completed victory. “After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, who did corrupt the earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.”

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”²

¹ Revelation xviii. 9-12.

² Revelation xix. 1-3, 6.

CHAPTER III.

THE HAPPY CHANGE—THE REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT SUCCEEDS THE FALL OF THE PAPACY.

THE destruction of evil will be followed by the prevalence of what is holy, and true, and righteous. This has been God's grand purpose and design from the beginning. He permits the entrance and continuance of sin for the manifestation of his patience and long-suffering. His saints are exposed to violence and oppression for a lengthened period, that their faith may be tried, and that they may be refined and purified in the furnace. The Church, the spouse of Christ—the object of his intense regard and unchangeable love—is suffered to be afflicted and persecuted by the proud enemy; and the witnesses for truth testify in sackcloth,—poor, contemned, and sorrowful,—while Antichrist is in power; and ultimately they are slain, and their dead bodies are dishonoured, until the mystery of Providence shall be finished, and the designs of sovereign, inscrutable wisdom have been accomplished. Dark and intricate as may be such a dispensation of the Divine administration, we are sure that it is consistent with sovereign rectitude; and that the issue will be a revenue of honour and glory to Him who orders all things according to the counsel of his will, and a vast increase of joy and happiness to the saints delivered from the enemy's hand, and gathered at length to Zion, with singing and everlasting joy upon their heads.

The frequent intimations of inspired prediction assure us that the closing period of the Christian dispensation will be bright and joyful beyond any that preceded it. "At evening time it shall be light." "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days."

It is the appointed time of the triumph of truth over all opposing error, the glorious era of the full establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth. The saints shall reign. The

idols shall be utterly abolished. Violence and oppression shall cease; and the Redeemer's large and great dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Sacred predictions unequivocally declare, that in the last period of the Church's history on earth, the people of God shall not only be freed from oppression, but shall possess the chief power and influence throughout the nations: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."¹ The resurrection of the slain witnesses is immediately followed by their ascension to heaven, the seat of authority, in the sight of their enemies. The trumpet of the seventh angel sounds, and great voices in heaven proclaim, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."² When the judgment has accomplished the predestined vengeance upon the little horn, and his dominion has been consumed and destroyed, it is declared, as immediately consequent upon the execution of wrath, "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."³

The grand enemy of Christ and his cause is the Papacy; the mighty impediment to the spread of the truth and to the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness in the earth is Popery. Till this is removed, no great progress in the diffusion of truth, or in the ascendancy of holy principles, may be expected. The nations will groan under oppression, and be enveloped in darkness till Popery be destroyed. This grand stumbling-block must be removed out of the way, before the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and converted Israel shall enter the city of God. This "great mountain" must "become a plain" before the nations of them that are saved shall bring their riches and glory to Zion. The night of vengeance precedes the bright day of the Church's purity and victory; and the shaking and removal of the heavens and earth usher in the glorious kingdom that cannot be shaken, and that shall endure for ever.

As the judgments of the Papacy are progressive, and God has been showing, by the gradual weakening and decay of the

¹ Daniel ii. 44.

² Rev. xi. 12-15.

³ Daniel vii. 27.

antichristian power, his designs in relation to its total destruction, so the joyful future to the Church is indicated by the changes that are going forward throughout the nations. The Church's dark night is far spent, and already the light of the dawn begins to break upon the mountains. The good seed of the kingdom is extensively sown, and though the last storms of winter may yet break over the earth, the joyful harvest will ere long come, to cheer an expecting Church, and gladden a renovated world.

As the destruction of the Jewish polity, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation preceded the universal diffusion of the Gospel, and seemed necessary to its general reception, so the overturning of the Papacy appears to be demanded, in the providence of God, as preparatory to the universal emancipation and illumination of the nations.

The happy change that succeeds the downfall of the Papacy, for effecting which extensive preparation is now going forward, may be viewed as the full development of movements that are already begun, with those special Divine interpositions which the declarations of Sacred Writ warrant the Church yet to expect. As the nature of light is to expel darkness, and freedom acquired will propel its possessors everywhere to break the chains of slavery, so these movements themselves indicate, on the one hand, the approaching doom of Babylon, and they exhibit, on the other, the grand principles which shall universally prevail when the Mediator's kingdom shall be established on earth.

We notice a few of the more prominent events which are connected with the destruction of Antichrist, and the establishment of the reign of righteousness.

1. *The truth shall be remarkably and universally diffused.*

The spread of the truth is the sure precursor of Antichrist's ruin, and at the same time, the harbinger of the future bright day of the Church's revival. The kingdom of the Papacy is a kingdom of darkness; the time of Christ's reign is an era of light. The Scriptures clearly announce that the last day of the Church shall be distinguished by the wonderful increase of light,—by the wide diffusion and triumph of truth. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is his treasure." "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." ' These bright predic-

' Daniel xii. 4; Isaiah xxxiii. 6; Habakkuk ii. 14.

tions declare that the darkness of error and superstition shall be dispelled, and that the seminal principles of the future kingdom of Christ and his saints shall be universally diffused. The extent of the seed-time indicates the abundance of the future harvest ; and although many difficulties may have to be encountered by faithful labourers, and they may have to sow in tears, their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. They who sow in tears shall reap in joy. "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the tops of the mountains ; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon ; and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth." ¹ This seed-corn is, first, Divine truths ; and, secondly, it is these truths professed by and embodied in living saints. The *fruit* is the increase of truth and holiness in the earth, and, at the same time, the large increase of those who receive the truth in their hearts, and exemplify its power in holy and useful lives. We rejoice even now in the spread of truth, characteristic of these last days, and we are cheered by the delightful prospect of a future abundant harvest. Notwithstanding the embittered enmity of Popery against the truth, and those who maintain it,—notwithstanding the declared hostility of the Papacy against the Bible and Bible Societies,—the Word of God is spreading rapidly throughout the nations ; and the Gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed to a wider extent, and with greater power than in any former period, since the era of the Reformation. The Bible has been translated into many languages. The press of Britain alone has issued more than *thirty millions* of copies of the Scriptures since the commencement of Bible Societies ; and despite of the attempts of the rulers of the darkness of this world, the Scriptures have penetrated even into the territories of Antichrist, and the machinations and violence of the enemy have been unavailing to prevent their entrance, or to exclude them. The minister of public instruction in France, some time ago, ordered 50,000 copies of the New Testament, for the primary schools in that kingdom. The Peace Congress, assembled at Paris, distributed the New Testament before the French people, as the symbol of concord. In the short reign of the Roman Republic, when the Pope was driven from his palace, *seventy thousand* copies of the Scriptures were sold in the city of Rome. The Bible has evidently been read, and prized, and has produced salutary effects in Italy, as, notwithstanding the vigilance of the Papal police, since the Pope's

¹ Psalm lxxii. 16.

return, very few copies of the Scriptures have been discovered ; and the recent rapid progress of evangelical truth in Tuscany is wholly to be ascribed to the blessing of the Spirit upon the simple reading of the Word of God.¹ In Spain and other darkened lands, there are numbers pondering the Word of God in secret, and thus preparing, when the day of deliverance shall come, to flee out of Babylon, and to embrace fully evangelical truth.

Not only is the Bible travelling with unexampled speed throughout the earth, notwithstanding the hostility of Rome, but the Gospel of free grace is preached with power in European countries, and is proclaimed to Jew and Gentile in other lands. "The angel having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," is flying in the midst of heaven.² This is emphatically the age of *missionary* exertions ; and in Protestant and Popish countries, and among the distant heathen, devoted men are labouring for the world's conversion. The proclamation of salvation by free grace, characteristic of all Protestant missions, is a standard openly lifted up against the cardinal error of Popery—salvation by human merits. This is the grand method of turning men from error and lying wonders to the truth as it is in Jesus. Like the trumpets that sounded the signal of Jericho's fall, so the preaching of the glorious Gospel, however feeble the instrumentality, will shake the walls of mystical Babylon, and, through the Spirit of power, effect their total subversion. "It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."³ By this instrumentality, accompanying the spread of the Bible, barbarous tribes are civilized, light penetrates even the dark territories of the Man of Sin, and nations shall yet be born in a day, and the isles shall wait for the Redeemer's law.

God, in his providence, is opening up a way for the chariots of salvation, and revealing his future designs for the world's conversion. Distant Pagan nations are removed from the dominion of Popish powers, and transferred to great Protestant nations, to be enlightened by Gospel truth, and civilized and

¹ It is estimated that not fewer than *one thousand* persons in Florence alone had been brought to reject the errors of Popery, and to embrace the truth, through the reading of the Scriptures at the time that the Tuscan government, instigated by the priests, expelled the Swiss pastors, and arrested Count Guicciardini.

² Revelation xiv. 6.

³ 1 Cor. i. 21.

blessed. Protestant missions are instinct with life, and the violent or insidious attempts of Popery to pervert or destroy them, will only serve to give a renewed impulse to the great work of evangelization. Thus, in countries, and among tribes of men where the power of Popery has never been acknowledged, and the abominations of Antichrist are unknown, the truth is spreading; while in Popish lands, scriptural light is entering, notwithstanding the attempts that are made to exclude it. These things confirm our faith in the Divine Word, and encourage the joyful hope that the truth, heavenly in its origin and great in its power, shall prevail over Rome's countless errors and delusions, and that the kingdom of light and love shall overspread the earth.¹

2. *The Gospel shall take effect in the conversion and sanctification of multitudes.*

The Bible spread, and the truth faithfully proclaimed, will always be accompanied with saving influence. Jehovah's word cannot return to Him void; but it shall prosper in that whereto He has sent it.² It is true, the seed sown may lie for a time under the ground before it vegetates, springs forth, and bears fruit. But the harvest will assuredly come. Not one precious grain shall perish; and the ingathering and joy of harvest shall be great in proportion to the extent of the sowing, and the labours and trials of faithful men in its preparation. It is worthy of remark that, when evangelical religion declined in the Protestant churches, and no efforts were made for the conversion of the nations, there were few evidences of converting power accompanying the preaching of the Word. In the declension and decay that overspread the Protestant churches during the greater part of the eighteenth century, the Spirit was restrained, few sinners were awakened, and professed Christians gave little evidence of bringing forth the living fruits of righteousness.

¹ The self-denying labours of Christian missionaries have been the grand means of promoting civilization and its attendant benefits among barbarous nations. Statesmen, though slow to acknowledge the power of Christianity in purifying and elevating the nations, have been compelled, by evidence too powerful to be resisted, to admit the salutary influence of the work of missionaries in our day. The report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, on the Aborigines in the British Colonies and foreign possessions, bears ample testimony to the invaluable services of the heralds of the Cross among different tribes of the heathen. A similar and very decisive testimony to the Christian missionary, as the grand agent of civilization, is borne by Sir James Emerson Tennant, in his admirable work, recently published, on Ceylon.

² Isaiah lv. 11.

A lifeless, formal Protestantism favours the scheme of Antichrist to corrupt and destroy the truth. "While men sleep, the enemy sow tares." During the period to which we have referred, infidelity, nurtured by superstition and idolatry, spread widely, and bore luxuriant and baleful fruit. Departure from evangelical doctrine, and decay in religious practice, characterized the churches of the Reformation. In many European States once distinguished for the profession of the Protestant faith, the rulers and people have sunk back into the embraces of the Mother of harlots.¹

We rejoice that this state of things has passed away. The slumber of apathy and indifference has been broken, and the churches, awakened to new life and activity, are beginning to remember their first love, and to emulate their first Works. The outburst of infidelity, and the revolutionary wars that followed, at the end of the last and beginning of the present century, discovered the fearful extent of the evil, and excited the friends of evangelical truth everywhere to prayerful and vigorous exertions for reviving the things that remained, and that were ready to die, and for diffusing in darkened lands the knowledge of Christ. The all-quickening Spirit accompanied these efforts with gracious influence. The dry bones were animated; and numbers converted throughout the churches were the seal of Divine approval upon the faithful labours of those who proclaimed the truths of the Gospel, and exemplified its power in holy lives. The Lord gave testimony to the Word of his grace, and many were awakened and converted; and, as in the days of primitive Christianity, multitudes of such as believed were added to the Church.

It is worthy of remark, that according as the doctrines of free grace—the grand truths of the Protestant Reformation—have been faithfully and earnestly proclaimed, so has revival been experienced in the Church, and her fellowship increased by living converts. These blessed truths were everywhere boldly proclaimed at the era of the great Reformation. Justification by Faith was the watchword of the Reformers, potent to rally the Lord's host, and to dismay and discomfit their adversaries. It was the article, on the one hand, of a faithful Church rising

¹ The reigning family of Saxony has, for the last hundred years, been Roman Catholics, while, in the sixteenth century, the princes of Saxony were the protectors of Luther, and the most determined friends of the Reformation. The princes of several other Protestant Continental states have, by intermarrying with the families of Popish sovereigns, basely agreed that their children shall be educated in Popery.

and standing ;¹ and on the other, in its decline, it was the index of a Church fallen and apostate. The same central truth, again proclaimed by Franke and Spener, and their associates, was the means of revival in the decayed churches of Germany ; and the conversions that have of late years everywhere followed evangelical labours without and within the Church, have been the effect of the Spirit's powerful influences, following the faithful declaration of this cardinal article of the glorious Gospel.

The increase of true converts, in connection with the spread of the truth, indicates, on the one hand, the rejection of the Papacy, and is, on the other, a bright earnest of the approaching kingdom of Christ. Every true convert won from the ranks of Popery, or from Jews or Gentiles, by the power of truth, is a soldier enlisted in the army of the Captain of Salvation, to wage incessant war against the antichristian apostacy. The converts in Madeira, in the south and west of Ireland, in France and Belgium and India, are the most decided opponents of the Romish apostacy, and the most devoted labourers in the field of evangelical exertion.

The blessing that has already followed the proclamation of the Gospel in Popish countries, and in heathen lands, is a remarkable attestation of Divine faithfulness, and a bright omen of future abundant increase and victory. The Bible has been circulated among the scattered Jewish people, and the Word of salvation has been proclaimed to the outcasts of Israel. Notwithstanding the stumbling-block cast in their way by Popish idolatry and inert Protestantism, numbers of the race of Abraham have embraced the truth as it is in Jesus. Within the last twenty years, there have been more Jewish converts gathered into the Church than of any other single nation in the world ; and at the present moment, Jewish converts in various lands, are among the most earnest preachers of the Gospel, and the most devoted labourers. Have we not thus another band of witnesses raised up against Rome? Have we not the assurance that, from the converted Jewish race shall come the active heralds of salvation, to go throughout all lands, when Israel's ingathering shall be to the Church like "life from the dead?" An ancient proverb, which is said to be current even in Rome itself, declares, that "as Jerusalem shall rise, Rome shall fall;" and, in the increase and devotedness of Jewish converts, we have the cheering anticipation, at once of Antichrist's ruin and of the rebuilding of the city of God.

¹ *Articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae.* — *Luther.*

Converted Israelites are eminently *fitted* to disseminate the truth, and to be instruments for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. Their testimony to the truth, which they long despised and rejected, will be most important. They will stand forth to the wondering gaze of the world, monuments of the goodness, as they were previously of the severity of God. They have been scattered throughout all nations, and are acquainted with the languages, habits, and customs of all people. The Jewish mind is characterized by activity, decision, and perseverance. In the late revolutionary movements in Europe, it is said that no fewer than *fifty thousand* Jews were engaged in the strife in contending for popular rights; while the conductors and chief writers of a large number of the most influential newspapers and periodicals were of the same race. When Israel shall turn to the Lord, such talents and energies consecrated to the advancement of the Redeemer's cause will be productive of the most salutary effects.

The converts from Judaism have the most weighty reasons to oppose the antichristian system, and to rejoice in its downfall. Antichristian superstition and idolatry have been the grand impediment to the Jews embracing Christianity. In all Popish countries they have been grievously oppressed and maltreated; and to this day, in the territories of the Papacy, they scarcely enjoy a fragment of personal freedom. When the chains of their spiritual thralldom, as well as of their outward bondage, shall have been broken in pieces, they shall walk in the light of the living, and shall exult over the ruins of idolatrous and oppressive powers. As the Jews were long employed, in the providence of God, as the librarians of the Bible, may they not afterwards be the instructors of the emancipated nations? And how forcible will be their testimony, and how powerful their teaching, when they can point to their own history and character, as corroborating all that is declared concerning their nation in the Scriptures of truth!

Not only Jewish converts, but those also who embrace the truth, through the efforts of evangelical missionaries in every place, become the determined opponents of Antichrist, and their increase is a sure token of Antichrist's downfall. The converts in Tahiti and India, in South Africa and Greenland, embracing the truth, are opposed to the lies and delusions of Popery, and when tried, they resolutely refuse to yield to the machinations of the Man of Sin.* In the Disruption of

* It is stated in the last report of the London Missionary Society, that

the Scottish National Church, in 1843, not only the missionaries identified themselves with those who pleaded for the Church's independence and scriptural liberty, but not a single convert from heathenism was found to cling to an Erastian Establishment. Thus, the testimony borne to the power of the Word in the conversion of sinners, is at once a testimony to the truth of the threatenings against Babylon, and a presage of the blissful effects that shall follow the destruction of Antichrist. When this grand obstacle to the spread of the Gospel shall have been removed, multitudes of genuine converts shall attest the power of the Word. Nations shall be born in a day. The Spirit shall be plentifully poured out, and converts shall "spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." The Church, as a mother of sons full of joy shall exclaim, astonished at the large and unexpected increase—"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" "Who hath begotten me these; seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?"¹ Present instances of converting power, in connection with the spread of the Gospel, are the earnest of the approaching day, when multitudes in every land shall experience the power of the truth, and when, through the Spirit's quickening energy, the valley of vision shall become instinct with life, and the dry bones, collected and revived, shall stand up, an exceeding great army.

3. *The Headship of Christ, the Mediator, shall be universally acknowledged.*

The central principle of the Divine administration is the supremacy of the Mediator. He has the right of universal sovereignty in virtue of the Father's designation, and as the reward of his finished work. He has been set King upon Zion's holy hill. For the suffering of death He has been crowned with dignity and honour; and set at the Father's right hand, all things throughout the universe are put in subjection under Him. In virtue of his high exaltation, the ready homage and submission of men in all ranks and conditions are claimed for the Lord's Anointed. To Him, the appointment is given, "Rule in the midst of thine enemies;"² and earth's potentates, judges, and mighty

notwithstanding the machinations of Popish priests, and the trials of the native churches in Tahiti since the establishment of the French Protectorate, not a single Tahitian has been brought to embrace Popery.

¹ Isaiah lx. 8; xlix. 21.

² Psalm cx. 3.

ones are commanded, at their peril, to "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and they perish from the way, if his wrath is kindled but for a little."¹ The Messiah is "Governor among the nations," and from associated communities, as being under law to Him, He claims the recognition of his right to rule, and submission to his paramount authority. Upon his vesture and thigh He has a name written—"King of kings, and Lord of lords;" and on behalf of Christ and his Church, it is declared, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, all these nations shall be utterly wasted."²

The supreme authority of Messiah the Prince has long been contemned and practically rejected by the princes of the earth; and individuals and communities that bear the Christian name, have virtually declared, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Those rulers who are in league with Antichrist especially have refused the Mediator's claims; and have carried on, for many generations, a concentrated and embittered opposition to the establishment of his kingdom. The European sovereigns of the ten kingdoms of the beast, receive from the dragon their seat, and power, and great authority; and accordant with the origin of their power, and as exemplifying their *bestly* character, they "make war with the Lamb," oppress his servants, and exert their power to prevent the erection of his kingdom in the world.³

At length, the King of Zion will openly and powerfully assert his right of sovereign and universal dominion. He will take to Him his great power and reign. By repeated and overwhelming judgments, He will destroy his malicious foes, and remove out of the way every impediment to the establishment of his glorious kingdom. The "Little Stone," falling on the feet and toes of the great image, will break them to pieces, and the whirlwind of Divine judgment shall sweep them away. Connected with the judgment of the "Little Horn," and immediately consequent upon its destruction, is the visible exaltation of the Redeemer to sovereign and uncontrolled dominion. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."⁴ This

¹ Ps. ii. 12.² Isa. lx. 12.³ Rev. xvii. 14.⁴ Dan. viii. 13, 14.

extensive lordship is said to be "*given*" to the Son of Man. He possessed before universal sovereignty by proper right, through the donation of the Father in the covenant; and, in his ascension to heaven, He was inaugurated in his royal seat and took actual possession of the throne of the universe. But when Antichrist shall fall, the Mediator shall eminently *appear* as a reigning and glorious sovereign. The sceptres and thrones of the nations shall be seen in voluntary subjection to Him; and over the enemy of Christ and his people laid prostrate, the proclamation shall be raised throughout every part of the earth, and shall resound from heaven, "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."¹ Before, He reigned *de jure*, as well as *de facto*,—by designation and pre-eminent merit, as well as by actual investiture and controlling administration. But He was not generally acknowledged as sovereign, while Antichrist usurped his authority, and vile men were high in place. The era of Babylon's downfall will witness a revolution, the most important that has ever occurred in the administration of human affairs. Civil government,—God's ordinance,—long perverted and abused, will then revert to its proper mode of administration, and be conducted with a view to its grand end and design. "He shall set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." "Judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it."² The work of overturning finished, He shall come whose right it is, and it shall be given Him. The grand principle of the testimony of Jesus—the principle of his universal Headship will then triumph. It was held in abeyance, opposed and neglected before. Against it was mustered the combined and determined hostility of the rulers and nations of the earth, and the enmity of the powers of darkness.

For the dignity and sovereignty of their exalted Lord, a few faithful witnesses all along pleaded. This was the ground of their manifold sufferings; and for this they resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Their testimony was, however, for a long time unheeded, and their cause covered with reproach and contempt. They were trodden down by the enemy, and persecuted, and slain. Now, however, the Lord has arisen, to make inquisition for blood, and He forgets not the cry of the humble.³ He has brought forth their righteousness as the light, and their salvation as a burning lamp. With the destruction of his great adversary, and his people's powerful oppressor.

