
S E R M O N VIII.

THE CONDEMNATION OF SELF-WILL.

JOB xxxiv. 33.

SHOULD IT BE ACCORDING TO THY MIND.

“OH! that I were made judge in the land; that every man which hath any suit, or cause, might come unto me, and I would do him justice.” Such was the language of Absalom, when labouring to promote and to justify a measure, the design of which was to exclude David from the throne, and to establish a usurper. It is the common eloquence of faction, which always knows how much easier it is to censure than to reform; which loves to talk of the facility of government, and to hide the difficulties; which is sure to fix on evils which are often unavoidable, and to disregard advantages, in the procuring of which human prudence has some share; and which is ever making comparisons between long established institutions, the sober value of which cannot strike with the freshness of novelty, and the charming scenes to be found in the paradise of speculation.

Who is not ready to condemn Absalom?—“Young man, while the king is employed in the cares and perplexities of empire, it is an easy thing for you to

“ sit in the gate, and deal forth your reflections and
“ your promises. Are you not a subject? Are you
“ not a son? Are you not in experience, and every
“ other qualification, inferior to your father, and your
“ sovereign ?

I go further ; if a person were to rise up in this assembly, and endeavour to draw away disciples after him ; if holding the same language with regard to God, which Absalom used with regard to David, he should say, “ Oh ! that I were made governor in the world ;
“ things should not be as they now are : the ways of
“ the Lord are not equal : the Almighty perverts judgment ; ” I am persuaded you would be ready to drive him from the sanctuary, and to stone him with stones, saying, “ thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all
“ righteousness, when wilt thou cease to pervert the
“ right ways of God ? ” But what, my hearers, if there should be found here of such a description, not one character only, but many ; what, if in condemning this supposed blasphemer, you have pronounced judgment on yourselves ? Why, the sentiment in various degrees prevails in all mankind. If they do not avow it, they indulge it ; if they do not express it in words, it is to be derived by fair inference from their actions. For are they not displeased with the divine proceedings ? Do they not murmur at those events, which under his administration are perpetually occurring ? Are they not always suggesting arrangements which they deem preferable to those which the Governor of the world has planned ? This is the subject which is to engage your attention this morning ; and it is a subject of superior importance, and will be found to possess a

commanding influence over your duty and your happiness. Observe the words which we have read as the foundation of the exercise. "Should it be according to thy mind?" The speaker is Elihu; a personage which the sacred historian introduces in a manner so extraordinary, that commentators know not what to make of him. Some have taken him for the Son of God; others for a prophet; all for a wise and good man. The meaning of the question is obvious; "Shall the Supreme Being do nothing without thy consent? Should He ask counsel of thee? Ought He to regulate his dispensations according to thy views and desires? Should it be according to thy mind?" He does not specify any particular case, which makes the inquiry the more striking and useful, and justifies an application of it, the most general and comprehensive. Elihu, like the other friends of Job, said somethings harsh and improper; but when he asked, "should it be according to thy mind?" Job should instantly have answered, No. And were your preacher to address the same question individually to this assembly, you should all immediately answer, No. To bring you to this temper, we shall enlarge on the desire of having things "according to our mind." I. AS COMMON. II. AS UNREASONABLE. III. AS CRIMINAL. IV. AS DANGEROUS. V. AS IMPRACTICABLE. —"Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things."

I. To have things "according to our mind" is a very COMMON wish. Man is naturally self-willed. The disposition appears very early in our children.

All sin is a contention against the will of God ; it began in paradise. Adam disobeyed the prohibition to “ touch of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,” and all his posterity have unhappily followed his example. What God forbids, we desire and pursue ; what He enjoins, we dislike and oppose. Yea, “ the carnal mind is enmity against God ; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

