The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, 
Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from 
God: for no man can do these miracles which thou 
doest except God were with him. John iii. 2.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among 
you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which 
God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves 
also know. Acts ii. 22.

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DISCOURSE XI.

On the Marriage in Cana of Galilee,
Being the Substance of Two Sermons.

PART I.

John ii. 1, 2.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the Mother of Jesus was there.

And both Jesus was called, and his Disciples, to the Marriage.

It deserves remarking, that the first miracle which Jesus wrought was at a marriage, thus adorning, beautifying and blessing that holy and honourable estate instituted of God in the time of man's *innocency, as well as pointing out to

* See the beginning of the matrimonial service according to our Church.

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us the excellent mystery, whereunto he hath consecrated it, even to represent and signify that spiritual marriage and unity, which is betwixt Christ and his Church, betwixt the Son of God and human nature; which divine and ever blessed union is the foundation of all our hopes, and the fountain of all our comforts.—And I know not when we can more properly dwell upon the subject of this great miracle wherein Christ manifested forth his Glory, than at the present season* of the year, when we are about to commemorate the mystery of our Lord's birth and incarnation, those heavenly nuptials to which a shining choir of the angelic hosts sung that delightful bridal-song, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men. And to shew her sense of this matter, our church hath appointed, amongst the proper psalms for Christmas-Day, one of the most beautiful epithalamiums, the sweetest and divinest marriage hymn that perhaps the whole scripture affords: I mean the xlvth Psalm.

Though Christ was long betrothed to his spouse, the flesh, even from the day of the fall; though the consummation of his nuptials, his appearance in the flesh, was earnestly ex-

* Sunday before Christmas-Day.
pected and desired by patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, and all his faithful servants, the friends of the bridegroom; yet he long delayed his much expected advent and sent not the glad tidings of his approach to the favoured virgin, till things were reduced almost to the last extremity: his peculiar people well nigh deprived of all their power and privileges, nay and indeed their faith, and with the gentile world overwhelmed with thick darkness, yea covered with the shadow of death. In this gloomy night the sun of righteousness arose from the east, dispelling the shades, and enlightening the world: He delights to save and assist when matters are come to the last crisis, and human powers are unavailing: when the ship is sinking, he speaks the word: Men must be heavy-laden before they can come to him: and he oftimes in love reduces them to straits and necessities for this blessed purpose. While there was plenty of wine at this marriage in Cana, even his mother sought not to him: for where there is no need of him perceived, his help will never be called in: but soon as the wine was out, soon as they began to want, then they bethink themselves what a guest was present, and his mother proposes their deficiencies to him. This is the
the way of human nature: and these examples of our Lord's readiness to save, are a singular blessing to us, apt as we are, while we want not his aid, to forget that GOD, who yet in our wants, if we cry to him, will never forget us.—But I will not anticipate any useful remarks which may arise from this first display of our Lord's glory, intending, 1st of all, to explain the literal history, and to obviate some difficulties, which men willing and wishing to be infidels have raised against it, which done, I will, IIddy, remark what practical improvements may be made hereof, and IIIdly, in general direct you to the spiritual use and application of this miracle. And may the divine author of it bless our present reflections upon it in the same manner to our souls as he did the performance of it to his disciples; for then be manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.

1st, And the third day, says the evangelist, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, the third day, as it is supposed after Christ's coming into Galilee, of which despised country Cana was an obscure town, in the tribe of Asher, whereof it was foretold, by the patriarch Jacob, that he should yield royal dainties *.

* Genesis xlix. 20.
in Cana of Galilee. 5

Thus, as well as in his birth, his parents, and his disciples, Jesus chose the weak, the humble, and the despised things of the earth to confound the great and the wise, to manifest forth his glory. In this same village there was a marriage-feast *, for so the original word imports, and we know that the Jewish solemnities of this kind continued for many days. And the mother of Jesus was there, she was there as a person concerned, not called or invited: from whence it is presumed, and tradition confirms it †, that this was the marriage

* See Judges xiv. 12. and Genesis xxix. 27, 28. Γατος; Vocant autem γαμον Graeci interpretes, ait Chemnitus, Genesis xxix. 22. Esther ii. 18, convivium nuptiale, quando sponsa ad sponsum introducitur & sponsus ad sponsam ingressit, sicut scriptura solet congressum conjugalem bono et circumloqui. Alterum enim vocabulum, quod Hebræis significat desponsationem, seu ipsum conjugium Graeci reddiderunt, Jothua xxiii. 12. εὐγαμον Cant. iii. 11. νυφινων. Hac observandum est idem, quod Christus, non jam privatus, sed in ipso officio Messiae, non tantum desponsationi, sed et illi convivio interesse voluit, quando sponsus ad sponsam ingressit; & hinc Heb. xiii. 4. dicitur, ipsum cubile in con-jugio esse immaculatum.

† And this may be considered as the more probable, says Doddridge, as Mary was not only present at the feast, but was concerned about supplying them with wine: and when the feast was over, we are told at verse 12 that Jesus was attended at his leaving Cana not only with his own disciples, but with his brethren, or his nearest kinsmen, who probably came thither as relations to be present at the marriage. As Mary here is spoken of alone, it
riage of some near relation: It has been said that St. John the beloved disciple was one of the parties: but it seems more generally supposed, that the persons were Alpheus or Cleopas, and that Mary, who in the scriptures is called the sister of Jesus' his mother. Jesus, however, and his disciples, those few, who already followed him, were invited to the marriage; and as he was now entered upon his ministry, and acted in a public capacity, wherever he went or whatever action he did, it was with one and the same view, namely, to perform his Father's will: for he had meat to eat, that no man knew of; his meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. * Wherefore knowing that his attendance at the marriage would be for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby †, to the intent that his disciples might believe; he complied with the request of his friends, and graced the marriage feast with his holy presence: Not to countenance light intemperance, much less the

may be reasonable to conclude, that Joseph was now dead, and that he lived not to the time, when Jesus entered on his public ministry, especially as he is nowhere mentioned in the gospel afterwards. See Dr. Lightfoot's Harmony in Loc.

* John iv. 34.
† John xi. 4.
in Cana of Galilee.

inordinate excesses frequent on such occasions, but by manifesting forth his glory, to direct their view to a better, even an eternal marriage, a holy and inseparable union, of which divine love is the sure and indisputable cement.—And it was not long before their necessities required his gracious aid; his mother—provident for the young couple and having conceived great expectations (as she had good grounds) of her wonderful son, whose miraculous conception she could never forget, and who, we are told, kept all the remarkable circumstances attending his birth, &c. and pondered them in her heart, and whose entrance on his public ministry she now perceived with joy, witnessed as it was by the voice from heaven*: when the wine began to fail, and was almost out, ὅστερησαυτός, but a small stock possibly having been at first provided,

* These remarks are made by Theophylact. Παρακαλεῖ τς αὐτὸν ματὶ γραφεῖ. His mother exhorts him to work a miracle, as she had conceived a great opinion of his power, as well from his conception as his birth. For she kept all these things in her heart, and concluded from them, that her son could do something above the power of man. For she was not induced to ask this of him from any former miracle that she had seen him work, for when a child he did not work any miracles, which if he had done, it would have been well known by all: but she had heard the testimony of John, and saw his disciples now following him; and from all these she conjectured the power of her son.
by reason of the meanness of the persons; and that failing the sooner, as greater numbers of guests attended than was expected, probably on account of Jesus, whose fame began now to be spread abroad:—In this situation of things the mother of Jesus faith unto him, they have no wine: hinting, as our Saviour's answer shews, her desire, that he would afford some miraculous supply*. Wherefore to teach her, that in the exertion of his divine power she must by no means take upon her to direct or assume any authority over him—who though her son in the human, was yet her God and her Lord in the divine nature, David's Lord as well as David's son †,—he faith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. In which there is nothing, as some have impiously supposed, either of disrespect or moroseness: to suppose either in the blessed Son of God is blasphemy. The term woman appears a little harsh to us, only from our manner of using it: but the very best and most polite heathen writers use it as an honourable title, and

* Some have supposed that Mary spoke this to her son, as a reason why they should depart; but it appears to me quite foreign to the subject, as well as to the answer which Jesus gave.

† Jesus is at once the root and the offspring of David. See Rev. xii. 16.
when the highest mark of respect is intended; nay indeed, our Lord himself used it to his mother at a time and upon an occasion, when his bowels *sounded† with the tenderest affection towards her, even when he hung bleeding on the cross for her as well as for all the world, nailed by that *almighty love, which caused him not to abhor this virgin mother's womb — *Woman, said he to her in that bitter hour, commending her to the disciple whom he loved, *woman, behold thy son ‡. Then indeed the hour was come when *he bad to do with her — when that nature, which he took from *her, was for *her and all the world, enduring the most bitter passion, when indeed she had a *part with, yea *dominion over him; and when it was that all mankind *bad to do with *him, were *connected and *concerned with him in the highest degree: when he might well *say, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, behold and see if ever sorrow was like unto my sorrow || — my sorrow which is all for you, O ye sons of men, which is something to you all, wherein you have all to do with me, wherein all your nearest and dearest interests are inseparably, eternally united.

* See *Blackwall's *sacred *Classics, vol. 1, p. 206.
† See *Isaiah, xvi. 11.
‡ *John xix. 26.
|| *Lament. i. 12.
Then his hour was come, and then he had to do with his mother; but now, when he acted as God, she was by no means to prescribe to him in any of his mighty works: and therefore upon her attempting to do so, he says, *What have I to do with thee,* ἓμων ἡμῖν, which is an Hebrew phrase, and, in whatever part of scripture it occurs, is apparently used in the sense of our translation, *what have I to do with thee,* what right, rule or authority dost thou claim over me? what concern hast thou with me and my mighty works? * Tho' she might claim an authority over him as a Son, yet in his public capacity, as the Messiah, the Son of God, she had no right over him; there all relationship in the flesh ceases: as he abundantly declared, when they said unto him, *behold thy mother and thy brethren without, seek for thee:* and he answered them, saying, *who is my mother and my brethren?* and he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, *behold my mother and my brethren: for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother.* †—In this reply then to his mother, he fully declares his

divine power, and to our comfort assures us that we may all have to do with him by a relationship in the spirit, since in the hour of his passion we all had to do with him, we all were concerned and interested in him. We have in the viith chapter of St. John ver. 3, an account of a conversation between Jesus and his brethren in Galilee, which seems to me greatly to confirm the explication above given of the present passage. His brethren said unto him, depart hence, and go into Judæa that thy disciples also may see the works that thou dost: for there is no man, that doth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly: if thou do do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. To which Jesus replied, My time is not yet come, but yours is always ready. And that by his time and his hour, he meant the hour of his passion, is manifest from various places of sacred scripture. No man laid hands on him, we read, for his hour was not yet come.--Then they sought to take him, but no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come.--My time is not yet full come. *

Thus Jesus declared to his mother, that in matters pertaining to the divine nature she must not take upon her to direct or think to

* John vii, 6. viii. 20. &c.
influence him: there she was also a woman, only a human creature, that wanted his atonement as well as the rest: then she would have to do with him as a son, when his hour of suffering was come, and he was manifesting by his bitter death the reality of his relationship to her, the reality of that human nature, which he took from her.

The generality of writers upon this subject have observed, that this rebuke was intended by our Lord in his prophetic spirit, as a standing testimony against that idolatry which he foresaw after-ages would superstitiously bestow upon his mother, even to the robbing him of the right and honour of his alone mediatorship and intercession: "Oh blessed virgin, if in that heavenly glory, where thou art, thou canst take notice of these earthly things, with what indignation dost thou look upon the presumptuous superstition of vain men, whose suits make thee more than a solicitor of divine favours? Thy humanity is not lost in thy motherhood, nor in thy glory: the respects of nature reach not so high as heaven: It is far from thee to abide that honour which is stolen from thy Redeemer." *

* Bishop Hall. Bede in answer to Erasmus hath the confidence to assert, that Christ even now at the right hand
Be this observation as it will, it is very plain that Mary did not understand this answer as a denial, but, as I conceive, rather an encouragement to her request, as being better informed hereby of her son’s divine power: for the faith to the servants, *Whatsoever be faith unto you, do it*—hereby fully declaring her expectations of some mighty work to be done by him, as an answer to what she had suggested to him: and prescribing a rule to the servants, which it would be happy if every servant of Christ would invariably observe, *Whatsoever be faith unto you, do it*, not entering into the reasonableness of the command, or the improbability of the means to the end proposed, but implicitly obeying whatever is a plain and clear command of Christ, *DO this*; and how any, who call themselves christians, can dare to disobey any such plain commands, is wonderful and fearful to think, and what it would be almost impossible to believe, if it were not more impossible to disbelieve it. The way of duty is the way of mercy, and

hand of his father, *owes* obedience to his mother, according to the human nature! And the *Roman Catholics* in their prayers, *intreat* the virgin to *command* her son to perform their petitions! Thus is the more than a *solicitor* indeed! The reader desirous to see an excellent sermon on the true honour due to the ever blessed virgin, will be very well entertained by consulting Bishop Bull's sermons, vol. 1. p. 135.
blessed are they who walk even on, without going to the right hand or to the left, either by a bold, a proud, and a selfish presumption of duty, where no command is given; or by a bolder omission of duty, where a plain command is written in the eternal word of God.

The servants at this feast afford us a better example: the Jews were very much in outward and ceremonial washings: superstitious to a strange degree: for which purpose, even at this humble dwelling, three were set six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece: a considerable quantity, tho' at present not very easy to be ascertained with any degree of exactness *. As it was known to all the guests, that these water-pots never contained anything but water, Jesus therefore chose to make use of them, for the more undeniable proof of the miracle †, which was about to be wrought: and accordingly he

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* See Dr. Lightfoot's Harmony in Loc. and Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, lib. vi. c. 9. ad finem.

† All these tend to the certainty of the miracle. 1. Changing the wine in pots into which nothing but water ever entered. 2. Filling them afresh. 3. Drawing out instantly. 4. Bearing to the governor what the servants thought water. 5. The ignorance of the governor concerning filling the pots and drawing out thence: 6. The natural surprize which we must suppose in the servants on hearing what the governor said. 7. The governor and not the guests tasting and applauding this Wine, &c.
orders the servants to fill these water-pots with water. The reason of which though they could not understand, yet following Mary's admonition, they obeyed, and filled them up to the brim. Jesus, having no doubt of the extent and efficacy of his divine power, orders the servants forthwith to draw out from these pots even now filled with water, and to bear to the governor of the feast, a person usually appointed amongst the Jews to superintend, direct and manage such solemnities*. He, not being ignorant of the deficiency of wine at the feast, according to his place, tasted this which the servants bore to him, to see if it were proper for the guests: but upon tasting it he was surprised, so exquisite was the flavour, so uncommon the delicacy of its relish: and not knowing whence it was, (though the servants which drew the water knew) he called the bridegroom, and admiring the uncommon excellence of his wine, said, It is usual with most men to set forth at the beginning the good wine, τον καλόν οίνον, and when men have drank plentifully, then that which is

* To this governor of the feast it belonged to bless what was prepared, and having drank of the cup thus blessed, to send it about to the whole company, whence Christ faith to the servants, Draw out and bear to the governor of the feast. Whitby.
worse: thou hast proceeded in a different manner, thou hast kept the good wine until now. In which words every discerning reader will see that there is no room at all for those many blasphemous remarks, nay and daily insults upon the pure and spotless character of the holy Jesus, the only begotten of the most high, as if he were indeed a wine-bibber, a friend and encourager of revelry, drunkenness and debauchery.

For in the first place, the governor of the feast doth not say even so much as that the present guests had drank plentifully: he only urges the common proceedings in such festivals as these, and the words rather countenance a contrary opinion: for he saith "every man sets forth good wine at the beginning, and when it may happen, that men shall have drank plentifully * then that which is worse: thou (without any connecting particle) thou hast kept the good wine until now; thou hast not done as others do; the best wine comes last." Herein is the whole of the comparison: he, by no means faith that they had drunk plentifully or to excess: it is more than probable, as will appear by and by, that there was no appearance of any such irregularity or excess:

* This is the import of ὅταν μὴ ὑποκείσι, cum affatim biberrint. Beza.
feeling the governor was thus capable of distinguishing the relish of the good wine so instantly, which when men have well drunk is not the case; and therefore it is, that, as he says, bad wine is brought last.

But however allowing, 2dly, that the words when men have well drunk, did refer to the present guests, yet the true meaning of the original word μεθυσθεὶς, and its usage in scripture, shews that it signifies not criminal drinking or drinking to excess: its proper and immediate sense is to drink after sacrificing *, and so it is used in a religious import; and in scripture it is applied to drinking wherein there could be no excess: it is used Gen. xliii. 34. then, when Joseph's brethren were admitted to him, before he had discovered himself, and when they were under too great terrors and apprehensions to fall into any criminal excesses: they drank, we read, and WERE MERRY with him. It is used for spiritual drinking, Cant. v. 1. I have drunk my wine with my milk:

* Memv△ μετα θυει, and The LXX in that passage render the Hebrew word by μεθυσθειαν—and it is well known that the original word נלע is used frequently for drinking without excess, nay and for spiritual drinking, as in the text from the Canticles. Beza observes that נלע which answers to the Greek word μεθυς, is frequently not used in a bad sense, but sometimes signifies the liberal use of wine, without deviating into any excess. See Dr. Whitby's note on the place.

Vol. II. C drink
drink yea DRINK ABUNDANTLY, 0 beloved. This is that spiritual drinking, of which we can never drink too abundantly: And hence St. Paul exhorts, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit *. And for this spiritual and blessed inebriation it is, that Christ offers us the wine of his gospel, of which blessed is he that drinketh it new in his kingdom, for his blood is drink indeed! " His love is what we are to drink of, and that largely, it being preferable to wine, and may be drunk of without danger plentifully: we may drink, yea be inebriated with love, as the words may be rendered; for here is enough of it, and no fear of receiving any danger by it: and all this together makes up that feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined, of which the Lord's supper is a representation †.

* Ephesians. v. 18.
† See Gill's exposition of the Canticles on the place above quoted. Erskine in his pretty paraphrase of the Canticles, hath these lines on this text—

Eat, drink, O friends, whom I approve,
I also welcome you:
Yea drink abundance of my love,
Full freedom I allow.
Your fainting spirits here refresh,
With plenty spread abroad:
The grace and love, the blood and flesh
Of your incarnate God!

Not
in Cana of Galilee.

But, 3dly, allowing both these objections to be true, namely that these guests had already drunk well, and that the word, so rendered, doth import criminal drinking, yet it would by no means follow, that the miracle which Christ now wrought was intended to encourage any vice of this sort: far from the mouths of christians, far from the hearts of men, be the least surmise or supposition of such a fact: most reasonable it is to conclude, that the change of the water into wine drew off their attention wholly from the feast, to this divine and wonderful person who thus manifested forth his glory, and obtained the faith of those who saw it: most reasonable it is to conclude, that this was a great means of sobriety and seriousness, bringing the beholders to the usual admiration—What manner of man is this? And moreover,—not to insist upon a remark, which an able writer * makes, that it seems likely from the text, "that the cup only which was borne to the governor was changed into wine"—I say, not to insist upon this, to which, I must own, there seem many objections, yet to use the emphatic words of the same writer, "it

Not elect angels ever share
Such strange and matchless food:
They feaft on their creator's care,
Not your redeemer's blood.

* Mr. Law, in his answer to Dr. Trapp.
should be remembered that the wine here spoken of was not common wine, and therefore has not the least relation to our common drinking: that it was not wine from the juice of the grape: that it had nothing in it but what came from a heavenly hand: that it must have in it the purity and virtue of him that made it: that it had as good qualities in it, and was fitted to have the same effects upon some that drank it, as the clay which he moistened with his spittle had upon the eyes of the blind! It should be remembered, that it was water only, so altered, and endued with such qualities as he pleased to put into it: and therefore we may be sure, that it was water, as highly blest for their use, as they were capable of: we may be sure it was fitter to allay the heat and disorder of drinking, than if it had been water unaltered by our Saviour *.

—Well might it be said of this miracle, that he thereby manifested forth his glory, &c. O holy Jesus,

* I omit a sentence here, because it seems to be extremely exceptionable, and because the rest of this writer's observations on this subject are so refined and noble. What he says of this wine changed by our Saviour, finely illustrates the original τον καλον ειναι. "Without all doubt, says an ancient writer, the excellence of this wine was such, that the like to it was never drawn from the grape, nor made by any art."
thou didst nothing of thyself, thou foughtest only to manifest thine and thy Father's glory from the beginning to the end of thy life: thou spestest whole nights in prayer, in mountains and desart places: thou hadst not where to lay thy head: thy common poor fare with thy disciples was barley-bread and dried fishes: thy miraculous power never helped thee to any dainties of refreshment, though ever so much fatigued and fainted with labour: but yet because this holy Jesus came into the world to save all sorts of sinners, and to shew, that every kind and degree of sin could be taken away and forgiven by him, therefore he came into all places, and entered into all sorts of company: he did not, as the baptift, tie himself to one sort of food, for he came eating and drinking: but why did he so? it was that he might reprove and convert sinners at their own tables; he came not to indulge himself, or to find such gratifications as the baptift abstained from: but to work miracles, to awaken and astonish sinners in the midst of their indulgences."

—And to teach us that the wisdom of the prudent should rather be employed in studying how to improve and amend conversation, than to decline it: for it is a much less virtue to fly from and bid adieu to the world than to live usefully, godly,
godly, righteously and soberly in the cheerful discharge of all those social duties for which man is made and fitted.

Wherefore as even in the letter of this miracle there is nothing to countenance the wicked fancies of those, who are so weak and destitute of common sense, as to suppose Christ displaying his glory only to prolong a drunken revel, — let them take heed how they draw any arguments for intemperate festivity from hence, while they are strangers to the spiritual use and application of such divine mysteries and know not any thing of that holy rejoicing to which the bridegroom invites the bride, drink abundantly, yea drink, O beloved; and which St. Paul recommends to all christians, rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice. †

The consequences and fruits of this miracle were the manifestation of the glory of Jesus, and faith in his disciples.—He manifested forth his glory, his own glory, which was never said of any miracle, wrought either by Moses, the prophets or apostles, and is a proof of Christ’s true divinity: for the word GLORY, all through the scriptures, is used for the divinity of the second person in the ever blessed Trinity; that glory which united to the man-

† Phil. iv. 4.
hood gives weight, an exceeding weight of glory, to the light scale of human vanity*. So that the expression is to the same purport, as if St. John had said, manifested forth his divinity: for you will find, by carefully comparing the texts through the old and new testament, that the glory of the Lord which manifested itself in the tabernacle, temple, &c. is the same with that glory which manifested forth itself in the temple of a human body: which GLO- RY Moses desired to see, and could not, but which the apostles and disciples of our Lord saw fully manifested in the life and marvellous works of the Son of God. We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father: which glory, let us remember, was therefore manifested that it might produce the same fruits in all, as in the disciples †,—might cause us to believe in him—might raise in our hearts that divine faith which apprehends Jesus as the glory of the Father, and so our only glory, full of grace and truth.

* Dr. Stanhope expresses himself extremely well on this head—"The word glory then applied to Christ, denotes the same God to have exhibited himself to us in this person, who formerly exhibited himself to the Jews in their temple. And by manifesting forth his glory, we are to understand that Christ did something which plainly proved his power to be divine and argued the actual presence of God with and in his human body. See Epistles and Gospels. Vol. II. p. 75. † John i. 14.

Happy
Happy will it be for us, if these displays of his divine power bring us to a full resignation of ourselves to him, that his infinite and exceeding glory may add weight to our infinite lightness and deficiency, that his divine merits may counterpoise our numberless wants and great worthlessness, and that saved by his fulness, and made free by his truth, we may for ever extol the riches of the one, and for ever be ruled and directed by the dictates and authority of the other.

Having thus explained the literal story, I should now proceed to shew you the practical and spiritual improvement, which you should make hereof: but my present time prevents: Look however, till we meet again, through the letter of this story to that marriage feast, to which Jesus calls all and every one of you here present: and if you have any desire to fit down with the Lamb in his glorious kingdom, comply here upon earth with his command, *Do this in remembrance of me*—drink of his wine freely offered to you, drink of that blood and eat of that body, of which *whosoever eateth and drinketh, he shall never see death*, but enjoy an eternal marriage feast, and live in love and peace unspeakable, with a bridegroom, *who is fairer than the children of men, who is altogether lovely*. Be no longer in-
intent on indulging your taste or any of your sensual appetites: the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: * to attain which, pursue those intellectual and devotional pleasures, which were the meat and drink of our celestial bridegroom while on earth, that so you may patiently wait for, and at length drink of that good wine which he reserves to the last for his people, and for those richer dainties with which he will feast those, who shall drink it new with him in his kingdom of unfading glory, &c.

* Rom. xiv. 17.
On the Marriage in Cana of Galilee.

PART II.

St. John ii. 11.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

ON the former sermon on the subject of this first and great miracle which Jesus wrought, I endeavored to explain to you the literal story in as full and clear a manner as I was able, obviating such difficulties as the corruption of human nature and the perverseness of evil imaginations are willing to raise against it: foolish and blind, to cavil with the works of omnipotence; weak and impious to reflect upon the sacred character and divine reve-
revelation of a holy and undefiled Saviour, who gave himself only for this blessed purpose, to deliver fallen mortals from the tyranny of sin, to redeem us from all iniquity, to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, to teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

To this end it was that he went about doing good, having only this single point in view during the time of his public ministry, to do his Father's work, to call sinners to repentance and life. And upon this he was equally intent, and to this every place was equally fitted by him, whether it were at a wedding or a funeral, whether he were called to Cana in Galilee, or whether to Bethany, where Lazarus lay dead. At either he could equally manifest his glory, and have the same cause of rejoicing for the sake of his disciples; nevertheless, said he, I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there to the intent that ye may believe.†

For this he manifested forth his glory, in raising Lazarus from the dead; for this he manifested forth his glory, by changing the water into wine: for we read hereupon, that his disciples believed on him. This was the grand end and chief purpose of all his mighty works,

† John ii. 15.
so to manifest his glory in and by them, as to obtain the faith of the beholders as well as of the bearers of them: for this end pertains to us also, and with this view we should always reflect upon every manifestation of the glory of Jesus, that our faith may be thereby increased; for blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed*

The present was such a manifestation of his glory, such a proof of his divine power, as we are assured is infinitely beyond the reach of all human abilities, and which was conducted in such a manner as to be incapable of any fraud or deceit; for which purpose he chose to change the water in those water pots, which were used for the purpose of purifying only, and into which, as was observed before, no wine ever entered; wherein every guest present had washed themselves, and so were convinced of what they contained, and which for the fullest proof were now, by his command, filled with water even to the brim, that every beholder might be a witness of their contents, and that all might come and see the great quantity of wine transformed by his secret and wonder-

* John xx. 29.
ful power. Though nothing less than omnipotence could do this, yet as St. Austin beautifully observes, it was as easy for that omnipotence to do it now without the use of means, as to do it every year by means of moisture extracted from the earth, filtered through the branches of the vine, and having passed through its several stages, swelling in the full ripe grape on the stalk. This is equally miraculous, and equally superior to all the united power of mankind, who can no more form one ripe grape on the vine, than they could change into wine many firkins of water. But as the same father * continues to observe, “Because this hath lost its wonder

in the sight of men, by reason of its frequency and repetition, therefore God reserv'd to himself an unusual way of working, to stir up and awaken, as it were, the sleeping attention of mortals to the useful contemplation of his mighty works in the creation;" and to shew us what we owe to that almighty and beneficent creator, who, in a natural sense, maketh all things work together for our good: giving us all things richly to enjoy, sending us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness *: and in return for all this beneficence requiring only of men so to use these blessings, as not to abuse them, to receive them with thanksgiving, and to ascribe the glory and favour of them to the bountiful giver! And yet see the vile ingratitude of the human race! how are these blessings abused, yea defiled and polluted to the vilest ends; how is the Creator not only forgot, but shamefully and scandalously reviled and affronted even in and by those very gifts, which he himself hath bestowed; how doth the whole creation groan and travail in pain together until now †! You need not look far for proofs; epicures, gluttons and drunkards, pamperers of the flesh, and lovers of the wine, when it sparkleth

* Acts xiv. 17. † Rom. viii. 22.
in the glasses, are not rare to be met with: temperance and abstinence, though the greatest blessings, even in a worldly sense, are very scarce and hard to be found. We abhor the name of an atheist, of a man who is without God in the world; but, I pray you, what is this but atheism, atheism of the very worst kind, being without God in the world indeed, and a sure way of being without God in the world to come? Let us, my brethren, act more wisely; and through the glasses of the creatures behold and magnify the glory of the Creator: that so we may use them with thanksgiving, returning all the praise to him for the merciful use of his good creatures, and sanctifying them to ourselves by the word of God and by prayer: bearing always in mind, that we are not born and do not live to eat and to drink, but only eat and drink to live; a good rule and always to be observed by us.

This is the first practical remark, which I would recommend to you from the general subject of this miracle. The honour and dignity of the marriage state, is the second thing, which we are taught from hence, and which our church advises, as an use to be made of this miracle: and that more particularly

* 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.
when we consider it, in a spiritual sense, as signifyng the mystical union betwixt Christ and his church. The honour, dignity and happiness of the marriage-state is sufficiently shewn by the first institution of it in paradise, in the time of man's innocency; but an additional blessedness is given to it by the great honour which Christ hath done it, in beautifying and adorning it with his presence, as well as the first miracle that he wrought; but more especially by that high mystery, which through his union with our nature, it now represents and signifies: striking admonitions to us, what they should think of themselves, who dishonour that which God hath determined to honour, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from an holy ordinance of God. St. Paul hath directed us what to believe of such and their doctrines; that they are themselves seducing spirits, and their doctrines, doctrines of devils *.

But there are other ways of dishonouring this holy estate, upon which so much of the present comfort, so much of the future happiness of society depends: and these are, Ift, entering into it, upon wrong, base, and worldly motives, which, alas, is but too commonly done every day, and which is a fountain of perpetual

* 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.
in Cana of Galilee.

bitterness: 2dly, by living in it without that love and affection, which is essential to the true happiness of the state, in continual brawls and disquietude, that render it very unlike the love and union it is intended to represent, even the love of Christ and his church: 3dly, by breaking the marriage contract, which is the highest offence possible, and the greatest affront to God, dishonouring his ordinance in the last degree, and big with innumerable evils. For the adulterer not only breaks thro' the laws and sanctions of society, not only transgresses a plain command of the eternal king of heaven, but is guilty of the highest profanation and irreligion, profaning a temple of God, even his own body, for our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and irreligiously defiling a sacred mystery which is the source and substance of all our future hopes: cutting himself off from that blessed and future union with Christ, the true bridegroom, who gave himself for his spouse, for every soul! and yet the adulterer horribly disclaims all union with him, and joins himself to that flesh and that sin, which hath for its marriage portion and its marriage joys nothing but flames of hell, and beds of everlasting fire. Thus every act of adultery "desecrates Vol. II. D a
a temple and deflours a mystery:" † and as being the most hainous sin, is also the greatest disgrace and dishonour possible to God's holy ordinance of matrimony. But there are, 4thly, who no less dishonour it; those, I mean, who, in contempt both of the institutor and his institution, live in fornication and uncleanness, and instead of making themselves members of Christ, make their bodies members of an harlot! * St. Paul puts a God forbid to this: and indeed we may well do so to those, who are baptized and call themselves christians: and yet alas how doth thisiniquity abound through these christian realms, men so madly d•luding their own souls, as to esteem it venial! If to defile and desecrate a temple be esteemed so horrible a thing that we look upon the wretch who doth it, with the greatest abhor-

† To break faith with a wife or husband, says Bishop Taylor, is a divorce from Jesus, and that is a separation from all possibilities of felicity. In the time of the Mosaical statutes to violate marriage was to do injustice and dishonour, and a breach to the sanctions of nature and the first constitutions; but two hands more are added in the gospel to make marriage more sacred: for now our bodies are made temples of the Holy Ghost, and the rite of marriage is made significant and sacramental, and every act of adultery is profanation and irreligion: it defecrates a temple and deflours a mystery. See his Great Exemplar, page 219.

* 1 Cor. vi. 15.
rence and abomination, and would scarce bear to be present with a man who should do any act of wickedness and uncleanness in the church or on the altar; why should we look upon those guilty of this vice, or why should they who are guilty of it look upon themselves with less abhorrence and abomination? for they do defecrate a temple, they do defile the members of Christ, they crucify him afresh—*for what, faith the apostle, know ye not, that your body is the TEMPLE of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price,* a price inestimable indeed, even the pure and precious blood of Jesus Christ! Are ye then not shocked to think, that ye shall not only defile this temple of the Holy Ghost, but make these members of Christ, for which he shed his most precious blood, the members of an harlot, and all for a little filthy lust, for a momentary joy, which will torment your souls with everlasting pain in the burning and bottomless pit?—Were this vice less common I should not dwell so particularly upon it, and more especially when, through the iniquity of our times, and the prevalence of the sin, it is become almost ridiculous to speak otherwise than with a kind of approving smile of adulterers and fornicat-

* 1 Cor. vi. 19.
tors: when modest cheeks should rather glow into a flame, and true zeal fire the indignant tongue, as ashamed at once both to hear and to speak of those things that are done of them in secret. — But I have good hope through the grace of God, and therefore I have spoken, that, if any guilty of this vice hear me, considering its hainous nature, considering that it defiles and pollutes the temple of God, even the spirit of holiness, that it abuses those members, which the Son of God redeemed, by such unspeakable sufferings, and which he now claims for his own, and will have used to his glory, that considering it crucifies afresh the Son of God, and puts him to open shame; that reflecting upon these things, they will not madly destroy their own souls, and run headlong into everlasting misery, but follow the same apostle’s advice; flee fornication; for every other sin that a man doth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his body, which yet is not his own but the temple of the Holy Ghost: wherefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are Gods.†

These are the principal ways by which God is abused in his holy ordinance of matrimony:

† 1 Cor. vi. 18.
the best means to reform all which, and to honour him therein, is to do, thirdly, as this couple at Cana of Galilee did for our example, invite Jesus to the wedding. This is a certain way to secure happiness: to have all the water of earthly troubles and afflictions changed into wine, into comfort, peace and serenity. Most Christian writers have been particular in their advices upon this subject, following St. Paul, who gives it as a command, *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.* But in truth his command, as well as examples in abundance of the fatal consequences of neglecting it, avail very little in the world, where interest and secular motives are the chief things considered in contracting marriages, and where Christ is generally the only person left out of the invitation: or at least, if other conveniencies suit, it is not esteemed of immediate consequence, whether he be present or not: This seldom breaks off matches. How well doth our excellent church advise all her members not, to enterprize or take in hand so momentary a change of circumstances, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no

* 2. Cor. vi. 14.
understanding: But reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God."* There can be no doubt of felicity, when, in the fear of God, this holy estate is entered into, when Jesus is called to the wedding: Holy love and heavenly peace will abound in the dwellings of such, and while the mutual love of Christ and his church is made the pattern of their affection, they will go on hand in hand in the cheerful discharge of their duty, and part only for another and a better meeting, a meeting in the kingdom of their heavenly Bridegroom, never, never more to part, but to live through endless ages in the mutual enjoyment of his love and grace unspeakable. If you desire this present, as well as future happiness, invite Jesus to your wedding,† seek and sue to him by fervent prayer for a blessing; live in his love and favour, and then be assured, no worldly things shall ever molest your peace, or destroy your quiet; for you build on a rock. The evil and fatal consequences of omitting so to do, are too plain and obvious in the world to need insisting on;

* The homily of our church on matrimony well deserves a serious perusal.
† It is never too late to invite him, and if you should have been so unhappy as to have contracted a marriage, forgetful of Christ, now remember to invite him, now sue to engage him, and interest him in your favour.

whence
whence proceed these frequent and numberless breaches and the marriage-contract, this flood of adultery, this coldness and disregard, this want of affection and esteem, these frequent breaches and disquietudes, these quarrels and divisions, "scandalous separations, and more scandalous cohabitings, by which so many families are undone in their fortunes, dishonoured in their blood, tainted with diseases, corrupted in their education, ruined by domestic patterns of vice? These are consequences which no wise man can think strange, where so many matches are made, in which the true ends of them are never consulted: where wisdom and virtue and religion, and agreeableness of tempers, and modesty of behaviour are wholly overlooked, and the beauty and fortune are the only inducements. This may be to call Mammon and Venus, but it is perfectly to shut out Christ and his disciples from the marriage."* And, if they be excluded, as two fallen children of fallen Adam meet together, their passions and evil tempers unsubdued and unmortified by grace, they must and will break out into flames; and the evil consequences enumerated above will ensue. And as nothing but grace can subdue these tempers

and passions, whatever moral qualifications, out of Christ, we look for and expect, they will be found utterly insignificant, too weak to bind, too impotent to restrain, the evil nature will betray itself. Nothing but Christ, by his divine love and powerful word, can drive out the legion, and speak peace to the winds and storms. But if he be called, if he be a desired and welcome guest, his love will so subdue all evil passions, so incline each one to bear gladly with the other, and so sweeten and soften the unavoidable imperfections of human nature, that they will soon become, as if they really existed not, that they will soon really not exist: — For in this respect also he will change the water into wine: The water of earthly passions into the cheering wine of heavenly affections. Would God the consideration hereof might incline us all to desire his divine presence, keeping our eye fixed upon that of the apostle, marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge; yea they shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.*

Fourthly, we may learn moreover for our practice a tender and becoming concern for

* Heb. xii. 4. Rev. xxi. 8.
the wants and necessities of our friends, from Mary's solicitude for this young couple: If it be in our power, we are bound to relieve them, when in want, and indeed in all their wants and necessities we have the power of doing what Mary's example suggests, of applying to Christ on their behalf. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much: great are the blessings and promises annexed to faithful prayer: and when as well in the spiritual and temporal needs of others, we apply to Jesus as our only mediator and advocate, we need not fear, but that he will at length hear us, that in his good time, and his hour he will supply all our necessities: which though he seemeth to delay, nay, though he should put us off somewhat harshly, yet we must carefully observe Mary's rule and temper, patiently submit to his divine and better will, and whatsoever he faith unto us, Do it; this is the only way to have him shew miracles of mercy on our behalf. We must not dare to prescribe to him times and seasons for assisting us; that must be left to his better wisdom: we must wait for his hour; and his time of assisting us is generally our time of utmost need; when the wine is all out, when all hopes of human aid are gone, then he delights to stretch forth his right hand to save, defend
defend and deliver us. Nor must we think unkindly of Christ, though he bring us to this last hour, though he reduce us to the last extremity: calamities and afflictions are no marks of his hatred, but of his love: whom he loves he chastens. There was wine wanting at the feast where Christ himself was present: frequently the best of Christians are reduced to the lowest state of sufferings, and God hath his good purposes in all these, even the manifestation of his glory.

Fifthly, His gifts are all for use, to be drawn out, we must not bury our talent in the earth, but trade with it; for there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; but the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal.* These gifts of the spirit and of Christ are very different from the gifts of the world, sin and Satan, they present us with the very best wine first: Christ keeps the good wine till the last. All the delights and pleasures of sin smile upon us to allure and entice us at the first, they present us with the most beautiful outside, while within they are like graves full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Milton describes sin as a beautiful woman, fair and lovely to the waste, but

* 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7.
Ending foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm'd
With mortal sling.†

And Solomon describing the wine of sensual
worldly pleasures, uses much the same image;
at the last it biteth like a serpent and slingeth
like an adder. The world presents us with
fair language, promising hopes, convenient
fortunes, pompous honours, these are the
outsides of the bole: and that vile inveigler
and subtle deceiver of souls comes with his
base insinuations—all these things and the glory
of them will I give unto thee, if thou wilt only
fall down and worship me. And alas, how ma-
ny are caught by this bait in the caitiff's trap!
but soon as it is down, soon as the bait is swal-
lowed, these dissolve in an instant, and there
remains nothing but bitterness, and the ma-
lignity of colloquintida:* these fair shews and
specious promises melt away like the morning
dew, and in their stead the heart feels nothing
but the fiery flings of conscience, and the
burning fear of hell. Every sin smiles in the
first address; and, like the harlot, flattery
is in its tongue, honey on the lip, gaudy bravery

† Paradise Lost, b. 2. 650. Proverbs xxiii. 32.
* See Bishop Taylor's Great Exemplar, p. 220.
In its outside attire*: but when we have well drunk, then comes that which is worse: a dart striketh thro' the liver, when fastening like a bird to the snare, and knowing not that it is for life: they lie down in shame, and their confusion covers them, for they have sinned against the Lord their God†: who will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man, that doth evil, that is contentious and obeyeth not the truth. But to these, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for honour and glory and immortality‡, for those will he reserve the good wine to the last, the good wine of eternal life, and eternal bliss, which they shall drink new with him, in his heavenly kingdom, when the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

But this more properly belongs to the spiritual interpretation of this miracle, which I proposed to give you in the IIId and last place, and which I will do as concisely and clearly as I am able.

The great mystery of the rejection of the Jewish, and the calling of the Gentile church,
Christ delivered in a parable *, where he tells us, that the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son: And sent forth his servants to call them, that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Other servants were sent to these same people: but they despised both the messengers and the message; making light of this and slaying those. The king enraged hereat, sent forth his armies, and destroyed these murderers and their city. But desirous that the wedding might be furnished with guests, he sent them into the high-ways and hedges, to bid as many as they should find to the marriage. The invitation was readily accepted by these, and the wedding was furnished with guests. This king represents to us God the Father, and the Son his Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he who is the bridegroom, and hath the bride, even those faithful souls who come to the wedding: the Jews represented by those who were first bidden, and refused to come, rejected Christ when he came with his proposals and offers of love to them, cruelly entreated and slew him, as well as such of his servants, those friends of the bridegroom, as

* Matt. xxii.
he sent to woo them to himself and to his love. Rejected by these he made his offers of grace to the Gentiles, represented by those in the high-ways and hedges; he sent his servants to invite them, and they readily received and obeyed his heavenly call, closed with his divine proffers, rejoiced to be led into the knowledge of the truth, and to espouse themselves to this all-lovely bridegroom. And this reprobation of the Jews and election of the Gentiles was the great mystery, the deep decree and counsel of predestination, hid from ages, kept secret, since the world began, but, as St. Paul says, made manifest after the death of Christ *: And by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the ever-lasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith †. And indeed the prophets all through speak in the strongest terms of this great mystery of Christ's marrying the adulterous gentile church, of his taking that wife of fornications to himself, as you will see by consulting the prophets, particularly the liveth chapter of Isaiah, where he faith to this church, Thy maker is thy husband—and in none more emphatically than in the prophet Hosea, whose name signifies Saviour, ‡ and

* Coloss. i. 26, 27. † Rom. xvi. 25, 26. ‡ The learned reader wants no proof hereof: and the unlearned one
and who was in this respect a strong type of our redeemer, being commanded of God himself, to take a wife of whoredoms, to marry a woman an adulteress, even as Christ married the adulteress flesh, and particularly the gentile church*. Plead with your mother, plead, faith one is referred to Mr. Cruden's excellent Concordance, where he will find a very useful explanation of all the proper names in scripture.

* See Hosea i. ii. and iii. It is remarkable that in the genealogy of Christ, out of the four women that are mentioned there, two were adulteresses; Tamar and Bathsheba. Irenæus speaking of the prophet Hosea says, Christ was manifested to the prophets not only by visions and words, but by actions likewise: that he might by the prophets pre-figure and foreshew things to come: for this purpose it was that the prophet Hosea took a wife of whoredoms, to shew by that act that the earth had committed great spiritual whoredom in departing from the Lord; and that out of this earth God would espouse to himself a church which should be truly sanctified by communion with his son, as that wife of whoredom was to be typically by communication with the prophet, as St. Paul says, "The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband, 1 Cor. vii. 14. That which was done typically by the prophet, the apostle shews was really performed by Christ in the church, lib. 4. chap. 37. p. 336.—St. Cyril of Alexandria, vol. i. p. 196, upon Genesis, says, God did these things by his holy prophets from time to time, that in them, as in a lively picture, men might have a view of things to come, delineated as it were before their eyes, and might turn them to their own spiritual advantage. So that the prophet's cohabiting with a wife of whoredoms was a type or figure of God's uniting or associating himself, after a wonderful manner, with that detestable harlot the Jewish church.—

I am
On the Marriage

faith God in this prophet, chap. ii. 2. Am I not her husband, is she not my wife? let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts, &c.—ver. 19. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies: I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. And I will sow her unto me in the earth, and I will have mercy upon her, that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

This too, as I observed, is that great mystery of predestination, even God's decree from all ages to call and marry in Christ the Gentiles, his elect, of which St. Paul speaks, and of which he writes particularly in the iii d chapter to the Ephesians, the title of which in our bibles is, Of the hidden mystery, that the Gentiles should be saved.

And as this was the great purpose of Christ's coming in the flesh, and dying upon the cross thus to purchase to himself an uni-

I am obliged to the learned labours of the reverend Mr. Merrick for these collections, as well as for many useful hints on this subject, which the reader will find in his sermons on Marriage, printed for Withers, Fleet-street.
versal church by shedding his most precious blood, so is it spiritually figured out to us in this first or chief miracle, which he wrought in Cana of Galilee: for the great, the principal, and the chief miracle which he wrought, was the shedding his blood, and rising again on the third day to purchase to himself his spouse the church.—The Holy Ghost informs us, that this marriage in Cana was on the third day: now as there is no word in scripture without its spiritual as well as literal use, so we may be assured that this also was intended to teach us something; and the third day both in the Old and New Testament hath reference to the resurrection of Jesus, which was on the third day, when having finished his work, having performed the service required, paid his bride's debt, fully satisfied for her offences, and obtained the full power of redemption, he arose from the grave and entered upon his mediatorial office, preparing to celebrate his divine and eternal nuptials, going before, as he said, to provide and make ready those divine and heavenly mansions †, which are in his Father's house, for the reception of his beloved spouse. Speaking of the third day, he himself says, Behold I do cure's to-day and to-morrow, and

* Τῷ ΑΡΧΗΝ τῶν Σημειῶν.  
* John xiv. 2.
the third day I shall be perfected, — wholly completed, fitted and consecrated to my office of mediator, to have all power in heaven and in earth." And the prophet Hosea speaking of Christ says, after two days will be revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight *, for when he was raised up from the dead, his bride, even all faithful souls were raised up with him, for he is the head, and we are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. This is a great mystery, faith St. Paul, but I speak concerning Christ and his church †.

And as the Holy Spirit informs us of the day of this divine wedding, so doth he also of the place, Cana of Galilee; upon which much stress seems to be laid; for you may observe that it is repeated, both at the beginning and end of the narration. For this I will use the words of the learned St. Cyril, "Here again, says he, let the intelligent reader observe, that the marriage was not celebrated in Jerusalem, but without Judea, to the end that it might be the country of the Gentiles; for Galilee was of the Gentiles, as the prophet speaks §; and, hereby was

† Luke xiii. 32.  
* Hosea vi. 2.  
† Ephef. v. 32.  
§ Matt. iv. 12. Jesus departed into Galilee; — and why to? — That it might be fulfilled — which was spoken by Esaias
was manifestly intimated, that the Jewish church
would reject Christ the bridegroom from heaven,
but that the Gentile would very readily receive
him; for Christ did not go to this marriage of his
own accord, an unbidden guest; but was invited
by many believers; moreover there was a de-
ficiency of wine to the guests, which intima-
ted that the law made nothing perfect *, the
writings of Moses did not suffice to create
spiritual joy; but Christ hath shewn us a
wine which is much better than the first
(under the law;) for the letter killeth, but
the Spirit giveth life †. The good things of
the law have no perfection in themselves, but
the gospel dispensation is the completion of
the blessings promised therein."

And to shew that the Jews would not only
reject, but be rejected of him, Jesus at this
wedding rebuked his mother, and said, "what
have I to do with thee? shewing to the Jews
that the outward privileges they stood upon,
and the relationship which they boasted that
they bore to God, who, they said, was their
Father — was no argument for presuming up-
on his power; since he would forsake them,

Esaías the prophet, saying — Galilee of the Gentiles, the
"people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to
them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is
sprung up." See Isai. ix. 1, 2.

* Heb. vii. 19.  † 2 Cor. iii. 6.
as they had forsaken him, to take unto himself a spouse from the Gentiles. For generally in marriages there is a forsaking; a man, faith the scripture, shall leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife*, as the wife must do in return; so Christ did forsake, did leave his heavenly Father's bosom, to marry human nature, and he forsook his Mother the Jewish church, to marry that of the Gentiles, which in return was to forsake all her idols and all her abominations, before her maker could be her husband.

There were set at this wedding water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews; — and the water in these he turned into wine, to shew, that all the typical washings and purifications of the Jews were to terminate in his blood, and, as it were, to be changed into it: that all their ceremonies and services should cease, and be completed and verified in that great sacrament, his death upon the cross, which is the life, the sum and substance of the gospel sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.

This water made wine was to be presented to the Governor of the feast, who here, as the King in the parable just before spoken of, represented God the Father, who receives this

good wine of his Son's blood, accepts and approves of it, and declares himself well pleased with it, as being far better than the wine offered at first, than all the typical services, and all the blood shed in sacrifice, which could never make the Comers thereunto perfect, and with which he declares himself not well pleased*. This good wine Christ kept to the last, till these last times, namely of the gospel dispensation, (in which sense last times is commonly used in the scripture) and shed it upon the cross for the sake of sinners, to purchase to him-

* See the 9th and 10th chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews. Quesnelle in his reflections on the 10th verse of the 2d chapter of St. John, observes, God gave at the first the old wine of the law without strength, spirit or taste; and in the fulness of time he gave the new wine of a strong and powerful grace, which enables us to fulfil the law, which imbibes the heart in a holy manner and causes it to forget all present things. Let us desire, pray for and taste this wine of our heart, which is so necessary to our salvation.—This is the wine of the marriage of the Lamb, a marriage begun in the incarnation, by the union of the WORD with our NATURE; continued and brought to perfection in the sanctification of sinners, by their being incorporated with Christ, finished and consummated in heaven, by the union of all the elect with their head, and the completion of the adoption of God's children in the bosom of the Father!—Theophylact on the place explains it in much the same manner. Vol. I. p. 587. Διανεριστονονος υπονομονον, &c. By the Wine you may understand the gospel; by the water, all the dispensations before it, &c. See the author.
self and to cleanse by this purifying stream, that church, which, as writers observe, proceeded from his wounded side in the mystic stream of blood and water, when he hung dead upon the cross, as Eve was taken from Adam's side when he lay asleep in the garden*; and from which event, all through the old Testament,—the books of Moses, the psalms, the prophets,—as well as the New, quite to the end of the Revelation, even to the Marriage-supper of the Lamb, this similitude is used, and this holy estate of matrimony consecrated to represent to us the spiritual marriage and union which is betwixt Christ and his church; insomuch that I do not know of any relation wherein the Holy Ghost so much delighteth to represent our Redeemer to us, as under this of our near Kinsman †, who took our nature to become thus near to us that he might betroth and espouse us to himself in love.

* This is the unanimous voice of all the fathers, of all the best and most ancient writers of the church—"As the sleep of Adam, says Tertullian, was a type of the death of Christ, so Eve coming forth of the side of Adam prefigured the procession of the church, that true mother of all truly living, from the wounded body of our Lord." De Animâ. cap. xliii. p. 593.

† See Ruth ii. 1. iii. 12, 13, &c. and Deut. xxv. 5, &c.
This first miracle of our Lord's was intended to signify this in general, but to unfold in particular the hidden mystery of Christ's marrying the Gentile church, which he purchased by his own blood, that they who were sometimes far off, might be made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us (and the Jews) having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, to make in himself of twain one new Man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh*. And this saving dispensation so happy for us who are of the Gentiles, we are bound to commemorate with thankful hearts, and with believing souls to contemplate this manifestation of his glory, the greatest which he could possibly give us, and which if it fails to excite our faith and love, we have great reason to tax ourselves with hardness and baseness of heart.

For did it not shew the greatest love to us miserable sinners, that the Son of the Most High should leave his Father's bosom, and

* Ephes. ii. 13, &c.
in much meaness and humility condescend to dwell upon earth, to live in this wretched world, to live a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and at length after sufferings, the most grievous and intolerable to human nature, to lay down his life a ransom for ours, to pay our debt and satisfy for our sins, by the bitterest agonies on the accursed tree; — what lover could shew his love more? well might he say, greater love than this hath no man, than that a man lay down his life for his friends! † — and as thus he fully manifested his love to us, so he no less manifested his glory, when, after his body had been mangled, his hands and feet transfix’d to the cross, and his precious side pierced with the spear, yet on the third day he arose triumphant from the grave; his wounds all healed, his heavenly body refined and fitted for glory, and himself so perfected, as to have finished the work for which he came, as to have wrought his beloved bride’s deliverance, as to be ready to receive and take her to his heavenly embraces! this was indeed a stupendous manifestation of his glory: but it is more stupendous still, when we reflect, what poor,

† John xv. 13.
wretched, worthless sinners we are, for whom the Son of God hath done so much, and to whom his loving heart is so much inclined! O sinner, doth not his uncommon love to thee beget some yearnings of affection, some tender feelings towards this heavenly bridegroom, who hath a place for thee in his heart, and who wooes thee with all the warmth of love to his bosom and delights! — Did some mighty prince; enamour'd with love to an earthly beauty, who on account of the greatness of her debt which she was unable to pay, was confined to a doleful prison, and condemned to grievous sufferings from a merciless tyrant, — did he submit for her sake to lie in that doleful dungeon many years, where otherwise she must have lain for ever; did he submit to be scourg'd and tortured in her stead; did he offer to receive her, though covered with filthy and defiling rags, and all over uncleanness; did he present her with costly robes and deck her in the finest ornaments, place her on the throne with himself, and admit her to his bed and bosom; * — think you, that his generous treatment would not engage her heart? — which of you, supposing you were that prince's bride, would not love him with all

* See the xviith chapter of the prophet Ezekiel.
your soul, and strive to please and delight him with all your power?—your hearts, I am sensible, bound with gratitude even at the thought—nothing, nothing, you think, could ever be sufficient to make such a benefactor amends!—Now then, you have all such a benefactor!—nay one as much superior to what I have been hinting, as an eternal God to a perishing man!—Christ hath in reality done this, yea and ten times more out of his unbounded love to each of our souls: he hath not only lived, lived in a prison, a dungeon, far from his native kingdom and his celestial home, he hath not only suffered, suffered tortures beyond what heart can think or pen describe; but he hath died, died the most ignominious and painful death for us! his love was stronger than death! he hath lain in prison, he hath lived in the dungeon of this world, he hath suffered stripes and scourges, he hath endured all the curse of the law, all the agonies of a bloody sweat, a torturing cross, a crown of thorns, the taunts of sinners, the reproaches of enemies, the desertion of nearest and dearest friends, and all this—not for those who had any beauty or comeliness to recommend them, but for miserable beggars, spotted over and defiled with sin,
from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot—all this for thy sake, O sinner, all this to redeem thee from the curse of the law, under which thou liest, from the power of Satan, by which thou art strongly bound, from the sentence of death, under which thou art condemned, and from the eternal punishment, which is to be inflicted on those, who accept not his grace. And after all this endured for thee, if thou wilt but come to him, though never so much defiled, though never so much polluted, he will receive and cleanse thee from all thy filthiness, deliver thee from the power of the law, sin, death and hell, and clothe thee with the garments of salvation; he will cover thee with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decking thee with ornaments, and as a bride adorned with her jewels *. And having done this, he will espouse himself to thee in much faithfulness and love; he will give thee the most comfortable presents, the sweetest earnefts of his love, till the blessed consummation day, even his holy Spirit, that faithful friend of the bridegroom, who will display his graces to thee, and bring to thy remembrance † all his tender words and endearing speeches: many kind visits will he him-

* Isaiah lxi. 10.
† John xiv. 26.
self make thy soul; a sweet foretaste shalt thou have of his pleasures in the sacrament of his body and blood: and perpetual delight and joy in perusing his letter of love, his divine word of promise, which shall be sweeter than the honey-comb to thy soul, and which thou wilt never lay aside, but hold near to thy heart in his long absence; and when it shall please him to hasten thy desired wedding-day, to come and take thee to his arms and home for ever, then thou shalt drink of that GOOD WINE, which he keeps till the last, that wine, which is infinitely raised in flavour above all earthly draughts; thou shalt be taken into those blissful mansions, which thy faithful bridegroom went before to prepare, and to welcome thee into which he shall come in his marriage-robes, adorned with all his glory on the great day: when taken up with him to thy eternal home and his eternal love, thou shalt taste such pleasures, and drink of such rivers of delight, as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man † to conceive, much less to express!

And need I then, as the friend and messenger * of this bridegroom, sent by him to woo and

† 1 Cor. ii. 9.
* 2 Cor. v. 20. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in
and win your souls to his heart, and your own happiness—need I intreat you to close with him, to strike the bargain, to accept his offer, to betroth yourselves to him in faithfulness and love? This offer is made to all amongst you

"in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God!—The persuasion and beauty of this text can scarce be resisted, one would hope, by any thinking person that reads it.

There is something so remarkably sweet and persuasive in the following little hymn of Herbert's, and which gave me so great pleasure, when writing on this subject, that I cannot prevail with myself to omit it, as hoping it may please the reader no less than it hath done me.

1 B.

Sweetest Saviour, if my soul
Were but worth the having,
Quickly I should then control
Any thought of waving:
But when all my care and pains,
Cannot give the name of gains,
To thy wretch so full of stains;
What delight or hope remains?

2 C.

What, child, is the balance thine,
Thine the poise and measure?
If I say, thou shalt be mine:
Finger not my treasure.
What the gains in having thee
Do amount to, only he,
Who for man was fold, can see:
That transferr'd th' accounts to me.

3. B.

But as I can see no merit
Leading to this favour:
So the way to fit me for it
Is beyond my favour.
you, come to the wedding, for all things are ready: and O that I could so invite, so display the love, the graces, the beauties of this heavenly JESUS, as to win all your souls to a marriage union with him! and surely there is in nothing so much room, since, say all we can, we can never say enough, so much is he above all praise, so much is he above all commendation: for this is no mortal perishing husband, subject to infirmities, caprice, dislike or change: but thy husband is thy maker, the Lord of hosts is his name, the eternal king of heaven and earth, he whose word spoke all this world into being, he who gave to man his wonderful body, and breathed into him his still more wonderful and immortal soul: he who could say to the roaring winds, peace: and to the raging sea, be still: he who broke the iron bars of death, and rose triumphant

As the reason then is thine,
So the way is none of mine,
I disclaim the whole design;
Sin disclaims and I resign.

4. C.

That is all, if that I cou'd
Get without repining:
And my clay, my creature wou'd
Follow my resigning.

That as I did freely part
With my glory and desert,
Left all joys to feel all smart.

—All—no more: thou break'st my heart!
into heaven: he, before whom thrones, dominations and powers bow their heads, giving glory and honour, might, majesty, and dominion for ever and ever: he who knows not any change, who loves with an eternal and immutable love, and who with an everlasting kindness will have mercy †: who continues the same to day, yesterday, and for ever: and whose divine word of promise and letter of love to us shall never fail; heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle of his word shall never pass away! Wish you to be married to a spouse of great dignity and high honour—behold, Christ is ready to enter into your heart as his bridal chamber; and no dignity can equal his, for he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords*: he is highly exalted, and hath obtained a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth †! Wish you a spouse full of wisdom and knowledge? Christ is the wisdom of God; grace is poured into his lips, never man spake like this man: his mouth is most sweet: yea in him are hid all

† Isaiah liv. 8.
* Revelation xvii. 14. xix. 16.
† Phillip. ii. 9, 10.
the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*: With you a spouse for loveliness and beauty? Behold he is white and ruddy, the chiefest amongst ten thousand, fairer than the children of men, his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars, as the sun shining in his strength; his beauty far surpassing all idea; in sum he is altogether lovely! With you a spouse with love to return the warmth of your affection? Oh here indeed Christ far surpasses all description! St. Paul, who was well acquainted with his love, declares the breadth, and length and depth and height of it to be far beyond all human knowledge: nay, he is love itself; read the writings of his beloved disciple that sweet suitor of this celestial bridegroom, and there you will be enamoured of his love! but to see it in all its beauty, to behold it in all its fulness, to behold him in all his graces, in his most winning form, when all the virgins that behold and see, will bless and love him †; look, faithful soul, turn thine eye to Calvary's mount, there see thy love crucified, there see thy love stretched out in sorrow inexpressible

* See 1 Cor. i. 24. Col. ii. 3. John vii: 46. For the most complete description of Christ I must refer the reader to the xlvth psalm, the vth chapter of the Canticles from ver. 9 to the end, and the first chapter of the Revelation from ver. 13.
† See Cant. i. 3.
for thee, there see him, meek lamb of God, silently suffering for thy sake; there hear him praying for his adversaries; there see him breathing out his soul for thee, and never henceforth dare to doubt of his love, who thus died to witness it, who thus died to espouse thy soul as a chaste virgin to himself; and never, never, O man, presume to refuse him thy heart, who thus shed his heart's dearest blood for thy wretched sinful sake!

As no greater misery can befall us than to despise this love, and to refuse this divine union with Christ; as no greater hell can be hereafter than the loss of this Redeemer's love and favour throughout all eternity; and as no stronger motives can be offered to incline you to close with him, and to give up yourselves, your souls and bodies in true faith to him, than the foregoing reflections on his infinite love to us:—I will leave you with this impression on your minds, and may the Spirit of God imprint it deeply on all your hearts! I will have good hope, my beloved brethren, that you will seriously consider these things; that you will not be so insensible to your souls welfare, and so in love with everlasting woe,

† 2 Cor. xi. 2.
as to have no regard to an eternal state; but that you will each one resolve to become the spouse of Christ, that you may live blessed here in the sense of his endearing affection and regard, and infinitely blessed hereafter in the full fruition of his inexhaustible pleasures and goodness! The only way to secure which, is to discharge that duty, which he enjoins his spouse, to be loving and faithful, giving him all your hearts, and permitting no other loves to have any place in them, and to be obedient to him in all things; for ye are my friends, faith he, my beloved spouse, if ye do whatsoever I command you*. Carry yourselves, therefore, thus loving, faithful and obedient to your heavenly bridegroom, in all quietness, sobriety and peace, and he will love, nourish, cherish and sanctify you, that you may be holy, and without blemish†: and on the glorious day of the consummation of your heavenly nuptials, you shall hear the triumphant song of all the hosts of heaven, congratulating you, singing and saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to him—for the marriage of the lamb is come,

* John xv. 14.
† Ephes. v. 27.
and his wife hath made herself ready. Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb †—which, &c.

† Revel. xix. 6, 7, 8.
DISCOURSE XII.

On the Pool of BETHESDA.

John v. 4.

For an Angel went down at a certain season into the Pool, and troubled the water; whoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

SAIN T JOHN is the only Evangelist, who mentions this surprising miracle, wrought at the Pool of BETHESDA, and there is perhaps scarce any portion of Scripture, upon which more difficulties have been raised, and more surmises vented. I shall not take up your time with enumerating these, but will endea-
endeavour to make this part of that divine 
word, all of which was written for our in-
struction and comfort, as profitable to you as 
I am able, by giving you,
Ist, A plain and clear account of the 
fact here recorded.
IIdly, By shewing you its spiritual desig-
nation and intent; which will naturally lead 
me, in the
IIId Place, to consider the propriety and 
purpose of the miracle wrought at this Pool, 
by our Saviour, upon the infirm man; from 
which I will endeavour to draw such infe-
rences, and to make such remarks, as shall 
conduce by God's grace to your instruction in 
righteousness, and tend to increase your know-
ledge and love of God your Redeemer.

Ist, Then, I am to give a clear and plain 
account of the literal story, and of the fact 
here recorded by this Evangelist.

