

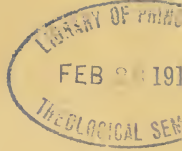
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S E R M O N S

PREACHED IN

I N D I A.

BY THE LATE RIGHT REVEREND

✓
REGINALD HEBER, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF CALCUTTA;

FORMERLY RECTOR OF HODNET, SALOP; PREBENDARY OF ST. ASAPH; AND
PREACHER AT LINCOLN'S INN.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXIX.

TO THE

HON. SIR CHARLES EDWARD GREY,

CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE IN BENGAL,

TO WHOSE AFFECTIONATE SYMPATHY AND KINDNESS

IN THE HOUR OF SORROW,

THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN OF HIS FRIEND

WERE SO MUCH INDEBTED,

THIS VOLUME

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED BY

AMELIA HEBER.

Bodryddlan, St. Asaph,
28th Feb. 1829.

P R E F A C E.

THE sermons contained in this volume are selected from those which the Bishop of Calcutta preached in India.

At the request of the Clergy of one of the Presidencies,—a request with which the editor has much gratification in complying—she has printed all the sermons preached within its limits, naming, both in the present volume and in that lately published, the station at which each was delivered.

The Bishop was much struck with the situation and beauty of the Church of St. George, at Madras, standing, as he expressed it, “embosomed in palms.” As he intended taking a sketch of it on his return from his southern visitation, for the frontispiece of a volume of Indian Sermons, the editor, before she left Calcutta, requested a friend to procure her an accurate drawing of the building, which she has prefixed to the present series.

The Address on Confirmation will be read with melancholy interest, from the circumstance of its delivery having been the concluding act of her husband's public life ; in less than two hours after he had thus earnestly exhorted his congregation, he was summoned to meet his Saviour !

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THE
VALEDICTORY ADDRESS
OF THE
Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,
DELIVERED BY THE
LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL,
AT A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,
JUNE XIII. M.DCCC.XXIII.
TO THE
LORD BISHOP OF CALCUTTA,
PREVIOUSLY TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR INDIA :
TOGETHER WITH
HIS LORDSHIP'S REPLY.

At a Special General Meeting of the SOCIETY
FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
held at their House in Bartlett's-Buildings,
June 13, 1823, agreeably to public notice :

PRESENT,

His Grace CHARLES MANNERS SUTTON, D.D. Lord Archbishop
of CANTERBURY, President,
His Grace WILLIAM MAGEE, D.D. Lord Archbishop of
DUBLIN,
The Right Rev. WILLIAM HOWLEY, D.D. Lord Bishop of
LONDON,
The Right Rev. THOMAS BURGESS, D.D. Lord Bishop of ST.
DAVID'S,
The Right Rev. GEORGE-HENRY LAW, D.D. Lord Bishop of
CHESTER,
The Right Rev. WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D.D. Lord Bishop of
LLANDAFF,
The Right Rev. JOHN KAYE, D.D. Lord Bishop of BRISTOL,
The Right Rev. REGINALD HEBER, D.D. Lord Bishop of CAL-
CUTTA,
The Right Honourable GEORGE, Lord KENYON,
The Right Honourable THOMAS, Lord LILFORD,
The Very Rev. ROBERT HODGSON, D.D. Dean of CARLISLE,
Sir THOMAS DYKE ACLAND, Bart. M.P.
Sir R. H. INGLIS, Bart.
Ven. JOSEPH HOLDEN POTT, M.A. Archdeacon of LONDON,
Ven. JOHN JAMES WATSON, D.D. Archdeacon of ST. ALBAN'S,
Ven. CHARLES JAMES BLOMFIELD, D.D. Archdeacon of COL-
CHESTER,
Ven. ROBERT NARES, M.A. Archdeacon of STAFFORD,
Ven. FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M.A. Archdeacon of CLEVELAND,
Ven. WILLIAM STRONG, D.D. Archdeacon of NORTHAMPTON,
The Hon. & Rev. GEORGE NEVILLE GRENVILLE, M.A. Master
of MAGDALEN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
And a large assemblage of MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY,

HIS GRACE THE PRESIDENT, in the Chair :

The following VALEDICTORY ADDRESS to the Right Reverend Father in God REGINALD, Lord Bishop of Calcutta, previous to his departure for India, was delivered, on the behalf of the SOCIETY, by the Right Reverend Father in God John, Lord Bishop of Bristol.

MY LORD BISHOP OF CALCUTTA,

YOUR preparations for the arduous voyage which you are about to undertake, being now so far advanced towards their completion as to preclude the expectation that you will again, at least for a long series of years, be enabled to attend the meetings of this Society, it has been resolved, and all must admit the propriety and expediency of the resolution, that a Valedictory Address should be delivered to your Lordship on the present occasion. The highly responsible and honourable situation, which you have been recently appointed to fill, is intimately connected with objects, to which the attention of the Society has, for more than a century, been directed. They would, therefore, subject themselves to a charge—of all others most abhorrent from their real character and feelings—a charge of indifference and inattention to the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of Hindostan, did they not seize the opportunity, before your depar-

ture for those distant regions, of publicly expressing the deep, the intense interest, which they take in the success of your future labours.

But while I acknowledge the peculiar propriety of the resolution, I must be permitted to state my unfeigned regret that its execution has not been entrusted to abler hands. When it was proposed to me to undertake the office of delivering the present address, I was not insensible to the difficulty of the task in which I was about to engage. Every approach which I have since made to the subject, has confirmed me in the conviction of my inability to do it justice—to produce any thing which should not be alike unworthy of your Lordship's distinguished reputation, and of the reasonable expectation of the audience by which I am surrounded.

Happily, however, for me it is not requisite that I should enter upon the various important and interesting topics, which the occasion unavoidably suggests. In contemplating your elevation to the episcopal office, it is impossible to separate that event from the influence which it must necessarily have upon the spiritual interests of the subjects of our Indian empire ; of an empire scarcely inferior in extent to that of Rome in the plenitude of her power, and containing millions of our fellow-creatures, who are yet strangers to the saving truths of the Gospel. How grand, how overwhelming a subject is here presented to the contemplation! A subject, in which the most exalted intellect may find a fit opportunity for the display of all its

powers; but from which ordinary minds must shrink, oppressed by the humiliating consciousness of their own insufficiency! Great, therefore, is the relief which I have derived from the reflection, that the design of the present address neither requires, nor even permits, me to expatiate in this ample field. It would be no less presumptuous in me, than foreign from the intention of the Society, were I to occupy your time and that of this meeting in detailing my own opinions respecting the most effectual mode of communicating the blessings of Christianity to the nations of Hindostan, or in offering your Lordship my advice respecting the course which it is expedient for you to pursue in discharging the duties of your high station. My province is simply to express to you the feelings with which the Society regard your appointment to the superintendence of the Indian Diocese, and to bespeak your protection and support for the efforts which they have long made, and, with the blessing of Providence, shall never cease to make, to diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel throughout that vast continent.

Yet, I trust that you, my Right Reverend Brother, and that the rest of this respectable assembly will not charge me with improperly digressing from the immediate business of the day, if I briefly advert to the change which has been effected in the prospects of the Society, since a similar address was delivered in this place. Strongly as the Society were impressed with the conviction that the forma-

tion of a Church Establishment afforded the only secure mode of communicating the blessings of Christianity to our Eastern Empire—firm and deeply-rooted as was their confidence in the zeal, the discretion, the ability of him to whom the government of that Establishment was to be committed—they were, still, too sensible how shortsighted are the views of man, and how frail the nature of all his expectations, not to feel some anxiety and apprehension respecting the success of the newly-adopted measures.

Nine years have now elapsed since your lamented Predecessor entered upon the discharge of his episcopal functions; and that, which then could only afford a subject for conjecture and for hope, has become a matter of retrospect and of certainty. All the accounts which have reached the Society, concur in stating that the new measures have been attended with more complete success than from the shortness of time, during which they have been in operation, the most sanguine could have ventured to anticipate. Many of the impediments which directly or indirectly, retarded the reception of the Gospel, have been removed. The establishment of a visible Church has opened an asylum to the convert from the taunts and injuries of the professors of his former faith. The progressive improvement effected in the lives and conversation of the European settlers has deprived the natives of one of their most powerful arguments against the truth of Christianity. They no longer look upon us as mere

conquerors, greedy only of wealth and of dominion ; but as a virtuous and religious people, not less superior to them in moral goodness than in civilization and manners—in justice and benevolence than in arts and arms. Their attachment to their caste, which seemed to present the most formidable obstacle to their conversion, has been overcome. The mists, which enveloped their understandings, are fast dissolving before the irradiating influence of Sacred Truth. The superstitious dread, with which they regarded their deities, is giving place to juster conceptions of the Divine Nature ; and the priests of the idol of Juggernaut are compelled to bewail the decreasing numbers and diminished zeal of his votaries.

What a variety of emotions is the cheering prospect which has at length opened upon us, calculated to excite ! What gratitude to Almighty God for the blessing which He has been pleased to bestow upon the labours of the infant Church ! What reverence for the memory of the distinguished Prelate, whose wisdom and piety have, under the direction of Providence, conducted those labours to so successful an issue ! How powerful an encouragement does it hold out, how strict an obligation does it impose, stedfastly to persevere in the prosecution of these holy designs, till the triumph over the powers of darkness in our Indian empire shall be complete, and no other vestige of the ancient idolatry shall remain than the deserted temples of the divinities, who were its objects. Nothing now

appears to be wanting but that the number of labourers should bear a due proportion to the abundance of the harvest which is spread before them; and our confidence in the enlightened piety of our rulers forbids the supposition, that this want will long remain unsupplied. But, I must no longer detain you from the immediate business of the day.

My Lord, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge desire to offer to your Lordship their sincere congratulations upon your elevation to the Episcopal See of Calcutta.