¹ Rev. xix. 6.² Isa. xlii. 4; Ps. xciv. 15.³ Ps. x. 12.

the Redeemer claims the nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. "The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."¹ These were emphatically "kingdoms of this world" before. They were worldly in their constitutions, character, and administration. They become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ," in a way similar to that by which they were formerly kingdoms of this world,—by the dedication of national resources to promote his glory, and by submitting the legislation and administration to his sovereign authority and law. This happy change will take place after "the great earthquake," which shall overturn the city of mystical Babylon. In the eleventh chapter of Revelation, we are told that, by the commotion, "one tenth of the city shall fall," and there shall be "slain of men seven thousand," and that "the remnant" shall be "affrighted," and shall "give glory to the God of heaven." In the original, the slaughter is said to be of seven thousand "of the *names of men*,"² and this may indicate that the lofty titles and proud distinctions taken from Antichrist shall be abolished. The "city" corresponds to the Latin Roman earth—the ten kingdoms of the beast. The fall of "the tenth part" of the city denotes the secession of one of these kingdoms from the league with Antichrist. In the revolution, symbolized by this great earthquake, one of the states which have long been leagued with the Man of Sin, one of the kingdoms which have long subserved his interests, shall break off from the confederacy, and shall stand forth, opposed to his policy and kingdom, professing subjection to Messiah the Prince. This secession will have a powerful influence upon other European nations. An act of national homage to the Mediator offered by one emancipated kingdom, will bring with it manifold national blessings. It will serve to awaken other States to a sense of the slavery under which they have long groaned, and to excite them to seek the scriptural liberty and rights of which they have been long deprived. It will then be clearly seen that "righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is the reproach of any people." The authority of Christ Jesus, the Lord, as Governor among the nations, will be acknowledged; and the practical application of this grand doctrine will be seen to be inseparably connected with national peace and prosperity. The sceptre of Messiah will be gloriously displayed, and will be confessed to be a right sceptre. Official

¹ Rev. xi. 15.² ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων χιλιάδεις ἑπτὰ.

authority shall be dedicated to the Redeemer. Kings and judges of the earth shall kiss the Son. Earthly thrones and diadems shall be in voluntary subjection to Him who is Lord of all. The purpose of the Eternal respecting the Redeemer's exaltation shall be fulfilled; and He shall then be seen enjoying his glorious reward. Blessings the most valuable and extensive will be dispensed throughout the nations, the reward of professed subjection to their rightful Sovereign. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth." "The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him."¹

4. *The people of God shall be exalted to influence and authority throughout the nations.*

This is expressly declared as the immediate effect of the judgment and destruction of the little horn. "The kingdom and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."² During the whole period of Antichrist's reign, the people of God were trodden down by the enemy, and were in a low and oppressed condition. The woman, the emblem of the faithful Church, is in the wilderness, removed from the kingdoms of men, and having no influence upon national affairs. The witnesses prophesy in sackcloth before many nations, having no access to the palaces of princes, or the halls of power,—contemned, and in poverty, and under oppression. A chief part of the policy of Antichrist was to possess the highest places of authority, and to exclude faithful men from the seats of dominion, and from the cabinets of princes. In this he was too successful. While this wicked system prevailed, the reins of government throughout the kingdoms of the earth were generally in the hands of despots, or of men characterized by irreligion and immorality. "They have set up princes but not by me." Constitutions of government were framed on the ever-shifting principles of an evil expediency, while the Scriptures—the unerring rule of right, the statute-book of heaven—were rejected and contemned. Laws were framed and administered for party purposes and mere worldly interests. Truth seldom found access to the ears of men in power; and they were surrounded by persons who never addressed to them the word of faithful remonstrance or honest reproof; but who, on

¹ Psalm lxxii. 6, 10, 11.

² Daniel vii. 27.

the contrary, praised their measures, and pandered to their vices. In consequence, the cause of truth and righteousness was trampled down, and the men who faithfully maintained it were misrepresented, excluded from places of influence, and occasionally persecuted and oppressed. "No man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name, of the beast, or the number of his name."¹ The way to stations of influence was guarded by every possible means that might guarantee the continuance of antichristian and oppressive systems. Ensnaring oaths of office were exacted of the entrants to power, defiling the conscience, and binding the juror to the approval and active support of unscriptural systems. The prerogatives of the reigning Mediator were usurped by men opposed to the establishment of his kingdom; and his authority and laws were contemned, equally in the constitution and administration of their governments. The unavoidable consequence was that those who maintained faithful allegiance to Messiah the Prince were compelled to stand aloof from unscriptural and immoral civil systems. They could not defile their conscience, nor compromise the claims of their exalted Sovereign, for the sake of earthly honour. They considered it better to suffer than sin. Hence they continued to testify in sackcloth, all the time that Antichrist was in power. They were treated as aliens even in their native land, and they "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth."

During the prevalence of the antichristian system, and while the kings of the earth were intoxicated, and the nations were deceived, by the Mother of harlots, the scriptural doctrine of civil rule was, in a great measure, unknown; and as often as it was publicly asserted, it was vilified and reproached. Throughout the sacred record, this precious doctrine occupies a prominent place; and its importance to the safety and well-being of the nations is frequently and distinctly declared. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."² Magistrates are to be "ministers of God to men for good;"³ a "terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well."⁴ The choice of rulers by a people enjoying Divine revelation is limited to "able men"—men "fearing God and hating covetousness;"⁴ and the *approved examples* of godly rulers are exhibited in a large part of the volume of inspiration, as connected with eminent blessings upon their administration—with national prosperity and stability.

¹ Rev. xiii. 17. ² 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. ³ Romans xiii. 4. ⁴ Exod. xviii. 21.

The grand principle of the Bible respecting civil governments, both in the Old and New Testament, is, that it is an ordinance of God, placed under Messiah, to be framed according to his revealed will, and administered for the advancement of his glory, and for man's good, both spiritual and temporal. Under the Jewish economy, this was strikingly exhibited both by precept and example. The monarch was required, on his accession to office, to write out a copy of the book of the law for himself, and to read therein by day, and meditate by night. How remarkably were the godly reforming princes prospered, and the nation blessed for their sake! The larger number of the kings of Judah were good men, and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; while almost all the monarchs of the kingdom of Israel did that which was evil, and were mostly wicked. The truth that "righteousness exalteth a nation" was remarkably illustrated in the long-continued preservation and prosperity of Judah—the smaller and weaker of the two kingdoms—in the lengthened reigns of the kings of Judah—and the few changes that took place in the line of succession. On the other hand, the wickedness of the Israelitish rulers drew down upon themselves and the nation repeated scourges. The line of succession was frequently interrupted and broken; many of the rulers were cut off, after a very brief tenure of office; and the kingdom itself was at length destroyed, sinking under the accumulated crimes of its rulers and people. The same grand principle holds still. The ground of the shakings, upturnings, and destruction of nations is the support tendered by rulers and a deceived people to Antichrist—their practical refusal to recognize Messiah, the Lord's Anointed, as rightful ruler, and their contemptuous rejection of his Word as the rule of their conduct. The settled law of the Divine government is, that rulers who refuse to kiss the Son shall perish from the way, when his wrath is enkindled but a little. The nation and kingdom that will not serve the Redeemer's Church "shall perish—yea, all those nations shall be utterly wasted."

The faithful witnesses of Christ have, in all ages, testified to the Headship of the Redeemer, and to the principle—as its direct and immediate consequence—that men possessed of civil authority throughout the nations should practically own subjection to Messiah the Prince, and should conform their lives and administration to his laws. The witnesses in conflict with Antichrist are represented as *two*, not only because they are

¹ Isaiah lx. 12.

few in number, but likewise because they testify to the two grand institutions of heaven—a faithful ministry, and a scriptural civil government.' The Reformers, in various lands, maintained the independence of the Church of civil control, and, at the same time, asserted the scriptural institution and character of civil government. The "*Harmony of Protestant Confessions*" bears unequivocal testimony to the unity of sentiment of the churches of the Reformation on this subject, and to their concern to have civil power entrusted to men who recognized the authority of Christ and the supremacy of the Scriptures. Our Covenanting forefathers were eminently honoured to contend for the crown-rights of the Redeemer. In their national vows, they plighted the allegiance of the nation to Him—and by those federal deeds, rulers and people were taken bound to consult for the promotion of Christ's honour, and the interests of true religion, above any worldly interests. The laws passed in the reforming period in Britain were the embodiment of the grand fundamental principles of the Redeemer's kingdom; and for a brief period—like a gleam of bright sunshine in the history of the nation, the doctrine was generally proclaimed, and widely respected, that Christ Jesus should reign supreme in his own house, and among his people, and that earthly rulers should yield Him all homage and subjection.²

¹ The Witnesses "are a small company of true Christians, defending the interests of religion against all opposition, and frequently sealing with their blood the testimony which they hold."—*M'Leod*.

"They give testimony to the truth in opposition to the antichristian system; and as we have shown that this system is described, in the little book, as *an apostate church in league with the beast of the pit*, these witnesses are of course opposed to the antichristian corruptions of civil and ecclesiastical polity throughout the whole extent of the Latin Roman Empire."—*Ibid*.

"It is a sufficient reason why these witnesses are said to be *two*, as *two* were the legal number of witnesses; and as in the times of the ancient prophets, on greater occasions, two were usually joined together,—as Moses and Aaron in Egypt, Elijah and Elisha in the apostacy of the tribes, Zerubbabel and Joshua after the Babylonish captivity."—*Lowman*.

The *Two Olive Trees* "represent the two great standing ordinances of God, for the preservation of moral and religious order in the human family, the ministry, and magistracy, which Antichrist is endeavouring universally to corrupt. The two witnesses, therefore, standing before the Lord of the whole earth, and proclaiming the dignity of Jehovah-Jesus, of whom Joshua and Zerubbabel were eminent types, in the twofold character of Head of the Church, and Prince of the kings of the earth, oppose the pretensions of Antichrist, who, having usurped the temple of God, claims also the right of disposing of crowns and kingdoms."—*M'Leod*.

² The laws passed in the reforming period in Britain, especially in Scotland, in favour of reformation, were a necessary defence against Popery;

These principles, of great intrinsic value, and of most salutary influence, are destined yet to obtain the ascendancy throughout the nations. Soon as the power that has long held them in abeyance, or repudiated and rejected them with hatred and contempt, shall have been removed, they will come into full development and clear manifestation. and their practical value will be extensively acknowledged. Messiah shall put down the oppressor, and assume publicly his throne of dominion; and his people shall reign with Him. The witnesses, re-animated, shall ascend up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies behold them.¹ "Heaven," in prophetic language, denotes the elevated place of power. They shall take possession of stations of influence and authority; and shall obtain the dominion in the view of their enemies, and throughout the nations in which they had been hitherto oppressed. In the happy change that shall succeed, the destruction of Antichrist, the witnesses that suffered for truth shall rise and reign with Christ "a thousand years."² The persons of the slain martyrs will not rise again till the end of the Millennium, and till the Redeemer's coming to judgment: but their cause will revive and triumph, and their spirit shall live again.³ This great moral revolution will afford a remarkable contrast to the condition of faithful witnesses at any former period of the long dark night of the reign of Antichrist. and will be productive of results most beneficial to human

and, when the deep-laid plots of priests and Jesuits, and the machinations of Popish powers for the destruction of Protestantism, and against the liberties of Britain, are considered, they are justified, on the principle of self-preservation, the propriety of which is universally admitted. Though some of these laws wear the aspect of severity, yet, when the circumstances of the times and occasions on which they were enacted are duly reflected upon, they will appear to have been absolutely required to meet the emergency; and the day is not far distant, when, under the last violent attempts of Popery against the truth, the wisdom of our ancestors will be justified, in the measures which they adopted to secure the blessings of sound scriptural Protestantism to the nation. The infamous Act Recissory, by which, through the perfidy of the second Charles and his drunken councillors, the laws protecting the reformation-attainments were swept away, is a foul stain on the national statute-book; and its removal by the Legislature would do a thousandfold more to check Papal aggression, and to put an end to Popish intrigues, than the speeches or letters of statesmen, or the half-measures of Parliament.

¹ Revelation xi. 12.

² Revelation xx. 4.

³ For a very full and satisfactory view of the resurrection of the slain witnesses, prior to the Millennium, and of their spiritual reign with Christ a thousand years, see *Christ's Second Coming, Will it be Pre-millennial!* by the Rev. David Brown, A.M. (second edit.), pp. 219-260.

society. Instead of faithful men being excluded from public places, they will then possess the highest offices in the State, and will wield the destinies of nations, for high and holy purposes. "A king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." Instead of being few, depressed, and uninfluential, the saints shall be honoured and elevated. True religion will adorn the high places of society, and will shed its hallowing influence throughout all orders and places of the community. Iniquity, as ashamed, shall stop the mouth, and righteousness shall flow down the streets as a river.

The principle of the reign of the saints, as connected with the future hopes of the Church, and the destinies of the nations, is of great practical value and importance. The claim of faithful men, who maintain the supreme Headship of Christ, is, that there should be *scriptural legislation and a scriptural administration*. Nothing short of this, it is evident, will suffice to vindicate the honour and prerogatives of Him who is Governor among the nations, and Prince of the kings of the earth. If due regard is shown to the requirements of Holy Scripture in relation to civil rulers, two things would seem to be apparent—first, *that good men cannot be expected to take part in the administration of bad laws*; and secondly, *that the execution of good laws can never be safely entrusted to men who are devoid of proper moral and religious principles*. The moral character of rulers is intimately connected with the results of their administration, whether good or evil; as the character of the laws themselves will, in a great measure, determine what kind of persons will be called to fill the offices of the State. The best laws will fail of their object if men of bad principles, or of immoral character, are entrusted with their administration; and the very spirit of the constitution may be infringed by officers who are under antichristian influence. Thus the representatives of British sovereignty in Ireland have frequently succumbed to the potent power of the priesthood of Rome. The principle of British liberty was trampled upon by a Popish Governor of Malta,¹ in refusing a

¹ Isaiah xxxii. 1; Psalm lxxii. 3.

² The British Governor of Malta—Mr More O'Farrel, an Irish Romanist who refused a refuge to the Roman exiles—gave a more recent instance of the violation of constitutional principles, and the perversion of right, to advance the interests of the Papacy. In the "Amended Code" for the

refuge to the Roman patriots; and time-serving officials, in various British colonies, have tarnished the glory of the nation, by debasing the dignity of a great Protestant power, to honour acts of idolatrous worship, Pagan or Popish.' The recent conduct of British statesmen, in relation to the Sabbath, shows how little confidence is to be reposed in rulers, who are not actuated by scriptural principle, on any great moral or religious question. In opposition to the wishes of a large majority of the people, and the recorded vote of their representatives, the Post-office was opened for extensive Sabbath-desecration, on the plea of State-necessity. The Ministry that countenanced the reversal of a salutary Christian measure, and the members of the Commission who recommended the change, were notorious for their opposition to the law of the Sabbath. Thus, in the hands of men destitute of scriptural qualifications, the voice and rights of the people were disregarded, the authority of the Lord of the Sabbath contemned; and the nation was robbed of a boon fraught with invaluable blessings to society and individuals, and involved, through its rulers, in the guilt of aggravated Sabbath-desecration. As an instance, on the other hand, of the benefit arising from entrusting power to the hands of good men who act on Scripture principle, may be mentioned the case of Lord Barham, who was at the head of the Admiralty at one of the most trying periods of the wars of the first French Revolution. Whatever press there was for despatching ships, he steadily and resolutely refused to allow the least work to be done in the dockyards on the Sabbath. Who can tell whether we should ascribe the naval superiority

government of the Island, as published in March, 1850, the Popish Church in Malta is styled the "dominant Church." In other articles, it was enacted that whoever should violate, by *word or gesture*, any article of the Roman Catholic Church, should be punished with imprisonment of from four to six months. To refuse to uncover when the Host passed, or to speak a word against the Virgin, or pretended saints, would have subjected the person to the penalties of the code. A few days after the appearance of this edict, mixed marriages were prohibited in Malta and its dependencies, unless a solemn promise were given by the parties, that the children of these marriages should be brought up in the Popish faith. Some of these enactments have been withdrawn, but still the Romish Church in Malta retains the title of "dominant."—See *Wylie on the Papacy*, pp. 532, 533.

' To the want of a true Protestant spirit in British rulers, and their succumbing to the influence of Popery, may be ascribed the melancholy desertion of the interests of the queen and people of Tahiti—an island which had been civilized and brought to embrace Christianity by British missionaries, and which claimed the protection of England—to the grasping ambition of France, and the machinations of French Jesuits.

and success of Britain, during that perilous period, more to the piety of Lord Barham, and a few men of a kindred spirit who conducted some parts of the executive in Britain, than to the bravery of Nelson and others who engaged in deadly conflict with the enemy?

Men of scriptural principle and religious character should not be required to administer unscriptural laws, and they cannot do so consistently. Good men of various names in America at present feel this—refuse to take public office, as involving them in the guilt of abetting slavery, or of executing the infamous *Fugitive Slave Law*, and plead the obligation of the “Higher Law” of God’s Word, as prohibiting them from taking part in measures which violate the rights of conscience, and manifestly set aside the authority of the Supreme Ruler.¹ Under governments that are plainly antichristian, throughout the ten kingdoms of the beast, as neither their constitutions are based on the Scriptures, nor the administration conducted according to the rule of the Word, it is evident that many of the laws will be such as conscientious followers of the Lamb cannot take part in administering or executing them. Hence the State suffers a twofold injury: it is deprived of the public services of the faithful subjects of Christ—the best friends of rightly-constituted civil government; and those who are exalted to power are either destitute of scriptural principle, or do violence to their conscience, for worldly motives and objects.

The time is rapidly approaching when these evils shall be redressed. Antichrist’s downfall will be the removal of the grand impediment to the accession of men of right principle and upright lives to power and authority throughout the nations. When that long-wished-for event shall take place, nations, deceived and degraded by the Papacy no longer, shall own willing subjection to the Redeemer, and shall frame their systems of civil polity in accordance with the standard of his Word. The people of the saints of the Most High shall possess authority and exercise dominion. Good men shall then execute good laws. The powerful influence of true religion shall pervade society in all its departments. The lovely pictures of inspiration shall be fully realized. “The lion shall eat straw with the ox.” The reign of righteousness and peace shall universally prevail. Rulers shall rule in the fear of the Lord; and “righteousness and praise shall spring forth before all the nations.”²

¹ See Appendix.

² Isaiah lxi. 11, “It shall be,” says President Edwards, “a time wherein

religion shall, in every respect, be uppermost in the world. It shall be had in great esteem and honour. The saints have hitherto, for the most part, been kept under, and wicked men have governed. But now they will be uppermost. The kingdom shall be 'given into the hands of the saints of the Most High God' (Dan. vii. 27); and 'they shall reign on earth' (Rev. v. 10). 'They shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years' (Rev. xx. 4). In that day, such persons as are eminent for piety and religion shall be chiefly promoted to places of trust and authority. Vital religion shall then take possession of kings' palaces and thrones, and those who are in highest advancement shall be holy men. 'And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers' (Isa. xlix. 23). Kings shall employ all their power, and glory, and riches, for the advancement of the honour and glory of Christ, and the good of his Church: 'Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings' (Isa. lx. 16). And the great men of the world, and the rich merchants, and others who have great wealth and influence, shall devote all to Christ and his Church: 'The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour' (Ps. xlv. 12)."¹

¹ *History of Redemption.*—Period iii., Part 2, Sect. I.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXTENT, STABILITY, AND PERPETUITY OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST, AND THE REIGN OF HIS PEOPLE.

THE extent and continuance of the happy state of the Church and the nations, which is introduced by the fall of Antichrist, are declared in terms peculiarly emphatic and expressive. When the Son of Man is invested with his high office, "all people, nations, and languages serve Him," and his "dominion" is said to be an "everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." When "the people of the saints of the Most High" are elevated to power in the nations, "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" are given them; and the kingdom of the Redeemer, administered by his people, is an "everlasting kingdom," and all dominions serve and obey Him.¹

From these comprehensive expressions, and the universal terms employed by the sacred writers on this subject, we are warranted to declare,—

1. That the future kingdom of Christ will be of *very wide extent*. For a lengthened period, the religion of Christ has but a limited spread throughout the earth. Christianity, though from its nature fitted for universal diffusion, and destined by its Divine Author to bless the whole family of man, was for ages unknown to many nations; and even where its heavenly truths were proclaimed, it was corrupted and its spirit lost, through the manifold perversions of Popery. The number of those who profess subjection to Christ, compared with the whole population of the world, is, for ages, very few; while the number of those who have the faith of Christ, and who do his commandments is still fewer. The attempts of the Church after enlargement, and the efforts made to extend the kingdom of Christ, previous to the removal of the Papacy, have very limited success. A people are called out of Babylon, a remnant of

¹ Daniel vii. 14.

¹ Daniel vii. 26.

Israel is gathered ; and converts from apostate systems, receiving and professing the truth, are as the first-fruits of a harvest of blessing. But the full harvest is deferred till the predicted judgment descends upon the Papacy ; and till, by the vengeance inflicted upon Antichrist, the vintage of the earth is reaped. Then the truth shall spread, like the light of heaven throughout the earth ; and the bright predictions of the Word respecting the universal establishment and extent of the kingdom of Christ shall be fulfilled. "The isles shall wait for his law." "The ends of the earth shall see his salvation." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."¹ "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow down before Him." All kindreds of the nations shall do homage to Him. As far as the sun travels, or the tides of ocean roll, so far shall the benign sceptre of Messiah be stretched out, and his peaceful dominion be acknowledged. Jew and Gentile—the tribes of the saved—shall come from every land, and shall bow down to the enthroned Redeemer. His kingdom of willing subjects shall be co-extensive with the population of the world, and its blessings shall be enjoyed by the universal brotherhood of man. To this blessed consummation, events in the kingdoms of the earth are now hastening. Manifold as may yet be the obstacles that hinder the triumph of truth, and strong as may be the opposition to be encountered, the darkness is receding before the light, and the impediments to the universal prevalence of peace and righteousness are in process of rapid removal. The seed of a glorious harvest is widely scattered. Expecting nations are sighing for renovation. The Church is travailing in birth, till the hour of deliverance shall come, and she shall be proclaimed a mother of sons full of joy. And when a brief period of trial and conflict shall have passed over, the universal blessed reign of the Redeemer shall be the answer to the many prayers of the saints that have been offered in all past generations ;—the complete victory after innumerable conflicts ; the fulfilment of all joyful anticipations and hopes of the righteous. Philanthropists may rejoice in the extension of civilization ; the patriot that the laws of his beloved country and the principles of its government are adopted by the nations : the Christian has a far higher ground of exultation. The government of his exalted King shall one day embrace all people, and shall secure boundless blessings to all lands. "Men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed."²

2. *The rulers of the nations shall everywhere own subjection to*

¹ Isaiah xlii. 4 ; Ps. xcviii. 3 ; lxxii. 8, 9.

² Ps. lxxii. 17.

the Redeemer, and shall labour to advance his glory. The "all dominions that shall serve and obey" Christ, are the princes and potentates of the earth. It is true "the principalities and powers" in the heavenly places own Him as their Lord, and even the devils are rendered obedient to his Word. But the Mediator has a special claim upon the homage of earthly rulers. Plainly as their duty to submit to the Lord's Anointed is asserted in the Divine Word, and frequently as He addresses them, commanding their obedience, and threatening his heaviest displeasure if they rebel against Him, his claims were resisted, and the rulers of the earth, in league with Antichrist, refused to yield homage to the reigning Mediator. The language of their hearts, expressed in all their official procedure, was, "Who is the Lord, that we should obey Him?" When, however, the Red Dragon is cast out of heaven, and the kings of the earth are no longer intoxicated with the wine-cup of Babylon's fornication, they shall return to allegiance to Messiah the Prince, and shall employ their extensive power and influence for the advancement of his kingdom. This effect of the downfall of Antichrist is announced in the Scriptures in terms that exhibit its unspeakable importance. "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." "Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." Princes, instead of opposing the kingdom of Christ, as heretofore, shall "kiss the Son," and promote the interests of his kingdom. Hence it is predicted, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers;" and again, it is said of Zion, "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings."²

These predictions evidently imply that rulers in their official capacity shall submit to Christ, that they shall render to Him willing subjection, and employ their public authority and influence and state-resources to promote the cause and kingdom of Christ. As kings they set themselves, and as rulers they took counsel together, against the Lord and his Anointed; and their official power, and the legislation and resources of the State, they perverted and abused in opposing the cause of Christ, and in corrupting and oppressing the Church. In the happy change that succeeds the subversion of Antichrist, kings become sensible of their duty and true interest, and cheerfully

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 31; Ps. lxxii. 10, 11.