After this, says he, there was a feast of the 
Jews, or as the original might be rendered *,

* Μετὰ тαυτά τον Εορτή των Ἰουδαίων. That this feast was the 
passover, so call'd κατ' εἰσόδων, as Irenæus is of opinion 
lib. ii. chap. 39, and not the Pentecost, as Cyril and Chry-
soestom thought, appears very evident to me, says Beza from 
the words of Christ, chap. iv. ver. 35 of this Evan-
gelist.
was the feast of the Jews — the feast of the passover, meaning, by way of eminence, and as it seems generally agreed; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, not only that he might pay a due regard to that law, whereto he was made subject for man, but also that he might have an opportunity to manifest himself and his doctrine to a greater number of people assembled on occasion of this feast, and as it was to be supposed in a religious frame of mind, and therefore more ready to receive the truth; teaching us at once to pay a due regard to divine ordinances and religious assemblies, and to improve every serious frame and disposition of mind into an occasion of good.—Now there is at Jerusalem, says St. John, (at the time of my writing *, as much as to say,) by the sheep-market or gate, (which was built by Eliašib the high-priest, as is mentioned Nehem. iii. 1.) a pool or bath, κολυμβήσθαι †, for the

* This seems to intimate that Jerusalem and this pool were then standing when St. John wrote this gospel, and therefore that it was written, as Theophylact and others say, before the destruction of Jerusalem, and not, as the more ancient Fathers thought, long after. See Dr. Whitby on the place, and also Bengelius.

† At Jerusalem, says Dr. Pearce bishop of Rochester, in his useful vindication of our Lord's miracles, p. 7, near the place call'd the sheep-market, or sheep-gate rather, there was a bath built for the use of such of the common people, as lov'd
the purpose and convenience of bathing as to its ordinary use, and called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, i.e. the house or place of mercy, on account of the following supernatural and extraordinary uses; around this bath were built five porches, a kind of cloisters or porticos *, which served to shelter, both from the heat and cold, those who frequented this place: but which were more particularly serviceable to the infirm people, who crowded hither on account of the miraculous virtue of the waters; For in these porches there lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the MOVING of the water. For an angel descended into the Pool, at a certain season, ἅτα άμρον, that is, at the loved to swim and bathe themselves in the water; this is the proper sense of the word κολυμβήθρα (from κολυμβᾶν to swim, Acts, xxvii. 43) used by St. John, and by other writers, and in the old Latin version, (called the Italics) it was rendered by Natatoria, a bath or swimming-place. Nothing was more common, or more useful than such baths in these warm climates. Josephus mentions some by this very name of κολυμβήθρα, and at Jericho, as used for the exercise and pleasure of swimming; and it may be reasonably presumed, that this at Jerusalem was built for the same purpose."—That the sheep to be sacrificed were washed here, or that all the blood of the sacrifices ran into it,--as many commentators have advanced, seems to want proof, nay indeed to be disproved by the Bishop in the following page, which see.

* ετοιμα.
season of the passover *, say some, with great probability, and others, at some particular seasons, which were uncertain and indeterminate — I rather am inclined to think, the season, referred to, was the passover; — and thus descending, troubled † the Water, by which troubling of it, and the extraordinary motion consequent thereupon ‡, they were informed of the descent of the Angel; Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had:—And thus it was abundantly proved that this was no natural virtue, nor a virtue acquired* from

* See Dr. Pearce's Vindication, p. 9. note (e).
† It is not probable, says Beza, that the angel used to descend in a visible form; sed ex aqüae repentina turbatione & consequenti miraculo, fatis omnibus constabat divinitus id fieri consueuisse.
‡ ἐκαταγόνι; the Hebrew word is יִתְאָנִי used Ezek. xxxvii. 2 and 13, which signifies conturbare aquas, idque calcando aut conculcando, says Leigh, sicut bomo calcat in aquis non profundis.
* A virtue acquired, &c.] I mention this to obviate a strange hypothesis of the very learned Dr. Hammond, which it is marvellous a man of his understanding should have espoused. He thinks, that this water had contracted a natural virtue by washing the carcases and entrails of the sacrifices in this pool, and that on stirring it up that virtue exerted itself the more; so that a proper officer or messenger, (the immediate signification of the original word ἀγγέλος) was appointed for that purpose. This opinion wants no arguments to confute it. Grotius observes, that many things concurred to prove, that this was no natural effect of the water; and then gives the like reasons to those in the text above.

natural
natural causes, in these waters, since, 1st, all manner of diseases were healed by them, 2dly, since these cures were performed only at stated seasons, 3dly, since one only after the troubling of the water was healed, and since, 4thly, none were healed, but after the troubling of the water, whereas, in general, medicinal waters are required to be calm and not troubled for the use of patients.

Such is the account which St. John gives us of this miraculous Pool of Bethesda: with which if we will be content, and rest satisfied with his authority, we shall have no need to trouble ourselves, with those various enquiries that men have made concerning it, who would be wise above what is written. Numberless questions have arisen concerning the place, the time, and the nature of this Pool; and as we have no mention of it particularly either in the writings of the Prophets, of the Apocryphal or Jewish writers, therefore these questions remain as doubtful as ever, and perhaps will never be clearly answered.—As to the time, when this miraculous effect first took place, nothing precisely certain can be determined; but it seems almost universally agreed, that it could not be long before the coming of Christ; and that the miracle was intended to lead men to him. For the
the gift of prophecy and of miracles had now been withdrawn from the Jews for above 400 years; to raise in them therefore a more ardent desire for the coming of the Messiah, and to an observation of the signs of his now almost universally-expected * coming, — God was pleased to favour them with this remarkable sign at Bethesda. And because in these last times the Jewish people lay open not only to the irruptions and tyranny of the Gentiles, but had wholly lost their liberty; that they might not yet entirely despair of the fulfilling of the promises made to their fathers, nor entirely cast off their religion and allegiance to God, he favoured them with this eminent token of his favour, this wonderful Pool, in a place near to the gate of victims, which were figures of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Messiah: that they might see God had yet a regard to the posterity of Abraham, and the worship which he himself had established,

* For it is well known, and heathen writers expressly declare it, that there was through the East, an almost universally received opinion and persuasion of some great prince and mighty ruler to arise. The testimony of Tacitus and Suetonius have been urged over and over, — and Virgil's Pollio is a very strong evidence— but stronger than all are the testimonies to this truth given in the New Testament, where we find many at the time of Christ's coming, waiting for the consolation of Israel.

and
and might thus support themselves with good hopes of the speedy coming of the Messiah, the great angel of the covenant, to his temple*. And as this miracle of the angel descending from heaven then began, when the coming of the Messiah was at hand, to advise them of the speedy and near approach of that promised salvation—wherefore also this gift of healing was without the temple—so there can be no doubt, that Christ therefore entered these porches, and performed the miracle following, to shew what was the true intent of this gift of healing, and to what it was designed of God, to lead men,—even to himself, the fountain opened for sin and for all uncleannesses: and the water was thus troubled only at this certain season of the passover, or at other stated periods, and one only at each time was healed, to shew them at once the weakness of the law, and the great difference between that and the gospel dispensation; and to teach them not to rest in the corporal benefit only, as in the ministration of an angel; but to betake themselves to a careful consideration of the promises of the Messiah's approaching advent.—And thus I have led you to a general view of the

* Mal. iii. 1.
If d thing which I proposed to shew, namely
the spiritual designation and intent of this
miraculous effect at Bethesda.

It was to lead Men to Christ: to him, who
was the expectation of all nations, the great an-
gel of the covenant, and who descending into
his church, and moving upon the divine or-
dinances and means of grace, efficacious only
through his most precious blood, restores to
perfect soundness of soul, all who step in, all
who use their endeavours to wash and be * clean.
—The number of impotent folk, lying around
this pool, and in the five * porches of it, un-

† 2 Kings v. 12.
* St. Aufflin, whose interpretations are frequently much
too fanciful and far stretched to be followed, though his
piety and erudition are never enough to be admired—in his
allegorical interpretation of this miracle, says that the five
porches figured out the five books of the law, and I be-
lieve it will be universally allowed that his interpretation
here at least is solid and good: I will produce his own
words. Exposit. in Joan. page 61. tom. 9. Piscina illa
& aqua illa populum mibi videtur significasse Judæorum; sig-
nificari enim populus nomine aquarum, opertè nobis indicat
apocalypsis Ioannis: ubi enim cum ofienderentur aquæ multæ,
cap. xvii. 15. & interrogasset quid essent, respondum acceptit,
populos esse. Aqua ergo illa, i. e. populus ille quinque libris
Mosis, tanquam quinque porticibus claudebatur. Sed illi libri
predabant languidos, non fanabant; lex enim pecatores con-
vincebat, non solverebat. Ideo litera sine gratia reos faciebat,
quos confitentes gratia liberabat. Nam hoc dicit apostolus, si
enim data est lex, quæ posset vivificare, omnino ex lege
effet justitia. Quare ergo data est lex? sequitur & dicit,
"fed
able to cure and help themselves, represent to us the condition of human nature, and the weakness of the law, which only shews us our sins, and keeps us under its power, but can by no means deliver us from the bondage of corruption. But what the law could not do, in that it was WEAK through the FLESH; God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh*: which great deliverance was figured out by the descent of the angel into the pool, and by the miraculous cure wrought upon him, who first stepped in after the moving of the water†. And this was done at the time of the

fed conclusit scriptura omnes sub peccato, ut promissio ex fide Jesu Christi dareetur credentibus. What follows of this good father's interpretation, will neither be defended or espoused—we cannot however fail to admire his wit and ingenuity.

* Rom. viii. 3. Weak through the flesh: for it is the reign of sin in the flesh, which causes the weakness and inability of the law, as it is the dominion of grace over the will, which causes the fulfilling of it. The law is holy, just, and good—but we are carnal.

† It is to be noted, says Dr. Whitby, that these waters of Siloam, were a type of the kingdom of David and of Christ; of the kingdom of David according to those words, Isaiah viii. 6. Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Siloah that go softly, that is, faith the Targum, the kingdom of David, that ruleth them quietly: and of Christ according to those words of the same prophet, xii. 3. with joy shall they draw water from the wells of salvation, whence Siloah is interpreted sent. See note on John ix. 7.
On the Pool of Bethesda.

passover to direct their and our view to the death of Christ, and the blood shed for sinners, which gives efficacy to all gospel ordinances, and which thro’ them, applied by the Spirit to the heart, cleanses and heals all manner of sin and iniquity: and that not of one particular person, and in one particular place only, but of human nature in general, of all, who in every place and nation will come to the fountain, wash and be clean: for now is the day, in which, according to the prophet, the fountain is opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin, and for all uncleanness †: in which words it is more than probable that Zechariah alludes to this pool of Bethesda, and so to him, whom that pool prefigured. And “hence, as Tertullian notes, “the virtue of this pool then ceased, when “the Jews persevering in their infidelity re-“lected our Saviour:” nay and indeed it was then of necessity to cease like all other types and shadows, when Christ the reality was come and his kingdom established upon earth to

To this type of the Messiah, God might therefore give this virtue about that time to prepare the Jews to receive his advent, who was sent to them; and when a fountain was to be opened for sin and for all uncleanness, namely the blood of Christ might communicate this virtue to this pool, as a prefiguration of it, &c.

† Zechar. xiii. 1.
On the Pool of Bethesda.

On the Pool of Bethesda. — So that the pool of Bethesda, with all the impotent folk lying around it, was a figure of the state of human nature and the weakness of the law; and the descent of the angel into it, with the consequences thereof, a figure of the gospel kingdom, set up by Christ, who descended from heaven for that purpose, and having finished all, descended into the grave †, and arose again the third day: from which his death and resurrection, the gospel sacraments and means of grace gain all their influence: from and through which the waters of this river heal and give life to every thing whither the river cometh, as the prophet Ezekiel expresses.

† The angel קאָבָה descended, and so Christ descended, קאָבָה, in both the respects abovementioned; and we in baptism descend with, are buried with him; to signify which we may remember, that it was usual in the primitive church in baptism, to descend into the water, and to dip in it three times—See Cave's primitive christianity, part I. p. 320.

|| St. Jerome upon this chapter observes, "by these waters the Lord shed the waters of baptism, and the doctrine of the gospel issuing out of the temple at Jerusalem where Christ taught, in great abundance to the watering of all nations: concerning which waters also it is spoken Zechar. xiv. 8. running towards the east and the west, to shed the eastern and western churches, where by this doctrine the countries and nations are watered. And it is spoken of the gospel, Isaiah lv. 1. by the name of waters. The
On the Pool of Bethesda.

presses it, in his vision of waters, chap. xlvii. which may serve well to illustrate the present miracle.

Some following St. Chrysostom have applied this miraculous effect, as a figure of regeneration in baptism: "the laver of regeneration, says one *, is to us as Bethesda’s pool: "healing our spiritual diseases, not at certain "seasons, but at all times; whosoever will, let "him come."—And it is true of this, in a secondary sense, and very apt, because the

The prophet, as we read ver. 3, 4, was carried further off 1000 cubits to pass over these waters, and they came up to his ankles; after this a 1000 cubits more, and they came up to his loins: lastly a 1000 more, and then they made a river which was unpassable, unless by swimming: whereby was shewed, how by degrees evangelical graces abounded more and more, until Christian people came to be as a great river of waters. And in particular these waters came first up to the ankles, a few being converted, that is 120 of all the great multitudes which had formerly followed Jesus: but being drawn rather by his loaves than by faith. 2. Up to the knees, there being more added, even 3000 in one day at the coming down of the Holy Ghost. 3. Up to the loins, when Christians still increasing, their number was 5000. Lastly, these waters grew so great that they were a deep river, which was when after Peter’s preaching to Cornelius, and Paul’s being sent to instruct the Gentiles, various countries came in, and the faithful could then be no more numbered, than deep waters by any man passed over on foot." This may serve as a useful key to this very remarkable chapter—a good exposition of which the reader will find in Henry on the bible.

* Henry on the place.
water in baptism is not simply by itself, the laver of regeneration, unless the holy Spirit descending (to use the image of this history) troubles the water with the blood of our divine victim Christ Jesus*: then it becomes the laver of regeneration, according to St. Paul in his epistle to Titus, who fully and emphatically expresses this important matter; but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, after that Christ

* St. Chrysostom in his 35th Homily on John, speaks thus. "In this relation is a great mystery of that which was to come; this pool of water fetteth forth the water of baptism, curing all manner of diseases of sin, and making those, that descend into it dead, to come out alive. Neither were sins only remitted in baptism at the first, but to confirm our faith. Diseases were cured properly figuring our sins. And it is to be noted that the water had not this virtue in itself, but when the angel having descended, had troubled it; no more hath the water of baptism, but by the operation of the Holy Ghost: to induce the Jews to acknowledge this virtue in baptism, the Lord caused an angel thus to trouble this water, intimating hereby, that much more was the Lord of angels able to give virtue to baptism. Yet herein doth baptism differ from this pool; weakness hindered some from being healed there, and it was not always available: but none can plead this in regard to baptism; which is at all times of equal power to save; even as the sun-beams daily shining and giving light, are not at all diminished thereby: no more is the virtue of baptism, having cleansed millions, it remaineth still in full strength and vigour. — Theophylact on the place transcribes St. Chrysostom's words; and bishop Smallbrook, Vindication, vol. I. page 549, quotes the same passage.
descended into this world—not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us—when we lay like these impotent folk around Bethesda's pool, utterly unable to help ourselves—he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, &c. †. I will conclude this head with a passage from an excellent writer on the Gospels ||: “The pool of Bethesda situate near the gate of victims, was an emblem of the church, wherein the water of baptism and that of the tears of repentance cure all sorts of spiritual diseases, by virtue of the blood of the true victim, with which they are as it were tinged and dyed—a great number of diseases and diseased persons are necessary to represent the state and condition to which man is reduced by sin: so miserable is he and full of infirmities from his very birth. He is nothing but weakness, corruption and blindness, utterly unable to do the least good, and in him all grace and virtue are exhausted and withered away. This, O blessed Saviour, is what we should have been eternally in thy sight, if, after having been so long expected, thou hadst not come down among us by thy incarnation. How

† Titus iii. 4, 5.
|| Quefnelle.
great is the debt which we owe thee for having moved this water in our behalf, which hath made us whole. Finish, Lord, what thou hast begun in us."

From this explication of the spiritual and figurative design of the angel's descent into this pool, we may see,

IIIIdly, the purpose and propriety of Christ's entrance into these porches, and of his cure of the infirm man. — It was to prove to them that the Messiah was now come: who was prefigured by this angel; and that HE was that Messiah, that angel of the covenant, now come to his temple, who was able, by his divine word alone, to perform unto ALL that, which could not be done without the ministr} of this angel, to more than one. — As he suffered at the passover to shew them that he was the very paschal lamb, the true passover, sacrificed for a guilty world; so now he wrought this miracle upon the infirm man, to shew that he was the glorious messenger of the Father, who doth nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for whatsoever things he doth, these also doth the Son likewise; as being equal with him in glory and power: wherefore he adds in the verses following, be that honoureth not the Son, ho-
“O JESU, thow art not the Father which bath SENT him. —— Herein you see the great purpose and propriety of this miracle, which we will just in brief consider, and proceed to the uses that may be made of it.

In these porches, built around the pool, amongst the impotent folk lay a man, who had been wholly disabled by a terrible disease and infirmity, most probably a paralytic disorder, now for thirty eight years*: Jesus fixed his compassionate eye upon him, knowing by his divine Spirit †, that he had been now a long time in that miserable case, and so was a fit object upon whom to shew his pity and exert his power: from whence, by the way, a word of comfort may be given to those in affliction, who may learn from hence that how long or heavy soever their affliction is, God knows how long, and keeps an

* The original is προκοιτα ὀκτω ετη εξω ειν τη αθενη — Having been thirty eight years in a weakness, by which general word, bishop Smallbrook seems abundantly to prove, that the palsy is meant—see p. 541, vol. I. and he corroborates his opinion by that of some eminent physicians Bartcheloe, Ader, and Dr. Harle — his quotations from each of which well deserve the reader’s perusal, as the treatise on the scripture diseases of Ader, and the essay on physic in the old and new Testament of Dr. Harle do the attention of every student in divinity. I doubt not Bartholoe is equally excellent, but must not presume to lay more of him, as being a stranger to his works.

† See vol. I. p. 193.
exact account: and is best able to tell how much this affliction may be for our service, and when it is best to remove it. They are often most blessed, whom he chastises most; it is good for the soul to be under strict discipline.

Jesus seeing him lie, and knowing his case, faith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? by which question he intended to engage his attention as well as that of those who were present, and to stir up in the man's mind that earnest desire and will, without which we cannot be saved: for grace doth not operate irresistibly; we are endued with freedom of will and choice, and our will must concur with our Saviour's in our spiritual cure. There was but little doubt of his desire to be made whole: the mean, whereby he could attain the blessing, was that alone, which was wanting. Sir, replied he, I have no man* when the water is troubled, to put me

* He complains for want of friends to help him in, (says Henry on the place) I have no man, no friend to do me that kindness. One would think some of those, that had been themselves healed, should have lent him a hand, but 'tis common for the poor to be destitute of friends: no man careth for their soul. To the sick and impotent 'tis as true a piece of charity to work for them as to relieve them, and thus the poor are capable of being charitable one to another, and ought to be so, though we seldom find that
me into the pool; but while I am coming, so infirm and weak am I, so unable almost to move along, another more active and less diseased than myself, steppeth down before me.—Such is our natural impotency, in which we must have lain for ever, as this man must have done until death, for any ability of his own, had not Christ descended into our world as he did into this Bethesda, and perfected for us the glorious cure.—To magnify his power and manifest his compassion, to let us see, that where human help ceaseth, there the divine aid is ready, and begins to exert itself—He spoke the commanding word to the impotent man, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. He did not bid him rise and step into the Pool, but rise and walk, to shew that he was himself all-sufficient to do that for us, which the law could not do, and which he fulfilled and so abrogated, thus manifestly declaring the full completion of this present miracle in himself. He gave the word, and immediately the man was made whole, the cure was in an instant perfectly wrought, as was undeniably evident to the senses of all that were present, by his rising forthwith, taking up his bed and walk-

that they are so: I speak it to their shame.—He observes also how mildly this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him: a lesson to all in misfortunes.
So with us the greatest proof of our spiritual cure is our rising and walking at the command of Christ; If he hath healed our spiritual diseases we shall know it by our loving and willing mind, to do whatsoever he faith, and to take up whatsoever he layeth upon us, and we shall shew it by really doing so, by walking before him in holiness, simplicity and truth.

Such was the miracle which our Saviour wrought in proof of his divine mission, and as the fulfilling that great miracle wrought by the angel’s descent into the Pool of Bethesda, concerning the dispute * which arose upon it, through the base envy of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the abundant arguments which he used to convince them of his real divinity, as it is not in my compass to speak at present, I must refer to the chapter, and would advise a careful and serious perusal of it: while I proceed to make such remarks, as naturally arise from the subject, and as may, through the grace of God, be profitable to your further instruction in righteousness.

It is very pleasing to observe, that the Son the most high God when, as the Lord and Ruler, the great messenger of the covenant, he suddenly came to his temple, and when

he was about to deliver the most sublime discourse concerning his equality with the Father—should on the sabbath-day, enter as a physician those five porches, which were a kind of hospital, where there lay so great a multitude and so sad a spectacle of the wretched and suffering children of Adam! This serves to assure us, that Christ, though now reigning in equal power and glory with the Father, doth not therefore disregard our miseries; but exerts his office of a loving mediator, in this world, as a great hospital, assisting by his grace and ready help the afflicted in soul as well as body, and not forgetting to extend continually his rich mercy and compassion towards both. Nay if he condescended to leave those glories, of which he was possessed from eternity, to come down into this wretched world, this place of misery and woe, and to open from his most precious heart a fountain for all our uncleanness;—can we doubt of his fatherly care over us, can we distrust his tender regard for us who hath purchased and redeemed us by his own blood; we must necessarily be dear to him, who of his own

* There cannot be stronger proofs of the divinity of Christ, than the reader will find in this fifth chapter of St. John, which is well worth the serious attention of all those who doubt or disbelieve this chief-corner stone of the Christian faith.
free love paid so inestimable a price for us! Let us learn hence with full and humble confidence to repose ourselves upon him, and in all our miseries and necessities of soul and body to commend ourselves into the hands of this faithful redeemer: and to wait upon him in all those means, which he himself hath ordained and appointed, and where he hath promised to meet and refresh our longing souls!

2dly, What a blessing was this Pool of Bethesda, endued with this miraculous virtue, to the Jewish people! You see how they throng'd it; the five porches were full: and all were wishing and striving to enjoy the advantages of it. And were there such a miraculous Bath in this nation, there would be no less crowding thither; each of us should be pressing towards it, when labouring under diseases, and all desirous of stepping in first, that we might be made whole.—How amazingly do men, by their own conduct in temporal things, delude and condemn themselves in spiritual: it will be well if the judge do not say to many in that day—not only out of thine own mouth, but by thine own actions will I condemn thee*.

Such a pool, such a fountain there is for the soul, a fountain opened for sin and for all uncleanness, a fountain, in which whosoever

will, may come, wash and be clean! Such a fountain is the most precious blood of Jesus Christ streaming forth in all his divine ordinances;—yet how little are they thronged by men wishing and earnestly striving to be healed; how few are there who come to them with a full sense of their spiritual impotency, and a full resolution to step in that they may be made whole: How many are there who never come to them at all, who have either found out some new methods to heal their spiritual infirmities, or proud in heart, will confess no spiritual infirmities to be healed, who despise the weakness of their proffered cure, and, wise in their own inventions, have too much sense to believe the gospel: thus, to their infinite peril, treading under foot the Son of God, and accounting the blood of the covenant, whereewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace! Of how sore punishment they will be thought worthy, it behoves all such seriously to consider; and God grant they may understand in time, for it is a fearful thing to fall into the bands of the living God!* And more especially when so much grace, when so much goodness, when so much mercy, hath been long and obstinately rejected; the grace, the mercy, and goodness of an

* Heb. x. 29, &c.
On the Pool of Bethesda

eternal Saviour, who, out of unbounded voluntary love, hath endured sufferings unspeakable to procure so divine a remedy for all our evils! A remedy which is infallible, a cure which can never be unsuccessful: all sicknesses, all disorders, however complicated, however inveterate, are here removed by one hand, and one water: None ever were, none ever will be sent empty away, who come desirous of relief; nor is it confined to the first who steps in: it is a fountain flowing plenteously unto every draught! "Oh all ye that are sick and diseased come to the pool of Bethesda, this blood of Christ, come and be healed: Do ye complain of the blindness of your ignorance, here ye shall receive clearness of sight: of the distemper of passions here is ease: Of the superfluity of your sinful humours, here is evacuation: of the impotency of your obedience, here integrity, of the dead witheredness of good affections, here life and vigour—whatever your sin and infirmity be, come to the pool of Bethesda, come and be healed."

3dly, Thus may you all be cured: but your own will must concur: Christ first asked the man, wilt thou be made whole, before he bid him arise and walk. There could be no doubt of his desire to be cured, who waited at the pool for that very purpose: and you must shew
On the Pool of Bethesdo.

Shew your will and desire to be cured in this same way: you must wait at the pool, you must wait for Christ in those general ordinances, which he himself hath ordained, in the sacraments, prayer, and the word: and if with hope duly sensible of your weakness and misery you thus wait upon him, you need not fear but he will perfect the cure of all your spiritual maladies, and enable you to walk and glorify him. But if you attend at the Pool, frequent the ordinances of the Gospel, the sacraments and church, with any other motive than a real desire to meet there the Saviour of your souls, and to be healed of all your infirmities by his divine blood; be assured you will frequent them in vain, and never find them what they are to the contrite and humble means of grace and channels of heavenly life and support to the soul. — Should you frequent them and still find them not efficacious, yet must you not therefore cease to frequent them: the man was thirty-eight years in his infirmity, and yet perfectly healed by the power of Christ at the last: God often delays his mercies to make them more signal and acceptable; and when we have no man to put us into the Pool, when none is able or willing to help, speaks the word, and we are delivered." Bethesda must be waited on;
on; he is worthy of his crutches that will not stay God's leisure for his cure; there is no virtue, no success without patience, and here we have all need of it. One is sick of an overflowing of the gaul, the jaundice of malice, another of a swelling of pride, another of the fever of concupiscence, another of the vertigo of inconstancy, another of the choking quinsey of curses and blasphemies, another of the dropsy of covetousness*, another of the pleuritical pangs of envy; one is hide-bound with pride, another is consumed with emulation; another rotten with corrupt desires, and we are so much the sicker if we feel not these distempers; oh that we could wait at the Bethesda of God, attend diligently upon his ordinances, we could then no more

* Horace speaking of covetousness observes very beautifully,—Ode II. lib. 2.

_Crescit indulgens sibi dirus hydrops, &c._
The dropsy by indulgence nurs'd
Pursues us with increasing thirst,
Till art expels the cause, and drains
The wat'ry liquor from our veins.

Francis.

He observes in the former stanza——

By virtue's precepts to control
The thirsty cravings of the soul,
Is over wider realms to reign
Unenvied monarch, than if Spain,
You cou'd to distant Libya join,
And both the Cartages were thine
fail of a cure, than now, without it, we can hope for a cure; we wait hard and endure much for the body; what toil do we take that we may toil yet a little longer; we endure many certain pains for the addition of a few uncertain days: Why will we not do thus for the soul, for the immortal, the better part, when we know our waiting will not be unsuccessful, and when we know that our waiting here will procure for us eternal rest hereafter?

Wait, therefore, upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the Lord: trust in him and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed: wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee*: wait on him in all the means of grace, and in all the paths of duty; come to these means, duly sensible of your spiritual evils, lay them before the Lord, confess your sins to him, and with earnest desire to be delivered from the body of this death cry to him, and he will at length give you the victory, and by his grace enable you to rise, take up your bed and walk, to leave sin, and all the occasions of it, and to serve him in holiness and righteousness of living.

4thly, These are the sure evidences of a cure.
1. A forsaking our former sins. 2. A laying

On the Pool of Bethesda.

aside the marks and occasions thereof: and
3. A performing the contrary actions: partic-
ularly the duties of praise and thanksgiving
to God, as this infirm man did; for we read
that *Jesus afterward found him in the TEM-
PLE*: where every penitent soul should be
found, and those especially, whom God hath
raised from a sick bed to a longer enjoyment
of life. It was here that Christ said to him,
for a lesson to us all, *Behold, thou art made
whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto
thee*: hereby shewing that diseases and sick-
nesses are the punishment of sin, and that
of consequence the best remedy we can ap-
ply for their cure, is sincere repentance and
conversion.

To deter us from relapses into sin, he
shews the danger of them, *sin no more, lest a
WORSE THING come unto thee*: it was bad
enough, God knows, to lie thirty and eight
years bound by a terrible disease: but it is
worse, infinitely worse, far worse than pen
can describe or thought can fancy, to lie
bound in flames of ever-during fire, not for
thirty eight or thirty times thirty eight years,
but for ever and ever!—Let them remem-
ber this admonition of our Lord, who have
made upon sick beds good resolutions, and
determined to turn and amend their lives,
when the hand of the Lord hath been fore
upon them; but have forgotten all, when
to try and prove their sincerity, he hath
saved them a while from the jaws of death.
—O let them remember how fearful a woe
hangs over their heads, who having been
made whole, have indulged as usual in the
practice of sin:—and left a worse thing, even
eternal misery, come unto them, let them make
haste with broken hearts and humbled souls
to the pool of Bethesda, the blood of Christ,
the fountain opened for sin and for all un-
cleanness!

For those of you, who have been made
whole, who have experienced the blessings of
this cleansing blood, this admonition will
serve as a lesson to teach you to be duly
mindful of the benefits conferred upon you
by God, and to shew your gratitude by lives
of holiness and love! The admonition, you
observe, stands in the middle, between a
blessing and a curse: Thou art made whole, thou
art become a servant of God, therefore sin
no more, sin doth not suit with such a state:
but if this will not do, dread the punishment—
sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.
Sin is the fruitful parent of all human evils:
and till the body rests in the silent grave, the
temptations to it will never cease; so that we

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have continual need to be upon the watch, and to remember our Saviour's warning—
*behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*—the only method to secure us from which is a full dependance upon the almighty grace of God, sought for with sincerity and humility in all the means appointed, by a regular attendance at the pool, at gospel ordinances; a holy, careful, and conscientious walking, and a strict watchfulness over all our thoughts, words, and actions: if endeavouring thus to wait and thus to act, we shall find God's grace sufficient for us: if thus Christ find us in the temple, paying our grateful tribute of praise and adoration, he will enable us boldly to confess him before men, as this man did before the Pharisees; and if we do so, we have his infallible promise, that he will confess us before his Father and all the holy angels—*Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven, and before the angels of God: but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.* Matt. x. 32, 33, &c.
On the thankful Penitent.

Luke vii. 47.

Therefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

We read of many, who labouring and heavy laden under the burden of corporal evils and worldly distresses, accepted the gracious invitation of Jesus, came to him, and found rest to their souls. But here we have a poor sin-sick sufferer, a woman that was a sinner, whose sins were her only burden, the arrow in her heart, seeking to
On the Thankful Penitent.

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to the sovereign physician of souls for relief. A Pharisee, the last man one would have thought, who would have invited our Lord to his house, a Pharisee, however strange it may seem, desired that he would go home and eat with him. He went accordingly, and sat down to meat. He refused no company, so be he might be found doing good: and he left no company, but they were always the better for him. It is no marvel to see Jesus surrounded with penitent sinners; one would wonder to see him among self-righteous, self-justifying Pharisees: But marvellous as it is to find him in the house of a Pharisee, it is still more so, to think that any poor sinner should either find him or dare to approach him there: where, whatever reception Christ himself might give, nothing less than severe reflections could be expected from a Pharisee, who would behold with scorn a known sinner in his house, when even his righteous neighbour was a sinner in his eye—Strange however, as this might be, St. Luke informs us, that thus it happened: and to denote the particular circumstances of this case, BEHOLD, faith he, a woman in the city which was, I should rather read, which HAD BEEN* a

* Htic mv, quae fuerat.—For she had ceased to be so, says Beza,
sinner, but was now a penitent, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the pharisee's house brought an alabaster box of precious ointment, the best, her love could devise, and not daring to approach his presence, self-humbled, as she was, she stood at his feet, behind him, weeping; which the manner of sitting at meat amongst the Jews rendered very practicable, for they used to lay along upon beds, round the table, leaning on their sides, with their feet turned backwards; and thus standing behind him, weeping the acceptable and blessed tears of contrition, with them she began to wash her Saviour's feet, and to wipe them with those dishevel'd locks, which were once her greatest pride and ornament, nets to catch men, but now employed to holier purposes: warm'd with heavenly affection, she kissed those divine feet, from whose going about to do good, she had received the glad tidings of salvation, and which therefore were beautiful indeed to her: and as a token of her gratitude she anointed them with the ointment, which she had brought to present to her Saviour. Thus her ointment, hands, eyes, hair, lips, Beca, as appears from her very sincere and lively repentance. There is the same manner of expression, i Cor. vi. 11.
are now consecrated to the service of Christ her Saviour, whom in these she had offended: If our satisfaction be not in some kind proportionable to our offence, we are not true penitents."—Here was a marvellous change, and these were testimonies of it seemingly undeniable. But the Pharisee observing this, and being no stranger to the character of the same woman, who, alas, had rendered herself but too infamous in the city by her loose and abandoned life, not charitably inferring from hence the possibility of a mighty change wrought in her: but looking on her in this worst light, he spoke within himself, saying, "This man, whom I have here invited, and of whom I had at least so favourable an opinion as to suppose him a true prophet of the great God, it is plain, from hence, is not what I took him for: for, if he were a prophet, he would have known, who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner, an open, scandalous, notorious, city sinner."—Thus he reasoned in his heart: but Jesus quickly convinced him of his mistake, and proved indeed, that he was a prophet, yea and something more than a prophet,—Simon, said he, I have something to say unto thee. And be faith, Master, say on. A Pharisee was willing to give Jesus attention, let
let us take heed, that we be no less careful to do so.—There was a certain creditor which had two debtors, the one owed five-hundred pence, the other fifty: And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most?—Simon answered, very wisely, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. Jesus replied, Thou hast judged rightly. Truth, from whose mouthsoever it fall, is worth the picking up: our Saviour praises the judgment of a Pharisee: it is a very injurious indiscretion in those who are so prejudiced against the person, that they reject the truth.—Now then, continues our Saviour, to apply this parable, which was spoken for thy sake, turning to the woman, Simon, said he, seest thou this woman? The parable is exemplified in thee and her. Thy invitation was a proof of some small love and regard to me, but how small it is, appears from thy neglect of those common ceremonies and civilities, which men pay to honourable guests: I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she bath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head even with common oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my
my feet with precious and fragrant ointment. And as thus she hath given me indisputable proofs of greater love to me than thou hast done, it is plain from thy own confession, that more is forgiven her than thee: she needed more forgiveness, yet her greater love shews, that she is really in a pardoned state. Wherefore I say unto thee, that her sins, which are many, are forgiven: FOR she hath loved much: Her great love is an evidence that her great sins are forgiven:* for the debtor to whom most is forgiven will love most: But to whom little is forgiven,—He who hath less

* This is evidently the true sense of this passage, and however controverted by some, the whole scope of our Lord's discourse abundantly proves it. Beza's note is very remarkable and excellent here—"ονιαπνοι. Nam dilexit. Vulg. & Erat. Quomiam. I chose rather to interpret in this manner, that it may be more easily understood, that these words shew not the cause of remission of sins; but that the antecedent is gathered from the consequent. For God first loved us when we were yet sinners. Therefore they who abuse this passage to the overturning free justification by faith alone, not only shew the greatest assurance, but weakness. For Christ denies, that this woman was a sinner, as the Pharisee had rashly judged her. He testifies, that the sins of her former life were forgiven: and proves them to be so, from that which follows remission, namely, love, of which she had then given a public testimony. Love therefore is not the efficient or procuring cause of justification, but the consequent effect."

See Dr. Whitby on the place, who gives the same exposition, and defends it ably.
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conviction of sin, less sense of and less remorse for it, the same loveth little.—His love is in the same proportion: the debtor to whom fifty pence is forgiven, hath not so great obligations, and will not love so much as he, who hath five-hundred forgiven him. This, I speak, Oh Simon, for your conviction and instruction.—But that the woman also may have the comfortable sense and assurance of my pardoning love, I will also confirm this blessing of forgiveness, and comfort her conscience burdened under the weight of self-condemnation: "Upon which, he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee."—They that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, as the Pharisees did before upon a like occasion, when he spoke in the same manner to the paralytic, —Who is this that forgiveth sins also? But as then, so now, he ratified his divine word; giving then an outward sign and evidence, that the sins of the paralytic were forgiven, by the cure which he wrought upon his body: giving now to the woman an internal sign and evidence of remission, even peace to her soul, which, in her present state, was more desirable to her than all the gold of Ophir.—He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee: Go in peace.
The ancient writers * have given us this spiritual interpretation of the present fact. The Pharisee, say they, presents us with a figure of the Jewish people: amongst whom the word of God was known, received and dwelt, as in his own house. But a woman that was a sinner, that is, the Gentile church entered into this house, and believed with lively a faith on Christ, who was but ungratefully received by his own people:

* These are the words of Servius, of which I have given the substance in the text. Hic autem Phariseus figuram continent synagogae Judaeorum, in qua primum tanquam in domo propria Dei verbum commoratum fuit, cum per solam Palæstinnam notum esset, et in tabernaculo testimonii appareret. In domum autem ingressa est mulier peccatrix, hoc est, ecclesia, quae ex universi orbis gentibus collecta est. Et sponte sua credidit in Chriftum, qui cum ingratis ac perseveribus istis hominibus accumbebat. Admodum autem ad rem apposite dixit, ecce mulier peccatrix, utpote non uni sed omnibus peccatis adeoque fornicationi obnoxia. Scriputura enim sacra generatim omne peccatum, fornicationem, appellare confuevit, præsertim vero translationem cultus divini, quando is qui soli Deo debitur inanimitas simulacris defertur. At tuli autem alabastrum unguentii, hoc est, insuetam animi sinceritatem puritatemque, tanquam in vitreo quodam vasculo suavem quendam ex omnibus commixtum virtuilibus odorum continentem. Hoc enim est unguentum spirituale. Et sians retro, hoc est, secundo post synagogam ordine contenta, osculatur eum non frigide aut otiöse, sed unguento pedes ejus ungens, ac per virtutum operationes illius vestigiiis insistentes. Unde comparans eam cum synagoga ad Phariseum qua fi in figura Chriftus dicit, Oculum mibi non dedisti. Quamvis enim synagoga precepta quaedam observaverit, non tamen ex amore, sed timore potius servili, mancipii infitar, hoc faciebat.
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He came unto his own, and his own received him not. And her crime, fornication, is that, which throughout the scriptures is laid to the Gentiles charge: spiritual fornication or idolatry, leaving their first husband, the Lord of hosts, and giving themselves up to idols, going up upon every high mountain, and under every green tree, and there playing the harlot, inflaming themselves with idols under every green tree, upon a lofty and high mountain setting their beds, even thither going up to offer sacrifice.*

When converted however from these abominations, they were more fervent and zealous in love, and received Christ with more ardent desire than the Jews.—But not to inlarge on this, we learn moreover many noble and instructive lessons from this great miracle of divine mercy: as particularly the freeness of God's grace, and the nature of justification.—

The condition of all men, debtors to the God of heaven, bankrupts and unable to pay, and without hope, save in the grace and favour of their atoning Redeemer,—the true nature of conversion, its blessed effects and fruits,—and besides, we learn, and that particularly, the nature, evidence, and fruit of forgiveness

* Comp. Jerem. iii. 6. and Isaiab lvii. 5, 7.
of sins. I propose not to speak to each of these, but only to the latter—the evidence and fruit of forgiveness: If we are in a truly justified state we shall show it by our outward works of love, we shall know it, by the inward peace and consolation of our own minds, by the peace which passeth all understanding. This is manifest from our Lord's words: First, her sins which are many are forgiven, FOR she LOVED much. Secondly, thy faith hath saved thee, go in PEACE.

There are great disputes amongst the learned, whether this woman were Mary Magdalen, or some other sinner of the same sort: plain it is, this story recorded by St. Luke is very different in time and circumstances from that recorded by Matthew, Mark and John, of Mary's anointing our Saviour to his burial. It matters little who she was: I rather incline to believe it was Mary Magdalen, who performed this office of love a second time, when the passion of her Saviour drew near. Be that as it may, I shall take the liberty, for greater clearness and distinction's sake, to suppose it Mary Magdalen, and so to speak of her, as being really the person here meant. First, then, to speak of the outward evidence of true remission of sins, which is love: her sins which are many are forgiven, for she hath loved much.
much; As much as to say it is plain from hence, that she is in a justified state, (though she herself may not know it) because she loveth much: she hath given manifest tokens of her great love to me, from whence it follows, by necessary consequence, that her great sins are forgiven—for no sinner, as such, can love Jesus Christ.—Are then all, it may be ask'd, who love Christ forgiven? from this instance we have a full and determinate answer to that question; Most indisputably they are while they continue in his love *. They who give such proofs of love as Mary gave, as certainly are forgiven as Mary was. But to understand more perfectly the nature of this love, let us consider her case a little more distinctly.

The black side of her character is given in very few words; a woman in the city that was,—rather, had been—a sinner. — A sinner,—what marvel is there in that,—who is not, who have not been sinners? But she was a sinner of the first rate, a woman, as is supposed by many, of a noble family; for in those loose days, under Herod, when vice reigned so triumphantly in Israel, a gap was set open for all uncleanness †, — so that vile lust and the

* John xv. 9.
† Virorum exemplo, &c. After the example of the men in
the most shameless prostitution, were remarkably public and avowed amongst high as well as low: she was one of the abandoned of those times, a city sinner, the more scandalous and notorious, as the more public: but like Paul who was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, she obtained mercy and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Jesus Christ *. She was converted by the ministry of his divine word †: faith opened her eyes, and shewed her the filthiness and slavery of that sin, under the bondage of which she was led captive: faith shew'd her its fearful wages, even eternal horror: faith led her to the fountain opened for all uncleanness, to the merciful Jesus whose inviting calls to poor oppressed sinners she had heard and received with joy, in those days, many women of fortune and nobility lived in the most loose abandoned manner, not prostituting their bodies for gain, but merely thro' the madness of lust, infania libidinis. Conzen in loc.

* 1 Tim. i. 13.
† There is no sort of reason to suppose, that this was the first time, this woman heard of or saw our Saviour; the story seems abundantly to prove the contrary,—much less must we think with Vida, that she came now to the house of Simon, drawn by the fame of the beauty of Jesus, and with carnal purposes, this may do in poetry, but should be considered solely as fiction. That masterly writer has described the event in a very elegant manner, such as will afford the learned reader a pleasing entertainment. Christiad. lib. i. ver. 300.

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while her heart was transfixed with love to the almighty giver of pardon. "Doubtless as she had heard his many gracious invitations so she had observed how he vouchsafed to come under the roof of despised publicans, of proscribed enemies: she had noted all the instances of his power and mercy, whereby he proved himself the God, able and willing to forgive sins; and now deep remorse wrought upon her heart for her former viciousness: the pool of her conscience was troubled by the descending angel, and now she steps in for a cure. The arrow stuck fast in her soul, which she could not shake out, and now she comes to this sovereign dittany* to expel it." And as the thirsty, panting hart hard-hunted and in the extremity of drought eagerly longs for the cooling springs, so touched with repentance for her former vanities, did she pant after the refreshing cooling streams of Christ's forgiving grace and mercy.

Conversion is the very nature of Christ's religion; and conversion necessarily implies a change of heart and life, a change from sin to holiness, from darkness to light; and this

* These sentiments are from Bishop Hall, who has taken them from Salmeron, an elegant Latin writer on the subject. Dittany is an herb, which wild goats and deer are said to eat, when wounded with arrows, it being found efficacious to remove them.
is effected by the steps abovementioned, by faith wrought in the heart by the word, thro' the operation of the Holy Ghost, convincing of the guilt, the wages, and the danger of sin, and the sure ransom found for it by those who repent and turn to him, who desireth not the death of a sinner.—You see what humility this faith wrought in Mary: though she cannot be kept from the place, where he is whom her soul loveth, yet will she not appear before him, if she may but stand behind him, at his feet, it is enough for her: you see what Godly Sorrow it produced: she stood behind him weeping, she began to wash his feet with her tears, tears of joy, in a transport as she was, to find herself so near the Saviour, whom her soul loved: tears of sorrow to reflect, how her former offences, had injured, grieved, and wounded him; you see what neglect of her former elegancies, which she is determined to use to holier purposes, than heretofore, that as she had yielded her members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, so now she might yield them as instruments of righteousness unto God*. And lastly you see what love it produced: "she kissed his feet as one unworthy the kisses of his mouth,

† Rom. vi. 13.
which the spouse coveted *. 'Twas a kiss of adoration as well as of affection; she wiped them with her hair: her eyes shall yield water to wash them, and her hair be a towel to wipe them; and she anointed his feet with the ointment, owning him hereby to be the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed Saviour: she anointed his feet in token of her consent to God’s design in anointing his head with the oil of gladness †." Nothing she can do is too much to testify her obligation to him.

* Cant i. 2.
† Henry on the place, who also observes, that she had been converted from her wicked course of life by the preaching of Jesus. Again, We have reason to think, she had before forrowed for sin, but now she had an opportunity of coming into the presence of Christ, the wound bled afresh and her forrow renewed.—Pool also in his annotations remarks, was a sinner,—was—referreth here to the time past, though lately past, she had lately been infamous and notorious, but it appeareth by what followeth, that she was not so now, otherwise than in the opinion and vogue of the people, according to whose opinion, though uncharitable enough, quem simul fuit mala, semper praefumitur esse mala in eodem genere mali, a person who hath once been bad is always presumed so to be, through their ignorance of the power of divine grace in changing the heart, or their malice against and envy toward those whose hearts they see so changed. But whatever this woman had been, it seems God had affected her heart with the Word which Christ had preached, and filled it with the pure love of God and Christ instead of its former fulness of impure love, and made her sins as bitter as they had been formerly pleasant to her."
who when she had nothing to pay, frankly, offer'd to forgive her mighty debt: her costliest ointment is well employed upon his feet, and under the sense of his forgiving love, her heart burns with the warmest gratitude—we love him because he first loved us*: He had first display'd the riches of his mercy to her, he first had broken her heart, and she had offered him that pleasing and acceptable sacrifice, a broken and a contrite heart, before she broke her box of ointment at his feet.—And who can wonder that she who was so deeply sensible of her debt, and the impossibility of ever paying it, should love much, when her almighty creditor frankly forgave her all. Great obligations naturally produce great affection.

Thus was it her faith which saved her, her faith, which thro' the Spirit wrought true conversion in her, and which, working by love, gave infallible testimony to the sincerity of her change, and that the work was of God. And you see how acceptable and well-pleasing to Christ these evidences, of her love to him, were; from hence he convicts Simon of far less regard to him, than this woman had shewed, and informs us that he judges of our affection and love, by the offices of love which we

* John iv. 19.
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do to him,—Seeft thou this woman? I entered into thine house, &c.

We are all debtors to God, and though our debts may be unequal, the sins, which some have contracted more gross, hainous and offensive than others, yet have we no reason to boast ourselves upon that account, or therefore to prefer ourselves to others; since we are all equally insolvent, equally unable to pay, as well he that owes fifty, as he that owes five hundred pence: if we would be forgiven, we have all but one and the same means, great sinners and small, all alike must be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ: we must apply to the mercy and goodness of our almighty creditor, who will not cast out any, that freely and humbly acknowledge their poverty: but will frankly forgive us the debt, if we are duly sensible of its greatness, and truly desirous of being made free; which surely we can never fail of being, since if we are not forgiven, we must be delivered to the tormentors, and confined in an eternal prison, till we pay the uttermost farthing*: which, as we have nothing to pay, must of necessity be for ever.—No debt so great, no sin so hainous, but there is now, in the day of grace, forgiveness and pardon for it; as this example

† Matt. v. 26.
for our comfort proves to us; but then we must be careful not to deceive our own souls; if we would be forgiven, we must detest and leave our past offences; we must come in faith to Christ under the burthen of our sins; and with humility and godly sorrow testify the reality of our contrition, and by acts of love and obedience manifest the sincerity of our conversion. —— It is an easy matter boldly to arrogate forgiveness of sins to ourselves: it is easy to say that we are justified, that we are assured Christ hath pardoned us; but bold words do not prove a fact, and strong assertions will never convince the cool and considerate. Christ hath given us an infallible test, whereby we may judge, both for ourselves and others, of the truth of our conversion and the reality of our forgiveness: Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she hath loved much. Now whosoever finds this change wrought in their hearts from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, let them demonstrate it by the abundance of their love to Christ: by their diligent observance of his commands, for he who keepeth my commandments, faith he, HE IT IS, who loveth ME*. If you can say that you love him, because he first loved you, and if you demon-

* John xiv. 21.
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rate the truth of what you say by seeking all opportunities to shew forth that love, by frequenting the place, where his honour dwelleth, by a constant and regular attendance upon him in all his holy ordinances, (without which it is but vain to say you love him,) if you find yourself humbled in his presence under a deep sense of your own mighty unworthiness, of that great debt which you could never have discharged: if you find godly sorrow swelling your heart, tears of holy grief and love flowing from your eyes, if you find the course of your life and the stream of your affections chang'd, the members, which before were servants of unrighteousness unto sin, now servants of righteousness unto God*:

* In an elegant little treatise on this subject by W. Hudson, Esq; intitled Sancta Peccatrix, amongst many other pleasing observations are these, "She had wont to send forth her alluring beams into the eyes of her lascivious paramours, therefore now she weepeth a deluge of tears, which is little enough to bear the ark of her sorrows. She had made her lips the weapons of lust and gates of vanity, but now they sanctify themselves with her dear respect unto the Son of God. Her hair which she had so gently combed and braided cunningly against the glass, doth now serve instead of napery to dry his feet. Her odioriferous perfume, wherewith she was wont to make herself pleasing to her amorous companions she now bestows on those hallowed feet which her eyes had watered, her hair had wiped, her mouth had kissed." p. 91. See also Sect. iv.
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if you rejoice to wash the saints feet *, to shew forth your love to your redeemer, by your love, benevolence and good-will to all your fellow-creatures,—the sure proof of love to God, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen † ? — if thus, (to carry on the reference to this woman) you perfume the church with the rich ointment and sweet favour of all your good works; if thus you manifest your love to Christ,—for all this is included in love to him — then have you an infallible evidence, and sure token that your sins are forgiven; the former greatness and hainousness of which will increase your love in proportion, since great love is the fruit of

* Tim. v. 10. A penitent should never cease to kiss the feet of Christ by a lively faith, and to make some return for his charity, by loving him in the poor and in the lowest members of his mystical body, &c. Quesnel on the place; whose incomparable observations on this chapter, were I to do him justice, I should produce at large, and therefore omit any further quotations, referring my reader to the excellent author.

† John iv. 20. O Lord, in vain shall we profess to love thee, if we do nothing for thee; since our goodness cannot reach up to thee who art our glorious head; oh let us bestow upon thy feet, thy poor members here below, our tears, our hands, our ointment, and whatever our gifts and endeavours may testify our thankfulness and love to thee in them. Bishop Hall: whose contemplation on this subject is remarkably delicate and pleasing.

I 3 great
great forgiveness: Mary loved much because much had been forgiven her: but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little.

Thus is love the sure evidence of forgiveness; that which may convince not only the Penitent's self, but all likewise who have eyes to see. Men indeed are in this respect frequently more severe than God: like Simon they often murmur and reason within themselves, and are even displeased to see sinners admitted into communication with Jesus! They will not readily pardon those whom God hath pardoned; they will not examine the lively evidences of conversion manifested in a life of love, in a life contrary to the former life of sin and enmity with God. But we should be careful to do so, lest we chance to fight against and to condemn the work of God; and should learn from this example of Simon a lesson of charity, which teacheth us never to judge or condemn any one; we should be careful how we wrest this dread thunderbolt out of the hands of omnipotence, for judgment is the Lord's; vengeance is mine, I will repay, faith he. Charity believeth all things, and hopeth all things to the good of our neighbour — nay it even thinketh no evil. Who would not have preferred Simon to Magdalen according to human judgment? a strict Pharisee.
Pharisee, of a sect apparently the most holy amongst the Jews, yet by no means bigotted; favourable to Jesus, so favourable as to invite him to his house; and so well esteemed of Jesus, that he accepted his invitation: and she a notorious, scandalous prostitute. Yet see, to cut off all judgment from us, — see how she is exalted, and he is abased: she is infinitely richer in divine love than Simon, and it is love alone that makes us dear and precious in the sight of God *: Hence we should learn,—not by any means to prefer and esteem an open sinner before an outwardly righteous person — but never to judge or despise any man, who can tell how the riches of God's mercy may be exerted? — For those to whom God hath been thus wonderfully good and gracious, forgiving them, when they had nothing to pay, forgiving them so large and immense a debt, which would have cost them the eternal loss of their souls, let such warmed with the truest gratitude, not forget to be zealous in love, not forget to shew by their lives of exemplary holiness.

* St. Ignatius in his epistle to the Smyrneans, observes with a most beautiful simplicity, "Let no man's place or state in the world puff him up: that which is worth all, is faith and love, to which nothing is to be preferred." See Epist. of Apostolic Fathers, by Archbishop Wake, p. 116.
and humility, the sense they have of God's
unspeakable, unfathomable love in Christ
Jesus; that so the Pharisees, the more out-
wardly righteous and less-condemned, the
er elder sons § in the parable, may by their good
works be convinced of the truth of the change,
and glorify God on the return of their pro-
digal brother, on the behalf of those who
were— that is a good word— were, but—
thanks, eternal thanks to the God of mer-
cy— are no longer sinners; were sinners, and
now are penitents!

But, Ildly, I observed, there is an internal
proof, which the penitent alone possesseth,
and which is also a convincing evidence of
the favour and pardon of God to the soul:
and this is PEACE, peace and repose of con-
science, to the troubled soul. And this too,
like love, is generally in proportion to the
greatness of the sin: The greater and more
violent the storm, the more evident and de-
sirable is that calm, which hushes the trou-
bled winds and waves, and brings the vessel
to the desired haven. The disciples when
sinking, were more sensible of the power and
blessing of the word of Jesus, speaking peace
to the waves and storms, than if no tempest

§ See the beautiful parable of the prodigal son,
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had ever assailed their vessel, and brought them into jeopardy. While wretched Mag- dalen was in her course of sin boiling with the flames of lust, and agitated with the fires of unruly passions,—though then she had no peace; for there is no peace to the wicked,—yet had she no uneasiness for the want of that peace, which is the gift of Christ only to the troubled soul. But soon as the sense of her guilt and shame stared her in the face, soon as she saw, what a vile abandoned profli- gate she was, the enemy of God, the slave of the devil, and heir of hell; soon as she saw her wretched ingratitude to the God who cre- ated her for his service, and redeemed her for his glory soon; as she saw heaven’s doors for ever shut to the adulterer, fornicator, unclean, to the sinful soul: soon as she saw her hard master, the devil, ready to drag her into un- quenchable flames, the moment her wretch- ed soul should leave her polluted body,—soon as she saw her many shameful and aggravated offences, with these dire consequences at- tending,—then such a storm was raised in her breast, such a troubled sea was her heart, that nothing less than the almighty Jesus could speak the sovereign word and restore the desired peace.—And we find she sought him not in vain: Faith opened her eyes, faith
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convinced her of her danger: Faith wrought godly sorrow in her heart, faith led her to repentance not to be repented of, to remorse for the past, and amendment for the future: faith brought her to him, whose debtor she was, and who alone could forgive her. Thus faith, a faith we may observe attended with contrition and love—saved her: and the author and finisher of that faith calmed all her storms, silenced all her fears, frankly forgave her all, spoke the divine and comfortable word, and so dismissed her in peace—thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace. And this peace, spoken into her heart, joined with that love, were such testimonies of forgiveness, as she could not doubt, and which filled her heart with joy and gladness. Thus, like the spouse in the Canticles, did she wound Christ with one of her eyes, and with the chain (a chain of graces) about her neck.* For so pleasing to him were all the actions of this perfect penitent, of this grateful convert, that he not only made her apology against the Pharisee, in preferring her kindness before the entertainment of his house; but against Satan and the powers of hell, in forgiving her many sins without any enumeration of them, and in dismissing her

*Cant. iv. 9.
in peace, which is the earnest and foretaste of heaven.

And this peace, which St. Paul tells us, passeth all understanding, and is the fruit of the holy Spirit dwelling in the heart, is the peculiar gift of Christ to all, who, with Magdalen; convert and love him. As the first step to conversion is conviction, so true conviction necessarily implies contrition or godly sorrow; these three are inseparable from true repentance, conviction, contrition, conversion. The greater and deeper the sense of sin, its guilt and wages, is upon the soul, the greater of necessity will be its uneasiness and contrition: the soul will be more disturbed, and the man will be the greater stranger to peace; and that conversion is likeliest to be most lasting, which is founded in the deepest contrition: the more we feel under the condemning sense of our own sinfulness, the more we shall love, when we obtain peace in the sense of forgiveness. For, as forgiveness produces peace, so peace is the fruit of forgiveness: It is very possible that God may keep us some time under the uneasy sense of our sins, long time strangers to his pardoning love; nay, and we may not know when that pardon is really given to the soul: but of this we may be assured, that when the before-mentioned love rules in our hearts and
and lives, and the present peace hath removed the fears and horror, the guilt and sting of sin from our souls, then we may be assured, that our sins are forgiven, that Christ hath said, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.

Thus I have given you, from this sweet display of divine love, two infallible evidences, whereby you may try and examine the state of your souls, and be convinced whether you are in a justified state or not.---I would have you carefully observe from hence, that it is very possible to be in a justified state, and not to know it assuredly for some time: This is by no means a first step * in the Christian course, as some would persuade you; who will boldly pronounce you in a damnable state, unless you can as boldly pronounce your know-

* The judicious reader will obverse, that I by no means pretend to controvert the matter with those, who declare positively their instantaneous conversion, who say, that they can tell the time when, the manner how, the place where, the Spirit of God (as they generally choose to express it) bore witness with their spirit, that their sins were forgiven.—There is no disputing with such men; they have, they declare, a sensible feeling evidence; and who can contradict what a man says he feels?—I only attempt to give more scriptural, more solid and substantial evidence, and would wish to recommend to the strenuous defenders of those tenets a caution, that they do not attempt to make those necessary terms of acceptance and salvation, which the great Judge of heaven and earth hath not, in that word, whereby we are to be judged.
ledge of your justification.—But with such you have no need to do more, than soberly, and in the spirit of meekness, to desire a full proof of this from the word of God, which is our only sure test, and I dare pronounce the word of God sayeth no such thing.—From hence too you learn, that you have no need for despair or uneasiness, though you should not find in your heart, that internal assurance, that immediate impression from the Spirit of God, convincing you undeniably, that you, even you, are a child of God, that your sins are forgiven.—However boldly some again talk as to this matter, it is very obvious, that it hath no real foundation in the word of God, but is of man's device, and so of consequence to be rejected, and disregarded in a matter of such infinite consequence: while, nothing moved by the experiences which some pretend to, of all things the most fallible and delusive, and least to be reasoned upon,—We, on the contrary, attend carefully to those sure marks and criterions of forgiveness, which the infallible word of God giveth us: and which, as I have endeavoured to shew you, are love to Christ, because he first loved us, forgiving us all, when we had nothing to pay; and peace, peace, passing all understand-
ing, arising from the sense of our forgiveness, and consequent upon our real conversion.

Labour, my beloved brethren, labour with all your might to attain this full assurance of faith, this divine plerophory,* which every Christian may attain, and which is founded upon nothing far-fetched or unseen, but is nigh you, within the knowledge and power of you all.---How plain is this? "My many sins are forgiven--for I love much--I love much that divine Lord, who first loved me, and gave himself a ransom for my soul. I love much, and in that love have much peace, as knowing it to be the fruit and evidence of my Saviour's free pardon of all my past offences, given in his infallible word of promise, and sealed by his Spirit to my heart."---Oh happy are they, who with Magdalen are thus wounded with love, thus dismissed with peace! Who can wonder that she loved much when the reflection on her past danger should magnify the present blessing: who can wonder that her peace was great and sensible indeed, when the storm raised by her sins must have been insufferable even here, and, unless stilled by the powerful word of Jesus, eternal!

* Heb. x. 22. Ev πληρωμα της πισεως

---In.
In this respect we are all equal to her, that we are all debtors to God, and that we all have nothing to pay: condemned as well for fifty as five hundred pence, and capable of procuring a free discharge but one way, by the free grace and mercy of God our Father in Christ Jesus, the loving Saviour of our souls! Blessed be God, sin is not equal in all: some are kept from großer offences by the goodness of God, while some work all uncleanness with greediness: But Christ, in this gospel, hath given us, as in other instances, an example of the greatest sinner, to shew us the freedom of redeeming love, to convince us, that no merits or deservings of ours can have any share in the great work of justification, and to let us see that there is mercy for the vilest of sinners, for adulterous Magdalens, and persecuting Pauls, if they will turn and live: to let us see (that all might have hope) that there is free pardon for all, for those who owe five hundred, as well as those who owe but fifty pence: seeing they have nothing to pay, let them only come, ask, and receive; our Lord will frankly forgive them all the debt!

And as he is so bountiful and merciful, let us take heed, that, in this our day, we share of his bounty and mercy, lest we be cast in-
to prison, where to the least debt we see is sufficient to bring us: one transgression can never be atoned for by man, one sin committed against the almighty infinite Majesty of heaven, of necessity becomes infinite, and can never be done away by all the power of man; because the least sin against omnipotence is mighty indeed, our offence being always aggravated in proportion to the greatness of the person against whom we offend, and future obedience, which is but duty, can never expiate past offences. We cannot redeem our own souls; their redemption is more precious §; we have nothing to pay, nothing to satisfy eternal justice, nothing that can stand the fire of divine vengeance, burning against sin, all we have is hay and stubble *; we have nothing to interpose between God and us: the law condemns us, conscience approves the sentence, hell waits to receive us, and we must be dragged to that miserable prison-house, there to lie for ever, wretched insolvents,—thither must we be dragged, — unless now, while we have it in our power; now, while grace and mercy are offered to us; unless now we fly to the only Saviour of our souls,

† Psalm xliv. 8.
* 1 Cor. iii. 12

and
and gain from him a free and full remission of all our debts and trespasses! — As ever therefore we desire to share his mercy hereafter, let us make ourselves fit objects of it while we are here: let us now apply to him, now turn and live, now confess and bewail our wretched worthlessness, and implore him, that, as we have nothing to pay, he would be pleased graciously to forgive us the debt! — The more sensible we are of its greatness, and of our own utter incapability to pay it, the more shall we love when forgiven. And as the debts and trespasses of us all, are alas — great enough: — as even the least is sufficient to condemn us everlastingly, let us not be superficial in the examination of our souls, but carefully search out all our most secret sins, and labour to get the deepest and most humbling sense of them, that our love and peace may be accordingly.