They derive from your appointment to this high office the certain assurance, that all the advantages, which they have anticipated from the formation of a Church Establishment in India, will be realized; and that the various plans for the diffusion of true religion amongst its inhabitants, which have been so wisely laid and so auspiciously commenced by your lamented Predecessor, will, under your superintendence and controul, advance with a steady and uninterrupted progress. They ground this assurance upon the rare union of intellectual and moral qualities, which combine to form your character. They ground it upon the stedfastness of purpose, with which, from the period of your admission into the ministry, you have exclusively dedicated your time and talents to the peculiar studies of your sacred profession; abandoning that human learning, in which you had already shown that you were capable of attaining the highest excellence, and re-

nouncing the certain prospect of literary fame. But above all, they ground this assurance upon the signal proof of self-devotion, which you have given by your acceptance of the episcopal office. With respect to any other individual, who had been placed at the head of the Church Establishment in India, a suspicion might have been entertained that some worldly desire, some feeling of ambition mingled itself with the motives by which he was actuated. But in your case such a suspicion would be destitute even of the semblance of truth. Every enjoyment, which a well-regulated mind can derive from the possession of wealth, was placed within your reach. Every avenue to professional distinction and dignity, if they had been the objects of your solicitude, lay open before you. What then was the motive which could incline you to quit your native land? To exchange the delights of home for a tedious voyage to distant regions? To separate yourself from the friends, with whom you had conversed from your earliest years? What, but an ardent wish to become the instrument of good to others? A holy zeal in your Master's service? A firm persuasion that it was your bounden duty to submit yourself unreservedly to His disposal—to shrink from no labour which He might impose—to count no sacrifice hard which He might require? Of the benefits, which will arise to the Indian Church from a spirit of self-devotion so pure and so disinterested, the Society feel, that it is impossible to form an exaggerated estimate.

Nor has this act of self-devotion been the result of sudden impulse ; it has been performed after serious reflection, and with an accurate knowledge of the difficulties by which your path will be obstructed. You have not engaged in this holy warfare without previously counting the cost. So deeply were you impressed with the responsibility, which must attach to the episcopal office in India, that you hesitated to accept it. With that diffidence, which is the surest characteristic of great talents and great virtues, you doubted your own sufficiency. But upon mature deliberation you felt, that a call was made upon you : a call—to disobey which would argue a culpable distrust of the protection of Him who made it. You assured yourself that the requisite strength would be supplied by the same Almighty Power, which imposed the burthen. Amongst the circumstances which have attended your recent appointment, the Society dwell upon this with peculiar satisfaction ; inasmuch as it forms a striking feature of resemblance between your Lordship and your lamented Predecessor ; who, like you, originally felt, and like you, subsequently overcame a reluctance to undertake the administration of the Indian Diocese.

Before that accomplished Prelate quitted his native shores, which he was, alas ! destined never to revisit, this Society in a valedictory address entreated him to honour with his countenance and protection their exertions for the propagation and maintenance of the Christian Religion in the East.

They stated their exertions to consist in sending out missionaries ; in procuring translations into the dialects of Hindostan of the Scriptures and the Liturgy of our Church, and distributing them throughout the country; and in encouraging the erection of schools for the instruction of children as well of Europeans as of natives. They further invited his attention to the formation of Institutions in imitation of the Diocesan and District Committees, which had about that period been established in different parts of England and Wales.

In the designs recommended to his notice by the Society your lamented Predecessor was pleased to promise his cordial co-operation. Under his fostering care committees were formed in the three Presidencies and in Ceylon, from the labours of which the most beneficial results have arisen. The limits which the Society must prescribe to themselves in the present address, will not allow them to enter into a minute detail of their results. Yet they cannot deny themselves the gratification of particularly referring to the re-establishment of the Vepery Mission Press through the interposition of the Madras Committee; a measure fraught with the most important benefits to the cause of the Gospel, since it supplies the means of diffusing through the whole of Southern India the word of knowledge and of life.

The same countenance, with which your Predecessor honoured their past labours, the Society now entreat your Lordship to bestow upon their

future exertions. The nature of the objects to which those exertions are directed will, we are assured, of itself constitute, in your estimation, a sufficient title to your support. Yet we cannot but indulge the hope, that you will be induced to regard them with an eye of especial favour by the consideration that they proceed from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Though you have been precluded by the distance of your residence from the metropolis, and by more pressing avocations, from attending the meetings and taking an active part in the business of the Society, still ample proofs have not been wanting of your friendly disposition towards them. Your name has long been enrolled in the list of their members; and they feel both pleasure and gratitude, when they reflect that you condescended to close your ministerial labours in this country by a discourse delivered at their request, and, if they may be allowed to use the expression, in their service.

It now only remains to assure your Lordship, if such an assurance is indeed necessary, that in quitting your native land you bear with you the esteem and the regret of the Society. Though removed to a distant quarter of the globe, you will still be present to our thoughts. Every event which befalls you will be to us a subject of the liveliest interest: and with our prayers for the success of your public labours we shall mingle our petitions for your personal safety and welfare; humbly beseeching the Giver of all good gifts, that He will be

pleased to shower his choicest earthly blessings on your head, till He shall at length call you, in the fulness of age and honour, to receive that eternal reward which He has reserved in His heavenly kingdom for those, who are the instruments of “turning many unto righteousness.”

To this Address the Lord Bishop of Calcutta made the following Reply :

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE AND MY LORDS, PARTICULARLY MY LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL.

IT may be easily supposed that the present is to me a very awful moment—both when I consider the persons, in whose presence I stand ; the occasion, on which we have been called together ; the charge, which I have just received ; and the Society, on whose part those admirable and affectionate counsels have been addressed to me. I cannot recollect without very solemn and mingled feelings of gratitude for the trust which has been reposed in me, and of alarm for the responsibility which I have incurred, how much I have been honoured by the kindness and confidence of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the remarkable and most honourable interest, which this Society has always evinced in the welfare of the Indian Church. I cannot forget, that it was this Society which administered the wants, and directed the energies of the first protestant missionaries to Hindostan ; that, under

its auspices, at a later period, Schwartz, and Gerickè, and Kolhoff, went forth to sow the seeds of light and happiness in that benighted country; and that, still more recently, within these sacred walls, (for sacred I will venture to call them, when I consider the purposes, to which they are devoted, and the prayers, by which they are hallowed) Bishop Middleton bade adieu to that country, which he loved, and to that Church, of which he was one of the brightest ornaments. With such examples of learning and holiness around me, with such models of Christian zeal before me, I may well be acquitted of assumed humility, when I profess a deep and painful sense of my own insufficiency; and feel, that where so much has been done, and where so much remains to do, far greater energies and talents than mine will be necessary either to fulfil the reasonable expectations of the Christian world, or to avoid falling short, far short, of the achievements of my admirable Predecessor.

With such difficulties, and under such a responsibility my hope must be, and is, in the counsels and countenance of your Grace, and of the other distinguished Rulers of the English Church, whom I see around me; and it is therefore, that I could almost feel disposed to lament as a deficiency in the eloquent and pathetic Address of the Right Reverend Prelate, to whose kind notice of me I am so deeply indebted, that he has professedly waved all detailed explanation of his ideas respect-

ing that line of conduct, which, in my situation, is most likely to conduce to, and accelerate the triumph of the Gospel among the Heathen. I regret this the more, since, in a recent admirable sermon by the same distinguished person, he has shown us, how remarkably he is qualified to offer counsels of such a nature. Most gladly, I am convinced, we should all, and most gladly, above all, should I have become his scholar in the art of feeding the flock of Christ, and teaching and persuading the things, which belong to the kingdom of God. But, though his modesty has withheld him from the task, I will still hope to profit by his assistance in private, for the execution of that awful and overpowering enterprize, which, (if I know my own heart) I can truly say, I undertake not in my own strength, but in an humble reliance on the prayers and counsels of the good and the wise, and on that assistance, above all, which, whosoever seeks it faithfully, shall never fail of receiving.

Nor, my Lord Archbishop, will I seek to dissemble my conviction, that, slow as the growth of truth must be in a soil so strange and hitherto so spiritually barren; distant as the period may be when any very considerable proportion of the natives of India shall lift up their hands to the Lord of Hosts, yet, in the degree of progress which has been made, enough of promise is given to remove all despondency as to the eventual issue of our labours. When we recollect, that one hundred years have scarcely passed away, since the first missionaries

of this Society essayed, under every imaginable circumstance of difficulty and discouragement, to plant their grain of mustard-seed in the Carnatic ; when we look back to those apostolic men with few resources, save what this Society supplied to them ; without encouragement, without support ; compelled to commit themselves, not to the casual hospitality, but to the systematic and bigoted inhospitality, of the natives ; seated in the street, because no house would receive them ; acquiring a new and difficult language, at the doors of the schools, from the children tracing their letters on the sand ; can we refrain not only from admiring the faith and patience of those eminent Saints, but from comparing their situation with the port which Christianity now assumes in the East, and indulging the hope that, one century more, and the thousands of converts which our missionaries already number, may be extended into a mighty multitude, who will look back with gratitude to this Society as the first dispenser of those sacred truths which will then be their guide and their consolation ? What would have been the feelings of Schwartz, (*"clarum et venerabile nomen Gentibus ;"* to whom even the heathen, whom he failed to convince, looked up as something more than mortal,) what would have been his feeling had he lived to witness Christianity in India established under the protection of the ruling power, by whom four-fifths of that vast continent is held in willing subjection ? What, if he had seen her adorned and strengthened by

that primitive and regular form of government, which is so essential to her reception and stability among a race like our eastern fellow-subjects! What forbids, I ask, that, when in one century, our little one is become a thousand, in a century more, that incipient desertion of the idol shrines, to which the learned Prelate so eloquently alluded, may have become total, and be succeeded by a resort of all ranks and ages to the altars of the Most High; so that a parochial Clergy may prosecute the work which the missionary has begun, and “the gleanings of Ephraim may be more than the vintage of Abiezer?”

There was one part of the Speech of my Right Reverend Friend, (if I may be allowed to call him so) which I cannot abstain, in gratitude, from noticing, though I confess, I allude to it with reluctance; I mean the obliging manner in which he has been pleased to speak of me. There is no man who knows better than myself, and this, my Lord, is no time for dissembling, how little these praises are deserved. Yet even these praises, by God's grace, I would hope may not be useless to me. They may teach me what manner of man the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge desires as her agent and correspondent in India; they may teach me what manner of man a Bishop of Calcutta ought to be, what manner of man Bishop Middleton was, and what manner of man, though at an humble distance, I must endeavour, by God's help, to become.