² Isa. xlix. 23; lx. 16.

yield their official power and national homage to the Redeemer. They recognize the grand principle that sovereigns, in their lofty station and public acts, have to do with the religion of Christ; and that to the Church, as being the grand institute for the manifestation of his glory, they owe more than common protection,—that it should be a principal object of their fostering care. European princes are expressly included in the prophecy declaring that future sovereignty shall be subjected to Christ. “The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents;”¹ while the monarchs of distant nations, and the chiefs of wandering tribes, are brought also to submit to Christ, and to promote true religion. “The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.” Everywhere throughout the world, sceptres shall be lowered to Christ, and diadems shall be prostrate at his feet. Constitutions of civil government shall be based on his Word—the Statute-book of heaven. “The law shall go forth out of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”² “The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”³ Laws shall be enacted and administered to subserve the religion of Christ, and the cause of genuine morality; and the grand spectacle will be presented before the eyes of wondering nations of the power and resources of mighty states consecrated to the advancement of truth and righteousness. How vastly important will be such a moral revolution! How joyful and blessed the effects of the subjection of national sovereignty to Christ, and of its employment for the advancement of his glory! Instead of princes living in ungodliness, and ruling for mere worldly interests, they shall reign in righteousness, and be real and extensive blessings to the nations. The beautiful picture of a faithful ruler, as seen by the aged monarch of Israel, shall be exhibited in many lands. “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even as a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain.”⁴ The honour and stability of thrones will be secured, in connection with the subjection of rulers to Christ; and the true interest and prosperity of states shall be greatly advanced. Them that honour the Redeemer, He will honour.

¹ Psalm. lxxii. 10. According to Hebrew usage, the term “isles” was applied to designate any country, whether continent or island, that could only be reached, in travelling from Palestine, by sea.

² Micah iv. 2.

³ Isaiah xxiv. 23.

⁴ 2 Samuel xxiii. 3, 4.

As with David, and the godly princes of Judah, blessings descend from fathers to sons, and a lengthened and prosperous dynasty marks the Divine approval of rulers who consecrate their official rank and influence to the cause of Christ. Righteousness exalteth a nation; and "when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord,"¹ then true national glory and prosperity shall be their abundant and continuing portion.

3. *There shall be no future extensive defection from the cause of Christ, nor successful opposition to his kingdom.*

In the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in the second chapter of Daniel, it is declared that the kingdom which the God of heaven shall set up "shall never be destroyed," and that it "shall not be left to other people," but that it shall "break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."² The kingdoms of men have had their periods of prosperity and decline. Monarchies, at one time powerful and illustrious, have been enfeebled, and their glory has departed like a dream of the morning,—

"Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome.
Speak to the present times, and times to come."

But the dominion of Christ which shall hereafter be established on the earth shall know no decay or diminution, but shall continue to increase in power and splendour to the end. In its nature, it is antagonistic to evil, and destructive of all that would tarnish God's glory, and injure the best interests of man. Hence the kingdom of the stone is said to "bruise and break in pieces" the feet and toes of the great image. It rejects all compromise with corrupt systems, and is intolerant of error and sin. The things that can be shaken are removed, and then is introduced the kingdom that cannot be shaken, that shall not be given to another people, and that shall remain till the end. When thrones of iniquity are subverted, and the wicked power that upholds them is broken to pieces, our comfort and assured hope is, that no fifth monarchy shall arise upon the earth, to make war against the Lamb, to rob men of their liberties, and to enslave and oppress them. The Church shall pass through various changes and trials, till the time when our Lord and King shall come to establish his kingdom in the earth. While enemies without have straitened her borders, opposed her testimony, and exacted upon her faithful members, she has

¹ Psalm cii. 22.

² Daniel ii. 34.

had within bright seasons of revival and prosperity, and again long periods of decline and decay. Like the Queen of night, the Church has waxed and waned, looking forth at times "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners;" and at others, the truth which she held has been obscured, her glory eclipsed, and her light has been hardly perceptible in repelling the world's darkness. The work of apostasy and defection, encouraged by large worldly systems, civil or ecclesiastical, reduced to a remnant the number of the faithful. The fairest and most flourishing parts of the Church were thus despoiled of their beauty, and became separated from the cause and kingdom of Christ. The seven Churches of Asia thus forsook their first love, and forgot their first works, till, in righteous indignation, the Redeemer spued them out of his mouth; and the Church of Rome, famous among the early churches, passed through successive stages of defection, till it became the Head of the "apostasy of the last times," the "Mother of harlots, and of abominations that are done on the earth."

Shortly before the final judgment of the Papacy, we have reason to think that declension from purity and apostasy from the truth shall, in various ways, spread and increase. Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold. Perilous times shall come. "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" In the separation between good and evil, between truth and error, which shall characterize the last times, there is reason to think that the enemies of truth shall largely increase, and ungodly systems be strengthened, that the power of the Lord may be more conspicuously manifested in taking vengeance upon his enemies, and in vindicating the cause of his people, reduced to a remnant—weak, dispirited and oppressed. When, however, this seasonable and glorious interposition is made, the Church shall be no longer exposed to change or decay, and the voice of violence and oppression shall be heard in her no more. At the evening time, there shall be light—bright, unclouded splendour—which shall not again be withdrawn, or be succeeded by a night of trouble or sorrow. "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

¹ Song vi. 10.

² Isa. xxx. 26.

It is true, we read of a gathering of the enemies of Zion at the close of the happy Millennium. The Destroyer "is loosed for a little season." He gathers from the four quarters of the earth his chosen instruments, and they come up to compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city. But their attempt prevails not. Divine interference, like that which arrested the building of Babel, and scattered the builders, will not only arrest and disperse the rebels, but destroy them. Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.¹ Immediately after, the Redeemer comes in the clouds of heaven to judgment. During the happy era of the Mediator's millennial reign, light abounds, and there is no defection from truth, or decay of the power of godliness. The last attempt, permitted to exemplify the power and inveteracy of evil, will be at once crushed. The kingdom of Christ will thus not only exist in undiminished splendour to the end, but will, in this last act of its administration on earth, display its intrinsic vigour, and the might and faithfulness of its exalted Head, striking through in his wrath kings that withstand Him, and powerfully vanquishing and annihilating all the opposition of his own and his people's enemies.

Lastly. The kingdom of Christ on earth, and the reign of his people, will be introductory to the state of glory.

The Church's millennial state will be succeeded by her final

¹ The "little season" mentioned in Revelation xx. 7, 8, 9 as the period at the close of the Millennium, when the last attempt shall be made by evil power against the Church, there is reason to think, will not be so brief as many writers on prophecy seem to think. It is designated "*little*" from the brevity of its duration compared with the long period of peace and purity that has preceded. Faber's remark respecting it seems just: "Since it cannot be imagined that the whole world will plunge at once from piety to impiety, both common sense and general experience may teach us, that a considerable time will elapse ere the children of men will become so thoroughly depraved as to enter into a regular combination for the purpose of extirpating the small remnant of God's faithful people."¹ There is no proper ground however to conclude with Faber, who applies the benediction pronounced in Daniel xii. 12 to this subject, that the "*little season*" will last for *Three hundred and thirty-five years*. All statements concerning its exact duration must be regarded as mere conjecture. The judicious observation of Frazer² points to the source of this last attempt against true religion: "No oppression is so grievous to an unsanctified heart as that which arises from the purity of Christianity. A desire to shake off the yoke is the true cause of that opposition Christianity has met with from the world in every period, and will, it is most likely, be the chief motive to influence the followers of Gog in his time."

¹ *Faber's Sacred Calendar*, vol. iii. p. 478.

² See *Frazer's Key*, p. 455.

glorious triumph. The universal spread of truth and the prevalence of godliness upon the earth will be followed by the unclouded brightness of eternity. The "Bride, the Lamb's wife," shall be fully made up, and shall appear clothed in the beauty of holiness, adorned with embroideries of gold, and brought into the palace of the King to abide for ever. The Church—comparable to a magnificent city, the holy Jerusalem—shall descend out of heaven, having the glory of God. Immediately succeeding the reign of the saints with Christ on earth shall follow the general judgment; and the present system of things, having accomplished the purposes designed by its exalted Author, shall pass away, and shall be followed by a scheme vastly more glorious and permanent. The Mediator's providential government of all things on earth for the benefit of the Church shall usher in the blissful reign of eternity. Zion's illustrious king—the Head over all things to his Church—shall fully deliver up the kingdom which He established in the territory of the Destroyer, and over which He ruled despite of all opposition, to the Father, that the blessed Godhead may be all in all. The grand purposes of the Mediatorial dominion are served, when the Church is completely purified, when all enemies have been brought down, and the elect have been all conducted home to glory. The form of administration will then be changed; and when the high trust reposed in the Mediator shall have been accounted for, and the kingdom delivered up, then shall the Son also himself be subject to the Father. The Redeemed are brought near to God. The saints are gathered into the many-mansioned house in glory, and the Bride is brought with gladness great into the palace of the King, to abide for ever. The king of Zion will for ever preside over his people, as their Redeeming Head and Lord. He shall be the lofty medium of their intercourse with the throne throughout all eternity; and shall dispense to them all the blessedness of heaven, as He communicated to them all the privileges of his house on earth. Perpetuity in the amplest sense of the term is characteristic of Messiah's dominion. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

The "new heavens and earth," that shall arise after the coming of Christ, may be a new material system, which, like the fabled Phœnix, shall spring out of the ashes of the old.¹ Or

¹ This is the sentiment of Fairbairn in his *Typology*, and of various other writers, ancient and modern.

the phrase may designate the new state of glory—the exalted condition of the righteous, when sin shall be wholly and for ever purged away, and when they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. In this glorious state shall for ever dwell righteousness. The ransomed, clothed in the righteousness of the Redeemer, in common with holy angels, shall inhabit those abodes of purity and love. They have finally triumphed over all enemies, and evils of every kind are to them completely and for ever done away. Clothed in white raiment, and with palms of victory in their hands, they share the glory of their ascended Lord. They have entered into his joy. They are crowned princes in his presence, and before the Father and his angels. They have overcome, and are set down with Christ on his throne, as He overcame, and is set down with the Father on his throne.¹ Eternal righteousness will henceforth appear brightly conspicuous in all the administration of the Divine government. Injustice, and wrong, and oppression will be for ever excluded from the kingdom of God. Its glory will never be eclipsed or diminished. Throughout ages of endless duration, the glory of the mighty Lord shall appear in untarnished and dazzling splendour. The Lord Jehovah shall rejoice in all his works: and the ransomed of the Lord, his faithful subjects on earth, those who continued with Him in his temptations, shall share ecstatic joys, and partake of lofty and uninterrupted communion with the Elder Brother, in the Father's house, in his kingdom.

¹ Revelation iii. 21.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRESENT DUTY OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS IN RELATION TO THESE CHANGES.

THE friends of truth owe special duties to those who have bowed down to the yoke of the Papacy, and who are under the influence of the antichristian delusion. While we should ever regard Popery as a system of lies and wickedness, and should cordially abhor,¹ and, by all scriptural means, oppose it, we ought, at the same time, unfeignedly to pity the devotees of Popery, and employ our most strenuous efforts to rescue them from spiritual thralldom. Too long have the Protestant churches, in their various sections, criminally overlooked and neglected this important duty. While great masses of the nominal Protestant population have been suffered to sink into ignorance and ungodliness, their scriptural instruction neglected, and the ministrations of the sanctuary forsaken, the Roman Catholics, in these Protestant lands, have not been objects of deep concern and prayerful exertion, even by those who know the truth, and who labour for its extension. Deluded Romanists at our doors have been passed by unheeded, none to warn them of their danger, or to tell them of the way of safety; while in parts of the land where Popery almost exclusively prevails, the inhabitants are left wholly to the oppression of the priesthood, without any attempt to rescue them from mental and spiritual thralldom. This has arisen from wrong views of the character of Popery and of the condition of its votaries, from the want of life and faithfulness in Protestant churches, and from the absence, on the part of professing Christians, of a right estimate of the value of the soul's redemption, and from want of zeal for

¹ "I die," said the Duke of Argyle, who suffered under the Papist James II., "with a heart-hatred of Popery." The expression was worthy the descendant of an illustrious covenanted martyr. It is quite possible to cherish this heartfelt abhorrence of antichristian error, idolatry, and oppression, together with the deepest compassion and sincere love for those who are held in chains by a system of darkness and cruelty.

the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom. Lamenting past manifold neglect, we should be aroused to a sense of the special duties which we owe to deluded Romanists, and should be quickened to their vigorous and persevering performance.

We should everywhere diffuse right views of the intrinsic and inseparable evils of Popery, and endeavour to deliver its votaries from their fearful power and fatal influence. The system is emphatically Antichrist—the irreconcilable enemy of God and man. We deny not the possibility of salvation within the communion of the Romish Church; for even on the eve of her destruction, God has a people to be brought out of her. But subverting, as she does, the grace of the Gospel, there is extreme peril to the salvation of any who remain in such a connection. If saved at all, the adherents of the Papacy will be saved, not *by* Rome, but *in spite of* her. Her doom, moreover, is certain, and her destruction lingers not. Our grand and urgent duty, therefore, is to spread the light of Divine truth among those who are sitting in Papal darkness. We should disseminate among them the Divine Word, and employ a *special agency* for their instruction. We should manifest an affectionate interest in their welfare for time and eternity, and labour to win their confidence. We should offer fervent prayer for the destruction of Babylon, and the salvation of those who are involved in error and idolatry; and we should aim to recommend the truths we profess, and to enforce our exertions, by the influence of holy and consistent lives. The churches of the Reformation should betake themselves in earnest to a duty too long neglected. While the ignorant and irreligious within their own pale should be cared for, and thus the recruits for Popery would be cut off, they should, everywhere, in the thronged populations of large towns, as well as in rural districts, employ an agency of devoted men, thoroughly acquainted with the Romish system, and able to refute it; painstaking and prayerful men, whose business would be to carry the light of truth to Romanists, and to bring them from under the cruel tyranny of Babylon. Catechetical instruction should be employed, as best adapted to unveil the sophistries and subterfuges of error, and to present the truth in a familiar manner to the understanding and conscience.¹ The nearer we approach the period of Baby-

¹ Of the success of this method of presenting the truth to the minds of Romanists, we have an admirable example in the Edinburgh City Mission. The interest that has been taken in this mission by Romanists, and the large numbers that, through it, have already been led to forsake the idolatry

the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom. Lamenting past manifold neglect, we should be aroused to a sense of the special duties which we owe to deluded Romanists, and should be quickened to their vigorous and persevering performance.

We should everywhere diffuse right views of the intrinsic and inseparable evils of Popery, and endeavour to deliver its votaries from their fearful power and fatal influence. The system is emphatically Antichrist—the irreconcilable enemy of God and man. We deny not the possibility of salvation within the communion of the Romish Church; for even on the eve of her destruction, God has a people to be brought out of her. But subverting, as she does, the grace of the Gospel, there is extreme peril to the salvation of any who remain in such a connection. If saved at all, the adherents of the Papacy will be saved, not *by* Rome, but *in spite of* her. Her doom, moreover, is certain, and her destruction lingers not. Our grand and urgent duty, therefore, is to spread the light of Divine truth among those who are sitting in Papal darkness. We should disseminate among them the Divine Word, and employ a *special agency* for their instruction. We should manifest an affectionate interest in their welfare for time and eternity, and labour to win their confidence. We should offer fervent prayer for the destruction of Babylon, and the salvation of those who are involved in error and idolatry; and we should aim to recommend the truths we profess, and to enforce our exertions, by the influence of holy and consistent lives. The churches of the Reformation should betake themselves in earnest to a duty too long neglected. While the ignorant and irreligious within their own pale should be cared for, and thus the recruits for Popery would be cut off, they should, everywhere, in the thronged populations of large towns, as well as in rural districts, employ an agency of devoted men, thoroughly acquainted with the Romish system, and able to refute it; painstaking and prayerful men, whose business would be to carry the light of truth to Romanists, and to bring them from under the cruel tyranny of Babylon. Catechetical instruction should be employed, as best adapted to unveil the sophistries and subterfuges of error, and to present the truth in a familiar manner to the understanding and conscience.¹ The nearer we approach the period of Baby-

¹ Of the success of this method of presenting the truth to the minds of Romanists, we have an admirable example in the Edinburgh City Mission. The interest that has been taken in this mission by Romanists, and the large numbers that, through it, have already been led to forsake the idolatry

lon's final catastrophe, the greater is the peril of all who continue in the devoted city, and the greater, too, our responsibility to extend to them, at least, the means of escape. Let us, therefore, awake to a due sense of our duty, and to strenuous prayerful exertions for extending the knowledge of salvation to the devotees of Rome. The example of enemies should provoke us to such labours.¹ And while the clouds of vengeance are collecting for Babylon's destruction, we should cry aloud in prayer and spare not, we should ring in the ears of her degraded citizens, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."²

The predictions contained in the Scriptures of truth are uttered, in order to fix our attention on subjects of vast importance, which we are prone to overlook, to remind us of solemn duties, and to bring us to the state of mind, and to place us in the posture of men who are waiting for their Lord's coming. Special duties are demanded of the Church in particular periods of her history; and in this day of Antichrist's revived power, and arrogant pretensions, and of the near approach of the Church's last conflict and glorious triumph, it is required of the servants of Christ to realize their responsibility, and with more than ordinary diligence and devotedness, to betake themselves to the great work of finishing their testimony, and of making known the Saviour's renowned fame throughout the nations.

We notice a few of the practical views that are suggested by the changes which have been noticed, and some of the special duties which are required of the followers of Christ in our day.

1. We should learn *prayerfully to anticipate and prepare for the future.*

Our business is to ponder diligently the predictions of the Bible, and to await, in solemn expectancy, their fulfilment. We must not, on the one hand, neglect the study or exposition of inspired prediction, because of the difficulty of interpreting the sacred symbols, or on account of the errors and mistakes of Rome, have clearly shown the suitability of the instrumentality employed, and should powerfully recommend the adoption of a similar aggressive system in all our large towns and elsewhere. To some extent, a like method of presenting the truth to Romanists has of late been tried in Dublin, and has been accompanied with some success. We would cordially rejoice in witnessing the extension of the plan of the Edinburgh Roman Catholic Mission to every part of these countries.

¹ Witness the prayers of Father Ignatius—the *novenas* ordered by the present Pope—and the associations of Rome's devotees forming in France, Spain, and other Popish countries, to pray for the conversion of England to Romish idolatry.

² Rev. xviii. 4

of many who have attempted to explain prophecy ; nor must we, on the other, be dogmatical in assertion, or aim minutely to determine the precise eras when every event referred to in the prophecies of Scripture shall have its accomplishment. The Lord has revealed his mind to his servants the prophets ; and to those who prayerfully, and in humble reverence and godly fear, ponder the Inspired Record, there will be given such intimations of what God is about to do for the manifestation of his glory, and the deliverance of his Church, as shall strengthen their faith, and invigorate their hope. Especially to those who are earnestly concerned about the interests of Zion, who are devoted to efforts for the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth, and who study the Word, that they may know their own duty, and what the Lord would have Israel to do, will light shine upon the prophetic page ; and the movements of Providence will serve to confirm their trust in the Divine faithfulness, and to prepare them for future displays of God's power and justice in behalf of his cause and servants. "The wise shall understand." "The people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits." ¹

Our age is pregnant with momentous changes. Civil and ecclesiastical society is moved to its foundations. Events are in progress, and potent influences for good or evil are at work, which, ere long, must effect revolutions more radical and important than any which we or our fathers have witnessed. These may burst suddenly upon a wondering world, as did the political storm that broke over European States in 1848, and the Franco-Prussian war in 1870—sweeping down thrones, prostrating ancient dynasties, and casting headlong from their seats sovereigns and statesmen, like the stars falling from heaven. On all hands, a mighty and extensive preparation is going forward for the new order of things—for that new development of great principles which is to distinguish the last times. As at the era of the Redeemer's advent, as at the period of the Reformation, the minds of men were in a state of expectation for momentous changes, and the condition of the nations betokened events of unusual interest being near ; so in the present singular period, the signs are numerous and distinctly marked of the subversion of ancient systems, and of new organizations to be effected. The powers of evil are evidently combining and mustering their forces for a final struggle,—and inflated with recent success in crushing the nascent spirit of liberty, they are big with the expectation of

¹ Daniel xi. 32.

an easy victory, and of lengthened and undisputed dominion. On the other hand, light is encircling the globe. The seeds of Divine truth are extensively scattered throughout the nations, and men are everywhere awakening to a sense of their rights, social, political, and religious, and are prepared vigorously to demand and assert them. Nations are drawn into closer intercourse with each other, and a felt community of interests conduces to establish a universal brotherhood. Rapid modes of communication with distant lands are preparing the world's highway, while the acquisition of various languages, and acquaintance with the manners and customs of different nations, are discovering the wants of the world, and are pointing, too, to the means of supplying them. Viewing these things in the light of inspired prophecy, and with the eye and heart directed to Him whose throne is above the wheels, controlling and directing their movements, the Christian should wait, in patience and hope, the disclosures of the future, and should seek preparation for the special work of a day of danger and conflict and approaching triumph. Like the prophet, in the day of Babylon's power, and of Israel's coming deliverance, he should keep the high post of observation, and should await the unfolding of the vision: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." The Divine answer assures us that expectation will not be in vain, and that there is no uncertainty in the fulfilment of the Divine prediction. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."¹

2. OF TWO MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS we are warranted to cherish an assured expectation. These are the destruction of mystical Babylon, and the prevalence of true religion throughout the earth. These events are frequently spoken of in the Divine Word, and clearly foretold. They are determined with infallible certainty, and every movement in the kingdom of Providence, and throughout the nations, proclaims that their accomplishment is near. Even the rapid spread and partial success of Popery in some Protestant countries, and the revived spirit of its votaries, verify the predictions of Sacred Writ: and declare that we have entered on the last stage of "the war in heaven," when the Dragon comes down to the earth in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short, and when he casts out of his mouth a flood to destroy the woman and her

¹ Habakkuk ii. 1. 3

seed. Throughout the European nations, and especially in all Popish countries, the power of the Papacy is evidently decayed, and the system of which it is the head and guiding spirit is tottering to its fall. In Italy, where Popery has had for ages the moulding of the mind and conscience of the people, and has exercised undisputed power over every institution of the country, the people, sick of the superstition and idolatry under which they have long groaned, intensely hate the Pope and the priesthood; and could they freely declare themselves, the majority would at once pronounce the indignant rejection of Popery. Spain and Portugal, once the strength and glory of the Papacy, and still retained by it in degrading vassalage, are becoming sensible of their chains. While, in these countries, the morals of the priesthood are in the lowest state,¹—and they are the known enemies of constitutional liberty,—the educated inhabitants, one-third of the entire population, never frequent the Mass or the Confessional. The successful attempt of Borrow to introduce the Bible into Spain, during a brief period of the prevalence of constitutional freedom, indicates how tired the Spaniards are of the thralldom of Popery, and how prepared they are to throw off its accursed yoke, and to embrace the truth, when the shocks of Revolution shall break in pieces a long-established system of oppression, and scatter its fragments to the winds.² In France and Austria and Belgium, and other Popish lands, there is evidence that the Papacy is on the decline, and that all the contrivances of Jesuits and the appliances of unprincipled rulers will not avail to avert its downfall. This wicked system, displaying its unchangeable character, has of late proved itself to be the principal ally of despotism and oppression. Ignorance and superstition are its only supports; and before the rising spirit of liberty, and the advance of light and truth, it will as certainly fall as did Dagon before the ark of God. The effete superstitions of the dark ages may be tried again, and men may be summoned to witness the liquefaction of a pretended saint's blood—to worship relics—and to go on pilgrimages to winking statues and weeping pictures, and holy coats and wells.³ The power of the State may be invoked: as in Italy, to prevent the reading of the Bible; as in Austria, to suppress free inquiry and free

¹ See in proof the Works of the Rev. Blanco White.