And let us by no means rest satisfied with any doubtful surmises in a case of such importance to our souls; oh let this woman be a preacher to us; and let us from her example search, try, and examine, whether the good work is done in us, whether Christ hath forgiven us, and spoken peace to our souls. In order to which let us ask, Do we love him? Love
him, because he first loved us? Calling us to him, giving himself for us, freely blotting out our long debt to him? Do we love him with all our heart, and serve him with all our might? Is Jesus, our beloved, the desire of our hearts, the one thing upon earth, the one thing in heaven, which we desire? Oh blessed soul who can say, *whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is nothing upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee!* But as a proof of this love, search and ask,—Do you love the place where he dwelleth? Do you, with Mary, hasten to the house where he is? Is your soul glad, when you hear men say, We will go into the house of the Lord? Do you love to meet him in prayer, in his word, in his sacraments? Do you there find Jesus your beloved? Are you humbled in his presence, deeply sensible of your own vileness? Have you cast away all pride and self-esteem, and are glad and content to be esteemed less than the least of all the servants of God? And as a full proof of your love to Christ, as an undeniable testimony of your gratitude and thankfulness,—Are you active in your love to your brethren, in that love which fulfillleth the law, and which makes a man, however he mistook before, a good father, a good husband, a good

* Psalm xxiii. 25.
On the Thankful Penitent.

master, a good neighbour, &c. --- good in all the relations of life, glad to distribute, willing to communicate, rejoicing always to do good? ---Blessed is the man, who thus labouring to fulfil all Christ's commandments, continually endeavours to love, even as he hath been loved: For this, faith our Lord, is my commandment, that ye should love one another as I have loved you: hereby shall all men know, that ye are my disciples.*

And now, my brethren, to those of you, who have gained this divine evidence of forgiveness, whose faith, thus working by love, hath saved you.--- What need I speak of that peace which dwelleth in you, which is the peculiar gift of Christ, heaven begun in the heart, --- My peace I give unto you, † and which far surpasseth all human understanding, as much unknown by, as it is far from the men of this world, and which of consequence can never be adequately expressed or described! May the God of Love increase it in all our hearts, and in the hearts of all those who desire it! And who that hath tasted of it in any degree, but will say amen to that! Nay, could but the formal Christi-

* John xv. 12.
† John xiv. 27.
an, the lover of pleasure, the lover of sin, the lover of the world, could they but be convinced of the inestimable blessing, they would soon exchange their shadows for a substance, their toys for realities. Oh that God would wound and transfix by his word and Spirit all their hearts with such patience and love, as he did the heart of Magdalen: Oh that they might all weep much and love much, as having much to be forgiven! Oh that the sense of this forgiveness might be engraven on their hearts, by the love of the crucified Jesus, and the peace of the Holy Comforter! And for this you who have obtained mercy, cease not continually to pray: cease not to pray, that the word of God may have its due, its desired effect; and strive above all things by the unblamable and exemplary holiness of your lives to convince men of the beauty of divine love, and the un- speakable happiness of that peace of Christ, which passeth all understanding, &c.
Discourse XIV.

On the Woman with the bloody Issue.

Being the Substance of Two Sermons.

Part I.

Luke viii. 42, 43, 44.

But as he went the people thronged him;
And a Woman, having an Issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon Physicians, neither could be healed of any,
Came behind him and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her Issue of Blood stanched.

One but those who travel and are heavy laden, can come to Christ, and all who do so come, shall be refreshed: some proofs of this we have already seen; two eminent ones present themselves to our view, in this part of the gospel
On the bloody Issue healed.
gospel-history, a ruler of the synagogue, and a miserably afflicted woman! all the evangelists who relate these miracles of mercy, begin with the emphatical Behold, Behold there came a man, named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: for it is worthy our greatest admiration that such a person should, by divine providence, be stirred up to seek Christ, at a time when the whole synagogue of the Jews were conspiring against him, nay when they had determined, to put any man out of the synagogue who should confess him*. But alas—all the terrors and threats of men avail but little, when deep affliction's lie heavy on the soul, and the means of relief are utterly secluded. This ruler was a father, and he felt with all the tender affection of a parent: he had one only daughter in the bloom of youth, and she lay a dying; all hopes of recovery were gone, all natural means had been found ineffectual; when hopeless and helpless the wretched father was driven to Jesus, as his last resource. To witness the fervor of his desire and the bleeding anxiety of his soul, he fell down at the feet of Jesus and earnestly besought him, that he would come to his house, that he would visit and restore his one only beloved daughter,

* John ix. 22.
whom he left in the last extremity, at the very last gasp. And when did our compassionate master ever refuse his gracious assistance to those who implored it of him? — he immediately arose and followed the ruler towards his house. And as his faith appear'd at present, but very weak and infirm, rather founded on love to his child than sure trust and confidence in Christ, our Saviour, according to his wise purpose, so ordered it, that an eminent example of faith should meet them in the way, to strengthen the ruler, and to establish him in hope. For as he went along, a large multitude accompanying him, a woman who had been diseased with an Issue or flux of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living upon physicians and to no purpose, being unable to procure any relief, nay so far from it, so far was she from being any thing better'd, that she rather grew worse,—after having thus in vain tried all means to obtain a cure, she came behind Jesus and touched the hem of his garment, for she said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. And she was not deceived: for immediately her issue of blood stanched: and, she felt in her body, says the Evangelist, that she was healed of that plague. Jesus immediately knowing in himself, that virtue had gone out of him, (a strong proof surely of his divine
divine power and knowledge) turned him about in the press, and said, *Who touched me?* not that he wanted to be informed; for he that knew virtue was gone out of him, could not be ignorant upon whom that virtue was exerted; but he spoke it for the fuller manifestation of this woman's faith, and of his own miraculous power. His disciples were surprized at the question: Master, said they, thou seest the multitude thronging and pressing thee, and sayest thou, *Who touched me?* they did not distinguish between the spiritual and corporeal touch: for many touch Christ, to whom no virtue goes out from him to heal them. He persisted therefore and said, *Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out from me.* And looking round about to see her, that had done this thing, the woman perceiving that she was not hid, and knowing what was done in her, came fearing and trembling, and falling down before him, she told him all the truth, she declared unto him before all the people, that they who had ears to hear might hear, for what cause she had done this, and how she was healed immediately; to remove all her fears and to compleat her joy, Daughter, said he, be of good comfort, thy faith hath saved thee: Go in peace and be whole of thy plague. This must needs have greatly strengthened
strengthened the ruler's faith, which yet was again attacked, and needed the strongest confirmations; for behold, news was brought, that his daughter was even now dead, wherefore should be trouble the master in vain, whom neither he nor his people imagined by any means able to raise the dead and restore to life. But Jesus hearing what was told, said to the ruler, Be not afraid, only believe. And thus they came to the house, where, upon our Lord's observing to the weepers and mourners, that the maid was not dead, but asleep only, they laughed him to scorn knowing that she was dead, and not knowing, that they, whom Christ shall raise again, are not dead, but asleep only, for he that believeth in him, shall never die *. However notwithstanding all their mockery, he display'd his power and convinced them indeed, that they who die in him are not dead, and that he hath the keys of life and of death. He took her by the hand and called her, saying, Damself, I say unto thee, Arise. And her Spirit came again, and she arose straightway; and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were greatly astonished; whom he charged that they should tell no man what was done: but the fame hereof went abroad throughout all that land.

From hence, as well as from the resurrection of the Widow's Son of Nain, we have a full proof of the divine power of Christ to raise the dead, a more eminent instance of which we shall see hereafter in Lazarus—and from them we cannot but derive the strongest consolation to our souls in this fundamental article of our faith, the resurrection from the dead. We have here also a lively picture of the death of our souls in sin, and of the readiness and ability of Jesus to raise them up to newness of life, that they may walk in his ways, and serve him in righteousness and true holiness. But having spoken at large upon these articles, when considering the history of the resurrection of the Widow's Son, I propose at present to dwell principally upon the case of the woman, and that of the Ruler's daughter only as connected with it, and to make such remarks upon the event, as shall tend to your spiritual advantage: from whence if you desire to receive any profit, consider the example of this woman, and see that not to all them who touched him, virtue went out from him, but to her only who touched him in faith; so neither is the hearing of his word available, unless you hear it in faith as the word of God, intreat his Spirit to apply it to your hearts,
and sincerely endeavour to reap all possible profit from it for your present growth in grace, and your future perfection in glory.

Four things more especially we learn from this part of the Evangelical history:

Ist, Not only the abounding greatness of human misery, but also the true cause and fountain from whence it flows:

IIdly, The remedy for this common misery of human nature, whence it is to be fought, and where only it is to be found:

IIIIdly, How we may apply this remedy to ourselves: And,

IVthly, What are the advantages of so applying it, and of receiving Christ with firm and true faith.

To speak of the Ist of these, the abounding greatness of human misery, and the true cause and origin of it; upon which I need be but brief, since when speaking of the Paralytic I discoursed at large upon the near connection between spiritual and natural evils, and shew'd sufficiently, that sin was the true cause and origin of them all.—The various calamities and distresses wherewith this life
is beset on all sides, needs no proof, since the experience of every living soul, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, of every order, sex, and condition bears full testimony to its truth. And all mankind in every age of the world have seen and deplored it, but it has been a perplexing enquiry * to all mankind, and what never philosopher was able, by human wisdom, to resolve, whence all this evil, whence all this misery arose; what was the true cause and fountain of it. Some have conceived one thing, some another; devising a thousand imaginations to themselves; and one wise man, after another to shew the fallacy and weakness of mere unenlightened reason, pulling down the strong holds of his predecessor: confuting and confuted, perplexing and perplexed, and treading in an inextricable maze of error and sophism. The scripture alone supplies us with the clue to guide us thro' this otherwise impervious labyrinth; for it is from thence alone, we are informed that God created man upright, after his own image and similitude, free from sin, and capable of immortality, without passing the now

* For a proof of this the reader is referred to that very elaborate treatise of Archbishop King's, on the Origin of Evil, with the notes of the Reverend Mr. Law.—See particularly chap. the 2d. necessary
necessary refinement of corruption and the grave; but that through envy of the Devil came death into the world; that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. This is the true fountain from whence death the greatest of natural evils, and so of consequence all lesser ones arose: sin brought in the ghastly train, and sin, still by sad inheritance entailed upon and reigning in us all, maintains their sorrowful dominion amongst us.

Jaros, as a ruler of the synagogue, could not be ignorant hereof: He must have often heard and read that dreadful denunciation, in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die the death: and he knew, that by the general consent of the Jewish rabbies and teachers, by that Death was understood, not only a separation of soul and body, but bodily diseases, as well as calamities of every sort and kind, no less than the sad separation of the spirit from the life of God, and without atonement, its everlasting separation from him in the flames of hell. He knew well from that law, whereof he was himself a teacher, that sin was the cause of his daughter's death, as well that wherein she was con-

* See Wisdom ii. 24. Rom. v. 12. Gen. i. 27.
ceived, as that which till now she herself had committed: And indeed it will be impossible by any means to reconcile the dealings of that Almighty Lord, who is just in all his ways, with regard to the death, sufferings and miseries of infants and children, unless we have recourse to that original source of death and evil, the transgression of our first parents. --- As to the WOMAN, if she were a Gentile, as some have supposed, she was then ignorant of the cause and origin of her misfortunes, though natural light is sufficient to lead men so far as to see and confess evil to be the punishment of sin: But if a Jew, she too was well acquainted with it from the law of Moses, whence she was fully informed and instructed, that her disease was a peculiar punishment inflicted on her sex, for sin, and a constant monitor of that original offence of their first mother, which brought death into the world---and all our woe! And hence the evangelist St. Mark emphatically calls it a plague, μαρτύρ, a scourge, or punishment. — Particular laws for which are given in Leviticus,* and to

* Levit. xv. 19. It is impossible to speak on these subjects without giving a handle to libertines, and perhaps offending the chaste: I chose therefore to refer the reader, who hath a heart capable of duly improving scripture subjects, without being offended at them, to the commentators on this place,—particularly to the Bibliotheca Biblica.
which God alludes in the xvith chapter of Ezekiel, to set before us our natural misery, and that original sin, wherein we are all born and conceived. When I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thy own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live: yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live: the whole chapter will well repay a careful examination.

Our Saviour takes every opportunity to inculcate this important article in his gospel kingdom: that his people being well convinced and informed of the shortness and continual miseries of this life, should not only shake off that false security wherein worldly men repose themselves, but with so much the greater earnestness think of, and seek out for the proper remedy of those evils. Doubtless it is a misery great and to be deplored if possible, even with tears of blood, that through the malice of the Devil and the dreadful tyranny of sin the life of man is so beset with abounding iniquity, so surrounded with calamities of every sort, that no day scarcely passes to any without some sad experience of them. The best, the very strength of our days, is but labour and sorrow: if prosperity do a while shine upon us, quickly some great and grievous misfortune like a cloud comes over us, and darkens the serenity of
of our joy: To-day Nebuchadnezzar sits in the pomp of state, to-morrow he is a beast in the field with beasts: to day the rich man is clothed in purple, to-morrow in hell, he wants a drop of water to cool his tongue. Nay life itself is but a vapour, a mere passing vision, a dream of the night; we have at the best but a short time to live, and even that short time is full of misery: we come up, and are cut down like a flower; we flee even as a shadow, and never continue in one stay, and when life is at an end, poor, putrid, filthy carcases, we are forced to be removed from the sight of all who loved and held us dear; so odious, as not capable of being kept even longer above the earth, so corrupted as to be concealed in the bowels of the grave, food for worms, and wasting in horrible putrefaction! — These are the bitter fruits of sin, these are its wages: these are the gnawing worms arising from that fatal fruit in paradise, which corrode our heart and consume our life! who then can help having a just detestation of that sin, which brings such dreadful consequences here, and worse, far worse, if unrepented of and unremoved, hereafter: well may we say, "In the midst of life we are in death, of whom may we seek for succour but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly dis-
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displeased!—Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy judge eternal, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death!" For with this most mighty Lord alone is the deliverance, with him alone is the Remedy of all these Evils; which is the

IId Thing we are taught in this history, as well as how to seek and obtain it.

Human reason when the usual calamities of our fallen nature happen to us, is neither used to consider that true cause and origin of them, which we have just mentioned, nor to look and apply for the Remedy of them to that God, without whom there shall be no evil done in the city*, as the prophet expresses it, who in every chastisement remembers mercy and intends our welfare: but men fly to natural means, and seek for relief only from creatures and mortal powers: Daily proofs of this rise up before our eyes, where men though corrected by the hand of God, neither

* Amcs iii. 6. This consideration that whatever evil is in the city, the Lord hath done it, should engage us patiently to bear our share in public calamities, and to study to answer God's intention in them. The Evil of sin is from ourselves; the evil of trouble personal or public is from God, whoever are the instruments, God is the principal agent: out of his mouth both evil and good proceed, Henry on the place.

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behold his design in the correction, nor consider their sins as the cause; neither fly to him for assistance, nor truly repent of and leave those sins, which hide his face from us, and interpose between God and us. Strong faith we have in natural means, every worldly endeavour must be tried, while not one spiritual endeavour is put forth; true faith in the power and mercy of God being exploded, as inefficacious and unavailing, and esteemed as mysterious and absurd, even by those, who live only by faith, a faith founded on objects, that have neither strength nor stability to assist them. But would we be well advised and warned of a practice so dangerous to our soul’s eternal welfare, we must look to this Woman and this Ruler, and shall then be convinced, what faith in Christ can do, when all natural means are baffled, frustrated and defeated. She, we are told, had suffered many things of the physicians, living long under their hands, and under many painful and tormenting operations; 2dly, she had spent all her living, all her substance, upon them, and so far was she, 3dly, from being better’d, that instead thereof she rather, 4thly, grew worse.—She relied doubtless upon the great skill and art of her physicians, and had a mighty confidence in their medicines and advice; nay she tried all, she
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She spent all she had upon them, she went from one to another, still seeking help from the power of man, still making flesh her arm, and so retaining that curse, which God denounces against all those who do so, for cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. And as this sovereign Lord and disposer of all events hath declared that all labour is in vain to build the house, all labour in vain to plant and to water, except he give the blessing and increase; so it is emphatically proved by this woman's example; in whom we see, that medicine as well as every human endeavour without his blessing is unavailing to procure relief, and that if we would desire success to the physician's skill, as well as to all our attempts and undertakings, we must implore God's gracious assistance and apply to the giver of all health to bless the means to the desired end. For we see, that this woman while she sought help from the physician only, fought it in vain.

But what did Jairus? he as a ruler of the synagogue and a teacher of the law, rested in that law, and boasted, that he knew the will of God, was a guide of the blind and an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes, who had
On the bloody issue healed.

the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law *. He taught others therefore not only the duties of circumcision, tithes, fasting, sacrifices and the like, but himself placed all his confidence therein. But when death came to his house, and the wrath of God fell upon him, he then fully and sufficiently experienced the weakness of the law with all its sacrifices, to assist in extremity, or to deliver from death. For the law worketh wrath only; and the two tables of stone are, as it were, nothing else than a whetstone for death to point and sharpen his dart upon. For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law †. Whence it is that the law thunders out its curse on account of sin upon all, because they abide not in all the words of the book to do them. So that Jairus from the law could gain neither comfort nor relief.

Both from him then and the woman we fully see, that neither in nature nor in the law of God can any remedy be found to avert our misery or remove its cause. And like them should we strive to find a remedy in every natural means possible, like them should we be disappointed! happy will it be for us, if with them we apply to that only fountain of relief, which they point out to us, and to

* Rom. ii. 19. † 1 Cor. xv. 56.

which
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which they directed every labouring and heavy-laden soul. — For the woman perceiving that all relief from her physicians was hopeless, and that she rather grew worse than better, all means having proved ineffectual, she is at length stirr'd up to come to Christ, whose saving mercy she had heard that many had happily experienced. — Jairus too, when he found that sacrifices and offerings were in vain, and that through the curse of the law the violence of death was greater, than could be remov'd by the whole levitical ceremonies, came also to Christ, imploring his assistance now in the time of need, whom hitherto he had but little regarded on account of the meanness of his person and appearance. Thus they shew us, where the true and infallible remedy is to be had: true and infallible, tho' all worldly means prove ineffectual to our souls.

It is worth our while diligently to remark, what those two persons did in seeking Christ, since thereby we shall be the better taught how to seek him properly, and so of consequence have the better assurance of finding him. We may observe in them both, 1st, that they felt, deplored and acknowledged each of them their particular misery, the woman her incurable disease, Jairus his daughter.
daughter's invincible death; and both absolutely despaired of outward relief, as well from natural means, from the help of man, as from the law of God,—they were both burdened and heavy-laden: That, secondly, they sought for relief and assistance from the heavenly physician, Christ Jesus, whom they approached with this confidence that, as a good and most merciful Lord, he would reject none, who stood in need of his help and implored it, and that as an almighty Lord he was furnished with divine power, able then perfectly to relieve, when all worldly aid was found fruitless. Thirdly, the woman, whose faith was much the most strong and lively, touched the hem or fringe of our Saviour's garment, with firm trust, that so touching she should be made whole; and it was so. Jairus, with his friends and household, was weaker than to extend the hand of faith fully to apprehend Christ, Christ therefore reaches out his own, and takes hold of the young damsel's hand, who was dead, calls her and so restores her to life.—Thus burdened and heavy-laden they came to Christ in faith, and found his sweet promise of rest happily fulfilled in themselves.

And this is a pattern for each one of us, who groan beneath the burden of sin, and de-
fire to be delivered from that original guilt and condemnation, which continually rages in our hearts, and from whence, as from a bitter fountain, not only all actual sins, but all calamities, miseries, diseases, yea and death itself, have flowed down to us.—We must know and experience this: And if we be not awakened to the knowledge hereof by outward calamities and misfortunes; yet do our own hearts bear strong testimony to their evil and corrupted state: for from the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c. These are the things which defile a man: If any man is so much in love with these defiling iniquities, as to desire no deliverance from them, we can only pray, that it would please God to shew him his misery, and to drive him from his strong holds and false confidence! But if any man, convinced of the present evil, and alarmed with the dread of that sure punishment, which must fall upon the soul, remaining in this sad state of condemnation: if any man, feeling this fountain of blood in his soul, and weeping for the death to which it will assuredly bring him, if any man thus burdened, earnestly desires relief, then let him apply to that Saviour, who hath all power in heaven and earth, and who desires not the death of a sinner, but gave his life a ran-

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som for all; who will have ALL MEN to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*. Like these two suppliants, when thus coming to Christ, we must acknowledge our disease, and misery, and confess, that we can neither deliver ourselves, nor be delivered by any other from them, "knowing and feeling, as our church expresses it ||, that there is none other name under heaven, whereby we can be saved, but only the name of our Lord Jesus."

This is the first step towards our cure. For be assured, so long as we desire and seek for salvation either from ourselves, or from others, spending our money for that which is not bread, and our labour for that which satisfies not †, so long shall we obtain no relief; our troubled consciences will find no peace: our bloody issue will never staunch, nay we shall grow every day worse and worse. Many

* 1 Tim. ii. 3. What a beautiful and most comfortable idea doth this give us of God our Saviour? — What will the advocates of particular election and reprobation say to these words of the apostle—Christ will have— Θέλει—He desireth, it is his wish and desire, ἄνθρωπος καθόπειρασ— that all men, all unconditionally without reserve, that all should be saved—And blessed be his name for this saving declaration, and that unbounded philanthropy, which abundantly shewed the strength of that desire. || See the Visitation of the Sick.

† Isaiah lv. 2.
On the bloody issue healed.

proofs we have of this, as well in churches as in private persons. See how the Roman church devises a thousand means to soothe the consciences of men, and to give them hopes of salvation. Ceremonies upon ceremonies are heaped up; tradition upon tradition; pilgrimages, masses, corporal castigations, and a thousand other such like physicians are tried, while the poor soul still retains its malady, and is kept from touching him, whose virtue alone can deliver from every evil. And it would be well too, if many more, who call themselves the true church of Christ, were not found greatly defective herein.——And so amongst private persons, how backward do we find men to apply sincerely and singly to Christ for salvation, while they are devising a thousand ways to get to heaven, and planning a variety of schemes to secure their eternal health. Vain and erring, when the road to life and the directions how to find and persevere in it are so plain and easy, that he that runneth may read, and a way-faring man, though a fool, cannot err therein. Yet this notwithstanding, see how one man builds upon his merits, and founds his confidence upon boasted morality: while another swallows, as an all-prevailing catholicon, a large pill of God's mercy, and at the same time wounds
wounds his justice *, by imagining him of eyes unholy enough to behold, approve, or at least to pass over sin unpunished. Others, formal professors and mere outward christians, build all their hopes of salvation upon the opus actum, the external performance of their duty: these are their physicians: and downright Pharisees, they think heaven their due, because they pray often, come to the church, attend the communion, hear sermons, much admire fine preachers, read their bible and call God their father, and at the same time do not the will of that father, are not in Christ new creatures, do not love even as they have been loved, do not avoid sin, but are in all respects as other men are, save that they are worse † for deceiving in an outward

* Dr. Young expresses himself well upon this subject --

Not thus our infidels th’ Eternal draw
A God all o’er consummate, absolute,
Full-orb’d, in his whole round of rays complete,
They set at odds God’s jarring attributes;
And with one excellence, another wound:
Maim heaven’s perfection, break its equal beams,
Bid mercy triumph over—God himself,
Undeify’d by their opprobrious praise:
A God all mercy, is a God unjust?

† The archbishop of Cambray well remarks, concerning hypocrites, in his elegant Telemachus, where speaking of his hero’s descent into the infernal shades, “he observed great numbers of impious Hypocrites, who seeming
ward garb of piety, and for bringing a disgrace on Christ's most holy faith; and so entitled to the bitter portion of hypocrites, who are threatened to be cut asunder, and have, of all other sinners, by far the most heavy woes denounced against them: and it deserves serious reflection, that every one is an hypocrite, not what he seems, who professes Christ's most holy faith and denies him in his life.

These outward works ought they to have done, they are absolutely necessary, but not to leave the other undone, — which are the life and the spirit. — Such miserable physicians do these formal Christians rely upon, and under their care they also grow every day worse and worse: let all these, and all of whatever seeming to love religion, had employ'd it, as a fair pretence to cover their ambition; and to impose upon the credulous; these men, who had abused virtue itself, (though the greatest gifts the Gods can bestow) were punished as the most villainous of all mankind. The children who had killed their fathers or mothers, wives who had imbrued their hands in the blood of their husbands, traitors who had violated all the most solemn oaths, were less severely punished than these hypocrites. Such was the sentence of the three infernal judges, which was grounded upon this; because hypocrites not thinking it enough to be wicked, like the rest of the impious, would pass for good men, and so by their counterfeit virtue they make people afraid of trusting those who are really virtuous. The Gods whom they mocked, and whom they rendered despicable in the eyes of men, take delight in exercising their whole power to revenge such insults."—See Book XVII.

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fort or kind they be, who seek for salvation and hope for heaven by any means of their own devising, or by any other way than true and living faith in Christ Jesus, who is the only way, truth and life, — Let all such be told, and would God, it was written, as with a pen of a diamond on all their hearts! — that they are miserable self-deluders, self-deceivers, and if they continue to trust on these arms of flesh, they will be accursed from God; these physicians whereon they rely can never cure their spiritual maladies, or raise up their souls from the death of sin; but spending all they have, all their powers, and faculties, all the gifts and graces of God, they will be reduced to everlasting beggary, grow worse and worse here upon earth and die the death eternal in the kingdom of horrible woe!

Oh that they would hearken and be wise; that they would give up all this vain dependence, acknowledge their own misery and helplessness, and secondly, with this woman and this ruler, apply to him who is the only physician of the soul! And no need have we to fear, but that he will give us a gracious reception: when Jairus requested him to go to his house, he arose and went immediately:
On the bloody issue healed,

ly: when the woman touched him, virtue instantly went out from, him, and he said, with abundant compassion, Be of good comfort, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace. This should strengthen us in the confidence of our addresses and application to him; and the more strongly our faith cleaves to him and his precious promises, so much the sooner we know shall we receive his gracious assistance, since according to our faith *, he hath constantly declared, that we shall always find his mercy! Oh where was there ever an instance known of any humble petitioner for bodily or spiritual diseases, that returned unrelied and unpitied from this God and Saviour? Be strong in him, ask, seek, apply, and be assured, that as his mercy, so is his power, each almighty to save, and each, oh humble, penitent believer, each offered to thee, each ready to be given to thee, and exerted for thee, if thou wilt but extend the hand of faith, and apprehend that, for which also thou art apprehended of Christ †: for you perceive, thirdly, that this woman reached forth her hand and touched the hem of our Saviour's garment—thus teaching us how we may apply to ourselves this remedy of all our

* See Vol. I. 132.
† Philip. iii. 13.
On the bloody Issue healed.

evils, even Christ, the great physician of our souls—which is the IIId general head, whereof I proposed to speak, and which this history teaches; but this must be omitted to the next discourse.
DISCOURSE XIV.

On the Woman with the bloody Issue.

PART II.


And when the woman saw, that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good Comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace.

O shew us the fearful havoc which sin hath made in the world, and the utter helplessness of our souls from either law or nature, or any natural means, two afflicted sufferers, strong pictures of burdened and heavy-laden sinners, are in this part
part of the gospel presented to our view; at the same time to admonish us of our state, and to shew us the power of that divine faith, which is able to save our souls; which truly laying hold of Jesus, the great and only physician of the spiritually sick, will ever gain from him this gracious reply, *Be of good comfort, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*

Designing principally to dwell upon the case of the Woman, and that of Jairus only as connected in doctrine with it, I observ'd that four things were more immediately taught us from this part of the gospel-history. Two of which having been already considered,

Ist, The abounding greatness of human misery, its true cause and fountain; and,

IIdly, The remedy for this common misery of human nature: I proceed in the

IIId Place to speak of the manner how we may each one of us apply this remedy to our own souls.

The Woman, you perceive, came behind our Lord Jesus, reached forth her hand and touched the hem, the border or fringe of his garment, which he wore according to the custom of
of the Jews *; for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. — She came behind him, because as being legally impure, every person was esteemed unclean that touched her: wherefore in our Saviour's kind address to her, we have a lively proof of his great compassion to filthy sinners, as well as of his wonderful love in saving us while we were yet in our blood, enemies to God, and impure with all uncleanness and iniquity. — But how shall WE approach him, you may ask, how shall WE extend the hand and touch this Lord, no longer present with us, but seated on the throne of his glorious Majesty in heaven? shall we ascend into the heaven, or go down into the deep?—No, blessed be his name, he is not at this unsurmountable distance from us, but present, forever present, even to the end of the world, with his church, in and by his word and sacraments, where he will be sought, and where he is always to be found: Thus must we touch the hem of his garment, approach him in the means of grace, established and duly administered in his church. We may just remark, that the coat of Christ, woven without seam from the top throughout, for which the soldiers cast lots, hath ever been spoken of and used by writers of

* See Numb. xv. 38, and Deut. xxii. 12. See also Beza's note on Matt. xxiii. 5.
all sorts and kinds as a figure or emblem of the church of Christ, his seamless coat, and so of that unity, which should and will ever reign amongst the true members of that church, who will never rend and divide it into pieces; hence in the song of Solomon it is said of this church, my Dove, my undefiled is but ONE: she is the only ONE of her mother*.

With this one true church, in the means of grace, Christ will ever be present to heal; wherefore it behoves us to take especial heed, that we rend † not this seamless coat, that we break not the unity of this church by needlessly and carnally separations, the cunning artifice of Satan, to prevent the efficacy of the great promise of Christ to his apostles and their successors, which is a blessing we cannot too highly prize, nor too zealously maintain. For his first commission to the apostles, and so to his ministers, their successors throughout all generations, is, Go ye therefore and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world‡: I am,

* Cant. vi. 9.
† Μη εὐχλεον αὐτον — said the soldiers, Let us not rend it, when the word schism is derived.
‡ Matt. xxviii. 19.
On the bloody issue healed.

by my immediate presence, even I, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given; I am with YOU as my ministers, in your office, always, at all times, and forever even unto the end of the world.—And hence to shew the power of faith in the means of grace, the word especially, St. Paul emphatically declares, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down? or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead: but what faith it? the WORD is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is; the word of faith, which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved *. This is the present salvation, this is the way to obtain help from on high, even by true faith in the heart, confessing the Lord Jesus, almightiness to save; which faith of necessity, as delivering from the death of sin, raises up to the new life of righteousness.—Thus believe in, and thus confess him, not ashamed of him and his words, before all men, and thou shalt have present salvation from sin here, and salvation from death eternal hereafter.—It is the word of faith, which, says St. Paul, we preach, that is able to do this: to effect

* Rom. x. 6, 7, 8, 9.
through the Spirit this great salvation. In this word we have him near to us; he is ever present with us, in this word read, heard and preached in his church; here we may approach and touch the hem of his garment, we may come and lay hold of him by faith, for he hath promised to make it effectual to the salvation of those who hear and receive it as his word, as God speaking to them: and who so hearing it, apply its precious promises to the necessities of their own souls. Nay and to the weak in faith it is the great mean, whereby Christ lays hold of them, to raise up and strengthen them, even as he did the daughter of Jairus: stirring them up by it, for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God *, speaking with power to the soul dead in sin, I say unto thee, arise: and enabling it to walk in his ways, and to eat of his divine food and refreshment in his blessed supper, another great mean of grace to the soul in the church, by which we are made partakers of his most blessed body and blood, where he is always present to the faithful in a peculiar and excellent manner, where we may always reach forth the hand of faith and touch him, and where it is ever our own fault if virtue go not out of

* Rom. x. 17.
him to heal us; for verily, verily I say unto you, faith he, he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day*. The cup of blessing, says St. Paul, which we bless, is it not the communion (that which communicates to us the blessings and benefits) of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ †? By the participation of which we are so united to him, that truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ ||. And that we shall be where he is, and behold the glory which the Father hath given him ‡. And in baptism, the other great gospel-sacrament and mean of spiritual grace, we have not only the assurance of virtue proceeding from his garment to bless and to save us, — (nay St. Peter says expressly, that baptism doth save us, the like figura whereunto even baptism doth also now save us. — And St. Paul, that according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost §) — but there we even put on his robe, his robe of righteousness, clothed wherewith we shall appear as well accepted guests at his last and glorious marriage feast: and here too he shews his great readiness to

* John vi. 53, 54. † 1 Cor. x. 10. || John i. 3.
‡ John xvii. 28. § 1 Pet. iii. 21. Tit. iii. 5.
save, preventing us with the riches of his mercy, and stretching out his hand to raise us up, and to deliver us from death: by blessing us with this sacrament of baptism, this sign and seal of favour, admitting us into covenant with him, enlisting us under his banners, in early infancy, and engaging us to fight his battles against sin, the world, and the devil.

Thus is Christ ever present with his church, ever near to his people in the great means of grace which he hath appointed, and which, when duly administered and properly received, can never fail of the same efficacy, which flowed from him when corporally present upon earth. Do we, therefore, desire salvation and deliverance from him, we must not fail diligently to seek for it, and to apply to him in those means of grace which he hath instituted, and to which he hath bound himself by an infallible promise, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!

Whence then doth it happen, we may reasonably enquire, that so many in this church use the means of grace, are baptized, hear the word, receive the blessed communion, &c. — and yet continue either gross and notorious sinners, or downright hypocrites, mere formal professors, experiencing nothing of the virtue of Christ proceeding from him to heal
On the bloody issue healed.

and to save them from their sinful selves? The reason is plain from this gospel, and a very alarming one it is to us all—Who touched me, said Jesus, when he perceived, that virtue had gone out of him: all denying, Peter said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, who touched me? Whence you see, that though numbers pressed round, and touched our Lord, yet to none of them virtue went out from him, save to this woman, who alone touched him in faith, in want of relief, and in full confidence, that he was able to give it. —So in the church, many throng about and press upon Christ, in the means, and yet return from thence, just as they came *. And what is the cause, but

* Father Quesnelle observes very excellently on the 45th ver. of the viiith ch. of Luke. "Abundance of christians, as it were, press upon Jesus Christ, in hearing his word, receiving the sacrament, and performing the outward parts of religion; but few touch him by a lively faith, by a true christian life, by the prayer of charity, and by the meditation, love, and imitation of his mysteries; ——those numerous assemblies and multitudes of people, who fill the churches and make the crowd at sermons, and yet cease not to go on in their usual course, in following the world, and their own passions, throng and press Christ, but do not touch him." In his reflections on Mark v. 28. he observes also, O God, how oft do we touch, receive and eat his (Christ's) representative body in the Eucharist, and yet through our own fault, we
but that they are destitute of that true faith, which alone draws grace for grace, from this fountain opened for all who will come and drink? a want of this faith, this full reliance upon the power and mercy of God in Christ, this total abjedion of all self-dependance hath been ever the great impediment to spiritual progress amongst professing christians. We cannot trust him with that full persuasion, which Abraham, the father and pattern of the faithful, possessed: we are for making Christ a partial saviour, and so stagger through unbelief, and fall short of the promised blessing. Nay, and indeed mankind have always too much sought for salvation and the grace of Christ by their own merits and deservings. This hath been the continual snare of the devil in the church of Christ, even from St. Paul's time: and to oppose this, and shew the nature and truth of justification by faith, by the alone works and merits of Jesus Christ, hath been the great business of every reformer, as you may see as well in that hardy champion of Christ's faith, Martin Luther, as in all others: and in none more than those zealous and blessed reformers in our nation,

we continue still subject to the same infirmities! it is because we do not approach him, as this woman did: with the same faith, the same confidence, the same humility!
On the bloody issue healed.

from whom, under God, we enjoy all the blessings of our religion, and our happy deliverance from the darkness and superstition of popery, and that most dangerous of all doctrines to salvation, which deists and moralists pretend to espouse so much in these our days, the sufficiency and meritoursness of our own works to salvation! Poor miserable sinners†! O father of mercy, for the sake of thy son Jesus Christ, lay not the sinfulness of even our best works to our charge; but after we have done all, suffer us, as most unprofitable servants, as they who have nothing that they did not receive‡, to fly to and trust in the all-sufficient merits of thy dear Son for salvation!

Desire you, therefore, to partake of the salvation, which is in Christ,—and surely, my brethren, you cannot but desire your soul's

† It deserves a serious consideration, whether the great increase of this opinion, and the manifestly prevailing infidelity, which is its certain consequence, doth not at present call for the most strenuous confusion and opposition from all christians of every denomination; seeing it paves the way so readily for popery, and opens so wide a door to that torrent of Antichristian superstition and tyranny; which gains but too much ground upon protestantism every day; and against which, country, liberty, lives, salvation, all things call upon us most loudly NOW to contend!

‡ i Cor. iv. 7.
everlasting health,—touch Christ with constant and firm faith, believe confidently, that he came into this world, as well for you as for all other sinners, that he loved you, and gave himself for you: that for you he endured the ignominious and painful death of the cross; that by his death he hath obtained, not for himself, but for you, the remission of sins: appeased the anger of that heavenly Father, whom you had by your sins sadly offended, and reconciled him to you for ever. Believe moreover firmly, that as he is faithful who hath promised, so is he able to perform what he hath promised: and conclude without all doubt, that he will most graciously receive you flying to, and seeking for his mercy, that he will defend you against the rigour of divine justice by his obedience: will heal you of every spiritual disease by his almighty power and virtue; and cause you to know and feel, that for the sake of his infinite merit you are made righteous and just, an heir of God, and an inheritor of eternal life—To which good purpose, hear the word of God, not carelessly, nor with carnal ears, but with all your heart, and all your soul attending upon it; constantly cleave to, and place your confidence and hopes of strength in it, by the Spirit
Spirit: which, if you do, you shall perceive in your mind and conscience the power of God, and how by the operation of his Spirit you continually advance in true piety and holiness: for the gospel is the power of God to salvation*—not to all who hear it—but it is so to every one, none excepted, that believeth:

Take heed, therefore, how you hear, and remember the solemn exclamation so oft repeated in the word of God, He that HATH EARS to HEAR, let him HEAR †. And as in the word, so in the other means of grace, if you expect Christ should make them effectual to the salvation of your souls, come in faith, and apply them to your comfort; rest not in a merely outward baptism, seek for the inward renewing of the Holy Ghost; be not content, "carnally and visibly to press with your teeth the sacrament of the body and blood of ‡ Christ," but by a living faith partake of Christ in an heavenly and spiritual manner: and think it not enough to secure the blessings annexed to faithful prayer; that your lips formally repeat the service of the church, lift up the earnest desires of your hearts to God, lay your wants

* Rom. i. 16.
† Matt. xi. 15. Revel. ii. 11, 17, 29.
‡ See the 29th article of our church.
before him, and request him to do all his
good-will in you: and thus seeking, you shall
find.

Hence then we see how we may apply Christ
savingly to our souls, and how we may be
assured of a blessed reception from him; even
by seeking him in those means of grace,
which he hath annexed to his church, by
firm and sincere faith: truly feeling, deploring,
and acknowledging the weight and burden
of our sins and offences, truly and fully per-
suaded, that no other means can help us, as
knowing that there is salvation in no other,
and approaching in full and humble confidence,
that his divine power and mercy, offered to
all repenting sinners, will undoubtedly be ex-
erted on our behalf, and for the salvation of
our souls! if we come thus to him, he will
receive us graciously, as he did this woman,
he will readily answer our call, as he did the
request of Jairus, raise us up from the death
of sin to newness of life, and dismiss us with
this blessed answer, Be of good comfort; thy
faith hath saved thee, go in peace: which are
the glorious advantages arising to us from a
faithful reception of Christ.

The IVth and last thing, whereof I shall
speak, and that principally, by way of appli-
cation.—Before which it may be necessary,
just in brief to suggest to you the spiritual interpretation, which the fathers and ancient writers of the church give of these miracles. — "How came it to pass, (faith one of them *) that Jesus, when going principally to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, not to the woman with the bloody issue, nevertheless cured her first, when she met him in the way?—These things are spiritually to be understood: the son of God came primarily and principally to the synagogue of the Jews, which he found sick and ready to die; for the sins of Israel had drawn on the death of that people. But a woman with a bloody issue, a continual flux of blood, unclean and defiled, believed on him, before this people, to whom he came first. This was a figure of the Gentile church: whom all the philosophers could not heal, the physicians which had long been tried in vain, and whom faith in Christ alone restored to health and soundness. And when this perfect cure of the Gentiles shall be wrought, then shall the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue rise again—when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, then all Israel shall be saved †.

* St. Cyril.
† Rom. xi. 25, 26. The ix, x, and xi. chapters of this epistle will serve excellently to explain this history, as to the figurative sense of it.

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Jairus, says another, † is an emblem of the Jewish people, for whom Christ came in the first place, but who are not to be saved, till after the Gentiles; of whom this woman is a type or figure, both by the nature of her distemper and the preference which she receives. The Gentiles represented by her, passing as it were through the crowd of the Jewish people, approached Christ, and believed in him. They do indeed belong to him, though the Jewish people were his peculiar people, and they received his grace, as it were, contrary to his design and first intention— they came behind him, and touched him. 

As he saith also, in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people, and her beloved, which was not beloved.

St. Jeron † observes, that as the daughter of the ruler was twelve years old, so the woman had been diseased twelve years: that is, the Gentiles then began to be sick, when the Jewish people believed. For vice is not known, but by the comparison of virtues. She came not to the Lord in the house, or in the city, because, according to the law, she was excluded from cities, but as he was in the way; that

† Quefnelle.
† St. Cyrill also makes the very same remark. See Jeron on Matt. ix.
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while he went to one, another might be cured:
And hence the apostles say (referring to this
dispensation of the election of the Gentiles, and
reprobation of the Jews) it was necessary that
the word of God should first have been spoken to
you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge
yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn
to the GENTILES.”* — Thus, according to
the ancient fathers and doctors of the church,
this history was intended to point out to us,
that great mystery of the calling of the Gen-
tiles, and the future resurrection of the Jews,
when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come
in, when the veil shall be taken away, and
their blindness removed, when the deliverer
shall come out of Sion, and turn ungodliness from
Jacob. A day greatly to be wished and prayed
for: for if the fall of them be the riches of the
world, and the diminishing (or loss) of them be
the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their
fulness? If the calling away of them be the re-
conciling of the world, what shall the receiving of
them be, but life from the dead! † As we daily
pray therefore, so may it be—May this thy king-
dom come, Lord Jesus; mayest thou come in the
fulness of thy power, and compleat the work
with the Gentiles, that so all Israel may be

* Acts xiii. 46. † Rom. xi. 12, 15, 26.
saved!
On the bloody issue healed.

Even so, come Lord Jesus! †— This will be a glorious day, when the everlasting gospel shall be preached to all them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people: when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously! *— And such is the information and uses which we gather from the spiritual interpretation of this history, which I shall leave to your several improvements and meditation; while I consider the advantages arising to us, at present, from a faithful receiving of that Redeemer, whom we expect to see one day in triumph, and whom the heavens must receive, till that day, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began. ‡

Great indeed were the advantages which these two persons, the woman and the ruler, received by applying to Christ: the fond afflicted miserable parent received from death his only and beloved child; the woman obtained a happy deliverance from a disease, which had now been upon her twelve years, which had caused her to suffer many things,

† Revel. xxii. 20.
* Revel. xiv. 6. Isaiah xxiv. 23.
‡ Acts iii. 21.
and which had reduced her to extreme necessity, all her substance being wasted. To these, in this time of need, Christ extended the arm of his compassionate mercy; they came to him, burdened and heavy-laden, he refreshed and gave them rest: But they came not, till they had tried all other means; for we are naturally averse to Christ: the evil in our hearts keeps us from him, and we are for trying all physicians,—mere empirics --- before we will come to him, who hath all power in heaven and earth, to save and to heal us! Yet strange as it is he alone can save us, and we all need, nay, and must have his salvation, or perish everlastingly. He alone can raise us up from the death of sin, and restore us to new life.---

It is he alone who can speak the word with power, I say unto thee, arise; it is he alone who can save us from the fountain of evil in our hearts, virtue can proceed from no other to launch it: it is he alone who can speak with authority, crown our faith and dismiss us in comfort and peace,---Be of good comfort, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace: these mighty advantages, — even new life, salvation and peace, may we obtain by a faithful application to him; these advantages can be had from none other, and if we have them not —— wretched men that we are, who shall deli-

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On the bloody issue healed.

ver us from the body of death here, and from the never-dying worm hereafter!

Can it be possible then that we should refuse so great salvation, so inestimable blessings, such unspeakable benefits! can it be possible that any of us, my brethren, should reject this good counsel of God towards us, these offers of life, salvation and peace? Can it be possible that we should choose rather to continue in the dead state of sin; in the filthy and unclean impurity of defiling lusts and affections, in the tossings and tempests of an uneasy conscience, rather than seek to Christ for a new and a happy life, for a free pardon and full salvation from our vile and condemning offences, and a blessed peace of mind, a peace passing all understanding, which continues unshaken amidst all the storms and troubles of this mortal life, brooding, like the balcyon, most securely, amidst the raging waves and roaring winds of this world! Can it be possible that we should see and hear of such daily instances of anxious care and solicitude for worldly concerns, for deliverance from death, and bodily evils, and yet not be aroused to an equal care and anxiety for the deliverance of our souls, from spiritual sickness and sorrow, from eternal death and everlasting woe? Can it be possible that we should choose death rather
rather than life—evil than good, the oppressive yoke of sin and Satan, rather than the light and easy one of Christ?

Things are best seen by comparison—weigh then together the advantages and disadvantages, the benefit and loss of accepting or refusing the terms of the gospel: think well with yourselves, what you can lose, you have seen what you may gain by this bargain, wherein you can be prejudiced by taking this light and easy yoke upon you—what you can forfeit or give up by closing with and accepting the offer of Christ?—No one enjoyment, no one blessing worthy a rational creature! truth it is, you must lose, you must forego all those enjoyments, which devils and beasts partake of in common with sinners: you must give up pride, malice, envy, rancour, ill-will, you must give up loud-mouth'd blasphemy, daring infidelity, the root of all evils, horrid and profane swearing, filthy and abominable communications: you must give up drunkenness, adultery, fornication, lust, hatred, variance, emulations, strife, murders, revellings, evil-speaking, and all such fruits of the flesh.

—These indeed must be forsaken; let no man deceive himself: there is no possibility of retaining these and closing with Christ—light hath no fellowship with darkness! and one
would think it no hard or uneasy parting to leave such base and deceitful friends as these, which work the present woe of all, who are joined in society with them, and worse than all, at last will plunge their friends in the bottomless pit of perdition! O who would wish to retain such dangerous acquaintance as these! who would not rather choose to be at peace, and to enjoy solid and substantial comfort, which the world can neither give nor take away, which no sinner, no worldly carnal man ever did or ever can enjoy! who would not rather wish to fly to Christ for deliverance from these foes, and to receive in return a blessed and new acquaintance, that bring nothing but cheerfulness and gladness wherever they approach: for these are the joyful, the blessed fruits of the Spirit of the kingdom of God, set up in the heart, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—where these are found, to that soul Christ hath said, be of good comfort; and that happy soul shall have continual rejoicing here, and everlasting peace in the kingdom of glory hereafter!

This comfort is offered to us all in the church of Christ, and we are bound to be duly and constantly thankful to God, that he hath so blessed us with the means of grace, and
and of consequence the hopes of glory! and to use the words of the pious and incomparable bishop Beveridge, "seeing our Lord hath promised to be with his apostles and their successors, even to the end of the world, seeing the succession of the office apostolical hath without interruption been continued in our church to this day; and seeing therefore that Christ, according to his promise, is always present by his holy Spirit at the word and sacraments to quicken, actuate, and make them effectual to the salvation of souls; hence in his name, and for his sake, and your own too, I humbly pray and beseech you all, that you would take all the opportunities you can, to meet your Lord and Saviour in the public offices of the church, to which he hath thus promised his peculiar presence. And think it not enough to be there, but consider all the while in whose presence you are, and deport yourselves accordingly. And while we read or preach the gospel, call upon you, exhort and pray you to observe whatsoever Christ hath commanded, still remember the apostle's words, that we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God! and therefore
fore receive it not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God.

Above all things take heed, that you have not mens persons in admiration: so as to think the word and sacraments one jot the better or worse because administered by one person rather than another. For they that do so, it is evident, regard the person more than the office: and then it is no wonder, if they receive no benefit or advantage from it. For all the hopes or expectations that we have, or can have, from the exercise of any ecclesiastical office, by whomsoever performed, are grounded only upon Christ's promise to the office itself, to be present with it by his holy Spirit: without which all the fine words and phrases in the world can never mortify one lust, nor convert one soul to God and goodness. And therefore, whosoever you address yourselves to the public prayers of the church, to hear God's word read or preached, or to receive the holy sacrament, still keep the eye of faith fixed upon Christ as there really present, according to his promise ready to dispense his heavenly blessings by his holy Spirit, working together with the ordinance to make it accomplish the end of its institution, even your sanctification in this world, and your eternal salvation in the world to come. Do but observe these few rules
rules in all your solemn devotions, as performed by that part of the catholic church, which, by the blessing of Almighty God, is settled among you; and then I dare assure you, in the name of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, that you will all experience the truth of what you have now heard, even that Christ is always present with his ministers in the discharge of their office, even unto the end of the world!"* —Through faith, by these means of grace, thus touching the hem of his garments, you will be made whole of whatever spiritual malady you groan under, and receive peace and comfort, salvation and life to your souls.

Hence you learn, that nothing can stand in the way of your salvation but yourselves: Christ is ever present in the means to give you his grace; and his promise cannot fail: so that all may receive his peace and salvation, if they will only apply to him with true desire, and seek for his assisting Spirit in and by those means, which he will always bless to the faithful soul! And there will come a day, when, if we now refuse to apply to him, we shall indeed wish that we had known the things which pertained to our peace.—Loud warnings, my brethren, are given to us all: The solemn toll

* See Bp. Beveridge's, sermons, vol. I. page 35.
again hath bespoken the departure of a soul from amongst us! Of a soul, consigned to an eternal, an unchangeable state; another of us, brethren, is become a lifeless mass of clay! — Who was assured, that it might not have been his lot! And who now amongst us can tell whether the next summons may not be for him; whether, before he shall have another offer of grace, the eternal decree may not be passed, and he for ever consigned to endless life or death? — Is there not an awful solemnity in the thought? — Is it not sufficient to awaken us to a serious concern for our souls; or can we behold our fellow-creatures, vanishing from before our eyes, and delivered to the cold, dark bowels of the grave, without one reflection on our own mortality, without seeming to hear from the deep departing knell, Prepare, oh mortal, prepare; time is on the wing, thy hour is at hand, every moment thou art nearer and nearer to eternity. — Oh, Fellow-Christians and fellow-heirs of death, can ye be unmoved in a matter of such infinite moment? Is it nothing to you? Is the eternal welfare of your souls of so little concern? Who can dwell in everlasting burnings? * Oh what shall it profit you to gain the whole world, and lose

your own soul? What is all the world to you, when once a cold and common carcase in the earth? What would you give the moment your spirit is departed from your body, if haply devils should seize it horribly condemned to death everlasting by the sentence of a most just and impartial judge? — What would you then give for a return to life, and for days of holiness? — But that will be vain — that will be impossible: I beseech you think of it: Now you have it in your powers to receive and embrace the salvation of Christ: De- lude not yourselves, rest not easy in a state of miserable uncertainty, when matters of such infinite consequence demand your regard. Had you hopes of obtaining some great worldly inheritance, how diligent and scrupulously exact would you be to ascertain your title to it! Condemn not yourselves therefore: Let not the children of this world be wiser in their generation than the children of light: Examine and prove your title to your eternal inheritance with the like zeal, the like diligence. Examine the state of your souls by the word of Christ; search, prove and try: Have you ever approached to this divine physician in true faith, confessing yourselves unable to help yourselves, and humbly seeking and suing for

† Matt. xvi. 26.

relief
relief and pardon from this most merciful Jesus? — Nothing but such an application in faith will avail you: Thy faith hath saved thee, is his word to all, who thus applied to him: — Be confident therefore, if you have never applied to him in true faith, all your hopes of salvation are vain and delusive.* — Rest not easy then, but under the sense of your own utter inability apply to him, as the Lord, able and willing to save, and be assured, that virtue shall go out from him to heal you.

And as of continuing in a sinful, so especially beware of continuing in a formal course, in an outside profession of christianity: see how many thronged and pushed about our Saviour, and yet none of them received a cure, save this woman only; and the reason was, you find, because she touched him in faith,

* Theophylact upon Luke beautifully observes concerning this woman, who touched Christ, and her bloody issue immediately staunched; that “as if any should bring his eye to a shining light, or should put flubble to the fire, the effect would immediately take place, (the eye would see, the flubble would burn) so the bringing faith to him that was able to heal, immediately obtained the health and blessing desired. For she nothing regarded the length of time that she had been diseased, the inability of the physicians to cure her, or any thing else — but only believed, and was saved, μονον επιστευσεν κα' σωσεσαι, — and as it seems, the first touched Christ in mind, then in body, πρωτη τη ψυχη μου κα' σωματικως. Vol. I. p. 363.
under a full sense and feeling of her misery, a knowledge of the vanity of all human help, and a firm confidence and persuasion of Christ's ability to save. If I may but touch the hem of his garment, said she, I shall be whole. So thou christian, unless thou comest with this faith to Christ in his word and sacraments, be well aware, behold I have told thee — thy formal receiving and outward profession, thy loud talking and much boasting of the temple of the Lord, will avail thee nothing, for it is by faith only that we are saved, and faith brings home Christ the spiritual physician to recover from death, to stop the bloody issue, to cause iniquity to cease, and to cure all the evils of the soul. So that a sure mark it is, that Christ is not in us of a truth, that he hath not visited our house, if our sins and iniquities reign with full power in us, if concupiscence still irritates to evil, if our bloody issue be not staunched, if we are not dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—But if we do indeed approach him in faith, we shall then be saved from our sins and dismissed in peace: the guilt, the fear, the power and condemnation of them will be done away: and though there will always remain, in true believers, the stirrings of sin, the motions of the old man, crucified
fied and dying on the cross—yet sin shall not have dominion over us, to rule or condemn us, and we shall have peace and joy in God.

Is this then the happy case of you, my beloved brethren, if you believe? and surely you all go thus far, you who are baptised, and now assembled to worship this Redeemer,—if you believe these miracles of mercy shewn by Christ on these two persons, you cannot doubt of his power and willingness to save: of the vanity of all earthly means, and their utter inefficacy to deliver from sin and death; and of the all-prevailing force and excellence of divine faith. Have you then seen and known him as thus able and willing to relieve? have you experienced the vanity of all human aid—and in anxiety for your soul laid hold of Christ by faith, as the only and the all-sufficient Saviour? have you proved the sweetness of his mercy, and the greatness of his power?

—- These are questions of the last importance, and you should by no means rest contented till you can answer them to the complete satisfaction of your souls: and they are easy to be resolved; the woman could not doubt, when her Bloody Issue staunched, and she felt in her body, (as the evangelist expresses it) that she was delivered from her plague: no more
more can you doubt whether the grace and power of Christ have been effectual to the forgiveness of your sins, if you feel in yourself a deliverance from the guilt and power of them, together with new joy in Christ, new love to God, and new apprehensions of your spiritual estate; if you enjoy in yourself that peace, which is the gift of Christ, which passeth all understanding, which is a divine foretaste of heaven, a comfort superior to all this earth can give, and as much more excellent than all terrestrial pleasures, as heaven is itself more excellent than earth. If you have found this pearl of great price, happy are you; the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: be of good comfort; let nothing trouble or disquiet you: your faith hath saved you; go in peace, and by an humble patient perseverance in all the means of grace, and in every good work, labour to shew yourselves faithful sons and servants of your God; and by meekness, patience and love approve yourselves true followers of Christ, and possessors of that divine peace which he alone giveth.

But if you have not known this death unto sin, and new life unto righteousness, oh reflect upon the danger of your present state, and make haste, moved by the foregoing considerations, to secure your souls eternal welfare.
On the bloody Issue healed.

fare, before your lot be irrevocably cast. Intreat the Spirit of God to open your eyes, and to shew you that original fountain of sin, which hath derived its bitter waters into your soul, to shew you the spiritual extent and purity of the law of God, which you have broken in every particular: examine yourself heedfully thereby; and when the long roll of your offences stares you in the face, then see how you are already condemned, incapable of making atonement for the very least offence, unable to stand before a just and a holy judge and in no possibility of being rescued from the jaws of the great dragon, other than by the power and mercy of Jesus our great and triumphant Michael. Oh seek to him and thou shalt find him rich in love, and almighty to save! confess thy sins, deplore thy misery, own and cleave to him, as the only refuge in time of need, seek him diligently there where he hath promised always to be present, in his word and sacraments, and be assured that virtue shall go out from him for the healing of all thy hitherto incurable diseases! --- All partial amendments, all confidence in ourselves, or in any thing we can do, must
must be utterly laid aside, and with deep humility, lowly contrition, and firm faith, we must depend upon Christ, and Christ only: If we desire to make him a partial Saviour, come to him merely to patch up our deficiencies, and to supply what we think wanting in ourselves, we shall find that we trust to a leaky bottom; our vessel will inevitably perish: No, my brethren, he is all in all: in all things and for all things we must trust him: we must resolve to follow Kempis his advice—nudi nudum sequamur Jesum—naked, cast ourselves upon a naked Jesus—if we do so, we shall infallibly be blessed; our corruptions and sins will here be done away, the fountain will be dried up: we shall enjoy perfect health, and perfect peace in him, and as knowing whom we have believed, as persuaded that he is able to keep what we have intrusted with him, we shall find him in the end faithful who hath promised: faithful after our day of service is over, after our constant dependence on the means ceaseth, faithful to raise us from the dust of death, to feed us with his own refreshing comforts, and to satisfy us from the rivers of pleasures, which flow forever.
forever at his right hand: faithful to bless us in his eternal sabbath, and with his own endearing love and embraces; faithful to receive us, blest with immortality and incorruption, to himself, and to crown us with his own everlasting glory!—Which, &c.
D I S C O U R S E X V.

On the F A I T H F U L C A N A A N I T E.

Being the S U B S T A N C E o f T W O S E R M O N S.

P A R T I.

St. Matthew xv. 22.

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

Jesus, we are told by the evangelist, departing from the Jews, retired to the very borders of Palestine, to the Coasts of those two celebrated Gentile cities, Tyre and Sidon: where, as St. Mark informs us, he
he entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid: it was as impossible for the divine sun of righteousness * to be concealed, whereabouts he came with his healing wings and message of peace, as it is for the sun in the firmament, when he riseth in all his glory, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and as a giant, rejoicing to run his course †. For a certain woman of Canaan — having heard of him, as the sacred writer declares, though she was one of that detested race, though a Gentile of the most abject sort, a Canaanite, yet nothing moved hereby, came out of that country (into which Jesus could not enter, as his personal mission was to the Jews only, not to the Gentiles,—but to the borders of which by divine providence he departed for her sake)—She, I say, having heard of him, notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, threw herself, as an humble petitioner, upon his almighty grace and love. Strong necessity urged her on: grievous and insufferable distress caused her to be bold and importunate. Alas, unhappy parent, her young daughter, her own bowels, her beloved child, had an un-

* Mal. iv. 2.
† Psalm xix. 5.
clean spirit, was grievously vexed with a devil. And when such a cause, when such pressing need, when such miserable sorrow surrounded her, who can wonder that she was anxious, that she was earnest; that she would take no refusal from this divine person, whom she saw, by faith, all-powerful to deliver? Who but must rather wonder, that the example of this woman doth not incite us to an equal importunity for spiritual and temporal blessings in behalf of ourselves and children, when we have so many advantages over her, so much more encouragement to come to Christ, and so much more evidence and foundation for our trust and reliance on Jesus, as all-willing, and all-mighty to save?—But let us see how her application succeeded: she came, she fell at his feet, she besought him, she cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David. Have mercy, I plead no merits, I profess no deserving—as a worthless, suffering wretch, I intreat only the riches of thy grace and mercy: I intreat it, O Lord, for such I confess and believe thee to be, and not the Lord, the Jehovah only, but also the Son of David, the promised Messiah, the expected and much desired Saviour of the world: O have mercy on me, O
On the faithful Canaanite.

for the cause of my child, and its distresses are mine—my poor unhappy daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

Who but must admire that such a petitioner should be rejected: and rejected by that bountiful and merciful redeemer, who, with the voice of love, invited all that were heavy-laden to come to him; who promised never to cast out any that would come; and whose business it was to go about doing good? Yet you find, he answered this woman not a word, he did not design in appearance so much as to take the least notice of her and her distress!—She nevertheless still cried, still besought, still importunately pressed her petition: insomuch that the very disciples were moved with her case and became her advocates: they themselves, tho' Jews, besought their Lord to dismiss this petitioner, as he was always accustomed, to grant her the thing she prayed for, and to send her away: for they saw no reason to suppose, that she would cease her prayers, and leave off her loud importunity. But our Lord speedily silenced them, and by an answer agreeable to their own prejudices, took them off from the cause: I am not sent, said he, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. To this they readily assented: and,
as they were high in their notions of the Jews prerogative, were so well satisfied with this answer of their Lord's, that we hear them pleading no more for this lost and miserable Gentile. But she herself was not so easily satisfied: it was her own cause; and our own immediate concern stirs us up to the most zealous application. Somewhat encouraged, by perceiving that she was the subject of discourse between our Lord and his disciples, she was emboldened to draw near, though there was danger in the attempt, since the law absolutely forbad such an intercourse: yet she came, she worshipped this Son of David, she confessed again his divinity, and prayed, saying, Lord, help me.

Jesus then at length condescended to speak to her, but words, one would have thought, sufficient to have discouraged every further attempt; nay, and to have raised her bitter dislike to this person, of whose mercy and favour she had already conceived such high and heavenly notions. It is not meet, said he, it is not good, (μαλακόν) and proper, it is not becoming, to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. It is not right to deprive the Jews (who are the children of the covenant, the descendents of faithful Abraham) of any part of those blessings, which
which I am here present to bestow, and that by giving to such as you, who are esteemed no better than dogs, nay and so called by all the Jews, as being aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel.

—How happy are they, who from discouragements can gather hope; who from hard treatment can find out arguments of consolation? "What ordinary patience (to use the words of bishop Hall) would not have been overstrained with so contemptuous a repulse? How few but would have fallen into intemperate passions, into hasty expostulations, Art thou the prophet of God, that so disdainfully entertainest poor suppliants, —is this the comfort that thou dealest to the distressed? Is this the fruit of my humble adoration, of my faithful profession — Did I snarl or bark at thee, when I called thee the Son of David? Did I fly upon thee otherwise than with prayers and tears, — and if this term were fit for my vilenes, yet doth it become thy lips—Is it not sorrow enough to me, that I am afflicted with my daughter's misery, but that thou (of whom I hoped for relief) must add to mine affliction in an unkind reproach?" — But here is none of all this: on the contrary, her humility grants all, her patience over-
comes all, and she meekly answers: "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs, which fall from their masters table." O Lord, thou art truth itself: thy words can be no other than truth; thou hast called me a dog, and a dog I am; give me therefore the favour and privilege of a dog: that I may gather up some crumbs of mercy from under that table where thy children sit: this blessing, though great to me, yet the infinite greatness of thy power and mercy is but as a crumb to the feast: I presume not to press to the board, but to creep under it—deny me not those small offals which else would be swept away in the dust: after this stripe, give me but a crum, and I shall fawn upon thee and depart satisfied."

Who can wonder that such humble, patient and persevering faith was crowned? We may say, "O woman, great is thy humility, great is thy patience: but, O woman, faith our Saviour, great is thy faith: he sees the root, we the stock: nothing but faith could thus temper the heart, thus strengthen the soul, thus charm the tongue: O precious faith: O acceptable perseverance; it is no marvel, if that chiding end in favour: Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt;
On the faithful Canaanite.

wilt; and accordingly one evangelist adds, that her daughter was made whole from that very hour; and the other, to shew the perfection of the cure informs us, "that when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed." Which her former situation never suffered her to be, being constantly torn and tormented by the power of that evil spirit which possessed her. "Thus we see, that the way to speed well at God's hand, is to be humbled in his eyes and in our own: for it is very different with God and with men; with men we are so accounted of, as we account of ourselves; he will certainly be vile in the sight of others, who is vile in his own; but with God nothing is got by vain ostentation, nothing is lost by humility and self-abasement." Nay from this woman we learn, that the very reason why God is pleased to deny awhile his favour to us, and to humble us in the lowest manner, is only to magnify more fully his own mercy, by giving us occasion to illustrate and shew forth our faith the more evident: since whoever humbleth himself before God shall by him most indisputably be exalted.

From this very remarkable story we are taught many useful and instructive lessons: I pros-
I propose to dwell upon five particulars, which are immediately observable in it.

Ist, The great blessing and use of afflictions—her daughter's calamity urged the mother to come to Christ.

IIdly, The woman's confession of faith declared in these words—*Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David.*

IIIdly, The obstacles to her faith—particularly observable in our Lord's silence, in his answer to the disciples, and in his answer to her.

IVthly, The commendation of her faith, *O woman, great is thy faith*—and,

Vthly, The fruits and effects of it—*Be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

These five particulars I will distinctly consider; and then shew the use, which we should make of them, if we desire to attain that profit and instruction from the sacred scriptures which God intended us, by causing them to be written for our learning:
ing: and may we not only at present in meditating upon this portion of the divine word, but at all times so hear, mark, learn and inwardly digest it, that by patience and comfort thereof we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which is given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ: and may the example of this woman incite us to an equal importunity and perseverance in faith and prayer, and that so we may obtain from our Lord an answer equally favourable, Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt!