I can only conclude by expressing, so far as words can express, to your Grace, to the distinguished Prelates around you, and to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in general, my gratitude for the private and personal, as well as public kindness and countenance, with which you have honoured me ; my gratitude, and that of the Indian Church, for the splendid bounty of which you have made me the dispenser ; my gratitude for the patience and indulgence with which you have now heard me ; my gratitude, above all, for those prayers which you have promised to offer up, on my behalf, to the throne of grace and mercy. Accept, in return, the blessing of a grateful heart ; accept the settled purpose of my mind, to devote what little talent I possess, to the great cause in which all our hearts are engaged, and for which it is not our duty only, but our illustrious privilege to labour. Accept the hope, which I would fain express, that I shall not altogether disappoint your expectations, but that I shall learn and labour in the furtherance of that fabric of Christian wisdom, of which the superstructure was so happily commenced by him, whose loss we deplore ! I say the superstructure, not the foundation, for this latter praise the glorified spirit of my revered Predecessor would himself be the first to disclaim. As a wise master-builder, he built on that which he found ; but “ other foundation can no man lay,” nor did Bishop Middleton seek to lay any other than that, of which the first stone was laid in

Golgotha, and the building was complete when the Son of God took His seat of glory on the right hand of His Father.

I again, my Lord Archbishop, with much humility, request your blessing, and the prayers of the Society. It is, indeed, a high satisfaction for me to reflect, that I go forth as their agent, and the promoter of their pious designs in the East ; and, if ever the time should arrive when I may be enabled to preach to the natives of India in their own language, I shall then aspire to the still higher distinction of being considered the MISSIONARY of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

INDIA,

AT

Calcutta, May 27, 1824 ; at Bombay, April 29, 1825 ; at Colombo, September 1, 1825 ; and at Madras, March 10, 1826.

Σπουδασω δε και εκαστοτε εχειν υμας μετα την εμην εξοδον την τουτων
μνημην ποιεισθαι.—2 Peter i. 15.

ADVERTISEMENT,

PREFIXED TO THE CALCUTTA EDITION.

THE Right Reverend Author, after holding his visitation at Madras, delayed the publication of his charge till the completion of his extensive journey to the south should have enabled him to speak, from personal observation, of the actual state of the several missions in the diocese. In the course of his laborious visitation of the several provinces of Upper, Central, and Western India, and subsequently of the Island of Ceylon, his attention had been anxiously directed to these inquiries; and the last weeks of his invaluable life were devoted to the minute and careful survey of the more cultivated fields of missionary labour in the Peninsula. And though, amongst the many circumstances which render the untimely loss of such a man a source of universal sorrow to the Church of India, this may well have been overlooked; it is yet no slight subject of regret to the Christian world, that he whose mind was most capable of appreciating those important labours, whose opportunities were most favourable for observing them, and whose high and sacred dignity gave weight and authority to his testimony, should not have been spared to record more minutely the scenes of infant Christianity which he had himself witnessed, and to communicate to the hearts of others the impressions of delight and gratitude which they had left upon his own.

A

CHARGE.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

ADDRESSING you, for the first time, in your collective and corporate capacity, I am happy to be enabled to announce the probable increase of your numbers to an amount more nearly adequate to the spiritual necessities of India; to the arduous and peculiar labours which the Indian clergy undergo; to the casualties of an enfeebling and devouring climate, and to that fair proportion which might be looked for between the ecclesiastical establishments of Fort William and its subordinate Presidencies.

The number of chaplains allotted to the former is increased, by a recent order of the Honourable Court of Directors, from twenty-eight to thirty-one, while the transfer of Mhow and Nagpoor to the establishments of Fort St. George and Bombay will enable the government of this Presidency to avail itself, in other quarters, of the services of the clergymen who now officiate there; and the change, which is further directed, of “station” into “dis-

trict" chaplains, may lead, I trust, to measures still further increasing the effective nature of their ministerial labours.

For the munificent and parental care which has prompted these measures, it would ill become me to conceal the expression of my gratitude,—and it is in the hope of so far exciting (by an unvarnished statement of our wants) the zeal of our brethren at home, as not to render vain the Christian care of our rulers,—that I am induced to mention (what, to those who hear me, is unhappily but too familiar) the very great deficiency, in numerical strength, of the Clergy on the Indian establishment.

Of twenty-eight chaplains assigned by the Honourable Company to the Presidency of Fort William, fifteen only are now on their posts, and effective. Five are, from ill health and other unavoidable causes, at present absent on furlough; while of the remaining eight appointments, no fewer than seven are represented as vacant, the clergyman who fills the eighth only, being reported on his voyage from England.

The consequence has been, that, even in Calcutta and its vicinity, some Churches must have been shut up but for the occasional help of clergymen not in the Company's service; that at Cawnpoor, a single labourer is sinking under the duty of a military cantonment about five miles in length, containing two places of worship, two burial grounds, two distinct establishments of barracks, schools, and hospitals, and for which the wisdom of govern-

ment had designated two resident ministers;— while in the other mofussil provinces, some of the most important stations are addressing to me, almost daily, their earnest (and, unhappily, their unavailing) applications for that comfort and instruction which in our own country is accessible to all.

This is a state of things, beyond a doubt, sufficiently lamentable. It presents the revolting spectacle of a nation almost without a priesthood to the Romanists who dwell among us, and to the surrounding heathen. It has a tendency to increase itself and its own evils by oppressing and overpowering the strength of those labourers who still continue in the vineyard. And it excludes, in the worst and most effectual manner, from the teaching and ordinances of our religion, the daily increasing multitude of our countrymen and their descendants, of whom by far the greater part are still ardently attached to the faith and worship of their fathers.

In all which I have said, I am far from designing to convey a censure on our rulers. Those rulers have shown (I cheerfully bear them witness) a progressive attention, during many years, to the spiritual wants of their servants and soldiers in these distant lands. Their endowments have been liberal; they have been careful of the comforts and respectability of their clergy, and, in the general exercise of their patronage, they have exhibited a disinterestedness and an anxiety for the cause of

God and goodness, which few bodies of men have exhibited under similar circumstances. The inadequacy, the delay, the frustration of their measures for the spiritual good of India, may be ascribed, with more justice, to the general ignorance which prevails in England on most points connected with these important but distant territories ; to an apprehension, (certainly not an unnatural one,) on the part of the younger clergy, of an unhealthy climate, and almost a life-long banishment, and to their consequent backwardness in soliciting or accepting appointments, the duties of which are little understood, but the sacrifices incident to which are easily and generally appreciated.

And I have, therefore, thus strongly, but truly, depicted the condition of our Indian Church, both as it accounts, in no small degree, for that tardy progress of Christ's kingdom in the east with which our adversaries are not slow to taunt us ; and as it affords me an opportunity of bearing testimony to the diligence, the fidelity, the conciliatory and affectionate spirit, in which, so far as I have yet seen or known, the clergy of this diocese, to their power, and in some instances beyond their power, have laboured and are labouring.

Nor will I conceal my hope, that when our wants are more generally known, deserving candidates may more readily offer themselves to our rulers for situations, which, as they claim, undoubtedly, no common share of talent and diligence to discharge their duties effectually, so a greater and more im-

mediate return of usefulness is obtainable in them than in almost any stations of ministerial labour which have come within the compass of my experience.

It is, indeed, most true, that those men would be much mistaken who should anticipate, in the fortunes of an Indian chaplain, a life of indolence, of opulence, of luxury. An Indian chaplain must come prepared for hard labour in a climate where labour is often death; he must come prepared for rigid self-denial in situations where all around him invites to sensual indulgence; he must be content with an income liberal, indeed, in itself, but very often extremely disproportioned to the charities, the hospitalities, the unavoidable expenses of his station. He must be content to bear his life in his hand, and to leave, very often, those dearer than life to His care who feeds the ravens.

Nor are the qualifications which he will need, nor are the duties which will rest on him, less arduous than the perils of his situation. He must be no uncourtly recluse, or he will lose his influence over the higher ranks of his congregation. He must be no man of pleasure, or he will endanger their souls and his own. He must be a scholar, and a man of cultivated mind, for, in many of his hearers (wherever he is stationed), he will meet with a degree of knowledge and refinement which a parochial minister in England does not often encounter, and a spirit, sometimes of fastidious and even sceptical criticism, which the society, the

habits, and, perhaps, the very climate of India, has a natural tendency to engender. He must condescend to simple men, for here, as elsewhere, the majority of his congregation will, nevertheless, be the ignorant and the poor.

Nor, in his intercourse with this humble class of his hearers, must he anticipate the same cheering circumstances which make the house of the English parochial minister a school and temple of religion, and his morning and evening walk a source of blessing and blessedness. His servants will be of a different creed from himself, and insensible, in too many instances, to his example, his exhortations, and his prayers. His intercourse will not be with the happy and harmless peasant, but with the dissipated, the diseased, and often, the demoralized soldier. His feet will not be found at the wicker gate of the well-known cottage ; beneath the venerable tree ; in the grey church-porch, or by the side of the hop-ground and the corn-field ; but he must kneel by the bed of infection or despair, in the barrack, the prison, or the hospital.

But to the well-tempered, the well-educated, the diligent and pious clergyman, who can endear himself to the poor without vulgarity, and to the rich without involving himself in their vices ; who can reprove sin without harshness, and comfort penitence without undue indulgence ; who delights in his Master's work, even when divested of those outward circumstances which in our own country contribute to render that work picturesque and

interesting; who feels a pleasure in bringing men to God, proportioned to the extent of their previous wanderings; who can endure the coarse (perhaps fanatical) piety of the ignorant and vulgar, and listen with joy to the homely prayers of men long strangers to the power of religion; who can do this, without himself giving way to a vain enthusiasm; and whose good sense, sound knowledge, and practical piety, can restrain and reclaim the enthusiasm of others to the due limits of reason and scripture; to him, above all, who can give his few leisure hours to fields of usefulness beyond his immediate duty; and who, without neglecting the European penitent, can aspire to the further extension of Christ's kingdom among the heathen; to such a man as Martyn was, and as some still are, (whom may the Lord of the harvest long continue to His Church!) I can promise no common usefulness and enjoyment in the situation of an Indian chaplain.

I can promise him, in any station to which he may be assigned, an educated society and an audience peculiarly qualified to exercise and strengthen his powers of argument and eloquence. I can promise him, generally speaking, the favour of his superiors, the friendship of his equals, and affection, strong as death, from those whose wanderings he corrects, whose distresses he consoles, and by whose sick and dying bed he stands as a ministering angel! Are further inducements needful? I yet can promise more. I can promise to such a man

the esteem, the regard, the veneration of the surrounding Gentiles ; the consolation, at least, of having removed from their minds, by his blameless life and winning manners, some of the most inveterate and most injurious prejudices which oppose, with them, the reception of the Gospel ; and the honour, it may be, (of which examples are not wanting among you,) of planting the cross of Christ in the wilderness of a heathen heart, and extending the frontiers of the visible Church amid the hills of darkness and the strong holds of error and idolatry.