Enter the world of grace. Behold the revelation which God has given us. One deems it unnecessary ; for a second it is too simple ; for a third it is too mysterious. See Jesus Christ crucified. He is “ to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.” God has “ set” his “ King upon his holy hill of Zion,” and has sworn “ that to him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess ;” the language of those who hear this determination is, “ we will not have this man to reign over us.” When we begin to think of returning to God, it is not by the way which “ He has consecrated for us,” but by a way of our own devising. We labour, not despairing of our own strength, while prophets and apostles teach us to implore help, and to place all our dependence on Him, whose “ grace” alone “ is sufficient for” us. We seek to be justified by our own works, while the gospel assures us we must be justified by “ the faith of Christ ;” and many a surly Naaman exclaims, “ Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? may I not wash in them, and be clean ? So he turned, and went away in a rage.” And the same is to be seen in the world of Providence. Who

is "content with such things as" he has? Who does not covet what is denied him? Who does not envy the superior condition of his neighbour? Who does not long to be at his own disposal? If he draw off his eyes from others, and look inwardly, every man will find "a pope in his own bosom;" he would have every thing according to his own mind; he would have his own mind the measure, both of all he does towards God, and of all God does towards him.

Acknowledged—But is not this disposition crushed in conversion, and are not the Lord's "people made willing in the day of his power?" See Saul of Tarsus on his knees; "behold he prayeth"—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" David wraps himself up in the stillness of patience and submission: "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." There stands old Eli; he has received the most distressing intelligence, and piously exclaims "it is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth him good." A gracious woman in deep affliction was once heard to say, "I mourn, but I do not murmur." We have read of one, who, when informed that her two sons, her only children, were drowned, said in all the majesty of grief, and with an heavenly composure, "I see God is resolved to have all my heart, and I am resolved He SHALL have it." Ah! here you behold the saints in their choicest moments, and in their best frames; for their sanctification is imperfect in all its parts; too much of this self-will remains even in them; they are most gratified when they find the divine proceedings falling into the direction which they had prescribed; they are too much elated when their schemes

succeed, and too much depressed when their hopes are frustrated. They do indeed love the will of God ; and we are far from saying, that they would have nothing done according to HIS mind ; but they are often solicitous to have too many things done according to their OWN.

II. This desire is UNREASONABLE. And it will easily appear ; for we are wholly unqualified to govern, while God is every way adequate to the work in which He is engaged ; and therefore nothing can be more absurd than to labour to displease Him, and substitute ourselves as the creators of destiny, the regulators of events. For, to throw open this thought—His power is almighty ; his resources are boundless ; “ his understanding is infinite.” He sees all things in their origin, in their connections, in their dependencies, in their remote effects ; He is “ wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.” This is the Being you wish to set aside ; and who is to be his successor in empire ? You, a worm of the earth ; you, whose “ foundation is in the dust ;” you, who are “ crushed before the moth ;” you, who are of “ yesterday, and know nothing ;” you, who “ know not what a day may bring forth.”

Placed in an obscure corner of the universe, where only a small proportion of God’s works passes under his review ; fixed in a valley, whose surrounding hills intercept his prospects ; a prisoner even there, looking only through grates and bars ; his very dungeon enveloped in mists and fogs ; his eyes also dim by reason of weakness ; such is man ! and this “ vain man would

“be wise ;” this is the candidate, who deems himself by his proposal capable of governing, and wishes to arrange things according to HIS mind.

My brethren, have you not often found yourselves mistaken, where you deemed yourselves most sure? Have you not frequently erred in judging yourselves ; and generally erred in judging others? Do you not blame those who condemn any of your proceedings before they understand them, especially when the objects on which they decide fall not within the sphere of their knowledge or observation? What would you think of a subject, who scarcely competent to guide the petty concerns of his own household, would rush forth to assume the direction of the affairs of an enlarged empire, after censuring measures which he does not comprehend, cannot comprehend ; whose labyrinths he cannot trace, whose extensive bearings he cannot reach, whose distant consequences he cannot calculate? All this imagery is weak when applied to “the man who striveth with his Maker,” and “asks, what dost Thou?” For whatever differences subsist between man and man, all are partakers of the same nature, and all are liable to err ; but “in God there is no darkness at all.” “Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid : how then could God judge the world?”