First then the case of this woman sets before our eyes the great blessings and use of afflictions.

That she had heard of Christ before this event, whose fame was spread abroad thro' all the nations, admits of no dispute, and the sequel will more fully shew: — but his fame alone was not sufficient to bring her to him; while she and her house were in peace, in health, and in safety, she was contented to hear of him—she did not choose to leave her country in pursuit of him: she wanted not any thing, as she imagined from him, and therefore why should she trouble herself to go unto him? And in truth herein she reasoned very rightly, for
to come to Christ without we experience a want of him, is of very little consequence; nay, it is necessity alone that can drive us to him. For the flesh and the spirit are at enmity—our carnal and corrupt nature is averse to a sin-destroying Saviour. And as God desires the salvation of all men—so doth he never neglect the proper means to bring about that desired effect: ours is the fault if we frustrate his gracious purposes. He was willing to shew the riches of his mercy, even upon this Canaanitish woman, that the most abject sinner might have no reason to despair: and the means he uses with her is to afflict her daughter. He permits not Satan to spoil and destroy her outward temporal things, but gives him power to affect her in the most tender quarter, even in her favourite, her young, and beloved daughter: for the minds of affectionate parents are more sensibly concerned at the evils which befall their darling offspring than even at those which concern themselves. Nay, he suffers the child of this unhappy mother to be tormented with no common disease, to be afflicted with no ordinary sickness. She was possessed of an unclean spirit, of which, by God's providence and permission, we find there were many
many at this time, to display and manifest Christ's glory in driving them out, and so triumphing more evidently over all the powers of darkness—She was grievously vexed with a devil—A situation of all others most dreadful, horrible beyond the power of description. To see the body of a beloved child in the full possession of an evil spirit, torn and vexed, as the malicious Demon should see fit—thrown upon the ground by him, and wallowing, foaming, struggling with all the agonies of phrenzy, in danger of falling into fire and water, and every desperate destruction—O how much better had it been, must the afflicted mother have often said within herself, to have performed the last sad offices for my child, and to have closed her gentle eyes in death, rather than to behold her in such extremity of suffering!—worse, far worse than death was such a fight—and who can wonder that upon hearing of the many miracles and mighty works performed by Jesus, that she flew to him with all the haste of maternal affection, that she pressed him with all the importunity of the most loving and distressed parent? and you see by the event, how happy and blessed this calamity proved to her, you see in the consequence
quence the wise disposal of God's providence—and that this very greatest of evils by a proper use became the very greatest of blessings to this faithful Canaanite.—And equally wise in the disposal, equally design'd for our welfare, equally productive of such happy consequences, are all the afflictions, which the wisdom of God's providence is pleased to order us here,—if we on our parts are wise enough so to receive them. God never chastiseth but in love: and if not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge and permission*—how can we ever doubt, that the concerns of our life are guided and directed by him? while in health, in ease, and prosperity, like this woman of Canaan, we may indeed hear of Christ, and give some little heed to his fame: but we shall not come to him, till he is pleased to lay his hand upon us in some way or other, and to discover our spiritual wants to us. We have no notion of assisting and supporting grace, we have no idea of a Saviour's blood to cleanse and purify us, of an almighty arm to protect and defend us, till he reveals to us our own weakness, our own sinful and corrupt nature, the enemies wherewith we are encompassed, and our utter destruction,

* Matt. x. 29.
unless he, by his grace and mercy, save, rescue, and deliver us.—And temporal calamities are above all things conducive to this great end: the woman came not, till her daughter was vexed with a devil: the prodigal son returned not, till he was starving in poverty: the nobleman came not till his son was sick unto death: nor the woman till she had wasted all her substance upon physicians, and found her bloody issue still the same: so true is David's remark, "Before I was afflicted, I went wrong, —but now have I kept thy law." Happy will it be for us all, if we make this blessed use of all those afflictions which befall us in life: for more or less they are the lot of every human creature; and it will be strangely defeating the divine good purpose and will, if we repine under our worldly distresses, and receive them not, as means to bring us to Christ!†

See how importunate this woman was, when the afflicting hand of God was upon her child: it is an example well deserving the serious regard of every parent amongst you: she does not come to Christ, with —

* Psalm cxix. 67.
† Read, by all means that fine and comfortable chapter, the iid of Ecclesiasticus.

Have
Have mercy, Lord, on my child—her petition is very different, and merits your attention—she says—Have mercy on ME, O Lord—for my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. She makes it her own cause; it was her child that suffered, but the tender parent was perhaps the greatest sufferer. Whereby we are instructed, that the afflictions of our children are our own, and as immediately relate to us, as if we ourselves were afflicted. And surely the sense of this far more powerfully than any thing I can urge, will prevail upon every parent's heart to be equally earnest, equally anxious, equally importunate with God for spiritual blessings upon their children: the love of parents is perhaps, of all others, the most strong, pure and amiable: and no principle can be more efficacious to stir us up to a serious application to God. More particularly when he is pleased to lay his hand upon our children, then let us especially remember, that this affliction is for us—then let us look to this importunate Canaanite—and learn of her with humble, patient, persevering faith to apply to Christ on their behalf—and this we may be assured, that if like her we patiently persevere, if like her we cleave close to Christ in fervent prayer—though he may awhile
awhile delay his mercy, yet he will never reject our petition—but at length dismiss us with that blessed answer—Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.

You see herein the outward motive which caused this woman to apply to Christ, namely, the affliction which God was pleased to bring on her child;—and you plainly see, that as this affliction was the motive, so was it the means of those blessed fruits of faith, which in this transaction so abundantly shewed themselves—and this I could wish you to retain in mind, during the whole of our meditation on this great event: and I would hope, that this reflection may incline all your hearts to a proper use and sanctification of all those afflictions which God shall be pleased to bring on you. Murmur not that he thinks proper to afflict you, but behold and kiss his hand when so chastising,—and receive it as a mark of his love and a means of your everlasting welfare. Neither be persuaded to pass over any afflictions in a carnal, worldly manner: seek not to diversions and recreations to amuse and keep up your spirits; this is the very height of Satan's delusion to destroy all good effects, from what our beloved master intends for our eternal advantage: and spirits
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fo kept up, for a time, only sink the lower: there is no substantial comfort: nothing upon which reason and reflection can so solidly support themselves: fly not, therefore, to these delusive Sirens: who invite only to destroy: but on the contrary, when you suffer either in yourselves, in body, or estate, or good name,—or in your dearer and nearer selves, your darling and beloved offspring,—then retire into your own hearts—see there your own sins as the sufficient cause of this trouble: then fly to that almighty redeemer, whose arms of love are extended to receive every returning prodigal; then press to him with all your power; humble yourselves with all patience, and persevere in your applications with all faith and fervor, and doubt not but you will reap a sufficient harvest of comforts. For the comfort and consolation arising from a soul at rest in Christ, is peace indeed, peace passing all understanding: Religion is no gloomy, dark and melancholy thing, as it is often fancied, and suggested to be by the father of lies, but a source of true and unexhausted pleasure, a fountain of such pure and unmixed joy and cheerfulness as the world is wholly unacquainted with, and can neither give nor take away.

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But
But let me just observe to you, that tho' outward afflictions are most commonly the means, whereby we are awakened from our sleep of death and carnal security—yet this arises principally from a want of self-application and attention to the state of our own hearts. Would we, even in prosperity, and when the world runs smooth, would we but suffer ourselves truly and seriously to examine our own state, we should find more need to apply to Christ in behalf of our souls, than this mother had to apply in behalf of her daughter. Her affection and tender love for her child doubtless strikes and pleases you all: you admire the amiable concern of the parent, and are interested in her cause, while with flowing tears and bended knees she intreats the Saviour of the world to have mercy: and you think, that in such circumstances you should have pleaded, you should have wept, you should have beseeched, like her! for mercy's sake, my brethren, do not condemn yourselves—look to your poor souls, turn your eyes inward and behold their state! are they not in the case of this woman's daughter—grievously vexed with a devil? are they not slaves to the power of Satan, and very bond-servants to the dominion of darkness! are they not
not under the tyranny of sin, and grievously tormented by the indwelling of lust and iniquity? alas, this is but too truly the case with every natural son of Adam: and however unwilling you may be at present to see yourselves under this representation, nay and perhaps displeased to be so represented; the time may come, when it will please God by outward afflictions to shew you this inward misery. Rather use the present means, search your hearts with dependence upon prayer to the Spirit of God, that it would please him to reveal yourselves to you — no knowledge is more advantageous than that of ourselves. O happy are they who can see themselves in this lost undone condition—The knowledge of the disease is half the cure: and what doubt can there be of its perfection, when we know of an infallible remedy for our disease? Such is Christ, the sun of righteousness, who will arise upon all our hearts, when the night of sin is dispersed, with healing in his wide extended wings: all-powerful to save, all-willing to deliver: every soul that comes to him under the burden of sin shall be refreshed by him: every soul shall find rest that seeks to him for aid, that in true faith and deep want applies to him, with this confession in heart
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and mouth, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David, which words being the woman’s confession of faith, are the

IIid thing to be considered. Her confession must also be ours, if we desire to have our petitions granted: she pleaded no merits, she claimed his mercy, she saw him all-powerful, she confessed him the Lord. She claimed an interest in him, she confessed him the son of David. So may we all come to him, relying on his mercy, assured of his power, and interested in his merits, as our brother, as partaking of the same nature, as the head of our body. She cried, saying, have mercy on me: she calls for mercy and pity only: and neither appeals to nor alleges any merits or deserving of her own: but trusts her cause to the known compassion and beneficence of this wonderful person: she saw and knew that she was afflicted and miserable, and she imagined this sufficient to move his mercy and compassion: whom, secondly, she confesses as no less powerful than she believed him willing to relieve her. She calls him LORD, which word always answers to JEHovah in the original; and wherever in your bible you read the word Lord as applied to any
any of the persons of the godhead, you may be assured that Jehovah, the self-existent deity, is there intended: for as the father is Lord (according to our creed) so the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. Thus calling Christ Lord, she confessed his divine nature: she confessed him to be the very and true God, able to save as his many mighty works demonstrated, works and wonders such as never were performed by man:—but she doth not rest here: she presses her petition from another very interesting circumstance—Thou son of David—in which words she fully confesses him the promised and expected Messiah, of the seed and lineage of David: and the scriptures frequently use this periphrasis to express the human nature of Christ, concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, says St. Paul.*

And thus you see the excellency of this woman's confession: who came to Jesus, imploring only his free grace and mercy, acknowledging him the very God, able to save, and confessing him the true Messiah, who was born of the seed of David, according

* Rom. i. 3.
to the flesh, and took human nature solely to seek and to save that which was lost. And her faith was very practical, not dead and inactive: she did not merely believe these things, and consider them as matters at a distance: but she applies this mercy, this power, and this kindred of the flesh to her own needs and necessities,—my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil—" from which, Lord, as no human power can deliver her, as all the arts and attempts of men are fruitless, and as I can bring nothing to merit thy favour or attain thy regard: I fly to thee as the only Lord and almighty Saviour: I implore thy grace and mercy: I beseech thee to help me in consideration of that flesh, that human nature which thou hast been pleased to take upon thee for the sake of lost and suffering sinners, and of thy nearness and relation in consequence thereof to me."

Such was the confession of her faith: and if it should be asked, how this woman attained to so notable a confession, St. Mark affords us a reply, who informs us that she had before HEARD of Jesus; and it is manifest from hence, that she had heard with diligent attention, not after the manner of dissemblers with God. And her hearing, it is plain,
plain, was not without a powerful inward

teaching: for this faith which cometh by

hearing, and is the gift of God alone, was

wrought in her heart by the power of the

Holy Ghost: for she confessed Jesus to be

the Christ, the anointed Saviour, the son of

David; and the word of God assures us, that

none can do this, no man can say that Je-

sus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost *.

And what can be more amazing, than that a

Canaanite, a person, whose nation was

sunk in the deepest idolatry, worshipping

devils: nay, and whose inhabitants had their

exorcisms, and used all manner of curious

and diabolical arts to drive out these infer-

nal spirits from such as were vexed with

them—a sure method only to give them

more strength and power, for Satan can

never be divided against, nor drive out him-

self—What can be more amazing, than that

such a woman, in such a place and situation,

should relinquish and forego the aid of all

her country's Gods and fly to this Jesus, so

despised and mocked as he was of his own

countrymen,—and should make so excellent

and just a confession of faith before him!—

The Jews reject him, the wretched Gen-

* 1. Cor. xii. 3.

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Tiles gladly receive him: the Pharisee, the wise, the disputers of this world are offended at his doctrines; a poor, miserable woman, even so low in estimation as to be called a dog, nobly confesses him, and appeals to the greatness of his mercy and power! These are the wonderful things of God: this is the marvellous way of Christ, whose cross hath ever been accounted foolishness by the Greek and the learned, while he hath chosen the weak and despised things of the world to confound the strong and the wise *. So true are his own words, for judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not, might see, and that they which see might be made blind †.

From this woman's example, we are shewn where to apply for relief when adversities and troubles of any kind come upon us: and in what manner we are to apply: we are with her to leave and forego all applications to wicked and impious means, and a dependance upon the aid and assistance of man, upon the arm of flesh, without a prior application to and full reliance upon God is wicked and impious; for the help

* 1 Cor. i. 27.
† John ix. 39.
that is done upon earth, God doth it himself: he is exceeding jealous of his honour, which he declares he will not give to another. Whenever, therefore, we are oppressed with calamities of any kind, and seek not to the great disposer of all events as the fountain of relief, using all others as means only under his divine direction, we offend him highly, we rob him of the honour due to him, and "provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death."

And yet, my brethren, though thus wicked and dangerous, how common is such a dependance, upon worldly aid, while God is forgotten; and we seem to exclude the almighty governor from the rule and direction of his own creatures, which yet he himself declares to be exact and particular even to the numbering of our hairs! — How commonly do we hear men, when raised up from a bed of sickness, extol the cure performed by the physician—as if the physician were a God to kill and to make alive.* How commonly do we hear men, when rescued from any impending calamity, and delivered from any evil, extol their own foresight, or such an accident, or impute it

* Deut. xxxii. 19.
all to lucky hits and a fortunate chance *?
And as in the delivery from evils, so is it also for the most part in the reception of them: we neither receive them as sent by God for our admonition, nor acknowledge and fly to him as the deliverer from them. The conduct is dangerous, it is ungrateful, and it is impious.—It is dangerous, because hereby you provoke God who alone can assist: it is ungrateful, because all the good that is done upon earth, he doth it himself, of him, and to him and through him are all things: it is impious, because you rob him of his honour, and give that to the creature which is due only to the creator, who is God blessed over all for ever and ever †. And for these reasons, I trust, you will follow this woman's example, and whenever any calamity, temporal or spiritual, shall befall you, seek to no aid, and fly to no assistance, but in a dependance, and due subordination to him, who is the Lord of the whole earth, the saviour of all that come to him, and who abounds in mercy to all who will seek for it at his gracious hands.

* For a glaring proof of this the reader is referred to Anson's Voyage, &c. in which whole narrative providence is remarkably forgot; while luck, chance, and fortune steered the vessel round the world, filled it with riches, and brought it safe home again.
† Rom. i. 25.
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You have in the whole history of the Jews continued proofs of the certain success of a full dependance upon God, both as to states and individuals: it is no where seen in more lively colours, than in the history of king Asa, as recorded particularly in the xivth, xvth, and xvith of the 2d of Chronicles; which monarch, while he depended upon the Lord of hosts, was always successful, but soon as he sought aid of the Syrians and neglected or distrusted the almighty arm of God, then all his affairs proved unfortunate. God sent one of his prophets to him, with this remarkable message, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God; therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubins an huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen, yet because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thy hands? For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him. Herein thou hast done foolishly, therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. It is moreover added concerning this prince, that being exceedingly diseased, he sought not to the Lord, but to the phy-
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Physicians: and so found no help.—How much should this example teach us the folly and weakness of any reliance on the arm of flesh; the necessity and happiness of placing our full trust upon this Lord, who is strong in the behalf of them whose hearts are perfect towards him?

The wisdom as well as the blessedness of so doing, of applying to this Lord in full faith, and depending upon him with full confidence, you see, you see in the manner, wherein this woman of Canaan applied. She came confessing him the Lord, the Jehovah, the true almighty God, able to save to the uttermost: so must we apply to him; and what a strong hold have we in the defence and protection of an almighty Saviour? whom need we fear, if such a God be on our side? God is my help, the God who made heaven and earth, faith David*: and so may every christian say, who will come in faith and cleave to this faithful and mighty Lord: and must not our faith needs be strong and powerful, when we consider, that the arm is exerted for our defence and protection, which decked the heavens with their glories, and poised the earth as upon a balance?

* Psalm cxxi. 2.
It would almost stagger one to believe this, did we not see as well, in this woman's confession as through the whole gospel, this sure foundation of acceptance, that he is not only the Lord, but also the son of David. He is not ashamed to call us brethren: he hath taken our nature upon him; we are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and whoever hated his own flesh? So that you see what an interest you have in this sovereign Jehovah, who is become as one of us, who hath taken our nature, suffered all its infirmities, and upon the knowledge and feeling of them is full of pity and compassion, and ready to receive us, when like this woman we come imploring his free grace and favour, and desiring to share of that mercy from an almighty Saviour, to which our kindred and relation, through his unspeakable love, intitles us.

No other confession of faith can profit us: "whosoever would come to Christ to purpose, (says bishop Hall) must come in the right style, apprehending a true God and a true man: either of these severed from the other makes Christ an idol, and our prayers, fin." For if we do not apply to

* Eph. v. 29.
our Saviour as God, almighty and all-sufficient to save, what hope can we have, our help depends solely on his omnipotence; nay and thus we are worshipping him, who is no God, and so committing idolatry. And if we do not apply to him as man, as suffering in our nature, and as our head, whence have we, miserable sinners, any right to expect favour, whence can we have any interest in this great and just God? and if, lastly, we presume upon our own merits, and come with a Lord, I thank thee, as the Pharisee did, we shall go away as we came, no whit justified, nay, and condemned rather than accepted.

Come, therefore, to Christ, as this woman came: acknowledge his divine ability to save: call him your Lord and your God. Claim your interest in him, in that he took our flesh, and died to redeem us from death. Cast yourselves at his feet with deep humility and self-abasement; plead no merits, works, or deservings of your own; pluck the very suggestion of it from your hearts: depend, wholly depend upon his mercy and power: and be assured, though he may try you awhile, as he did this woman, if you persevere and cleave close to him, he will at length answer your petition, and bless
bles the request of your lips. O could you but be persuaded to contemplate and consider him as all-powerful to save, as all-willing to relieve, could you but see the vanity and weakness of all human aid, then would you fly to this almighty Saviour, this wonderful, this compassionate God-man, and then would you receive true comfort and consolation to your souls! — For a dependance upon him is better than the world; and whosoever truly rely upon him shall from his own infallible promise never want any manner of thing that is good *, and convenient for them! O may his divine Spirit open all your hearts to a due sense of his infinite love and pity, and direct you to this prevailing intercessor; whenever the sorrows and distresses of the world shall compel you to seek for relief; with him you can never fail to find all, yea far more than all you want or desire.

But you must not expect at all times a speedy and sudden deliverance; God trieth us by various means, often denies our requests for our real advantage, and often delays his mercy to humble us in our own, and to extol and magnify us in his sight. This we

* Psalm xxxiv. 10.
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are taught from the woman's case before us, who was rejected, as it seemed, for a while, and whose faith had many temptations to encounter, many obstacles to breakthrough: which leads me to the

IIId thing proposed, namely, the obstacles to her faith, particularly observable in our Lord's silence, in his answer to the disciples, and in his answer to her.—But these must be treated of in the next discourse.
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PART II.

Matt. xv. 28.

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

ONE ever came to Christ, heavy-burdened and oppressed, and were rejected by him: he came to call all such to him: he was influenced solely by almighty love to such when he declared himself ready to do his Father's will, and to die upon the cross a ransom for the sins of the whole world. The story under our present consideration is the only one through the scriptures, that

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seems to shew any backwardness in our Lord to hear the petitions of them that come to him; and yet when we look to the conclusion and behold the event, what a comfortable prospect must it afford every faithful soul to observe, that our petitions are only refused awhile, to increase our humility, to strengthen our faith, and to render our prayer and perseverance more acceptable to God, more advantageous to ourselves. This will be sufficiently manifest upon a farther survey of this woman's perseverance and victory, the great obstacles to whose faith is the

IIId thing in order, now to be considered. As I treat of this history solely in its literal sense, and with a view to the practical improvement to be made from thence, it is necessary only just to hint its figurative reference to the calling of the Gentiles, and to remark, that most of the ancient writers suppose, that by this woman of Canaan is mystically represented the church, gathered from the Gentiles to the faith of Christ; who came to him with greater fervency of faith, and cleaved to him with greater and more humble confession of their own vileness, than ever the Jews themselves did. And the
the change is wonderful, that the Gentiles, who once were esteemed as dogs, are now the children; while the Jews, the former children, are lower than ever the Gentiles were. Moreover Christ, in his answer to the disciples and to the woman, seems to speak with all the prejudice of a Jew, as if to take off every objection to his reception of the Gentiles, when, like this woman's, their faith should be found great and prevailing.

Hers, as we have seen, was great and prevailing: and nothing, one would have imagined, was wanting to her reception: she came burdened and oppressed; a heavy evil was upon her: and our Lord had in-

* Remigius upon Matthew xv. observes—In this woman, we have an example of baptizing children; for she faith not, help my daughter, but help me, or have mercy on me: the sins of the children being forgiven through the faith of their parents when they are little ones. Hence hath grown the custom in the church, that the faithful promise for their children unto God, when they, by reason of their age, cannot promise for themselves. Allegorically, this woman figureth out the church of the Gentiles: for as Christ left the Scribes and Pharisees, and went unto Tyre and Sidon, so leaving the Jews, he went unto the Gentiles. And as she came out of her borders, so the Gentiles came out of their old errors and sins unto the christian faith. The children are the patriarchs and prophets, the table is the holy scriptures, and the crumbs are the least precepts, &c.—See the author.
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vited all such to come to him, nay and had promised them rest. She fell down at his feet and worshipped him, so by her actions confirming her faith, and proving the liveliness and activity of it: and, as you have seen in the former sermon, made the most proper and only available confession before him: for it is not enough, that with the heart we believe, the mouth must also make confession unto salvation *. And yet, for all these, he answered her not a word! Must not the flesh have recoiled here? which of us should not have been affected with a silence so severe, and doubtless so unexpected? —It must have been construed, one would have thought, into an absolute denial, and have caused the troubled and displeased petitioner to withdraw from his presence, of whose power and mercy she had conceived such exalted notions, but from whom she could experience neither. — For different was her conduct: she ceased not her application, she continued to pray and not to faint †.

This particular in her conduct should recommend that important lesson to us in every part of life: For what christian is there,

* Rom. x. 10.
† Luke xviii. 1.
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who hath not in some degree experienced that same impatience of the flesh, that little murmuring and dissatisfaction, which prayers, (as it should seem to our narrow view) unheard by our Lord, occasion? We are apt to repine and cry, How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and hath he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure †?—If such thoughts arise in our hearts, let us be careful to correct and check them, as the Psalmist did, and to say in confession of our sinfulness, This is mine infirmity: Let us then turn our eyes to this poor woman, and learn from her the great blessings of persevering prayer: while we rely absolutely upon Christ, though he seem to disregard us, continuing to knock and to importune till the gate be opened, resolving if we perish, to perish at his feet, and determined to cease not our prayer till he rise up and help us, remembering that he himself delivered a parable for this very purpose, that men ought always to pray and not to faint, to continue constant in the means, to persevere, and the issue will be advantageous to them, as to this

† Psalm xiii, 1. and lxxvii. 9:
woman.—For though Christ was silent, and answered her not a word, you see she was nothing moved thereby, but still CRIED after him, still sent forth that prevailing, effectually-servent petition, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David* — insomuch that the very disciples seemed to be more affected than even their compassionate master, who professed it his business, and the great purpose of his coming into the world to seek and to save that which was lost.—They were soon silenced: he was sent, he told them, only unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And they who conceived the glories and blessings of the Messiah peculiarly confined to their own nation, had not one word to add to this answer of their Lord's, satisfactory enough to them.—

Their conduct, however, presents us with an useful lesson of love to our fellow-creatures, whose necessities we are hereby taught to commiserate, and for whom we are here directed to apply in prayer unto God, when we behold him labouring in distress; but more especially to forward their good designs, when we perceive them, as it were, crying after Christ, and earnestly desirous to obtain his salvation: we cannot be too importunate with our Lord for such; nor
nor too industriously imitate the fervour of this woman's prayer.

For it is remarkable, that she cried after our Lord—she crieth after us, said the disciples: "prayer is as an arrow: if it be drawn up but a little, it goes not far: but if it be pulled up to the head, it flies strongly and pierces deep: if it be but dripped forth of careless lips, it falls down at our feet: the strength of our ejaculation sends it up to heaven, and fetches down a blessing. The child escapes many a stripe for his loud crying, and the very unjust judge cannot endure the widow's clamor and importunity. Heartless motions do but teach us to deny: fervent suits offer violence both to earth and heaven. Importunity and faith are the very soul of prayer: without which nothing can be expected from our lip-service: Jesus could not do many mighty works amongst his own countrymen, because of their unbelief: if we can find the faith, he will give the blessing. And faith this woman wanted not; neither did she want perseverance and importunity: hers was no lip-service, no heartless prayer: and in truth, when we see and feel our wants, there is no great fear, that we shall pray in a dead, lifeless manner, with hearts far from
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from God, and eyes roving upon every object, as we perceive too commonly the case, not in this only, but in all congregations.

The woman of Canaan preaches a very different lesson to us: she prayed with fervour: she was not easily to be denied: tho' the disciples had no more to urge in her behalf, and ceased their intercession, yet spite of this she approached, she fell down and worshipped him, she applied in a pathetic manner to him, "Lord, help me. Thou sayest thou art sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; Lord, I know not, I do not enter into their privileges, I dwell not upon those whom thou hast chosen, but one thing I know, that I am a poor lost sheep, if not of that house, yet am I lost, a miserable afflicted sinner, and thou camest to seek and to save such, and till thou art pleased to help me, I will not, I cannot, O pity my distress—I cannot, O Lord, depart." Such was her faith; and so must we cleave to his universal promises, and never be terrified at any objections, which may induce us to apprehend that we are not predestinated, that we are not of the elect of God. We have nothing to do with, nor can ever arrive at, any knowledge of
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of God's absolute and particular decrees: they are in his own secret breast lock'd up from the scrutiny of mortals: certain it is salvation is promised to all lost sinners, who with faith and repentance come to Jesus the almighty Saviour; and when we find ourselves lost, and so come to him, heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than ever we can be rejected of him, for whatsoever cometh to me, faith this faithful promising Redeemer, I will in NO WISE cast out.* You see how fully Christ declared to this woman, that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: and yet she, tho' a miserable gentile, was nothing affected hereby, but proclaim'd herself still an object in need, and wanting his aid, and as such she would not cease importuning him. Christ came to die for sinners, for all the lost sheep of the whole world; his personal mission and ministry was indeed confin'd to the Jews, but the benefits of his death and passion extend to ALL: and there is nothing can gain us a certain pardon at his hands, but evangelical repentance, which necessarily implies a knowledge that we are lost, and a sincere faith in Christ, who will save

* John vi. 37.

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such as to come to him. Let nothing therefore terrify you in your approaches to Christ, let nothing keep you from him: let nothing cause you to cease your importunity, when once you see yourself a sinner, and lost without the mercy of this Redeemer. Cry to him, "Lord, I know that I am a sinner, and that I want an almighty Saviour, and I know that thou camest into the world to save sinners, and to call such to repentance. I come therefore a poor lost undone sinner unto thee, I will cleave unto thee, I will not depart from thee till thou shalt bless me and answer my petitions—Lord, help me." Come but thus to Christ, and disregard every objection, throw all scruples aside; come but thus in a full sense of your lost estate, and his power and willingness to save—and be assured, in his good time, he will hear—tho' he may a while refuse; nay and suggest arguments of discouragement to try and exercise your faith, as we learn from this woman,—To whom upon her importunity he replied.—It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.—The Jews are the children, to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises: whose
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whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever, amen. * But the gentiles were then in a state of rejection—separate from the covenant, not having the hope of the promises, and without God in the world †. And not only called dogs but held and esteem'd in the lowest and most abject contempt with the Jews: Christ therefore in these words speaks agreeably to the Jewish prejudices to this most abject gentile; this woman of Canaan, a nation, as you know, accursed of God: and yet to magnify his mercy and to shew us, that the most abject sinners who will come to him shall find grace and favour, he condescended to bless and relieve this woman of Canaan: in figure, as was just now hinted, of his grace and favour in receiving the gentiles, and making them partakers of the children: who, amazing providence! are now become as dogs, yea more abject in the eyes of God and men, than ever we gentiles were in their eyes, whilst we abject gentiles are received into favour and grafted into their olive! Oh, let us not be high-minded but fear;

* Rom. ix. 4, 5.
† Eph. ii. 12.
let us duly prize these great privileges, and not make the unthankful use we do of them, lest we also be broken off thro' unbelief.‡

Our Saviour's words were, as one would have imagined, perfectly discouraging: *It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.* "You make, O woman, an improper and an unjust request. That living bread, which I brought from heaven, which *I myself am*, and of which I am the dispenser, is due to the Jews. For they are the *elder-born* of God. They are his children. You and all the gentiles are dogs and unworthy to be esteem'd and reckon'd of God's family, abominable by means of your idolatry, your vile desertion of the great creator, and those filthy lusts which are the consequence of your fatal apostacy. Cease therefore thy petitions, nor ask of me, what it were wrong to take from the children."—

Her humility and perseverance here were amazing — and her answer demonstrative as of the most humble spirit — so of the firmest faith — *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters table.* I acknowledge, *Lord*, that I am that

‡ Rom. xi. 20.
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base and unworthy creature, more unworthy than any comparison with the vilest animal can make me: I envy not the Jews their privileges, nor esteem myself worthy to partake of that fulness of blessings which they enjoy — yet one crumb from the feast cannot harm them; and that will suffice me, one word of love and mercy from thee, one kind word for my child: oh let her have but that crumb out of the many abundant and plenteous blessings, which thou dispensest to the children of Israel. I ask but for what they would reject — I petition only for what they would despise — It can be no diminution to thy power to speak the word, and my daughter shall be deliver'd: It can be no detriment to them for a poor afflicted gentile to be deliver'd from the power of an evil spirit. Thus she pleaded, and thus she prevailed: thus her faith was perfected, and by Christ himself proclaim'd great and efficacious — O woman, great is thy faith, &c.

Hence we are further taught the necessity of perseverance in prayer, tho' temptations and suggestions of our own unworthiness arise against us, and would persuade us to neglect our approaches to Christ. Often do christians hear it whisper'd in their heart. — What
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What an unworthy wretch art thou for whom indeed Christ hath died, for whom he hath done so many wonders, and on whom he hath conferr'd so many blessings, and yet how hast thou return'd them — how hast thou behav'd thyself under the knowledge of his light and truth! Like the dog hast thou return'd to his vomit, and as a fow to her wallowing in the mire, and canst thou expect, that he will have mercy on such a sinful, ungrateful, and unworthy wretch — cease to trouble this blessed master — do not put up thy unhallow'd petitions to him — for how canst thou think he will hear thee? — When such temptations and suggestions arise in your hearts, then look to this woman's example — with her acknowledge the whole, and with her send from hence an argument of favour — *Truth, Lord, I am all unworthiness, a sinner of the vilest and most ungrateful sort; I have sinned against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy child, or to partake of thy grace: yet shew some mercy upon me, make me, O blessed Jesus, as an hired servant, give me the least crumb of thy favour; give me, O Lord, the least portion of thy regard—if I may not sit at thy table with Abraham,*
with Isaac and with Jacob, and with the rest of thy chosen and faithful servants, yet with this woman of Canaan, let me eat of the crumbs which fall from their table. Oh let me be *but a door-keeper*, give me the meanest office, so long as thou dost not shut me out of thy heavenly kingdom." Whoever with such humility and faith shall persevere and depend upon Christ, like this woman, their faith will be crown'd, and like her they will triumph over every impediment and every temptation: and like hers their faith will be commended: which is the

IVth Thing observable in this history: *O woman, great is thy faith.*

Thus she gain'd the victory by the strength and greatness of her faith: and thus was she applauded by the judge of hearts.

*O woman,* there seems no small emphasis in these words — men may stand and reason with men, but for a poor weak, despised woman thus to persevere, and thus to continue importunate, was something great and remarkable indeed. *Great is thy faith,* as thou hast shewn as well by thy right confession of me, as by thy close and confident application of thyself to me. And as I have enlarged upon that confession
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The faithfulness of hers, and upon her perseverance in prayer and humility, you cannot but from thence clearly see the greatness of her faith, and of consequence it is less necessary for me to dwell largely upon this head.—There are two parts necessary to constitute a right and saving faith, namely, a knowledge and assent duly instructed and informed, and a confident application of the things believed to our own souls. Both of these were eminent in this woman: she had indeed a knowledge very properly informed and instructed: she believed in Christ as the Lord and God, as the seed of David, and the promised Messiah, as the merciful and compassionate Jesus, who came to save and was able to deliver his people from sin and the bondage of Satan—But merely to have known this, would have been very unprofitable to her—This is but the smallest part of faith, tho' absolutely necessary, since without this knowledge we cannot have the second, namely, a confident application of ourselves to this throne of grace, this Lord and Saviour able and willing to save all that come unto God by him.—And you see in how eminent a manner, she, through God's spirit,
Spirit, was possessed of this latter part: you see nothing could deter or move her from her purpose—she came to Christ, she applied this power and mercy of his to herself, and she would not be rejected.—Be careful therefore that, like this woman, your faith is built upon true and sound knowledge.—Take heed that your judgment be rightly informed concerning the power, the truth and the mercy of him, by whom alone we can come to God; but rest not on any account in this dead or historical faith—consider that these things immediately belong to your own souls—that Christ's mercy is for you, that his power is for you, that his merits are yours, and his intercession at the right hand of the Father for you. Oh how many do we see, who have no doubt at all of these things, who read and understand the scriptures, who confess that Jesus is the Christ to the glory of God the Father with their lips, and yet in their lives deny him! who ignorant of their lost and sinful estate never in true sincerity apply to him as this woman did—Have mercy on me, O Lord, my soul is grievously vexed with a devil! and yet even these will talk loudly against faith without works, and religion without holiness! in truth faith without works and religion without holiness, is the faith
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faith and religion of devils only! they believe and tremble *. But true faith in Christ must and will operate upon every heart, as it did on this woman's—making the heart earnest in prayer to God, anxious for the welfare of them who belong to us, humble and patient in the midst of all reproof, yea persevering in every good way with holy courage and undaunted resolution: for that is most certainly no true faith which doth not purify the heart from all uncleanness: making us loath sin worse than the grave, and striving to increase in every good word and work. 'Tis the immediate and sure effect of faith, true faith in Christ, to make us better in every station and relation of life, to make us better fathers and children, better husbands and wives, better masters and servants—and let men lay the blame, where they please, it is not faith, but infidelity; it is not the love of Christ, but the contempt of him, and it is not the preaching his doctrines, but the refusing to hear and obey them, which causes such an overflowing of iniquity amongst us, which causes such an inundation of vice and profaneness of every kind, and which like a deluge

* James ii. 19.
must cover our land, so long as men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and so long as sin and the world triumph in full power, and the cross of Christ is a badge of reproach and infamy! how long, Lord Jesus! oh open thine eye of mercy upon this land, and give to each of thy creatures the faith of this Canaanitish woman, that so they may like her apply to thee, and like her receive the full fruits and effects of an holy, true, and lively faith—which is the

Vth and last thing to which I propos'd to speak, Be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Such was the issue of this woman's faith; and thus her mourning was turned into joy, and thus the seeming refusals of Christ were made productive of greater happiness and glory to her. He gives her more than she ask'd—he does not only say, Go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy child, but be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And from that very hour the devil departed, the mother receiv'd her child in her right mind and senses, and both join'd together in magnifying the

† 2 Tim. iii. 4.
love and mercy of this divine Lord even unto their lives end.

Thus will God give unto us exceedingly abundant above all that we are able to ask or think— if we can but open the hand of faith and extend it to receive his bounties. He is always ready and disposed to give---the reason why we receive not more of his favours, is wholly because we are not disposed to receive them— we continue not in prayer and in faith—we do not cast all our care upon him---we go down to Egypt for strength, and forget that the Lord of hosts is on our side—Could we be persuaded of the truth of his promises in scripture, we should readily cast our care upon him, and seeking first the kingdom of God, should never doubt of any worldly things—See how he blessed Solomon; when he fought wisdom only, all things beside were added in profusion—do but thou, O christian, cleave to God in earnest persevering prayer, forsake all other helps, and depend upon the Lord of hosts—and be assured, it will be unto thee even as thou wilt—and hence let us learn in no state of body or mind to despair---but to press forward with importunity, and to lay our cause before God, seems the case never so
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so desperate. He can assist, if we can believe, and he will assist, if we continue to ask, and he sees it necessary for us—but let us on no account lose our hold or forfeit our confidence—tho' he be silent, tho' he reject us, tho' he seem to despise and utterly to forsake and refuse us, still let us cry to him, and our earnest cries will certainly at length open the doors of heaven.

To sum up the whole—-from this woman let us learn to bless God for afflictions, and to make the right and intended use of them—-let parents learn the tender and near concern due to their children's spiritual welfare, and be taught to consider their case and necessities even the same as their own. All sin is an impure spirit, which possesses the sinner: 'tis at the feet of Jesus we must seek a remedy.—Would to God that every sinner had for his soul the same zeal and earnestness this woman had for the deliverance of her daughter: the same fidelity not to let slip the least occasion God offers, the same humility, which casts her down at the feet of the sovereign physician! few mothers are like her. The greatest part instead of shutting out the devil of vanity, of impurity, of the love of the world, from the hearts of their daughters, or endea-
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Vouring to cast them out, open them to him in a thousand ways.—Oh foolish and unwise! how few prize the gifts of the Spirit in a child equally to the gifts of the world!—But for these who do so, for these who with this woman constantly pray to Christ for their children, and make their case their own—have mercy on ME, O Lord—what comfort must it be to them, particularly to a christian mother, to whose prayers God grants at last the salvation of a son or daughter possessed with the spirit of the world! but how few are there who beg this favour! * and yet how great encouragement have all, who will request it! what St. Ambrose used to say of St. Austin, whose mother Monica never ceased her prayers and tears for him, may be applied to the comfort of all parents equally solicitous for their children's eternal welfare—It is impossible for a son of so many prayers and tears to perish.—And as parents may thus learn from hence the near concern requir'd of them for their children's salvation—so should we all learn more especially the near concern of our own souls, enslav'd to sin and Satan and in danger of everlasting de-

* See Retsynelle on Mark
On the faithful Canaanite.

striuction---and aroused hereby, let us learn from this woman where to fly for relief, even to Jesus, the God and Saviour of mankind---whom let us approach, even as the approach'd, confessing him the merciful God, who took human nature to rescue us from death, and who as he hath power to save from hell, and bless with everlasting life, so hath he power to cast both body and soul into hell, and to shut the door of bliss for ever against us---hence let us learn the necessity of immediate application to Christ, whom to know otherwise than as the all-sufficient redeemer of our souls, will be but of little avail: and in our applications let us learn from hence the efficacy and use of true prayer and perseverance, let us press on in spite of every impediment, and with patience and humility wait the good pleasure of our Lord---and if we so seek; if we so apply, if we so continue in prayer and watching and faith we shall certainly experience his good pleasure; it will be to us, according to our prayer, he will hear and bless us---and we shall enjoy in the peace of his love and favour bliss unspeakable, peace passing all understanding! but let us, my brethren, be abundantly careful to manifest the work of God in our lives:
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the devil will ever hate those most who are escap'd from his snare, and delivered from his power: and therefore he will never cease every opportunity to blacken and molest them by some of his infernal agents and ministers: if no real cause of blame can be found in their life, he will find and invent something to condemn in you—you must not expect to fail clear: if he cannot convict you of any known sin, he will be sure to insinuate a thousand evils—and if that succeeds not—he will load you with infamy, brand you with the name of madman and enthusiast—and endeavour to render you odious and hateful in the sight of men—But, brethren, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, that is to try you, as tho' some strange thing happen'd unto you*, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are made partakers of Christ's sufferings—that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a mur-

* 1 Peter iv. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.
derer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other mens matters — [then alas your sufferings will be but justly your due] — but if any man suffer as a christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

You therefore, my beloved brethren, who have taken up the cross of Christ, and resolve to follow your master, tho' you suffer as a fool or madman for this, be particularly careful, that your lives and conduct speak neither madness nor folly, but the words and works of sobriety and truth: labour to shew yourselves patterns unto all men,—let your light shine before them, that so seeing your holy conversation others may be won, and your Father in heaven glorified!

And O Father of mercies, and God of all love, give thy blessing unto this our feeble endeavour, and give thy Spirit to all who are desirous of life eternal! grant that we may all unite in one heart and one soul to love and serve thee our only king and God — grant that we may, from the example of this woman, bring into practice all those lessons which are herein taught, that we may be strong in faith, persevering in prayer, and eminent in gratitude for thy bounty and mercy. Oh humble every sinner
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sinner into a due sense of his miserable and lost estate, bring him home to thy blessed son, and so exalt our Lord and Saviour and perfect all thy people in holiness and godliness of living, that we may wait with patience and cheerfulness for that hour, when we shall be dissolved, and stand before thy aweful judgment-seat.

Grant this, O Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, &c.
St. Matthew xiv. 19, 20, 21.

And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes; and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

And they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained; twelve baskets full.

And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

HIS is the only miracle of our Lord's, which is recorded by all the four evangelists, a sufficient proof of its importance; the sense our church hath of it, is plainly seen by her appointing it a reading three times
times in the annual course of the gospels; and the opinion which the people who saw it, had of its greatness, is abundantly manifest by the resolution which they formed consequent upon it, to come and take him by force and make him a king. Tho' they mistook the nature of their Messiah's kingdom, their minds being carnal and not spiritual, yet their conclusion was very just—then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that PROPHET, that should come into the world, that great prophet, of whom Moses foretold, saying, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken: * and of whose coming, there was now, at the time of Jesus appearing, an universal and remarkable expectation throughout the east; heathen writers bearing testimony, that it was a general persuasion founded on the writings of the prophets, that a person should arise from the east, whose sceptre should command the whole world. He did indeed arise according to those prophecies a king over all, but his kingdom was not, as they fondly desired, of this world.—He had already up-

* Deut. xviii. 15.
on many occasions prov'd himself the great high-priest of their profession, and the divine king, whom they were bound to obey, by taking all their infirmities, and by commanding by his sovereign word winds and storms, diseases and devils to obey him. Here he fully declares himself the great prophet and teacher of Israel, the supplier of spiritual nourishment, the giver of the bread of life to the soul: him, upon whom we must continually depend, from whom all increase cometh, who openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.

There are no difficulties which attend the letter of this miracle, as recorded by the several evangelists: all there is plain and very intelligible: wherefore I shall not detain you with any remarks thereupon, but hasten to those improvements, which may be made from it, considering such circumstances as occur in the several narratives under these three heads.

Ist. The preparatives to the miracle.

IIdly. The miracle itself.

IIIIdly. The consequences of it, or what followed after it was wrought. &c.

Ist. Then
Ist. Then to speak of the preparatives to the miracle.

Such numbers attended our Lord and his disciples in their public ministr y, that they had no leisure so much as to eat: wherefore Jesus withdrew privately with them into a desert place, that by retirement, meditation, and prayer they might be refreshed and recruited for their spiritual labours, and at the same time to teach us the necessity of the like privacy, retirement, and devotion. But the multitude attended so closely, that their departure was quickly known, and great quantities of people followed after, and ran afoot to the place, whereto they supposed Jesus and his disciples destined: struck with the greatness of the miracles, which they had seen him perform on those that were sick, and anxious to hear more instruction from the mouth of so divine a teacher. When Jesus saw them he was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; much people without a pastor, a large harvest without labourers: motive sufficient for compassion! It was sad to think of all this multitude being scatter'd abroad, poor defenceless sheep, without a guide,
guide, without a guardian; it was sad to think of all these sheep falling into the jaws of the infernal wolf: And what should affect the heart of a faithful pastor so much, as a large multitude, as many sheep, without a shepherd? no wonder the blessed Jesus that good shepherd who came to lay down his life for the sheep *, was mov'd with pity towards them: that same pity which brought him from heaven for the sake of his lost and wandering sheep in the desert, now brought him to this large number of people who received him gladly, while seated on a mountain with all his disciples around him, he began to teach them many things, and to speak unto them of the kingdom of God: and to manifest the power of his divine word, he healed all them that were present and in need of healing: Giving all his future ministers and teachers an example,

1. How ready they should be upon every convenient occasion to promote the great business of the gospel, even tho' it should deprive them of their necessary and desir'd retirement.

2. With how sincere affection they should do it, mov'd with the most tender

* John x. 11.
On the Loaves and Fishes.

Compassion to the souls of men, considering them as the precious sheep, the redeemed flock of the great shepherd of souls:

And,

3. In what manner they should do it, speaking to them of the kingdom of God, and not of vain speculations and idle questions, which engender strife, not of moral distinctions, and thin-spun metaphysic subtleties beyond the reach of the most refined comprehension, but of such things as minister grace to the edifying of the hearers, of such things as every man living is nearly interested in, of the kingdom of God, and the means of coming thither, of faith and repentance, obedience and holiness, of life, of death and judgment. They that speak of these interesting subjects, that speak of them as matters of near importance, and

* Dr. Edwards in his preacher observes, that Christ's compassion is a pattern for preachers: they must take particular care to convince their hearers of their love to their souls, and let all their actions as well as their preaching testify this; and if a minister can once gain this point, there is not much reason to doubt his success. The reader is refer'd to the work, page 165, a work, which cannot fail of being highly useful to all young divines especially, which tho' not to be recommended without some limitation is, bating two or three passages, in my poor judgment at least wholly unexceptionable, and cannot fail of producing good effects, if read with a view to improvement.
On the Loaves and Fishes. 257

that speak of them as the oracles of God, will always have hearers, and attentive ones too; and tho' the gift of miracles is ceased, whereby their word may be confirmed, yet they are bound, in earnest prayer, to commend themselves and their audience to God, and at the same time to confirm their doctrine by the exemplary holiness, regularity, and strictness of their own lives; always remembering that they should not be as other men, but shining examples to all, and patterns to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers.* They that do thus lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life †.

Our Lord (wholly intent on teaching and healing, the people on hearing and observing) did not perceive that the day began to wear away apace, and was already far spent: wherefore the twelve, too anxious and like Martha too much troubled about worldly things, thought fit to advise him hereof; — as if the God of wisdom wanted any directions from them — and coming to him they inform him, that as

* Acts xx. 28. † 1 Tim. vi. 12.
the day was now far advanced, it being evening, and as the place was a solitary desert, where neither food nor lodging were to be had, it would be convenient to dismiss the people, that they might go into the towns and villages round about, to get lodgings and food, seeing they had nothing with them to eat. Jesus replied to them, but in particular to Philip, who was acquainted in that country, that he might prove him, as well as the rest of the disciples,—(for he himself knew, and was determined what to do) "Whence shall we buy bread, that all these may eat and be satisfied?" Philip, struck at the seeming impossibility of such a supply from that small sum of money, which he knew to be their all, and not duly considering the extent of his Lord's power, answered, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." As much as to say, "this, our whole stock of two hundred denarii or pence, (which amounts to about six pounds, five shillings of our money) will go but a very little way towards providing for this great people: it will scarce afford every man a very little bit, so far from satisfying them."—Our Lord might have well put the same question to
to Philip here, that he did upon another occasion, *Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip?* Hast thou seen so many of my miracles, and yet not known that I am possessed of all power in heaven and earth to do whatsoever I will? — But he only adds, *Give ye them to eat:* “Be what you say as it will, I will shew you that there is no need to dismiss this people unfed; *I will that you supply their necessities, and give them to eat.*” — The twelve not yet awakened to the design of their master, take up Philip’s objection, yet shew themselves willing, if he shall command, to expend their whole stock— “*Shall we go, say they, and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, that they may eat?*” — That his strength might be made perfect in weakness, he would not admit of any such supply, but faith unto them, “*How many loaves have you at present; how much provision is there to be found amongst this multitude: go and see?*” Andrew returning informed him, that amongst all the people there was only one lad, who had five coarse barley-loaves and two fishes; a quantity so inconsiderable that it scarcely

*John xiv. 9.*
desired notice: *What are they, said he, amongst so many?* five loaves and two fishes for five thousand men, and possibly as many women and children!—*Jesus* ordered them however to be brought unto him, and immediately commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, of which there was plenty in the place, directing his disciples at the same time to place them in a regular order, by hundreds and fiftys in a company, each company (as the original imports) making a long square and containing a hundred in rank, and fifty in file, that thus the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people better and more regularly served. The disciples therefore obeyed his directions, the people sat down as they were ordered, and the expectation of all was sharpened into eager surprize, whereto these wonders and this uncommon preparation might tend; while the great master of the banquet stood ready to supply the necessities of all his guests: a banquet where, though they had no canopy but the azure sky, no table but the verdant earth; where they had only coarse barley-bread and dried fishes to eat, only clear water from the crystal river to drink; yet was there more real grandeur displayed by the divine master of it, than by
by the gorgeous Abafuerus in that royal feast which was intended to show the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty; when the vessels and the beds were of gold and of silver, upon a pavement of porphyry, marble and alabaster.*

Such were the preparatives to this great miracle: upon which we may observe,

1. How much the circumstances of the place and time, serve to magnify its greatness. The place was a desert, where there was no possibility of procuring any sustenance: had he done this mighty work in any of the towns or villages round about, the Pharisees of those days and the infidels of ours might have objected, that he had received secretly some supplies; this was impossible in the present case. The time was the evening: the people had been all the day fasting, and so of consequence were ready for their meal: had it been done in a morning, they might have said, either that the people had been just refreshed, or were not hungry: and so eating nothing, there was no great miracle. Objections of this sort the time and place wholly removed, and

* Esther i. 4, 5, 6.
this serves to shew us the wisdom of our Lord in so ordering his divine acts: at the same time that it admonishes us, to be as wise and prudent as to the choice of place and time in all our actions, as well of a moral as of a spiritual nature. And seeing he deferred their help till evening, we may learn hence never to despair of his assisting goodness, which he frequently withholds to the last, till the evening, to try and to prove us: our time of extremity and greatest need is generally his time of mercy. **Hope therefore in the Lord, and be doing good, and VERILY thou SHALT be fed**.

2. In regard to the apostles, we may observe at once their too great forwardness and too little faith. *Their too great forwardness,* in that they dare to prescribe to Christ what he should do respective to the people, thinking him who was the great teacher of them all, wanting himself a teacher. **His disciples came to him, saying, send the multitude away.** It is our greatest wisdom to trust all our concerns in the hand of God, to prescribe nothing to him, whose we are, and whom we serve, and upon whom we may well cast all our care as he careth for us.

* Psalm xxxvii. 3.
The weakness of their faith is seen, in that they thought this people could be no otherwise sustained and fed, than by supplies from the neighbouring towns and villages. This is the old cry of the unbelieving Jews—*Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* So shamefully had these disciples forgot how lately they had been sent by their master into all the region round about, without purses, without scrip, without any provision—and yet had wanted nothing that was necessary for them. So little did they reflect upon that power, which, they should have concluded, could as easily provide bread for these people in the desert, as change water into wine, when that had been wanting.

These defects and weaknesses of theirs were recorded for our comfort, that we may not despair, when conscious of our manifold infirmities, but on the contrary strengthen ourselves by these examples of our Lord's mercy and might, in a full dependence on him, and a thorough confidence, that as he loveth us, so he will make all things work together for our good. Convinced that he can furnish a table in the

*Psalm lxxviii. 19.*

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desert, we should never distrust his power: and persuaded that he ordereth all things aright, we must never presume to call his wisdom in question, or to doubt of the justness of his proceedings with us—for he is righteous and true, and all his ways are just and good. But,

3. We read that our Saviour, though well apprized of his own purpose and design, put a question to his disciples, to Philip in particular, in order to prove, to try or tempt him—that he might either give him an opportunity to shew the greatness of his faith, or convince him of the weakness of it;—which conviction would necessarily be accompanied with greater watchfulness and more earnest application for increase of faith. God tempteth no man to evil, but he tempteth or trieth them for good, that the trial of their faith, being found much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour and glory, at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. God always tempteth or proveth his servants to this end: to stir up and manifest their graces, to convince them of their weakness and to quicken their endeavours. Thus he tempted
Abraham, thus he tried the woman of Canaan—and from each example we learn to cleave in humble obedience to the word of God, to persevere in the path of duty, and to expect with firm faith the manifestation of the divine favour: thus if in every trial of whatever sort we wait on the Lord, and are of good courage—he will strengthen our heart—wait, therefore, continues the psalmist, wait on the Lord *. Let your time be his time: though he tarry, yet wait for him, because he will surely come, he will not always delay. Thus the Lord's temptations are blessings, and hence St. James pronounces that man blessed, who thus endureth temptation: Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried (in the final Judgment) having endured the present trial, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him †.—Far different are the temptations of Satan, who is called the tempter of the world, and our own flesh—these are to destruction, and unless resisted, end not in a crown of life, but a lake of eternal fire. These temptations we must continually guard against, and stand ready armed with the

* Psalm xxvii. 14.
† James i. 12.
whole armour of God—never giving way to the Devil, the world and the flesh, against whom we are engaged by solemn covenant, and whom if we resist manfully in the Lord the tempter shall at length be foiled, the world shall drop its flattering allurements, sin shall not have dominion over us, and our soul, while safe beneath the custody of almighty grace and love, shall escape even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. Our wisdom therefore it is, to depend upon the strength of God, to sanctify the Lord of hosts, to make him alone our fear and our dread; and then the world and the flesh will in vain league their triple force against us; for who shall harm us, if we be followers of that which is good.*

4. After Christ had thus proved his disciples, and found them deficient, to convince them of the weakness of their faith, and to shew them, that if they had duly known † their master, they had it in their power to supply the people, he said, give ye them to eat? But what can they give, who have themselves nothing? Is Christ like an

* 1 Peter iii. 13.
† Halt thou not known me, Philip? St. John xiv. 9.
Egyptian task-master, requiring brick without straw? he shews the contrary, for the bread and fishes being brought to and blessed by him, he gave to the disciples, and the disciples, how impossible soever they once thought it, do now indeed themselves give to the people to eat.—And thus sometimes it pleaseth our Lord to require of us, what we are of ourselves unable to perform: at the same time to shew us what we cannot do, and so to humble us, and to raise a strong dependence in our hearts upon him, who is able to do for us whatsoever seemeth him good: He bids us keep his royal law,—but alas! what can we poor helpless sinners do? there is not one letter of that book that we are more able of ourselves to keep, than these disciples were to feed these five thousand from their own present store: this charge, therefore, is intended to shew us not our strength, but our weakness: that thus our eyes may be turned, not only back to what we might have done in our first and unfallen state, but upwards to him in whom we can do it, and by the rich supplies of whose afflicting grace we may be enabled to fulfil that law, the least tittle of which of ourselves we can never fulfil. Thus Christ in bidding
us do what in our own strength we cannot, enables us to do what he bids: his precepts under the gospel have not only an intimation of our duty, but a supply of his power: as here when he bade the disciples to give to the multitude, he meant to supply them, with what he commanded them to give:—

In every duty, therefore, and in every commandment, let us not question or scruple its obligation upon ourselves—but casting our eye downwards upon our own wretched inability to do any thing that is good, and upon our Lord's infinite power and willingness to supply us with the means of fulfilling whatsoever he hath commanded, let us, in imitation of the disciples, bring our bread, as it were, to him, and crave his blessing, let us put our cause in his hands, and implore his grace, and then working with him distribute to the multitude, then using our own endeavours, labour to manifest the efficacy of his assisting grace. Thus if we do, convinced of our own weakness and our Lord's will to help, we shall be enabled to fulfil all his commandments—and wherefoever he hath said, Give ye them to eat—do this—if we seek to him for succour, we shall find abundant supplies to do and
and give as he hath commanded! Give us all the grace, blessed Lord Jesus, to hang upon thee, as a fucking child upon its mother, and then we shall never want an abundance of thy grace and good Spirit to assist and strengthen all our most imperfect endeavours?

5. We have, in the ready obedience of the people, an excellent pattern for us to follow, and such a one as will never fail to procure us the abovementioned grace both to will and to do, which is so requisite in all our undertakings. He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, they readily obey, and wait the event, though they saw nothing to feed them, but five barley-loaves and two small fishes — yet having seen so many of his miracles already, they were doubtless in expectation of some marvellous act now to be shewn for them. That is true obedience which doth not attend so much to the thing commanded, its nature and possibility, as to the command itself: let us but be satisfied that the command is of God, and we have nothing to do more than implicitly to obey. Reasoning with God and disputing his positive commands hath been a fruitful source of evil
evil to man: it began with Adam—yea hath God said, was an objection the tempter soon found prevailing — And it would be well, if many now did not fatally deceive their own souls, by refusing obedience to many positive commands of Christ — to many a positive give and do, by suffering the workings of their own minds and the evil surmises and suggestions of the tempter to prevail over them. Obedience is the sure fruit of faith; wherefore we may sufficiently prove ourselves hereby, whether we are in the faith or not—for it is in vain to say, we believe in Christ and do not obey him—such a faith will never make a christian, or bring to heaven; it is good for nothing but to be cut off and cast into the fire to be burned. God grant, we may all so believe as to love, so love as to obey, so obey as to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, who stands in readiness to revenge all disobedience, when the obedience of his servants is fulfilled. Our obedience doth then most honour to God, when we wait upon him, even there where means appear not: when we continue our faith and duty, tho' he seem to hide away his face and will not see: when he commands us to sit down to eat, and there seem
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seem not any supplies sufficient to sustain us. Nothing is more easy than to pray to God to give us our daily bread, when we have it in plenty about us; but when we neither have, nor know whence we shall get what our necessities require, then to depend upon the invisible bounty and unseen hand of heaven, is a true and noble act of faith’. Indeed in every state our duty is a full dependance upon providence, yet not such a dependence as implies the disuse or omission of our own means and endeavours. We must do our parts and leave the rest to God, and when the necessity is of his making we see our refuge, and happy are we if our confidence can fly to and rest in it: it is but our duty, to be perfectly satisfied and content whether he shall prosper or frustrate our endeavours, after we have done our utmost, and to be wholly resign’d to all his dispensations! yet, in all other respects, our duty is our highest happiness, so is it in this, for to attain this temper is to attain perfect peace of soul!—Great part of the miseries of mankind owe their rise to this want of dependance upon God—whom while we neglect in the common occurrence of life, and imagine that all depends upon chance or human foresight, the sure consequence is a continual uneasy
uneasy carking and caring, a disquiet mind and a troubled conscience, a curse that eats out all our happiness in the midst of worldly blessings. For fulness and abundance itself becomes a curse, if it takes us off from this dependence: for since in every our best estate we must still look up to the great householder of the world: and cannot but need his provision: for we want his gracious aid in every respect: if we have meat, perhaps we have not an appetite, if appetite perhaps not digestion, or if that, not health and freedom from pain, or if that, perhaps not an easy mind and a quiet spirit, and perhaps on a sudden from other accidents not life itself.”—So necessary is a continual dependence upon providence, so necessary is it to look up with a believing eye to the great ruler of the world, in whose hands are the issues of life and death; so necessary is it to trust all our concerns with humble confidence in his most faithful hands, and with cheerful content to expect his good pleasure towards us, knowing, that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, by any thing that God shall order and appoint and bless to that end. Nature is content and satisfied with little, grace
grace with less, sin with nothing. The Son of God we see here furnished the most divine banquet, only from barley-bread and dried fishes—if we have conveniencies, we need not be anxious for superfluities. 'Tis better to live meanly upon the fruits of God's goodness than plentifully upon the products of a man's sin. A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses: and he who measures his happiness by the delicacy of his living, the splendor and luxury of his table, has but a groveling soul, that can be content to forego everlasting pleasures for the meanest delight of sense, and which the beasts enjoy so very much above him. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them. How much better and wiser to labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man will give to them that ask it: for he will never send away empty those hungry souls, who come to him, but will fill them with good things, and satisfy them with his mercies—as we see to our great comfort, by the gracious manner of his dealing with these five thousand, whom tho' his disciples were desirous of dismissing, yet he would not suffer them to depart fasting,
but having thus prepared all things, and seated them around in convenient order, he afforded them a miraculous supply, blessed the bread and brake it, and distributed it with such marvellous increase, that not one was sent empty away, they did all eat and were filled!

But the consideration of the miracle itself must be omitted to another opportunity. From this preparation to it we see the wisdom of our Lord manifested in the time and place of performing it; from the weakness of the disciples faith we are taught to improve and strengthen our own; from our Lord's tempting them, we see the reasons why God tempteth his servants, that the trial of their faith may be found precious; from his command, give ye them to eat, we are taught our own inability to do as he bids, and the sure supplies of grace we may expect, if we diligently obey, even as the multitude sets us an example, teaching us more especially in times of doubt and difficulty a full and absolute dependance upon that providence, which will never fail those who humbly rely upon it—resign'd to every dispensation of God, and instructed of him in every state to be content, whether abounding or suffering want. Such shall never be sent empty
empty away, such fitting in humble hope at the feet of Christ, shall as surely be satisfied with the riches of his love, as this multitude then seated on the grass around him, were satisfied with the plenteousness of his house.

In some respects we at present are alike to this multitude, assembled as we are in his presence to hear his divine word, seated, as it were, at his feet, and expecting our food from him: It is his word, which we in his name, and as his messengers, preach unto you: a word in itself and in the deadness of the letter no less weak and insufficient to nourish your souls, than these five loaves and two fishes were to nourish the bodies of this great multitude; but if he vouchsafe his blessing, not one shall go unsatisfied away: and he will vouchsafe his blessing, if we sincerely desire it: lift up your hearts therefore to him, if you are really hungry and desirous to be filled, and intreat him, that he would now and always vouchsafe to bless his word read or preach’d to yourselves, and so strengthen you by his grace in and thro’ it, as to enable you to love and to serve him with all your soul and with all your might. He is not desirous that any should return empty—bountiful Jesus, be it unto us, not accord-
ing to our corrupt wills, but according to thy good pleasure—and make this thy word effectual to the building us up in thy most holy faith!—But another blessed ordinance of his, and means of grace, calls us to the feet of Jesus, where unless he indeed blesses the bread, who brake it and gave it to his disciples; and who commands all his future followers to do this, take and eat in remembrance of, and as a mark of love and obedience to him, well may we say with the disciples, what is it amongst so many, what is it to our spiritual support! If we marvel at Christ's miracle of feeding so many thousands with so little provision, can we forbear less to marvel when in humble faith we contemplate the sacred symbols of his divine body and blood, which are in themselves so weak, and which are outwardly so poor, and yet when received in faith, and thus blessed by Christ, are so strong and powerful, so rich and abounding with grace to the everlasting health of those who receive them? They become verily and indeed the body and blood of Christ himself: for when we receive in faith, then "we eat the flesh of the Son of God, and drink his blood, then we dwell in him, and he in us, we are one with him, and he with us!" Oh marvellous efficacy
efficacy of faith, which thus transforms, by the power of grace beggarly elements into the body and blood of the Son of God! nature and reason may stumble hereat and no wonder—if the disciples could not conceive how their almighty Lord should feed so many thousands with five loaves, much less can the natural man conceive how the souls of all believers live in and by the bread of life; by him, who is the bread of life, who came down from heaven to be made the food of man, the bread of life, by being ground, baked, and burnt in the furnace of suffering: and who hath peremptorily declared, that unless we eat of that bread, unless we eat of the body and drink of the blood of the Son of man, we can have no life in us! plain and positive as these words are, yet we see many, unlike the people who obeyed instantly Christ's command and sat down on the grass, we see many I say, neglecting this most plain and positive injunction—and fearing not to live in continued danger of the eternal loss of their most precious souls! Oh that the grace of God would so enlighten their understandings, so powerfully operate upon all their hearts, as to place them in willing faithful obedience.
at the feet of Jesus, humbly waiting to receive
their spiritual food from his divine hands!