In what I have said, I feel that I have expressed, almost without intending it, my opinion as to what manner of man an Indian chaplain ought to be ; and to such of you, my brethren, as fill that honourable rank, any further pastoral advice seems scarcely necessary. If there be any thing more, it must relate to matters of detail and local expediency, which may be left to every man for himself, according to his personal and particular experience.

Two such points there are, however, which I would generally press on the notice of all, because I can hardly conceive a situation in this country, where an attention to both will not be both necessary and blessed.

The first is, a continued and earnest furtherance of and attention to those powerful aids in your spiritual work, by the bounty of individuals, the parental care of government, and the pious munificence of the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in regimental or station schools,

wherever they exist or can be established ; in the dissemination of religious tracts, of our excellent Liturgy, and the Holy Scriptures ; and in the arrangement and conduct of those lending libraries, which should more particularly fall under the chaplain's care, and which I hope, by God's blessing, to see established throughout this land, wherever there is a barrack to receive, or an European soldier or invalid to use them.

The second point which I would recommend to every chaplain who is preparing himself for India, or who yet looks forward to a lengthened residence here, is the attentive and grammatical study of some one of the native languages. I mean not merely that jargon which a few weeks will bestow ; which is picked up in our intercourse with the meanest of the people, and which suffices, perhaps, to order bread to be placed on our table, or to expedite our journey from stage to stage. Nor do I recommend, as a general measure, what is to most impracticable, and useful, perhaps, to few, an investigation of the abstruse elegancies and intricate machinery of the learned language of the brahmins. But I do earnestly recommend some further attention than the majority of chaplains in India are accustomed to pay, to those dialects which are intelligible to the great body of the Indian people, and which well-born and well-educated men employ in conversing with each other.

The duty, indeed, of endeavouring the conversion of his heathen neighbours, is to a chaplain, I

readily admit, an incidental duty only. It is a duty, nevertheless, expressly contemplated in those laws which send him hither; and the times may yet return in which it may be expedient to remind the opponents of Gentile conversion, that to acquire the languages and instruct the natives of India is declared in the charter of these colonies, to be a legitimate and necessary part of the labours of every chaplain whom the East India Company shall employ. I allow, nevertheless, that a Chaplain has other and more immediate cares. His vocation is, in the first instance, to the scattered flock of Christ in these lands, to the conversion and renewal of all who are already named after our Lord and Saviour. But God forbid that any among us should forget that it is his duty, as occasion offers, to labour after the good of all men; that he has no commission from God but that which commands him to preach the Gospel to every creature; and that there are patterns before him, of men abundantly and exemplarily zealous in their duty to their European charge, who have found leisure, nevertheless, for conveying the word of salvation to those without these limits, and, to the praise of presbyter, have added that of evangelist.

But this is not all. Even if you found no opportunity, or possessed no talent for convincing the professed unbeliever, yet in every city, and almost every cantonment of British India, a numerous and increasing population is found, the children of Europeans, and too often the monuments

of their vices, who, notwithstanding their English descent, are accessible to instruction through the languages of India alone, and who, though divested of the pride of caste, and, not a few of them nominally Christians, have as much need to be instructed in the first rudiments of Christianity as the inhabitants of Polynesia or Japan. On these your labours must often be bestowed, for they are an integral and essential part of that European and military population for whose immediate benefit you are sent out hither. And, when the many other ways are called to mind, in which a knowledge of the native languages will enable you to forward the cause of Christ; by superintending versions of the Scriptures and the Common Prayer, by tracts, by schools, and by similar gradual and peaceful methods of acquiring influence over the Indian mind, and diffusing through the warm and ripening mass an unseen leaven of godliness, it will appear that this method of employing a clergyman's few leisure hours, is one of the most effectual means by which those hours may be made a source of blessing.

Thus far, my reverend brethren, I have addressed myself to those of your number who may be regarded in a peculiar degree as the parochial and beneficed clergy of British India: but there are others not comprehended under this description, and it is with no common thankfulness to God, that I see the episcopal chair of Calcutta now first surrounded by those who are mission-

aries themselves, as well as by those who are engaged in the important office of educating youth for the future service of missions.

To the importance of that service no Christian can be insensible : and I regard it as one among the most favourable signs of the present times, that, while Providence has, in a manner visible and almost miraculous, prepared a high way in the wilderness of the world for the progress of His truth, and made the ambition, the commerce, the curiosity, and enterprise of mankind, His implements in opening a more effectual door to His Gospel, the call thus given has been answered by a display of zeal unexampled at any time since the period of the reformation ; and America and England have united with Denmark and Germany to send forth a host of valiant and victorious confessors, to bear the banner of the Cross through those regions where darkness and death have hitherto spread their broadest shadows.

Nor can it be a matter of reasonable surprise to any of us, that the exertions of this kind, which the last fifteen years have witnessed, should have excited a mingled feeling of surprise and displeasure in the minds, not only of those who are strangers to the powerful and peculiar emotions which send forth the missionary to his toil, but of those who, though themselves not idle, could not endure that God should employ other instruments besides ; and were ready to speak evil of the work itself, rather than that others who followed not with them should

cast out devils in the name of their common Master. To the former of these classes may be referred the loud opposition, the clamours, the exhortation, the alarm, the menace, and ridicule which, some few years ago, were systematically and simultaneously levelled at whatever was accomplished or attempted for the illumination of our Indian fellow-subjects. We can well remember, most of us, what revolutions and wars were predicted to arise from the most peaceable preaching and argument; what taunts and mockery were directed against scholars who had opened to us the gates of the least accessible oriental dialects; what opprobrious epithets were lavished on men of whom the world was not worthy. We have heard the threats of the mighty; we have heard the hisses of the fool; we have witnessed the terrors of the worldly wise, and the unkind suspicions of those from whom the missionary had most reason to expect encouragement. Those days are, for the present, gone by. Through the Christian prudence, the Christian meekness, the Christian perseverance, and indomitable faith of the friends of our good cause, and through the protection, above all, and the blessing of the Almighty, they are gone by! The angel of the Lord has, for a time, shut the mouths of these fiercer lions, and it is the false brother now, the pretended fellow-soldier in Christ, who has lift up his heel against the propagation of the Christian Gospel.

But thus it is that the power of Anti-Christ hath

worked hitherto and doth work. Like those spectre forms which the madness of Orestes saw in classical mythology, the spirit of religious party sweeps before us in the garb and with the attributes of pure and evangelical religion. The Cross is on her shoulders, the chalice in her hand, and she is anxiously busied, after her manner, in the service of Him by whose holy name she also is called. But outstrip her in the race, but press her a little too closely, and she turns round on us with all the hideous features of envy and of rage. Her hallowed taper blazes into a sulphurous torch, her hairs bristle into serpents, her face is as the face of them that go down to the pit, and her words are words of blasphemy !

What other spirit could have induced a Christian minister, after himself, as he tells us, long labouring to convert the heathen, to assert that one hundred millions of human beings, a great, a civilised, an understanding, and most ancient people, are collectively and individually under the sentence of reprobation from God, and under a moral incapacity of receiving that Gospel, which the God who gave it hath appointed to be made known to all ?

What other spirit could have prompted a member of that Church which professes to hold out the greatest comfort to sinners, to assert of a nation with whom, whatever are their faults, I, for one, should think it impossible to live long without loving them, that they are not only enslaved to a cruel and degrading superstition, but that the principal

persons among them are sold to all manner of wickedness and cruelty; without mercy to the poor; without natural affection for each other; and this with no view to quicken the zeal of Christians to release them from their miserable condition, but that Christians may leave them in that condition still, to the end that they may perish everlastingly.

What other spirit, finally, could have led a Christian missionary, (with a remarkable disregard of truth, the proofs of which are in my hands,) to disparage the success of the different Protestant missions; to detract from the numbers, and vilify the good name of that ancient Syrian Church, whose flame, like the more sacred fire of Horeb, sheds its lonely and awful brightness over the woods and mountains of Malabar, and to assure us, (hear Oh Israel !) in the same treatise, and almost in the same page, that the Christians of India are the most despised and wretched of its inhabitants; that whoever takes up the cross, takes up the hatred of his own people, the contempt of Europeans, loss of goods, loss of employment, destitution, and often beggary; and yet that it is *interest alone*, and a love of this world, which has induced in any Hindu, even a temporary profession of the Gospel?

And this is the professed apologist of the people of India! My Brethren, I have known the sharpness of censure, and I am not altogether without experience in the suffering of undeserved and injurious imputations. And, let the righteous smite

me friendly, I shall receive it (I trust in God) with gratitude. Let my enemy write a book, so he be my open enemy, I trust (through the same Divine aid) to bear it or to answer it. But whatever reproofs I may deserve, to whatever calumnies I may be subjected, may the mercy of Heaven defend me from having a false friend for my vindicator !

My own experience in India is, I own, as yet but little ; but the conclusions which I have been led to form are of an extremely different character. I have found, or seemed to myself to find, a race of men, like other men who are not partakers in the regenerating principle of the Gospel, very far gone, indeed, from God and His original righteousness ; but exempt perhaps, by the fortunate circumstances of their climate and habits, from some of those more outrageous and appalling vices of which so dreadful a picture is drawn in those nations to whom the apostles preached Christ crucified.

I have found a race of gentle and temperate habits ; with a natural talent and acuteness beyond the ordinary level of mankind, and with a thirst for general knowledge which even the renowned and inquisitive Athenians can hardly have surpassed or equalled. Prejudiced, indeed, they are, in favour of their ancient superstitions ; nor should I think, to say the truth, more favourably of the character, or augur more happily of the eventual conversion and perseverance of any man or set of men, whom a light consideration could stir from their paternal creed, or who received the word of truth without

cautious and patient inquiry. But I am yet to learn, that the idolatry which surrounds us is more enthralling in its influence on the human mind than those beautiful phantoms and honied sorceries which lurked beneath the laurels of Delos and Daphne, and floated on the clouds of Olympus. I am not yet convinced, that the miserable bondage of castes, and the consequences of breaking that bondage, are more grievous to be endured by the modern Indian than those ghastly and countless shapes of death which beset the path of the Roman convert. And who shall make me believe, that the same word of the Most High, which consigned to the moles and the bats the idols of Chaldee and Babylon, and dragged down the lying father of gods and men from his own Capitol, and the battlements of his "Eternal City," must yet arrest its victorious wheels on the banks of the Indus or the Ganges, and admit the trident of Siva to share, with the Cross, a divided empire?