² The progress of evangelical efforts in Spain, since the Revolution in 1808, affords gratifying evidence of the same kind. See *The Dawn of the Second Reformation in Spain*, by Mrs Peddie; and *Times of Refreshing in Spain*—a quarterly Periodical.

³ See Appendix.

expression of sentiment ; and in France, to obstruct the spread of evangelical truth ; and brute force may be called into requisition, as in the south of Ireland, to deter Protestant ministers from proclaiming salvation to their benighted countrymen, or to terrify and injure converts from Romanism. But these things only indicate that the supporters of the Papacy are themselves conscious that their cause is becoming desperate. Before the light of Divine truth, and the spirit of the age, all such attempts must recoil on those who make them, and can only serve to accelerate the inevitable overthrow of a system which leans upon falsehood and darkness and injustice, as its principal means of support and continuance. The fooleries of Popery, paraded as they are by its abettors in open day, will hasten its rejection. The exhibition of the "holy coat" of Treves turned thousands from Rome in Germany ; and the exposed hoax of the winking Madonna at Rimini, and that of the weeping picture at Vacluse, have awakened others to see that Popery is a gross system of lies and imposture. The despotism which the Papacy itself exercises,—witness the tyranny and oppression of the Pope in his own dominions—and the despotism which it supports in other countries, must speedily work its subversion. Justly did the Earl of Shaftesbury—one of the most philosophical statesmen of his day—remark, "Popery and slavery, like two sisters, go hand in hand. Sometimes the one goes first, and sometimes the other ; but where Popery enters, slavery will soon follow." Men are awakening to see this ; and recent events have revealed more widely the despotic spirit and enslaving doctrines of Popery. As slavery is doomed of God, and abhorred of man, so the Papacy, its inseparable ally, must with it be speedily swept from the earth. Popery cannot co-exist with free institutions, and in no country where these are established can they long remain safe, if the antichristian system spreads and prevails. The Roman Republic sprang nobly into existence, and flourished, when the Pope, disguised as a menial, had fled from his palace. The old tyrant invited the allied armies of France and Austria and Spain to abolish the Republic ; and he was reinstated, by means of foreign bayonets, over the crushed liberties, and prostrate ranks, and shed blood of an injured people. When the sympathy of all free hearts throughout the world was with Kossuth and the Hungarian patriots, the noble leader and the struggles of an oppressed people were denounced at Rome, and by Papists in various countries, as bitterly as at Vienna itself. It has been well said of the

Papacy, "Power is its religion—despotism is its creed." Men everywhere now discern this to be an inseparable characteristic of the system; and just as they see this, are they rising up to resist it with indignation. On this ground alone, multitudes have of late years rejected it throughout the European continent; and, in proportion as the spirit of freedom pervades the earth, and in the great struggle for national liberty and constitutional rights that is approaching, will the Papacy be abhorred, its extension opposed, and its destruction hastened. The diffusion of the Bible, and the revived spirit and extending influence of Protestantism, are sure prognostics of the decline and near destruction of Popery. Thus is light increasing in its power to expel darkness. It is the spirit of holiness and love and "good will to man" extending, to banish from the earth the malignant spirit of all that is evil and noxious. The result is not doubtful, nor will the conflict of the antagonistic principles be long. Great is the power of Divine truth, and it must prevail. Righteousness and praise shall spring forth before all nations. Superstition and oppression destroyed, holiness and love will prevail throughout the world, and the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God.

The downfall of Antichrist will wonderfully facilitate the prevalence of true and undefiled religion. Nothing can be conceived more favourable to the universal triumph of truth than such an event. In reference to it, we quote the lofty conceptions and eloquent words of an American author: "Were the Pope displaced—were Romanism destroyed—were the worship of saints and relics discontinued—were priestcraft abolished—how rapid, how glorious, would be the flight of the true Gospel! How would the nations welcome it! How would a liberated world bask in its sunbeams! There can, too, be little doubt, that the manner in which the Papacy will be overthrown will give the nations a greater relish for pure doctrines. This power is yet to exhibit some dreadful deeds of oppression. Its iron yoke will yet gall more deeply—its prisons yet groan more dreadfully. And when too, God, in a way remarkably providential,—in a way to be seen and known of all,—shall so interpose as to deliver mankind from these, the last struggles, the dying efforts of an old tyranny, how sweet upon the ear will fall the Gospel truth! How precious to the heart will be the influence of Gospel grace! What countless multitudes will then crowd the temples of salvation, and what marshalling millions will then bend before Him who is the 'Lord of lords, and King of kings!' Thus will the downfall of Popery be the

signal for the universal triumph of pure Christianity. 'The 'Man of Sin' will thus yield to the Man of grace, even Christ our Lord, and the long reign of wickedness be supplanted by the peaceable and righteous kingdom of the Son of God. Scattered Israel will, in the mean time, be regathered, and Jew and Gentile, yea, a ransomed world, will rejoice in Him, who is the 'Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last.'"¹

3. The friends of truth *should, from these views, learn important duties that are required at such a crisis, and should diligently practice them.*

We should return to *first principles*, and should aim to act consistently with them in all things. The Church is loudly called upon at the present time to remember her "first love," and to do her "first works." The grand truths which were proclaimed everywhere in the days of primitive Christianity, and which, at the era of the Reformation, were instrumental in dispelling the darkness of Popery, must be boldly declared, and universally diffused, if we would put to flight the armies of the aliens, and prepare the way for the establishment of the kingdom of light. By the power alone of the truth as it is in Jesus, we may expect the victory. God will thus arise and plead his own cause. The exhibition of the truths of the glorious Gospel has already proved potent to confound error, and to rescue men from ignorance and spiritual thralldom; and the same weapons will yet prove mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

The Headship of Christ the Mediator—the supreme authority of the Word—the power of the Gospel—must be ever inculcated, and brought into practical application, if we would successfully resist the inroads of Antichrist, or be instrumental in establishing righteousness and truth in the earth. Against these fundamental principles, the Papacy has always waged incessant warfare; and hitherto in Protestant nations and among Protestant churches, they have not been displayed in the commanding attitude which their intrinsic importance demands, nor seen in their legitimate applications. The time is come when there should be no shrinking from the bold and resolute assertion of Messiah's claims to universal sovereignty—no compromise of any part of a testimony for truth. We are entrusted with a "banner for the truth," and our duty is to

¹ *Christ and Antichrist; or Jesus of Nazareth proved to be the Messiah, and the Papacy proved to be the Antichrist predicted in the Holy Scriptures.* By Rev. Samuel I. Cassels, pp. 339, 340.

unfurl it fully, and hold it fast, despite of all opposition. When the enemy comes in like a flood, thus shall the Spirit lift up a standard against him. God's gracious power will attend nothing but his truth. As we expect our Lord shortly to come, and to put down the blasphemous usurpers who have arrogated his prerogatives, and oppressed his faithful subjects, we should everywhere loudly and boldly proclaim, as did the remnant of Scotland's martyred children, "Let King Jesus reign." We should seek to bring the King back; and claim that not only in his Church, his blood-bought inheritance, but throughout the nations, and in every department of the State, He should be acknowledged as supreme—his sceptre submitted to, and his laws obeyed.

The Bible too—the Statute-book of heaven—must not only be universally circulated, but the practical homage of men of all classes must be demanded to its authority. It speaks to kings and earth's judges, and they are dignified by receiving its high behests. "They are called gods to whom the Word of God comes." It is the "higher law" of heaven, to which all human legislation must implicitly bow. It alone can bind the conscience, as it goes forth to heal the nations, and to bless them, and to fit men for their duty and for happiness in time and eternity. We have already seen that Popery regards with mortal hate the spread of God's Word, and employs every means to oppose and exclude it. Notwithstanding, the Bible is travelling throughout the nations, and to earth's utmost parts, with amazing rapidity. Our grand concern should be to bring men of every rank to own the supremacy of the Bible—to lead rulers and statesmen to rule by its laws and imbibe its spirit, and to induce men in every condition practically to obey its requirements. This is the Divine "measuring reed," by which we are commanded to "measure the temple, the altar, and them that worship therein." Whatever does not stand this admeasurement, we must reject as reprobate and apostate, while conformity to this blessed rule marks those who are separate from Antichrist, and who shall ultimately obtain the victory over the beast and his image, and over those who have received his mark on their foreheads and right hands.

The Gospel, in its grand leading doctrines and practical influence, must be widely and fearlessly proclaimed. The pure, unmixed Gospel—the whole Gospel universally made known—is the eminent means of dispelling Popish error, and of irradiating the earth with heavenly light. This it was that scattered the

gloom, and overthrew the altars of Paganism. This spread the light of the blessed Reformation throughout the kingdoms of the beast; and this will distinguish the approaching era of light, and liberty, and holiness. The doctrines of this blessed Gospel have freed the greatest minds from the chains of superstition and idolatry, and brought liberty and happiness to prostrate nations. The Scripture declaration, "The just shall live by faith," spoken to the heart of Luther, when he was doing penance, by ascending, on his knees, Pilate's Staircase at Rome, was like the voice to the prophet in the desert. It filled him with shame at being the miserable dupe of superstition; and enabled him to cast off the manacles of his bondage. Justification by faith, which the Reformer justly styled "the article of a standing or falling church," freely declared, has brought peace to thousands; while the Spirit's work in sanctification, rightly understood, has often revived a slumbering Church, and has produced, throughout the world, innumerable fruits of righteousness. These precious truths, and other doctrines of the glorious Gospel, should be embraced, held fast, and universally diffused, if we would hasten the fall of the Papacy, and promote the reign of righteousness. The doctrines of the Gospel are to be firmly maintained, not as cold abstractions, or speculative opinions, but as life-inspiring and soul-nourishing principles,—the grand means of purifying and blessing the world. The Gospel of free grace will expel and triumph over the lies and delusions of Romanism. The angel of revival—the angel having "the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them who dwell on the earth"¹—heralds the fall of Babylon; and this mighty impediment removed, all nations shall rejoice in the glad tidings of salvation. Those who are put in trust with the Gospel have a solemn duty to perform. The enemy will smile at mere appliances of human wisdom, at political measures, or state enactments, to check his encroachments, or weaken his interest. But the power of the Gospel he cannot resist. It is the rod of God's strength sent out of Zion, to bring near a "willing people." Like the trumpets of rams' horns, the signal of Jericho's ruin, so the Gospel faithfully preached, and widely diffused, even by a despised instrumentality, will shake the walls of mystical Babylon, and lay her bulwarks in the dust.

Not only are the doctrines of the Gospel to be proclaimed, the *duties* connected with a Christian profession are to be diligently practised; and the spirit of the Gospel exemplified, if we would witness the triumph of truth over Popish error and

¹ Revelation xiv. 6.

delusion. A godly practice exhibited by the witnesses for truth, their life, under the influence of true religion, will have a mighty effect in reclaiming men from error and ungodliness. The living power of true godliness, as when it was seen in the primitive Christians, in the Waldensian confessors, and in the martyrs of different ages, will be the most powerful exposure of antichristian corruptions, and will attract men to the way of holiness. The Church must generally return to *first duties*, as well as to *first principles*, if she would stand against the enemy, and advance in the path of victory. A holy discipline must clearly mark her separation from the world. The power of prayer must be ever tried in the closet and the social assembly. Families must be ordered for God, and become nurseries for the Church, and "the godly upbringing of youth" must be a principal concern to parents, ministers, and the whole Church, if Antichrist is to be successfully resisted, and the world reduced to obedience to Christ.¹ While the Man of Sin holds in tenfold chains his willing votaries, he labours to perpetuate and extend his dominion, by engrossing the training of the young, and his most sanguine prospects for the future are found in the ignorance or neglect of the proper education of the rising generation.²

¹ This was the declared design of John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, when he laboured to have it established that the school should be a necessary appendage of the church, and that every town of any considerable size should have a grammar school, and every large town a college; and that all seminaries of learning, from the highest to the lowest, should be conducted on the principle of scriptural education.

² Popery has, in every period of its history, been the foe of that knowledge which expands and liberalizes the human mind, and most of all, of scriptural knowledge. The recent attempts of the abettors of the Papacy in every country where they possess influence to oppose determinedly all scriptural education, and to prevent the attendance of the children of Roman Catholics at the seminaries frequented by Protestant youth, or taught by Protestants, deserve to be carefully marked, as illustrating the spirit and designs of Antichrist. In the United States, the Popish party, by agitation, and influencing the elections, brought some of the state legislatures to give separate grants out of the school fund to schools exclusively Popish; and they are labouring strenuously to break up the Public School system in America, in which the Bible is read daily, and to obtain a portion of the State funds, for denominational schools, which are under the exclusive control of the priesthood. This is in palpable violation of the original constitution of the fund. The declared objection of the Popish priesthood to the state-school system was, that the Scriptures were required to be read in schools receiving aid out of the school fund. In France, under the present Republic, recent measures have thrown the supervision and control of the universities into the hands of Popish dignitaries, and even many of the communal schools are no longer open to Protestant teachers and inspectors. The proposed concordat between Spain and the Pope expressly consigns over the whole

Here we must be prepared to meet and repel the Adversary. While the young of no class are to be overlooked, while we must ever contend for a thorough scriptural education as of vital importance, Christian parents and the Church unitedly must double their diligence, and employ all scriptural means to instil right principles into the minds of the youth of the Church, and to excite them to holy activity and devotedness. We must aim, as we approach the time of the end, to have our last works more than the first. The "testimony and law left in Israel" we must teach our children; and in the practice of all holy duties, we must adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. Thus shall the truth display its all-conquering and transforming power, and win its future glorious triumphs. "Then shall ten men take hold of the skirt of one that is a Jew, and say, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." ¹

The *spirit* of the Gospel too, revived and exemplified, will achieve blessed results. Let Rome exhibit its bigotry, intolerance, and hateful impurity.² Let persecution and slander, and falsehood and hypocrisy, distinguish its priesthood and deluded votaries. These are the weapons that belong to the camp of the Dragon and his angels. Ours is the armour of light. The spirit of meekness, forgiveness, self-denial, patience, and devotedness, must ever distinguish the followers of Michael, the prince. It is with the Cross alone that we can conquer; and a spirit like Him who died for enemies and rebels, who went about doing good, and who prayed for his murderers, must be ours, if we would be owned as his chosen soldiers, or share his victories. Especially do we need to cherish the spirit of patience and holy confidence and courage in the present eventful era, if we would prevail against the enemy, and be instrumental in ushering in the Millennial kingdom. We must cultivate the spirit of Luther, the morning-star of the Reformation. Writing to Melancthon, when his spirit was trembling for the ark, he says—"Cease your attempts to alter the purpose of God, and let Jesus Christ conduct the affairs of

education of the country to Romish ecclesiastics; and in Ireland, the declared opposition of the Pope and the Popish prelates to the royal colleges, and the proposal to found a Popish university, are based upon the claim to have the entire education of the young in the hands of the devoted abettors of antichristian darkness and oppression. This too is the game of the semi-papists—the Puseyite party in the English Church. While the friends of truth should be aware of the tactics of the enemy, they should thereby be aroused to strenuous and persevering exertions for the proper training of the rising generation.

¹ Zech. viii. 23.

² See Appendix.

his Church and the world in his own way. As for myself, I give myself no concern about the result; and I am anxious only how I may perform the part assigned me in producing it. If the cause of Christ is to perish, I am willing to perish with it. I would rather fall with it than stand with Cæsar. Has He not written, 'My grace is sufficient for thee?' For that one promise, I would be willing to go all the way from Wirtemberg on Rome on my knees. But I am not called to this. The Word is nigh us. 'Let us not then be faithless, but believing.' In the same confiding intrepid spirit, the noble Reformer said, when timid friends, fearing for his safety, tried to dissuade him from going to plead the cause of the Reformation at Worms,—“Though there were as many devils as there are tiles on the houses, to obstruct my way, I would go.” This spirit, too, sustained him when, before the emperor and assembled princes of Germany, he uttered the memorable words—“Here I stand—I cannot do otherwise—May God help me!” Seeking a double portion of the spirit that animated apostles, reformers, and martyrs, let us prepare for the last conflict of truth with antichristian error. This will eminently characterize those who shall achieve the final triumph, and grasp the palm of victory. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, not having loved their lives to the death.”¹

4. The views which we have presented of the Judgment of the Papacy, and of the subsequent reign of Christ and his saints, are fitted to inspire the Christian with joyful hopes. The day of Zion's deliverance draws nigh. The dark night of superstition and oppression is past, and the morning cometh. It is true that Babylon yet stands in its towering greatness—that the darkness of Popish idolatry and ignorance yet heavily broods over many nations, and that vast multitudes, even in Protestant countries, own willing subjection to the destroyer. The power of the Papacy is everywhere in active operation to bear down the truth, and to oppress its faithful adherents. Countries where a door seemed to be opened for the spread of the Bible—such as Spain and Austria and France—have, through the machinations of the priesthood, become more impervious to the light, and the profession of truth is attended with greater danger. The Man of Sin is strengthening his fastnesses, and has been putting into array his chosen forces, to perpetuate his dark dominion, and to attempt new conquests. His purpose is to exterminate truth and righteousness from the earth,

¹ Revelation xii. 11.

and to establish a universal sovereignty of idolatry, and superstition, and despotism. Notwithstanding these appearances, there is hope for the cause of Christ. The deep shading of the scene is relieved by some lines of brightness. Not only have we the assurance of Him that cannot lie of a happy issue to present conflicts and trials of Christ's witnesses ;—but all things in the state of the nations, and in the movements of Providence, indicate that the day of Antichrist's power is nearly ended, and that the blessed era of the Church's deliverance and victory is at hand. The truth is rapidly spreading, and its Divine power in the conversion of sinners—in enlightening darkened lands, and in diffusing the blessings of civilization and liberty throughout the earth—is extensively felt and acknowledged. The day has dawned ; and despite of all the attempts of the powers of darkness, it will continue to advance, until the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord.

The voice of faithful witnesses is beginning to be heard in places where it did not sound before ; and their testimony is telling in quarters where, till lately, it was disregarded and contemned. In the British Senate, the protest of Reformers and covenanted martyrs has been taken up by leading statesmen. Many of the laity of England have resolutely condemned and rejected the usurpations of the Man of Sin, and the corruption of state-endowed churches. The authority of Sacred Scripture is asserted in the halls of legislature, and its declarations appealed to as decisive on many public measures, as the Marriage Affinity Bill, Papal Aggression, and the admission of the Jews to seats in Parliament. The rights of the oppressed slave are pleaded by American patriots, and acts of Government are tried by the Bible, the Supreme Law of heaven ; while even in France, statesmen are forced to do homage to the Divine Word, by introducing it into the primary schools, and by pleading for the observance of the Christian Sabbath. Christian Missions have wrought out emancipation for the slave in the West Indies, deliverance for the oppressed in South Africa, and have abolished suttees in India, and compelled British rulers to grant full liberty and equal rights to the converts from heathenism, and to withdraw support from idol temples. These auspicious movements discover the onward progress and intrinsic power of scriptural truth, and supply bright tokens of the glorious future. They are as the noise of the Redeemer's chariot wheels rushing on to assured victory. The grand principles of his government are every day coming to more

clear and marked development ; and with Divine faithfulness pledged for their extension, and Almighty power engaged on behalf of the truth, the conflict with the opposing principles of evil cannot be long doubtful. Many great questions are suspended for their solution upon the issue of the approaching struggle. We look forward to it with solemn awe, but with resolute hearts. Viewing the progress that has already been made in the weakening of Antichrist, and the advancement of truth, and fixing our eye upon the promises that assure us of future victory and blessing, we are encouraged to rejoice in the near prospect of the time when "all kindreds of the nations shall do homage" to the Redeemer, and "the ends of the earth shall see his salvation."

Regarding the destruction of Popery, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom as events contemporaneous, and as shortly to be accomplished, we may apply to this subject the words which the Emperor Napoleon is said to have uttered, not long before his death, and take them not only as a striking testimony to the excellence of Christianity, but as descriptive of a power founded in force, deceit, and oppression, and of the increase and perpetuity of Christ's kingdom of light and love :—"The religion of Christ," said he, "is a mystery which subsists by its own force, and proceeds from a mind which is not a human mind. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself have founded empires, but on what did we rest the creations of our genius? On power. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire on Love ; and at this time, millions of men would die for Him. I die before my time, and my body will be given back to the earth, and become food for worms. What an abyss between my deep misery, and the everlasting kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, adored, and is extending over all the earth !"

If, as we have hinted, the Papacy is yet to be permitted to make another violent attempt against the truth of Christ, and faithful witnesses are yet to be subjected to trial and suffering, it concerns us, as churches and individuals, to prepare for the coming storm. Days of solemn visitation may not be far distant, when, because of neglected opportunities, and abused privileges, the right hand of the enemy may be exalted, and the godly will be called to suffer open persecution. In the slaying of the witnesses—as we apprehend, yet future—we may expect the faithful to be deprived, for a season, of liberty, and privileges which they have hitherto enjoyed ; and they may calculate on being exposed to privations and sufferings more intense than any which, for a length of time past, have been experienced.