And thou blessed giver of life and health,
let thy compassionate eye be over all here
present, and more especially over all those
who are about to approach thine altar, bless
and break the bread to all their souls, and in-
crease it with a wonderful increase to the
support and nourishment of all, who shall
this day receive—Oh fill every hungry soul
with thy good things, and of thine infinite
mercy send not any empty away! and see-
ing thy table is not yet filled, seeing there
is yet room enough and to spare at thy
marriage supper, oh raise up thy power
and come amongst us, and with great might
succour us: let thy convincing grace com-
pel them to come in—let not any of these
our dear brethren and fellow-creatures, for
whom thou hast shed thy most precious
blood, oh let them not hold out for ever
against all thy invitations, oh let them not
be insensible of their own eternal and bet-
ter interest, but bring them all in true
faith and repentance to thine altar, that
they may not perish and be lost for ever,
that they may be saved in the day of thy
mercy, and numbered amongst the sons and
servants of thee their God in glory!
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Hear us, O Father, hear, save, and help us for thy own gracious promise sake, for thine own tender mercies sake; for the merits and sufferings of Jesus thy beloved, in whom thou hast made all our imperfect prayers and services accepted: and to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be ascribed all honour, &c.
On the Loaves and Fishes.

PART II.

St. Matthew xiv. 19, 20, 21.

And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and two fishes; and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

And they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full.

And they that had eaten were about twelve thousand men, beside women and children.

Propos'd to consider this remarkable display of our Lord's divine power under these three heads,

I. The preparation to the miracle.

II. The miracle itself. And,

III. The Consequences of it.

Having
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Having dispatched the first in the former Sermon, I proceed to the second, the miracle itself, or the astonishing manner in which our Lord satisfied this great multitude: Which being placed in order around him—to shew that he is the God of order, and not of confusion, and to teach us, that the like order and regularity in states, in his church, in private societies, and families, is the great means of obtaining his blessing and provision, without which all tends to ruin and decay—in the sight of them all, that all might be witnesses to the small quantity of the provision, he took the five loaves and the two fishes, into his hands, those blessed hands, into which the Father hath delivered all things, and which, as the psalmist elegantly expresses it, he doth but open, Thou openest thine hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness *. He looked up to heaven in earnest prayer to his father, and when he had given thanks to that father, as well for this provision, as for the power he had received of working this miracle, as in the case of Lazarus, he lift up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always: but

* Psalm cxlv. 16.
because of the people, which stand by, I said it, that they may believe, that thou hast sent me. † This done, he blessed them, with a prevailing and singular blessing, which caused that miraculous increase of the bread, and fishes; for his blessing is increase: be fruitful and multiply ‡. Thus in the institution of his last supper, he blessed the bread before he brake it, with a peculiar blessing, whereby he caused that bread to become his mystical body, he blessed the bread, and brake, and said, take, eat, this is my body. †† Thus peculiar and efficacious was his present blessing; immediately upon which he brake the loaves, and as he brake, he gave them to the disciples, and in like manner the fishes: and the disciples began to distribute them among the people; when to their great astonishment so marvellous was the increase in all their hands, the bread and fishes by Christ’s singular blessing increasing under his hands, while he gave to the disciples: the disciples feeling, as it were, the divine power while the like increase was found in that which they receiv’d and distributed: and the multitude no less experiencing the divine power, while the blessed

† John xi. 41, 42.  
‡ Gen. i. 22.  
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morsels multiplied in the reception *; info-
much that from these five small loaves, and
two little fishes, all these five thousand men,
besides women and children, were supplied:
not one went empty away, nay, or had

* There have been different conjectures concerning
the manner in which the loaves and fishes increased: I
hope the method in which I have put it, will be found
as reasonable as any other, at least it is as well sup-
ported. A late able harmonist of the gospels, (Mr.
Macknight) observes, that on his supposition the meat
must have extended its dimensions, not in our Lord’s
hands only, but in the hands of the multitude likewise;
continuing to swell till there was a greater quantity than
they who held it could make use of: so that breaking
off what was sufficient for themselves, they gave the re-
mainder to the persons next them, who in like manner
saw the bread and fish swell in their own hands, till
they also had enough and to spare, &c. — He remarks,
“the evangelists indeed give very short accounts of our
Lord’s miracles. Nevertheless the nature of these mira-
cles, and the few circumstances, which they have men-
tioned, oftentimes suggest many astonishing ideas, which
vulgar and unattentive minds altogether overlook” —
“Anciently, he adds also, Elifba fed an hundred men,
with twenty barley loaves, 2 Kings iv. 42. But the
quantity of the food divided was greater, and the peo-
ple fed therewith incomparably fewer, than at our Lord’s
miracle. Besides though something was left at Elifba’s
feast to shew that the men were filled, it was but a trifle
in comparison of the quantity left by the great multitude
whom our Lord fed.—This being one of the most af-
tonishing, and at the same time the most extensively con-
vincing of all the miracles Jesus performed during the
course of his ministry, every one of the evangelists has
recorded it, and which is remarkable, it is the only one
found in each of their histories.” See p. 175. of his harmony.

not
not enough: but on the contrary they did all eat unto fulness, they did all eat and were perfectly satisfied; nay and many baskets full of fragments remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

Astonishing fact! but what is too hard for God, what is impossible to omnipotence! —strange perverseness of the human mind, which after such manifestations of almighty power, should incredulously doubt, or impiously distrust the good providence and fatherly care of this sovereign, this infinitely gracious Lord, into whose hands, the father hath delivered this world and all its concerns! his we are by right of creation and redemption, and him we are bound to serve; and if we do serve him, we have his sure word and promise, that we shall never want his protection: if we are his sons and servants, he will be our father and master — and blessed are they, who have such a master and such a father!

From this mighty miracle we are taught, 1st, that it is this divine Lord, this Son of the Father, who every year blesseth mankind with the plentiful supplies of meat and drink, and all necessary provision: it is this Lord who, in the emphatical words of David, visiteth the earth, and blesseth it, who maketh it very
very plenteous *, who watereth her furrows, and sendeth rain into the little valleys thereof.

* St. Austin with his usual beauty and piety observes, upon this miracle, "the miracles, which our Lord Jesus Christ wrought, are in truth divine works, and from the things that are seen awaken the human mind to contemplate and understand the invisible God. For he is such a substance as cannot be seen by human sight, and because the miracles, by which he governeth the whole world and ruleth every creature, are by their frequency little regarded, so that scarce any one thinks it worth his while to attend to and remark the wonderful and astonishing works of God, manifested in every seed and grain upon earth: out of his mercy he reserved some things, which he would do contrary to the usual course of nature, that they, by whom his daily wonders were unobserved, might have an occasion to admire, not when they saw greater, but more unusual acts! for it is a greater miracle to govern and provide for the whole world, than to feed five thousand men with five loaves: yet while men nothing at all regard the former, they stand astonished at the latter: not because it is greater, but more unusual: for who is it that now feeds the whole world, but he who from a few seeds sown produceth the plentiful sheaves? and the same power which gives that marvellous increase, multiplied the loaves in the hand of Christ, who was himself endued with all power. Those five loaves were a kind of seed, not indeed delivered to the earth for increase, but increased by him who made the earth, immediately, by that same divine power, which in the other case acts gradually and by regularly appointed means. This therefore was exhibited to the sense and eye, that the understanding might be raised to and exercised upon the contemplation of the invisible God, thro' his visible works: and that being elevated and purged by faith, we might have a desire to see that deity face to face, now invisible to us otherwise
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who maketh it soft with showers, and blesseth the increase of it: who crowneth the year with his goodness, while his clouds drop fatness: making the valleys stand so thick with corn, that they laugh and sing †. Whose beneficent hand and liberal bounty to the sons of men calls forth all their praise, and claims all their thankfulness. For whatever we may think of it, and however inattentively through its frequency pass over this mighty work of the Lord, it is notwithstanding no less a miracle that the Lord should marvellously every day support and feed the whole race of mankind, cattle and every living thing upon the earth, than that Christ should feed five thousand, with five loaves and two fishes: for what are five thousand to those infinite millions of millions of men, that are daily fed from the fruits of the earth; the increase of which is no less a miracle to us, than the increase of this bread and loaves, by the blessing of Jesus. For how small proportion doth the seed sown bear to the produce: it is carried out in handfuls and brought home in sheaves; and which of us can tell by what secret operations this wise than in the glass of his creatures, than in the things that are seen."—See this father's 24th Tract. in Johan. † Psalm lxv. 9, 10.
wonderful effect is wrought? — How it is that the seed sown groweth up from the blade into the ripe corn in the ear, and is blessed to the nourishment and support of life in man? Nature is no less full of wonders in all her works, than in this particular: and the divinity, to an attentive observer, is no less visibly seen in these regular productions, than in the miraculous supplies, afforded: no less seen in the wine produced from the moisture of the earth through the branches of the vine, than in that instantaneously changed from the water: no less seen in the corn gradually ripened, and made into bread for the support of all mankind, than in the bread marvellously blessed to the support of the five thousand. But their frequency and constant repetition renders these less observed: wherefore our good God condescends to go out of the common order of causes, to arouse and awaken our attention the more. But if we are dead and utterly inattentive to the works of God in nature, where we see the divine magnificence and bounty so visibly, so richly displayed, it is too much to be feared, that outward miracles would not now awaken us.—Yet we are apt to deceive ourselves in this respect, and frequently are
led to conclude, that had we been present when such a stupendous work (as this we are considering) was wrought, we should have adored the divine hand that wrought it, and never forgot nor forsook the faith and love of Jesus. But alas! if all the displays of his divine power in the works of creation, if all the evidences of his omnipotence, if the continual supplies of his bounty, and the most legible characters of his adorable love, written upon all the creatures, elevate not our grateful and rejoicing hearts to him, there is great reason to fear, that had we seen the present miracle, we should have acted like many who did see it, have turned away at some of his hard sayings, and walked no more with him. For what are all outward miracles unaccompanied by the grace of God to the heart?

We are continual witnesses of his goodness and power manifested in the returns of feed-time and harvest, in his gifts of the former and latter rain, of fruitful seasons and fertile fields, which as they fill our hearts with food and temporal gladness, so should they no less fill us with spiritual joy and thankfulness. 'Tis God's blessing alone which giveth the increase. And should that blessing be denied, should God, as the
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prophet strongly expresses it, break the staff of bread upon the earth, and send abroad the evil arrows of famine, should be shut the windows of heaven, and deny us his refreshing rains; then should we fully learn from whose hand it is, that all plenty cometh, when bread is eaten by weight and with care, and men drink water by measure, and with astonishment. That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one at another and consume away for their iniquity *. —— It is iniquity you see — consume away for their iniquity — which provoketh God thus to deal with nations: and what can more enhance that iniquity than an ungrateful forgetfulness of God, in the midst of plenty, than a want of thankfulness to him for his bounties, when he openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness: than an uneasy carking anxiety, a distrust of providence, and a doubt of his power and will to help us, from whom alone proceeds all help, not, as we vainly suppose, from our own frail and weak endeavours only: the vanity of which we fully prove, when, after we have done all, God denies his blessing, and sends the locust or mildew, denies his rain,

* Ezek. iv. 16, 17.

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or with-holds his sun: so true is it even in a natural sense, that neither is he that soweth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase †.

To avoid this unthankful disposition of soul, let us with firm faith contemplate and adore his divine munificence acknowledge, that from him proceed all blessings, and with thankful hearts and eyes look up to the great and bountiful giver; and avoid that careful anxious solicitude after seasons, which is apt to raise murmuring and repining too much in the heart, especially of those who are interested therein. Confessing our Lord the giver of all plenty, let us be diligent to obtain a plentiful harvest of grace in our hearts, and then we shall gladly trust him for the fruits of the earth. Let us look up to heaven for a blessing on all that we do, make it our first care to get the dew of grace and the light of life to water and shine upon our souls, and we need not fear that we shall be forsaken of God: who is as able as willing to do exceedingly abundant above all that we ask or think, both in temporals and spirituals; and who for our comfort hath assured us by the mouth of one of his holy

† 1 Cor. iii. 17.
prophets, I have been young and now am old, and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread†: but who amongst us have not seen the contrary? God grant, that a love to our offspring may at least be found a prevailing motive with us thus to leave them the best portion and the surest treasure: may we be righteous for their sakes also: otherwise we are promised that what we save with care, they will waste with profusion. Thus righteousness and godliness alone hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. Be righteous therefore, O ye parents, if ye would prosper your seed: be godly, if you would bless your offspring, and preserve to them the promises of God.

How we may obtain this blessing, and how we are to seek it we are taught, 2dly, from this miracle, namely by prayer and giving of thanks: Christ lift up his eyes to heaven and gave thanks, before he blessed this bread with such marvellous increase. So must we pray to him for his blessing; and forget not to thank him, when he vouchsafeth it. And by these means, as we shall be led continually to acknowledge God, as the author

† Psalm xxxvii. 25.
of all good to us, and ourselves as his guests, so shall we never use his gifts to luxury and intemperance.—This grateful remembrance of the father of bounty introduced in the beginning of the world that excellent custom, amongst his true sons and servants, the patriarchs and holy * men of old, of giving him thanks and craving his blessing upon every meal, without which they would not dare either to begin or end: the first christians were eminent for their pious use of this act of religious worship: so whether they eat or drank, or whatever they did, doing all to the glory of God †. Some remains of this good custom are yet found in the christian world: but alas! how shamefully in general it is performed, and how much a custom it is with many, we have no need to say: that reverence and decency which becomes so solemn an act, being for the most part turned

* For an excellent dissertation on this subject, its antiquity and use amongst Jews, Christians, nay and heathens too, I refer my reader to the 5th vol. of Bibliotheca biblica, p. 171. where he will find two pretty hymns translated from Prudentius, used by him before and after meals, and perhaps by many christians in his time.— Theophylact upon this particular of Christ's looking up to heaven and blessing, &c. observes, that herein Christ gives us a plain admonition, that as soon as we come to a table of refreshment we should first give thanks and then eat.

† 1 Cor. x. 31
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into inattention and disregard. While some who yet profess themselves christians, forget to use it at all, and come to their tables as utterly unmindful of, and unthankful for the divine beneficence, as brute beasts to their stalls, with no higher ends than to satisfy their appetites: and neither consecrate the beginning of their repast by the invocation of the divine name, nor the end of it by giving of thanks! who can wonder at the vain, impure, obscene discourse, which for the most part fills up the intervals of such meals! christians should blush at such practices: and they who are really such, and not so in name only, will I doubt not take care to see this duty soberly performed at their tables, remembring that it is no dishonour to man to entreat the almighty creator's blessing upon his daily bread, that bread which honest labour, by the assistance of God, hath acquired, which is used with sobriety and temperance, and for the gift of which the giver is sincerely and humbly thanked. O how sweet is such bread, how much better is a dinner of herbs, where such love to the creator is found, than a stalled ox, than all that gilded roofs and golden vessels can supply, where enmity to God begins and ends
ends the unthankful banquet *. God's blessing makes every morsel sweet, and while we adore his provident and fatherly supply, content smiles at our table, and felicity fits joyful at our humble board: where we shall never fail gratefully to acknowledge the divine bounty have we more or have we less, when we see, as in this miracle, Christ himself the Son of the most high, thanking his heavenly father for this homely repast of coarse barley-bread and dried fishes! Thus if we do, we shall draw down his blessing, which prayer and giving of thanks are the great instruments of obtaining; for we are taught that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer †: and so can never be used to unholy and impure purposes. And this act of religion used religiously, will conduce much to our growth in grace, and to the maintaining upon our minds that filial and reverential regard to God, which should attend us in all our duties and through all our life.

From the distribution of the bread and fishes in this miracle we are taught, 3dly,

* Prov. xv. 17.
† 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5:
that beneficence and Christian charity, with which they, who have it in their power, are bound to communicate of their goods to those that are in need. To do good and to communicate, faith St. Paul, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased *. Deal thy bread to the hungry †, faith the prophet, and in the old testament God commanded the rich at their solemn feasts not to forget the poor, the fatherless, and the widows: nay, and in the new, Christ compares the rich to stewards, who are so to administer the goods committed to their charge, as they that must give a strict account of their stewardship. And alas! how will they be able to answer who have not considered themselves as stewards, but as masters, and wasted the goods committed to their charge, by forgetting the cause of the poor servants of the Lord, and by either madly hoarding up, or shamefully abusing those goods to the purposes of pride, luxury, intemperance, vanity and ambition! how fearful an account have they one day to make! God forbid that you, my brethren, should depart hence such unfaithful stewards, so unmindful of your stewardship! rather

* Heb. xiii. 16.
† Isaiah lvi. 7.
act as men, who know that they are accountable beings, and that all they have and all they use is from God, and must be used as for him: rather consider the emptiness of all earthly riches to a stiff clay-cold putrefying corpse, as each of ours must speedily become: for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out, naked came we out of our mother's womb, and naked shall we return thither *: wherefore having food and raiment, let us be therewith content; for they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; you that are rich in this world, according to the same apostle's charge, be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. Do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up for

* Job i. 21.
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yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal life.*

—For as you learn from this miracle, there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth: by the blessing of God what we distribute, through his love, shall be ten-fold increased to us: the bread shall increase in the breaking, as the oil in the pouring out, and be that watereth shall be watered again †.—Much more is this the case with spiritual gifts, which, unlike other things, grow in the using, and the more they are exercised, the more they increase: God's grace is like the loaves in Christ's hand, increased to us in proportion, as we employ it with humble dependence upon, and prayer to the giver of it, and with continual thankfulness for the use of it: for God ministrith seed to the sower, and multiplieth not that which is hoarded up, but that which is sown. Be active therefore in all your duties, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and you will find your labour not in vain, but your strength continually renewed in the Lord: more baskets full of fragments remaining, than you had stock at first to begin with; which we find was the consequence of the present miracle, and the

* 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.
† Prov. xi. 25,
IIId Thing whereof I proposed to speak. For when the multitude were all filled, Christ ordered his disciples to gather up the fragments that remained, that nothing might be lost: which they accordingly performed, and for an undeniable attestation to the truth and greatness of the miracle they gathered them together and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the loaves and fishes, which remained over and above to those that had eaten: and which was prodigiously superior to what they had at first—twelve baskets full, to each disciple one, that they might either have in the spiritual sense to distribute to the Gentiles, or to shew, that they were real loaves that were broken *—so stupendous a display of divine power leading the people to conclude rationally enough, that this person who performed it, was indeed the expected Messiah, they resolved, (having their minds and hearts totally ingrossed by the thoughts of his temporal kingdom) to come and take him by force and make him a king: which

* This is St. Jerom's remark—Unusquisque apostolorum de reliquis salvatoris implet cophinum suum, ut vel habeat unde postea gentibus cibos praebat, vel ex reliquis deceat veros suisse panes qui postea multiplicati sunt.
he perceiving, immediately withdrew, and retiring from them dedicated the night to devout meditation and prayer, spending it alone on a mountain, in heavenly communication with his Father: thus teaching us to seek the blessing of God on our public labours by private retirement and devotion, without which we shall but sow our seed in the furrows of the sea.

From this careful preservation of the fragments, at our Lord’s command, we are also taught a lesson of frugality. We must not wastefully, profusely, and lavishly destroy the good things given to us of God in mad revel or intemperate luxury, but carefully gather up and preserve what we have for our future necessities. Tho’ we are not to hoard we are not to waste, we must avoid either extreme: and be especially careful that our frugality be directed and recommended by our love to others, not to ourselves: frugality how often so ever it deviates into covetousness, being yet as true a virtue as generosity, and, as it is justly call’d, the best patrimony. Our several circumstances must teach us its due latitude and extent, however we must be especially careful not to make it a cloak for covetousness: God directs us to the brute creation to learn this lesson.
lesson profitably, go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest; * they therefore are no less blameable in the fight of God, who begin to gather up their fragments, who fordidly spare, when those who ought to be fed from their crumbs are not supplied: than they, who neither honestly provide for themselves and their household, and so deserve not to eat (for if any man will not work, St. Paul hath determined, that he ought not to eat †) nor succour those with the abundance, the fragments of their banquets, and revels, who would rejoice to be fed with the crumbs that fall from their plentiful tables.—Let it therefore be our endeavour so to take care that nothing be lost, as to enable ourselves to spare somewhat to the relief of our brethren, and not wrong their necessities either by covetousness or prodigality. But if we spare, merely to expend the more on our pleasures and luxuries, if we grind the faces of the poor, or deny them a charitable relief, that we may the better support our own extravagancies, and supply our

† 2 Thess. iii. 10.
numberless superfluities; if we can very well spare many shillings for a play or a ball, while we can scarce afford a few half-pence to the necessities of our distrest suffering fellow-creatures: let us remember, that we are not acting as becometh Christians, nay not as honest heathens themselves have acted: let us remember, that we have a strict account one day to give; and if the servant was condemned, that only increased not the sum intrusted to him, what must they expect who have wasted it—how sad will their account be? an account, the greatest part of which will consist in an enquiry after—not our mere preservation—not our careful hoarding up of our talent—but after our use and improvement of it, after our acts of love and benevolence to the members of, and so to Christ himself: it will then be said, depart from me, ye cursed, for I was an hungry and ye gave me no meat, thirsty and ye gave me on drink, naked and ye clothed me not *. O then at that fearful hour we shall wish we had been frugal and sparing in all things, save in that wherein we are now so sparing, charity to the poor.—Gather up your fragments therefore, my beloved brethren, for these: look upon the necessities of your brethren,

* Matt. xxv.42, 43.
and with a liberal hand and heart deal your bread to the hungry, and draw out your bowels of compassion to your fellow-creatures, your fellow-christians, your fellow-heirs of life eternal!

Thus we learn from this miracle || that Christ came into the world to be "the great feeder, as well as the great healer; not only to restore, but also to preserve and nourish spiritual life: and in him, the bread of life, there is enough for all that come to him: enough to fill and to satisfy the soul: none are sent empty away from him, but they who come full of themselves:" they that wait upon him, hungrying after his righteousness, have his sure promise, that they shall be filled: * even as is proved from hence. Be sure therefore that they who hear, love and keep the word of God, that first seek his kingdom and righteousness, shall never perish for want of food, because Christ himself hath promised to feed and take care of them: and how able he is to fulfil these promises in all circumstances we have from hence abundant proof.

Some of the fathers and primitive writers

† See in Quesnelle on Luke 9. 15, &c. excellently drawn out the duties of a true bishop and pastor.
* Matt. v. 6.
† of the church have given us this spiritual interpretation of the present miracle:—The ministers of the word, whose business it is to feed the people with the sincere food of the gospel, tho' furnished for the work with much reading and diligent meditation on the sacred books, must always acknowledge how small their provision is, which, how-

* See particularly St. Jērom and St. Austīn, with whom in the general all the rest agree. See Theophylaet for the greek Fathers. They in general in the mystical sense refer the five loaves to the five books of Mōses, and the two fisbes to the writings of the fishermen, the new testament: I have not express'd this in the interpretation, as it seems better to refer the whole to the bread of God, the word in general. Est hic quidam puér qui habet quinque panses, says Jērom, qui mihi videtur significare Mōsen; duo autem pisces, vel utrumque intelligimus testamentum vel quia par numerus referitur ad legem &c. Theophylaet. Δυο δὲ ἑκατεροι, οἱ των αλιεων Δαυδ, τινες δὲ των αρτων, τὴν επιτατευχον της Μωσους αναφηκαν. The two fishes are the writings of the fishermen; the five loaves the pentateuch, or five books of Mōses. See the author. St. John in his narrative of this miracle throws in a circumstance upon which most of the Fathers have remarked, now there was much grass in the place.——St. Basil and St. Gregory observe, that Işaiab has shewn us what grafs means spiritually understood, all flesh is grafs. Unless any one therefore shall subject the flesh and its wisdom to the spirit, which is to sit down on the grafs—He cannot be a partaker of that bread, which Jēsus blesses! Austīn observes also, these people sat upon the grafs, for they were carnal, both in desires and understanding (as the event proved) for all flesh is grafs, faith the prophet. Jērom gives the same exposition save that he is a little more mystical in regard to the numbers. I will give you his own words; Sat down
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however small it may be, is yet not their own, but wholly due to and the gift of Christ: To him therefore must they humbly offer it, that being multiplied by his blessing and breaking, it may be given to the people not as their own, but as the Lord's supply. The bread, the book of God, is in itself and in the deadness of the letter

down on the grass &c. juxta litteram manifestus est fenus spiritualis interpretationis sacramenta pandamus. Discumbere jubentur supra fœnum, et secundum alium evangelistam supra terram, per quinquagenos aut centenos, ut postquam calaverint cœnem fœnum, et omnes flores illius et seculi voluptates, quasi arens fœnum, fœb subjecerint, tunc per quinquagenarii numeri pœnitentiam ad perfectum centimum numeri culmen ascendant.—Theophylæt gives a moral turn to the passage analectiv dœ tœs çœlus, he makes the multitude sit down on the grass, to teach frugality, that we should not covet to lie upon rich beds and couches.---Quæsnelle remarks in the same way--Doth not that abundance of grass, which God bringeth forth continually for the cattle, justly upbraid men for their infidelity and their distrust?" And to close this matter (upon which I am the longer as some have lay'd hold on it, and been too daringly free with the words of this gospel) Mr. Henry remarks, there was much grass in that place, tho' a defart place: see how bountiful nature is, makes grass to grow upon the mountains; this grass was uneaten, God gives not only enough, but more than enough: here was this plenty of grass, where Christ was preaching: the gospel brings other blessings along with it: then shall the earth yield her increase. This plenty of grass made the place the more commodious for them that must sit on the ground, and serv'd them, for cushions or beds, (as they call'd what they sat on at meat, Eph. i. 6.) and considering what Christ faith of the grass of the field, Matt. vi. 29, 30. these beds excell'd those of Abasferus: nature's pomp is the most glorious."
small, mean and contemptible, yet when spiritually understood, how full, copious and divine! how doth it serve to the satisfying of the soul, to the teaching of thousands, to the filling up and answering every difficulty and satiating every want of the mind and spirit! which yet is no less a miracle than this of feeding the multitude from the bread and fishes: for how astonishing is it, that faith should proceed from this word, read and preach'd by us poor earthen vessels, from so weak an instrument as it seems; this foolishness of preaching, as St. Paul styles it; that faith should be by it enabled to bring forth such fruits, to withstand such difficulties, to war against such enemies, who sink beneath the force and sharpness of this two-edged sword! whoever come to this word shall never, unless it be their own fault, be sent empty away: whoever come to it empty, empty of them-

*St. Austin finely remarks in one of his epistles, 3. p. 4. Tim. ii. Tanta est Christianarum profunditas literarum, ut in iis quotidie proficerem, si eas solas ab ineunte pueritia usque ad decrepitam senectutem, maximo otio, summo studio, meliore ingenio conarer addicere. So great is the depth and fulness of learning and wisdom in the sacred scriptures, that I could profit and improve in them, were I to study them from childhood to decrepit old age, with the greatest leisure, the most intense application, and with a far better understanding than I have.
felves, of pride, and self-esteem, will find in it enough to answer all their spiritual wants, they shall return full and satisfied. And this word, this bread (to carry on the allegory,) is broken and distributed when the scriptures are expounded and usefully applied for doctrine, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness. But no increase can be had without prayer and giving of thanks, because without the operation of the divine Spirit all our study and labour avails nothing: *neither is he that planteth any thing; nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.* They who would be filled with this heavenly bread, must receive Christ, in true faith, with hearts lifted up unto heaven: for by this faith alone are we made partakers of his grace, and have our souls satisfied with the riches of his love and the fulness of his righteousness: by this faith alone can our prayers make their way to him! and gain us *day by day that daily bread,* that food of divine grace, which alone can preserve our souls alive. This is that gospel feast whereat numbers after numbers from generation to generation are fed and filled, and yet the bread fails not, yet there is provision for all that will come and eat. For Christ never fails,
fails; Christ the divine bread of life is today, yesterday, and for ever the same.—Moreover of all others it most concerns the successors of the apostles *, the ministers of the gospel, to take care that the marvelous works of their God and Saviour may be improved to the best advantage: they may not suffer the least fragment to be lost,

* Quesnelle on this verse 2 Cor. chap. ii. verse 17. "For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."—observes, that a minister may preach the word of God, in such a manner as is worthy of him, he must with St. Paul be always mindful of these three things. 1. That he is sent from God, and that he speaks directly from him, and in his name, as his ambassadour. 2. That he speaks in his presence, and under his immediate inspection. 3. That he supplies the place of Christ, that he speaks in his person, and that it is Christ himself, who speaks by the mouth of the preacher. If a preacher have reason to fear and tremble under so sacred a ministry, he who hears him ought seriously to consider, whether his reverence and docility, with respect to the word of God, be answerable to the idea, which St. Paul here gives us of it.—This writer also on Mark vi. 38. observes, the Christian feeds on five loaves. 1. On Jesus Christ and his mysteries, in applying himself to them by faith. 2. On his word by hearing it. 3. On his body in receiving it. 4. On his grace, by confiding in it. 5. On his will and righteousness in doing it. And that he may relish them the better, he makes use of the example of the humble and suffering life of Christ, and of the saints: who are spiritual fishes, bred in the waters of baptism, nourished in the bitterness of sufferings, living in silence, and conceal'd in the sea of this present world.
that may yield any glory to the almighty worker. The very least of Gods acts (if any acts of an omnipotent power may be called so) deserve to be had in everlasting remembrance.—Would you therefore be filled with the riches of his grace, seek him with firm faith in those means, where he is always present to the faithful soul, seek him in his word and ordinances, and use but the same endeavours after the bread of life, that you do after the meat that perisheth, and verily you shall never go empty away. This you have full proof of from the foregoing miracle: rather than those who follow and obey him shall want, the almighty redeemer will provide a table in the wilderness; trust in the Lord therefore and verily you shall be fed: for they that trust in him, shall want no manner of thing that is good.

And now that we have thus consider'd this stupendous work of the Son of God; now that we have seen his amiable compassion, manifested to these poor hungry followers in the wilderness and his abundant readiness to relieve them—suffer me, my brethren, to request you to put this question seriously to your hearts—"What think you of this marvellous instance of our
our Lord's loving-kindness and power?"—Doth not his compassion move you, doth not his glory strike you? Are you persuaded with the people, that this was indeed the GREAT PROPHET? and are you willing to make HIM your KING? Whether you believe it or not, it is from him that all your provision comes, that all your wisdom is derived: it is from him that all our power, peace, and prosperity descend. And he expects an acknowledgement and return: how small an acknowledgement, how easy a return! only the tribute of a grateful loving heart! to pay him this, is the only method to secure blessings present or future: we may live awhile in outward appearance, flourishing as a green bay-tree: * we may say, with those in the psalm, tush, God careth not for it, he hideth away his face and will never see †: but sooner or later the goodness we injure, and which by sparing would lead us to repentance, will put on terrible fury and write bitter things against us. Christ will be a King either to rule, gently to rule his willing and happy subjects, or to tread upon the necks and to break in pieces his rebellious

* Psalm xxxvii. 35.
† Psalm x. 11.
foes with a rod of iron. Submit yourselves therefore unto him; yield up your understanding, will and affections to his golden empire; follow him into the desert for food, leave the love of the noisy and vain world for his love and peace, and seek to him with humble faith for support and blessings: and then shall ye find peace to your souls! he will break his bread to the hungry: blessed, faith he, are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled: I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me, shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst †: O blessed are they that shall eat this bread with him in the kingdom of heaven. And behold it is offered to you ALL: Christ the great prophet and teacher of his church is ready to satisfy all your desires: be that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out ‡. he will satisfy you to the full, if you will only come to him. But how shall we come? in faith and earnest desire. But how shall we gain this faith and earnest desire? By God's good Spirit working in your hearts: for Christ hath said, no man can come to

† John vi. 37. ‡ John vi. 35.
me except the Father draw him*—except it be given him of the Father; except he be taught of God. †—How then shall we gain this Spirit, how shall we make inter-
est in the court of heaven, that we may be drawn of the Father, that we may be taught of God? by earnest importu-
nate prayer ask, and ye shall have: whatsoever you ask the Father in the Son’s name, he will give it you: how much more shall my hea-
venly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him ‡. These are the sure promises of the God of truth; and can we,—shall ever admit such a thought into our hearts, as to doubt, as to distrust his infinite vera-
city? no; fully confiding upon the un-
speakable love, which led him to give such precious promises to miserable fin-
ners, if you desire this teaching Spirit to lead you into all truth, if humbly and sin-
cerely you desire to come to God, if you truly and earnestly wish not to be cast out at the last day,—now, dearly beloved, now jointly, and for yourselves in particular im-
prove your interests with the God who bled for you; now seek, ask, implore: ear-
nestly intreat the gift of the divine Spirit,

* John vi. 44.
‡ John vi. 65.
of theunction from the holy one to teach you all things: sue to the Father of mercies for the sake and merits of his dearly beloved Son, and may you all so seek as to desire—so desire as diligently to seek; so love as to find, and so find as entirely to love the Lord your Redeemer! and O almighty God, we humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual aid we may bring the same to good effect thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth ever one God world without end. Amen.
DISCOURSE XVII.

On the Buyers and Sellers driven out of the Temple.

Matt. xxi. 12, 13:

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves:

And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.

O Lord in his triumphal entry, and in this act of regal power, appears in all the magnificence of that great and expected messenger of the covenant, whose approach the prophet Malachi foretold in very express terms to the Jews, and whose words
On the Buyers and Sellers

words will serve as an excellent key and introduction to this stupendous instance of our Lord's divine power. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before ME: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiners fire, and like fullers soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you in judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the forcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts *. These are they that he will drive from his temple here, and his everlasting temple hereafter, into

* Mal. iii. 1. &c.

which
driven out of the temple.

which there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, &c. *: These are the things from which the great refiner will purify his people, and from which unless they are purified, they will be consumed in the trying fire.—To shew that this word of prophecy was fulfilled in him, our Lord upon the first passover in his ministry entered his temple, and displayed his power: for we read John ii. 13. That the Jews passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that fold oxen, and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers of money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that fold doves, take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandife. And his disciples remembered that it was written, “The zeal of thine own house hath eaten me up.” And now being about to finish his work, and give the greatest possible proof of his humiliation by his death on the cross, he first afferts his divine mission and authority, enters the city

* Rev. xxi. 27.
in triumph, fulfilling all the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and amidst the hosannas and acclamations of those that went before and those that followed after, ascended, not to the regal palace, but to the temple of God, to shew that his kingdom was not of this world, and that he was as well the priest and prophet, as the king of his people Israel: there manifesting his mighty and secret influence over the minds, as he had before done over the bodies of men; and performing an act, which seems equal, if not superior in wonder to all he had before performed.—For whether we consider the person of Jesus, humble, mean, and despised as he was; the power of those whom he opposed, the Pharisees, the scribes, the priests, or the numbers and employment of those whom he turned out, whose gain and interest would naturally make them obstinate and refractory; which ever of these we consider, the fact appears most astonishing, and we must needs have recourse to that divine power over-awing the minds of these men, which afterwards in a state more humble, a condition far more abject by one word, and that, as it seems, not full of terror, I am he*—laid prostrate on the ground.

* The original is ἐγώ εἰμι, I am, which many excellent
Driven out of the temple. 317

a band of armed soldiers, and blasted their
purposed resolutions. — St. Jerom observes
thus, upon this instance of our Lord's
power in the temple †, "Some may think

lent writers have supposed to be an asserting his divinity,
to be a declaration of his eternal existence in Jesus,
from the marvellous effects that followed it — So he
before said to the Jews—Before Abraham was, Ew am,
IAM—the great IAM who sent Moses to the Israelites.
Aujlin finely remarks in his comment on John xviii. 6.—
Ubi nunc militum coher, & ministri principum ac Pharifti-
orum? Ubi terror & munimen armorum? Nempe una
vox dicentis, Ego sum, tantam turbam odio sercem, armis-
que terriblem, sine telo ullo percussit, repulit, stravit. Deus
enim latitbat in carne: & sempiternus dies ita membris oc-
cultabatur humanis, ut laternis & facibus quareretur, occi-
dendus a tenebris. Ego sum, dicit, & impios desicit: quid
judicaturus faciet, qui judicandus, hoc fecit? Quid reg-
naturus poterit, qui moriturus hoc potuit.

† Plerique arbitrantur maximum esse signorum, quod
Lazarus suscitatus est, quod caecus ab uto lumen acceperit,
quod ad Jordanem vox audita sit patris, quod transfigura-
tus in Monte gloriam ostenderit, triumphantis. Mibi inter
omnia signa quae fecit, hoc videtur mirabilius esse, quod unus
homo ex illo tempore contemptibilis & in tantum vilis, ut
postea crucigeretur, scribit & Pharisaic contra se favi-
bibis, & videntibus lucra sua destrui, potuerit ad unius fla-
gelli verbera, tantam ejicere multitudinem, menisque sub-
vertere, & cathedras constringere, & alia facere que
infinitus non fecisset exercitus. Hieronym in loc. The
same father speaks of the luminous appearance from
the eyes of Christ. Igneum quidam atque sideriun
radiebat ex oculis ejus, & divinitatis majestas luce-
bat in facie.——Mr. Harvey with his usual elegance
speaks
On the Buyers and Sellers

it the greatest of his miracles, that he raised Lazarus from the dead; that he gave sight to a man born blind: that he shewed his glory in his transfiguration on the mount: but to me, of all the miracles which our Lord wrought, this appears by far the greatest; that one man, and a man at that time very contemptible, nay so vile in their eyes, as afterwards to be crucified by them; that he, while scribes and Pharisees were raging against him, and beholding their gain destroyed by him, should at the shaking of a single scourge drive out such a multitude, overturn their tables, overthrow their mo-

speaks of this remark of St. Jerom, and expatiates upon it. _Theron and Afsaf_ , Vol. 3.

St. Jerom looks upon this miracle, as one of the greatest our Saviour wrought.—And indeed the circumstances are very extraordinary—that one man should undertake so bold, and execute so hazardous a task—one man without a commission from Cæsar; without any countenance from the Jewish rulers; without any arms either to terrify the multitude or defend himself --- that he should cast the whole tribe of mercenary traffickers, wrest from those worshippers of wealth their darling idol, and trample under foot their great Diana---and all without tumult or opposition; not one of the sacrilegious rabble daring to move the hand or open the mouth or peep---Whoever reflects on the fierce and ungovernable nature of an incensed populace, or considers the bitter and outrageous zeal of Demetrius and the craftsmen on a less irritating occasion, may possibly find himself almost, if not altogether, of the Latin father's opinion.
ney, cast them out, and do such things, as it would have been difficult for an immense army to have performed. There goes a tradition that a certain bright and dazzling lustre flashed from his eyes, which they were unable to bear, as the people could not behold the face of Moses for the glory upon it—but as the scriptures take no notice of any such transcendent lustre, we must only adore the greatness of the fact, and at the same time so improve this miracle to our souls advantage, as to secure, by accepting his grace, the power of this mighty refiner on our sides, that when he shall come in glory—and who can abide the day of his coming? we may be safe under the blessed shadow of his almighty, his protecting wings: while he takes fearful vengeance on those who have defiled his holy temple, the temple of their own bodies *, and made it a den of thieves, that have robbed God of his due, and will then rob the soul of its everlasting reward in blessedness.

But before we proceed to consider these things, it may be proper just to give you a general account of the literal story, and to explain the several circumstances of it: and

* 1 Cor. vi. 19.
particularly, whence arose this profane custom of selling sheep, oxen, doves, &c. and of money-changers sitting in the temple.

Moses, in Deuteronomy, speaking of tithes and offerings to be brought to the Lord, says, *And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee; then shalt thou turn it into money, and beseech that money for the purchase of whatsoever thy soul desireth, oxen, or sheep, or wine; and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household.*—When therefore the Jews were dispersed throughout almost every nation upon earth, that there might not be a necessity, when they came to Jerusalem to worship, of running about from place to place in search of proper animals for sacrifice, it was appointed that those animals which were used in sacrifice should be sold without the temple and near its gates. And because particular caution was necessary from the command of God, that there should be no blemish in these animals, the priests inspected and pub-

* Deut. xiv. 24.
licly approved whatever were sold in this place. And because the money used in the different nations, whence they came, was different, therefore money-changers took their seats here also, to change their money for them into the current coin or half-shekel, which was their yearly poll or redemption money. The shops for this purpose were soon remov'd into the temple, the outer court of it, call'd the court of the gentiles, which was the only place that the proselytes of the gate had to worship the God of Israel in: for which end it was built very large and spacious, that it might receive the great numbers, which the Jews had reason to expect to see there: because Isaiah's prophecy foretold, My house shall be called an house of prayer for all people: which prophecy our Saviour expressly quoted against the buyers and sellers when he drove them out, to shew them that their practice was wholly inconsistent with the view and intent of it, which was that proselytes from every country under heaven might come and worship there: and as far as lay in their power depriving the gentiles of any the least part or portion in the blessings of

† Isa. lvi. 7.
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the God of Israel, and of the benefit of putting up their prayers and petitions to him: in which amidst the hurry of the place, and the noise of the cattle, they must of necessity have been much molested: particularly when we consider the infinite numbers that used to throng this court, which Josephus informs us, at one passover, were computed at above three millions.—

But the case was still worse: for it seems probable that the priests and those persons who had charge of the temple, let out that part of the court for profit and advantage: and that the sellers to make themselves amends for the rent they pay’d for their shops and stalls, made an unjust and exorbitant gain; nay and we are told by St. Jerom, that the priests very often sold the same sacrifice to different persons—to such an uncommon pitch was their avarice and iniquity risen!—Of this however we are assured, that there was a very unjust and dishonest traffic carried on there: for our Saviour doth not charge them with having made the temple a place of merchandise only, but a den of thieves. If in the former case there was great indecency and irreligion, here there was the highest profanation of the temple. And our Saviour mani-
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manifested fully his great indignation against it by driving out those unhallow'd traffickers with their merchandize, and by informing them and us, that the house of God should be made an house of prayer; and that they who make it otherwise, thinking that gain is godliness *, shall in the day of his power be forever driven from his house and presence.

Thus we see, by this evil custom, the temple was profaned, the prophesies defeated, as much as by man they could, the sacrifices, service, and house of God turned into an unhallow'd gain, the true use and purpose of them consequently forgot and overlooked, and thro' the avarice of the priests, and the iniquity of those merchants and money-changers the house of God turn'd into a den of thieves †: For, 1. to alienate that which was dedicated to the honour of God was sacrilege, it was robbing God. 2. It was to disturb and distract those services, in which men ought to be most solemn and serious. 3. It was to make the business of religion subservient to secular interest, for those ever make God's house a house of merchandize: 1st, when minds are filled with worldly concerns,

* Tim. vi. 5. † Matt. xxi. 13.

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while they are attending on religious exercises: and 2dly, who perform divine offices only for the sake of filthy lucre, to fleece the flock, and sell the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

In treating further of this miracle, I will,

I. Make some general remarks upon it, in regard to public reformation, on which I shall be but brief, as this doth not so immediately pertain to us.

II. I will just suggest to you the spiritual sense and design of this miracle: and enlarge,

III. And that principally, upon the use, which we, each one of us, may derive to our souls from hence. And,

I. To speak briefly of public reformation. We see hence, that it is necessary, reformation begin at the house of God: if things are impure and out of order there, muddy streams will flow from a corrupted fountain. Therefore our Saviour, as was before observed *, begins his work with reforming these abuses †: he is a refiner, and

* See p. 315.
† St. Chrysostom well observes in his Exposition on Matt. xxi. "That the Temple, or church, is like the

stomach
and will purge away the dross: and he begins with temple-work, which much needs reformation, when gain and traffick take up their seats in the house of God, when men seek their own in the church, not the things that are Jesus Christ's: The prophet foretold of him, that he should purify the sons of LEVI, and purge them as gold and silver, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness*. Who can wonder, that the whole Jewish nation at our Saviour's coming was so funk in blindness and iniquity, when they who sat in Moses's seat†, when their teachers were so blind, so worldly, so avaritious? When they could fit by, and see the temple of God, so profaned, nay, and be themselves the great instruments of its profanation?—There was need in truth, that reformation should begin from the house of God; and when begun it requires repetition. Wickedness, if once unhoused, will again raise up its head: it is necessary to follow the blow,

* Phil. ii. 21. † Mal. iii. 3. † Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

Stomach in the body, from whence either good or evil food is digested into the body, and causes either health and life or diseasés and death, and thus, as from a well-ordered church all good, so from a corrupted one all evil proceeds: Christ therefore, like a wise physician, first endeavoured to cure the stomach. A lesson to magistrates and ministers.
and to continue a constant diligence in works of reformation: since the same abuses will naturally creep in, and if not guarded against, strengthen themselves with double power: like those devils, which, though driven out, returned with more violence into the man, and made his last state worse than the first: *—Christ begins his reformation with casting out evil: and that both in public and private should be our rule: we must take care first to remove ungodliness, to set apart all wicked customs, and all evil tempers, and then we may hope for the introduction of new life and holiness.—Though he acted with so much authority, yet he made the scripture his rule, brought it in evidence and justification of his proceedings; —It is written: and this after his example, must be our rule: we must go no further than we can justify ourselves with, It is written. Reformation is then right, when "corrupted ordinances are reduced to their primitive institution." This is the true reformation in the church. And it would be well if for this purpose the zeal of our Lord's house did eat us up—not only a zeal for the reformation of public, but also of our own

* Matt. xii. 45.
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private offences: as to private ones, we are bound to look to ourselves: "what, says St. Austin, if Christ was thus zealous against the buyers and sellers in the temple, what would he be now if he were to see drunkards, adulterers, swearers in his house?" we may add, what would he be if he were to see men forget that it is his house by inattention and indovation in it; by making it a place for compliments and common conversation? * this is to prophane the house of

* F. Quesnelle observes upon the place, "It is very remarkable, that both the first and the last time that our blessed Lord was in the temple, after he was baptized, he signalized his zeal against the irreverence and profanation which the Jews were guilty of therein. Will not the example of our great high-priest awaken the zeal of all those who are invested with his authority, against so many profaners of the churches where the majesty of God resides and the true sacrifice is offered?——Profane, unprofitable and criminal discourse, indecent postures, a scandalous uneemliness in dress, lascivious glances, meetings about business, sinful assignations, and vain extravagant, and wicked thoughts; these are much more insupportable in the sight and temple of God, than either those creatures which were designed for sacrifice, or than the bare trading in things of the like nature."——It is a matter of real concern to every sincere minister, to see the inattention which is generally paid to the divine service: and greatly to be wished, that all who come to the church would seriously consider the awful majesty and presence of the most high God, and demean themselves accordingly! How insufferable
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of God indeed: and if we continue to do so, if we remain thus unholy, we may have an entrance into the outward walls of the church it is true; but that will not make us either living members of it here, or of the church triumphant hereafter: into which there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they that are written in the lamb's book of life *. Take therefore these things hence, and beware,

ferable is it to see those who profess themselves Christians idly talking within those sacred walls, during the performance of solemn duties, which require the utmost reverence—How little do they reflect on the hollines of the Lord of glory, who behave in his church as if it were a coffee-house. Would to God they were more wise; that there were such a spirit in all who come there, as to attend to nothing but the great business for which it is presumed they come. To see persons just hide their face when they come into the church, and immediately pay compliments to all around, nay, and in the midst of the most solemn parts of the divine service—to see them stand erect, leaning on their elbows, and constantly observing all around, curious to know the dress of each, and studious to observe the actions of others,—what heart but must be touch'd with zealous indignation—what pen or tongue can refrain from reminding such that they act not as become the creatures, the redeemed creatures of a bleeding sovereign—that whatever they may suppose, such services are an abomination to him, and if not otherwise performed, will only enhance their future condemnation. May the God of wisdom give them a better mind!

* Rev. xxi. 27.
my brethren, left you profane and defile
the temple of God, either by a life of sin
or indecent behaviour, to your own great
harm and the singular offence of others.

As to *public* reformation; God knows,
there never was greater need of it, never
greater cause for reducing the corrupted or-
dinances of our church to their primitive
institution: when almost every ordinance is
neglected and passed by, and the rules and
decrees of the church, though established by
the strongest sanctions, looked upon as fa-
bles, and regarded as matters of no obliga-
tion, contemptible through meer old age!
I need not refer you farther than even the
*rubrics* in your common-prayer books, par-
ticularly those regarding the *sacraments*, and
the necessary, though much neglected office
of *catechising*, for the truth of this asser-
tion: were you just to run over the *canons*
of our church, you would then in admi-
ration bless yourselves upon the excellency
of its constitution, the purity of its doctrine,
the exactness of its discipline, the strictness
and holiness enjoined its clergy, the great
duties and solemn services which they are
engaged to perform on pain of high punish-
ment—and having seen and admired these
things, wonder whence it proceeds, that no
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such church, as that there pictured out, hath any existence in this island!—but alas! what avails it to speak these things, when we are unable to redress them! May that God of power, who drove the buyers and sellers from his temple in Jerusalem, remove all corruptions and abuses from his church, established in this nation, and make it truly what it is called, the temple of God, and an house of prayer *

Idly, I am to speak of the spiritual design of this miracle.

* It deserves attention, that in St. John ii. 16. when our Saviour first performed the great work of casting out the buyers, &c. he says, Make not my Father's house. But this second time, having proved by innumerable miracles his divinity—he says, MY house, Mat. xxi. 13. claiming and ascertaining clearly his equality and unity of essence with the Father. A like remark may be made with regard to the prophecy of Malachi quoted at the beginning of this sermon——The prophet calls the temple the temple of the Messiah, The messenger of the covenant shall suddenly come to HIS temple——St. Matthew calls this same temple, the temple of God, chap. xxi. 12.——therefore Jesus the true Messiah is GOD: to whom alone temples are or can be truly dedicated. And to express this same divinity of Christ, there is a remarkable change of the persons in the prophet and the evangelist: the prophet says, Behold I will send MY messenger, and he shall prepare MY way before ME, &c. chap. iii. 1.: the evangelist, chap. xi. 10. Behold I send MY messenger before THY face, which shall prepare THY way before THEE.
It hath been generally supposed, that by this expulsion of the animals for sacrifice from the temple, Christ intended to denote the speedy cessation of the levitical ceremonies and sacrifice: as by the fig-tree, which he caused to wither from the root the next day, was denoted the utter extirpation of the Jewish oeconomy. And further some suppose *, "that Christ by this miracle did moreover signify the calling of the Jews to be God's people, the holiness of whose court was here vindicated by him from the prophaneness of secular commerce: a court, which however despised by the Jews, was part of that house of prayer, which was to be common to all nations:" and which Christ himself was, of whom this house or temple was a figure. And whoever will be at the pains to read the two last chapters of the prophet Malachi, will be convinced and satisfied of this fact.—He declared however sufficiently both in his triumphal entry amidst the hosannas of the people, and by this high act of power as well as by healing the blind and the lame that came to him in the temple, that he was indeed that expected Messiah, who should come into the world to

fulfil the law and the prophets, to refine his people, and set up his kingdom amongst men. And though the Jews obstinately and perversely stood out against all these convictions of the reality of his divine mission, though they rejected him who hath now cast them from his house and temple and put a sad period to their state and services; we, having this example before our eyes, shall surely be wiser than to incur the same vengeance by committing the same offences:—For let us consider in the

IIIId place, (as one use we may make of this great miracle) that whatever abuses there may be in the house of God, we are now, under the gospel, each one of us that house; we are each one of us the temple of God, a temple dedicated to the service of the ever blessed Trinity, who, if we in faith desire it, will inhabit it as really as the house which Solomon built,—a solemn caution surely to us all to keep this temple holy! for if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is HOLY, which temple YE ARE *. It is naturally impure: it is naturally a den of thieves †, a

* 1 Cor. iii. 17.
† See by all means Jeremiah, chap. vii. ver. 1—12.

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Driven out of the temple.

receptacle of beastly passions, filthy lusts, evil imaginations, proud, selfish and corrupt desires. Wherefore if we desire to have it the house of prayer, where God may be served in spirit and in truth, we must suffer Jesus with his scourge to drive out all these merchants, all these profaners of his temple; to reform, refine and purify us.

Reformation is the first step to holiness: nothing is quickened except it die ‡. True mortification must of necessity make way for the life of Christ in the soul: and it is in vain to think of having him with us, if we do not die to sin, if our dross is not purged away: if we retain in his house those that are his enemies, which brought him to the cross, and would nail him to it again, were he as before in all his humiliation preaching up self-denial amongst men. These three great enemies of his are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Concupiscence, avarice, pride, like the buyers and sellers in the temple they have taken their seats in all our hearts: but these are enemies to God: they are contrary to the Spirit of Christ; and it is as impossible to be his disciples, while either one or all of these have place in us, as it was for the house

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 36.
Buyers and Sellers of God to be at the same time a house of prayer and a den of thieves. For these are thieves indeed: thieves, which rob God of the honour and glory due to him from every soul, and which he receives with pleasure, when offered from a grateful, thankful heart; thieves, which rob the soul not only of its future happiness, but of its present, of its earnest and foretaste of celestial bliss, that life in God for which it was created: and out of which it is in a constant state of fluctuation, like Noah's dove, finding no place of rest for its feet, till the arm of mercy be reached forth to receive it into the ark of peace and security.

Imagine not therefore when you hear of these buyers and sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and of these money-changers driven by Jesu out of the temple: imagine not that you have no concern in this scripture, and that it is only a mighty display of your Lord's divine power and authority: but recollect with your own souls, whether he hath done this work in you—and fat as a refiner to purge and purify you—whether the threefold scourge of true repentance, made up of conviction, contrition, and conversion, hath overthrown the seats of sin, and driven out those who fat and
and told there? whether Christ hath fully convinced you of sin; whether he hath been a swift witness against the plague of your evil nature, and those many vices which take up their habitations under the shelter of the old man? whether he hath driven out that pride and high-mindedness, that self-esteem, which is a dangerous inhabitant in the Christian temple, and which, above all others, would strive to keep out the meek and humble Jesus, with his lowly self-denying spirit, from entering? whether he hath driven out those filthy deeds of the flesh, that vile lust and concupiscence which makes the temple of God an house of uncleanness, and profanes it to the most unhallowed uses? whether he hath driven out that vain love of the world, that base and mean covetousness which is downright idolatry, and all its attendants, as extortion, injustice, rapine, and self-seeking, a blood-thirsty crew, content with nothing less than the blood of the soul, which they inhabit, a den of thieves and murderers, which not only defile the temple of the living God, but with the Jews join to crucify the great inhabitant of it.

Make this use of the miracle, and turn it thus into self-examination, and you will find
find it greatly profitable to your souls; more especially, when reflecting on the high dignity of your bodies, redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, sanctified by the holy Spirit, and inhabited by all the divine three persons in the Godhead—when reflecting on the glory, dignity and advantage of thus consecrating them as living temples to the eternal and adorable Jehovah—when reflecting on these you see and seriously lay to heart the great evil, the detestable iniquity of profaning these temples of God by that abominable sin which cost the Son of God so dear, and will cost your soul the suffering of all that he suffered thro' endless eternity, together with the loss of happiness for ever! obstinate sinners thus themselves prepare the scourge, with which they will be driven from the eternal temple of the most high God possessor of heaven and earth!

Nor should you once only see, that this work of reformation be performed and begun in your heart: without continual watchfulness, without fervent zeal, without repeated strokes, these evil inhabitants, these indwelling lusts and passions will not be driven out: perpetual war is to be waged with these old inhabitants of Canaan:
It is by little and little, that the Lord our God will put them out before us*. So that it is our wisdom to remain in unwearied watchfulness, to wait upon Christ, and seek for his succour in all the means of grace, and to fortify our souls by performing therein the acceptable service of God, and making them by all holy exercises, by devout supplication and prayer, by meditation, fasting, reading, hearing and receiving the Eucharist, really the house of prayer, really the temple of God, where upon the altar of an heart flaming with divine love, we continually present our prayers and praises before him, more acceptable through Christ than all burnt-sacrifices, than the blood of a thousand rams.—Then will he assuredly bless us, and when he shall destroy this temple made with hands, this corruptible tabernacle of clay, the glory of the latter house shall far exceed that of the former†; for this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality‡: and in the new Jerusalem we shall live clothed with righteousness and glory, in the perpetual

* See Deut. vii. 22.
† Haggai ii. 9.
‡ 1 Cor. xv. 53.
fruition of the love of God our Father, and our everlasting delight.

But if we continue to profane his temple, if we consider our bodies as nothing more than machines created to eat and drink, and to take their fill of earthly pleasures, and then to die and rot in corruption like the beasts that perish: if we employ our souls in the pursuit and contemplation of all worldly things; if pride, lust, and covetousness, in whatever shape they appear, and in whatever manner they are varied, according to our different circumstances: if these, I say, possess our hearts and make the temple of God a den of thieves—yet let us remember, that if here we will not admit Jesus to fit as a refiner and purifier,—he will fit one day as a judge and a consumer: For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch*.—Who shall be able to abide this day of his coming?—How much more blessed would it be, if now you would fear the Lord and hearken to his great and

* Malachi iv. 2.
Driven out of the temple.

terrible name, that so the sun of righteousness might arise upon you with healing in his wings? O could you have the least glimpse of his infinite love and affection to each of your souls, could you but see and be convinced how much that God who is love, desireth your salvation, you would not hesitate one moment to admit him as a refiner, to reform and purge away all things contrary to himself: you would not fail to give up all self-seeking, self-love, and self-esteem: and to wish nothing, desire nothing, and do nothing but in conformity to the will of the infinitely gracious God, and the Spirit of the lovely adorable Jesus.

Were you but warmed by this love, were you but so enamoured as to have this longing desire in your heart to be one with Christ, speedily would it put a stop to all the vanity of your life: and nothing would be permitted to enter into your heart, or proceed from thence, but what came from and returned to God: you would soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the chains of all holy affections and desires, your mouth would have a watch set upon it, your ears would willingly hear nothing that did not tend to God, nor your eyes be open but to see and find occasion of doing good. In a
word when this love had got your heart as well as your head, it would then be with you as it was with the merchant, who found a pearl of great price, it will make you gladly sell all that you have, to buy it. For all that hath seized and possessed the heart of any man, whatever the merchant of this world hath got together, whether riches, power, honour, or reputation, loses all its value, is counted but as dung, and willingly parted with as soon as this glorious pearl, the love of God in Christ, is discovered and found by him.—And it will infallibly be found, as soon as the soul's sincere desire is turned to God for it: as soon as with the afflicted blind and lame in the gospel, you can, in fervent desire to be healed, ask of Jesus to make you whole. For his desire is always turned to man: his loving heart is always bent to do them good: and he runs to meet even the least motion of returning prodigals: he desireth not the death of a sinner: see him before he entered in majesty to take vengeance, see him weeping over Jerusalem as a sufficient proof hereof: hear him pathetically exclaiming, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes!—This was sorrowful
rowful indeed to have withstood all offers of grace so long and so obstinately, till they were utterly withdrawn. And God hath said, that his Spirit shall not always strive with man *: do not, therefore, always strive with it, contend with, grieve and molest it: left happily these things should be hid from your eyes.

There is a day, which states as well as individuals may outlive; and an abuse of greater measures of grace and light, is likely to bring on a more speedy withdrawing of God's favour: and that withdrawn, what miserable wretches are we! left to the darkness and horror of our own corrupt and condemning passions, consigned to the upbraidings, and sad society of tormenting fiends!—Some there are who can sit and hear these things with as much indifference as if they were not human creatures, as if they were not one day to give an exact account: and after call upon call, varied in every way, and after every sort, still retain the polluting guests in the temple, and revile or laugh at those who would shew them a more excellent way! however they may despise, however they may be ignorant of their own true happi-

* Gen. vi. 3.
ness, may the infinite mercy of our God forbid, that these things should be for ever hid from their eyes: God grant that they may know at least in this their day the things which belong to their peace! *O that they were wise, O that they would understand these things, that they would consider their latter end*!

Brethren, the power that reduced Jerusalem and its temple to destruction for the crying sins of those that dwelt therein, can as easily reduce us and all we have: his arm is not shortened: and however we seem already to have forgot them, yet we want not recent proofs of its tremendous power: and how can you think of standing before that God in his glory, whose brightness will be ten-fold above the brightness of the mid-day sun, before whom in his humble and despised state the Pharisees and rulers, and all the merchants of the temple, the chief priests, the elders, and the soldiers could not stand!—O the wrath of the Lamb will be exceeding fierce, but there will be no hiding from it: if we seek to the rocks to hide us, the flinty rocks will melt before his awful presence; if we fly to the mountains

* Deut. xxxii. 29.*
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...to cover us, the mountains will dissolve beneath his glowing feet; yea the great arch of heaven itself and the vast globe of earth shall pass away as a scroll, and be consumed with fervent heat,—and while all nature with insufferable ruin and noise, is rushing into final destruction, the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day *. On that day we must all appear before him, all stand before this mighty refiner, in the midst of his great temple the heavens.

Consider, therefore, with yourselves, how you would wish on that day to have spent your lives—what do you imagine will then give you satisfaction—will days spent in vanity, folly and pride, in idleness, trifling and sin; nights in luxury, revelling, intemperate pleasures, balls, plays and gaming—lives of covetousness, drunkenness, lust,

* 2 Theff. i. 7, 8, 9, 10.
p r i d e ,  i n t e m p e r a n c e ? — T h i n k ,  w i l l  t h e  r e f l e c t i o n  o n  t h e s e  t h i n g s  b e  w h a t  y o u r  s o u l s  w i l l  t h e n  d e s i r e ?  F a r ,  v e r y  f a r  f r o m  i t — t h e s e  w i l l  b e  t h e  t h i n g s  t h a t  w i l l  c a u s e  y o u  t o  c a l l  u p o n  t h e  r o c k s  t o  h i d e  y o u ,  t h e  m o u n t a i n s  t o  c o v e r  y o u .  L i v e s  o f  h o l i n e s s ,  s e r i o u s n e s s  a n d  s o b r i e t y ,  o f  t r u e  r e l i g i o n ,  o f  a  g o o d  a n d  r i g h t  d i s c h a r g e  o f  y o u r  d u t y  i n  e v e r y  s t a t e ,  l i v e s  d e d i c a t e d  t o  G o d ,  l e d  i n  h i s  f e a r  a n d  l o v e — t h e s e  a n d  t h e s e  o n l y  w i l l  p r o f i t ,  c a n  c o m f o r t  y o u .

A n d  s i n c e  a s  c e r t a i n l y  a s  y o u  a r e  a l l  h e r e  n o w  p r e s e n t  i n  t h e  h o u s e  o f  G o d ,  a n d  I  t r u s t  w i t h  o n e  d e s i r e  s o  t o  s e r v e  h i m  h e r e ,  a s  t o  h a v e  t h e  b l e s s e d  h o p e  o f  s e r v i n g  h i m  e t e r n a l l y  h e r e a f t e r — s i n c e  a s  c e r t a i n l y  a s  y o u  a r e  a l l  h e r e  p r e s e n t ,  s o  c e r t a i n l y  y o u  m u s t  a l l  s t a n d  b e f o r e  t h e  j u d g m e n t - s e a t  o f  C h r i s t ,  l e t  m e  o b t a i n  o n e  f a v o u r  a t  a l l  y o u r  h a n d s ,  l e t  m e  p r e v a i l  w i t h  y o u  i n  s e r i o u s n e s s  t o  p r o p o s e  t o  y o u r  h e a r t s ,  t h a t  q u e s t i o n  b e f o r e  p u t ,  W h a t  l i f e  w h e n  I  a p p e a r  b e f o r e  t h e  j u s t  j u d g e ,  w h a t  l i f e  s h a l l  I  t h e n  w i s h  t o  h a v e  l e a d  u p o n  e a r t h ? — C o n s i d e r  t h i s  i n  y o u r  c l o s e t  a n d  i n  t h e  r e t r i e d  c o r n e r s  o f  y o u r  h e a r t s ;  a n d  a s  y o u  f i n d  t h e  r e p l y  f r o m  a  c l e a r  c o n v i c t e d  c o n s c i e n c e ,  s o  l i v e ,  g o  a n d  d o  s o ,  l e f t  h a p l y  t h i s  q u e s t i o n  m a y  b e  a  m e a n s  o f  g r i e v o u s  s e l f - c o n d e m n a t i o n :  w h i c h  m a y  t h e
the divine and powerful grace of God prevent for the sake of Jesus Christ; and render it on the contrary, by his effectual working, a powerful means to awaken, encourage, and stir us up to greater zeal, and after more earnest heed to the things which belong to our everlastung peace, &c. Amen.
DISCOURSE XVIII.