That the missionary to whose work I have referred, may have been, himself, unsuccessful in his labours, I certainly am not called on to deny or question. That those labours were honest and diligent I am extremely ready to believe, both from the acknowledged blamelessness of his life, from the time which he spent in the work, and the reputation which he enjoyed in Southern India. But the unsuccessful labours of one man, however diligent and able, are no argument against the hope that God, who alone giveth the increase, may

bestow more abundant blessing on other husbandmen.

And when we recollect that, by the rules of his sect, the author of whom I speak was precluded from the free dispersion, among his hearers and his flock, of those sacred writings to which the first preachers of Christianity appeal on all occasions, or which those preachers themselves left behind for the conversion and confirmation of after-ages; when we recollect, that no translation of, I will not say the Bible, but of any single Gospel or Epistle, was entrusted, for all that appears, by this missionary to his Indian converts;—it may occasion the less wonder that they were but lightly affected with a faith whose authentic documents were withheld from them. And since, on his own showing, it was his object, and that of his brethren, to allure the Hindu from his ancient creed, by a display of those gaudy vanities in which the Romish sect most nearly approaches to the religion of Brahma, what marvel will remain that the populace preferred those images to which they were accustomed, or that the more philosophic inquirer found little apparent advantage in transferring his veneration from the legends of the Ramayana to the almost equally doubtful names of St. Veronica, St. Ursula, and St. George the Cappadocian!—But we, my brethren, have not so learned Christ. Whether our success be great or small, it is to something very different from Hinduism that we Protestants lead our converts; and though I am

far, Heaven knows, from placing on the same level the Brahminical and the Romish faith; and though, as a form, though a corrupt form, of the knowledge whereby men are brought to God, I rejoice in every conquest which this latter has made among the heathen, I would rather, should God so far honour me, be the instrument of bringing one idolater to the worship of the one true God, and the one Mediator between God and man, than to have persuaded, like Xavier, my tens of thousands to patter their rosary in Latin instead of Sanscrit, and transfer to the Saints the honour which they had paid to the Devetas.

But are any converts made to our sober and less attractive ritual? Will not the homely truths of Protestantism fail to attract attention where the gorgeous rites of Romish splendour fail?—Let me, in the first place, express my sorrow, that so little pains have yet been taken to bring Protestant Christianity before the attention of the heathen in its most comely and attractive form; in that form which blends decency of ornament with perfect purity of worship, and has preserved the beauties of the ancient liturgies without any intermixture of more recent superstition. The Common Prayer has been translated into Hindustani, Cingalese, and Tamil. But how few places of worship for those different nations are there, in which that excellent ritual is regularly used with its striking and primitive appendages of surplice, font and altar! Even where Ministers of our own Church have officiated,

I have heard, in many parts of India, of a carelessness in these particulars. I am, therefore, the more anxious to call the attention of those who hear me to the advantage, and, I will say, the duty of conforming in external decorum, no less than in spirit and doctrine, to a Church of which, I trust, none of us are ashamed; and to that beauty and regularity of worship which both well becomes the truth, and may cause the truth itself to be received with less reluctance.

But are no converts made to Protestant Christianity? Bear witness to the contrary the Christians of Agra, of Benares, of Buxar, of Meerut, and Chunar! Bear witness those numerous believers of our own immediate neighbourhood, whom, though we differ on many, and doubtless, on very important points, I should hate myself if I could regard as any other than my brethren! Let the populous Christian districts of the Carnatic and Tanjore bear witness, where believers are not reckoned by solitary individuals, but by hundreds and by thousands! Bear witness Ceylon, where the Cross has, in a great measure, lost its reproach, and the nobles of the land are gradually assuming without scruple the attire, the language, and the religion of Englishmen! And let him, finally, bear witness whom we have now received into the number of the commissioned servants of the Church, and whom, we trust, at no distant day, to send forth, in the fulness of Christian authority, to make known the way of truth to those his countrymen

from whose errors he has himself been gloriously delivered !

To perpetuate and extend these triumphs must be the endeavour of those around me, who, however small their success, are aware that, in thus endeavouring, they are fulfilling a solemn commandment of God, and who, though their visible success should be none at all, will at least, if they are faithful in their ministry, have saved their own souls, and laid up for themselves a good reward on that day when the Lord shall make up His jewels ; a day for which no better preparation can be found than a patient and unwearied continuance in well doing, and in stretching out, like Him whom we serve, our consecrated hands to exhort, to heal, and to save, though it may be that, like His, our hands are stretched out to a gainsaying and unbelieving people !

From even the taunts of an adversary, however, a wise man will increase his wisdom. And, if we learn, from the volume which I have quoted, a greater moderation in our language and a greater circumspection in our deportment ; more strict adherence to the union and discipline of the Church ; and a more careful abstinence from every thing like exaggeration in those accounts of our progress in the work which are sent to our friends in Europe, it is apparent that some of those hindrances will be lessened which impede the progress of the truth, and that a more abundant blessing may be expected

on our toils from Him who is the God of peace, of order, and of humility.

It is on these grounds that I would recommend to you, in your intercourse with the heathen, a careful abstinence from every thing which may enlist their angry passions on the side of error; all expressions hurtful to their national pride, and even all bitter and contemptuous words against the objects of their idolatry.

In these respects, no better model can be found than the great apostle of the Gentiles, whose harshest words, in his addresses to the Athenians and men of Lystra, are of a kind to stimulate the curiosity, far more than to wound the zeal of the fiercest and least tolerant Pagan, and of whom at Ephesus, however boldly and successfully he had contended for the truth, no man was able to say that he was actually a blasphemer of their goddess. In no cause, indeed, however righteous, can abuse and insult hold the place of argument; and far nobler conquests may be gained in a friendly discussion with our adversary, than by adopting a tone which, in itself, gives him an additional motive to shut his ears against all which we urge to him.

The next topic which I would desire to impress on your minds, is the advantage and necessity (I speak both to chaplains and missionaries) of a constant and confidential communication of the more important occurrences of your ministry with each other and with your ecclesiastical superiors.

It was a wise rule of the ancient Church, “χωρίς ἐπισκοπῶν μη τι ποιεῖτε,” not, certainly, that it is well or worthy of the priesthood that any man or set of men should systematically play the part of spies on their Christian brethren, but because, by such a system of confidence, the very existence of spies is rendered almost impossible; because the elders of the Church, being acquainted with the views of every man, and having opportunity, in the least offensive way, to correct, to guide, to forward them, became themselves a leading party in every beneficial measure, and were enabled often to render measures beneficial, which would otherwise have assumed a very doubtful character.

It is the misfortune of the modern English Church, that the Bishop is too often regarded by his clergy, not as the master-spring, but as merely a controuling power; a remora to check too ardent zeal, rather than an agent to further improvement; a censor of measures already adopted, rather than a guide in measures proposed. I rejoice to say that, with such of my clergy as I have as yet personally known, I feel myself on a very different footing; and it is in order that this mutual confidence may become general throughout the diocese, that I am anxious that all should be convinced that, in their Ordinary, they have a fellow-servant and a friend, actuated by the same general principles, confessing the same faith, and having the same great objects continually in view; who is only desirous to forward their labours of love by

the aid of such experience as he possesses, and to prove to them, experimentally, that for the most ardent zeal, and for activity the most incessant, enough and more than enough of room is afforded by the closest principles of Church union, and the most cautious adherence to the canons and constitutions of that Church to which we profess allegiance.

Lastly, my brethren, whereuntosoever ye are called, and whatever may be the peculiar sphere of ministerial action marked out for you, let it be always in your minds, as the prevailing principle of your lives, that you are ministers of Christ, and devoted to his high and holy calling. "*Hoc agite !*" Let every man who hears you preach ; every man who witnesses your performance of your sacred functions ; every man who is admitted to your society and familiar conversation, be made aware that there is thus much distinction in your character, and that your main object is that of your profession.

Even if worldly estimation, if worldly popularity were our objects, it is conduct like this which (undisgraced by affectation and formality, and proceeding unfeignedly from the good treasure of the heart) would eventually most secure them. Consistency is, after all, that quality for which, even among worldly and carnal men, the most unfeigned respect is entertained ; and the man who is in earnest, whether they account him mistaken or no, is always esteemed the most, and listened to most willingly. But the world is not the master whom

I am desirous that you should seek to please ; and the applause of the world is of very little moment to those whose industry is commanded in the words, “ occupy till I come !” and whose labours will be rewarded with, “ well done, good and faithful servant !”

It was by a more than usual attention to the consistency of his appropriate character, and to the paramount and indispensable necessity of his appropriate pursuits and duties, that the character of Bishop Middleton became that which you beheld, and that which he, for the example of us all, has left behind him. That great and good man, had his mind been attracted to secular objects, possessed much of every quality on which the world bestows its favour. But, though his memory was stored with all profane and civil literature, the application of his learning and talents was to ecclesiastical purposes only. He ranked among the very foremost critics of his age, yet it was to scriptural criticism only that his acumen was directed. He had, I am assured, an inexhaustible supply of lighter and more elegant literature, yet he sought to be remembered as a preacher and a theologian only. Nay more, when his life-long labours were at length drawing near their term, as if fearing the applause of men, even in those branches of study which were strictly appropriate and ministerial, he consigned, as a last sacrifice, his laboured manuscripts to the flames, content to live in the memory of those who personally knew, and loved, and ho-

noured him, and desiring no other reward than the mercy of Him to whom his thoughts, his studies, and his prayers, had been long and steadily dedicated.

One monument, however, he has left behind of the zeal which prompted, the wisdom which planned, and the liberality which largely contributed to it, which must long preserve his name in the grateful recollection of the Indian Church, and which bids fair, under the Divine protection, to become eventually a greater blessing to these extensive lands, than any which they have received from their foreign lords, since the gate was first opened by the Portuguese to the commerce and conquest of Asia.