The floor of the visible Church must be winnowed before the Millennial harvest; the altar and sanctuary must be cleansed before the city shall be known by its glorious name, "Jehovah Shammah"—the Lord is there. An hour of temptation will come "upon the whole world, to try them that dwell on the earth." While this hour is either in part already come, or is near at hand, we should, as churches, aim at Philadelphia's distinction and honour, "to keep the word of Christ's patience," and to hold fast that we have; so shall we be kept in the time of trial, and our crown of victory shall be sure.¹ We should purge out of the sanctuary all that is polluting, seek earnestly the spirit of revival, that the Church may shine in her internal light and beauty, and that her *last words* may be more than the *first*. As individuals, we should prepare for trial by seeking to be on the Lord's side, by increased faith and love, and by holy activity. The approaching trial, from the power of the enemy, and from the shaking and destruction of ungodly systems, may be severe, but it shall be brief. The followers of the Lamb shall be in chambers of safety when the Lord arises to shake terribly the earth. In Mount Zion there shall be deliverance. And when the fury of the tempest has swept the kingdoms of the beast, the last vestiges of antichristian idolatry and oppression shall have disappeared, the witnesses shall be exalted to the highest honour, and the saints of the Most High shall universally triumph in their king. Ours let it be, therefore, to await, in holy confidence, our Lord's coming. Let us anticipate the issue of the conflict with patience and joyful hope. In evil days there is rest in the king's pavilion, and victory is sure. The issues, to the Church, and to all right-hearted men, shall be glorious beyond conception. "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."²

Lastly, The passage of Sacred Writ from which the preceding remarks on providential movements have been founded, forcibly *reminds us of the Final Judgment, and urges us to diligent preparation for that most important event.*

For you—for me—for all—the Judgment shall sit. The Judge shall come in glorious majesty, and the dead, small and great, shall be gathered around his great white throne. The books shall be opened, and all shall be judged according to the things which are written in the books. "Every man shall give account of himself unto God"—of his time—opportunities—talents—and of every deed done in the body, whether it be good or evil.³

¹ Rev. iii. 10, 11.

Daniel xii. 12.

The Judgment that sits on earth upon ungodly systems, and upon those who established and who support them, exacts a full and minute account of their wickedness and of all their crimes, and brings upon them, however long deferred, deserved retribution. The saints, too, though at times overlooked, are ever had in remembrance; and the moral Governor of the world maintains their right and cause. "He sits on the throne judging right."¹ The ordinary course of Divine Providence, as well as special interposals of mercy or vengeance, either for the vindication and deliverance of the saints, or for the destruction of their enemies, give plain indication of the character of the Judge, and of the nature of his future decisions. Infinite rectitude marks all his administration. He perfectly hates all sin; and wickedness, however long continued and prosperous in the earth, He always regards with the utmost abhorrence. His patience and long-suffering are displayed in permitting the existence and prevalence of wicked power; and his inscrutable wisdom and love are exhibited in bearing with the deep and manifold oppressions of his saints throughout many generations. When at length He comes by signal acts of justice to put down the wicked from their seats, and to plead the cause of his injured saints, and especially when He comes at the last judgment, to close up the scheme of providential government, there will be the brightest display of all Divine perfections. The ways of God to man will be fully vindicated. The wicked, and the systems which they have supported, and their works, shall be condemned and destroyed for ever; while to the faithful shall be awarded a full recompence for all their labours of love, and privations and sufferings, for the truth's sake. "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth."²

At the last judgment, there will be a complete separation between the righteous and wicked—between all that is evil, and whatever is praiseworthy and holy. Preceding acts of judgment chiefly had respect to men as grouped into classes. There is no perfect separation of heterogeneous elements till the time of the end. The tares and the wheat grow together till the harvest. The fishes, good and bad, are gathered into the same net, till it is drawn to the shore; and not till then do they sit down,³

¹ Psalm ix. 4.

² Psalm lviii. 10, 11.

³ Καθίσουτες ουυίον ξαν, etc. This is the proper import of the original terms.

as in a judicial process, to discriminate between the different kinds, to collect the good into vessels, and to cast the bad away. The judgment of the Great Day will be a decision upon *individual* character and conduct, a verdict according to truth pronounced upon each separate human being, and upon all his actions, as well as upon the dispositions of the heart, and upon the motives, springs, and principles of conduct. Without holiness—complete purity of heart and life—none shall see the Lord. It is faithful and devoted servants alone, who loved their Master, dedicated themselves to his work, and accounted it their honour to suffer for his name's sake, that shall be welcomed to the presence of his glory, and that shall shine with Him in the blessedness of his everlasting kingdom. At the Redeemer's second coming, it will nought avail us to have been separate in name from the Romish apostasy, or to be merely numbered with those who protest against the errors and oppressions of the Papacy. If we would stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion at last—chosen, and called, and faithful,—we must have followed Him on earth whithersoever He led, and be among them that are redeemed from the earth,—the first-fruits to God and the Lamb. The lamp of a profession, however large, will not serve its possessor at the Bridegroom's coming, even though in foolish self-confidence he may arise to trim it, if the oil is wanting in the vessel,—if there is no purifying, illuminating, comforting grace in the heart.

Let us therefore seek diligently preparation to meet the Judge at his coming. Even now He stands at the door, and in a very little time He will appear and call his servants to give account of their stewardship, and will render to every one of them as their works shall be. If we have been faithful in his service, He will appear on his lofty tribunal as our Friend and Brother before an assembled universe, to own us as approved ones, and with his own hands to place on our heads the crown of life. If we squandered or misimproved our Lord's money, and were slothful or negligent, how fearful the doom that awaits us! "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Let us ever remember that to us death is immediately followed by the judgment; and that, according to the character which we are forming now, so shall be the condition of our disembodied spirits, when we pass out of life—so shall be our state when our bodies shall rise again at the great day of accounts.

Our present appropriate attitude is that of holy activity, and

prayerful expectation of our Lord's coming. We should earnestly look for, and hasten unto the coming of the day of God, whether for the destruction of Antichrist, and the establishment of righteousness in the earth, or for the introduction of his eternal kingdom, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."¹ The dead that die in the Lord are assuredly blessed, and their works shall follow them,² to have an influence on the future kingdom of Christ and his saints on the earth, and to be honourably mentioned by the Judge in the solemn decisions of the Great Day. We may not live to witness the accomplishment of the bright predictions of the Word respecting the downfall of Babylon, and the triumph of Christ's cause in the earth; but if we have been faithful to the death, the glad tidings of these events shall be borne to us in heaven, and shall enhance our bliss in glory. Numbered with saints and faithful witnesses, we shall respond to the high invitation of angels and ransomed ones—"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." With apostles, and prophets, and martyrs, we shall join in hallelujahs of praise over the prostrate walls of Babylon, and rejoice triumphantly, because of the kingdom and glory of Messiah universally made known and established. At the coming of Messiah the Prince, we shall go forth to meet Him, and shall hail with ecstatic delight his appearance—"Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."³ He will publicly own us as his, receive us to Himself, number us with his jewels, polished, made up and set in his diadem of glory, to shine there for ever and ever.

And now, O Lord, our glorious King, our eyes are upon thee. We wait for thee as for the rain. Arise, O God, and plead the cause that is thine own. O, come for our salvation; stir up thy strength and might. Destroy speedily the Man of Sin, and Son of Perdition, with the breath of thy mouth, and the brightness of thy coming. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁴

¹ 2 Peter iii. 14. ² Rev xiv. 13. ³ Isa. xxv. 9. ⁴ 2 Thess. i. 6. 7. 8.

A P P E N D I X.

DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

Romanists, when pressed in controversy, frequently complain that Protestants misrepresent the doctrines of the Romish Church, and ascribe to them tenets which they do not maintain. While it is manifest that such assertions are often made for the purpose of misleading the unwary, it may be safely affirmed that the authorized writings of the Romish Church contain her avowed principles, and that as she claims infallibility, as the exclusive interpreter of Scripture, there can be no change in her principles. Any such change would completely set aside her claim of infallibility, and therefore it will not be attempted, until she foregoes her arrogant pretensions, which she will not do during the whole period of her existence.

The doctrines of the Popish Church may be learned from the Creed of Pope Pius IV.; the Decrees and Catechism of the Council of Trent; the Episcopal Oath of Allegiance to the Pope; the decrees of General Councils; Papal Bulls; and Liturgical Books. The writings of the Fathers, and of approved Popish authors, with a huge mass of unwritten and undefined Traditions, are likewise appealed to by Romanists, as exhibiting or proving the tenets of their Church. The mere mention of such a multitude of works, which are regarded as having more or less authority, in defining and declaring articles of faith, shows how difficult, if not impracticable, it must be for the abettors of Popery, who refuse the Scriptures as the only rule of faith, ever to arrive at clearness, or certainty, in relation to the articles of their religious belief.

The Creed of Pope Pius IV., and the Oath of Episcopal Allegiance to the Pope, may be taken as containing a condensed summary of Popish doctrine, and as displaying the system as essentially intolerant and persecuting. The former of these documents was issued in November, 1564. by Pope Pius IV., as an epitome of the decisions of the Council of Trent. Charles Butler, in his *Book of the Roman Catholic Church* (p. 5), says,—“This Creed “was immediately received throughout the universal Church; and since that time has ever been considered, in every part of the world, as an accurate and explicit summary of the Roman Catholic faith. Non-catholics, on their admission into the Catholic Church, publicly repeat and testify their assent to it, without restriction or qualification.” It is as follows :—

“ I, N., believe and profess, with a firm faith, all and every one of the things which are contained in the symbol of faith, which is used in the Holy Roman Church, namely :—

“ I. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and

earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; born of the Father before all worlds; God of God; Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made; who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man: was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven; sits at the right hand of the Father, and will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there will be no end: and in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Life-Giver, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who, together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified, who spoke by the prophets: and one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins; and I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

"2. I most firmly admit and embrace apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other constitutions and observances of the same Church.

"3. I also admit the Sacred Scriptures, according to the sense which the Holy Mother Church has held, and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; nor will I ever take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

"4. I profess also, that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and for the salvation of mankind, though all are not necessary for every one; namely, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, and that they confer grace; and of these, baptism, confirmation, and orders, cannot be reiterated without sacrilege.

"5. I also receive and admit the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, received and approved in the solemn administration of all the above-said sacraments.

"6. I receive and embrace all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification.

"7. I profess likewise, that in the Mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrifice of the eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation.

"8. I confess also, that under either kind alone, whole and entire Christ and a true sacrament are received.

"9. I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

"10. Likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ are to be honoured and invocated, that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be venerated.

"11. I most firmly assert, that the images of Christ and of the mother of God, ever virgin, and also of the other saints, are to be had and retained; and that due honour and veneration are to be given them.

"12. I also affirm, that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

"13. I acknowledge the Holy Catholic and Apostolical Roman Church

the mother and mistress of all churches; and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman bishop, the successor of St Peter, the prince of the apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ.

"14. I also profess and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons, and general councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent; and likewise I also condemn, reject, and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatsoever, condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the Church.

"15. This true catholic faith, out of which none can be saved, which I now freely profess, and truly hold. I, N., promise, vow, and swear most constantly to hold and profess the same whole and entire, with God's assistance, to the end of my life; and to procure, as far as lies in my power, that the same shall be held, taught, and preached by all who are under me, or are entrusted to my care, by virtue of my office. So help me God, and these holy Gospels of God."

The Episcopal Oath of Allegiance to the Pope was first imposed in the eleventh century, by Gregory VII., the notorious Hildebrand, and was then about one-fourth its present extent. Catalini, the annotator on this oath, in the Pontifical, says, it is "not only a profession of canonical obedience, but an *oath of fealty*, not unlike to that which vassals took to their direct lord." Not only archbishops and bishops, but all who receive any dignity from the Pope are required to take the oath. The following literal translation is given by Elliot, in his *Delineation of Roman Catholicism* (p. 30).¹

"I, N., elect of the church of N., from henceforward will be faithful and obedient to St Peter the Apostle, and to the holy Roman Church; and to our lord, the Lord N., Pope N., and to his successors canonically entering, I will neither advise, consent, or do anything that they may lose life or member, or that their persons may be seized, or hands in any wise laid upon them, or any injuries offered to them under any pretence whatever. The counsel with which they will interest me by themselves, their messengers or letters, I will not knowingly reveal to any to their prejudice. I will help them to keep and defend the Roman Papacy, and the *regalities of St Peter*, saving my order, against all men. The legate of the apostolical see, going and coming, I will honourably treat and help in his necessities. The rights, honours, privileges, and authority of the Holy Roman Church, of our lord the Pope, and his aforesaid successors, I will endeavour to preserve, defend, increase, and advance. I will not be in any counsel, action, or treaty, in which shall be plotted against our said lord, and the said Roman Church, any thing to the hurt or prejudice of their persons, rights, honour, state, or power; and if I shall know any such thing to be treated or agitated by any whatsoever, I will hinder it to my utmost; and, so soon as I can, will signify it to our said lord, or to some other, by whom it may come to his knowledge. The rules of the holy fathers, the apostolical decrees, ordinances or disposals, reservations, provisions, and mandates, I will observe with all my might, and cause to be observed by others. *Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said lord, or foresaid successors, I will, to my utmost, persecute and oppose.* I will come to a council when I am called, unless I be hindered by a canonical impediment. I will, by myself in person, visit the threshold of the apostles every three years; and give an account to our lord, and foresaid successors, of all my pastoral office, and of all things any wise belonging to the state of my church, to the discipline of my clergy and people; and lastly, to the salvation of souls.

¹ This oath is found in the original in Decret. Greg. ix. Lib. ii. tit. 21.

committed to my trust ; and I will, in like manner, humbly receive, and diligently execute the apostolic commands. And if I be detained by a lawful impediment, I will perform all the things aforesaid by a certain messenger hereto especially empowered, a member of my chapter, or some other in ecclesiastical dignity, or else having a personage, or, in default of these, by a priest of the diocese, or in default of one of the clergy (of the diocese), by some other secular or regular priest of approved integrity and religion, fully instructed in all things above-mentioned. And such impediments I will make out by lawful proofs, to be transmitted by the aforesaid messengers, to the Cardinal Proponent of the Holy Roman Church, in the congregation of the Sacred Council. The possessions belonging to my table I will neither sell, nor give away, nor mortgage, nor grant anew in fee, nor any wise alienate, no, not even with the consent of the chapter of my church, without consulting the Roman Pontiff ; and if I shall make any alienation, I will thereby incur the penalties contained in a certain constitution put forth about this matter. So help me God, and these holy Gospels of God."

THE CONFSSIONAL. (p. 266.)

There is none of the usages of Popery that is fraught with more evil to individuals or society than the practice of confession to the priest ; and there is none that invests the priesthood with more extensive power of mischief to public morals, and to the best interests of the community. The Council of Lateran decrees, " That every man and woman, after they come to years of discretion, should privately confess their sins to their own priest, at least once a year, and endeavour faithfully to perform the penance enjoined on them ; and after this they should come to the sacrament at least at Easter, unless the priest for some reasonable cause judges it fit for them to abstain for that time. And whosoever does not perform this is to be excommunicated out of the Church, and if he die, he is not to be allowed Christian burial." And the Council of Trent anathematizes those who deny the Popish doctrine of Confession in these terms—" Whosoever shall deny that sacramental confession was instituted by Divine command, or that it is necessary to salvation ; or shall affirm that the practice of secretly confessing to the priest alone, as it has been ever observed from the beginning by the Catholic Church, and is still observed, is foreign to the institution and command of Christ, and is a human invention, *let him be accursed.*"¹

The form of the *Confiteor* is this : After receiving the priest's blessing, the penitent says—" I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Virgin Mary, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my most grievous fault."²

It need not be shown how contrary all this is to the Word of God, or how it involves deluded Romanists in the grossest idolatry, and places them in the most degrading bondage to their priests. The Confessional tends to generate, instead of repressing crime and immorality, and invests the priesthood with a power which should not be tolerated in any civil community. In the works of Ligouri (a Life of whom has been published in

¹ *Concil. Lat. tom. xi. par. 1 ; Concil. Lat. iv. decret. xxi. ; Elliot's Delineation, vol. 1, p. 312 ; Conc. Trid. sess. xiv.*

² *See Key to Heaven, p. 20 ; Garden of the Soul, p. 20.*

English by Cardinal Wiseman), such directions are given for the Confessional as no writer, having any regard to morality, would pollute his pages by quoting. In Dens' *Theology*, which is the class book for theological instruction in the Royal College of Maynooth, and which has been sanctioned by the four Popish Archbishops in Ireland, there are given at large the questions with which the priests are to probe the consciences, and elicit the secret thoughts and feelings of females unmarried and married; and these are so disgusting and polluting, that they cannot bear to be translated into English; and the wonder is, that any sensible Romanist, who has any regard to the purity of his wife or daughter, would permit them to be exposed to such an infamous usage. The conduct of the priesthood, connected with the Confessional, has been, in various countries, such as to trample down all morality. The writings of Blanco White, himself a priest in Spain, contain evidence the most convincing, that the Confessional is a school of vice, and that to it thousands of the Romish clergy themselves may ascribe the utter eradication of all sentiments of decency and morality. The late Romish Archbishop of Dublin (Dr Troy) was so sensible of the abuses of the Confessional in his diocese, that he issued an order, forbidding the priests to receive confessions in their private rooms, and enjoining them only to be heard in connection with the chapels.

Michelet has well remarked, in his *Priests, Women, and Families*, that while the practice of Confession is allowed, there cannot exist real freedom or liberty of action in any community—the priests obtaining, from wives and daughters, all the secrets of the family, the chamber, and the State, and directing their consciences; and, in reality, thus controlling and directing their husbands and fathers, and influencing every measure of the State.

The view of the Confessional, however, which most exhibits its pernicious tendency to the interests of the commonwealth, is that which enjoins absolute secrecy on the father-confessor, on pain of mortal sin, in all cases respecting what is divulged to him in Confession. He must, without reserve, grant absolution not only for all crimes confessed to him as having been committed, but also for the avowed purpose of perpetrating the worst crimes that outrage the laws of a community. This confession to the priest is held to be sufficient, without the criminal confessing to any other; and in no case is the priest at liberty to make known what is revealed to him in the Confessional, not even to prevent the commission of crime or preserve the peace of society. Peter Dens, in his *Theology*, expressly teaches, that the priest-confessor should not make known what is declared to him in confession, even at the expense of truth, and the sacred obligation of an oath. The following questions on this point are proposed and answered:—

“*Can a case be given in which it is lawful to break the secrecy of confession?* Ans. None can be given; although the LIFE or SALVATION of a man or the DESTRUCTION of the commonwealth would depend thereon. For the Pope himself cannot dispense with it; because the secrecy of the seal of confession is more binding than the obligation of an oath, a vow, a natural secret, &c.; and it depends on the positive will of God.”

“*What, then, ought a Confessor to answer when interrogated respecting any truth which he knows only by sacramental confession?* Ans. He ought to answer that HE DOES NOT KNOW IT; and, if necessary, TO CONFIRM THAT BY AN OATH.”

“*But what if the Confessor is directly asked whether he knows that by sacramental confession?* Ans. In this case he ought to answer nothing: so says Steyart with Sylvius. But such an interrogation is to be rejected as

impious : or the Confessor can say absolutely, not relatively, to the inquiry. (*Ego nihil scio*)—*I know nothing*; because the word (*Ego*) I refers to human knowledge. In like manner, if a Confessor should be cited before a court for trial, that he might give a reason for the denial, he ought to contend, that in this matter **HE KNOWS NO SUPERIOR BUT GOD.**"

When such are the doctrines of the Romish Church, we need not wonder that the administration of justice is obstructed, and that the most horrid crimes are perpetrated, without the least hope of detection, in all places where the power of the Popish priesthood is established, as in many parts of Ireland. The Rev. Mr Nolan, who was a convert from the Popish priesthood, in his work on the *Confessional*—after stating that when he was a priest, and fully believed in the dogmas of Rome, he had a deep sense of his own degradation, in being obliged daily to receive into his mind, as a sink, the filth and moral pollution of those who came to him for confession—mentions several instances of the commission of crimes, of which he was previously made cognizant in confession, but which he dare not reveal, even to save the life of the intended victim. One was the murder of a gentleman universally esteemed, and with whom Mr Nolan was on terms of intimate acquaintance. The hired assassin confessed the purpose to murder, and obtained absolution. The Confessor was shocked at the avowal, and laboured by every means to get the wretch to say something about his bloody purpose *out* of confession, for then he could have informed the marked victim; but without effect. A few days after, the priest met and conversed with the gentleman; but, though he states that his blood ran cold at the prospect of the fate that awaited him, he could not give him the most distant hint of his perilous situation. To have done so would have been mortal sin; and, in a short time after, the barbarous deed was done, and the murderer remained undetected, and was held as a true and worthy son of the Infallible Church.

The Rev. John Weir, in his *Lectures on Romanism*, mentions the following instance, as occurring within his own knowledge while resident in Ireland—and it is to be feared that similar cases frequently occur:—

"I know well the spot in Ireland where a father was dragged out by two blood-thirsty men from his own fireside, and notwithstanding the resistance of a heroic daughter, was barbarously shot at his own door. Though the brave girl identified both at the trial, and there existed, and could exist, no doubt of their guilt, these men, with the ropes round their necks, to the last breath declared that they were 'innocent as the child unborn.' Many a time and oft have such statements been made on the scaffold by the convicted murderer in a neighbouring country. And what shall account for this but the imaginary virtue of priestly absolution? The man has been taught to believe that this has shrived his soul from the stain of blood; and thus, with a lie in his right hand, and a falsehood on his lips, the murderer has been launched into eternity."

THE CANON LAW. —(p. 269.)

The Canon Law is termed, by Cardinal Wiseman, "*the real and complete code of the Church*," and he declares that a principal design of the present Pope in constituting a Popish hierarchy in England was to introduce this code, as it was "*inapplicable under Vicars Apostolic*"—the system which formerly existed. The Canon Law is a compilation of the decrees

¹ *Romanism: Eight Lectures for the Times*, by Rev. John Weir. pp. 135, 136.

of Popes and Councils obedient to their will in different ages, commencing with the forged "Decretals" of Isidore in the beginning of the *ninth century*, and reaching down to the *Extravagantes Communes*, which were published about A. D. 1483. The *modern period* of the Canon Law includes the canons of the Council of Trent, and various concordats between Sovereigns and Popes of a subsequent date. The first great collection of canons was made by Gratian, a monk of Bologna, and was published about the year 1150, under the title of *Decretum Gratiani*. The next collection was by Raymond of Runafort, who was authorized by Gregory IX. to collect and publish the numerous rescripts and decrees which had been afterwards issued. In 1298, Boniface VIII. added another part to previous collections, which he named the *Sext.* In 1313, Clement V. published a fresh collection of Decretals, which were termed *Clementines*. Pope John XXII., in 1340, added the *Extravagantes*; and succeeding Popes, down to Pope Sixtus IV., added others, which have been styled *Extravagantes Communes*.