On the Barren FIG-TREE.

St. Matt. xxi. 18, 19.

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

The time of our Saviour's passion now drew near, the time when the measure of the iniquities of the Jews was to be filled up, and their neglect of the things which belonged to their peace punished with judicial blindness and fatal hardness of heart. To warn,
admonish and reclaim them if possible, Christ had now for more than three years taken every opportunity to open their eyes and ears by many miracles big with love and power, by many affectionate and awakening discourses, the truth of which they could not resist, but would not receive. And finding all his acts of mercy, all his calls of love most unthankfully rejected, he began now to clothe himself with majesty and honour, and as being the most mighty to gird his sword upon his thigh, and to shew them by actions as well as words what they must expect from a God of justice, who refuse the gospel of a God of love. We see him, in his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, riding prosperously, giving lively proofs of his truth, his meekness and righteousness: we see his right hand teaching him terrible things, "his almighty power accomplishing things terrible, and fearful indeed to his enemies," when he drove them from their seats in his temple, and purged the house of prayer from that unhallowed throng which had made it a den of thieves, thus pointing out to the Jews that speedy abolition of their rites and temple, which soon followed their crucifixion of him. And that they might learn from actions as well as words, the destruction
On the Barren Fig-Tree.

hanging over their state and nation, as he returned next morning into the city, he gave them in a very expressive emblem a strong picture of their destined overthrow: and shewed them in the barren fig-tree what they must expect when found barren by him who hungered for fruit, who earnestly desired from them fruits meet for repentance. That there might remain no doubt with them or with us of the meaning of these wonderful acts, he immediately delivered such parables as fully explain the purpose of these significant miracles, declaring to us in that of the father and the two sons, the rejection of the Jews, and the receiving of the Gentiles, and fully evidencing in that of the vineyard, the husbandmen of which flew the heir, the state and proceedings of the Jews; nay, he expressly says to them upon the close of that parable, Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the FRUITS thereof.

Moreover that the sense of these parables also might never be mistaken in the xxiiiid and xxivth chapters of this Evangelist, he denounces, in plain and express terms, the destruction of the Jewish church and nation, delivering such prophecies concerning their approaching ruin, as were verified in the fullest
On the Barren Fig-Tree,

fullest manner, when that city was destroyed by the Romans, and which are undeniable evidences to the truth of the Christian faith.

But though these great and important mysteries have their first relation to the Jewish people, yet we must not conceive that they are things indifferent to us, seeing all that happened to them, and all that is written concerning them, happened and were written for our example and admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come—and are lively monitors to us, that if we act like the Jews, like them we must incur the just judgment of a righteous God—who will render to every man according to his works.—In this view I recommended in my last discourse, to your serious consideration, the miracle of our Saviour's driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and endeavoured to enforce such a practical improvement of it as might render this Scripture serviceable to your instruction in righteousness. With the same view and to the same purpose I propose now to consider the miracle which immediately followed the former, that of the barren fig-tree withered by the word of Jesus. In order
order to our perfect knowledge of it, it will be proper,

Ift. To state the literal story, and to obviate some difficulties which have been urged from St. Mark's account of it.

II. To shew its exact completion in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; and,

III Idly, To point out to you the continual instruction held forth by this speaking miracle to all christians: and the lively admonition it gives to hypocritical professors who have a form of godliness but deny the power of it *, who bring not forth the fruits of the kingdom of God. And may this mighty instance of the vindictive power of our Lord upon such awaken all our souls to a zealous seeking after this power, and these fruits of holiness, lest, if haply the barren leaves of profession only be found upon us, we also should be sentenced to everlasting barenness.

Ist, then I am to state and explain the literal story.

There is no difficulty at all in St. Matthew's account of the matter; he tells us

* 2 Tim. iii. 5. that
that Jesus as he was coming to Jerusalem in the morning, being a man subject to the same innocent infirmities of human nature that we are, was an hungry: and seeing one (man) one particular fig-tree in the way, whose appearance we must naturally conclude promised fruit, he came to it in search thereof, but was disappointed, finding nothing at all upon it but those leaves only, which had led him to hope that so flourishing a tree to fight might not be without fruit also: upon which perceiving that it had only leaves and no fruit at all, not even green figs, which was a sure proof that it was a barren tree, he said, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.—Such is the account St. Matthew gives us of the event, and for our better understanding it we must remark, that the nature of the fig-tree is such that it always puts forth its fruit with or before its leaves: so that it is indubitably certain, the fig-tree which hath leaves only without any fruit at all, green or ripe, is a barren fig-tree, and of consequence cumbreth the ground. But besides, we should be informed that the fig-tree in such warm climates as that of Judæa, produces ripe fruit twice in the year, the first time about the
On the Barren Fig-Tree.

the beginning of the summer, and the second time in autumn: and we may have observed in our own garden figs even in this cold climate of ours, that after the leaves are shed, there generally remain some small ones upon the tree which are killed by the winter's cold, but which in warmer countries are matured and brought to perfection early in the year, and are what is called the first crop.—So that hence you will gather that when our Saviour found this fig-tree had nothing thereon but leaves only, he justly condemned it as being perfectly barren. Had he found upon it green figs that would have satisfied him, since he who was the divine light, the sun of righteousness, could as easily have matured them in nature as in grace: and as the tree was so promising by means of its outward verdure, though the full season for ripe figs was not yet come, he had great reason to expect that he should at least have found something more than leaves.

These considerations will tend to clear up what St. Mark* says on this subject rather more fully than St. Matthew. He tells us also, that Jesus as he was going to Jeru-

* Mark xi. 12—14.
in the morning was hungry: that he saw a fig-tree afar off at some distance in the way, the high-road, as St. Matthew expresses himself, which had leaves upon it, sufficient and reasonable evidence as hath been just observed for an expectation of some fruit: its appearance however invited Jesus to go and see, if haply, as it had so fair an outside, he might find any thing thereon: he only went with a probability of finding, if HAPLY, &c., says the Evangelist—and he presently subjoins the reason, why there was only a probability—for the time of figs was not yet—\[\text{
\vspace{0.3cm}
}\]it was not yet the full season of figs, though that season drew near: however, when he came to it, he found NOTHING but LEAVES: he found that it was absolutely a barren fig-tree, that its leaves and outside shew held out false colours and pretended to what it really had not: since in fruitful fig-trees, leaves and fruit are always the certain attendants of each other, and if you see a fig-tree with leaves you may be sure it has fruit if it be a tree that bears fruit at all. St. Mark agrees with St. Matthew in the circumstances following: Jesus said to the fig-tree, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever; and his disciples coming past the next day observed the mighty effect of his
his maledictive sentence, the fig-tree was dried up from the roots *.

Now in this account of the matter which I have given you from St. Mark's gospel, I dare say there appears not anything like a difficulty: and you will be surprised, when recollecting that infidels and enemies to the gospel have taken more handle of this miracle than of almost any other wrought by our Saviour: which shews the weakness of their cause and the badness of their arguments, founded as they are upon so mean an understanding of the sacred scriptures.—Their objections arise from St. Mark's words, as they stand in their literal order: Seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon (and when he came to it he found nothing but leaves,) for the time of figs was not yet.—The whole difficulty and the foundation of all the mistakes, in this passage, is laid in referring the last sentence, for the time of figs was not yet,

* The fig-tree is remarkable for its abundant sap and moisture which renders the miracle more extraordinary: the word of Christ was like a flash of his lightening which in a moment blasts the most verdant trees. How fearfully awful is his power, who hath all these elements in his hand!
to the sentence immediately foregoing—
*When he came to it he found nothing but leaves:* whereas this sentence should be put in a parenthesis, and the last clause be read and understood as a reason given for the words, *if haply he might, &c.* Read the passage thus transposed and all is clear:
*He came, if HAPLY he might find any thing thereon, FOR the time of figs was not yet*—
(for, observe, answers to *haply*) and when he came to it he found nothing but leaves.—

Thus reading and understanding the words, there is not the least shadow of a difficulty or possibility of objection in this passage which has so much perplexed the interpreters, and pleased the enemies of our most holy faith. And to shew you, that thus throwing back the reason after the parenthesis is not uncommon, turn to the xvith chapter of this same Evangelist *Mark*, and you'll find a case exactly parallel: in the 3d verse you read, *they said among themselves, who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?*—What was the reason that they were so anxious to know who should do this? that reason is subjoined at the latter end of the 4th verse, *FOR it was very great*:
and yet there is a long sentence going between: thus stands the whole passage: *Who shall*
shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? (and when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away) FOR it was very great.—So that you observe, the above is exactly parallel to this much controverted passage concerning the fig-tree, whose very verdant appearance led our Saviour to expect that it might have even ripe fruit, tho' it was not yet quite the season of figs; he could not suppose, from its external show, that it had nothing but show, no fruit at all, only leaves: but when he found this to be the case, and that it was perfectly barren, he acted in a judicial manner, and made its fault its punishment.

Thus even in the letter there is nothing to which one would imagine the veriest infidel could object, nothing certainly which a believer can stumble at or hesitate to receive: there is a passage in the subsequent parable which seems to cast light upon this, Matt. xxi. 34. After the householder had done all that was requisite for his vineyard, and let it out, we are told, WHEN the time of the fruit DREW NEAR, ἐγγυσεν ο οὐαρος του ο限期ων—he sent his servants, nay and his Son also: so here Christ also, the reality of what that parable shadowed forth, when the time drew near, the full time of figs was not yet, though
though it drew near, came to the fig-tree and found it barren. And the parable of the fig-tree which he before delivered serves well to illustrate this whole matter: a certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none: (even as Christ came to this fig-tree, in reasonable expectation of fruit, sought and found none:) Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, behold these THREE YEARS I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none; cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground? and he answering, said unto him, lord, let it alone this year also till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down *.—

This was now the fourth year of Christ's ministry, when he caused the barren fig-tree to wither away: in the middle of which he himself was crucified, and the fig-tree this year also was found without fruit, and so incurred the deserved sentence.

Thus I have explained the letter of this miracle and given you a clear and easy solution of the supposed difficulty in St. Mark; so that it would be needless and tiresom to inform you of the various methods which

learned expositors have taken to untie this knot; though I think the most learned of them all are agreed that the words should be read thus in a parenthesis, that the time of figs, καιρὸς τῶν Συμνών, refers to the first season of ripe figs, or at least to the time of gathering them; though some insisting upon it that the time of figs was come, (which yet by no means appears) are for reading the words as if expressive of that time, either with an interrogation—εἰ δὲ καιρὸς Συμνών; for was it not the time of figs? or by supposing the sentence elliptical, for where he was, it was the time of figs: each of which interpretations appear, to me at least, harsh and unnatural. It seems clear beyond dispute, that this fig-tree was out of the common way, more verdant than usual; and the remarks above made, concerning the nature of the fig-tree, which always hath leaves and fruit together, if fruitful, sufficiently obviate every difficulty—and more especially when we refer to that spiritual interpretation of the miracle which is on all hands allowed: however, before I come to it I will just add bishop Hall's excellent paraphrase*

* See his plain and familiar explication of all the hard texts of the scripture—on Mark xi. 13.
of the passage, and then proceed:—"When he saw a fig-tree in the way he came purposely to seek that fruit which he knew he should not find ripe and seasonable, that he might hence take occasion to work that exemplary miracle upon it, which ensued: for when he found only store of leaves upon it and no fruit, that he might in this tree shew how much he hates a formal profession (such as the Jews made) of religion, without an answerable fruitfulness, he cursed the fig-tree and said, let that which is thy fault be thy punishment; thou bearest no fruit at all, whereas the nature of thy kind is ever to have one fruit under another, always some, though not always in a full maturity: since therefore thou bearest no fruit at all, never mayst thou more bear any fruit: and presently the fig-tree as blasted by that word of judgment withered away." And this,

Idly, which was now done in the fig-tree, in less than a century was fulfilled in the Jewish church and nation, the destruction of which it is universally agreed by all commentators was figuratively foretold by this act of our Saviour. He saw in this his church and people the leaves of profession very green and flourishing to the outward eye;
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eye; much were they in the externals of religion, zealous for the law of Moses, exceedingly strict and superstitiously nice in outward washings and ceremonies. He hungered* after their salvation, he ardently longed for and earnestly desired their souls eternal health, and under these fair leaves of profession wished and hoped to find, if not the full ripe fruits, yet at least the bud-dings of holiness, faith, the great principle thereof, good desires and right inclinations, which he, the divine light, the sun of righteousness would have matured and brought

* See by all means Zec·rus in Matt. xxii. 18, &c. St. Jerom remarks, that Christ hungered after the salvation of believers, as on the cross he thirsted with the desire of them. Esurit Christus salutem credentium, sicut etiam in cruce sitit nostri desiderio. Eusebius remarks—effurit dominus non ficus, sed fidem, the Lord hungered after not figs but faith, not the fruit of the tree, but of the man, non fructus arboris sed corporis.

† John Gerhard in his Harmony, page 164, observes, Christ shews by his returning early in the morning to an ungrateful city, how much he desires with a spiritual hunger and thirst the salvation of his people Israel: of which the hunger which he felt in the way, was a figure; by his going to the fig-tree seeking fruit, he shews that he expects the fruit of faith and good works from the Jews: by cursing the tree when he found no fruit, he shews the proximity of the Jews to temporal excision and cursing for their contempt of he Messiah: who now for three years had laboured in vain to render them fruitful, &c.
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to perfection †. But alas! he was wholly deceived; for though they had been told that the season of fruits was approaching, though they had been exhorted to take care and provide those fruits for the great master of the vineyard—Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand—bring forth fruits meet for repentance*: though he came for three years, seeking fruit and found none, tho' all due means had been used to render the tree fruitful by digging about it and dunging it, by the many wonderful works which Christ wrought, by the many awakening and affectionate discourses which he delivered; this notwithstanding the tree remained barren, the Jewish people, their rulers and Pharisees persisted in obstinate infidelity, and the things which concerned their peace were at length wholly hidden from their eyes. He shewed his earnest desire, his hunger for their salvation, when he wept over the once beloved, but now forsaken and devoted city. And to shew them the determined purpose of God, if yet they repented not, nor brought forth fruits, he wrought this miracle on the fig-tree, which was done in the public way, for pub-

* Matt. iii. 2, 8:
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lic inspection, and that all who had eyes might see, and which, though the most vindictive of any performed by him, yet shews his great mercy and magnifies his adorable clemency: in that when punishing he lets fall his anger only on an inanimate, a useless, a barren tree *, but when blessing, men are always the object of his love, so true is his own most divine declaration, that the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them †. And it must be owned that the present miracle would have greatly conducted to this benign purpose, had the emblem before their eyes been duly considered and properly laid to the heart by the Jews; so that this act of vindictive justice was fraught with the greatest love to them, since the destruction of a barren tree might have been the means of saving a whole nation.—But they were proof against all miracles both of love and justice! To render them however wholly without excuse, our Saviour in this same chapter delivered in the parable of the housholder and his vineyard, the husbandmen of which slew the heir, a

* See Grotius on the place, who makes this same remark, as also doth S. Hilary con. 21. in Matt. page 309: In eo quidem bonitatis dominica argumentum reperiemus, &c. See the Author.
† Luke ix. 56.
most lively description of their ingratitude and approaching ruin, which they could not, they did not mistake. For we are told that the chief priests and Pharisees, when they heard his parables, perceived that he spake of them. Nay indeed he says positively, that the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the FRUITS thereof. And this miracle of drying up the fig-tree was nothing more than an emblematical representation in things of the same truth, which this parable taught in words: however that facts and parables might be abundantly confirmed by plain speeches, in the xxiiiid chapter he directly informs them of the judgment coming upon them. Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation—O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! see, how he hungered after this people's salvation! But now behold your house is left unto you desolate! the fig-tree is wholly withered, not for a season only, nor in some of its branches, but dried up from the roots! —And in the next chapter, the xxivth, you will read such pre-
predictions of the miseries that should attend the siege of Jerusalem, as must of necessity greatly strengthen your faith and kindle in you a godly jealousy over your own souls, that the fruits of holiness may not be found wanting there, when the great householder shall come seeking fruit: especially if you compare those predictions with the histories we have of that terrible and most astonishing event. For a destruction like to that of the Jewish state and nation by the Romans under their emperor Titus was never heard of and is not to be paralleled in story: such complete miseries, such consummate distresses no people ever suffered—for no other people ever crucified the incarnate Son of God! both within and without the walls famine, pestilence and sedition stalked abroad, and made the most deplorable havoc: infinite numbers, above a million of them, perished within the walls of Jerusalem: many dying upon the cross in extreme tortures there where they crucified the Saviour of the world, whose blood was now, according to their horrid imprecation, upon the heads of them and their children*

* See universal history, vol. II page 677. N. (P.) This lady, whose name was Miriam or Mary, had taken refuge with a vast number of others in this accursed city from
not one jot or tittle of whose prophecy fail-
ed, as that wretched mother help'd to prove, who murdered the fucking infant from her breast, and broil'd it, in wild fury to satiate her hunger — happy had it been for her, had she never borne, had she never given suck †! And as Titus fully compleated in ploughing up the walls and foundations of the city, thus remarkably ful-

from the beginning of the war. As the famine increased, the factious zealots who lived now altogether upon the plunder of the helpless, had often forced her into her house and carried off such provisions as she had been able to procure. She had often tried either by prayers to pre-
vail on them, or by the bitterest curses to provoke them to put an end to her miserable life: those inhuman mon-
sters still thought it too great a mercy to be granted to her. Filled at length with fury and despair, she snatches her fucking child from her bosom, cuts his throat and broils him: and having satiated her present hunger, she hid the rest. The smell of it soon drew those voracious carrions to her house; they threatened to put her to the most excruciating tortures, if she did not discover her provision to them: upon which she goes and fetches them the sad relics of her mangled infant and sets it be-
fore them, bids them eat heartily and not be squeamish, since she, the once tender mother of it, had made no scrup-
le to butcher, dress, and make a meal of it. At the sight of this horrid dish, those bloody hell-hounds, who never had till then felt the least spark of remorse or hu-
manity, were seized with such sudden dread that they went off trembling out of the house, and left the aston-
nished mother in full possession of her dismal fare!

† Matt. xxiv. 19.
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filling our Saviour's words, that there should not be left one stone upon another. And how desolate that house and place is now left, you have only to look into the accounts of travellers, who inform you that brambles, nettles and thorns overrun the sacred mount, Jerusalem, being become the habitation of dragons, and of owls, for the Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob and bath not pitied†! He hath stretched out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness ‡!—It would be too long for me to dwell upon the particulars of this dreadful siege, for which I can recommend you to no author, better than Josephus, who was himself greatly interested in that dire event, and whose account you will scarcely read dry-eyed*.—It suffices for my present purpose to have remarked thus much in proof of the exact completion of this mi-

† Lam. ii. 2.
‡ Isaiah xxxiv. 11.
* See also the Universal History, Vol. X. Octavo, page 668. I should, says Josephus, undertake an impossible task, were I to enter into a detail of all the cruelties of those impious wretches, it will be sufficient to say, that I do not think that, since the creation, any city ever suffered such dreadful calamities, or abounded with men so fertile in every kind of wickedness. Jewish War. chap. xi.
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Oracle wrought by our Lord, as also of those words, parables, and prophecies, which he delivered to the same purpose. For even as this barren Fig-tree withered away and was dried up from the roots,—so was it with the barren Jewish church and people, who, after Christ's death grew continually worse and worse, till the measure of their iniquities was completed, and that consummate desolation came upon them, which brought to utter confusion their place and nation.

An event, IIIdly, big with important instruction to us; for who that hears of or reads this astonishing fact, so plainly foretold, so exactly fulfilled, so well attested, so indisputably confirmed, who shall ever doubt, that the God of heaven is a God of justice, punishing iniquity and sin, who will by no means clear the guilty, but reward every man according to his works, whether they be good or evil? who shall dare to trifle with that Omnipotence, which thus shew'd his fearful indignation in the punishment of his own peculiar people—and if he spared not the natural branches, why should we expect that he should ra-

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ther spare us? Who can deny from this instance, that sin and punishment are connected together, and that the sure fruit of the one is the other? Who can deny from hence that the judgments of God for the iniquities of a people have awfully manifested themselves from heaven, when even the Roman Emperor himself tho' a heathen, as he survey'd the desolate Jerusalem and wept over that once favour'd city, declar'd that the hand of God was visibly stretched out against it, and that, had not the majesty of heaven fought for him, he could never have destroy'd the place; of which he pronounced himself not the conqueror, but only the weak instrument of the divine vengeance. And what arguments can we use to sooth our consciences, that the like destructions may not befall both states and individuals, if happily they also be found

† Titus, when returning victorious from Jerusalem, would not receive the congratulatory compliments of the neighbouring nations, nor the crowns they sent him in honour of his victory. So many memorable circumstances, the wrath of God so express, and his hand which he yet saw before his eyes, kept him in a profound astonishment; and it was this made him say, that he was not the conqueror, but only the weak instrument of the divine vengeance. See Boffuet's Universal History. Vol. II. p. 50 and 60.

fight-
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fighters against God, barren fig-trees, murderers of the beir? — Indisputably certain it is, that the God of love is a God of justice: that he cannot, he will not pass by sin unpunished; that sin and punishment have a natural connection, and that if we remain in the one, we must not be disappointed if we meet with the other. Let us not therefore deceive ourselves with any absurd and monstrous notions of the mercy of the supreme being as swallowing up his justice, when that justice hath manifested itself in innumerable instances, but in none more than in the great satisfaction for sin, even the death and sufferings of the immaculate Lamb, slain for the sins of the whole world. When we vainly presume upon God's mercy; let us look to the cross of the crucified Jesus, and there contemplate his flaming justice; and when terrified by the apprehension of that justice flaming against our own sins, let us contemplate the crucified Jesus, and learn to love and adore the deep and inexpressible mercy of God. So both his mercy and justice will be beautifully reconciled. And this consideration will lead us neither to be presumptuous in sinning, and vain in ill-founded hope, nei-

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neither to be barren in good fruits, nor slothful in the great business and work of the Lord; whose works we must work, while it is called to-day, lest the night come upon us, wherein no man can work, lest the Lord find us unfruitful and barren, and we be condemned for our negligence and sloth in the day of our labour below.

For God hath created us to answer the purpose of our creation: not to remain barren and idle; he expects that we should bring forth fruit, and in order thereto, he gives us all the means necessary, and will assist our endeavours with his light and grace if we sincerely seek for them. And well may he expect fruit, well may he expect grapes from a vineyard planted on so fruitful a hill. But if while he patiently waits and seeks for fruits from us, we bring forth only wild grapes, or remain barren and formal professors, with the outside shew, the mere leaves of a religion, wholly neglecting the inward power and life of it, tho' he doth indeed hunger after our salvation, though his heart is inclined towards us, and his love set upon us, though his soul desircth the first ripe fruits; yet if we continually disappoint him, if we bring them
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them not forth, if we love him not, for all his love to us, nor obey his blessed precepts, walking in holiness and truth before him; after much long-suffering, and after every means tried to bring us to fruitfulness, he will at length pass the dread sentence, and make our fault, our punishment for ever.—As one of the chief blessings, which was indeed the first, is, be fruitful and multiply.—So one of the saddest curses is, be no more fruitful. Thus the sin of hypocrites is made their punishment; they would not do good and therefore they shall do none: he that is fruitless, let him be fruitless still, and lose his false honour and ill-gained credit—wither away, and be dried up from the roots: the psalmist had seen this, I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree, Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea I sought him, but he could not be found!

Nothing is more dangerous to man, nothing is more odious to God than a formal outside profession without fruits: hypocrisy is detestable both to God and man: and I know not against what our Saviour ever inveighed with so much severity as against this
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this aggravated evil. For highly aggravated it is, and terribly enhanced the account which the Pharisee of every place and age has to make, who under a cloke of extraordinary zeal for religion conceals the most diabolical purposes: and thus hath not only all his other sins to answer for but the dreadful crime of hypocrisy superadded to all the rest!—They think themselves wise; and alas! none so foolish as they! for vain are all their attempts! God sees the heart; men may be deceived, but the omniscient searcheth the deep things, the most hidden purposes of all our souls! It is true, religion, as concerned with man compounded of body and spirit, must have a body as well as a spirit, must have an outside form as well as an inward life: the outward means as well as the inward grace: the one is as necessary to it as the other: wherefore we should be very careful not only how we attempt to separate these, but how we condemn any who have the outside, unless we see their vices manifestly contradict it, and so scandalize the religion they profess: it is not ours to penetrate the recesses of the heart; but it is ours to know for ourselves, whether our outward profession be the consequence
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sequence of an inward renewal of mind, or a pretence only for base and worldly purposes: if so, we are barren fig-trees and near to cursing. For the earth, says St. Paul, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:‡ fruits from the dew of God’s grace will ever obtain his mercy, the fruits of an holy, good and exemplary life: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned*!

They who have the means of grace and are yet so far from bringing forth the expected fruit, that they are productive of evil; such formal, sinful professors must expect nothing but the natural consequence of evil, punishment.

This is a matter which well deserves consideration: for formal profession is, alas! much more common amongst men, that it is imagined there is scarce a sinner, but hath this also to add in aggravation of his other offences; since almost every sinner is moreover one of your formal professors, a tree that hath leaves only; for what is his bap-

‡ Heb. vi. 7. * Ver. 8.
tisn but the leaves of profession wherein he hath promised, but promised only to renounce sin, the world, and the devil? what is the name he bears, that of christian,—and call him by any other, and he would think you did him great wrong—what is this high and honoured name of christian to him, but a name of mere profession? he only is a christian who is anointed with the holy Spirit and conformed to the life and image of his great examplar Christ; what then is he who is a sinner, a profess'd sinner, and yet called a christian?—Besides what is the coming to church, the prayers, the worship of such men—what but leaves only? God, when he sees men in his church, expects to find in them the fruits of holiness: and what if he find leaves only: only the bare profession of faith, which yet is with many so much a profession as to be taken up and embraced solely because their fathers embraced it, (as good a reason for Mahometism as Christianity) and which hath never done even its first work, caused them to die to sin and to rise again unto righteousness! — We, my brethren, professing with one consent our faith in the same gospel are now assembled to honour our God in
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in that place where his more immediate presence dwelleth: his eye is upon each one of us: well may we say how dreadful, how awfully dreadful is this most solemn place! Not a secret in our hearts but he knoweth altogether! and can we, dare we now lay those hearts open before him, as convinced that they have, or at least heartily desire to have the fruits of true repentance and holiness: that their intentions are right and their views directed to the true end before him? 'tis vain to think of deceiving, 'tis vain to refuse an answer—not one of you have a thought secret from this all-seeing God, not one of you have a thought which shall not be revealed on that day! great and ador-able Lord God, awful in majesty, wonderful in thy doings, searching the heart and trying out all our ways—how are we abased before thee, whom we are so utterly unworthy to approach, and whose love we have so greatly abused.

We are in thy presence, we fear not to come hither—and yet we want that which alone can fit us for it!—O convince every offender of their sin and danger in this respect; let us not approach the place where thy honour dwelleth, while de-

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terminated to dishonour thee; and now, God of light and truth shine with such power on the hearts of those who come to this house, merely through form or fashion, without sincere love to thee, and earnest desires after their souls wealth, that they may dread the punishment prepared for such, and fly from the sin, which alone can make them fit objects of thy saving mercy!

Many there are who carry their profession much higher than those above-mentioned: who think that these leaves will do without the ripe fruit: who think the mere opus operatum, of religion, the work done, sufficient to justification: but this is a dangerous and destructive mistake; for if we pray, come to church, receive the sacrament, fast, give alms and the like, to purchase salvation, to bribe heaven, to build upon as our own works, while at the same time we are deficient in the greater things, the inward life of these outward duties, in justice, judgment, and truth—let us remember that these are leaves only, and if Christ find nothing else upon the tree, he will condemn it to everlasting barrenness: let such consult nature, for
for the things of grace: and then they will be taught very emphatically, that the husbandman never thinks that fruit-tree hath answered the end of its planting, which is covered with leaves, but continually deficient in fruit: *cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground,* will at length be the sentence of such a useless tree.

God knows the form, as well as the *power* of religion are greatly lost amongst us at present: the form however is necessary to the power: let us therefore, my beloved, be well advised in this needful point, not to separate the one from the other, but to implore in and by the *means* such supplies of God's *grace,* as may enable us to bring forth the full ripe fruits of holiness. These alone are the things that will avail us in time or eternity: *for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.* If therefore your *faith* is not productive of this *love,* which is the fulfilling of the law, vain, very vain are all your professions; in vain we preach, in vain you pretend to believe.

*Gal. v. 6.*

But
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But in the name of God I exhort you seriously to reflect, what will be the effect of such a formal profession, as well to yourselves as your nation:—even your own and its speedy desolation! Look at that Jerusalem which was once the city of God, the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth: see what woes fell upon it, what terrible devastation overwhelmed it! the great sin of that people was INFIDELITY: a sin pregnant with every other, teeming with every iniquity, for it is want of faith only which causes men to continue in the darkness of unrighteousness. Tho' they had call upon call, and warning upon warning, as well from our Saviour as from his apostles, and many very many others, both ordinary and extraordinary before and during the time of the siege*—yet they rejected

* Four years before the war was declared a countryman, says Josephus, fell a crying, "a voice is gone out from the east, a voice is gone out from the west, a voice is gone out from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem, and against the temple, a voice against bridegrooms and against brides, a voice against all the people," from that time he ceased neither night nor day, crying, Wo, wo to Jerusalem! he redoubled his cries on the feast days; no other word came there out of his mouth: those who pitied him, those who cursed him, those who gave
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jected them all against their own souls, and were left at last to perish in their blood. And is not God as merciful to us; do we now want continual warnings from nature and from his word? and yet can we with satisfaction answer our consciences, that we use them better than the Jews did, bring them nearer to our hearts, or behold more national fruits of reformation and repentance? the calls of the word are from time to time neglected: like Gallio we care for none of these things *, or cry out with Festus,

gave him the necessaries of life, could never get ought from him, but that terrible sentence, *wo to Jerusalem!* he was seized, examined and condemned by the magistrates to be whipp'd; at every question and every lash he answered, without ever complaining, *wo to Jerusalem!* being dismist as a madman he ran up and down the whole country, incessantly repeating his sad prediction. Seven years did he continue to cry in this manner without relaxation, yet without his voice being weakened. At the time of the last siege of Jerusalem, he shut himself up in the city, patrolling indefatigably round the walls, and crying with all his might, *wo to the temple, wo to the city, wo to all the people!* and at last he added, *wo to myself!* and at the same instant was carried off by a stone shot from an engine. See Boffuet, &c. p. 52, vol. 2. The reader can no where see how exactly all our Saviour's prophecies were fulfilled in regard to the destruction of this city, than in archbishop Tillotson's sermons on the subject, vol. 12th of his works.

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the man is mad! * The calls of nature we resolve into mere bug-bears, natural causes, things of course, and tho' perhaps just awaken'd by the noise and shock, and frightened into a prayer, turn our sides, and fall again to sleep right composedly!—But is not this acting too much like the unhappy Jews, upon whom was poured the spirit of deep sleep, and their eyes were closed †, whose hearts were hardened, and their ears dull of hearing;—Is this acting, like christians, and reasonable creatures who must one day give an account; is this living, as if we did indeed believe, there was a just God over us; is this using the short span, as being the time only allotted us to prepare for an eternity of misery or bliss?—"Oh eternity, how awakening are the thoughts of thee: who so stupid, so senseless, as not to feel a trembling in his loins, when this thought comes into his mind"—What if I should be lost and miscarry for ever?" ‡ What if you and I, my brother, should be lost and miscarry for ever? what then would all we have said and done here avail to comfort or

† Matt. xiii. 14, 15.
support us? and you'll grant, there may be a probability of miscarrying: and if so we are egregiously to blame to remain one moment in a state where there is an absolute certainty of so doing, in a state of barren, sinful profession of the religion of Jesus, whose life and death are proofs to us, that barren fig-trees shall never flourish in his kingdom; that sinners shall never see God, and that unless we abound in the fruits of holiness, and the works of the Lord, we shall have lived far worse than in vain, we shall have lived only to die everlastingly!

These are not things indifferent, pertaining to one man, and not to another; we are all call'd to the same grace, the same holiness: we are or ought to be all members of Christ, and so one of another: and in sincere desire after your welfare I call you to a due reflection on them, to more and more advances in grace, to continual growth in godliness, to the utter extirpation of sin, and the full love of God in Jesus Christ, that so you may enjoy true peace passing all understanding here below; and that we may all together in the realms of glory, above meet and rejoice in peace and
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and happiness unspeakable, through endless ages with that adorable Jesus, who having loved his own, will love them to the end, the end of time, even for ever and ever. Amen.
DISCOURSE XIX.
On the Man born BLIND:
Being the Substance of Two Sermons.

PART I.

John ix. 30, 31, 32, 33.

The man answered and said unto them, why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

If
If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

The present miracle contains the most undeniable evidence to the divinity of our blessed Lord: and the reasoning of the poor man who was the happy object and occasion of it, not only served then to confute and silence all the malice of the Pharisees; but at present also and for ever is and will be sufficient to shew that Jesus was indeed of God: and that it is our wisdom to believe on him, our duty to fall down and worship him, who alone is able to open the eyes of all those who are born blind, of all the sons of Adam, who through natural corruption have the eyes of their understanding utterly darkened.

The Pharisees of those days acted a part so glaringly inconsistent with right reason and unprejudiced judgments, that there scarcely breathes an infidel in ours however deep in the mysteries of incredulity, who will not condemn a practice so flagrantly injurious, and acknowledge that upon plain and positive evidence of such a fact as here related, there could remain no doubt at all of the mighty power, by which such a work
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work was wrought. For no human abili-
ties ever yet were available to the giving
of sight: and as that gift, the most valua-
ble of earthly blessings, is wholly divine, it
is plain the instrument by which it was
given, could never be an enemy to God:
for God heareth not, he granteth not any
of the petitions of sinners. Now no fact
ever was, ever could be better attested:
the object was one of the most public sort,
a poor blind beggar known most probably
to the greater part of the Jewish nation,
whose notice he could not escape, as he
fstood continually imploring their alms at
the Temple-gate, and must therefore at least
have been observed by those who went up
to the temple to worship. The day upon
which the miracle was wrought tended
also greatly to its publication: for it could
not fail to engage the notice of the people
to behold a man, with his eyes covered with
clay, come to wash in the pool of Siloam:
which was a place much frequented by the
Jews, who must of consequence have been
greatly curious to enquire into the reason of
this breach of the sabbath as they esteemed
it: and that more especially, when they be-
held the consequences, and heard the story,
when they saw the clay washed away, and
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two new-created eyes appear in those sockets, which from the man's birth had been closed in utter darkness. No doubt the man himself was ready enough to declare and speak aloud the wonders which he so sensibly experienced: his neighbours and acquaintance were earnest and anxious to enquire into the fact: it became the general subject of conversation and surprise; and for the more compleat examination into it and the fullest proof of it, he was brought to the scribes and Pharisees; the most accurate investigation was made by them; that he was born blind, was found undeniably true from the evidence of his parents, that he now saw was manifest to all their senses. — Thus was the fact indisputably proved, and this accuracy of enquiry into it, tended only the more to elucidate it *, the more to shew forth the mighty power of Jesus, and to convince — no, alas! to harden the

* No truths, says bishop Hall, have received so full proofs as those that have been questioned. — This is very manifest not only in the present case, but in the whole history of Christ, which has received the more abundant light from the objections of infidels and heretics: Nay indeed to this it is, as ecclesiastical story informs us, that we owe this rich treasure of St. John's gospel: for which every Christian is bound continually to bless and adore the great giver of all good gifts!
Jewish priests and rulers in their obstinate unbelief! — Let the modern unbeliever ask himself whether he thinks he should have acted otherwise, and received Jesus as the light of the world, the promised Messiah, had he been an eye-witness of this notable fact? — If he thinks he should: then why not now believe him as the same divine person upon the faithful narrative of such a fact, which hath all the evidences of truth, and all the marks of veracity? What can be required more, what further evidence can we have? and if Jesus was then able to do this work which is the work of the divinity only, surely now he is exalted to the right hand of power, his glory is not lessened, nor the excellent greatness of his omnipotence diminished! no, he can as easily open the eyes of the most obstinate unbeliever, as he opened the eyes of this blind man: the light of his glorious gospel shines forth for this blest purpose: and wretched are they who close their eyes against it, choosing darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

An impartial and unprejudiced consideration of the present fact, one would conceive most likely to remove the darkness of unbelief: and surely in matters of so near
a concern, we cannot be too unprejudiced.—
But for those who sincerely believe in Je-
fus as the coeternal Son of God, and de-
ire to improve by all his wonderful works
and words, in the great business for which
he hath sent us into the world: for such
I shall endeavour, by the help of divine
grace, to consider this memorable event un-
der the following heads:

Ist, The occasion of or introduction to it.

IIIdly, The fact itself: and

IIIdly, The consequences of it.

Ist To speak of the occasion of or intro-
duction to it.

As the great design of the present mira-
acle was to shew, that Jesus is the divine re-
storer of sight to fallen human nature *:
therefore we perceive that no prayers of
his own, no solicitations of his friends gave
occasion to this blind man's recovery: but

† Illustris est hac historia indicandae lethali, in qua om-
nes nascimur, cæcitati, & intelligendovero & unico ejus re-
medio propositis quoque in bujus nati cæci persona, tum me-
dicame: itt m fontis Siloam allegoricis in ipsos sensus incur-
rentibus exemplis, inquit Theod. Beza.

that
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that same adorable *philanthropy*, which brought the Son of God from the bosom of his Father to *enlighten* a benighted world, *caused* him to cast his compassionate eye on this afflicted son of Adam, and to give us, in his free mercy to him, a lively representation of the same free mercy to us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death. And as a key to the whole miracle and a full declaration of his regenerating power, he proclaims himself before the performance of this extraordinary fact, *The light of the world.*

1. The evangelist tells us, that as Jesus *passed by,*—which some would refer to the last words of the foregoing chapter †, and infer from thence the unspeakable benignity of Jesus, which no affronts or indignities of the Jews could weary out or prevent from *working the works of him that sent him,* and dispensing blessings even on the rebellious and ungrateful—*He SAW a Man which was blind from his birth.* He beheld him with no indifferent, transitory

† *Præteriens statim post impetum hostium,* passing immediately after the attack of his enemies, says Bengelius—Other commentators and harmonists seem with better reason to suppose this event not immediately consequent.

D d 3 view:
view: but fixed the eyes of his divine compassion on him; and already prevented him with the riches of his adorable love. His look is ever benign and salutary: happy are they upon whom this God of mercy casts a favouring eye. We should continually request this blessing from him; and with fervent prayers cry out, God of love, light of life, deign to look upon me a miserable sinner, to look upon me with those eyes of mercy, wherewith thou didst behold a world of transgressors in the darkness of sin, wherewith thou didst behold denying Peter in the hall, Mary at the banquet, the thief on the cross, and this poor blind man in the way! — The reflection on his mercy to these must of necessity greatly strengthen our confidence in prayer: for if this most merciful Lord so kindly looked upon the blind, upon those who could not see, who did not desire, who did not even think of his almighty goodness, with how much greater readiness will he grant us the same relief when we implore it of him with an humble heart and lively faith? St. Paul beautifully enlarges upon this ground of hope and confidence, and I know not what can tend more to inspire us with a full depen-
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dependence upon the goodness of our Saviour—But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us! much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; MUCH MORE being reconciled we shall be saved by his life! let us apply this reasoning to ourselves and we cannot fail to join with the apostle in the following verse, And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement *

2. The disciples, remarking their Lord's attention to this object of compassion, and imagining perhaps that he was about to extend his usual mercy, propose a question: whether it arose from any particular prejudices and opinions, or from our Lord's own words, seems in a great measure doubtful. Some have supposed that Christ's words to the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, gave occasion to this opinion in the disciples, that all afflictions were the punishment of particular sins: Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee +.


D d 4 —Others
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—Others again have imagined that the disciples were tainted with the Pythagorean notions of the praëxistence and transmigration of souls, and of their punishment in one body for their offences committed in another.

—But the disciples seem to have been men of too little erudition, to suppose them capable of imbibing this doctrine; especially when we may rationally account for their sentiments from several declarations of our Saviour, and from the known principles and doctrines of their own law: which taught that sin was the fruitful source of evil, and that the Lord did punish the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and therefore we do not find that our Saviour

† The reader is left at liberty to adopt what opinion he shall judge most agreeable to the sacred writers: I am pleased however to be able to confirm mine by the joint testimony of Chrysostom, and his faithful follower Theophylact: who upon the place observe γαρ ὅτι τὰς διζάντων ἄνθρωπον, &c. —For the apostles had not received those trifling notions of the Gentiles, that the soul can sin in a praëxistent state, and to be punished in another body for the faults committed in a former one. For being plain fishermen, it is not to be supposed that they had heard these things which were the doctrines of the philosophers, &c. —He then accounts for their question, as taking its rise from what Christ laid to the paralytic, as above, and supposes them rather doubtful in this opinion, that sin was the one true source of punishment and evil, &c. See the author.
viour rebuked them as maintaining any ir-
religious notions: but declared to them that
over and above the common and known
sources of affliction, they served also to
another end, even the glory of God, of which
the present was a remarkable instance. Je-
sus answered, neither hath this man sinned,
nor his parents, that he should be born
blind: neither his own nor the sins of his
parents have been the immediate cause of
this peculiar punishment: but he was born
blind that the works of God should be made ma-
ifest in him *, † particularly his sovereignty in

† "There are some afflictions, says Quesnelle, which
God sends only for his own glory: and he who endures
them is but too highly honoured in being subservient
thereto, at the expense of every thing which is most
near and dear to him.—Though God never afflicts the
innocent, and though afflictions always serve either to
punish sin, or to purify the sinner; yet this is not al-
ways the first, and never the principal design of God;
he intends here to honour and authorise his Son; but it
is to his own glory, that the miracles, authority, and
glory of his Son ultimately tend—Happy is that minister
of this Son, who imitates his example in never seeking
his own glory in the most eminent and remarkable
works, which God is pleased to perform by his hands.
Let us always remember that it is the work of God, and
not our own, which shines forth in us: and that it
ought to shine forth only to his glory!" The designs of
God in his providence are adorably deep and unsearch-
ably
in bringing him into the world blind, his power in conferring the faculty of sight upon him, and his goodness in bearing witness to the doctrine, by which men are to be saved.

By this reply our Saviour teaches us, that a curious enquiry into the causes of other mens afflictions may safely be avoided; and that we can never do amiss, while we suppose every calamity subservient to the glory of God; while we exhort others and endeavour ourselves so to use and so to bear them; never imputing to their personal sins, whatever miseries we behold in others, lest like the disciples in the present case, we assign to sin what owes its rise to the glory of God. But in our own private afflictions we can never do amiss by assigning our manifold offences as the reasonable, the adequate cause; and by seeking in repentance and the pardon of our sins through Christ, the only sure, the

ably great. This man we read was born blind, that the works of God might be made manifest in him. 'Twas now, as one observes, a great while since this man was born blind, and yet it never appeared till now, why he was so. The intentions of providence commonly do not appear, till a great while after the event, perhaps many years after. The sentences in the book of providence, are sometimes long: which you must read a great way before you can apprehend the sense of.

only
only available relief *. For as, in the case of this blind man, God's glory was manifested in his good, and the divine work of Christ conduced to his present and everlasting advantage: so in the punishment and chastisement of sinners God's glory doth then most abundantly shine forth, when the punishment answers its design, and the soul's salvation is the issue of his fatherly correction.

Learn we therefore upon a view of the affliction of others, not to suppose, that these were sinners above all the Galileans, not to seek for the cause of their evil in their own or the offences of their parents; but to say and to believe that God's hand is in all this work, and that these things happen that the works and glory of God should be made manifest. But in our own particular afflictions, let us be as careful to assign our sins as the cause, as we are not to do so in the case of our neighbour: and then we shall never fail to manifest God's glory, by his work on our souls, by our sincere contribution for those offences which we see and confess have justly drawn down his indignation upon us. " The grace of repentance, faith one, calls our own afflictions punishment.
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ments; but the grace of charity calls the afflictions of others trials, unless the contrary is very evident."

3. Our Saviour having declared the cause of this man's blindness, that the works of God should be made manifest in him*: adds, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.—In which words he not only signifies to his disciples, but to all mankind, his unwearyed study in and application to

* Exactly parallel to this is what our Saviour says in the xith chapter and 4th verse of this evangelist—This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. In which words we cannot but remark that the glory of God the Son and God the Father is one and the same: and it is observable that after our Saviour hath spoken these words concerning the blind man that the works of God, &c. he adds, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; plainly declaring that he himself was God: which is fully proved by his proclaiming himself the light of the world. Theophylact from Chrysostom, uses the like argument though more fully in proof of our Lord's divinity. Οὐτω καὶ ὁ Θεός μαν ἐποιησεν, &c. So our GOD Jesus Christ restoring the blind members to their proper nature, shews that it is he who creates all the members. When he says that the glory or works of God might be manifested, he speaks of himself, not of the Father. For his glory was already manifest: it was necessary therefore to shew forth his own, and that it was he who from the beginning made man. And in truth it was no small glory to manifest, that he who now appeared as man, created man in the beginning as God. See the author in his comment on the place.
the work of God, in which alone he was occupied night and day all the time of his sojourning in the flesh, to which alone he directed all his thoughts and all his intentions, which he esteemed even as his meat and drink, and for which he suffered the neglect of his ordinary food, that he might finish the blessed, the beneficent work of human salvation, for which he was sent into the world of the Father, whose will he came cheerfully and voluntarily to perform, and in the execution of which he went about continually doing good.

A lesson and pattern of imitation to all the true sons and servants of this most diligent master: which should stir them up to zeal, activity and perseverance in his work: which should incline them daily to examine for what end they were created by God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the holy Spirit; to what end they were crowned with so many blessings, and endued with so many benefits: that thus they might be incited more and more to work the works of him that sent them. Now God sent us not into this world, only to build and to plant, to trade and get gain, to indulge in pleasures, to pass away our days in sloth and indolence, or to scrape up riches by
by all possible means, *per fas & nefas*, right or wrong; he sent us not into the world to live to and for ourselves; but that we should labour to acquire the knowledge of him; that we should confide in him when known, that we should serve him in righteousness and true holiness all the days of our life; and inherit, thro' his grace and the infinite merits of Christ, everlasting blessedness with him in the kingdom of Glory. And the consideration of what our Saviour here suggests, should forcibly incline us to an earnest inquiry after this heavenly knowledge,—namely, that God hath appointed to every man his *DAY*, his certain time, wherein he may work; which once passed, he can do no more in the great business of salvation: *the night cometh when no man can work*. As therefore every one hath his appointed *Day*, as we all, some sooner, some later are hastening on to the same goal *, as the day is declining, the day of life, and the night approaching, the night of darkness and death, as this night will come certainly, may come suddenly, and is every moment nearer and nearer to us; how should this consideration quicken us, as it did our blessed Saviour,

* Serius aut citius, says the Poet, *metam properamus ad unam.*
in the discharge of that work, for which we are sent? how zealous should it make us to work the works of God, to add to our faith, virtue, &c. and to improve all the opportunities of life both for our doing and getting good? As an incentive whereto let us constantly bear this scripture in mind, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is DAY: the NIGHT cometh when no man can work. Add to this the wise man's counsel, Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest. All depends upon the present short span, the present day, the present hour, the present moment: this lost, eternity may be lost also; son of immortality, up therefore, arise and be doing.

4. That we might be informed, what kind of works they are, which Christ was sent to do, even works of light and love, he declares in the subsequent verse, as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world *. In these words our Lord plainly

* Hence we learn, that our Lord's miracles were designed not only as proofs of his mission, but to be specimens of the power which he possessed as the Messiah. For example by feeding the multitude with meat that perished, he signified that he was come to quicken and nourish mankind with the bread of life, that soverign
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refers to the day of his corporal presence upon earth; which may be called emphatically his day: because at that time the sun of righteousness did, as it were, doubly illumine the earth, both by his corporal presence, and his heavenly doctrine; hence in the foregoing chapter he says, that Abraham the father of the faithful desired earnestly † to see his Day: and he saw it, in faith, and was glad. As long therefore as he was corporally present in the world, so long he was the light of the world, and made its day, by his bright example, his

vereign cordial, and salutary nutriment of the soul. His giving sight to the Blind, was a lively emblem of the efficacy of his doctrine to illuminate the blinded understandings of men. His healing their bodies represented his power to heal their souls, and was a specimen of his authority to forgive sins, as it was a real though a partial removal of its punishment. His casting out Devils was an earnest of his final victory over Satan, and all his powers. His raising particular persons from the dead, was a beginning of his triumph over death, and a demonstration of his ability to accomplish a general resurrection: and to give no more examples, his curing all promiscuously who applied to him, shewed that he was come not to condemn the world, but to save even the chief of sinners. Accordingly at performing these miracles, or soon after, when the memory of them was fresh in the minds of his hearers, we often find him turning his discourse to the spiritual things, that were signified by them, as in the present case, &c. Macknight.

† Εγάλλησαν, in id. glorious
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glorious miracles, his salutary doctrines, and his other works of love, all tending to the salvation of man †. Thus was he then the light of the world, in this respect; which he is also now and for ever; the same eternal Son of God, the same blessed Jesus Christ, to day, yesterday and for ever. For he was always in the world as well before his nativity as after his ascension: for thus it is said of him before his nativity, He was in the world, and the world was made by him: but the world knew him not. And he himself speaks of the time after his ascension, Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. The bodily presence of Jesus Christ on earth made

† Beza well remarks, Christus est illa ipsa lux diem terris, suo in Judeam adventu inferans evangelica prædicationis radiis & divinis miraculis resuægentem, quam quisquis pro sui munieris ratione intuetur, curriculum sua vitae beatus conficiat. Hujus autem oblatae lucis tempus, quod praesentia carnis Christi in terris & apostolica Christi discessum sicut prædicatione terminatur, tam obstante aspernantes Iudaos, Christus hoc loco ut & infra, xi. 9 & xii. 35, admonet sicut naturalem diem obeundis humanis laboribus deletatum excipiant nostis tenebras, in quibus nemo; ne si maxime quidem velit, res suas curare posset: ita si cessantibus ipsis, vera lux illa semel ipsis evanesceat, in tenebras exitiales incident, cujus prædictionis eventum nunc adhuc cernimus. Quod autem Iudaæis hic prædictum, haec ipsum sibi omnes populi; atque adiò singuli Iudaorum pertinaciom sseuti, nov. rins hic prædici.

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the day or light of the world: and his spiritual presence in the church, and in a heart by faith and grace, makes the day or light of that heart, and of the whole church. — He is just going to show by enlightening this one person, that it is he who lighteth every man that comes into the world: and that he likewise came on purpose to enlighten the world, which lay buried in the darkness of ignorance and sin*. And there is no emblem in nature, whereby the spiritual blessings of Christ and his gospel could be more aptly represented to us than this of light, wherefore he not only at present, but at other times insists upon it, as a doctrine of consequence, that be is the light of the world: I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of LIFE †. And in a subsequent chapter, he speaks of himself and the day of his personal ministry, in words that will serve to elucidate what hath just gone before: Then Jesus said unto them, yet a little while is the LIGHT with you: walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth; while ye have the light believe in the light, that ye may be the children

* Quesnelle. † John viii. 12.
of light †. Hence the prophet Isaiah speaks of Christ, rising on the gentile world under this beautiful image. — Arise, shine [be in-lightened, marg.] for thy LIGHT is come, and the GLORY * of the Lord is risen upon thee §.

And what could more aptly represent, in natural things, Christ the king of glory, the only begotten of his Father, the light and life of men: For, 1st, light is the ruler and chief agent in matter, the glory of all created things, even as the divine person it represents is, by covenant and cession of the other divine persons, the king, the ruler, the chief actor in the oeconomy of grace, who manifested forth his glory by his personal appearance and mighty works, and still manifests it by his grace and Spirit in his church. 2dly, Light is coeval and coexistent with its fire, the sun †: We cannot separate the idea of

† John xii. 35, 36.
* For the meaning of the word Glory, see p. 22, 23 of this volume.
§ See Isaiah lx. 1. comp. ver. 19.
† Milton, in his excellent hymn to the light (Par. Lost, Book III. ver. 1.) has a beautiful expression or two, which may well be applied to the uncreated light, and serve to manifest the great truth spoken of in the text:

——Hail holy light
Of th' eternal, co-eternal beam,
Bright effluence of bright effluence increate.
The hint of which it is probable he took from the wis-
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light from the sun, nor suppose any priority of existence, since light is essential to the very nature of the sun, nay, of the same essence, and indivisible from the existence of it both in time and nature: so the uncreated light, the only begotten of his Father, is co-eval and co-existent with the Father, whose wonderful generation is seen perhaps in no glass so clear, as in this most expressive image: which is the only one in nature, that can give us any idea of that deep mystery, the co-eternity of the Son with the Father; which well considered, obviates every difficulty to that great point of faith, and gives us some idea at least of a Son co-eval with a Father; and so when more completely examined of a Trinity of persons in an unity of essence.

3. Light is

dom of Solomon, vii. 26, 27. where the wise man speaks of Wisdom, under such lofty characters as cannot well be applied to any but the Son of God, and which have a wonderful similarity to some passages in the New Testament, as the scriptural reader will immediately discern—For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty: she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness, comp. Heb. i. 3. He calls her in the 22d verse, The worker of all things; for in her is an understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtile, lively, clear, undefiled, kind to man, having all power, overseeing all things, &c.

that
that which dispels the blackness of the night, the shades of darkness, and the fogs and thick mists that arise in that time of horror: it is that which makes manifest and pours bright luftre over all created things, for whatever maketh manifest is light: remove this prime cheerer from the world, and it would become an uninhabited dungeon, a place of darkness, desolation, and death: and such is the soul upon which the light of life hath never shone. It is the appearance of Christ his rising upon the soul, that drives away and dispels darkness, turns night into day, and scatters all the clouds and black mists of ignorance, sin and unbelief: and not only so, but also by the influence of his word, and the glorious operation of his gospel, he dispels the dark fogs of infidelity and iniquity in the world: Thus he arose upon the Jews, thus upon the Gentiles, when both sat in darkness, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel: pouring clear luftre on all ceremonies and services of the latter, removing the shades, taking away the veil, and shewing himself the truth of them all by his life and death: and illuminating the former who were dead in the dark night of trespasses and sins, having their understanding
darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart— with the light of the glorious gospel of truth, so guiding their feet into the way of peace.

4. 'Tis light which diffuses beneficence, cheerfulness and joy. 5. Which gives life to all created things, not only plants and vegetables, but "if philosophers be right, —Soi & homo generant hominem—it hath a special influence in the generation of man."‡

‡ This is a remark of Archbishop Leighton in his excellent sermon on this subject, where the reader desirous to see more particulars of comparison will be highly entertained and instructed. 1. Light according to him, is the primum visibile, the first object of sight,—as Jesus Christ is the prime object of understanding. 2. Light being the first visible, all things are seen by it and it by itself: thus is Christ among spiritual things, all things are made manifest by him, and he is known by his own brightness. 3. None are ignorant that there is light, what light is few know, so all that bear the name of Christians, acknowledge that Christ is, but to know what he is, is of marvellous difficulty; his generation who can declare? 4. Light resembles Christ in purity; it visits impure and base places of the earth, and yet is undefiled; Christ tho' conversant with sinners, was holy, &c. 5. The light of the sun is neither parted nor diminished by being imparted to many several people and nations; nor is the righteousness of the sun of righteousness either lessened to himself or to several believers, by many partaking of it at once. 6. It hath a vivifying power, &c. as in the text. 7. Light drives away the frosts and fogs of winter upon its return in the spring, and produces plants, flowers, &c.—And such is Christ's influence upon a soul or church, such the fruits and graces he produces. See Cant. ii. 10—13. 8. All
6. 'Tis light which gives the power of vision, the means of sensation and perception of itself and other objects; together with the great and many pleasures that arise from thence; and so the divine light diffuses the benefits of his merits to all mankind, brings cheerfulness, gladness and peace to every heart, where he enters, his very kingdom consisting in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. 7. It supports, enlivens and gives daily bread, spiritual life to the souls of all believers: he is the proper and principal efficient of man's regeneration: the source of our spiritual life and motion. 8. He will enable us to receive and furnish us with perceptions and pleasures, of which we can have no higher ideas than from the material light, and will give and make us capable of receiving from him an eternal weight of glory through all eternity.”

9. There is nothing in nature so glorious for beauty and splendor as light, it is that without which every other creature loses its beauty, and by means of which alone life

8. All darkness flies before the light, so Christ arising in the world made the day break and the shadows flee away, the types and shadows of the law, ignorance, idolatry, the night of sin and misery, &c. All the stars and the moon with them cannot make it day in the world, this is the sun's peculiar; nor can nature's highest light, the most refined science and morality, make it day in the soul; for this is Christ's.
itself is preserved as well as the glories of creation manifested: So Christ is all glorious throughout, the God of Glory, full of grace and truth, whose divine beauty and splendor shone forth in his marvellous acts and loving kindness to men when on earth, and whose excellent glory is now manifested in his gospel, and will hereafter glad the eyes of his faithful servants in that new Jerusalem, of which the Lamb is the light: without his light the soul is in a state of darkness and death, unacquainted with the beauties of his love and the riches of his grace: without his light the comforts of life lose all their relish, all their blessing, and where the understanding is darkened, and the mind alienated from him, the soul wanders blindly on in the gloomy night of sin, and if unenlightened by his grace, will perish in the night of everlasting blackness and darkness, reserved for the impenitent and unbelieving. 10. 'Tis Light alone which conducts and guides us, by means hereof we are enabled to travel on in the way, and are preserved from those dangers and errors which we should fall into, if deep darkness surrounded us: and 'tis Christ alone who can enlighten our paths, conduct and guide us by his heavenly light through this world,
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world, preserve us from all the dangerous pits and shelves of sin: and in whose light if we walk, we shall be safely led to the land of eternal light: we shall be the children of light, and escape those difficulties and dangers which overwhelm those who walk on still in darkness, and know not whether they go.

Thus in this bright image and fair exemplar of the uncreated light *, we may trace such and numberless other particulars, that beautifully display to us the glories and blessings of the sovereign restorer. Whenever we behold the earth gladened with the golden light, and all creation smiling beneath its happy influence, whenever we contemplate its quickening power through all created things, its cheering, beneficent and salutary effects—then let us raise our ideas to the divine king of glory, and contemplate in this his first and most excellent

* Thompson speaks beautifully of the light in a hymn to the sun—Summer, ver. 89.

Prime cheerer light!

Of all material beings first and best!
Efflux divine; nature’s resplendent robe;
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt
In unessential gloom: and thou, O sun,
Soul of surrounding worlds! in whom best seen
Shines out thy maker! may I sing of thee!

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creature, the riches, the blessings, the glories of his unspeakable love and power; who is the fountain and author of all good to fallen man, the giver of life, the giver of health, the giver of peace and joy—who alone dispels those shades and darkness, that thick night of sin and death which envelop the human heart, who alone restores the day, and gladens poor benighted souls with the unspeakable comforts of his bright, life-giving, cheering and directing light! let us rejoice in his light, and never fail to contemplate all its benign effects in the pure and fair glass of that created light, to which our present life is indebted for all its natural comforts, nay its very being; even as our spiritual life is indebted for all its comforts, nay its very being to him, who is the light of life, the light of the life of grace here, the light of the life of glory hereafter! What an encouragement to come to him; who will shine upon us with his light as freely as the sun sends forth his refreshing beams! and how emphatically are we taught from hence the necessity of illumination from this divine light, without which our souls will as surely perish as our bodies would without the influence of the natural light: without which we shall as surely
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...surely go astray from the right path as those will who wander in a wilderness amidst thick darkness? and without whose beams to enlighten us, we cannot work the works of God while it is day, nor of consequence inherit his glory when the night of death is past, which will only be followed by an eternal night to those who walk not in the light here, that they may walk in the light and glory of the new Jerusalem for ever!

Thus is Christ the light of the world: that in spirituals which the light is in natural things: (though with a far exceeding superiority, there is always in him a πολυω καιλον, a much more in every comparison:) and having declared himself to be the light of the world, to manifest the truth thereof he restored sight to a man born blind, as a striking image of his restoration of sight to the soul born in the darkness of sin. Herein particularly we see how far he exceeds the created light—this can only be a blessing to those who have eyes, who can see, it cannot give sight to those who have not: but Christ hath not only light for those that can see, but healing in his wings for those that cannot: he arises, the sun of righteousness, not only with his bright wings displayed, to illumine and cherish with his light,
light, but with healing in those wings, divine medicine to restore and cure all the disorders and diseases of the body and the soul. As a proof whereof we behold him exerting his divine influence, and pouring the day on the sightless eye-balls of a man born blind, which miraculous fact is the IIId thing proposed to be considered.

IIIdly, The object and the manner of the cure, both deserve particular attention. Ist. The object, a man born blind, blind from his birth. Since the world began was it not heard, as this man well observed, that any man opened the eyes of a man BORN BLIND. Here was a new creation required: this was infinitely beyond the power of art: nothing less than a divine power could form that most curious part of the human frame, the eye, and give the blessing of sight to a man born blind. " The man was born blind, says bishop Hall; this cure requires not art but power; a power no less than infinite and divine: nature presupposeth a matter though formless; art looks for matter formed to our hands: God stands not upon either: where there was not an eye to be healed, what could an oculist do? it is only a God that can create. Such are we,
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we, O God, to all spiritual things; we want not sight, but eyes; it must be thou only that canst make us capable of illumination." The man was moreover miserable in another respect: woes seldom come single †: he was a person in extreme want, he fat by the way-side and begged the scanty pittance of an alms to support a wretched being: thus was he doubly miserable, for what can be more unfortunate than natural blindness, what more grievous to an ingenuous mind than a life of beggary and extreme want, a dependance upon the scanty offals of close-banded charity for a meal?—This man, say some of the fathers, was a figure of the Gentiles, to whom Christ came with the glorious gospel of light, after he was rejected of the Jews, even as now he came to restore sight to this blind man, when driven out of the temple by the Pharisees: how this may be further applied, I have spoken in another place *. We may see in him, however, a lively picture of our own souls, blind as we are by nature, not only to divine things and such as concern our salvation, but wonderfully short-

† Woes clufter, says Dr. Young, rare are solitary woes: They love a train.