I mean the excellent institution of Bishop's College, which, notwithstanding every disadvantage arising from scanty funds, from unfinished buildings, and the premature and irreparable loss of him whose talents were, of all men's, best adapted to contend with the difficulties which beset his infant establishment, is already, I rejoice to say, made available as a place of education, and already confirms the hopes with which its projector delighted to contemplate it, as the probable future source of sacred learning and religious instruction to the Christian youth, whether of European or native blood, through the whole of this vast empire, and as the instrument, in God's good time, of making plain His way through the wilderness of the heathen world, and giving light to the most remote,

the most obscured, and the most hopeless of the nations who sit in darkness.

But to the claims of Bishop's College on the assistance, the liberality, and the prayers, of all who love our English Church, or desire that it may be made an instrument of enlarging the general Church of Christ among mankind; to all which it now does, and the much more which with due support it may accomplish; and to the meritorious labours, I will add, of him who now single-handed supports the whole burden of the establishment, it is my hope, on some future day, more specifically to call your attention.

In the present instance, that attention, I am aware, must be exhausted, from the length of this morning's solemnity¹, and I feel myself less able to do justice to a subject of such importance, while I am suffering under the recent loss² of a distinguished and excellent friend; from whose eminent talents, from whose amiable temper, from whose high religious principles, and his repeatedly ex-

¹ The visitation at Calcutta, to which alone these two paragraphs relate, was lengthened by the addition of an ordination service, that of the native catechist of Schwartz, Christian David, of Tanjore, who is alluded to in the earlier part of the charge.—*Calcutta Editor*.

² The friend whose sudden loss is thus feelingly alluded to by the Bishop, is the Honourable Sir Christopher Puller, Chief Justice of Bengal, who had but recently arrived in the country, and died, after a short illness, May 25, 1824, but a few hours before the delivery of this charge in Calcutta.—*Calcutta Editor*.

pressed intention of devoting his ample means and powerful mind to the service of that God from whom he had received them, I had anticipated the most important aids in securing the prosperity of the Indian Church, and furthering the triumphant progress of that Gospel in which his hope and heart were laid up, and in which, while he yet lived, his life was hidden.

A few days only are gone by, since, with animation on his benevolent countenance, he expressed to me his gratitude to the Most High for the many blessings which he had received, and his desire to dedicate to God, through Jesus Christ, an increased proportion of his time, his means, and his influence. A few hours only are past since those good resolutions are gone thither, where they are treasured by a gracious Master whom he had served from his youth, and who, when his noon of life had scarcely begun to decline, saw fit to call him to his repose and his reward. In him India—in him the Anglo-Indian Church—in him the cause of missions here and throughout the world—in him the poor of every caste and country have lost a fearless, a kind, a bountiful, and unpretending friend; but he will not have died in vain if the consideration of his sudden mortality induces us to ponder the worth of this world in regions where, more remarkably than on any other part of its surface, the present moment is all that we can count on, where the sublimest and most awful phenomena of nature remind us every instant of our uncertain tenure,

and the still breath of pestilence, and the louder warnings of thunder, adjure us to apply our hearts to wisdom.

Finally, brethren, farewell ! Be patient and watch unto prayer ; for your flocks and for yourselves, that ye may be diligent in the discharge of your stewardships, for behold He cometh quickly, and blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing !

And “ Oh, Almighty God ! who hast built Thy Church on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

SERMON I.

PREACHING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

[Preached at the Cathedral, Calcutta, Dec. 21, 1823.]

ST. JOHN i. 20.

He confessed and denied not, but confessed "I am not the Christ."

ABOUT the middle of the long reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, when all mankind were in hushed and anxious expectation of that Great Deliverer whom both Jewish and Pagan prophecies had foretold as about this time to make his appearance upon earth; a new and mighty teacher of morality appeared in the wilderness of Judæa. His dress, his voice, his aspect, were the image of austere holiness, and of the then almost forgotten severities of the ancient prophets and penitents. His hair and beard, unshorn, after the pattern of the Nazarites, hung wildly over his breast and shoulders; his half-naked body was macerated with frequent fasting; his raiment was the coarse hair cloth which covered the Arab's tent; his food, the insects of the air and of the field; and his luxury, the honey left by wild bees in the sun-burnt rocks of Arabia Petræa.

He was recognized as John, the son of a Jewish priest, whose birth had, some thirty years before, been announced by repeated miracles ; foretold by an angel, preceded by a miraculous dumbness and followed by a miraculous cure ; whose boyhood and youth had, from the first, been strange and solitary, and who had fled from the amusements natural to his age, and the pursuits appropriate to his station, to the dismal and dangerous retreat of the waste and howling wilderness : till now, in the full vigour of his mind, and sublimed and purified by a life of meditation, he took his station at the ford of Bethabara, and, in words full of power and dignity, called on his countrymen to escape from the wrath to come.

The ford of Bethabara, which he selected for this first appearance, was a place of all others best calculated for the double purpose of a popular teacher and a severe and habitual ascetic. Only six miles from Jericho, and in the high road from Jerusalem and the sea coast to the wealthy cities of Gadara and Aræopolis, a celebrated prophet was, in such a situation, seldom likely to want an audience ; while the waters of Jordan, its marshes, and the adjacent wilderness, not only suited his mission as a Baptist, but were favourable also to the austerities and occasional secessions from the world which became the character of one who mourned for the world's transgressions.

Nor was the ford of Bethabara recommended by such considerations only. With St. John and with

the Jews it might, probably, weigh still more, that it was by this very passage, which was regarded as a figurative baptism, that their ancestors under Joshua, (himself, both in name and office, the type of a more illustrious Teacher,) had gone through the stream of Jordan, and, not without a miracle, had entered into their promised Canaan. And, as the scene of Elijah's occasional residence and miracles, as the visible instrument in the cleansing of Naaman, and as the favourite retreat, during the independence of the Israelitish state, of the most popular prophets and their scholars, there is reason to believe that both the river and the lake of Tiberias had acquired a sort of sacred character, and that the pilgrimages which Christians make thither are little more than the relics of a similar practice among the Jews.

The time, moreover, of St. John's appearance was no less favourable to his renown than the station which he had chosen. I have said that all mankind, and not the Jews alone, were at this period in still and anxious expectation of a mighty sovereign and conqueror to be born in the land of Judah; and I repeat the observation, because there are few facts in history more certain (though many of much less consequence are far more generally attended to,) than that amongst the heathen also, and more particularly in the Roman world, there were extant books of supposed divine authority, and which, so far as we have any account of them, gave an almost similar description of the future

Messiah with that which is read to the present day in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.

I am well aware, indeed, that the work which now bears the name of the Sibylline prophecies, is marked by many strong internal proofs as a forgery of far later date than the reign of Augustus or Tiberius, and composed when the worship of the cross and the other superstitions of the middle ages, had already made considerable progress. But that books were in existence, under the name of the Sibylline Oracles and the Prophecies of Hydaspes, which spoke many strange and many true things of Christ and of His kingdom, is proved, by the testimony of the most ancient apologists for Christianity, as allowed by the heathen themselves to be ancient and inspired documents, and yet in favour of the Christians. It is in part confirmed by Cicero, who, when, for a political purpose, depreciating the authority of the Sibylline books, observes as a reason why they were not to be followed, that they contained doctrines contrary to the established systems of idolatry and polytheism¹. And it is still more confirmed by that well known and remarkable Eclogue of Virgil, which so strangely corresponds with the leading chapters of Isaiah, and which, whatever its immediate occasion may have been, and however the flattery of the poet may have led him to apply to one of the Cæ-

¹ Cic. de Div. lib. ii. s. 54.

sarean family expressions of a nobler import, has avowedly borrowed its ornaments and metaphors from traditions or prophecies then actually current among his countrymen¹.

The subject is one not easily exhausted, and it is one to which I may hereafter recur. It is important in many respects, not only as, so far as it extends, a confirmation of Christianity, but as presumptive evidence, (when coupled with the prophecy of Balaam, the Epiphany of the Persian Magi, and the many circumstances in the Brahminical creed, which strangely border on our own,) that the coming of Christ was more widely made known, and the manifestation of the Spirit less limited in ancient times than Jews and Christians are apt to believe, and that the mercies of God through His Son, as they were intended for all, so they were made effectual to many, for whom, in the midst of their heathen darkness, our human wisdom would be at a loss to provide security.

But my present reason for mentioning the fact, is to point out the advantages with which the son of Zacharias began his mission, and the facilities which he possessed (had he thought fit to employ those facilities) for assuming any title or character which the wildest ambition might have dictated.

All Judea, in fact, (we learn it from profane as well as from sacred authorities) was excited and alarmed at his appearance. The priests and

¹ Virg. Buc. IV. v. 4. et seq.

scribes, the pharisees and sadducees, the publicans and the soldiers, (it appears from Josephus that Herod had sent an army across the desert against his father-in-law, Aretas king of Arabia Petraea) were alike moved by his eloquence, and added numbers to his audience and his disciples¹. Nay, Herod himself, till incensed by the severe honesty of his counsels, appears to have held him in honour, and yielded obedience to many of his injunctions as one in whom the Spirit of God in no common measure abode, and whose favour and prayers were not below the notice even of a politician and a conqueror.

Nor can the enemies of our faith pretend that the facts which I have urged, are founded on the representations of Christian and partial authorities only. They are confirmed, circumstantially confirmed, by the last historian of the Jewish nation, who in a passage of undoubted authenticity², has attested the popularity, the virtues, the influence, and the untimely end of him whom our Lord designates as the most distinguished among the sons of women³.

All things appear to have *favoured*, all things may be said to have *solicited* his assumption of the Messiah's name and character. The messengers from Jerusalem, we find actually pressing it on him, and, by a mixture of cross-examination

¹ Antiq. Book XVIII. c. v. §. 1.

² Antiq. Book XVIII. c. 5. §. 2.

³ St. Matt. xi. 11.

and entreaty, persuading him to profess himself that which they so earnestly desired he might be found to be. “ Who art thou? Art thou the Christ? Art thou Elias? Art thou that Prophet? Why baptisest thou then, if thou art not? Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us¹? ” Surely to the meaning of interrogatories like these, an imposter or a fanatic could hardly have remained insensible, any more than to the command of money and of men which the publicans and soldiers might have furnished, and the important position within his grasp, as occupying the ford of Jordan.