If we know not the peculiarities of the disease, how can we judge properly of the remedy which the physician prescribes? If we know not the station which the son is destined to occupy, how can we judge of the wisdom of the father in the education he is giving him? And how can we decide on the means which the Supreme Being employs, while we are ignorant

of the reasons which move him, and the plan which he holds in view? A providence occurs; it strikes us; we endeavour to explain it; but are we certain that we have seized the true meaning? Perhaps what we take as an end, may be only the way; what we take as the whole, may be only a part; what we deprecate may be a blessing, and what we implore may be a curse; what appears confusion may be the tendencies of order; and what looks like the disaster of Providence, may be the preparations of its triumph. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" "Such knowledge is too wonderful for" us; "it is high," we "cannot attain unto it." "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" Do not misunderstand the inference we would draw from these premises; there is nothing shameful in the limitation of our powers, nor should we be miserable because we possess only a degree of intelligence; but let us not forget our ignorance; let us not "darken counsel by words without knowledge;" let us not summon to our tribunal "the only wise God," and condemn all that accords not with our contracted notions. Before we begin to reform, let us be satisfied an amendment is necessary, and before we censure, let us understand.

III. The desire of having things "according to our mind" is CRIMINAL. The sources are bad. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles."

It argues ingratitude ; it is infinite condescension in God to be “ mindful of us ;” to be willing to manage our concerns, and to allow us to cast all our care upon him, with an assurance “ that he careth for us,” and will make “ all things to work together for our good.” For all this he surely deserves our thankful acknowledgments ; and we insult him with murmuring complaints ! What can be more vile, than for a poor dependent creature, who holds his very being by the good pleasure of his Maker, and possesses nothing undervalued from the bounty of his benefactor, to overlook so many expressions of his goodness, because he complies not with every fond desire ! What can be baser than our repining, when the very same kindness which urges Providence to give, determines it also to refuse !

It springs from discontent ; it shews that we are displeased with his dealings ; for if we were not dissatisfied, why do we desire a change ? This was the sin of the Israelites in wishing a king. It did not consist in desiring a monarchy, they would have sinned equally in demanding any other form of government. But they were under the immediate empire of God, and He had not pleased them ; they would set him right ; they “ charged Him foolishly ;” they would be like the “ rest of the nations,” when it was his pleasure that they should be a peculiar people ; “ the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.”

It betrays earthly-mindedness ; the soul feels it when “ cleaving to the dust.” According to our attachments, will be, all through life, our afflictions and our perplexities. When you find yourselves in prosper-

ous circumstances, surrounded with affluence and friends, enjoying health and peace, the providence of God is not only agreeable but intelligible. We never hear you exclaim, as you "join house to house, and add field to field," Oh! how mysterious the dealings of God are! But when the scene is reversed; then, not only hard thoughts of God are entertained, but all is embarrassment; "his way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known." What, does not God still continue to govern? Has he less wisdom in a cloudy day than in a fine one? Why does every dispensation of Providence become intricate as soon as it affects you? Are you so innocent as to render it doubtful, whether you can be lawfully touched? Are you such attentive scholars, as to render a stroke of the rod a mystery? Is God in blessing his people, confined to one class of means only? Do not "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" So much more attached are we to our fleshly interests, than to our spiritual concerns, so much more are we influenced by things seen and temporal, than by those things which are unseen and eternal."

It is the produce of impatience; this will suffer no delay, this can bear no denial, this struggles to be free from all controul, and cries "let us break" his "bands asunder, and cast away" these "cords from us."

It is the offspring of pride and independence; the cursed disposition which expelled angels from heaven, and Adam from paradise. In a word, it is a presumptuous invasion of the authority and prerogative

of God. Your place is the footstool, not the throne ; you are to follow, not to lead ; to obey, not to dictate. Suppose a stranger, or a neighbour, should come into your family, and begin to new place the ornaments and utensils of your rooms, to order your children, to command your servants, to rule your house, you would blame him. And on what principle ? This is not his office ; this is not his province ; he is an intruder. Maintain your distance here, and do not encroach on the divine rights. You did not create the universe, it does not depend on your care ; the world is not yours, nor the fullness thereof, nor even yourselves ; *YE* are not your own ; but there is One to whom the whole belongs ; “ he is Lord of all.” God cannot have an equal, and he will not have a rival. A prince may be pleased, if his subjects endeavour to imitate him in his mercy, his goodness, his truth, or in any of those virtues which are common to persons in all situations ; hereby they honour him, but if they imitate him in his regalia, in those attributes and actions which are peculiar to him as a king ; if like him they aspire to wear a crown, to enact laws, to declare peace and war, to levy contributions, to new model the state, they are guilty of high treason.