* See Vol. I. p. 418 & seq.
sighted also even in matters of human prudence. This darkening of the understanding was one of the first and most fatal effects of our first parents fall. Add to this that we are also beggars, by nature, in extreme want; for we want that which is the chief blessing, the glory of God: we are deprived of all the powers whereby we might apply a medicine to our miseries, so that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; unless, therefore, the hope of salvation in Christ who cured this blind beggar, shine upon us, and shew us that our sufficiency is of God, we must perish for ever in our blindness and want. How ready he is to assist, how free and preventing his grace is, we see to our great comfort in the present object, to whom he extended his compassionate mercy, freely and unimplored, and upon whom he cast his saving eye when he was himself unable to lift up one longing eye, one ardent desire to him and heaven. And this when all mankind was lost, was dead in sin; thus did he prevent them with the riches of his love, and brought redemption to his people. And for each one of us, how truly may we say, that when we were blind to, ignorant of, and unacquainted with him,

† 2 Cor. iii. 5.
he looked upon us in our mean estate, brought us to the knowledge of him, (or gave us the means to arrive thereat) and both in temporal and spiritual things hath a thousand thousand times made us acquainted with the tenderness and care of his fatherly, his protecting providence and love! let us diligently consider his blessings poured forth upon us from infancy to hoar-age, let us, each one of us, recollect the particular instances of his preventing grace and love: and say, in humble acknowledgment of his unspeakable liberality, and our own great unworthiness, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us be the praise but unto thy name, for thy loving kindness and for thy truth's sake: "O make us duly sensible of thy free unmerited goodness: that we may perfectly resign to and continually unite our will with thine: that we may dedicate ourselves and all we have to thy glory, and ever remain best satisfied with thy disposals in all respects, as convinced that we have not chosen thee, and of our own will should never have chosen thee, but that thou, desirous that none of thy creatures should perish, of thy free love hast chosen us, miserable sinners, (praised for ever, praised be thy name) and hast ordained us that we should go and bring
bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain—that whatsoever we shall ask the Father in thy name! be may give it us†. And O most bountiful Father, in the name of thy beloved Son we only ask, that thou wouldst enable us in every state, with sincerity and humility to request nothing more, to desire nothing less, than thy will be done!

2. The manner of the cure is to be considered. When he had thus spoken he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore and washed, and came seeing.—There is you may remember, a great similarity in these ceremonies, with those used by our Saviour in his restoration of the deaf and dumb man: upon which I then spoke at large*. There can be no doubt but our Saviour could as easily have performed both these miracles without any

† John xv. 16.
* See Vol. I. p. 378. where I have remarked in the note the general reason given by St. Cyril for the use of those and the like ceremonies which he also applies to all the bodily actions of our Lord, his taking hold of the dead, touching the lepers, &c.
of these means, as with them, for they seem in themselves, so far from likely to effect the cure, that one would judge them rather likely to produce a contrary effect. They were intended, therefore, we must conclude, to direct our attention to higher mysteries, and to shew us as in a glass, that it is the same divine person who at first created man out of the dust of the earth, and gave sight to his eyes, that now restores and regenerates lapsed human nature, and opens the eyes sealed with the blackness of sin. "How clearly did he hence evince to the world, says Bishop Hall, that he who of clay could make eyes, was the same who of clay had made man; since there is no part of the body that hath so little analogy to clay as the eye; the clearness of this is contrary to the opacity of that: had not the Jews been more blind than the man which he cured, and more stiff and hard, than the clay which he mollified, they had in this one work both seen and acknowledged his deity." As Christ is the creator of all men, for by him were all things made that are made, and by him, as S. Paul faith, all things consist*, so is he the restorer of human nature:

* Coloff. i. 17.
he first made man out of the clay, the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: man forfeited that divine life: Christ alone, as he first gave it, can restore it; he alone can renew that clay, and the same breath which at first gave life, can alone restore it when lost: to express this in signs and sensible things, he made clay with his spittle, the breath of his mouth, and anointed the eyes of the blind-man therewith. There is in Canne's * bible, an excellent marginal reference in this place to Gen. ii. 7. where it is said, The Lord God formed man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul: which is well referred to upon this occasion: since Christ by this miracle not only manifested himself to be the creator but also the restorer of that light of life which was given at first by him to man, and now when lost, is to be had only from him who is himself the light of life. Thus St. Chrysostom † interprets and explains

* This is an edition of the bible published by John Canne, with a great variety of marginal references, shewing the scripture to be the best interpreter of scripture.
† See also Theophylact on the place. St. Austin explains the ceremonies in pretty nearly the same manner. See
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plains this passage: and Beza upon it well observes, that "Christ healing the man born blind, by taking the sign or symbols of clay, and afterward that of the fountain of Siloam (which signifies sent) shews that as he at the beginning made man; so doth he

See his 44th Traet in Job. p. 133. tom. non. The blind man he supposes a figure of all mankind, which was taken out of the earth, Christ’s spitting upon the ground a figure of the incarnation: his anointing of the blind man’s eyes, upon which he saw not, but was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam, signifies, that when a man begins first to be instructed, and is a catechist, he is not fully restored, until he be baptized also. And he hints that the interpretation of the name Siloam, sent, shews, that by Christ sent, we have remission of our sins.”—It was the opinion of the whole primitive church, that a person was not perfectly restored till baptism, and therefore baptized persons were said to be enlightened, as observed above.—Others again suppose, that by this clay which was to be washed off again, is to be understood the wisdom of the flesh which keeps us in deep darkness, and is to be washed away with the watery waters of baptism and the divine word, if we would enjoy the life-giving light of Christ. The learned Cocceius interprets something after this manner: Iatum, illum oculis poterat significare, hominem naturâ rem suam esse prop- ter carnem. &c. This clay may signify that man is by nature blind through the flesh, which is called clay, dust, earth, &c. that is, because man is become carnal through sin, therefore he cannot see the truth or be delighted in it. The washing testifies that illumination proceeds from purification: and the waters of Siloam particularly shew that this washing, this purification from sin is to be had from him who was to be and who was SENT. And Christ’s words ver. 39 seem to explain these significant actions.—“This interpretation is very ingenious, and as being wholly agreeable to the analogy of faith may safely be admitted. The reader is at liberty to choose:

F f 2
he again restore both his body and soul: and yet so that he himself cometh first of his own accord to heal us." Having thus anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, he said unto him, *go wash in the pool of Siloam*—which word, adds St. John, signifies that advanced in the text seems most universally received and best supported. *Quesnel* observes, he who made man out of the earth, cures him by the earth. Spittle being a figure of wisdom, we have here an emblem of the union of the eternal wisdom with the earth and clay of our flesh, and of the wonderful virtue of that union.—The pool of Siloam is an emblem of the baptism of Jesus Christ sent by the Father, which cures the blindness of sin in all those who are obedient to the word of faith.—*Grotius* interprets in the same manner with *Cocelius*—See his Annotations.

* The spring of *Sileoam* discharged itself into a double pool; the lower which was called the pool of fleeces, *Neb. iii. 15.* and the upper which is called *סֵלֹאָם*—the pool of *Sileab,* which properly signifies απεσαλμον*—the waters being by the providence of God sent from the bowels of the earth into it, and so might by the very name mind them of the *Messiah* sent, as the more special gift of God for the purification of the unclean, and to enlighten the blind. *Ifa. xxxv. 5.* Whitby on the place, with whom all the commentators are in this respect fully agreed. See also *Ifa. viii. 5.* It is somewhat deserving particular attention, that when *Christ,* the *Shiloh,* the sent of God was come, the tower in *Sileoam* fell down, *Luke xiii. 4.* and the waters of this fountain ceased to flow, as we gather from *Josephus* and St. *Jerom:* tho' at the time of the siege of Jerusalem they burst out afresh in a marvellous manner for the relief of the Roman army.—*Beza* remarks, *hujus in hoc fonte ablationis mysterium Christus haec miracula adjunxit, ut omnes intellegent non extrinsecus aliquae, sed ipsius Christi ut mapp a Deo patre filii proprii nece mutatis titia virtute iustus peragi.*
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By this command our Saviour fully directed both them and us to the true understanding of this miracle, and of his own person, and divine mission, by whose power this person recovered his sight; and who was SENT into the world to open the eyes of the blind; and particularly in and by the laver of regeneration in baptism to wash away all filth and impediments to spiritual sight, and to illumine our souls with the knowledge of himself, the sent one, the great messenger of God; hence baptism is called illumination, and baptized persons, illumined or enlightened.—Whoever therefore desire to be delivered from their natural blindness and the darkness of their mind, let them come to Christ, the Lord of light, and implore the grace of illumination from him. He sends us to the baptismal laver, which, by his blessing, upon our faith and obedience, will become effectual to the end desired. But we must take care to work with him in this sacrament, not conceiving the bare sign available without the thing signified: nor depending upon an outward baptism unattended with the inward renewal of the Spirit: as our obligations are great to God for the blessings of baptism, so are our obligations great to lives of strict holiness.
sequent upon it: if we fulfil not the terrors of our baptismal vow, our condemnation will be terribly enhanced, since we are no longer our own, but solemnly consecrated to the service of God, and sworn to fight under Christ's banner against sin, the world and the flesh! and woe be to us, if we desert and fly from this triumphant banner.

The man in obedience to the command of Christ, which command, amongst other reasons, was given perhaps for a trial of his faith and obedience*, went, washed, and came seeing! happy effect of obedience: wonderful instance of the almighty power of our glorious restorer! there is more excellence and beauty in this concise narrative, than in Caesar's celebrated Veni, vici, vidi, I came, I saw, I conquered! he went, washed, and came seeing! There is no doubt, but he had learn'd from the by-standers or others who Jesus was, whose fame now was spread far and

* So says Theophylact, ἵνα μαθωμεν τῇ τούτῳ τὴν ἔργον καὶ ποιοὶ ὑπηκοότες—He sent him to Siloam, that we may learn from thence the faith of this blind man, as well as how obedient he was.—And he adds, another reason might be to confound the ingratitude of the Jews. — And the third, he says, was to shew that Christ was the true person sent, spiritually figured out by this Siloam. Ο Σιλωάμ τυπότης τῷ Χριστῷ, Σιλωάμ οινματικῷ ὑπίτι, &c., wide;
wide; otherwise we cannot well account for this implicit obedience! possibly he might have heard of his many other marvellous cares; and how Christ had opened the eyes of the blind man, and therefore in faith and hope submitted to the anointing of his eyes with clay, which otherwise appeared likely, to put out rather than open the eyes, and so obeyed his command, which is always a safe and indisputable fruit of faith.—Had he like Naaman proudly disputed the matter, and refused to go, wash, and receive sight, disgusted at the seeming weakness and impropriety of the means; who can deny, but that he had justly lost the benefit now conferred, that he had been justly left to his native miserable darkness? * Learn we from his example, in firm faith, and humble obedience to submit to all the means appointed of our God, for the recovery of spiritual illumination. Tho’ they may seem more

* This man’s return, from the pool, seeing, represents the benefit believing souls find in attending on instituted ordinances, according to Christ’s appointment; they have gone to the pool of Siloam weak, and have come away strengthened: have gone doubting, and come away satisfied: have gone mourning, and come away rejoicing: gone trembling, and come away triumphing: have gone blind, and come away seeing, come away singing. Isaiah lii. 8. Mr. Henry.
On the Man born Blind.

Vile in our eyes, and more weak to our reason, than the clay spread on the blind man's eyes. Let us not therefore dare to neglect or contemn them, but use them in the obedience of faith, according to the word and institution of Christ. "All things receive their virtue from divine institution: How else should a piece of wheaten bread nourish the soul? how should spring water wash off spiritual filthiness? how should the foolishness of preaching save souls? how should the absolution of God's minister be more effectual than the breath of an ordinary Christian? thou, O God, hast set apart these ordinances, thy blessing is annexed to them; hence is the ground of all our use and their efficacy: hadst thou so instituted, Jordan would as well have healed blindness, and Siloam leprosy." In this faith, and this dependance upon the divine institution and blessing, let us obediently use the means, however weak or insufficient blind reason may suppose them to the end designed. Let us remember that their efficacy depends not either upon themselves or upon us, further than as we use them in obedience and faith, but upon the divine and all-powerful institutor: who was no common and ordinary person, but the

† Bishop Hall.
Christ, the anointed of the Father, the Messiah, sent into the world for this very purpose, to confer eternal life and health on men. And to this the letter of this history seems to allude, wherein it is so often repeated, that he anointed, ἐπεξώπτε, the blind man's eyes: If this Christ, this anointed of the Father, shall anoint us with his spiritual eye-salve in and by his sacraments, however they may be despised in the eyes of the world and of carnal reason, yet let us not be offended, but firmly believe that in and by them salvation is offered, is conferred. Let us constantly believe in them and hope for grace and strength through them from him, who hath annexed his sure presence and blessing to the faithful use of them: from him, whom surely we can never imagine incapable to remove all impediments to our spiritual fight and life, when we contemplate his adorable power in restoring sight to a man born blind: As God alone could perform this, so he alone can work the like wonder for our souls: that he is able we can never doubt from hence: that he is willing,—oh Christian—canst thou want proof that he is willing? why then did he create thee, why did he die for thee? O never desire further arguments that he is
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is willing to save and to bless thee eternally!

And as in the means of grace, so also in every other dispensation and dealing of God with us, however contrary it may seem to our present or our future welfare; let us learn from hence patiently to submit, and resign ourselves. What could seem more contrary to the restoration of sight, than to cover the dark sockets with still darker clay: this one would conceive the method to obstruct, not to obtain sight? in like manner, God is often used to heal and restore his people in this life by contrary means, so that the very things which seemed likely to involve them in destruction, were beyond their expectation, the blessed occasions of life and happiness: the things which we thought would have been unto us the occasion of falling, on the contrary become an occasion of health. Thus good Hezekiah saw the happy event of his sickness: for peace, said he, I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption.* God, in his wise dispensations, takes away from one a wife, from another a husband, from these their children, † from those their fortune and

* Isaiah xxxviii. 17.
† See the note p. 225 vol. 1.
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estate, from others health, and the comforts of life: which, tho' they may seem at first painful, grievous and contrary to our well-being, are found in length of time to be highly subservient thereto, nay and frequently the only means of obtaining and securing our better interests. Happy are they who thus have learn'd to see the wisdom and excellence of Gods dealing with them: and can thank him in sincerity for the losses, afflictions and troubles where-with he hath blessed them, as being the glorious tho' once seemingly painful and contrary means of opening their eyes to the things of eternity! happy are those, who under any of the afflictive dispensations, the end and issue of which they cannot yet fathom or penetrate, in humble obedience admit the wholesome medicine, suffer the great physician to deal with them even as he sees fit, take his divine word for their guide, and apply to all his appointed ordinances for grace and strength to support and hold them up under every trial; still trusting in him though he should kill them, and still following his commands of patience, resignation, and cheerfulness, though blind to his purposes, and sadly in the dark as to his dealings and dispensations. Such need not fear that he
will ever leave or forsake them: at length their eyes shall be opened by his all-powerful grace, and humbly depending upon him, they shall at length return from the pool, with a clear display of all his wise and good works opened upon their soul. Or if the secrets of his ways, which though ever right are many times deep and impenetrable, shall here be hid from their eyes, the day is coming when every doubt shall be resolved, every difficulty removed, and all the hidden things made manifest, the day is coming, when this clay shall be washed from our eyes, when the darkness of this life's dim vision shall be changed into clear light, and we shall see as we are seen, and know even as we are known; then shall the fair book of God's providence be laid open to our view, and we shall stand, in joyful admiration of his wisdom, who conducteth all things aright, and maketh every thing work together for his people's good. Oh blessed and desirable hour, — oh glorious and delightful knowledge — when shall we arrive at the one, when shall the other present us with its blessings! that fet-free from this dark and mortal prison, this house of clay, our scales of mortality shall fall off, when the eyes
eyes may be opened to the sight and love of the all-glorious deity, the incomprehensible THREE-IN-ONE, to the inconceivable glory of the saints and angels, and the inexplicable brightness and bliss of that great city, the holy Jerusalem, which hath the glory of God, the street of which is of pure gold, as it were transparent glass: which sounds perpetually with the ravishing melody of the celestial harpers, harping on their arms; where nothing defiling, nothing abominable shall ever enter: where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: of which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple: which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof! *

Come, Lord Jesus, come, quickly—come and finish thy glorious work and take thy servants up to this richly beautified city, the purchase of thy divine blood, the gift of thy free, unmerited and unspeakable love!—Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

* See that excellent and incomparable chap. xxi of Revelation.
On the Man born BLIND.

PART II.

John ix. 30—33.

The man answered and said unto them, *Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

*This man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

O V'D by that divine compassion *, which caused him to look with eyes of blessing on a world of sinners, sunk in the dark night and deep poverty of sin, *Jesus as he passed by fixed his merciful eyes on a miserable

* There is nothing, which deserves more particular attention than that constant mention of the compassion of
object, fit emblem of the world he came to save, a Man who was blind from his birth, and who sat and begged. Conscious that death, blindness and all evils arise from sin; having heard from the law that God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and from the mouth of their master, that sin and sufferings are connected together, the disciples were curious to know, for whose particular offence, the man's or his parents, this great and peculiar punishment was inflicted upon him. Whether there were more of curiosity than charity in the question, whether it proceeded from any strange opinion of the pre-existence and transmigration of souls held by some of their Rabbies, and taught by those who sat in Moses's seat; or whether from a real desire of information, and a reasonable doubt whence it could be, that all afflictions were the punishment of actual offences, when this man was thus singularly afflicted, before he was capable of doing good or evil in himself—whether of Jesus, manifested to every afflicted object: a source of rich consolation to the troubled soul, to all mankind, upon whom the loving eyes of our Redeemer are graciously fixed, towards whom his compassionate bowels ever yearn! See Luke x. 33 and xv. 20, where you will find two lively pictures of this compassion.
whether they were unmindful or forgetful of that original sin and evil, from which as a fountain flow all human miseries, in which we are all conceived, and thro’ which we are all corrupted both in body and soul—whether it arose from these or what causes foever, our blessed Redeemer saw fit to satisfy them no farther, than that the man’s blindness proceeded not from any particular offence of his parents, or evil disposition of his own; but that God saw fit in the counsels of wisdom, that he should be born blind, in order to manifest his works in him, to shew forth his wisdom, his power and goodness, but more especially to give his Son an opportunity to work a work in this blind man, whereby he might shew himself the Saviour and enlightener of his people Israel: and make manifest the great work of God's grace for man’s redemption then carrying on by him. Fully to declare which he at once apologizes for the work, which the day (for it was the Sabbath) seem’d in some degree to render necessary, and points out to us the spiritual use of it, as well as his own divine power. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day, and that without distinction of days, one day as well as another, for I am the light of the world; and
no day should be without light. *The night cometh when no man can work*, the night of death, which is speedily hastening towards me, when the *day of my personal joining* and ministry will be over, the work of redemption finished, and I can no more work the works of him that sent me." Having thus declared himself the divine *light* of the spiritual world, whose glories and blessings are seen in the glass of the natural light, he gloriously proved himself such by opening the eyes of this man *born blind*, which God alone could do, for *since the world began was it not heard that any MAN (any mere man) opened the eyes of one that was born blind*. The *consequences* of which most astonishing fact come next under consideration, as the IIIrd and last thing proposed to be treated of. And these chiefly concern, 1st, the enquiry of the neighbours, 2dly, the accurate examination of the Pharisees with their excommunication of the man, and, 3dly, the discovery of himself which *Jesus* was pleased to make to him.

1st, No wonder so marvellous an event produced a general curiosity and surprise; and made those who had seen this blind man in his darkness and distress, very particular in their enquiries after the means of...
On the Man born Blind.

so singular a miracle. It became the subject, doubtless, of general conversation, and one would have thought should also have been the means of general conversion: but as it too frequently falls out, a perverse curiosity prevented its salutary effects upon their souls; unbelief and hardness of heart led some even to doubt of the most evident fact; a fact the most evident and indisputable, and manifestly the work of the divinity led others to persecute at once the object and the author of it! let us not be astonished at this in the conduct of the Jews which we have seen too flagrantly fulfilled and copied in the proceedings of many who are called christians.

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him, that he was blind, said, Is not this He that sat and begged? some said, It is He: others said, he is like him: But he said, I am He.—No wonder they were in doubt concerning him, and hesitated whether the man were the same; whose late dead and dark countenance was now enlightened with two bright eyes, which particularly serve to difference and distinguish the face, and than which no features tend more to produce that observable variety in the human countenance, which is so striking
On the Man born Blind.

"The want or the sudden presence of an eye (much more of both,) must needs make a great change in the face; those little balls of light which no doubt were more clear than nature could have made them, could not but give a new life to the countenance. I marvel not if the neighbours who had wont to see this dark visage, led by a guide and guided by a staff, walking confidently alone out of his own inward light, and looking them cheerfully in the face, doubted whether this were He. The miraculous cures of God work a sensible alteration in men, not more in their own apprehension, than in the judgment of others." They certainly were in the right to examine this matter with the closest attention and to satisfy themselves the most fully concerning it: truth will always bear such an examination; and we shall do wrong, in matters of faith especially, to take up notions and opinions merely upon hearsay, the credit of others, or as it were, by a kind of hereditary right: this possibly may be one reason, why Christians now-a-days are generally so lukewarm in the practice of the faith they profess: they receive it from their parents, embrace it through form,

† Bishop Hall.

examine
On the Man born Blind.

examine not the evidences, and become not believers thro' conviction, but through the accidental circumstances of the place and times wherein they are born and live. This at least is one reason given, why the primitive Christians so much excell'd us in the purity of their lives and manners; who took not up their faith, merely because their parents had done so, or because they were born in a country professing Christianity; but believed upon full conviction of the truth, which they had carefully examined, and lived according to the truth, which they believed, with the clear assent of head and heart. Let us learn from them, and the example of these neighbours of the blind man, to search diligently into the grounds and evidences of our faith: to follow St. Paul's advice — prove all things: hold fast that which is good*; and the clear proofs we shall soon obtain of the reality of the divine revelation, and the excellency of the gospel salvation, will make us believers upon principles firm, sure and solid, will root, establish, strengthen, settle us in that faith, which hath everlasting truth for its foundation, and everlasting glory for its end.

* 1 Thess. v. 21.
The wonderful alteration, which fight made in the late blind beggar, produced, as we see, much doubting concerning the identity of his person; some said, that it was he; others said, that it was like him. Wherein we have a lively picture of the mighty change, which grace makes in a sinner, when it pleases God to enlighten the heart, and to cause the light of the glorious gospel of Christ to shine upon it. The man then becomes such, that his neighbours and familiars stand in doubt concerning him—surely say they, He is no longer the same man! and they say truly: He is no longer the same; no longer the same filthy, dark, abominable sinner; and he knows himself no more in that capacity and that character, but to confess that he was darkness, but now is light in the Lord! See a proof of this in the blessed apostle Paul, whose name and nature were so totally changed, that the Jewish rulers, who gloried in and sent forth to execute their hellish purposes Saul the persecutor, were so far from acknowledging, that they even desired to destroy Paul the worker, the abundant worker in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! — So St. Peter writing to the converted Gentiles, who formerly walked
in the works of the flesh, observes, that their companions thought it strange, that they would no longer run with them to the same excess of riot, which they had heretofore run, and therefore they spoke evil of them! This happens to all those, whose lives are altered by divine grace, and who cease to run to the same excess of riot, which they ran before; the change, though blessed and glorious to themselves, and a source of eternal thankfulness, will of necessity produce the wonder and reviling of their former companions; they will therefore be spoke evil of, and persecuted, as we shall see hereafter very remarkably in the case of this blind man.

His heart glowed with gratitude, he was full of joy: and therefore upon perceiving this doubtfulness amongst his neighbours, he proclaimed himself the very person, whom late they saw fitting and begging in total darkness! He said, I am he: I am he, thus marvellously blessed with sight by the peculiar mercy of God, I am he, who was blind from my birth, and whom you have all seen and many relieved in my miserable distress— I am he, who was blind, and now—glory, thanksgiving and praise to the adorable author of it,—now I see! — Hearing this frank and full confession, they were curious
rious next to know, how this admirable work was wrought: *How were thine eyes opened, said they to him?* he was as frank and ready to declare the author, and manner of his cure as himself the object of it. *The man, said he, so much famed and so well known, by what at present I only know of him, his name, J E S U S, made clay and anointed my eyes; and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash: I went, washed, and received sight.*

The works of the Lord being great they ought to be sought out; these neighbours did well in enquiring after so remarkable a fact: 'tis good to observe the way and method of God's works: the more they are observed, they will appear the more wonderful: we may apply it spiritually: 'tis strange that blind eyes should be opened; but more strange, when we consider how they are opened; how weak the means that are used, and how strong the opposition that is conquered.” Weak however as they may seem to the eyes of the natural man, we must never be backward, when it tends to the glory of God, and the manifestation of

* Ἀνθιμία—A man born blind cannot well be said to recover or receive again his sight: the compound in this place therefore is used for the simple.

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* Chrift,
Christ, to make a full confession of them, after the example of this blind beggar: His form of confession is a pattern for us.

We must not be ashamed with him to confess, first, our former state and condition, which we received either from our original, or our natural parents. For by nature we are, (as this history represents to us) blind, blind to God, beggars wanting his grace and glory, and condemn'd already through sin to everlasting destruction. How often doth David proclaim aloud his former mean estate, that God took him from the sheep-folds; from following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance? * Paul is not ashamed to confess in the face of all the world, that he was a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, thereby to extol and magnify the excellency of the riches of God's free grace and mercy. And he puts the gentile churches in mind of what they had been, to make them the more grateful and full of praise for what they were: Remember that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh †. And this recollection of our former vile and miserable estate tends greatly to subdue pride and to keep us under, that so we may walk humbly

* Psal. lxxviii. 21. † Ephes. ii. 21.
and behave ourselves unblameably in this life. And as no man should be ashamed to confess his lost and wretched estate, much less, 2dly, should any be ashamed to confess the great deliverer from thence, Christ Jesus our Lord. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, faith he, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and the Fathers and the holy angels — δει γνωτε και τα πατρος και των αγιων αγγελων. Though the weapons of our warfare and the means of grace are to the world vile and contemptible, yet let us not be ashamed to confess the glory of our God, in and by our due use of them; and be careful to give him all the honour of his works, which appears the more conspicuously thro' the weakness of the instrument, by which he is pleased to work: what can more magnify the power of Christ than sight restored to a man born blind, by means of clay and spittle?

And as we should never be backward to proclaim our own blindness and unworthiness, and to confess and aggrandize the power and glory of the redeemer, so neither should we be ashamed frankly to confess our ignorance in such matters as we are really strangers to: when the neighbours asked the blind
blind man concerning Jesus, where he was, he answered, I know not: for Jesus had withdrawn himself while the man went to the pool, probably to avoid the applause which would naturally have arisen, and which we see, through the gospel, he generally studied to avoid.

The neighbours, whether moved by envy or an ill-will to Jesus, which seems but too probable, or whether desirous to have the Pharisees search into this notable miracle, and give the due weight to so divine a work—whether moved by the one or the other, they brought however to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And the Evangelist subjoins, it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes: by which words he seems to point out to us the designs of these neighbours, who very well knew, that the Pharisees would make the religion of the day a handle for their persecution of him who wrought this work on the sabbath, even as they had done in a similar case heretofore*. Strange hypocrisy! to cloke their vile malice and monstrous breach of charity with the plausible pretence of a zeal for the honour of that sabbath, of which Christ proved himself by his

* See Matt. xii. 10.
works, and declared himself by his words, the Lord,—the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath †: and doubtless performed these miracles on this day purposely to manifest himself the Son of Man, and to declare himself the Lord of the sabbath ‡.

The man was no sooner introduced to the Pharisees than they begin to question him, how he recovered his sight? nothing daunted by this awful assembly, though terrible to a man of his mean circumstances, he boldly said unto them, be put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see. Learn we from him when brought before kings and rulers, freely and fully to confess the truth, and without any equivocation to declare what God hath done for us, though we may suppose that our enemies make the enquiry with no good design, and like the Pharisees, examine merely to find out some pretext to condemn, when the truth shines brighter than the mid-day sun. Striking examples whereof we have not only in our great master himself, and in this his undaunted con-

† Mark ii. 18.
‡ Christ chose to work his cures on the sabbath day, faith one, to dignify and sanctify the day, and to intimate that spiritual cures should be wrought mostly on the Christian sabbath. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the gospel, that blessed eyesalve on the Lord's day; how many impotent souls cured on that day?
the Man born Blind.

feļfor, but in many, very many of his faith-
ful and noble martyrs who have stood be-
fore judgment-seats, not to find right and
equity, but to be caught in their words, and
condemned however innocent *.

The Pharisees hearing this confession of
the blind man's, were divided, there was a
division amongst them—a schism, not often
found amongst the enemies of the truth,
which the Herods and Pilates, the Jews
and Gentiles of every place and age, gene-
rally stand up and take counsel toge-
ther to persecute and crucify——They
immediately lay hold of the old pharisaical objection——This man is not of
God, because he keepeth not the sabbath:
others † said, How can a man that is a sin-
nor do such miracles? Doubtful as they were
or pretended to be of the character of Jesu,
they ask the man's opinion, They say unto the

* See the Martyrologies, where numberless proofs here-
of will be found; nothing will be more likely to confirm,
establish, and strengthen us in the faith, than a serious
perusal of the lives and sufferings of the faithful cham-
pions of Christ, "the noble army of martyrs."

† Some have supposed, that this was urged by the
friends of Christ present in this assembly, "If Nicode-
mus and Joseph of Arimathea, both members of the
Sanhedrin were now present, faith Doddridge, they would
naturally distinguish themselves on this occasion: and
Gamaliel, on the principles he afterwards avowed
(Aês v. 38, 39.) must have been on their side.

blind
blind man again, what sayest thou of him, since he hath opened thine eyes—as he hath done thee such a favour let us hear thy opinion of him. We cannot suppose they asked with any real intention to be informed, or to be determined by the man’s answer—however, without regard to their designs, he boldly and plainly confessed, he is a prophet—προφητης εσι—we must not, I think, conclude from hence, that he meant to confess him the great prophet promised by Moses and expected: his confession notwithstanding should have awakened the attention of these doctors of the law, and have caused them to enquire into the marks of Christ’s mission, and the agreement of their law and prophets with the works and words of this man who, they could not deny, did many miracles: but their prejudices prevented; their worldly passions prevailed; malevolence bore the sway; and their division probably increasing, another doubt and objection was started by some of them concerning the reality of the fact; and was followed by an enquiry which tended perfectly to establish it, and to magnify the power and glory of that mighty worker of it, whom they sought by these very means to depreciate.

The
The Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received sight, until they called the parents of him that received his sight. Fain would they have evaded the fact, though already, from the testimony of the neighbours, and the man himself, clear and evident beyond dispute. The parents, however, completed the testimony; the Pharisees asked them two questions, 1. Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? 2. How then doth he now see? To the first they peremptorily answered, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: this, one would have thought, might have been sufficient evidence for them, let us take due care to improve it: to the 2d question they answered evasively and fearfully, knowing the determination of the Jews, that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue: therefore, in answer to the 2d question, they said, But by what means he now seeth we know not: or who hath opened his eyes we know not: be is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.—In the conduct of these parents we see how powerful the fear of man is to over-awe the conscience and stop the tongue, even in the most notorious facts: they could not be ignorant how their son received his sight: like him they should
should have gloried in the divine hand that did the marvellous work, and been ready to confess him before all men, to the hazard of all things: let us learn hence to fear our own and to pity human frailty, and to implore the Spirit of God, to give us courage and resolution in the day of trial, and especially to deliver us from that servile bondage the fear of man, by which so long as any one is held captive, he cannot be the servant of Christ—let us take care that we love not the praise of men more than the praise of God: and let us remember that the fear of man bringeth a snare *. Finding all attempts to discredit or disprove the fact fruitless, the Pharisees proceed to their usual method of calumniating the author of it: again they called the man that was born blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner!—bold, presumptuous, lying Pharisees, how do ye know it? all your attempts to prove him such have only displayed his brightness the more and manifested your darkness! but let this poor blind beggar speak for himself, and illiterate, ignorant, wretched as he is, convince and confute all these learned mas-

* Prov. xxix. 25.
On the Man born Blind.

ers in Israel, by the plainest, fullest and most irrefragable arguments, and in them let every present and every future unbeliever see a full answer to all their objections against the almighty redeemer, the light of the world—he answered and said, That he is a sinner, I know not—one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see—happy are they who have this evidence of their spiritual fight, who can say, whereas I was blind, blind to the ways, works and words of God, now I see, now my eyes are opened to the fight, sense and love of them all—but to proceed. The Pharisees desirous to entangle him in his talk, and, with the art of sophistry, cross-examining in order to perplex and puzzle him, said to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? this moved their indignation in the highest degree—they reviled the man, and said, thou art his disciple—the disciple of this man, whom we have pronounced a sinner—but we are Moses disciples; we know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow (they could afford the Son of God no better an appellation, who shall dare to com-
plain then of abuse and reviling? — as for 
this fellow, we know not whence he is. — The 
man's confidence and wonder increase hereat; 
and he confutes them with the most logical 
arguments, and with an ease and spirit that 
must have vexed these proud Pharisees at the 
heart—Why, herein, said he, is a marvellous 
thing, that YE, ye the doctors and teachers 
of the people who sit in Moses seat, that YE 
know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened 
mine eyes! now we know that God heareth not 
funders; but if any man be a worshipper of God 
and doth his will, him he heareth. Since the 
world began was it not heard that any man 
opened the eyes of one that was born blind! If 
this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 
Such was his reasoning clear and plain, founded 
upon truths they could not deny — They all 
granted that God heareth not sinners—they all 
knew that God had heard Jesus, by the work 
which he had wrought, which was a fact 
proved beyond any possibility of doubt, as 
the work was such as never man performed— 
therefore it follows by plain consequence that 
Jesus was not a sinner, but of God, since 
otherwise he could do nothing. The force 
of this argument was so strong that the Pha-
risees could not resist it: they recur there-
fore to the last method of answering, to down-
right violence, and thus manifest the weakness and baseness of their cause with great wrath, they said to the man, *thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* inhumanly and absurdly objecting his misfortune of natural blindness to him, which had they known how to estimate rightly, they had considered as his highest happiness, seeing it was for the glory of God: and not remembering that they themselves also were *altogether born in sins*—so little doth reviling become such poor, frail, and impure creatures as we are, who when we look into our own breasts, shall never be forward surely to condemn, reproach, and censure our neighbours. However, to abusive words they add violent actions, and put their decree in execution, casting the man out, or excommunicating him, depriving him of all the privileges and advantages of the synagogue; though their unjust excommunication not being ratified in heaven, he was thus cast off from their society, that he might be united to one, where no unjust sentences can ever be past, and to which they who are once united shall never be separated through a joyful eternity. "*Tis a happy separation which divides us from the world and from the society of the wicked to unite us to Jesus Christ*—It is the privilege of
of this poor man to be a confessor of Christ before he is a christian. He loses the communion of the Jewish church, without having the consolation which christians unjustly excommunicated enjoy, who are more closely and strongly united to Christ on that account: but Christ is just going to make him full amends another way."

From the whole of the Pharisees conduct let us learn and contemplate the various arts and subtle endeavours of all the adversaries and enemies of the gospel and cross of Christ: and be by no means surpris'd or terrify'd to find them, tho' in different shapes, employed against ourselves, if we zealously embrace the truth of Christ, as well as against all who are not afraid to confess before all men the glory of him who hath opened their eyes. It is impossible that the world should love those who testify that its works and words, its doing and teaching are evil! persecution, opposition, and reviling are the sure and certain fruits of a living faith, a full and free profession of the gospel, which is always enmity with the world, and which will always meet with the same treatment from the world, sin, and Satan, as its divine author and his first servants met with—the disciples must in all times be as their master. Settling this important truth

H h 2 well
well in our minds, let us not be shaken, when we come to experience it, but learn from this blind man, boldly and freely to confess the faith, and to declare the power of that God who hath brought us from darkness into his marvellous light: always remembering his divine promises, which pertain not to his apostles only, but to all his servants of all ages—settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before, what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. And ye shall be betrayed, both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish *. Nay and to comfort his faithful servants under the frowns of the world, our Lord hath not only pronounced his blessing upon those who are persecuted for his sake, but commanded them to shew the greatest gladness: blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the SON of MAN's SAKE: Rejoice ye in that day, and LEAP for JOY: for behold your reward is great in heaven †. Fully to prove this,

On the Man born Blind.

and to shew that when men cast us out as evil, when our friends forfake; us, then the Lord taketh us up, when persecutions deprive us of all earthy consolations, then the Lord Jesus draws nearer unto us with his heavenly comforts — He now manifested himself to the man born blind, after he was cast out by the Pharisees, and revealed himself more clearly to him, than he had ever done to any other person before.

3. For Jesus heard, the evangelist tells us, that they had cast him out: and therefore to comfort him, under this unjust and arbitrary sentence, the good shepherd sought him, and when he had found him, he said unto him, dost thou believe on the Son of God? Which question he proposes.

1st. Because faith in Christ the Son of God is the beginning of all grace and salvation. By faith in whom, faith St. Paul, we have an access into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

2dly. He doth not ask, dost thou believe on the Messiah, but on the Son of God; thereby to shew, that such a general faith in the Messiah, as then prevailed, was not sufficient; they for the most part expected him to be the Son of David only—and upon this our Saviour's question to the Pharisees turns, what think ye?
ye of Christ? whose Son is he? *—They did not acknowledge him to be the Son of God also, David's Lord, as well as David's Son: This expression Son of God, we see the very enemies of our Saviour understood, as implying his true divinity and equality with the Father †. Let us not receive it in any other sense, who have so many and such abundant proofs of his co-eternity and co-equality with the Father; nor rest easy in our faith, till we believe in Christ Jesus, as the Son of God, very God of very God, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: for without such a faith, we shall fall short of that redemption, which was made by the blood of God: for God hath purchased us with his own blood a price immense indeed, infinite as was the love, that moved him to give it hereby perceive we the love of God, because HE laid down HIS life for us! ‡

To this question of our Saviour's, the man

* Matt. xxii. 42.
† Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath; but said also that GOD was his father: making himself EQUAL with God. John v. 18. comp. x. 33.
‡ See Cant. v. 6, 7. and iii. 2, 3. and also Theophylact on the place, whose commentary is indeed as the title page expresses it, theologis omnibus, ecclesiasticis & concionatibus perutile & necessarium.

replied,
replied, who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? It is necessary that knowledge precede assent, the understanding must first be enlightened, before the will can apprehend: for faith without knowledge is absurd: and a belief of things which we may have no information of, fit only for that church, which keepeth the key of knowledge from her members.—Not to believe immediately, but to desire to be first instructed, is agreeable to the prudence which faith itself requires." Wherefore fully to instruct and comfort the man, as well as to shew us how God reveals himself to those, who like this man are of an humble teachable spirit, and desire to know, that they may believe, Jesus said unto him, thou hast both seen him and it is he that talketh with thee. "Thou needest not go far, to find out the Son of God. Behold the word is nigh thee. We do not find, that Christ did thus expressly, and in so many words reveal himself to any other as to this man here, and to the woman of Samaria, I that speak unto thee am

† Grammarians know, says Whitby, that when two καί's as in this place come together, the first is to be rendered both, and that the aorist is usually put for the present tense, and so these words are well rendered thus, thou both seest him, and he talketh with thee. Kai eipanag auton kai lano meto ou, &c.
HE: he left others to find out by arguments who he was, but to these weak and foolish, these poor and despised things of the world, he chose to manifest himself so as not to the wise and prudent."

The man hearing these words from the mouth of the eternal WORD, now no less enlightened in mind than in body, immediately declares, Lord, I believe. And as true faith is not a frigid assent, but such a warm affection of the mind, as carries the whole heart, all the affections of the man to the worship of him, who is the object of that faith—therefore having declared his faith in Jesus, as the eternal Son of God, and so of consequence worthy of all adoration, he witnesses that faith by his adoration, he worshipped him, he paid him divine honour and homage, as the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh.—This passage of the gospel well deserves serious attention, as it is of great force to prove the true divinity of our Saviour: who here declares himself in express terms, τοῦ οὗ το Θεός the true eternal, only begotten Son of God—so of necessity equal with God, even upon the concession of the Pharisees, and as he abundantly proved himself by this mighty work, opening the eyes of a man born blind, by his

* See Mr. Henry on Matt. xi. 25.
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own, not any delegated power, a work the like to which was never supposed to be wrought by any man since the world began—Philosophers declaring it impossible to any human power; and Jews confessing it the acknowledged work of their Messiah*.—*Jesus here too requires of the blind man to believe in him, the Son of God: but he who believes and puts his confidence in any creature, however great, however exalted, as much in the first of creatures as the last, is cursed by the mouth of God himself, Jer. xvii. 5. Jesus therefore was God. Moreover he admitted the worship and adoration of this man: which is due and must be paid only to the one true God, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. The God-man, corporeally present to the eyes of this person, not only required his faith, but admitted his worship: he must therefore either have been notoriously wicked or the very and true God, God and man in one person—Let the adversaries to the divinity of our Lord see how they can free themselves from this plain conclusion—and God give us all grace to see, believe and adore, with this

* Aristotle says, that no one born blind, τοπλον γενομαιον εκελεφατου, ever is restored to sight, that is by natural means. He who doth such a work, must be above nature. And the Jewish Rabbies reckon it among the signs of the Messiah, that he should open the eyes of the blind. Midrash in Psal. cxlvi. 8.

man,
On the Man born Blind.

man, born blind, the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Christ Jesus our Saviour!

The order of our salvation is beautifully pointed out to us in the example of this blind man:

1st. As he was separated from the Pharisees, so must we separate ourselves from the company of the wicked: we must come out from among them, and be separate, as the Lord commands: for this is implied in the very name of Christians, anointed, holy or separate persons: for what communion hath light with darkness; or what concord hath Christ with Belial? and what agreement, &c. see 2 Cor. vi. 14, 18.

2dly. We must firmly and truly believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God: we must confess him the only mediator between God and man, who came and brought the glad tidings of peace as well to us that were afar off, as to those that were near; for thro' him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father, to whom we are reconciled by him.

3dly. We must publicly profess our faith, when need shall require, as this man did, undaunted by danger, and unmoved by the fear and faces of men. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation: which confession boldly, freely, and fully made will encourage
encourage others, and stir them up to the like faith and resolution. And,

4thly. We must be careful to pay the due homage, adoration and worship to Christ: for the nation and kingdom that will not serve him, shall perish: * and God will pour forth his indignation upon the heathen, that know him not; and upon the families that call not upon his name.

So let us be careful to come to, believe in, confess, adore and serve him, and then we shall not be afraid of whatever men or devils shall attempt against us—thus walking in the light we shall not stumble nor be amongst the number of those obstinately blind, who like the Pharisees, reject every evidence of the truth, and to whom as well as to the Jews, our Saviour directs his words, on this occasion, with which the present discourse may properly be closed, and God give us all a right understanding both in these and all things—Then said Jesus, † for judgment I am come into this world, that ‡ they which see not, might

* It deserves remarking, that our Lord in the very next chapter speaks of himself as the good shepherd, and describes the character of a true and false teacher. The Pharisees were left to apply.
† John ix. 39.
‡ It is not causal in this place: many of the Fathers suppose these words referable to the Gentiles. I am obliged to
might see: and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, if ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, WE SEE: therefore your SIN REMAINETH.

to pass over many excellent things in this history, which the reader I hope will attend to more diligently: my compass not admitting me to be so explicit as its excellence requires.
öl DISCOURSE XX.

On the Death and Resurrection of Lazarus.

Being the Substance of Three Sermons.

PART I.

John xi. 1.

Now a certain man was sick named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

The resurrection of Lazarus, as it is the most illustrious, so is it the most circumstantially and fully related of any of the miracles of our Saviour: it abounds with the greatest variety of instruction and comfort, is the most affecting picture of the love and tender sympathy of
of the Lord of love, the God of mercies, and diligently contemplated affords the soul the most solid consolation both in life and in death. It is the most evident and convincing proof of the divinity and divine mission of Christ*, which is the first and grand end of all his miracles; and therefore every circumstance in it, is so ordered by infinite wisdom as to evince in the clearest manner the truth and reality of the fact, which we find the most inveterate enemies of our Lord at that day never once contested: nay, they founded their persecution of Jesus, and resolution to put him to death upon these very

* The famous, or rather infamous, SPINOZA used to say, that if he could believe this history of the resurrection of Lazarus, he would give up all his system, so great an argument is it of the Christian truth. And yet had Spinoza been in earnest, one cannot conceive any evidence wanting to establish the truth of the fact; for 1st, as Bengelius well observes, the deliberate and purposed delay of Christ: 2dly, His declaration of Lazarus, his death and prediction of his resurrection: 3dly, The variety and multitude of the persons, that were witnesses: 4thly, the consequent faith of many of the Jews who were present, by no means prejudiced in favour of Jesus, or disposed to believe him, as well as the perverse infidelity of the others, are such testimonies, amongst many more, of the truth of this miracle. as a man must have the hardiness of a Spinoza, a Woflon. or a Bolingbroke to gain-say and refilt. But let us remember, that according to our Saviour (fee p. 460.) when men say, They see, therefore their sin remaineth.
facts, which were too universally known and allowed, to admit of a doubt, What do we? said they, for this man doeth many miracles. And for this cause, from that day forth, they took counsel together for to put him to death 

So unhappily were they blinded, so wretchedly deceived, as not to consider that he who could restore life to another, must of necessity be the resurrection and the life, having life in himself and of consequence death could never hold him, who thus demonstrated that he had power over death, that he was the very person who spoke to them by the mouth of his prophet Hosea, 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: even as he fully declared by his own glorious resurrection from the grave, of which this of Lazarus was an earnest, as both, but the former especially, are happy earnestst to us, full proofs, and lively examples of our resurrection to a new life here, that we may partake of the riches of a future resurrection to glory.

As every circumstance in this most delightful and instructive history deserves particular attention, I propose thro' God's gracious assistance to go thro' the whole according to the

† John xi. 53.
order in which it stands in the gospel, to draw such remarks from it, as may strengthen our faith, confirm our hope, and encrease our love, both in life and in death; and in the conclusion I will particularly consider that which is eminently represented to us in this sickness, death, and resurrection of Lazarus; namely, the fall, conversion, and resurrection of a sinner to newness of life. Happy will it be for us, if we can each one of us see ourselves in this glass, and adore the infinite loving kindness of that Saviour, who not only wept over us when dead in sin, but shed his blood for us—not only tears, but infinitely precious blood—so great was his friendship, so passing all conception his adorable love to us miserable sinners!

For the more convenient treating of it, we may divide the history into three principal parts:

Ist, The preparatives to the miracle, and the return of Jesus into Judea, to ver. 16.

IIdly, The Conversation between Jesus and the two sisters, to ver. 32. And,

IIIIdly, 'The wonderful fact itself with all its astonishing circumstances.
I shall in this discourse confine myself to the first of these, the preparatives to the miracle, and the return of Jesus into Galilee.

1st, The Evangelist begins his narrative with an account of the persons concerned: Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, an inhabitant of Bethany, which was the town or village where Mary and her sister Martha lived *. It was that same Mary, who (as is recorded

* It is generally supposed that Lazarus was younger than his sisters, and that this village, rather country-feat, was their property; for that they were people of some condition is manifest, as well from this history, as from other parts of the gospel. Grotius conjectures, says Whiby, that this remarkable history of Lazarus was therefore omitted by the other Evangelists, because Lazarus was then living when they wrote their gospels: the last of them writing, faith Theophylact within fifteen years after our Lord's ascension; whereas tradition faith, that Lazarus lived thirty years after he was raised from the dead. He therefore thinks that they would not publish this history of him in his lifetime, lest they should provoke the Jews to cut him off (as we see even now they were desirous of doing; John xii. 10.) whereas according to the earliest computation, St. John wrote his gospel thirty-two years after our Lord's ascension and so after the death of Lazarus. 2dly, The last of the three Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) writing but fifteen years after our Lord's ascension, might think it needless to mention a miracle concerning a person living so near Jerusalem, where there was so great a fame thereof, and so many living witnesses to attest it. St. John writing his gospel, say the ancients, above sixty years after our Lord's ascension, when by the death of the person, and most of the witnesses, which were present at the resurrection, the memory and fame of it might be much
recorded in the following chapter) anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, when he was at supper in the house of this same Lazarus her brother, whom he raised from the dead, as the sequel will shew, and who was now sick, with that very disease, which subjected him to death in a few days, that the glory of God might be manifested in him. There was a particular friendship subsisting between this happy family and our Saviour: concerning one of whom, this same Mary, he formerly declared that she had chosen that good part which should not be taken from her *, and there is the utmost assurance to conclude the same of Lazarus and Martha, otherwise Jesus would never have blest them with this particular friendship.

much impaired, had great reason to perpetuate the memory of it, by this large rehearsal of it."—We may moreover observe, that the other three Evangelists confine themselves principally to what Christ did in Galilee, where he resided most, and scarce ever carried their history into Jerusalem till passion week: whereas John's memoirs relate chiefly to what passed at Jerusalem: and to him we are much indebted as for this, so also for the history of many other excellent miracles, and divine discourses of our Lord, omitted by the other Evangelists. It is more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles, says Henry, yet not only because there are many circumstances of it so very instructive, and the miracle itself so very great a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the owning proof of all, Christ's own resurrection."  


Rely-
Relying therefore upon his friendship, when these affectionate sisters perceived the danger of their brother's sickness, they dispatched a messenger to the place where he was, beyond Jordan, to inform him thereof, having great confidence and hope in his known love and assured power; and therefore not prescribing any thing to him, or pressing him to do ought other, than they were convinced his great benevolence would lead him to, they only send him word, *Lord, behold, He whom thou lovest is sick!*

1st. There is peculiar beauty and force in these words, *He, whom thou lovest,* which ought to warm the hearts of us and all Christians with a holy emulation, so to conduct our lives and actions, that *Christ may love us,* that he may be our friend, and honour us with that title, as he honoured Lazarus,—*our friend Lazarus*—For they whom God loves and to whom he is a friend, have in all adversities and necessities a safe asylum to fly to, whence they will never fail to receive counsel, help and consolation! But what must be done to gain the love, to procure the desired friendship of Christ? — *Look at Lazarus and his sisters*—they will teach you: They were diligent hearers and lovers of the word of God, more especially Mary, of whom we read that *she sat at the feet of Jesus,* and *heard*
heard his word: they practised what they heard, and framed their lives according to the precepts of their divine master: they received into their house Christ and his disciples, and were ready in acts of hospitality and beneficence towards him and them. Thus they procured the friendship of Christ: and to our comfort, he hath assured us, that if we go and do likewise, like them we shall be favoured, like them we shall be blest: For these three things will always procure his friendship, 1st, hearing and loving his word, 2dly, practising it, and, 3dly, performing acts of benevolence and love to him in his members upon earth. For concerning the hearing, loving, and keeping his word hath he not said, If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him—and again—My mother and my brethren are these, which hear the word of God and do it,—whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven,—the same is not only my friend, but my brother, and sister, and mother,—and again, Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you! And as to works of beneficence, and love, he hath promised the same friendship and regard to the doers of them to his poor members here upon earth as if they were done to his own very person—Inasmuch as
as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto ME *. Let us rejoice therefore, that we all have it thus in our power to procure the love and friendship of our Lord—and if we desire to be of the happy number of those whom he loveth,—let us be careful to do what we are assured will infallibly procure his love.

2. But though Jesus loved Lazarus, you find he was not therefore exempted from sickness and suffering—since it is added, Lord, he whom thou lovest IS SICK. It is not the privilege of the children of God and the friends of Christ to be exempted from evils and sufferings here below: it is enough for the disciples, if they be as their master: we cannot judge of the regard of God from temporal good or evil, all things here happen alike to all: a day is coming wherein all will be set right. Lazarus, you find, the particular friend of Christ was sick, so sick that death came and excluded all hopes of relief: the miserable sisters, no less beloved of the Lord than their brother, are left to the deepest grief on account of his death; and no relief at all, nay, no regard is had to them from that compassionate Lord, on whom they had built their hopes, and to whom they sent that affectionate message, Lord, behold, he whom thou

* Matt. xxv. 40.
lovest is sick. And herein we have a lively image of what christians should always fore-arm themselves at least with the expectation of: evils, troubles, afflictions and trials should by no means seem strange to them, as though some new thing happened unto them *: they should remember, that their inheritance is not here, and that they are the disciples of a suffering master, whose cross makes afflictions sweet and honourable, and that the way of the cross is the only way to glory! they should always bear in mind that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God, that tribulations are absolutely necessary to render us conformable to the image of Christ, to purify, purge and try us as silver is tried: to beat the world and its love out of our hearts. And that it is certain from the word of truth that, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer we shall also reign with him †: this reflection should teach us not only resignation to, but joy in sufferings, knowing that our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! with which glory that shall be revealed in us, (if we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together) the sufferings of this present time, however great and grievous, are by no means worthy to be compared!

* 1 Peter iv. 12. † 2 Tim. ii. 12.
3. Afflictions and sufferings thus born, for Christ's sake, become the most signal blessings: but frequently it happens, that when the hand of God is upon us, we are at a loss to know how to act, and to defeat his gracious purposes. In this respect also the sisters of Lazarus give us clear instruction: they send to Jesus, and take care to inform him of their brother's death: at the same time reminding him of that ground of all hope, his great love to their brother—We must follow their example: betake ourselves to Christ Jesus in all our troubles and necessities, commend in ardent prayer our wants and miseries to him, and press him moreover by that covenant of love which he hath made with us, and by all the proofs that he hath given us thereof, by his cross and passion, by his bloody sweat and bitter agony, by his life and death, his ascension and resurrection—by all these signal instances of his love, to come and have mercy upon us: we must dwell upon his love to us which is great and unchangeable, ours to him is ever too cool and unworthy to be urged before him—we can only love him because he first loved, first and freely loved us!—and when we thus in faith approach this Lord of compassion, we need not doubt, but, if it be for our good and his glory, he will come and help us, he will come and perform the request of our lips.

1 i 4 4. And
4. And we shall do well in all our prayers to copy after the example set us by these sisters: lay open our wants only before the Lord, intreat him to look upon and behold them, leaving the rest to himself, prescribing nothing to him, but submitting ourselves to his better will and divine good pleasure. Lord, said they, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. They do not add, therefore come down, and heal him, make haste and save him from the grave: it is sufficient for them to propose their case and their necessities to their Lord: whom they know able to find out the means and manner of helping without their admonitions: and willing, infinitely willing to help without any tedious persuasion of theirs. St. Austin, therefore, well observes, "'tis sufficient that God is moved, for he doth not love and then forsake:" into his fatherly bosom let us pour forth our complaint, to his paternal ears let us make known our wants, and patiently and quietly submit to this good Father's better will concerning us. O if we could thus resign ourselves to him, happy should we be: he would never leave nor forsake us: for can such a Father forsake his own, his redeemed, his depending children! suppose the child of any good and tender parent amongst us was to fall into a pit, and be in danger of perishing, and news was brought
brought to the parent of his child's situation: think you there would be any need of much reasoning to persuade this tender parent to hasten to his child's relief: his natural love and bowels of affection would, above all things, urge him to immediate assistance. And if an earthly father would act thus, why should we doubt of the love of that heavenly Father to us, who hath implanted this ἔγγυς, this natural affection in the bowels of men, that we might in some degree from thence conceive of his divine love and affection towards us; for even as a Father pityeth his own children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear him. Nay he hath the affection of both parents towards us, yea and more than both: can a woman forget her fucking child—her fucking child, when the little helpless babe hangs upon her breast and is endeared by all the tenderest ties of nature—can a woman forget such a fucking child, that she should not have compassion on the SON of her womb! — yea, they may forget, such a thing may be, though the most marvellous and contrary to nature—they may forget, yet will not I, faith the Lord, yet will not I forget thee! and after such a declaration shall we be backward to trust ourselves and all we have into the hands of this blessed Father; shall we be backward to depend upon and resign our-
felves wholly to his will? — forbid it, gra-
cious Father, prevent such ingratitude and
folly from taking place in our hearts, while
with a cheerful, loving, filial confidence, in
life and death we commit and commend our-
selves to thee!

2. Such instructions may we gather from
the message which these sisters sent to Jesus:
let us see next the issue of it. When Jesus
heard it be said, this sickness is not unto death—
words doubtless which, when carried to Mar-
tha and Mary, strangely surprized them, and
must have exercised theirs as well as the
disciples faith: since it is probable before the
sisters received them, their brother was dead,
and since speedily after, Jesus positively af-
sured his disciples that Lazarus was dead: but
our Saviour fully proved their veracity: for
though Lazarus died, yet was his sickness not
unto death, this was not the errand upon which
it was sent, nor was it for his final and laff-
ing separation from the world, (which alone,
properly, speaking, is death) but it was for the
glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified
thereby: that is, "Lazarus is permitted to be sick
by the special providence of God, not that he
designs to take him out of the world by death,
as he doth other men, but that the Son of
God might be glorified by shewing his al-
mighty power in raising him from the dead:
by
by this declaring that he hath given to the Son to have life in himself, and to quicken whom he will: and therefore that he could fulfil his promise made to them that believed in him, that he would raise them up at the last day: and so Christ expounds himself in the 25th and 26th verse †." This then was the great end and intent of this sickness that the Son of God might thus be glorified thereby: as the event will shew he was, much more than if he had either preserved Lazarus from sickness at all, or gone at the first invitation and healed him, or raised him up to life immediately after he was dead. The miracle would not then have displayed the glory of God and of his Son, (whose glory we see from hence, is one) a hundredth part so much as now, when he raised his friend dead in his absence, and four days laid in the bowels of the earth. And there is no doubt but Christ on purpose reserved this most illustrious miracle to the present time, when his death drew near, that thus he might in some degree take off the scandal of his death and cross, confirm and prove his divine power and mission, and give an earnest of his own resurrection on the third day. For by raising not only those who were just dead, but this

† See Whitby on the place.
man, who had been in the sepulchre four days, he rendered his own resurrection infinitely more credible: This, amongst others may be esteemed one great end and design of the present miracle.

The evangelist adds, now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister and Lazarus: God you see is no respecter of persons: Martha is now mentioned first, and Mary only call'd her sister, tho' she seem'd to claim a priority in the esteem of Christ. Hence we learn that particular friendships are by no means contrary to the spirit of the gospel: our divine Lord hath consecrated that amiable relation to us, not only by his friendship with Lazarus, and his sisters, the subjects of this history, but also with the blessed writer of it, the divine and beloved St. John, of whom it is recorded, that he was the disciple, whom Jesus loved.—How happy a family was this of Lazarus and his sisters, united thus in tender affection towards each other, and blest with the particular love of the Saviour of the world! O happy house in which such love and union dwelt! O much to be desired felicity, which they enjoyed in the friendship of the Lord of life! yet, to our comfort, we may all enjoy that happiness: our houses may be all thus blest! would to God, we were earnestly desirous and anxiously careful to do all we can to win the love, and
L A Z A R U S  raised.  477

and gain the friendship of this only valuable friend!—But tho' Jesus loved this family thus, we find, he did not exempt them from suffering: after the evangelist had given such information of the love of Jesus to this family, should we not expect to hear that he was hastening to their relief? on the contrary we find it written, when he bad heard therefore that Lazarus was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

1. Herein we have a lively representation of the dealings of God with our souls, and a subject of great consolation in case he defers the desired help: he frequently proceeds in this manner, and withholds his helping hand to prove and try us, that the trial of our faith may be found unto glory and honour in the day of the Lord. He loves us not the less: and tho' he seem to forsake us, yet is he nigh at hand. To take off all suspicion of want of friendship to Lazarus, St. John prefaches this seeming neglect of Jesus with that sweet information, now Jesus loved Lazarus, &c.—He loved them, yet continued two days from them, while the one expired, and the others were left hopeless and inconsolable. Yet look to the event and you'll see, that all this was for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. God hath proceeded thus

2 with
with many of his most eminent servants. He gave Abraham the promise of the seed, in which all nations should be blessed; yet kept him twenty five years in suspense, and when all hope seem'd to have been lost, thro' the deadness of his own and Sarah's body, he fulfilled his word, and Isaac was born. How long was good old Jacob in sore distress for Joseph? how long was that Joseph under the cloud of affliction before his light burst forth, and God crowned his piety. Nay, and even all his descendants, how did they seem forgotten of God and rejected, when at length he raised up Moses, and perform'd the promise given to their fathers so long before, of bringing them into the land of Canaan? These are lessons of consolation and arguments for us to wait continually upon the Lord, and tho' he seemeth to delay never to despair; but to trust in him, tho' he tarry to wait for him, because if we thus trust in and thus wait for him, in all our troubles and adversities, he will surely come, he will not tarry. His good word will be fulfilled to us, which he spoke by the mouth of his prophet, for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer.*

* Isa. l.v. 8.
2. What our Saviour faith, that this sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby:—should be a lesson to us in all our evils, sicknesses and sufferings to take care by receiving them properly, bearing them patiently, repenting truly, and believing sincerely, that they answer the end which God designs, namely the salvation of our souls, in which he is ever glorified. For this end all afflictions are sent, and let us remember, that we can only, by using them thus and receiving them as fatherly corrections, render them either serviceable to our temporal or future well-being, or make them conduce to the glory of God, which happy are they, who can promote and serve either by life or death, by good or evils, by blessings or sufferings. Levit. x. 3. Endued with the same temper wherewith St. Paul was blest, who declared, most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

3. The two days being overpast, Jesus said unto his disciples, let us go into Judea again. His disciples were struck at this proposal, and

2 Cor. xii. 10.
the recollection of his late danger there, alarmed them: master, said they, the Jews of late fought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again? Wilt thou hazard thy life amongst those who desire nothing more than to find a fit occasion to kill thee?—In which words they betray a want of faith in his divine power, and an aversion to sufferings, which they feared for themselves, while they cloaked their fear with a seeming zeal for their master. We must take care, that like them we do not shrink from suffering with Christ, when he is pleased to call us thereto: as also that we forget the trespasses of our enemies against us, as Christ we saw forgot them, willing as he was to return to that place, where he had been so indignantly treated, and to give the very people who made an attempt upon his life, further means of grace and new calls to his favour! O how doth this forbearing love of Christ and this wonderful readiness to embrace sufferings and death, condemn at once the little animosities and malice which reign too commonly amongst his children and disciples, as well as that love of indulgence and base repining under afflictions, which is but too common in the christian world!

To remove however the fear and scruples of his disciples, he saith, Are there not twelve
twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. As much as to say, “as the hours of the day are appointed for the various works of human life, and as he who travels in the day-time need not be afraid of stumbling, because he has the sun, the light of this world, to shew him the way: even so he who has a season allotted him to perform God's works, and at the same time the light of the divine call requiring him to engage in it—such a person need not be afraid of any danger, he exposes himself to in performing it, God whom he serves being always able to preserve him: but if any man undertakes God's work at an improper season or without a call, he may justly be afraid of the danger he exposes himself to.” *

* See Macknight's harmony of the gospel, in loc. He by these words, lays Cocceius, reminds his disciples, that he is the light of the world, and that as long as he was in the world, he must necessarily shine, and that there was no danger if they walked with him. He also hints hereby the stated time fixed for him to be in the world, and the consequent darknefs of those who should reject his light, and not walk in it, which they should enjoy always, who obey'd his word and follow'd his example—So faith the prophet.—To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is, because there is no light in them. See the former sermon. p. 395.
So that Jesus hereby informs his disciples, that he had no reason to fear, seeing his day was appointed, and the light of God was with him, and the night of his passion not yet come, before which he could not stumble nor fall through any of the snares laid for him: but that night was approaching wherein no man can work.

Hence we are taught the comfort and satisfaction of walking on in the way of duty and in the light of God's law and will, as well as the sure protection of his providence and the impossibility of any hurt or evil to us, while the day of our duty lasts, and he thinks good to preserve and keep us, for his work: He who is greater than all, will protect his servants, spite of all the roarings of their adversaries, as long as their service is necessary to his glory: A thousand proofs whereof he hath given us *, which should make us courageous and undaunted in his service; for who shall harm us if we be followers of that which is good? if we follow the light of God's will, word, and call,—if God be for us, who can be against us? let it only be our care to attend to the will of God in all we do, and to discharge our part faithfully in whatever

* The life, courage and amazing preservation of that hardy champion of Christ, Martin Luther, deserves well to be considered in this view.
state he hath placed us; and then we may repose ourselves, with full trust, on his providence: and as thus walking in the light, we shall not stumble, we shall not fear what man can do unto us: without his will they cannot hurt a hair of our head. But while we follow the leadings of self-will only, let us remember, that we walk in the night *, and being in total darkness, shall stumble and fall into the night of death eternal, because we have no light in us. And when the light of the glorious gospel shines so clearly around us, if we walk not in that light, but choose rather the darkness of sin, how can we expect the protection of that God, who to bless us with this glorious light became himself incarnate, and thus declared himself the light of the world, that we might walk in the light, and be the children of the light of life here, of the light of glory hereafter?