Place Mahomet in such a situation, and consider what answer he would have returned; contrast that answer with the answer sent by John, and enquire of your own hearts whether this last do not contain the words of truth and soberness. He describes himself not as the expected King of Israel, but as a harbinger sent before to smooth and prepare His way; he disclaims the title both of Elias and Jeremiah (the latter of whom was, by many of the Jews, expected to rise again), and instead of smooth and flattering language to those whose good will it was most necessary to conciliate, he exhorts his hearers, one and all, to practical holiness and individual amendment of life; reproving the pharisees for their hypocrisy, and Herod for his uncleanness; the soldiers for their rapine, and

¹ St. John i. 19—22.

the publicans for their extortion; while, instead of warming the hearts of men with the hopes of national greatness and political freedom, he forewarns them that the axe was already laid to the root of their tree, and predicts, in no doubtful terms, the approaching rejection and ruin of their church and people¹.

Is it urged that St. John was sensible of the dangers which might arise from assuming the foremost and most conspicuous place in a religious revolution; that he preferred the safer rank of vizier to the new Messiah, and was anxious, therefore, to point out to the curiosity and reverence of the multitude, some other head on which might rest the task of redeeming Israel from bondage, the splendours and the dangers of sovereignty?

On whom did his election fall? Did he fix on some well-known character, some powerful and popular leader, who was best qualified to promote his views and to ensure success to his predictions? Herod was at hand, corresponding to all these characters, and would no doubt have done many things, nay, every thing which a reputed prophet could have asked, who undertook to clothe him with the title of Messiah, and Son of David. The Parthian was on the frontier, with the gold and the horsemen of the east at his command, waiting only for such a demonstration on the part of the Jews to rush forward with all his archery. Ro-

¹ St. Luke iii. 7—20.

man generals might have been found (as Josephus afterwards found Vespasian) to listen with greediness to the tale that, from the east, a monarch of the world was, about this time, to issue¹; or, if he preferred a native Jew, and a leader of humbler origin, the neighbouring mountains were filled with popular and warlike chieftains, who had resisted thus far the mandates of the Roman conqueror, and to whom, in their last unavailing struggle for liberty, the nation of Israel at length committed their cause.

But on none of these did the choice of the Baptist fall. He chose an unknown young man, of royal blood indeed, but of obscure and narrow circumstances; the reputed son of a carpenter in a provincial town of Galilee. Him he approaches with the reverence due to a superior being; in terms of the deepest abasement he describes his own inferiority to Him, and points Him out to the multitude of his disciples as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the Person who, though his junior by mortal birth, had, in Heaven, existed before him; the latchet of whose sandal he was himself unworthy to loose; but for the manifestation of whom to Israel he had been sent to baptise with water.

And, here again, the opponents of Christianity have no ground for objecting that our facts are taken from the Gospel alone. The disciples of St.

¹ Jos. Bell. Jud. lib. III. c. 8.

John, a sect of Jews still existing in considerable numbers in the north-eastern parts of Arabia, who, by a strange perverseness, while professing themselves the Baptist's followers, reject, in all essential points, his testimony concerning Jesus; have preserved, nevertheless, amid the fable and allegory of their mystical books, an account of how St. John baptised the True Light, the holy Son of God, in the Jordan, with the strange addition, in which, however, some circumstances of truth are mingled, that the person thus distinguished was seen by St. John no more, but that His Spirit rested on him, while He Himself returned to His Father.

They thus, as may be seen by a reference to the passage itself in Michaelis¹, identify St. John with the Messiah, whom he foretold, and incorporate him with the Second Person in the Godhead. It is strange how such a perversion of the truth should have found place among men who approach so nearly to the truth; but their very blindness makes their testimony, so far as it goes, more valuable, inasmuch as it is, in a certain degree, the testimony of an adversary.

Nor, by those who are constrained to admit the leading facts of our Saviour's intercourse with St. John, will the appearance of any previous or subsequent collusion between them be pretended. They, indeed, were distant kinsmen; but the habits of

¹ Michaelis, vol. III. pp. 295—302. For the Christians of St. John, see also Taylor's Calmet, fifth edit.

St. John's early life had effectually divided him from one who, till thirty years of age, had remained patiently subject to the domestic discipline and humble toils of His earthly parent. St. John himself declares, and there is every appearance of truth in the declaration, that he knew not the man, save by a miraculous and public sign, who was to baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Instead of taking advantage of the zeal of the assembled multitude, which, had any concert existed, the Messiah and His forerunner would scarcely have neglected to do, our Saviour wanders forth alone, without waiting to receive their homage, and lingers for six weeks in the depths of the adjoining wilderness. On His return, though again hailed by the Baptist as the Lamb of God, He resumes no intercourse with him; each proceeds on his course of laborious preaching, of painful wandering, but our Lord alone, of blessed and most mighty miracles; the one laying claim to an existence and authority eternal, supreme, and infinite; the other, even in bonds and death, rejoicing in the success of the younger prophet, and cheerfully sacrificing his own importance and supremacy to *His* superior claim on whom the hopes of Israel rested, and of whom all the prophets of ancient time had spoken.

It is plain that St. John, while acting thus, could have no motive for deceiving others. But might he be himself deceived? was he an honest but visionary enthusiast? Many reasons may be urged against our entertaining such an opinion of him.

In the first place, the character of an enthusiast is almost always strongly marked by pride. Such a person is extremely unlikely to descend, as St. John did, to take the second place, or to rejoice so consistently and unaffectedly in the decay of his own popularity.

Secondly, the practical tenour of John's preaching, the repentance which he inculcated, and which he made, as we see in his answers to the soldiers and publicans, to consist not in superstitious forms, not in abstraction and contemplation, but in the discharge by every man of the plain and appropriate duties of his condition, is of a character too honest, too sensible and sound, for a heated temper or a diseased imagination.

And, above all, the coincidence of his choice with the circumstances and character of Jesus, is a decisive proof that such a choice was not determined by chance, nor built on the dictates of a capricious and casual fancy. If men drew lots for a king, it would be strange indeed if, out of a mighty and promiscuous multitude, the lot should actually fall on one of royal blood, of unexceptionable character, with every private and every public quality which could fit him for a ruler or a conqueror. But what are the qualifications of an earthly king, to those marks which were to distinguish the Messiah, who was not only to be a descendant of David, but the son of a virgin; who was not only to speak as never man spake, but to do the works which never man did; to heal the sick, to cleanse

the leper, to cast out devils, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to raise the dead, yea, and Himself to arise from the dead, having first poured forth His soul to death, and made His life an offering for many? Was it a casual or enthusiastic choice which rested on a Man, whose bidding the waves obeyed? Was the fig-tree in the plot, which dried up at the word of Jesus? or were the earth and moon and sun confederates in the forgery, which quaked, and became dim, and hid their glories in the hour when the Lord was crucified? Verily "John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this Man were true¹:" and the truth and the life is in Him.

A confirmation, then, of our faith, is the first and most obvious lesson which we are to learn from the Baptist's history. But there are other circumstances in which the son of Zacharias was sent for the instruction of the world, and in which he was given as a sign for many. I say a *sign* and not a *pattern*, inasmuch as, for the particular austerities which he practised, we have no warrant in the example of our Lord, nor in the earlier days of the Church, nor could such austerities be usually practised without a neglect of more important duties. But when we see the son of Zacharias in the wilderness, a mournful solitary man, can we refrain from observing, how insignificant in the sight of God are the advantages of

¹ St. John x. 41.

worldly wealth and greatness, since the most illustrious of His saints and His only Son Himself, had of this world's goods so extremely small a pittance ? Or, can we avoid observing, that as St. John, the reprover of sin, preceded Jesus, the messenger of pardon ; so Christ, it is plain, can be only effectually approached by the gate of repentance, while repentance is of no avail, unless, like St. John, it leads us to Christ ?

Some days yet remain of that season which the Church has devoted to the consideration of our Saviour's advent, and a preparation for the feast of His nativity. In those days, let St. John be in your thoughts ; during those days let the Son of God be the object of your devotions ; and intreat His grace that you may be so prepared to partake in His sacraments, that at His second coming in might and majesty ye may be found fit to enter into His joy. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He returneth shall find thus doing !

SERMON II.

OFFICE OF CHRIST.

[Preached at Trichinopoly, April 2, 1826.]

1 ST. JOHN v. 6—8.

This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ; not by water only, but by water and blood ; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.

To understand the meaning of these difficult words of St. John, it will be necessary to consider the tendency of his general argument, and for that purpose to go back to the former part of the chapter whence they are taken, in which he is at once enforcing the practical duties of a Christian, and the motives and principles and gracious aids from which those duties must proceed, and by which alone our weakness is enabled to perform them. We are called upon, he first tells us, to prove our love of God by the active discharge of our duty ; and this duty is rendered easy to us by the change which is wrought by God's grace in every one who truly seeks His mercy through the merits of His Son, which, to express the total alteration caused by it in our desires and habits, is called regeneration, or

being born afresh, and, to signify the degree of God's power to which we are thereby admitted, is here called by St. John, the being "born of God." "This is the love of God," he tells us, "that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous; for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world¹." As if he had said, the love of God can only be proved either to God or man, by our keeping those commandments, which God Himself hath given us. But how are these commandments to be kept? How is it that, weak as we are, the lovers and servants of sin, we shall be enabled to do all which God requires at our hands as proofs of our love? How shall we be able to deny ourselves and our sinful lusts, to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; to give up our sins, though those sins be dearer to us than a right hand or a right eye; to bear with cheerfulness the scorn and persecution of men; to be contented to incur the names of fool and hypocrite and madman, rather than do those things which God has forbidden? The world and its temptations are set against the kingdom of Christ, and who are we that we should be able to struggle with the world? Be not afraid of your own weakness, or the world's terrour. In yourselves you have no power, but through Christ's merits power shall be given you; and he that is born of God, we have God's own word for it, shall be able to overcome the world. But wherewith are we to be thus enabled? What shall be our wea-

¹ 1 St. John v. 4.

pon in this great battle? through what feelings, what hopes, what inward power, shall we be able to resist such enticements, to withstand such terrors? The objection is foreseen, the answer is ready; "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God¹?" In other words, our knowledge and belief in Christ and in His promises, our hopes of Heaven, our fears of hell, our deep and unaffected thankfulness towards Him by whose merits Heaven is opened to us, and by whose sufferings we are redeemed from everlasting misery; these hopes, this fear, this love, are so much stronger than all with which the world can tempt us, that if we resolutely maintain this faith as our comforter under distress, and as our warning guide when urged by pleasure or by interest, there is no distress, no pleasure, no interest which can be sufficient to separate us from our duty and from our love which is in Christ. It is always thus, when a stronger motive is offered to the mind, and so offered that the mind is really made sensible of it, those weaker objects which before impelled or attracted us lose their effect on our will, and give place to the more powerful hope or apprehension. When the sun is absent from the earth, and the Heaven is obscured with clouds, a candle from a cottage window shines far and wide like a star through the darkness. But let the moon