The design of the Canon Law is thus stated by Hallam:—"The general supremacy effected by the Roman Church over mankind in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries derived material support from the promulgation of the Canon Law. The superiority of ecclesiastical to temporal power, or at least the absolute independence of the former, may be considered as a sort of keynote which regulates every passage in the Canon Law. It is expressly declared, that subjects owe no allegiance to an excommunicated lord, if, after admonition, he is not reconciled to the Church. And the rubric prefixed to the declaration of Frederick II.'s deposition in the Council of Lyons, asserts that the Pope may dethrone the Emperor for lawful causes." The eloquent Gavazzi has thus farther stated the character of this Canon Law:—"Legislation quailed before the new-born code of clerical command, which, in the slang of the dark ages, was called canon law. The principle which pollutes every page of this nefarious imposture is, that every human right, claim, property, franchise, or feeling at variance with the predominance of the popedom, was *ipso facto* inimical to heaven, and the God of eternal justice. In virtue of this preposterous prerogative, universal manhood became a priest's footstool, this planet a huge game-preserve for the Pope's individual shooting."² A few of the canons of this code we sub-join, as a sample of the monstrous claims of the Papacy, and of the degrading vassalage to which it aims to reduce the civil power in every nation into which it is introduced.

"The Bishop of Rome is not bound by any decrees, but he may compel, as well the clergy as laymen, to receive his decrees and canon laws."

"The Bishop of Rome hath authority to judge all men, and especially to discern the articles of faith, and that without any council; and may assoil (acquit) them that the council hath damned; but no man hath authority to judge him, nor to meddle with any thing that he hath judged, neither emperor, king, people, nor the clergy; and it is not lawful for any man to dispute of his power."

"The Bishop of Rome may excommunicate emperors and princes, depose them from their states, and assoil their subjects from their oath of obedience to them, and so constrain them to rebellion."

"Whatever belongs to priests cannot be usurped by kings." "The tribunals of kings are subjected to the power of priests." "The yoke which the Holy Chair imposes must be borne, although it may seem unbearable."

"The emperor ought to obey, not command the Pope."

"The Bishop of Rome may compel, by an oath, all rulers and other

¹ *History of the Middle Ages*, vol. ii. pp. 2-4

² Gavazzi, Oration vi.

people to observe and cause to be observed, whatsoever the See of Rome shall ordain concerning heresy, and the favourers thereof; and who will not obey, he may deprive them of their dignities."

"If the Pope should become neglectful of his own salvation, and of that of other men, and so lost to all good that he draw down with himself innumerable heaps of people into hell, and plunge them with himself into eternal torments, yet no mortal man may presume to reprehend him, so much as he is judge of all, and judged of no one." "The bond of allegiance to an excommunicated man does not bind those who have come under it." "An oath sworn against the good of the Church does not bind; because that is not an oath, but a perjury rather, which is taken against the Church's interests." "The man who takes the money of the Church is as guilty as he who commits homicide. He who seizes upon the lands of the Church is excommunicated, and must restore fourfold."

The Canon Law minutely prescribes the punishments to be awarded to heretics, and persons suspected of heresy, and extends them to such as harbour, defend, or assist them, or who converse familiarly with them, or trade with them. These are excommunication, prescription from all offices civil or ecclesiastical, confiscation of all their goods, and death—sometimes by the sword, more commonly by fire.

"Those are not to be accounted homicides who, fired with zeal for Mother Church, may have killed excommunicated persons."

Such is the celebrated, or we should rather say infamous Canon Law, which Cardinal Wiseman declares it was the design of the Papal Aggression to bring into force in Britain. Well might the Prime Minister say, in his place in Parliament, that if the Pope would succeed in his attempt in these countries, the Roman Catholics themselves would enjoy infinitely less liberty than they now do under the British Government; and that in former times, Popish princes had determinedly resisted the introduction of the Pope's rescripts and of the Canon Law into their dominions, without their being first submitted to the civil authority. Justly has it been said of these laws of the Papacy, "Were Lucifer to turn legislator, and indite a code of jurisprudence for the government of mankind, he would find the work done already to his hand in the Canon Law."

For an account of the history of the Canon Law, see the work of Charles Butler, the Roman Catholic barrister, entitled *Hora Juridica Subseriva*.

HOSTILITY OF POPEY TO THE BIBLE.—(p. 288.)

The Church of Rome not only denies the Scriptures to be the only *rule of faith*, and maintains that pretended unwritten traditions are of equal authority with the Word of God, but employs every means to prevent the Bible from coming into the hands of the people. One of the most marked characteristics of the Church of Rome is its inveterate hostility to the Scriptures. Previously to the Reformation, she kept the Bible locked up in a dead language; and for the crime of translating the Sacred Volume into English, she caused Tyndale to be put to death, and Wyckliffe would have shared the same fate, if he had not been protected by the powerful Duke of Lancaster.

The Council of Trent, in its fourth rule, prohibits any person from "reading the Scriptures without a licence from his Bishop or Inquisitor—this licence only to be obtained when his Confessor shall certify that he is in no danger of receiving injury from so doing." The council adds—"If

any one shall dare to read or keep in his possession that book without such a licence, he shall not receive absolution till he has given it up to his Ordinary." The Bull of Pope Pius IV. declares that whosoever shall violate this rule shall be guilty of mortal sin. In 1816, Pope Pius VII. denounced the circulation of the Scriptures as "a most crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined." The same Pope, in a Bull issued in 1819, in relation to the Irish schools, speaks of the circulation of the Scriptures in the schools as "a sowing of tares," declares that the children are thereby "infected with the fatal poison of depraved doctrines," and exhorts the Romish bishops to "endeavour to prevent the wheat being choked by the tares." Pope Leo XII., in his Encyclical Letter in 1824, in denouncing the Bible Society, terms the Protestant Bible "the Gospel of the Devil;" and the present Pope follows in the course of his predecessors, in representing the free circulation of the Scriptures as most dangerous, and to be opposed in every possible way. The late Dr Doyle, in opposing the Kildare Peace Society, declared, that if the parents sent their children to a Bible School after the warning of the priest, "they would be guilty of mortal sin;" and on one occasion, he had the effrontery to say, that if he met a Kildare peasant, who had received a copy of the Scriptures from a Protestant lady, and had taken it with the tongs and buried it, lest by touching it he would be defiled, he would reward him for the action.

Approved Popish writers have used the most derogatory terms in speaking of the Word of God. Pighius calls it "*a nose of wax which easily suffers itself to be drawn backward and forward, and moulded this way, and that way, and however you like.*" Turrian designates it "a shoe that will fit any foot—a sphinx riddle—a matter for strife." Lessius says the Bible is "doubtful, obscure, ambiguous, and perplexed;" and the author of *De Tribus Veritatibus* calls it "*a forest for thieves, a shop of heretics.*" In the Bible discussions in Ireland, Mr M'Kean, a Popish priest, correctly stated the sentiment of the Popish Church when he said: "The Scriptures of themselves, unless accompanied by such notes and explanations, lead to every species of fanaticism and infidelity. The Catholic Church opposes their indiscriminate circulation." It deserves to be remarked, that the heads of the Romish Church, while they declare that the Scriptures are by no means to be read without notes and comments, have never to this hour published anything that can be called an *authorizal* explanation of the Bible, or of any portion of it. Even the Douay version of the Scriptures is not allowed to the people by the Popish priesthood. At the Carlow Discussion, Mr Nowlan declared,—"*If the Bible Society came to distribute copies even of that version which the Catholic Church approves of, we should still consider it our duty to oppose them. This principle (that of the Bible Society) is abusive of the Scriptures, hostile to the Catholic faith, and prejudicial to the peace and order of society.*"

The *practice* of the Popish Church in relation to the circulation of the Scriptures is in accordance with her avowed principles. In Spain and Portugal, and other Popish countries, the Scriptures are almost wholly unknown; while in Protestant countries, the utmost care is taken to guard the masses of the people who adhere to the Romish Church, from the contamination of Bible reading. Seymour, in his work entitled *Mornings among the Jesuits*, states, that after careful inquiry at all the booksellers'

¹ *Concil. Trident. De Libris. Prohibitis.*

² See *Mr Gavin's Protestant*, vol. 1, p. 272. See *Dr Brackenridge's Reply to Hughes*, p. 283.

³ *Discussion at Carrick-on-Shannon*, p. 9.

⁴ *Bible Discussion at Carlow*, p. 4.

shops, he "could not procure a single copy of the Scriptures in the Roman language, of a portable size, in the whole city of Rome." The reply that the booksellers invariably made to the inquiry, why they had not for sale so important a book, was that the volume was prohibited—that it was not permitted to be sold. Only at two places was Martini's edition of the Bible offered for sale, at the cost of 105 francs (about £4 sterling), a price which entirely prevents it being read by the common people. This is the state of matters in a city where there are above 5000 priests, monks, and nuns, besides cardinals and prelates. The whole population of Rome is only thirty thousand families, and there is thus a priest, or a monk, or a nun, to every six families in Rome, so that there are ample means for the instruction of the people, and yet here the Scriptures are to all intents and purposes completely prohibited.¹ Justly has it been remarked—"The suppression of the Scriptures has been the unquestionable characteristic of the Papal policy for a thousand years. In every country where it possessed influence, Popery invariably succeeded in extinguishing the national use of the Bible: in every country where the Reformation enlightened the popular ignorance, its first effect was to give the Bible to the people. This was, and is, uniformly the point of struggle—the acknowledged distinction—the marking feature—of the contest between Protestantism and Popery."²

The following anecdote illustrates the enmity of the Papacy to the Bible. The wife of a clergyman of the Church of England died at Rome. The following epitaph was prepared by her husband for her tombstone:—"For her to live was Christ," &c. "She is gone to the mountain of myrrh, and the hill of frankincense, till the day break," &c. This was submitted to the Censor—struck out. An appeal was carried to Pius IX. himself. He confirmed the Censor's act on two grounds: 1st. it was unlawful to express the hope of immortality over the grave of a heretic; 2d, "it was contrary to law to publish in the sight of the Roman people any portion of the Word of God."³

In a valuable pamphlet entitled, *The Bible in Italy in 1851*, by the Hon. and Rev. Samuel Waldegrave, he thus relates what happened to himself on the borders of the Pontifical States, in April last:—"At the various Custom-houses of Italy, books and arms are the principal, I may say the only things about which the searchers evince any zeal. I had with me, while travelling, only two books of at all a controversial character—controversial I mean, in the opinion of Rome. One was Jewell's *Apology for the English Church*, in Latin; the other was a small pocket copy of Diodati's Italian Bible,—it was purchased by my wife twelve years ago, and besides bearing her maiden name, and the date 1839 on the title-page, it exhibited in the binding manifest proofs that it had been long and frequently used. It so happened, that in returning from Naples to Rome, this Bible was put into one of our portmanteaus. On arriving at Terracina, the frontier town of the Pontifical States, that portmanteau was opened at the Custom-house. The Italian Bible was soon discovered. Immediately it was seen, the searcher exclaimed, with a look of the utmost horror, 'Una Biblia.' A second person added, 'Una Biblia Italiana;' while a third exclaimed, 'È Diodati!' I was absent at the moment. On returning, I pointed out that it was only for personal use. I assured them that it would not be given away; but in vain. The principal Custom-house officer, taking it up, and turning to the back of the title-page, exclaimed, 'È veine dalla propaganda.' It bore the impress of the Bible Society, and the Bible Society he meant when he spoke of the propaganda. The Bible

¹ *Mornings among the Jesuits at Rome*, pp. 132, 135.

² *Wylie on the Papacy*, p. 188.

³ Croly.

was taken away. I thought that we might ourselves proceed; no such thing. For three hours and a half I was detained under arrest at Terracina, and it was only by going twice to the Governor's house, and almost forcing myself into the Governor's sick room, that I succeeded at last in procuring permission to go forwards. Before, however, I did proceed, my English Book of Common Prayer, with a small English treatise on a part of the Apocalypse (containing no reference to Popery), were taken from me. The Custom-house officers did not know English, but they said that the books might contain much evil. All this was done on the authority of a letter received that morning from Rome, commanding that all clandestine books should be seized, and the bearers detained. Upon my representing this to the legate of the district, he expressed his regret at what had happened; the Minister of Finance at Rome did the same; but said that a mistake had been committed. *But can the government, under which such a mistake can happen, be said to permit their people the free use of the Bible?* I must add, that in spite of repeated promises to the contrary, neither the Bible nor either of the other books was returned to me."

THE JESUITS.—(p. 279.)

The Order of the Jesuits dates its origin from Ignatius Loyola, or according to his paternal name, Don Inigo Lopez de Recaldo, the son of a Spanish nobleman, who was severely wounded at the siege of Pampeluna, in 1535, and who, during his confinement, conceived the design of restoring the Papacy, then shaken by the efforts of the Reformers, to more than its pristine power and splendour. After a severe course of preparatory discipline and bodily mortification, Loyola entered upon the execution of his vast project, which was nothing short of utterly extinguishing all dissent from Popery, and all opposition to the Papal power, and of subordinating everything throughout the world to the Pope's supremacy. Having published the *Spiritual Exercises*,—a work which forms the basis of his system, and which has, for more than 300 years, reduced myriads of minds to the most abject bondage,—he applied to Paul III., the reigning Pope, and in 1543, obtained a Bull, granting to the Society of Jesus, as it was impiously called, the full Papal sanction. The grand principle of the association was unlimited submission to the Pope. The members were sworn to maintain, at all hazards, the Papal supremacy; to go at once to wherever the Pontiff commanded, and to go on whatever mission he prescribed. The General of the Order was to be obeyed in everything by the members,—in the words of the original institute, "in him should Christ be honoured as if He were present in person."

The system devised for training the future members of the Society is the most perfect that can be conceived for accomplishing its objects. All mental qualities of the novices, and all circumstances connected with their inclinations, relations, worldly means, etc., are carefully scrutinized, and rendered subservient to the great object of making them the most polished and abject tools of the Papacy. The instructions on this article are most explicit, and are such as to effect the complete slavery of those who receive them. "Let every one persuade himself that they who live under obedience should permit themselves to be moved and directed under Divine Providence by their superiors, just as if they were a corpse, which allows itself to be moved and handled in any way; or like the staff of an old man, which serves him wherever or in whatever thing he who holds it pleases."

The solemn oath of the members pledges them, "before Almighty God, and his Virgin Mother," to obey his superior, "as holding the place of God."

The *doctrines* and *practices* of the Jesuits exhibit the true character of Popery—and these are the most opposite to all evangelical truth, and to all sound morality. By the doctrine of *Probabilism*.—which is exposed with such caustic severity in Pascal's famous *Provincial Letters*.—any sentiment, however contrary to truth, or offensive to good morals, may be embraced, and carried out into application. The meaning of this dogma is, that if *one* doctor among the Jesuits has defended any course of conduct, or principle, though it may be subversive of all morality, his defence renders the action or principle probably right; and according to Jesuitical morality, that action may be done, or that principle held, without sin.

Thus, one Jesuit doctor teaches that—

"We may seek an occasion of sin directly and designedly, *primo et per se*, when our own or our neighbour's spiritual or temporal advantage induces us to do so."

Even a Pope (Alexander VII.) was constrained to say, that the "unbridled licentiousness" which Jesuitism sanctioned, would soon utterly corrupt Christianity.

By another Jesuit principle, "*the doctrine of intention*," we are taught that if a person, when about to commit a sin, directs his intention from the evil to the benefit to be enjoyed, the action is right. Thus, one Jesuit authority teaches—

"If, through invincible error, you believe lying or blasphemy to be *commanded by God*, blaspheme."

John Baptist Taberna says—

"That if a judge has received a bribe for passing an unjust sentence, it is probable that he may keep it. . . . This opinion is defended and maintained by fifty-eight doctors."

Vasques says, "If one saw a thief going to rob a poor man, it would be lawful to divert him from his purpose, by pointing out to him some rich individual, whom he might rob in place of the other."

Sanchez thus sanctions *perjury*—

"After saying aloud, 'I swear that I have not done that,' the person upon oath is to add, in a low voice, 'to-day;' or after saying aloud, 'I swear,' he is to interpose, in a whisper, 'that I say,' then continue aloud, 'that I have done that.'"

Escobar maintains that

"A wife may gamble, and for this purpose may pilfer money from her husband." *Larceny* by servants is thus justified by Jesuit authors: "Servants are excused both from sin, and from restitution, if they only take an *equitable compensation*--that is, when they are not furnished with such things for food and clothing as are usual in other houses, and which ought to be provided for similar servants." Murder, in various forms, is vindicated thus--

"If you are preparing to give false witness against me, by which I should receive sentence of death, and I have no other means of escape, it is lawful for me to kill you, since I would otherwise be killed myself."

Again, "By the universal consent of the casuists, it is lawful to kill our calumniators, if there be no other way of averting the affront." Again, "A priest may not only kill a slanderer, but there are certain circumstances in which it may be his duty so to do." The Jesuit Bonacina says—

"A mother is guiltless who wishes the death of her daughters, when, by

reason of their deformity or poverty, she cannot manage them to her heart's desire."

And it is further taught by Jesuit doctors, that—

"Christian and Catholic sons may accuse their fathers of the crime of heresy, if they wish to turn them from the earth, although they know that their parents may be burned with fire, and put to death for it." ¹ Such is a specimen of Jesuit morality in relation to the second table of the Divine law. In respect of the duties directly owing to God, their doctrines are even more revolting. Thus, John of Salis says, "An active love to God is not due to Him through justice, nor is even any due."

Gordon, another Jesuit divine, writes—

"Having established the obligation of this command (the love of God), we must next inquire *when* it is binding. . . . I think that the time in which it is binding cannot easily be defined. It is a sure thing that it is binding, but *when* is sufficiently uncertain."

Another Jesuit authority declares—

"An explicit belief in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Trinity is not a necessary means of salvation."

Another defends *hypocrisy* in these terms—

"One fulfils the precept of hearing mass even though one should go with no such intention at all."

The *profligacy* of monks is thus defended—

"A monk is not to be excommunicated for putting off his habit, provided it is to dance, swindle, or go *incognito* into infamous houses."

And, to close the quotation of specimens of the infamous principles inculcated by Jesuits, Suarez gives this interpretation of the words of the Saviour, "Feed my sheep:"—

"Among other things comprised in these words, and in the power which they convey, this also is included—*destroy, proscribe, depose heretic kings who will not be corrected, and who are injurious to their subjects in things which concern the Catholic faith.*" ²

The "*Secret Instructions*" of the Jesuits, which were only meant for the *professed*, and which were long concealed from others, have been brought to light; and they reveal the enormous extent of their wickedness and their deep designs to compass their objects. The murders and perjuries perpetrated by Jesuits that have been found out, and that are recorded in history, are numerous and flagrant, though an infinitely greater number await the revelation of that day, when the earth will no longer cover her blood, or conceal her slain. The Gunpowder Plot in England was hatched by Jesuits. In 1584, the Prince of Orange was killed by one trained by Jesuits. Henry IV. of France was assassinated by Ravallac, who was employed by the Jesuits for this purpose. In England, Parry was engaged as their instrument to assassinate Queen Elizabeth. In Scotland, Crichton the Jesuit was employed by the Order to murder King James. Count Krasinski, in his *Lectures on Poland*, ascribes the degradation and ruin of his country to Jesuit plots, conspiracies, and massacres; and there is strong ground to conclude that not a few of the cold-blooded assassinations that have been perpetrated in the south of Ireland have originated from the same quarter. In India, the Jesuit missionaries pretended to Hindus that they were Brahmins, and conformed to Brahminical habits and usages; and their converts were permitted to conform to all heathen rites. The Jesuit fathers even solemnly and publicly declared on oath that in their missions the religion of Christ must necessarily be joined to the idolatry of the heathen, to render it acceptable to Hindus and others. It is not to be

¹ See *The Jesuits*, by Dr Duff, p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 29.

wondered at, that when Tippoo Saib, in 1784, collected 60,000 of these Jesuit converts to make them Mohammedans again, not a solitary individual adhered to a Christian profession.

The Jesuits, in every country in which they have existed, have been convicted of the most monstrous crimes, and their existence has been declared to be incompatible with the peace and safety of society. They have been expelled not only from China and Japan and Russia, and other countries that have not acknowledged subjection to Rome, but at one time or other they have, by public acts, been extruded from Popish nations themselves. Even the Pope himself has been found to decree their banishment. Clement XIV. — usually termed “the virtuous Ganganelli” — in 1773, issued a Bull for their expulsion. Immediately on signing the document, he is said to have remarked — “The suppression is accomplished. I do not repent of it, but it will be my death.” Soon after, a pasquinade appeared on the walls of St Peter, which the Pope himself interpreted as meaning — “The Holy See will be vacant in September.” In June, 1774, he was suddenly cut off, under circumstances which left the strongest ground to suspect that he perished from the effects of poison, administered by the Jesuits. In 1814, Pius VII. issued a Bull for the restoration of the Order. This has been confirmed by the present Pontiff, and the Jesuits are now in high favour at the Vatican; and are again active in all Popish, in many Protestant, and in several distant heathen nations. Their establishments at Clongowes in Ireland and at Stoneyhurst in England, openly train a large number of recruits for all parts of the iniquitous service of the Order; while innumerable concealed agents are actively and incessantly employed in carrying into execution their diabolical designs. To those who desire full information respecting the history, character, doctrines, and practices of the Jesuits, we refer to *Pascal's Provincial Letters*, edited by Dr M'Crie; *Düller's Jesuits, as they Were and Are*, translated by Mrs Carr; *Loyola and the Jesuits*, by Isaac Taylor; *The Jesuits*, by Dr Duff; *Ranke's History of the Popes*, and a *Lecture by Dr Tweedie on the Jesuits*, in the *Edinburgh Lectures on Popery*.¹

THE IDOLATRY OF ROMANISM—(p. 296.)

Although Romish writers affect to be very indignant at the charge of idolatry as preferred against the doctrine and worship of the Church of Rome, yet, grave as such a charge is, there is the fullest evidence to substantiate it. The distinction which is attempted to be made respecting the different kinds of worship—as *Latreia*, the worship due to Godhead—*Douleia*, the homage to the saints—and *hyperdouleia*, the worship given to the Virgin Mary—is a pure invention of the Apostate Church, and has not the slightest warrant in the Scriptures of truth. The pretence that the worship is not rendered to the image, but to the object which the image represents, does not free the practice of veneration of images from the crime of idolatry; since precisely the same plea was used for the use of statues and images under Paganism; and, in fact, in all Popish countries, the masses of the people reject the refined distinction, and literally worship the sensible object. Middleton's *Letter from Rome* fully proves that many of the statues of the most favoured saints in Rome are just those of the heathen gods, with a Christian

¹ “There exists a papal coin in their (the Jesuits) honour, as ‘domini canes’—the noble hounds of heretics. The device is a dog, with a lighted torch in his mouth, traversing a globe; the motto, ‘What will I, if it be already kindled.’” — *The Jesuits as they Were and Are*, by Düller; Introduction.

name, and that the worship rendered at their churches and shrines is grossly idolatrous.