4. Jesus having thus removed their groundless fears, and strengthened his disciples, that he might clearly explain to them the cause of

* To convince us how striking the images in scripture are, and this in particular, we should have experienced the fact, and known the difference of travelling in a bright clear day, and in a dark, perfectly dark, night, when there are neither moon nor stars—and when we are strangers to the way in which we are going! how strong an image of a soul wandering on in the night of sin—in the gross darkness of self-will!
his going again into Judea, he faith unto them, our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. "He is dead, but I go that I may raise him from the dead; for they that die in Christ, are asleep only."—The disciples whose faith was yet dull, and whose great fault as well as that of the Jews seems to have been a constant understanding of the words of Jesus, barely in the letter, here fall into the same mistake: Lord, said they, if he sleep, he shall do well:" in extreme disorders this is a good symptom,—his distemper is abated, and he is probably amending, it would therefore be highly unreasonable for us to take two days journey for such a purpose, to awaken him out of his sleep." Thus they covered their fears and hinted to Jesus that it would be safest and best to continue where they were and not to take a hazardous journey into Judea,—They were mistaken however, the Evangelist informs us, and misunderstood our Lord: for Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking rest in sleep. To remove all doubting therefore, Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead: and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there: to the intent ye may believe: believe more fully, clearly and perfectly in my divinity and divine mission: they had some faith already, but faith always admits of
of increase: therefore Jesus faith—to the intent ye may believe, that your faith may be increased and confirmed, and that what is lacking in it at present may be strengthened and perfected. And this was also another great end and design of the present illustrious miracle.

From hence we may derive the strongest consolations against the fear of death: which to the believer in Christ is nothing more than taking rest in sleep; and shall we then fear death, when it is no more than falling asleep in the arms of a blessed Redeemer, and awaking up after his likeness, that we may be satisfied with rivers of pleasure at his right hand for evermore!

But thus to fall asleep, we must, like Lazarus, first, be the friends of Jesus: our friend Lazarus, he is pleased to call him; and how we may be his friends, I have shewed above: he says—Our friend—for those whom Christ loves should be dear to us all: for this is his commandment, that we love one another as he hath loved us, and because he hath loved us.—Christian friendship should reach beyond the grave; Christ calls Lazarus his friend, when dead and laid in the sepulchre: let us not conceive our Christian friends as lost when removed from us, and therefore forget our former love: but consider they are only gone a little
a little before to a place, where the imperfect though pleasing friendship we enjoyed with them here, shall be consummated in the most intimate and perfect union.

Thus if Christ be our friend and we his, we shall no more fear to die than to fall asleep, as knowing whom we have believed, and that we are about to commend our souls into the hands of a faithful Redeemer: nay sweet as is sleep to the weary labourer, after the long day's toil, so sweet will death be to the soul athirst for God and wearied with the cares and anxieties of this poor fatiguing life. And as in sleep, that striking image of death, our senses are all fast lock'd up and bound, we neither see nor hear, nor know any thing of what stirs around us, or what is transacting in the world; but arise when called in the morning, refreshed and active, to the business of our station: so when dead, we shall not perceive or regard any of the affairs in this world, but when Christ shall call at the last day, when the trumpet shall sound on the morn of the resurrection, and that awful voice, — *Come to judgment, come away* shall burst the carmentis of the grave; our bodies shall arise to life eternal, and join our transported souls, when both together shall enter into the pleasures of perpetual day! let us not then fear death, an enemy, whom we must encounter, but
but rather familiarise ourselves to him; but rather disarm him, thro' Christ, of his sting, that so when the appointed summons comes, we may say with good old Simeon, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, that so we may receive and welcome it with joy, as the blessed passport to the haven of rest, as the kind deliverer that sets the imprisoned spirit free, to live with God in bliss, to reign with Christ in happiness eternal. Happy they, who thus receive and welcome the summons, who thus in full faith fall asleep to awaken in the arms of a faithful Redeemer,—blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; even so faith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them!

5. Having thus given his disciples a proof of his divine knowledge and of the designs of providence in the death of Lazarus, our Saviour adds, nevertheless, or rather, ulla, — therefore, that is, to confirm your faith, and shew you the designs and glory of God, — let us go unto him. — " It may seem perhaps too late to go now he is dead: but let us go, and do ye believe, and ye shall see the glory of God." " Thus Jesus who could have raised up Lazarus without opening his lips or rising from his seat, leaves the place of his retirement beyond Jordan and takes a journey into
LAZARUS raised.

into Judea, where the Jews lately attempted to kill him. The reason was his being present in person and raising Lazarus to life again before so many witnesses at Bethany, where he died, and was so well known, would be the means of bringing the men of that and future ages to believe in his doctrine, which is so well fitted to prepare them for a resurrection to eternal life; an admirable proof and emblem of which he gave them in this great miracle *.

When Jesus had declared his resolution to go again into Judea, Thomas which is called Didymus, conceiving nothing less than destruction from such a journey, yet unwilling to forswear his blessed master, said, Let us also go that we may die with him.—For he knew the inveteracy and malice of his countrymen to be so great, that he apprehended nothing less than such an event, and therefore generously proposed that they should not forsake, but go and lay down their lives with their beloved master †.

* See Lardner's vindication of this miracle p. 118.
† And the many declarations Jesus had made of his approaching sufferings might not improbably in this hour of danger recur to the mind of Thomas. Some have supposed, that Lazarus is the antecedent to him, let us go and die with Lazarus, our dear departed friend,—and others considering the great incredulity of Thomas, have supposed these not the words of faith, but uneasiness and despair—as if Jesus was leading them on to destruction, and it was best to end so miserable and persecuted a life.
LAZARUS raised.

An amiable example for us to follow: let us not fear to partake of the sufferings of our suffering Lord, but resolve to go with him, to follow him wherever he shall lead, and think it our highest happiness to die with him, that we may live with him in endless glory. He hath indeed died for us, he counted not his life dear, so be he might finish his course with joy, and reconcile us unto God: and surely if he calls us to endure any dangers nay or to lay down our life for his sake, we cannot but rejoice in being so highly favoured with an opportunity thus to return him the life which he himself gave us, and to testify thereby our love to him and the brethren. For hereby perceive we the love of GOD, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, and so for him, if need be and we are called there-to. — Let us always consider death of every fort, whether natural or violent, thus as a sacrifice to God for Christ's sake, and it will then become sweet and desireable. — Moreover we shall do well to remember, that in one sense we must fulfil the words of Thomas, we must die with him, if we would live with him, die to sin, and rise again unto righteousness, life. I have preferred the more good-natured sense, and I hope the most agreeable to the context. — Thomas is always distinguished by the name of Didymus, i.e. twofold, to shew, say some, the twins struggling in him, of faith and unbelief — flesh and spirit.
if we have any hope to rise again to glory eternal: we must (in the excellent words of our baptismal service) follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and be made like unto him; that as he died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized, die to sin, and rise again unto righteousness: continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

Let these words therefore of Thomas,—let us also go, that we may die with him—be continually before our eyes to encourage us to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to meet any sufferings or evils which fall upon us, depending upon his grace and conforming ourselves to his spirit of sacrifice: and let them always admonish us of the necessity of going forth from and dying to sin with Christ, if we would partake of that resurrection, whereof this of Lazarus is a glorious proof and earnest.—And let us animate ourselves with this reflection, that, "it is better, far better, to die with and for this blessed Jesus than to prolong these wretched days of absence, meanness, and affliction, by forsaking him, when for his glory, he is leading us into dangers, that will surely turn out to our good if we rely upon him and depend upon his grace." To whom, &c.
On the Death and Resurrection of Lazarus.

Part II.

John xi. 25, 26, 27.

Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?

She saith unto him, yea Lord, I believe, that thou art the Christ the Son of God which should come into the world.

II.

Our blessed Lord, having continued in the place where he was, as long as he, in his wisdom, knew it conducive to the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, at length after his journey and the several events, which happened in that interval, came nigh to Bethany: he found upon the information of some of the inhabitants of that village, that Lazarus was not only dead, as he had foretold, but had now been in the grave four days.
Deep sorrow overwhelm'd the afflicted sisters: insomuch that many of the Jews, from Jerusalem came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother, Bethany being a village in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs, or two of our miles distant, from it. In which particular we cannot but admire the providence of God, who so disposed the present event, that there might be numbers of unexceptionable witnesses to the miracle, which the relations of the deceased might perhaps not have been judged: and therefore many of the Jews both men and women without doubt, being present to comfort the mourners, and thus made eye-witnesses of this most glorious miracle, gave in such an evidence to its truth, as infidelity could never gainsay: for the testimony of enemies in favour of a fact is always indisputable; and we have no reason to imagine, that these Jews were well disposed to our Saviour, but rather prejudiced against him, tho' the splendor of this mighty work shone so irresistibly that it brought many of them to the faith: many of the Jews which came to Mary, when they had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

No sooner was news brought, that Jesus was coming, than Martha, who appears to have been of a very active, lively disposition, went
LAZARUS raised.  493

went out immediately and met him: but Mary, who was of a more melancholy and contemplative turn, sat still in the house. Some have supposed, that Martha did not tell her sister, but upon the first information of her Lord's approach hastened with all speed and privacy to meet him—for sancta est prudentia, clam fratribus clam parentibus, ad Christum seque conferre *—it is a holy prudence to betake ourselves to Christ, secret from brethren, sisters or parents. No sooner was she come into the presence of Jesus, than she pours forth her complaint, wherein faith and weakness maintain an equal struggle — Lord, said she, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. "If thou hadst complied with the message we sent thee, when he whom thou lovedst was sick, if then thou hadst come down to our relief, I know thy love to thy friend, and thy interest with heaven had prevailed to the curing of his disease, and the delivering him from death." Great was the opinion which these devout sisters had of the power of Christ; as if death durst not shew his face to him, they suppose that his presence had prevented their brother's dissolution: and now his approach begins to quicken some hopes in them: but herein appears both the weakness of Martha as well as Mary's faith, (for they both use exactly the same words)

* Maldonat 'n loc.

that
that she limits Christ's power to his presence, and supposes her brother's death in a great measure owing to the absence of Christ—if thou hadst, &c. whereas had her faith been strong and rightly informed concerning her redeemer, such as was that of the Centurion, she must have known that he could have preserved Lazarus from death, as well when absent as present, had it been his good pleasure; that he could have spoke the word only, and her brother should have been healed. And as in these words, so in the next she betrays great weakness mixt with her faith—But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Wherein she shews, that she had some dark and imperfect hopes that her Lord would yet do something for her; while at the same time she betrays the weakness of the flesh, in that she supposes Christ had need of prayer for the performance of miracles, like the prophets and saints of old, and did them not by his own immediate and divine power, but obtained the performance of them from God by his prayers—whatsoever thou wilt, &c.' She should have said, as one observes, Lord, thou can'st do whatsoever thou wilt:" but she only faith, "thou can't obtain whatever thou prayest for:" she had forgot that the Son has life in himself, and that he wrought mi-
miracles by his own power who is himself the resurrection and the life, as he by and by clearly teacheth her and us.—Yet both these considerations must be taken in for the encouragement of our faith and hope, and neither excluded: both the dominion which Christ hath on earth, and his interest and intercession in heaven; he hath in one hand the golden scepter and in the other the golden censer: his power always predominant, his intercession always prevalent. Happy are they who always look to and believe in him, as the God ever able to help, as the high-priest ever willing to intercede.

Thus Martha in these words shews at once her hope and despair of relief: her hope, in that she says, I know that, &c. her despair, in that Jesus had not saved her brother from death, which she thinks it would have been more easy for him to have done, than now to raise him to life: and she might reason, if his friendship would not incline him to come and save him from death—I fear alas—it will not extend to a greater length. She presents us with a fair representation of ourselves in the like circumstances: so long as God blesses us with peace and prosperity, saves us from sickness, and crowns us with friends, felicity, and our hearts desire—so long we love him, call him our Father and
our friend:—or even, if he send us a slight affliction and yet in mercy is pleased speedily to deliver us from it, our patience is not wearied out, we can resign contentedly. But if he omit to do so, and permits the cross to lie long and heavily on our shoulders, then we not only cry out in anxious suspense with David, how long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever, how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? but also sometimes are rendered impatient and refractory, murmuring and repining against God, as if he dealt not with us according to that covenant whereby he hath admitted us into the adoption of Sons: and so much the more this infirmity increaseth upon us, as we see the less of human hope, the less probability of relief remaining, when to our apprehension all is lost, we abandon ourselves to despair: like Rachel, who refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. In such a state of distress, let us labour all we can to silence the murmurings and repinings of unbelief in our hearts: let us always conclude, that how dark soever the providences and evils around us seem, they yet are by some means, which we know not of, intended to manifest the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby—and when all human help seems wholly vain, then God shews his almighty arm—
Lazarus was four days in the grave before Jesus came to him—Job lost all he had, substance, children, health, and yet God blessed his latter end more than his beginning—nay, and should all possibility of human consolation be denied, our Saviour in his answer to Martha, supplies us with such an argument of comfort as cannot fail to revive and refresh every drooping soul.

It was never his manner to quench the smoking flax or break the bruised reed; wherefore he at once consoles the grief and strengthens the faith of Martha: Jesus faith unto her, thy brother shall rise again. It is to no purpose to look backward and trouble ourselves with what is past and cannot be amended: sorrow for what we cannot help as well as for what we can, is equally unreasonable: our wisdom is to look forward; and in the death either of ourselves or our friends we shall find no consolation, but in the thoughts of a resurrection to a life of glory.—As Jesus did not declare, how soon, or when her brother should arise, nor that he himself would now raise him, Martha understood his words as an argument of consolation, from the general resurrection, a matter whereof she was fully persuaded; she faith therefore unto him, I know that he shall rise again at
LAZARUS raised.

The resurrection * at the last day. She had no doubt of that important, though incomprehensible article of the Christian faith, the resurrection of the dead: but instructed clearly therein as well by the word of God in the scriptures of the old testament, as by the declarations of Christ himself, she believed in opposition to the deistical Sadduces who denied it, and the infidel heathens who derided it, that the hour was coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation †. Then, she believed, that her brother Lazarus also should arise: but here her hopes were bounded; and she seems not to have had any notion of the divine power and immediate influence of Christ, now, to perform this work, and to raise her brother from the dead.

Wherefore to instruct her and us in this important truth, Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: " not only able to raise the dead, but the author and head of that resurrection, the fountain and giver of that

* It is remarkable that Syrus renders ἀνάρρασσι in this place, by Κονινος ἐν παρακλησι in the consolation, implying, as it were, that the resurrection is the greatest and truest consolation and comfort.
† John, v. 29.
life which they shall inherit, who come forth unto the resurrection of life: for though Christ is the resurrection to all, as all shall arise through him, yet is he the life to the righteous only. He is not only the way, the truth, and the life: but the resurrection and the life also: "he is life, as one observes, the principle of all resurrection and life in his members, being the life by his divine essence and eternal birth. 2dly, He is the source of the resurrection from infidelity to faith by the inspiration of faith itself into the soul: and from sin to grace by the infusion of charity. 3dly, He is the author and model of the resurrection to a glorious and immortal life by the communication of his own." And as it is by believing these truths that we prepare ourselves to receive the accomplishment of them, therefore he goes on: be that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Which words seem very manifestly not to refer to the death of the body, and a future resurrection only *, but also and that prin-

* I say only: for that they may be very truly and well interpreted of the natural death and future resurrection I do not doubt, especially the latter part of the 25th verse, and as applied by our church in the burial service are very beautiful: "In whom whosoever believeth shall live tho' he die: and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall
principally to the present death unto sin, and the present resurrection to newness of life, which is the pledge and earnest of a future resurrection to life; and without which we can never expect to live with Christ in glory. “I am the resurrection and the life, faith Christ, he that believeth in me, who is by faith united to me, though he were dead* in trespasses and sins before, yet shall he live, he shall have a new life in and from me; who am the LIFE: and whoever thus liveth and believeth in me, that hath this new life by faith, and now liveth by the faith of the Son of God, he shall never die, this spiritual life shall never be extinguished in him, because I live he shall live also †: and though his body fall asleep in the not die eternally.” See the last collect. This perhaps may be at once no bad translation as well as comment. But the sense which I endeavour to establish above is certainly very important, agreeable to scripture and very consolatory to the friends of believers upon their death, namely, that such never die; that those who have the life of faith now, lose not that life though the body die, but pass from the life of grace here, to the life of glory hereafter: living in and with Christ.

* Kar anobarn etiam mortuus fuerit, seems to be the exact grammatical rendering of these words, and if so they certainly are not expressive of any future, but a past death: and it is observable, that all the translations agree in this rendering, as you may see by referring to the Polyglot. It is remarkable that the Ethiopic version there renders the words resurrection and life—by, I am the vivifier, life-giver, and raiser up of the dead—vivificator & suscitator mortuorum.

† John xiv. 19.
grave till the day of general resurrection, his soul shall and doth still live with me, by that life which is derived from me, the true vine into the fruitful branches; which he hath, now hath, who is ingrafted into me this true vine, that is, who believeth on me, for he that believeth on me hath everlasting life *, and which life is beyond the reach of danger, safely secured and laid up, from all possibility of loss and change—bid, as the apostle faith, with Christ in God †.

This seems to be the true and plain interpretation of these important words of our Saviour: whereby we are taught that as he is himself the resurrection and the life, they who have by faith in him arisen from the death of sin to the new life of righteousness, shall, (if continuing to live and believe, to live the life of faith here,) never be deprived of it; but when the body dies, remain in full possession of this life with Christ, their souls being with him in paradise; till at the last day the great work shall be completed, and the soul and body united in glory for ever. And thus (if this be the true interpretation of this passage, as will be made more probable by and by) all doubts and objections concerning

* John iii. 36.
† Col. iii. 3.
the condition of the soul after death, and the intermediate state, are clearly and fully obviated. And how full of comfort are these great truths to the Christian! disarming death of every sting, spoiling the grave of all its victory: seeing death is nothing more than a joyful return of the spirit to the God which gave it, a disunion of the soul from the body for a time, the one consigned as a seed to the earth to be raised up in glory and incorruption, the other received into the bosom of Christ and the full possession of that divine life with him, of which it hath already had some sweet foretaste below, and which now it shall live, consummately blessed for ever!

To confirm what I have advanced, I will just subjoin bishop Hall's paraphrase of the text, and a parallel passage or two from the sacred scriptures: as this sense of it appears to me highly important, and greatly delightful to the soul, I am the resurrection, &c. * Whereas man hath by his sin exposed himself to a double death both spiritual and bodily, I am he, who am both the author and beginner of life to him, and the preserver and finisher thereof: those sons of Adam, which are dead in their sins and trespasses, I

† Ephef. ii. 5. and v. 8. says a learned expositor, is the best interpreter of this place.
do by the power of my Spirit revive, by working in them a lively faith in me, and cause them to lead the life of grace. And those who do thus live the life of faith, I do by my power and mercy preserve from dying eternally, &c.'—Turn we now to the 24th verse of this evangelist, and there we shall be instructed in the same important truth: *he that heareth my word, faith Christ, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life: and cometh not into condemnation, but hath passed from death unto life.* In which words it is plainly declared that they who believe have passed from death unto life: and that they already have everlasting life: agreeable to what Christ faith here in the text, he that believeth on me, though he were, though he may have been dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die, he already hath everlasting life. And so St. John in his 1st epistle, chap. iii. 14. *faith, We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.* This love is an evidence of the new life in us: he that loveth

* These texts mutually confirm and explain each other: and it seems strange that any commentator should so enervate the force of scripture as to explain such an expression as that above, hath everlasting life, by hath the assurance of everlasting life. See Whitby and also Doddridge on the place.
LAZARUS raised.

not his brother, abideth in death. He hath not believed and so doth not live, in the sight of God: for he that believeth though he were dead, abiding in a state of death, shall live. Our Saviour goes on, verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live *. This hour can in no propriety be said to be then come, but in the spiritual sense, when the dead in trespasses and sins were quickened by the almighty voice and power of Christ, founding forth, awake thou that sleepest and arise from the DEAD, and Christ shall give thee light †. He goes on to declare himself the resurrection and the life: for as the Father hath life in himself: so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: and hath given him authority to execute judgment.

* Dodridge explains this verse thus—"some dead bodies shall be raised to life, and many souls shall be quickened and made spiritually alive." In his note, I express it thus ambiguously, faith he, because I am something doubtful whether it may not refer to the conversion of sinners by Christ's ministry rather than the resurrection of a few by his miraculous power. It is well known sinners are often represented in scripture as dead (Matt. viii. 22. Eph. ii. 1. 5, 14. 1 Tim. v. 6. and Jude 12.) and if the expression of αἰώνων is to be taken as we render it with the most literal exactness, they that bear or they and they alone that so attend unto the voice of Christ as to believe in him,—it will then limit it to this sense: which seems also favoured by verse 24, where death plainly signifies a state of sin and condemnation.

† Ephes. v. 14.
also, because he is the Son of Man, as well as the Son of God. Marvel not at this, continues our Lord, at this spiritual resurrection from the death of sin, by my voice and power; I will shew you greater things than these: for the hour is coming in which, not only all the dead in sin, but all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, &c.

This passage plainly points out and clears up to us the meaning of what Jesus said to Martha, namely, 1st, that he who believes in Christ, who is the life, now hath the life, now lives to God: he that believeth shall live, though he were dead: for faith, faith St. Austin, is the life of the soul. And our Saviour declares it to be so: this is life eternal, that they might know, believe in and love thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent: and in his 1st epistle, St. John declares, be that hath the Son hath life: and be that hath not the Son of God hath not life: which is fully explained by those words of our Saviour foregoing, he that believeth on the Son, HATH EVERLASTING life: and he that believeth not, shall not see life: but the wrath of God

* Whoever are inclined to see this passage more fully and clearly explained, and this sense of it defended at large, may consult the judicious Cocceius on the place, from whom I have partly wholly translated the present paragraph.

abideth
abideth on him*. He is now in a state of condemnation, and hath only to die to this world, to die eternally, whereas the believer is in a state of justification, and hath only to fall asleep, to live eternally with God: which is the 2d thing taught in our Saviour's words, namely, that this life fails not, nor ceaseth, but is eternal and shall never know intermission. Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. And the reason hereof is plain. For they live in and by their Lord; that is, because of the right, power, will, and efficaciousness of their Lord, who livesth in them: in whose body they are: because of the covenant of God, because of righteousness or justification. And so St. Paul informs us, Rom. viii. 10. If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin (for our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin should be destroyed, that henceforth we might not serve sin) but the Spirit (which is opposed to the body as the better part) is life, hath life, love and joy, both now and for ever, because of justification: for justification is unto life: Rom. v. 18. and where that is, all condemnation is over: being justified by faith we have peace with God, are made friends and sons of enemies and strangers: there is therefore now no condemnation

* John iii. 36.
to them that are in Christ Jesus, that live and believe in him, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. No weapon that is formed against thee, faith the prophet, shall prosper: and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, faith the Lord.* The faithful, those who are thus justified by faith in Christ, have their πολιτευμα, their citizenship in heaven †, and expect no other than the putting on of the heavenly tabernacle, and the coming of Christ, to conform their vile bodies to the fashion of his glorious body. They have in Christ an access to the Father, are made perfect with those who are in heaven, whither their forerunner Christ is gone before: they are come, already come, προσελκυσθε, as St. Paul expresses it, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to the spirits of just men made perfect &c. they are raised up with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.—Happy they who are thus united to Christ by faith—happy they, who have part in this first resurrection, on such the second death shall have no power.

* Isaiah liv: 17.
† Philip iii. 20.
Our Saviour having delivered these important and most consolatory truths, directs himself to Martha: and thereby shews us the necessity of an immediate application of the divine word to ourselves: since by faith alone we are made partakers of its promises, and unless we apply those promises to ourselves, a general belief of them will avail us not at all. * Believest thou this, said he: "Believest thou that I am the resurrection and the life: that he who believeth in me, shall live, tho' he were dead: and that whatsoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."—She faith unto him, yea Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. "Yea Lord, I do believe, what thou hast now declared: because I have already be-

* The exercise of faith, which is the source of prayer, says Quesnelie, is very often too much neglected. Christ recommends it more than the exercise of other virtues, because it is the food of them.—Nothing seems incredible or too great to be hoped for from Christ, when there is a lively belief of his divinity, but when this foundation is shaken, the whole building falls to the ground.—The faith of Martha comprehends all in a few words, and is a direct and full answer to the question of Christ, it soars up to the very bottom of the father, the living God, the principle of a living God, and who by this very Son is the fountain of all life: and from thence it comes down again into the world to the virgin's womb, where Christ was formed, by the union of the Son of God with flesh, that he might become the head and the principle of life to the children of God.
lieved thee πεπιστευκέαι, † to be the Christ, and upon the authority of thy divine word, I do now firmly believe and am fully persuaded of the truth of what thou hast delivered: seeing I have believed thee to be the Christ, the expected Messiah, the anointed of the Father, the Son of God, so God and man in one person, which should come into the world, promised by the father, from the beginning to be our prophet, priest and king, and expected by all the faithful prophets, priests and kings, from the day of the first promise to Adam to the present hour: and if I do, and have believed this of thee, it is but reasonable, that I should believe all thy faithful and divine words." Such was Martha's confession of faith: similar to that of St. Peter, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God—for which Christ pronounced him blessed, and upon which confession of his, as upon a rock, he declared, that he would build his church; that his church should stand firm, against all the opposition of hell, upon this true belief of his real humanity, real divinity, and divine mission.—And similar here-to must be the faith of every christian whom

† I am sensible that the perfect is frequently used for the present tense: but it seems to me most eligible to take the immediate sense of a scripture word, where it well agrees with the sentence: Grotius explains the passage as I have done: antebae credidi te esse Christum: quare æquum est, ut omnia dicenti tibi credam.
it greatly behoveth to have right apprehensions both of the person and office of the Redeemer: and who should be ready always to declare, that they believe in Christ, the all-sufficient Saviour, as very God and very man: and therefore both willing, as being bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and able, as being very God of very God, to save and redeem: that for this end he was anointed by his heavenly father, and consecrated to this blessed office: that for this end he came into the world, was made of a woman, and perform'd perfect righteousness—This is that faith which can alone profit us in life or death, and this is that alone whereby we can lay hold of the promises, and be made partakers of eternal felicity.

After this discourse had passed between Jesus and Martha, she went away, commanded, as seems most probable, by Jesus himself, and called her sister Mary, secretly, lest she should have been prevented from coming by the Jews who had no good-will to our Lord, their rulers having agreed that whosoever should confess him, should be put out of the synagogue—she said therefore privately to her, the master is come and calleth for thee.—Mary no sooner heard this, than she arose instantly, (a clear proof I think, that she had not heard of his presence before) she made all possible haste to him,
him, whom her soul loved: and left without delay those comforters who did but add to the weight of her grief, and goes to seek the only true comforter. It is only at his feet, that we can find that sovereign consolation, which reaches even the heart."—He continued yet without the town, in the very same place, where Martha met him, and this for wise reasons, hereby intending, as it proved, to draw out the Jews and make them witnesses of this most glorious miracle. For the Jews, who were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, she goeth unto the grave to weep there—When she came to Jesus and saw him, the remembrance of his former love and of her deceased brother melted her already broken heart, and bursting into a flood of tears, in humble prostration and lowly reverence she fell at his feet and in the very same words, which her sister had used, vented her grief and poured forth her complaint, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*.

How much our Redeemer was moved by her sorrow, and how compleatly his compassion wiped away all tears from her eyes, the

* See bishop Hall's beautiful contemplation on this subject, particularly p. 232. the paragraphs beginning both the sisters met Christ, &c.—And her humble prostration, &c. sequel
The sequel will abundantly shew; I will at present conclude with applying those great truths to ourselves, which Christ delivered to Martha, and which he hath taught each one of us to apply to ourselves, by the particular application of them which he made to Martha—Believest thou this? Indeed unless we read the scriptures in this view, continually examining ourselves thereby and conceiving every word as immediately directed to us, as if Christ himself were speaking to us, and asking, Believest thou this?—They will be but as a dead letter and we shall continue to read them without any improvement to our souls.

I am the resurrection and the life, saith Christ. Believest thou this? is the question which we should all put to our own hearts. Believest thou, not only that there will be a general resurrection of the just as well as the unjust, when all men shall rise again with their own bodies, and they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil into everlasting fire—Dost thou not only believe this most awakening truth; but dost thou believe that Christ is himself the resurrection, the principle thereof by his life, the source by his grace, the head, the author, the model by his own resurrection? Dost thou believe that the same Jesus who was crucified, dead, and buried, who rose again, and ascended into heaven;
ven, shall so come again in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven? that he shall by his almighty power raise from the dust, and reunite our corrupted and disseminated bodies to their several souls, and reward or punish as we have done good or evil?—and dost thou believe him, not only thus to be the resurrection but the life also, not only the author of a return to life, but also the author of, nay and that life itself, the giver, the principle, the preserver of it?—This we all profess to believe, and constantly repeat, that we do believe in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come: and so of consequence in Christ, as the author and principle of both, as the ground and hope of both: for he is the resurrection and the life. Let us not then condemn ourselves by expecting a resurrection to life by any other means: and if we really believe as we profess, let us be careful to demonstrate, by our present life of faith, that we are risen indeed with Christ, and hope to rise with him in glory hereafter.

For he goes on, be that believeth in me shall live, tho' he were dead: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Believest thou this, let us again enquire? Doest thou really and truly believe, that he who hath a living faith in Christ, tho' he were dead in sin, shall and must live a new life:
hath a new principle of life derived from Christ the head, in whom he lives and from whom he is nourished, even as the members of the natural body from the head, as the branches from the vine? And that of consequence, he who hath not this new life by faith here, can never enjoy and partake of the life eternal hereafter? For the future life of glory is only the present life of grace continued and perfected. Wherefore, dost thou believe, that he who hath this new life by faith here, that he who can truly say, the life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, that such a one—glorious comfortable truth—that such a one shall never die? but hath the principle of immortality within himself, and when his body shall fall asleep to be awakened at the last day, his soul shall be received into paradise, Abraham's bosom, Christ's everlasting comforts? Dost thou believe, this most delightful, most important, most consolatory truth? and if thou believest the gospel, thou canst not but believe this, that he who is united to Christ by living faith, as living in and by him, hath already everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation, but hath passed from death unto life? How invaluable a blessing! who would not wish to be possessed of it: a blessing invaluable beyond every thing I can describe, for to be possessed already, already instituted.
inflated in eternal life, to be justified, pardoned, accepted: who shall lay any think to the charge of such—what shall be able to separate such from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

But let us be well assured that we are in possession of this life: and therefore let us ask again: what are the terms of this life? He that liveth and believeth in me, faith Christ, shall never die: and again, he that believeth on me, hath everlasting life and shall live, tho' be were dead. Doth thou then BELIEVE? believe with Martha's faith, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world—God and man in one person, the anointed of the Father, full of grace and truth, who came into the world to make "by one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Canst thou reply to God from the bottom of thy heart, asking thee this question—believe'st thou this?—Yea Lord: I believe. If so, from the word of truth rest confident, that thou hast everlasting life.—But for the fullest conviction and most indisputable proof in a matter of so near importance, ask thy soul again one question further: Art thou alive to God? doest thou lead the new life of faith, art thou sensible, that thou art passed from death unto life; from the death of sin, unto
the new life of righteousness? Love, you find, was St. John's great mark: Hereby know WE, that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Hereby be and his disciples know it: and hereby should we know it also;—this is the best evidence for us. Now love is the fulfilling of the law: so that we may ask, Do we, as passed from death unto life, throu' Christ, love him, and so our brethren for his sake, do we love him and keep his commandments? for if ye love me, faith he, keep my commandments.*

If to these things you can reply with satisfaction, then be assured, you have everlasting life: life eternal is already begun in your hearts, you are born again of incorruptible seed, and the love, joy and peace which must reign there, (if the kingdom of God be indeed set up within you) are such evidences to the reality of your faith, and the certainty of your bliss, that neither men nor devils can ever deprive you of. Only go on, persevere in the good way: keep the eye of your faith upon him, who is the resurrection and the life: and as risen with him, seek these things that are above: set your affections on things in heaven, not on things in the earth: for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God: When Christ, who is our LIFE shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. Only let your conversation be such, as becometh those who are partakers of a new and heavenly life:

* John xiv. 15.
only let all your actions be such as may evince you to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.—Thus if you live, anticipating heaven, living and believing, growing in grace, and advancing in holiness, then remember, happy triumphant believers, then remember, that there is no death for you: the bodies of christians must fall asleep even as those of other men, but the souls, as already invested with everlasting life, can never be deprived thereof, but after death will be inflated in the full and complete possession of it: and when the vail of the body is dropt, they shall come in reality to the place and privileges, whereto they are now come by faith, and whereof they have received the fullest earnefts and assurances both in Christ's death and resurrection, as also in their own death unto sin and resurrection to newness of life:—for ye are come, faith St. Paul, unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel *.

"O merciful God, the Father of our Lord,

* Heb. xii, 22, &c. comp. Ephef. ii. 4, 6.
Lazarus raised.

Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life: in whom whosoever believeth shall live tho' he die: and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally: we meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin, unto the life of righteousness: that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him: and that at the general resurrection of the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight, and receive that blessing which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, thro' Jesus Christ our mediator and redeemer. Amen.
On *LAZARUS* raised.

**PART III.**

St. John xi, 43, 44.

And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. — And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-cloaths, and his face was bound about with a napkin: Jesus faith unto them, loose him and let him go.

Aving considered the two first parts of this most illustrious history, I come now to the third and last, to which all that hath gone before is but preparatory, and in which we have an account of a most glorious miracle, with all its astonishing circumstances, which, second to the resurrection of Jesus himself, is the most undeniable evidence of his divine power and mission, and the most lively proof and earnest of that fundamental article of the
Christian faith, the resurrection of the body from the dead. "For, (as one * of the greatest infidels and most professed opposers of our Saviour observed) it will be granted on all hands, that the restoring a person indisputably dead to life again, is a stupendous miracle; and that two or three such miracles, well circumstanced and credibly reported, are enough to conciliate the belief of mankind, that the author of them was a divine agent, and invested with the power of God, or he could not do them." Now we have two or three such stupendous miracles, that of the daughter of Jairus, of the widow's son, and this of Lazarus: not to speak of the former, though equally well circumstanced and credibly reported, that Lazarus was indisputably dead, that this miracle is well circumstanced and credibly reported, no man of the least observation can deny: and whatever a Woolston, and other infidels, in former ages may have done, we perceive that they who had the best opportunity as well as inclination to examine and disprove the fact, if false, never once attempted to do so, but, as I observed before, founded their resolution to destroy our Lord upon the notoriety of the fact, too evident to be disputed:

* Woolston.
what do we, say they, for this man DOETH many miracles? nay, and when they sought so studiously for false witnesses to put him to death, we never find that any of his miracles were disputed, or himself and his followers treated as impostors with regard to these. Moreover the Jews themselves in their Targums, have given in the strongest evidence (though mixed with the most diabolical craft) to the reality of the works wrought by Jesus, confessing the performance of them, which is all we want, but denying the divinity of the agent: and supposing them wrought by I know not what influence derived from the ineffable name, Jehovah, which they supposed he stole from the holy of holies! as reasonable a solution of the matter, as that given by their fathers, he casteth out devils through the prince of the devils! strange and blind perverseness! yet such as should confirm us in our faith, and lead us from the works to look to the divine work-master, and to confess with Nicodemus, that no man could do the miracles which Jesus did, except God were with him.

Fully confident hereof and humbly relying upon the divine grace, let us pursue our reflections on this mighty instance of our Redeemer's power, adoring the depth of that loving-kindness, which hath herein given us at
at once the strongest confirmation of faith, and the most solid foundation of hope!

1. We have in the first place a most lively picture of the tender compassion and sympathy of our Saviour: for we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tried like as we are, yet without sin: subject to all the innocent infirmities, I should rather say, the tender and laudable passions of innocent, unfallen human nature.—No wonder our Lord was moved; on this side stood Martha pouring forth a flood of tears, at his feet lay the affectionate Mary weeping and lamenting her dear departed brother; around were all the Jews who came to comfort the afflicted sisters: unable to assuage their grief, they join the solemn mourning, and mix their friendly tears, in witness of the worth of Lazarus departed, in testimony to the justice of the sisters grief for the loss of so amiable, so deserving a brother! the heart of Jesus was melted at the mournful scene: he groaned in the Spirit, for in all our afflictions he is afflicted and troubled himself, ἐταραξός εὐαυτῷ—his affections were wholly in his own power: he voluntarily sustained sorrow now, as he voluntarily embraced death afterwards, free, and almighty love alone constraining him!—Thus groaning in the Spirit, thus tenderly affected towards
towards his friend, Where have ye laid him, said he; where are the clay-cold remains of the much loved and much lamented Lazarus? not that it can supposed he enquired as if he were ignorant where Lazarus was laid: he who knew that he was dead, when far distant from him; and he who could raise him by a word, could not be ignorant where he was laid. But he thus, as frequently, expressed himself as a man when about to demonstrate himself a God: and it is remarkable that in most of the great acts of Christ, there is this wonderful intermixture: he was asleep in the ship, and awakened before he spoke peace to the winds and seas; he was an hungry and came to seek probable fruit on the fig-tree, before he blasted it *.—Moreover it is observed, that he made this enquiry where Lazarus was laid, to avoid any appearance of collusion or deceit, which the Pharisees of those days and the infidels of

* It is an observation of many of the ancient fathers of the church, (says bishop Reynolds, I think) that from the nativity of our Lord to the day of his death, the divine and the human nature did so communicate in operations and effects that no great action passed, but it was like the sun shining through a cloud, or a beauty with a thin veil drawn over it: they gave illustration and testimony to each other. The holy Jesus was born a tender and crying infant, but adored by the Magi as their king, by the angels as their God, &c.—When he was dying, he darkened the sun, when he was fast nailed to the cross, he made the whole earth tremble, when he was dead he opened the sepulchres, &c.
future ones might have been apt to have urged against him, had he gone directly to the sepulchre: this is wholly excluded by the earnest desire of his friends to shew him the way thereto: Lord, said they, some distant and imperfect hopes arising in their hearts, Lord, come and see!—when in remembrance of his departed friend, in sympathy with the living around him, in sorrow for their slowness of faith and unbounded grief for the natural, while the spiritual death was less lamented, in trouble for the sad consequences of sin, manifested by the death of Lazarus, and by and by more fully to be manifested by the obstinacy of those Jews who were spectators of this miracle and unconverted by it—being grieved for the hardness of their hearts,—Jesus wept—the Son of God, to prove himself the Son of man, very man, as well as very God! to prove himself not only man, but a most merciful and compassionate man, to prove himself a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and to shew us that the tender affections of an humane heart, when kept within due bounds; that friendly sorrow, when not immoderate and directed to wrong ends, is consistent with the highest sanctity of soul;—for all these ends the divine Son of God wept, when about to give the most ample proof of his divinity: that thus he might at once mani-
manifest both the one and the other: and shew by the innocent affections of human nature his real humanity, as by the work ensuing he clearly demonstrated his true divinity.

His tears then also had another use: they who saw them wondered more at the death of Lazarus, and doubted consequently of his divine power, which prevented it not: whence the subsequent miracle, as less expected by them, became the more wonderful. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! they perceived that his was no affected grief, that his were no affected tears, but the real testimonies of a sincere regard: and they could not but conclude, that it was great indeed for Lazarus, when no ties of blood, relationship, or necessity, but undissembled friendship only caused the generous weep!—Others of a more malevolent and envious turn of mind, full of malice towards Jesus, lean, gloomy, severe, censorious, with farcistical spite said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? By which words they would basely insinuate, that he did not do the former, as he could not (according to them) do the latter; seeing it was much easier to preserve a sick person from death, a matter within the reach of human power, than to restore sight to a man born blind, an act confessedly superior to
to all human ability. So that these envious and malicious Jews would thus basely have invalidated that former great work of Jesus because he did not preserve Lazarus whom he loved from death; not because he could not, as they were speedily convinced, but because he saw it most conducive to the glory of God not to do so.—Grieved however at their hardness of heart and infidelity, which yields not to his power, so soon as death itself *, Jesus again groaning in himself cometh to the grave, affected by the present calumnies, and that future abuse of this miracle, which he foresaw these Jews would make: he never groaned so much for his own pains and sufferings, as for the sins and follies of men: affected by his approach to the grave, and fresh indignation against death, his last and deadly enemy; against whom "he stirred up himself to take hold of God in the prayer he was to make, that he might offer it with strong crying and tears," being the all-prevailing intercessor for the sons of men, the all-sufficient conqueror over death and hell.

Learn we ift from the tears of the Jews, who wept with Martha and Mary, a lesson of kind condolance with and tender compassion to our fellow-creatures: we must not only re-

* This is a remark of Bengelius. Citius cedit moris virtutis Christi, quam infidelitas. On verse 47.

joice
joice with them that do rejoice, but _weep with them that weep_: we should _strengthen them with our mouths_, and the _moving of our lips should assuage their grief_. "For _friendship is a communication of affections, and they that love their friends will share with them in their griefs, as well as joys._ The _wise man tells us that it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting_; for _that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart_; for _sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better_. Sadness and sorrow well become fallen sinners, exiled pilgrims: and _christians should be as their master: lightness and vanity then surely ill become his disciples, of whom we read often that he _wept_, but of whom we read _never_, that he _laughed_ or _smiled_.—To _comfort the afflicted is a work of mercy_, which _draws after it a blessing_: these _Jews_ reaped the _benefit of their friendly compassion to the distressed_. It _was the occasion of faith and salvation to many of them, who by this means were made witnesses of the present glorious miracle, and _partakers of that new resurrection which it spiritually signified_: we _see in them how profitable and beneficial it is to visit virtuous_
persons, and to frequent their company. Salvation sometimes depends upon such an opportunity as this. A man meets with Jesus Christ in some christian family: he begins to know him there by the works of his grace, and he receives at length the precious gift of faith."* Good example is of mighty influence, as nothing is more dangerous and contagious than bad: it is as it were the stench of sin: it is difficult to go near open and inveterate sinners, and not be infected by them: so certainly do evil communications corrupt good manners.

2. From the tears of Jesus, the groans, and the troubling of himself, let us learn never to affect a stoical apathy and unfeeling insensibility of heart; at the same time that we indulge not immoderate grief for the loss of our friends, or any temporal evil, not sorrowing as men without hope, for them that sleep in him: for the loss of God's grace only immoderate grief is commendable: but let us witness by the tender sympathy and compassionate workings of nature, that we are no strangers to those generous and pleasing affections, which God hath implanted in us, and which under due regulations are not only innocent, but becoming, as this example of our Saviour proves. To be void of compassion

* F. Quesnolle.
and tears, faith Theophylact, is the property of brutes: to be immoderate in weeping, lamentation and sorrow the property of weak women only."

3. The observation, which the better sort of Jews made upon our Saviour's tears, _behold, how he loved him_—will afford us a most comfortable contemplation, when we cast our eyes to Christ crucified on the cross, for us miserable sinners: when we behold him there not only pouring forth tears, but his most precious blood to save us from death and to ransom our souls from the grave! If they could say upon the sight of his tears, _behold, how he loved him_! with how much greater reason may each one of us say, when we contemplate him bleeding on the cross, _behold, how he loved ME_, loved me even unto death, nay his love was stronger than death, and _greater love than this hath no man_. Oh let us upon the sight and sense of this infinite love, with the deepest gratitude say within ourselves, as well as one to another, _see how HE loved us, see how the blessed Jesus loved us! see how the rich blood forces its way thro' every pore, while he prays in yonder garden! see how it trickles down his mangled temples tortur'd with a crown of thorns: see how it gushes from his transfixated limbs, while he hangs on yonder cross, see how the blessed stream flows from
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L A Z A R U S raised.

his pierced side, while he bows the head, gives up the ghost, and finishes the amazing work—**BEHOLD, my brethren, BEHOLD, HOW HE LOVED US!**

2. *Jesus* having thus given proofs of his real humanity, his tender sympathy with his friends, and grief for the nature and consequences of sin,—**cometh to the grave, or monument.** It was a cave, according to the custom of the *Jews* to bury, possibly like that where-in our Saviour was laid, *cut out of a rock; and a stone was placed upon it*, upon the mouth of it, on which stone they used frequently to make their inscriptions, as a **memorial of the dead, and a memento to the living.** That he might not needlessly magnify miracles, and also to give a full proof, that *Lazarus* was really there lying dead, he said, **take ye away the stone.** He who could command *Lazarus* to come forth, could as easily have commanded the stone from the mouth of the cave, or made it liquify and give way to the body coming forth. But he thus took off all suspicion of fraud, while they that removed the stone, would have from the smell of the putrified body, sufficient evidence that it was there:

* An emphasis should be laid on every word—*Behold, faith should look up and see how to what an infinite and unfa-thomable depth and height he the incarnate Son of God, God of God, and light of light—loved freely, fully, unspeak-ably us, miserable sinners. Let us exercise our faith here-on: and our hearts cannot fail to burn within us.*

which
which all might see lying dead in the sepulchre, when the stone was removed, before Jesus gave the commanding word, come forth. Martha yet weak in faith, yet struggling with doubt, supposing it too late for any hopes of recovery, faith unto him, "Lord, it will be offensive to thee, the putrified body of my dear dead brother cannot be fit for thee to approach, by this time be certainly stinketh, for he hath been four days in the grave*—not four days dead only as we render it, but as Jesus was informed, upon his approach to Bethany, he had lien in the grave four days already—and of consequence had been dead longer, tho' possibly not much, since in those hot countries the dead much sooner grow offensive than in ours—(oh what a lesson of humility—what an argument to subdue worldly pride!) and cannot be kept unburied, so long as we keep them: tho' in some disorders with us the body almost immediately putrifies—poor corrupted clay, what hast thou whereof to be proud and vain! †

This diffidence and doubting of Martha

* γενεκταις γας έστι, est enim quattuoriduanus.
† Dead bodies, says Dr. Hammond, after a revolution of the humors, which is compleated in seventy two hours, naturally tend to putrefaction: and the Jews say, that by the fourth day after death, the body is so altered, that one cannot be sure 'tis such a person: so Maimonides in Lightfoot. Therefore, says Henry, Christ rose the third day, because he was not to see corruption.

however
however increased the certainty and greatness of the miracle: for thus the length of time, that Lazarus had been dead and buried, appears from the mouth of his own sister: and her distrustfulness of the possibility of his resurrection clearly proves that there could have been no collusion between Jesus and the sisters: at the same time that it magnifies the greatness of what Jesus did, to recollect that they believed it impossible to be done.—Jesus however gives her a solemn reproof for her unbelief, and teacheth both her and us, that as there is nothing impossible with God, we must not dare to circumscribe his almighty power within the narrow bounds of human reason, but only look to his word, and depend upon a performance of what he hath said, however impossible it may seem to us, knowing that infinite truth can never be fail’d by infinite power.—Jesus faith unto her, said I not unto thee, that if thou wou’dst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? And dost thou now doubt my truth, dost thou now distrust my power? my words require faith not reasoning.” And they that would see the glory of God, here or hereafter must in divine things firmly believe, and readily obey without murmuring or disputation:

* Hence it appears, that Jesus had said more to Martha, than is recorded: or, these words may be gathered from the message Jesus sent and from what he said: but we are not to suppose that in those histories we have an account of every word spoken: I suppose, that the whole world could not contain the books, if all the words and actions of the divine Jesus were recorded. See John xxi. 25. they
they that take God's word and rely on his power and faithfulness, shall find him faithful and true that hath promised. — We have need frequently to be reminded of what Christ here faith, SAID I not unto thee? which if we duly remember'd we should give God the glory of his truth by implicitly believing his divine words: and then his power and goodness would abundantly be manifested in us: which nothing hinders but our infidelity and floveness of faith: need have we all continually to pray: Lord, help our unbelief. For the more faith the more love, and the more love the more confidence: and the more of such well-grounded confidence the more manifestations of God's mercy and power: for nothing is impossible, faith Christ, to him that believeth.

3. The objections of Martha being thus obviated, she in silence with the rest who now took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid, with anxious suspense expects the event of this marvellous proceeding. And while the minds and eyes of them all were intent upon what Christ was preparing to do; behold, he begins the glorious work with a solemn giving of thanks, and an awful prayer to his Father in heaven.— Jesus lift up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I knew, that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. Thus hath he set us an example, that whatever we undertake and in whatever we engage, we should
should begin with solemn prayer and thanksgiving to God.—This indeed of Christ’s is properly speaking no prayer, but a thanksgiving; for his will and his Father’s being one, whatever he wills, is done: and therefore the subject of thanks. He had doubtless no need of prayer to work this miracle, seeing we know of many others, that he wrought without any prayer, by his own sole authority: but he did it, as he declares, because of the people, that they might believe his divine mission: as he said in the next chapter verse 30th, upon a voice from his Father in heaven, when he pray’d to him to glorify his name, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. —Moreover the Jews wickedly ascribed his mighty works to the devil; and therefore to obviate this calumny, with lifted eyes and exalted voice, and with great assurance, such as became the co eternal Son, he declared from whence his help came, even from that living Father, with whom he is one. And at the same time that he said this to obviate the calumnies of the Jews, so said he it also, to strengthen the faith of all present in his divine mission, and to let them know, as he said before in a former chapter, He that sent me, is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always those things that please him. Again, Believest thou not, that I am in the Father and the Father in me? the words, that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in
in me, he doth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the works sake.

Fully to prove which important truths, and abundantly to testify, that he acted by immediate authority, by his own almighty will and power, having thus given thanks to his Father, for this opportunity to manifest his glory, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby—*He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth*: not I say unto thee, in the name of my Father *, Lazarus, come forth — his voice was absolute and commanding, Lazarus, come forth,—and behold the amazing effect,—a divine energy accompanied his all-powerful word,—*He that was dead, that had been four days in the grave, came forth, awakened by the loud and efficacious call of the great giver of life: came forth*, to increase the wonder, even as he had been laid in the grave, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin: as was the usual method of burying with the Jews, who used to wrap the dead corps in a large sheet, and wind it around with several folds of linen: the napkin, as some say, covering the whole face, as others, only go-

* This Theophylact on the place observes, ὁ νας είτε, εν ευμυκτενι την πατρος μου, ικύς ας ειρησαυν ἀκούνων.—He says too, he wanted not prayer, as equal to the Father, εν ευμυκτε, κυς ας ειρησαυν την πατρος, &c.—But I forbear quoting from this father, as his whole comment on this passage deserves the reader’s attention and perusal.

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ing round the forehead and under the chin: so that he could easily see his way: and the grave clothes, we must suppose, were so far loosened by the same divine power that raised him (for he that could do the greater surely could do the less miracle) as to enable him to arise out of the sepulchre and to walk forth. ——Chill horror and strange astonishment must have seized the amazed spectators; joined with such an awful reverence towards the wonderful worker of this miracle, as should now fill all our hearts while we hear it: but much more theirs when they beheld the man, (whom they saw even now lying a putrified carcase,) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, restored to perfect health and soundness: which they quickly perceived him to be, when upon the command of Jesus, they loosed him and let him go: delivering him from those grave-cloaths, which were sure evidences that he had been dead, as to have lain four days in a sepulchre in that condition would of itself have killed any man. Jesus could as easily have loosed him as raised him: but he never multiplied miracles without need; and he gave this command at once to teach us that in the spiritual resurrection our own endeavours must work with him, we

† See Bishop Smallbrook's vindication, &c. p. 394—5, Vol. II. and also Lardner p. 79.
* See Macknight's harmony, Sect. 99. p. 72—73, and also the note, p 208, where the difficulty of Lazarus his walking forth, when bound in grave-cloaths, is solved very ingeniously.
must do our parts, when his grace commands and enables us: as also that they who loosed him, might have in the grave-cloaths abundant proof of death and putrefaction.

The wonderful modesty and humility, wherewith our Lord conducted this amazing work, deserves particular attention: we do not find one word of upbraiding fall from his lips, either to the doubting sisters or the malicious Jews: not one word of triumph or exulting: loofe him and let him go, is all we have recorded; doubtless to teach us the like humility and modesty in all we do, the like careful avoiding all fondness of parade, pomp and ostentation in our good works, and all transports of self-applause more especially in things concerning God and souls.

Such was the astonishing fact, thus was the Son of God glorified, raising to life not a man just dead only, and not laid in the grave, but one in a state of putrefaction on whom the whole power of death was accomplished, and the whole power of the resurrection shewn †. And in Lazarus thus corrupted and thus raised by this loud call of Jesus, we have a striking emblem and glorious earnest of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave, on the great day, when Christ shall command all to come forth, when in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall all be changed, at the last trump; when the same divine power which spoke Lazarus again into being, shall

† This is a remark of Pet. r Chrysologus - see his sermons.
collect our dispersed bodies, and re-unite them by his sovereign call to their several souls. The loud voice wherewith he called Lazarus was emblematical hereof*: of the loud voice of that last trump, which shall raise the dead, when the awful call Come forth, shall sound into the bottom of all our graves, and raise us up out of our dust. "This is the voice that shall pierce the rocks, divide the mountains, and fetch up the dead out of the lowest deep. His word made all, his word shall repair all: of which, though we may be dif- fident with Martha, and enquire with Nicodemus, how these things can be; yet let us only remember, that he whom we trust is omnipotent, and then -all our doubts and fears must vanish.—Who after this resurrection of Lazarus shall dispute the resurrection of the dead? and if Lazarus, as bishop Hall observes, did thus start up at the bleating of this Lamb of God, that was now every day preparing for the slaughter-house: how shall the dead be raised up out of their graves, by the roaring of that glorious and immor- tal lion of the tribe of Judah, whose voice shall shake the powers of heaven, and loose the foundations of the earth?"

Well may we apply to ourselves, upon this important truth, our Saviour's question to Martha:—Believèst thou this? For a true faith in a future resurrection to bliss or misery

* Μεγαλὴ Ὀνή—συμβολον εσι της μεγαλης Σαλατηγγος της μιλ- λιων επιται επτα κοινα αναφατε. Says Theophylact.

must
must of necessity work in us a careful preparation for that awful scene, when we shall arise with our own bodies, and that they have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil into everlasting fire! Oh how unprofitable, how vile and senseless are all the schemes and all the works of sinners, when the awful hour is hastening on apace, wherein every work shall be brought into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil, and the sinners short span of folly and rebellion in this life, punished with an eternity of repentance and sorrow! How much better is it to repent and turn from sin here, to die with Christ and live with him on earth, that we may rise to live with him in bliss eternal in heaven!

Of this spiritual death and resurrection of a sinner, we have a striking emblem in the death and resurrection of Lazarus: with a brief view of which, I will conclude what I have to say on the present miracle.

*Sin is the death of the soul:* ye were dead in trespasses and sins, says St. Paul: awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, (the dead state of sin) and Christ shall give thee light and life. And though all are by nature born in sin, yet all are not equal in actual offenses: some are dead only by sinful desires, and the lust of the heart, from which they are raised by the grace of Christ, and happily prevented from proceeding further: others are dead in act, having committed the trespass, but not yet hardened thro’ evil custom, by the power
power of God's grace convinced immediately and kept from presumptuous sins for the future: while others are dead in the habitual practice and constant custom of sinning. To represent these three kinds of sinners, and these degrees of sin, as well as the power of grace over all, Christ in a beautiful gradation, say the fathers *, raised up three persons from the dead: 1st, The daughter of Jairus, who was dead but not brought out of her chamber: 2dly, the widow's son of Nain, who was dead, carried out, and about to be laid in the sepulchre: and 3dly, Lazarus, who had now lain in it four days. This was representative of the last and highest degree of the death in sin: and Jesus therefore raised Lazarus as well as the rest, that in him we might have at once an emblem of such sinners as are hardened by evil custom, and of the power of divine grace: to contemplate which must of necessity prevent despair, and fill with joy and hope those who deeply convinced of sin, de-

* St. Aujlin particularly makes this remark—see his 98th sermon—I did intend to have produced the several passages from the fathers, &c. whence I have gathered the spiritual interpretation, that the reader might see the authorities upon which I go: but the number of sheets proposed being already exceeded, I can only add, that by referring to Theophylact on the place, to the abovementioned sermon of Aujlin, as also to his treatise on John, to Theodoret, and particularly F. Quesnells, the reader will find, that I have advanced nothing but what these Authors commend. Quesnells in particular is extremely beautiful on this history, and could I have followed my own inclination I should have quoted almost every page of his incomparable reflections.
fire to be raised therefrom by the almighty grace and love of Christ. *Sin is the death of the soul, which, though dead, Christ loveth as he loved Lazarus*, it is his friend, very dear to him, as what he hath done for this soul of man, manifestly proves: and for which when under the power of sin, the prayers and alms of the church, represented by Mary and Martha, should continually ascend before God. “A habit of sin is the grave of the soul: from which it cannot come out without a miracle: there is no sepulchre so loathsome and insupportable as the conscience of an inveterate sinner. Christ was pleased that the greatest of his miracles should be an emblem of the conversion of such sort of sinners, to the end that none of them might be without hopes from his mercy to recover the life of his soul.”—For a soul dead in sin, though irrecoverable by human means, as was Lazarus when laid in the grave, may yet be raised by the almighty grace of Christ: which obtained for the sinner by earnest prayer, removes, first, the stone from the sepulchre; takes away the stony heart of unbelief, of prejudice and evil customs, and by the loud and efficacious call of the gospel causes the sinner to come forth from the grave of sin, wherein he lay: but still though he be raised and beginneth now to live the life of grace, yet as

* Εγὼ μον γαρ ο νας την ζων φιλος Χριστος. &c. says Theophylact, for our mind or soul is the friend of Christ, &c. See p. 728. Vol. I.
Lazarus was, he is bound hand and foot and face; till he can neither do the works nor walk in the way, nor see the light of God's will: till Christ commandeth him to be loosed, that is to be absolved, by the church, say some, or till more grace be given him, by the help of the church and a wise director, whereby his eyes are opened to see the face of God reconciled to him, and he is enabled to walk in the right way, and to do the things which become a man born again and renewed in Christ Jesus.

In Lazarus, therefore, we may in general say, that we have a lively emblem of the soul of man, or human nature in its fallen, dead and corrupted state: and of the love of Christ moving him to seek the salvation of human nature, which if effected by the loud preaching of the gospel, accompanied with his grace, for the gospel is the power of God to salvation unto every one that believeth;—that believeth, ariseth from sin, and obeyeth its call. In particular his sickness is an emblem of the gradual growth and final dominion of sin in the soul: his death, burial, and continuance in the sepulchre an emblem of the state of death wherein sinners lie, who are hardened in their iniquitous practices, and upon whose heart the stone of evil custom is laid: yet even of such we must not despair; but with strong crying and tears intreat him, who is the resurrection and the life, by the infusion of grace and faith, to come and raise them:
them: his grace is all-powerful and the "first inspirations of it must be met with joy: on the first signs of the approach of Jesus, Martha must go forth to meet him by works of charity and faith, and Mary must sit still in the house, by prayer, meditation and serious recollection.—Christ groans in us, when faith excites in our minds an holy sorrow for and indignation against sin: and an earnest desire for strength from above, to vanquish and utterly destroy it."—He commands by his word of power the stony heart to be taken away: and we must work with him in endeavouring by his command to remove all obstacles to the spiritual life, and particularly that greatest of all obstacles evil habit, which can alone be done by entering upon a new life, and forsaking all our former sinful practices and sinful companions: the sinner, therefore, upon the loud and divine call of Christ in the gospel, heard and received in faith, must arise from his state of death, leave his sepulchre, and all the stench of evil deeds, the love and cares of the world, its lusts, its riches, its pleasures—and walk forth, when further enabled by the same grace, which hath given him new life: his hands, his feet, his eyes, and every member dedicated to the service and glory of God.

Are we then, by the powerful word of Christ, and by his free mercy raised from this state of death, wherein all men lie by nature,—let us glorify his unspeakable goodness, and labour by all our words, thoughts and actions
actions to manifest his praise, and shew forth the sense we have of his redeeming love.—And as the happiness and comfort felt in this new life must of necessity make us anxiously desirous that all should partake of the like happiness and comfort—let us be careful earnestly to present in prayer to him all that are near and dear to us, (after the example of these two sisters) who yet are so unhappy as to lie sick with the dangerous diseaue of sin. Lord, let us say, behold, he whom thou lovedst is sick—a soul, for which thou didst shed thy most precious blood,—a soul, which thou lovedst, even unto death, is sick, sick with the fore and fatal disease of sin—And if we thus persevere in earnest prayer for them, let us nothing doubt, but in his good time, though he seem to delay, he will come and help us. Let us be careful to improve every moment and occasion of grace and favour both for them and ourselves, and apply that other efficacious prayer, Lord, come and see—" Lord, come to this soul, that has forsaken thee, and see its misery: come to these inveterate sinners; come to the sepulchre of their heart and see how thy work is disfigured by the corruption of sin."

But for those not yet raised up, but still in the dead state of sin, still living in the practice of iniquity, with the stone of evil custom and infidelity on their hearts, what can we do more than pray to Christ to come and see, than earnestly beseech him; for those that will
Lazarus raised.

will not ask for themselves to come and look with an eye of pity on their loft and dangerous estate, on that sepulchre wherein they lie.—Yet, my brethren, if any such there be amongst you, thus under the dominion, and lying in the grave of sin—O consider that it cost Christ only tears to raise up Lazarus from the grave, but for you he hath shed his infinitely precious blood, and yet you refuse to hearken, yet you refuse to turn to him and be saved! one prayer in earnest desire, one petition, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick—one earnest cry—come, Lord, come and see my miserable estate, and by the power of thy mercy raise me from that corruption wherein I lie—one sincere groaning of heart may prove efficacious to your souls eternal health.—Pray therefore, and preventing grace will both assist and strengthen you: endeavour speedily to remove the stone of evil habits: take away all prejudice, labour to get infidelity removed from your hearts: read the gospel in prayer and humility, endeavour to do Christ's works and you shall know of his words, whether they be of God: only work and God's good Spirit will work with you; arise from the grave of sin, leave your corrupt habits and actions, and walk forth however bound and fettered, and then fear not, only believe, you shall see the salvation of God, and enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.——But remember, that if you refuse to hear the silver and welcome sound of the gospel trumpet now, pro-

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claiming the joyful year of jubilee and release, a day is coming—an awful day is coming, when you must hear a much more solemn and alarming call, against which it will be impossible to close your ears, tho’ now you may shut them against the call of the gospel, inviting you to leave the filthy grave and vile stench of sin:—If you will not fear and obey this call, a day is at hand, when the Son of God will descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God.—May his almighty grace forbid, that any of you should be found in the number of the enemies of the incensed Lamb; you cannot stand before him—poor helpless mortals that cannot stand before a little affliction—sickness or death—mountains, rocks, earth and heaven will melt beneath his glowing feet;—secure his favour therefore while it is called to day; see in this history, how strong is his love, how great his affection to fallen man, and come to him with full confidence and deep humility.—You see here also a striking instance of his almighty power: oh that you may all go hence, and use it as those Jews did, of whom it is written, that many of the Jews, which came to Martha and
and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him, as the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.—But God forbid, that you should abuse these offers of grace, and like the unconverted Jews make this miracle a means only of your deeper condemnation: for some of them went their way and told those bitter enemies of Jesus, what things he had done; upon which from that day forth, they took counsel together to put him to death, thus giving a dreadful and alarming confirmation of that awakening truth, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, tho' one rose from the dead.

Remember, that now you have heard the history of this most astonishing miracle, so strongly confirmative of the true divinity, real humanity, and divine mission of Jesus, that you must of necessity be either in the number of believers or unbelievers: and it behoves you greatly to examine and be assured to which class you belong. "God of his infinite mercy incline and enable you all to examine in sincerity: that those of you, who truly believe, may be more and more confirm'd and perfected in faith; and that those who believe not, with true christian faith, may be excited to pray ardently for the gift and to implore the blessing of convincing grace.
grace on their hearts: that so we may at length altogether come to the only Saviour of our souls, trusting not in the tears, but in the blood he poured forth freely for our sakes. And may we thro’ that infinite price of souls all find a glad reception with him, and partake of his favour here and hereafter—who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the holy Spirit, three persons, but one God, to whom be glory, and honour and praise from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.”

The End of the Second Volume.