¹ V. 4, 5.

rise and the stars of Heaven appear, the candle is seen no longer, and both the moon and the stars grow dim when the glorious light of day walks forth from his eastern chamber. Exactly so, in the natural state of man, the meanest trifles are sufficient to entice or agitate us; one man seeks for happiness in pleasure and sensuality; another gives his whole mind and care to the gathering together of wealth, all which in a few years he must leave behind; with a third, ambition is the ruling passion. But if an angel were to lift up one of these men, as St. Paul was caught up in vision, if he were to hold him by the hair of his head between hell and Paradise, if he were to show him from the middle of that great gulph whereby the seats of pain and blessing are divided, the tormenting flames, the bitter tears, the hopeless agony which dwell in the first; and the trees of life, the groves of palm, the golden city, with its gates of pearl and crystal streets, which God hath prepared for them that love Him¹; if he were told, “from those torments Christ hath died to save thee, and to these habitations of blessing His grace will bring thee if thou dost not cast away thy soul:” and if, while the man yet saw these opposite prospects, he were at that very moment to be tempted by the choicest of the things which he had followed after, do you think that they would have power to move him? Oh no; his heart would be full of other thoughts, of Heaven and hell, of blessing and cursing, of his natural danger and

¹ Rev. xxi. 21.

his hope in Jesus Christ, and all that once could rouse his passion most would fall as idly on his senses, as music on the deaf ear, or beauty on the blinded eye. But that effect which the actual sight of Heaven and hell is supposed to produce on a man so circumstanced, the faith that Heaven and hell are really what they are represented in Scripture, will be able, if we keep it constantly in mind, to produce on our hearts and behaviour. By this we are more than conquerors, and by this we shall triumph not only over the world, but over the devil and ourselves, if we continue to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and to receive the Gospel, which He hath given us, and to bear by His grace this faith in our souls, and to recall it to our minds whenever temptation comes upon us.

In the former verses, then, of this portion of St. John's Epistle, we are taught the necessity of good works, and the manner in which faith, if sincere and constant, will produce the answerable fruit of good works in our life and conversation. And the apostle then continues to explain in very few and somewhat mysterious words, the nature of that faith which we are to maintain respecting the person and office of our Saviour. We are to believe that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God," that He "came by water and by blood, not by water only, but by water and blood," and we are to believe this on the testimony of God's infallible Spirit. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, and the Spirit is truth."

It is not my intention to enter on the long controverted subject of the authenticity of that particular verse which follows, in which mention is made of the Three Heavenly Witnesses; that verse, undoubtedly, teaches nothing which a trinitarian can admit to be at variance with the general tenour of Scripture. I am, however, little inclined to seek support for an awful truth from materials of suspected soundness, or (while the doctrine of a Trinity in unity is taught in so many other texts of Scripture) to lay a stress on one of which it is not ascertained that it is in Scripture. And I am, in the present instance, yet more disposed to avoid entering into the discussion, since the particular verse in question, so far as the main purpose and connexion of the apostle's argument are concerned, is illustrative and ornamental only. The number and unity of the Celestial Witnesses are only alluded to on account of their analogy, in these particulars, with the triple and accordant evidence of "the spirit, the water, and the blood." It is to these last, then, and to the testimony which they bear, that I am anxious to direct your attention; and, in so doing, it shall be my endeavour, first, to ascertain what doctrine that is for which St. John is here contending; secondly, who those witnesses are which he describes as effectually supporting it; and, thirdly, in what manner it becomes us to lay their testimony to heart, and apply to ourselves, our hopes, our fears, and the conduct of our mental and external habits, those awful and comfortable

truths which the inspired reasoner enforces with so much earnestness.

It is obvious, in the first place, that the doctrine refers to some peculiarity in the person of Christ, and in the mission which He came to execute on the part of His Heavenly Father. In the preceding verses of the chapter, which, together with my text, have been read to you this morning from the altar, St. John had been establishing the necessity of good works, as an evidence of our love for God, and the necessity and efficacy of that faith without which a life of consistent holiness is impossible.

“ This is the love of God that we keep His commandments ; and His commandments are not grievous ; for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ¹ ? ”

As if He had said, “ It is vain and worse than vain for men to pretend to love God, unless they do those things which they know to be well-pleasing to Him. Nor, for the neglect of such things, is the weakness of our human nature an apology. Weak as we are in ourselves, there is, in our regenerate nature, a principle which enables us to be more than conquerors over the most terrible of our spiritual enemies, and the shield by which we may quench their darts is the faith which we cherish that Jesus is the Son of God.”

¹ St. John v. 3, 4, 5.

But then, as if apprehensive of our resting in this bare and general confession, he proceeds to explain who that Christ is, in whom he would have us firmly to believe, and what grounds are afforded to us for receiving the peculiarities which he here ascribes to Him. “This is He,” (that he is speaking of Christ the Son of God there can, I conceive, be no controversy) “This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth; and there are three that bear witness in earth,” (I pass the controverted clause) “There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.” It remains, then, that I should prove to you what the peculiarity is which St. John asserts of Christ, and to which he represents these three as witnesses.

There are three remarkable events in the history of our Saviour while among men, to some or all of which the apostle may be thought to have alluded. They are, first, His own baptism in the river Jordan, in which, as He commenced His mission and public ministry, so He may be fairly said to have come to us, in His official character, by water. Secondly, that violent death in which only, so far as we know, He was, in any sense, implicated with blood. And, thirdly, that remarkable effusion, after death, of both blood and water from His side, which St. John has thought fit, in its proper place, to record with such solemnity of asseveration, and to which he

here again recurs with an earnestness so remarkable as to convince us that he regarded it as something far more than a natural phenomenon.

Now, if we were asked why these things were so solemnly and circumstantially recorded of Christ; why it was decreed in the counsels of God, that Christ should undergo these things; that He should submit to a baptism for which, in His innocence, He had no need; that He should endure a most painful death to which, in His perfect righteousness, He was not justly liable; or that, lastly, a miracle should be wrought after His death, to produce a stream of blood first, and afterwards water from His body? I apprehend no answer could be so reasonably given, as that these things had some further and some mysterious meaning, that they were done for our advantage or for our instruction. And when we find these things so accurately and solemnly recorded, when our attention through the whole New Testament is so often called to them, and when, as in the present passage, we find an inspired apostle insisting on a faith in these things and in all of them, “not the water only, but the water and blood,” as essential to “the victory which overcometh the world;” we must be still more confirmed in the opinion, that this meaning, whatever it be, must be one extremely important to us all, and that the actions thus recorded are something more than merely curious and interesting as proofs of our Saviour’s humility, His fortitude, or the sincerity of His preaching.

But further, and as a probable guide to the import of such circumstances in the Messiah's life, it must be remarked that the Messiah was a Jew, that the prophecies, and the ceremonies of the ancient covenant were all in a strange and pre-ordained analogy with His life and character ; that in Him the laws of Moses were fulfilled, inasmuch as of Him they were only shadows ; that His mission, though its benefits were to include all nations, was, in the first instance, addressed to the Jews ; and that all which He taught, and all which He performed had, as its primary motive, their instruction, their conversion, their reconciliation with His Almighty Father. Whatever meaning then attached to these actions and circumstances of His life, it was one, in all probability, conformable to the ancient Jewish laws, and such as was obvious to a Jewish understanding ; and there is, therefore, no way so likely to arrive at the truth, as to examine what sort of impression they were likely to make on a follower of Moses and the prophets.

And here it is very remarkable that water and blood were, in the religion of Moses, the two necessary tokens of atonement for sin, and purification from all guiltiness before God. Without these, by the law, no justification could be obtained. And these were inseparably united with the notion of an expiatory sacrifice ; a sacrifice, that is, in which the death of one innocent being was accepted by the Divine justice, instead of the death of many guilty ones.

In every such ceremony both the victim and the priests were sprinkled with water before the former was slain or its blood was offered up to the Most High ; and, the sacrifice completed, water was again sprinkled over all those who had partaken in the devotions. The first of these forms was, evidently, to represent that repentance which was required to cleanse the heart before the offering could be accepted or acceptable. The second was to show that by God's acceptance of the blood, He had washed us clean from our sins, and from all their dismal consequences. And so well were these circumstances understood, that it has been at all times a sort of proverb among the Jews, that "without water is no sacrifice," and that "the law begins with water and ends with water¹."

If, then, a Jew had found it written in some of his ancient prophets that the Messiah whom he looked for was to come "by water and by blood," he would naturally suppose that these expressions referred to some great atonement which the Messiah was to offer up for the sins of His people. And, if he were induced, from other arguments and from the greatness of our Saviour's miracles, to acknowledge that our Lord was, indeed, the Messiah which should come, I know not how he could have reconciled the type and antitype any otherwise than by supposing that the whole ministry and death of Jesus was one mighty sacrifice for men ; that as a necessary preparation for this sacrifice He was

¹ Grotius in loc.

baptized by St. John in the river Jordan ; that the sacrifice was accomplished when He poured out His own blood for us on Calvary ; and that from His dead side the Father Almighty thought fit to cause water to flow, in token that the expiation was accepted and entire, and that from Him alone who had atoned for our sins by His blood, were we to seek for and to receive that purity of life whereof water is the expressive symbol.

But that meaning which a Jew would have assigned to the passage in question, if it had occurred in one of the ancient prophets, we certainly are bound, on every principle of good sense and rational criticism, to apply to the same words as employed by one of our own sacred writers. It makes no difference whether they were predictive of a future, or descriptive of a past occurrence. In the latter case, still more than in the former, we are sure that they refer to Jesus ; and as St. John was a Jew, and expresses himself, in the present instance, in terms expressly appropriate to the Jewish expiatory ceremonies, I really cannot see how an unprejudiced enquirer can escape from the conclusion, that a faith in the atonement for sin by the actual sacrifice of our Lord was, in his mind, an essential part of that faith whereby we are saved. The historical faith which acknowledges that, eighteen hundred years ago, a person named Jesus was born and founded a sect, lived about thirty years on earth, and was crucified ; the unitarian faith which receives Him as a prophet sent from God, as the Son