In the authorized rites of the Romish Church, the worship *Latria*, that which is due to the Supreme God, is, by the Council of Trent, commanded to be given *to the wood* of the cross, and those are declared accursed who refuse to render it. Clark, the author of *Glimpses of the Old World*, when at Rome, witnessed the ceremony of the Pope and the cardinals adorning the cross; and to render the idolatry more manifest, in the words pronounced in worshipping, they used the expression, "the wood of the cross," in their invocations. The consecrated wafer is worshipped, relics are addressed in prayer, and the Romish Missal contains many prayers expressly directed to departed saints and angels. The Pope, as Christ's pretended vicar on earth, is worshipped. On a medal referring to the inauguration of Pope Martin V., the Cardinals are represented kneeling and kissing his toe; and this inscription is added, descriptive of the act, "*Quem creant, adorant*"—"whom they make they adore." Moreover, the worship of the Virgin Mary may be said peculiarly to characterize the whole Popish system, and to prove against it most conclusively the charge of idolatry. If idolatry consists in ascribing divine attributes, and paying divine honours, to a creature, then it is perfectly obvious that the Romish Church is universally chargeable with this fearful crime, in the worship which she renders to the Virgin Mary. Not only is she styled by Popish councils, Popes, and bishops, "the mother of God,"—a title which is never given her in the Scriptures, and which evidently leads the ignorant to regard her as exalted above the rank of all creatures,—but she is directly addressed in prayer, by her deluded votaries, in every form of expression that can designate divine power and authority; and all ranks in the Romish Church, from the Pope to the lowest member, glory in the extravagant and insensate worship which they gave to the Virgin. The system is throughout *Maridatry*—the worship of Mary; and it is justly said, that the Virgin Mary may be properly regarded as the God of all Roman Catholic countries.¹

In the *Glories of Mary*, a work published by St. Alphonsus Ligouri, the Virgin Mary is spoken of in a style not only to exhibit her pre-eminent honours, but even to exalt her to a station of superiority above the persons of the Godhead. The following is a specimen of the idolatry and blasphemy of this work:

"The Lord has divided his kingdom, which consisted in justice and mercy. The kingdom of justice he has reserved to himself, and the kingdom of mercy He has, in a certain manner, given to Mary, ordaining that all the mercies which He dispenses to men should pass through her hands, and be dispensed as she pleases." "She is the privileged ark, where all who shelter themselves are saved from eternal shipwreck." "She is the coadjutrix of our redemption," the "mediatrix of peace between sinners and God," our "advocate," "the hope of sinners," the "way of salvation," "the life," the "refuge of the afflicted," the "help of Christians," the "all-powerful Virgin," "the gate through which sinners go to God," "the gate of heaven, because no one enters this blessed abode without passing through her." She is "the ladder to heaven," "the bridge of salvation which God has prepared for us in order to pass securely over the waters of this life." "Mary has been elected from all eternity, as mother of God, that she may save, by her mercy, those to whom her Son in justice cannot grant pardon." "Mary is the mistress of Paradise; she there admits whomsoever she pleases, and no wonder, since she is the mother of the Lord of paradise."

¹ See *Rome in the Nineteenth Century*.

She is "the protectress of sinners," the "rampart of Christians," the "salvation of the world." "She has at her disposal all the treasures of the divinity." She is "the queen of mercy, because she opens at pleasure the abyss of the divine mercy, so that no sinner, however enormous his crimes be, can perish if he is protected by Mary."

The specimens of idolatrous worship addressed to the Virgin are so numerous, that it is difficult to make a selection of instances. In the *Litany of the Virgin*, a petition is given in these terms—"We fly to thy patronage, O holy mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities; but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin." The hymn, or prayer, called *Salve Regina*, has these expressions—"Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope, to thee do we cry, poor banished sons of Eve, to thee do we send our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile ended, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus; O most clement, most pious, and most sweet Virgin Mary." In the favourite hymn, "Ave Maria Stella," similar expressions are used—"Hail, star of the sea, and kind mother of God, and ever virgin; happy gate of heaven; taking that 'hail' from the mouth of Gabriel, do thou establish us in peace, changing the name of Eve. Do thou for the accused loose their bonds; for the blind bear forth a light; drive away our evils; demand for us all good things; SHOW THAT THOU ART A MOTHER." This last expression evidently means, "exert a mother's influence and authority," and evidently places the Virgin above the Saviour.

In the daily prayers of Romanist worshippers, the *Ave Maria* (the Prayer to the Virgin) is placed side by side with the *Pateroster* (the Lord's Prayer); and the *Rosary*, which guides the devotees in numbering their vain repetitions, attests that *Mary worship* is the prevailing part of Romish devotion. It consists of 150 small beads, each answering to an *Ave*, and 15 large beads, each representing a *Pateroster*; so that, for one prayer to God which the devotee offers, he offers *ten* prayers to the Virgin Mary. The *scapular*, worn on the person of Romanists, and which they believe to possess mysterious virtue, is worn in honour of the Virgin. The highest dignitaries in the Popish Church parade on all occasions, before their deluded followers, their idolatrous veneration for the Virgin. In the Encyclical Letter of the late Pope Gregory XVI., the Virgin is styled, "through every great calamity, our patroness and protectress;" and in the close he says, addressing the bishops and clergy, "But that all may have a successful and happy issue, let us raise our eyes to the most Blessed Virgin Mary, *who alone destroys heresies, who is our greatest hope, yea, THE ENTIRE GROUND OF OUR HOPE.*"

In the Encyclical Letter of the present Pope, issued in 1846, he styles her "our sweetest mother, our mediatrix, our advocate, our surest hope, and firmest reliance, than whose patronage nothing is more potent, nothing more effectual with God." In the Allocution of the same Pope, pronounced when at Gaeta, in 1849, he says—"Let us have recourse to the most holy and immaculate Virgin Mary, who being mother of God, and our mother, and the mother of mercy, finds what she seeks and cannot be frustrated." After this, we need not wonder that the Irish Romish bishops, at the late synod of Thurles, and more recently at the Aggregate Meeting in Dublin, commended their measures to the patronage of the Virgin, in whom they reposed all their hope of success. It may be added, that what is termed by Romanists the *Assumption* of the blessed Virgin (the taking up of her body miraculously to heaven after her death), which every Papist is taught

as firmly to believe as he does the Ascension of our Lord, is commemorated by one of the most solemn festivals in the Church of Rome. Surely these specimens are more than sufficient to prove the gross and extravagant idolatry of the Church of Rome.

FATE OF THE KINGS OF FRANCE.—(p. 309.)

The following striking remarks of the *Edinburgh Witness*, made on the occasion of the death of the late ex-king of France, and in reference to the judgments that have been executed upon the royal house of France, exhibit the righteous retribution of God against those who have persecuted and destroyed his saints:—

“It is a curious fact, not very widely known, that Louis Philippe purchased and read *Fleming's Rise and Fall of the Papacy*, in the spring of 1849. We are believers in the Bible, and, of course, in the Apocalypse; and as we hold with the great body of Apocalyptic interpreters, who have all, from the second century, with scarce one exception, applied its predictions to the Latin apostasy, so we believe that the humiliations of the royal house of France are foreshadowed, implicitly at least, in the Apocalyptic scroll. What effect the book produced upon the mind of the ex-monarch we know not. But putting revelation, and especially its more symbolical parts, out of the question altogether, and founding only upon the principles of theism, we ask, is it consistent with the idea of a moral Governor that such crimes as were committed in France, and in which the Bourbon race bore a chief part, should pass without some public token of vengeance? The Gallic annals present us with little, during a series of ages, but oaths violated, treaties broken, massacres, crusades, proscriptions, and cruelties of all kinds, inflicted on those whose only crime, on the testimony of their enemies, was their Protestantism, and who in other respects were loyal, industrious, learned, and virtuous. Is there no cry arising from this blood? When the darkest of its many dark tragedies was enacted—the St Bartholomew massacre—Knox was still alive. “Being conveyed to the pulpit,” says M'Crie, “and summoning up the remainder of his strength, he thundered the vengeance of Heaven against ‘that cruel murderer and false traitor, the king of France,’ and desired Le Croce, the French ambassador, to tell his master, that sentence was pronounced against him in Scotland, that the Divine vengeance would never depart from him, nor from his house, if repentance did not ensue; but his name would remain an execration to posterity, and none proceeding from his loins should enjoy his kingdom in peace.” Have the kings of France since that day reigned in peace, or descended from the throne full of years and honours? Charles IX., by whom the dreadful tragedy was enacted, died soon after in awful horrors, the blood flowing from every pore of his body. Henry III., his successor, fell by the hand of an assassin. Henry IV., after a reign of twenty years, distracted by civil wars, died by the dagger of Ravallac. His successor, Louis XIII., after a reign of thirty-three years, spent mostly in warring with his subjects, died in his bed. Of Louis XIV. it is impossible to say whether the opening of his career was the more brilliant or its close the more disastrous and unhappy. The reign of Louis XV. was marked by private profligacy, public profusion, increasing financial embarrassment, and growing discontent. The king expired of a mortal distemper caught in the pursuit of his pleasures. In the next reign, the Revolution appeared upon the scene, and Louis XVI. perished on the scaffold. The troubled lives and unhonoured ends of the French kings

since that period are too well known to require that we should dwell upon them. And now the death of Louis Philippe adds another to the list of discrowned heads which have gone down in exile into the tomb.

"It is impossible to run over this list without calling to mind the denunciations thundered by Knox against Charles IX., 'that none proceeding from his loins should enjoy his kingdom in peace.' Other marks of retribution, too palpable not to strike a reflecting mind, are not wanting. For three gloomy years, the guillotine plied its dismal work on the very spot within the city of Paris where the first French martyr was burned. And during the late Revolution, that throne from which so many unrighteous edicts had issued, was burned as a sacrilegious thing on the Place la Bastille; and the Palace of the Tuileries, in which so many plots against the liberties of the world had been hatched, was converted into the abode of a crew of hateful satyrs. Nor can we think of the doomed country, revolving, Ixion-like, in its ceaseless cycles of convulsion, to end at last in ruin, without recalling forcibly the doom uttered of old against the persecutors of the chosen race—'Make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.'"

THE MEANS OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SEAT OF THE PAPACY.—(p. 310.)

From various passages contained both in the Old and New Testament, that refer to the final destruction of Antichrist, we are strongly inclined to the opinion of several ancient and of some modern expositors, that among the last plagues that will be inflicted upon Papal Rome, will be *earthquakes and volcanic fire*, marking as a monument of Divine vengeance to future generations the place which has so long been noted for monstrous wickedness, and countless crimes. Besides the judgment inflicted on the Papacy by the European kings, which is figuratively spoken of as burning the flesh of the great whore "with fire" (Rev. xvii.), it is declared, evidently in a different sense, that "she shall be utterly burned with fire." (Rev. xviii. 8.) This is said to be inflicted by an immediate act of Divine vengeance; and the witnesses of the destruction are represented as standing afar off, "for fear of her torment," and beholding "the smoke of her burning," which is spoken of as going up "for ever and ever." These expressions aptly designate the action of volcanic fire; and the physical nature of the soil about the city of Rome, and throughout a great portion of the Italian peninsula, impregnated with sulphur, lava, and the ashes of volcanoes, and peculiarly adapted to volcanic action, exhibits a singular preparation for such a catastrophe. Vitringa not only gives as his own opinion, but represents that of Jewish writers as concurring, that the prediction in Isaiah xxxiv. 9, 10, refers to mystic Edom, or Rome,— "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch; it shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever." Louth also, as other expositors, applies the prophecy in Jeremiah li. 25, to the New Testament Babylon, or Rome,— "I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord; and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and make thee a burnt mountain." (Vide *Vitringa on the Apocalypse*, p. 1065; *Louth on Jer. li. 25*.) The destruction of Rome, and of the whole or a part of the Papal ecclesiastical state in Italy, by such a physical agency, and the converting of this locality into an *unquenched volcanic fire*, would, like the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, traces of which re-

main on the region of these cities till the present day, form a most impressive and lasting testimony of the Divine detestation of the complicated and long-continued wickedness that has been perpetrated around the seven-hilled throne of the Papacy, and in the "Patrimony of St Peter." The earthquake that lately overthrew so many villages and habitations in the kingdom of Naples, and that destroyed, as in a moment, from *three to five thousand* of the inhabitants, shows how suddenly and fearfully Rome's plagues may lay her desolate, when the slumbering fires of vengeance are waked up to execute the Divine purpose of wrath. The author rejoices to find that the views which he has advanced in this note, are presented by Elliot in his *Horæ Apocalypticæ* (see vol. iv. pp. 106-108). He may be permitted to add, however, that he had entertained them, and sometimes publicly taught them, long before he perused Elliot's work.

RESUSCITATION OF THE SAINTS NOT LITERAL BUT FIGURATIVE.—(p. 306.)

Millennarians, who plead for a literal resurrection of the saints at the commencement of the Millennium, from the passage in Revelation xx. 4. overlook altogether the familiar use of such language by the sacred writers, as is employed in the Apocalypse, to designate a resurrection which cannot possibly be understood literally but figuratively. Thus, concerning the recovery and restoration of ancient Israel, the Lord says, by the prophet Ezekiel (xxxvii. 12-14)—"Thus saith the Lord God. Behold. O my people. I will *open your graves. and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.*" Again, by the prophet Hosea (vi. 2), revival is thus predicted—"After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will *raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.*" Concerning the prodigal returned (Luke xv. 11-32), it is said, "He was *dead, and is alive again.*" Justified persons are said to "pass from death unto life;" and in conversion and sanctification, those are declared to be "*quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins*" (Ephesians ii. 1). In the Apocalypse itself, the figurative resurrection of the witnesses is thus expressed—"And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet" (Rev. xi. 11).

Such a mode of thinking and speaking has indeed been common in all ages with earnest minds when engaged about events of great importance. D'Aubigné, speaking of the martyrdom of John Huss, says: "When the venerable John Huss had been summoned by Sigismund's order before the Council of Constance, and had been thrown into prison, the chapel of Bethlehem, in which he had proclaimed the Gospel and the future triumphs of Christ, occupied his mind much more than his own defence. One night the holy martyr saw, in imagination, from the depths of his dungeon, the pictures of Christ that he had painted on the walls of his oratory effaced by the Pope and his bishops. This vision distressed him; but on the next day, he saw many painters occupied in restoring these figures in greater number and in brighter colours. As soon as their task was ended, the painters, who were surrounded by an immense crowd, exclaimed, 'Now let the popes and bishops come, they will never efface them more!' And many people rejoiced in Bethlehem. and I with them, adds John Huss. 'Busy yourself with your defence rather than with your dreams,' said his faithful friend, the knight of Chlum, to whom he had communicated this vision. 'I am no dreamer,' replied Huss; 'but I maintain this for certain, that the image of Christ will never

be effaced. They have wished to destroy it, but it shall be painted afresh in all hearts by much better preachers than myself. The nation that loves Christ will rejoice at this. And I, AWAKING FROM AMONG THE DEAD, AND RISING, SO TO SPEAK, FROM MY GRAVE, SHALL LEAP WITH GREAT JOY." Elliot, *Hours Apocalypticæ* (vol. ii. p. 394), mentions that a medal exists, representing Huss at the stake, and having this inscription round it, [*Centum revolutis annis, Deo respondebitis et mihi*—"When a hundred years shall have revolved, ye shall answer to GOD AND TO ME." Elliot also refers to a Brief addressed by Pope Adrian in 1523 to the Diet at Navenberg, containing these words—"THE HERETICS HUSS AND JEROME ARE NOW ALIVE AGAIN IN THE PERSON OF MARTIN LUTHER."'

FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW.—(p. 339.)

By this oppressive enactment, the authorities in the non-slave-holding States are imperatively required to co-operate in restoring to cruel masters the victims of oppression, and all the citizens are held bound to lend assistance to the slave-holder in securing his prey. When the cupidity and unscrupulous conduct of those who traffic in human beings are considered; and that many most estimable individuals of the coloured population of the free States, who are religious, well educated, and some of them ministers of the Gospel, may, by the operation of this law, be reduced back again to slavery, its flagrant injustice will appear manifest. It is no apology for it—which, to their shame, has been offered by some ministers of the Gospel—that the Fugitive Slave Law is in accordance with an article of the Constitution of the United States. This only proves that the Constitution itself is wrong, and ought to be rejected by all who hold the supremacy of the Word of God.

The following excellent Resolutions on this subject were unanimously adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in America, at its late annual meeting held in Allegheny. We insert them, as justifying the argument contained in this work, and as a manly and faithful protest against a wicked enactment, and the system with which it is connected:—

RESOLUTIONS, &c.

"As human enactments are to be tested by the Divine law; and as it is the duty of the Church to testify against all that is in opposition to the law of God; and as her Head came 'to proclaim liberty to the captive,' so should she open her mouth for the dumb. Therefore,

"1. Resolved that this Synod reiterate its uncompromising opposition to the institution of Slavery, as a system of complicated and unmitigated wrong, and utterly repudiate all the arguments and excuses of slave-holders and their abettors for its continuance; and recommend to all our people more vigorous and persevering efforts for its removal.

"2. That the Fugitive Slave Law is essentially tyrannical; not only in securing the enslavement of those who are in part free, but in forbidding freemen to exercise the sympathies of Christian compassion, and commanding them to assist in returning men to cruel bondage. It brings deserved infamy on our land, dishonours God, and is expressly contrary to the plainest precepts of his law—"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee." "Bewray not him that

¹ See *Brown's Second Coming, etc.*, pp. 251-253.

wandereth." "Relieve the oppressed." And it is the duty of all, not only to refuse compliance with its provisions, but to show others its hideous enormity.

"3. That the main element of the Fugitive Slave Law naturally flows from the provisions of the Constitution of the United States upholding slavery, Act 4 Sect. 2.—'No person held to service or labour in one State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due.' Act 4, Sect. 1 :—'Full faith and credit shall be given in each State to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other State.' We see in this another exemplification of the immorality of the United States government, and it shows clearly the evil of swearing oaths of allegiance, and thus sustaining slavery.

"4. That those ministers of the Gospel who teach the binding obligation of this law to be obeyed for conscience' sake, and the conduct of those Christians who sustain the law, hypocritically professing to love God while they hate the negro, bring reproach upon religion, encourage infidelity, and rivet still more tightly the chains of the oppressed.

"5. That it is the duty of the ministers of Christ to teach clearly that magistrates in Christian lands should yield to the authority of God's law ; and that any law that is in opposition to the precepts of the Bible does not bind the conscience, and ought to be resisted by every means consistent with religion ; for we must obey God rather than men.

"6. That we recognize, with gratitude, the hand of God in making this infamous law the means of showing many the enormous evil of slavery, and of convincing them of their practical and constitutional connection with slavery ; and that we rejoice in the efforts that are making to free some of the churches from the incubus of slavery. And we trust that the Free Churches will, ere long, see the sin of upholding a government that rejects the law of God ; and that they and we, upon the broad ground of Christian principles, may labour to bring this nation into submission to God's higher law."

LIQUEFACTION OF SAINTS' BLOOD—WINKING STATUES, &c.—(p. 355.)

In one of the principal churches in Naples, there is preserved a vial containing a portion of the blood of St Januarius, a pretended saint of the Roman calendar. On a certain day in the year, this blood is liquefied at the command and in answer to the prayers of the priesthood ; and this annual miracle is exhibited with extraordinary solemnity to a vast number of devotees, the King of Naples and his court, and the members of the royal family honouring the pageant with their presence. At the time that the French army under Napoleon had possession of Naples, a French general, whose curiosity or infidelity prompted him to test the miracle, ordered the priests who had charge of the sacred relic to make the blood of the saint flow on a certain day. On being told that the day mentioned was not the period for the annual repetition of the miracle, and that the blood could not be made to flow at any other time, he threatened that, in case his order was not complied with, he would cut off the head of the priest himself—when lo ! the blood was liquefied on the prescribed day !

At Rimini, in Italy, a statue of the Virgin, some time since, was seen

frequently to wink, and crowds of pilgrims came from all parts to witness this instance of the continuance of the miraculous powers in the Holy Roman Church. Popish dignitaries gave their solemn attestation to the miracle, and yet it was afterwards found out to be an invention of the priests, to subserve interested purposes of their own.

Mock miracles are ever and anon occurring in France; and Jesuit and Popish dignitaries are not slow to avail themselves of them, to delude the multitude, and to keep them fast bound in the chains of superstition and idolatry. Thus, at one time, the Virgin appears to shepherd boys, and multitudes repair to the spot, to offer their devotions on the place rendered holy by the feet of the blessed Virgin! At Vacluse, a picture of the Virgin is seen to weep blood, and this, which afterwards turned out to be a hoax, was attested as a genuine miracle by a Popish bishop, and numbers of the clergy, and by magistrates and other civil authorities!

The exhibition of the "Holy Coat of Treves" led to the withdrawal of Ronge and several thousands of Free Catholics in Germany from the fellowship of the Church of the Papacy. This pretended relic was simply an old brownish coat, which was declared to have been worn by the Saviour while on earth. A pilgrimage to the sacred relic was enjoined by the Bishop of Treves; and such is the power of superstition in Popish countries, that, it is said, not fewer than about a *quarter of a million* of persons, of all ranks and conditions, thronged to Treves, and swelled the coffers of the Church, by their offerings on the occasion. When the "holy coat" was exhibited, with the greatest pomp and solemnity, to the people, it was actually worshipped, and prayers were addressed to it, at the connivance—if not by the command—of the priesthood. The superstition and idolatry that are still practised at the "stations" and "holy wells" in Ireland, and which are countenanced by the Romish priests, as a powerful means of obtaining money from the deluded people, are not surpassed by aught that is to be found in heathen countries. See, for a striking, though melancholy account of these superstitious practices, a little work by Philip Dixon Hardy, Esq., entitled, *The Holy Wells of Ireland*.

SINS COMPOUNDED FOR BY MONEY UNDER THE PAPACY.—(p. 362.)

The *Tax Book of the Roman Chancery*, which was circulated in Popish countries before the Reformation, has been translated into English, under the appropriate title, "ROME, A GREAT CUSTOM-HOUSE FOR SIN." Bayley, in his Dictionary, gives an account of these taxes, of the authenticity of which there can be no doubt. The following is a specimen:—

- A layman murdering a layman, 7s. 6d.
- Laying violent hands on a priest, without effusion of blood, 10s. 6d.
- For killing father, mother, wife, or sister, 10s. 6d.
- For a priest keeping a concubine—also his dispensation for living irregularly, 10s. 6d.
- Eating flesh in times prohibited, £1, 4s.
- For exemption from fasting days, £1, 4s.
- For burning a neighbour's house, 12s.
- That a man or woman found hanged may have Christian burial, £1, 7s. 6d.
- For a queen to adopt a child, £300.

A king going to the Holy Sepulchre without license, £7, 10s.

A town taking out of a church the murderers that have taken sanctuary therein, £4, 10s.

The deliverance of souls out of purgatory has been a source of immense wealth to the Romish priesthood. Till lately, the practice of "canting the dead," as it was significantly called, or of collecting offerings by the priests at the funerals of Roman Catholics, to free the soul of purgatory, was common in all parts of Ireland. Even in some of the northern counties, such sums as *fifteen* and even *twenty pounds* were raised for this purpose, either in the house of the deceased, or in the burying-ground, at the interment. Dr Brownlee, of New York, in one of his able works on Popery, gives a copy of a paper which was stuck up in the churches of Madrid, in Spain. "The *Sacred and Royal Bank of Piety* has relieved from purgatory, from its establishment in 1721, to November 1825, 1,030,395 souls, and this has been done at the expense of £1,720,437." In one year, from November 1826, to November 1827, the number of souls relieved, amounted to 11,402; and the money drawn for their release in that one year came to £15,276 sterling. The total number of souls thus relieved is 1,041, 797, and the total expense of their release amounts to £1,725,713. The number of masses calculated to accomplish this pious fraud are 558,921, each soul thus requiring one mass and nine-tenths, at the cost of *thirty-four shillings and fourpence* each. So justly applicable to the Papacy is the characteristic of Babylon the Great, as given in the Book of Revelation, as trading "*in the souls of men.*"

THE APPROACHING EUROPEAN CONFLICT.—(p. 365.)

The following just views of the state of parties in European society, and of the subtle attempts of the Papacy to render political changes subservient to its grand purpose to enthral the human mind, are given in Wylic's admirable work on *The Papacy; its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects*. The extract is rather long, but we give it, because of the solemn warning which it conveys in relation to the future, as well as the proper estimate which it expresses of present combinations and movements:—

"To grasp the political power of Europe, and wield it in the dark, is the present object the Jesuits are striving to attain; and can any man doubt, that, were the times favourable, they would exercise openly what they are now trying to wield by stealth? Never will the Papacy feel that it is in its proper place, or that it is in a position to carry out fully its peculiar mission, till seated once more in absolute and unapproachable power upon the Seven Hills, it look down upon the kings of Europe as its vassals, and be worshipped by the nations as a god; and the turn that affairs are taking in the world appears to be forcing this upon the Papacy. A crisis has arrived in which, if the Church of Rome is to maintain herself, she must take higher ground than she has done since the Reformation. She has the alternative of becoming the head of Europe, or of being swept out of existence. A new era, such as neither the Pope nor his fathers have known, has dawned on the world. The French Revolution, after Napoleon had extinguished it in blood, as all men believed, has returned from its tomb, refreshed by its sleep of half a century, to do battle with the dynasties and hierarchies of Europe.

"The first iden of the Papacy was to mount on the revolutionary wave,

* See *Lectures on Popery*, by the Glasgow Protestant Association, 1836, Lect. xi. pp. 8, 9.

and be floated to the lofty seat it had formerly occupied. 'Your Holiness has but one choice,' Cicerovacchio is reported to have said to the Pope,— 'You may place yourself at the head of reform, or you will be dragged in the rear of revolution.' The pontifical choice was fixed in favour of the former. Accordingly, the world was astonished by the unwonted sight of the mitre surmounted by the cap of liberty; the echoes of the Vatican were awakened by the strange sounds of 'liberty and fraternity;' and the Papacy, wrinkled and hoar, was seen to coquette with the young Revolution on the sacred soil of the Seven Hills. But nature had forbidden the banns; and no long time had elapsed till it was discovered that the projected union was monstrous and impossible. The Church broke with the Revolution; the harlot hastened to throw herself once more into the arms of her old paramour, the State; and now commenced the war of the Church with the democracy. It is plain that the issue of that war to the Papacy must be one of two things—complete annihilation, or unbounded dominion. Rome must be all that she ever was, and more, or she must cease to be. Europe is not wide enough to hold both the old Papacy and the young Democracy; and one or other must go to the wall. Matters have gone too far to permit of the contest being ended by a truce or compromise; the battle must be fought out. If the Democracy shall triumph, a fearful retribution will be exercised on a Church which has proved herself to be essentially sanguinary and despotic; and if the Church shall overcome, the Revolution will be cut up root and branch. It is not for victory then, but for life, that both parties now fight. The gravity of the juncture, and the eminent peril in which the Papacy is placed, will probably spirit it on to some desperate attempt. Half measures will not save it at such a crisis as this. To retain only the traditions of its power, and to practise the comparatively tolerant policy which it has pursued for the past half-century, will no longer either suit its purpose, or be found compatible with its continued existence. It must become the living, dominant Papacy once more. In order that it may exist, it must reign. We may therefore expect to witness some combined and vigorous attempt on the part of Popery to recover its former dominion. It has studied the genius of every people; it has fathomed the policy of every government; it knows the principles of every sect and school and club, the sentiments and feelings of almost every individual; and with its usual tact and ability, it is attempting to control and harmonize all these various and conflicting elements, so as to work out its own ends. To those frightened by revolutionary excesses, the Church of Rome announces herself as the asylum of order. To those scared and shocked by the blasphemies of socialist infidelity, she exhibits herself as the ark of the faith. To monarchs whom the Revolution has shaken upon their thrones, she promises a new lease of power, provided they will be ruled by her. And as regards those fiery spirits whom her other arts cannot tame, she has in reserve the unanswerable and silencing arguments of the dungeon and the scaffold. Popery is the soul of that re-action that is now in progress on the continent; though, with her usual cunning, she puts the State in the foreground. It was the Jesuits who instigated and planned the expedition to Rome. It was the Jesuits who plotted the dreadful massacres in Sicily, who have filled the dungeons of Naples with thousands of innocent citizens, who drove into exile every Roman favourable to liberty and opposed to the Pope, who closed the clubs and fettered the press of France, Tuscany, Germany, and Austria; and, in fine, it was the Jesuits of Vienna who crushed the nationalities and counselled the judicial murders of Hungary. History will lay all the blood

to the door of the Papacy. It has all been shed in pursuance of a plan concocted by the Church—now under the government of Jesuitism—to recover her former ascendancy. The common danger which, in the late Revolution, threatened both Church and State, has made the two cling closely together. ‘I alone,’—so, in effect, said the Church to the State,—‘can save you. In me, and nowhere else, are to be found the principles of order, and the centre of union. The spiritual weapons, which it is mine to wield, are alone able to combat and subdue the infidel and atheistic principles which have produced the Revolution. Lend me your aid now, and promise me your submission in time to come, and I will reduce the masses to your authority.’ This reasoning was omnipotent, and the bargain was struck. Accordingly, there is not a court of Catholic Europe, where the Jesuit influence is not supreme. And it is happening at present, as it has happened at all former periods of confusion, that in proportion as the State loses, the Church acquires strength. Although its companion in trouble, the Church is acting, at this moment, as the State’s superior. She extends to the civil powers the benefit of her matchless policy and her universal organization. So stands the case then. It must force itself upon the conviction of all, that this relation of the Church to the State is fraught with tremendous danger to the independence of the secular authority, and the liberties of the world. In no fairer train could matters be, for realizing all that Rome aspires to. And soon would she realize her aim, were it not that the present era differs from all preceding ones, in that there is an antagonist force in existence in the shape of an infidel democracy. These two tremendous forces—Democracy and Catholicism—poise one another; and neither can reign, so long as both exist. But who can tell how soon the equilibrium may be destroyed? Should the balance preponderate in favour of the Catholic element,—should Popery succeed in bringing over from the infidel and democratic camp a sufficient number of converts to enable her to crush her antagonist, the supremacy is again in her hands. With democracy collapsed, with the State exhausted, and owing its salvation to the Church, and with a priesthood burning to avenge the disasters and humiliations of three centuries, woe to Europe!—the darkest page of its history would be yet to be written.”¹

THE PAPAL AGGRESSION.

The Act of the present Pope in appointing a Cardinal Archbishop, and an ecclesiastical hierarchy for England, has called forth reclamations, protests, and resolutions innumerable from different parties—statesmen, corporations, and civil and ecclesiastical bodies. Believing, as we have elsewhere declared, that the Papal rescript was no hasty or rapidly-contrived measure of the Court of Rome, but a part of the deep-laid policy for which the Man of Sin has ever been distinguished, we think it not improbable that the British Ministry were led to employ the strong language which they uttered on this subject, and to assume a position, in relation to Papal measures, so different from that which they had heretofore occupied, from discovering the designs of the Papacy, in conjunction with the despotic European powers, to suppress liberty, and to concentrate and direct hostility against Britain and Protestantism. On *their* part, it was natural that they should resist the act of aggression by having recourse to the principles

¹ *The Papacy: its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects*, by the Rev. J. A. Wyke. pp. 160-169.

of the British Constitution, and by pleading its opposition to the doctrine of the Royal Supremacy, and to the legal rights of the English prelates. But it is certainly to be deplored, that of the numerous resolutions, protests, and addresses presented by evangelical bodies, on the subject of Papal Aggression, a large number assumed the same low ground as did statesmen in resisting the measure, while in others there was no faithful exhibition of the untenable nature of the ground taken in opposing Papal designs, by maintaining the supremacy of the Crown, and the exclusive claims of Diocesan Episcopacy. We have seen resolutions of state-endowed ecclesiastical bodies, which, instead of pointing out the unscriptural principles avowed by statesmen, even offered an apology for Erastian supremacy; and the dissenting churches in England either refrained from any expression of sentiment in opposition to the Papal measure, or uttered no pointed testimony against the Royal Supremacy. A valuable opportunity has thus been lost for testifying in behalf of important truth; and the character of the public resistance to Papal intolerance and Jesuit intrigues, has been such as to present no effectual barrier to repel the assaults of a powerful and unscrupulous adversary. It is vain to think of resisting Popery by the display of principles, which are evidently unscriptural, and to say the least, semi-popish. In the day of trial, which is at hand, the wood, hay, stubble, of human inventions, laid even upon the good foundation, will be burnt up: and no weapons will be found powerful to repel the attack of the anti-christian enemy, whether directed against the liberties of the State, or the doctrine and purity of the Church, but such as are taken from the armoury of Divine truth, and are attempered by the Spirit of power.

While, as we have stated in the conclusion, we regard the grand means of successfully resisting the attempts of the Papacy to be,—union among the friends of truth, fervent prayers, and devoted aggressive efforts for the diffusion of evangelical principle, we cordially rejoice in the exhibition of a faithful testimony, from any quarter, against Popish error, arrogance, and intolerance. By such a standard lifted up, the designs of the enemy are exposed, and the friends of truth are roused to exertion, and the course is indicated by which they may successfully contend against antichristian usurpations. Let a full and scriptural protest be thus displayed against every renewed attempt of the Papacy; and let it be followed by strenuous and sustained exertions to rescue, from the most grievous error, and from fatal delusion, the adherents of Popery. Thus will we emulate the deeds of the Reformers—approve ourselves worthy of the Protestant name; and thus may we cherish the hope, that numbers of the bondmen of Antichrist shall be rescued from their state of mental and spiritual thralldom, and shall themselves be the approved instruments of Babylon's subversion, and of the future triumph of the cause of truth and righteousness.

The following manly and comprehensive Resolutions, on the subject of Papal Aggression, were unanimously adopted at the late meeting of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Ireland:—

RESOLUTIONS.

“Resolved—1. That we, the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, regard ourselves as specially called on, this the first occasion of meeting since the recent audacious act of the Pope, appointing and investing with supreme spiritual authority over England a Romish cardinal-archbishop, and under him twelve bishops with territorial titles, to give a distinct utterance on that subject. Our position, as witnesses for Reforma-

tion-attainments—as the descendants and successors of the men who led the van in resisting Prelacy and Popery when they came in like a flood in the seventeenth century, and especially as dwelling among a people, of the majority of whom truth compels us to say that Romish superstitions and idolatries are deeply enshrined in their affections, and that their loyalty to the Pope is more hearty than that of the inhabitants of the Roman States ; a people, however, in many respects interesting—a people whom we love, and, because of the love that we bear to their persons, we testify against those heresies and superstitions which we hold to be perilous to their souls —‘the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.’

“Resolved—2. That we regard, with fervent gratitude to Almighty God, the Reformation from Popery, and especially the glory and fulness with which its light shone towards the middle of the seventeenth century in Scotland, and in part also in England and Ireland ; and regarding the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of these kingdoms, as having been eminently honoured to consolidate, extend, and perpetuate the scriptural Protestant principles of the Reformation, we look on them as exhibiting at this day to the nation and the Churches therein a scriptural platform, on which the adherents to Reformation principles may stand as on a rock, when called to resist encroachments on the prerogatives of Immanuel, and the liberties of his people.

“Resolved—3. That, holding the doctrine of Christ’s universal spiritual supremacy—holding the doctrine of Christ’s Headship over the nations, and that He is sole King and Head of his Church,—we feel that we are bound to oppose our testimony to every invasion of the prerogatives of Christ, or interference with the independent spiritual jurisdiction that He hath established in Zion, whether attempted by Pope or Prince.

“Resolved—4. That we feel constrained to testify against every part of the procedure of this great nation that has tended to suppress the work of reformation in these favoured lands which the period of the unhappy Restoration ; particularly do we testify against the bloody Prelatical and Popish persecution which followed it—against unfaithful dealing with Reformation-attainments at the Revolution, and against the policy adopted by successive administrations in more recent times, as presenting obstacles to progressive reformation—admitting to places of power the adherents of a creed inimical to civil and religious liberty—the endowments of Roman Catholic priests in the British colonies, the endowments of the Romish College of Maynooth, and the concessions made to Popery in the constitution of the National system of school and college education.

“Resolved—5. That we regard Popery, as clearly indicated in the Word of God, as the great apostasy that should arise in the world, and which God would permit for many centuries to exercise a powerful evil influence over the destinies of the nations of the earth ; a system that would trample under foot the civil and religious liberties of mankind—that would connive at the despotism of civil rulers, and instigate them to persecute the saints of the Most High, a system pre-eminently antichristian in its assertion of supremacy and infallibility ; in its perversion of the rule of faith ; in its denial of the use of the Scriptures, and the right of private judgment to the people ; in its manifold corruptions of doctrine, as respects original sin, justification by faith, and sufficiency of the Atonement, the work of the Spirit in sanctification and the nature and use of the Sacraments. Regarding Popery, therefore, as in the highest degree dangerous to the liberty, peace, and stability of the kingdom, and to the spiritual and eternal interests of souls, we look upon the recent act of the Pope, establishing a cardinalate in England, with its

appendages, avowedly for the purpose of bringing canon law into operation in these lands, as an invasion to be resisted by all scriptural means.

“Resolved—6. That we regard the proceedings of the Papal Court in reference to these matters as having been greatly encouraged by the countenance and aid afforded to Popery in many ways by the British Government, and also by the doings of the Tractarians in the Established Church, and the numerous perversions to Popery from among that party.

“Resolved—8. That though we rejoice in the universal burst of generous indignation with which all ranks in the land met the recent aggression; and while we express our cordial sympathy with that indignation, in so far as it is directed against antichristian abominations and tyranny in general, and more especially against the attempt of a foreign prince to assail the independence of this realm through such an institute as that recently appointed; yet we cannot oppose this aggression, nor express sympathy with the opposition given to it, on the ground of its being an invasion of the spiritual supremacy with which the constitution of this nation invests the Crown, nor yet on the ground of its assailing the prerogatives of the bishops of the Church established by law,—an order of office-bearers unknown to the Scriptures and the Church of Christ in primitive times. And however great and manifold may be the blessings enjoyed under the British Constitution,—and we yield to no class of men in the kingdom in regard to a due appreciation of the liberty and privileges enjoyed in the present day under the beneficent sway of the British sceptre,—yet we cannot regard any Church as discharging her obligations of loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ that would unqualifiedly call that ‘a happy constitution’ which confers spiritual supremacy over the Church on a mortal, however exalted in station and moral worth.

“Resolved—7. That it is not only our duty to testify against the great antichristian apostasy, but also, from love to the persons of such as are unhappily under the influence of Romish delusions, to exert ourselves to the utmost to improve the physical, social, and spiritual condition of the more destitute regions of our native isle,—to put forth more vigorous efforts to make known to the inhabitants of these destitute regions the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and to accompany our efforts with more frequent and fervent outpourings of our desires at the throne of grace. The consideration of our own abundant privileges, and our contiguity to the regions of spiritual darkness, urge to missionary effort; while the present movements in political and religious society, in connection with the indications of prophecy, admonish us that the end of Antichrist's reign draweth near, and that the great struggle that may be expected to precede it is, therefore, not far distant.”

POPERY DESTRUCTIVE TO NATIONAL PROSPERITY.

The following testimony to the destructive influence of Popery on national prosperity is given by Macaulay, in his *History of England*. When the liberal sentiments avowed by the author during his parliamentary career, and his advocacy of certain Popish endowments are considered, it is not a little singular and striking; it is evidently a verdict extorted by the force of truth:—

“Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her (the Church of Rome), and has everywhere been in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest provinces in Europe have under her rule been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor; while

Protestant countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned, by skill and industry, into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes, statesmen, philosophers, and poets."

Again he says—"Whoever passes in Germany from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant principality; in Switzerland, from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant canton; in Ireland, from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant county, finds that he passes from a lower to a higher grade of civilization. On the other side of the Atlantic, the same law prevails."—*Macaulay's History of England*.

THE INQUISITION.

The "Holy Inquisition," as it is titled by Romish writers, was first established by Pope Innocent III., for the purpose of exterminating the Albigenses in the south of France. At the head of it was placed Dominic Guzman, a Spanish ecclesiastic, the founder of the order of Dominicans, who is honoured as a saint in the Roman calendar. After cutting off incredible numbers of the witnesses for truth in France, and in the valleys of Piedmont, the "Holy Office" was introduced into Spain, in the year 1232. In 1483, it was remodelled by Torquemado, and was the instrument of perpetrating innumerable murders, and other crimes of the most atrocious character, in that unhappy country, for many generations. In the first year in which it was erected, the Inquisition of Seville "committed 2000 persons alive to the flames, burnt as many in effigy, and condemned 17,000 to different penances." From the same date to 1517, 13,000 persons were burnt alive, 8,700 were burnt in effigy, and 169,423 were condemned to penances: making, in all, 191,423 persons condemned by the several tribunals in Spain in the course of 36 years. Puighblanch, in his *Inquisition Unmasked*, affirms that 45,000 were burnt alive in the archbishopric of Seville alone, in the interval between 1480 and 1520. The Inquisition in Rome, which was suppressed during the brief period of the late Republic, was immediately re-established on the return of the Pope, thus showing that, notwithstanding the exposures that are made of its cruelty and wickedness, the Papacy is as ready as it ever was by violence to suppress the truth and destroy liberty, wherever it has the power.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.



I.—PARENTAL DUTIES.

“We have here, by a pious and talented servant of God, a FAMILY BOOK, as a manual for parental direction and encouragement; and from the faithful and affectionate manner in which it is written, it would give us great pleasure to learn that it is to be found in thousands of habitations throughout our land.”—*Scottish Guardian*.

“The volume itself is very scriptural and excellent.”—*Presbyterian Review*.

“This admirable work is characterized throughout by a spirit of deep and unaffected piety, careful and successful observation of men and manners, prudent and sound discernment of what is right. It is written in a felicitous style, and recommends itself at once to the feelings of the reader.”—*Fife Sentinel*.

II.—THE ADOPTION OF SONS.

“This is a most instructive little volume, without any speculations or pretences to novelty in theology, but eminently scriptural. In fourteen chapters, this honoured minister of the Reformed Presbyterian branch of the Church treats the whole subject very practically, and in that sense, very fully; and his plain language from time to time rises into true eloquence, as he unfolds the foundations of the believer’s hope, or the present privileges and duties, and the future prospects of the sons of God.”—*The Presbyterian*.

“There are quiet nooks in the gallery of religious literature. Into one of these, sweet and secluded, but with the aroma of heaven all around it, our author invites his readers. He discourses in choice language, with clear and accurate knowledge of the teaching of Scripture, on the family of God; the origin and nature of sonship, etc. etc. etc. The teaching of Dr Houston on the character and work of the Holy Spirit is clear and scriptural. The book is eminently calculated to edify the believer, and to become his chosen closet companion.”—*The Olive Branch*.

“Any one who wishes edification will be abundantly rewarded in Dr Houston’s treatise. He is at home in the old Puritan theology, and has transferred much of its spirit into his pages. When we have had so many speculative works on the Divine Fatherhood, it will serve a good purpose to unfold the bearing of that relation on the believer’s character and course. Dr Houston has done this plainly but satisfactorily.”—*United Presbyterian Magazine*.

“The volume, like all the previous ones that have emanated from Dr Houston’s busy pen, is pre-eminently scriptural in tone and expression. This

will be to many, and rightly, one of its highest recommendations; for Scripture is the best exposition of Scripture. We are much mistaken if this treatise do not sustain and add to the author's reputation as a sound theologian, and as a practical and experimental expounder of the doctrine contained in God's Holy Word, rightly dividing and applying the Word of truth. Sure we are that no earnest Christian can read it through without being greatly edified."—*The Covenanter.*

"The title of this book gives a very good conception of its nature. What has particularly struck us in the treatment of the whole subject is its *scripturalness*. Dr Houston is 'mighty in the Scriptures.' His frequent allusions to the original show that he is in the habit of drawing the living water of the Word pure from the fountain. Very noticeable is the mastery and ease with which he brings the whole relevant teaching of the Word to bear on the illustration of each part of his subject. His style is rich in scriptural language and allusion, wrought into the very substance of it, like the inlaid stones that give colour and beauty to a piece of fine mosaic.

"Both from its subject, and the mode in which the subject is handled, the treatise is admirably fitted for devotional reading. It is exhaustive without being tedious, solid yet not at all heavy, unctious and impressive. It will maintain the character of its author as a judicious and ripe divine, well read alike in the truths of theology, and the facts of spiritual experience. The chapter on 'Spiritual Conflict' we may specify as marked by much spiritual wisdom and tenderness of feeling, well-fitted to 'strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees.' Readers who procure the work will thank us for having brought it under their notice."—*Original Secession Magazine.*

III.—JUDGMENT OF THE PAPACY.

"This is a book much to our taste. The author looks at the world and the Church in the light of Scripture, and accordingly he views everything practically. We wish for the work a wide circulation, and for the enlightened author much usefulness in all his labours."—*Scottish Congregational Magazine.*

"Dr T. Houston's work deals entirely with futurity, and is at once an able and elaborate exposition of the unfulfilled prophecies of Daniel and John, in relation to the judgment and ultimate destruction of the antichristian power. We have perused it with special interest, and we can therefore, with confidence, commend the work to the favourable attention of the religious public."—*Banner of Ulster.*

"No less erudite than judicious, the work before us is replete with instruction, and well calculated to engender and nourish what the noble Argyle cherished when standing on a martyr's scaffold—'a heart-hatred of Popery.'"—*Monitor.*

"The subject is possessed of a most engrossing interest; and the excellent and laborious author treats it in a manner which shows that, in addition to his other qualifications as a divine, he is well acquainted with the bearings of unfulfilled prophecy, and with the authors who have made them the theme of their special investigations."—*Scottish Presbyterian.*