IV. The desire of having things “ according to our mind,” is DANGEROUS. If it were accomplished, all parties would suffer ; God, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves.

First, The honour of God would suffer. Nothing NOW occurs by chance ; every thing falls under the regulations of divine Providence, and as affairs are NOW

managed, they all subserve the purpose of Heaven, they all advance the glory of God ; even “ the wrath of man praises Him, and the remainder of it he restrains.” If you had the direction of the whole, would this be the sure result ? Would you make the honour of God invariably your guide ? Would you bend every claim and every occurrence to this sublime end ? You may imagine you would ; and nothing is more common than to hear people making costly promises, the execution of which only requires enlarged opportunities and capacities ; but “ the heart is deceitful above all things ;” and no man has reason to conclude that he would glorify God with greater powers, who does not employ for him the abilities which he already possesses. We may see this exemplified with regard to property. Many professors of religion whose wealth hath increased, do less in proportion, and I fear in some cases less in fact, for the cause of God, than while in more limited circumstances, and when their prospects were not flattering enough to render it worth while for them to become covetous.

Secondly, The welfare of our fellow creatures would suffer. The principle of selfishness is common to depraved nature ; for who loves his neighbour as himself ? Who, in forming his plans, would consider the conveniences and advantages of others, as well as his own ? The traveller would have the weather to accommodate his journey, regardless of the parched fields of the husbandman. That enemy would be disappointed and crushed ; that favourite would be indulged to ruin, selfish individuality would every where predominate, and public utility would be sacrificed on the altar of private interest.

To come nearer; your own happiness would, thirdly, suffer; and you would prove the greatest enemies to yourselves. You would be too eager to choose well; you would not have firmness to refuse a present gratification for the sake of a future good. You would be too carnal to choose well; nature would speak before grace; the pleasing would be preferred to the profitable; imaginary wants would be more numerous than real ones. The Israelites were clamorous for "flesh;" but it was not to relieve their necessities—"they asked meat for their lusts;" and "he gave them their heart's desire, but sent leanness into their souls." As in nature the most beautiful plants are not always the most wholesome or innocent, so it is in human life; a thing is not beneficial because it is gratifying, or good because our passions and appetites may pronounce it so. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan." It was a sensual choice; faith had no influence in this determination; it was made regardless of the welfare of his soul, the salvation of his family, and the honour of religion. And in what embarrassments, dangers, and calamities, did this preference involve him? The next time we hear of him, he is taken captive by the five kings; then "his righteous soul is vexed daily by the filthy conversation of the ungodly;" then he is burned out with the loss of all his substance; some of his relations perish in the overthrow; his wife, attached to the place, looks back, and becomes a pillar of salt; his two daughters, made shameless by the manners of the inhabitants, ren-

der their father incestuous; and his "grey hairs" are brought "down with sorrow to the grave."

In a word, you would be too ignorant to choose well. Did you ever observe the question of the inspired preacher? "Who knoweth what is good for man in this life; all the days of this vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow?" The answer is, No one knows. Look around you, and you will see men eager to change their conditions, but proving by their behaviour in the new stations they occupy, that they are no nearer satisfaction than before. They rush forth assured of finding a paradise, but thorns and briars soon convince them that they are entangled in a wilderness. The man of business, and the man of leisure, envy each other; they exchange, and go on complaining. The poor imagine that wealth would free them from care; they obtain it, but "in the fullness of their sufficiency they are in straits." The retired long for stations of eminence, but beside the trouble and danger of climbing the steep ascent of honour, they are compelled to leave their enjoyments in the vale below; often from the brow of the hill surveying them; often desiring them, but they cannot get down again.

In order to determine what will promote our happiness, it is necessary for us to know the things themselves, from among which we are to make our choice; how far it is in their power to yield pleasure; whether their natural tendency may not be counteracted; what are their ordinary effects. Nor is it less needful to understand ourselves; for a man must be adapted to his condition, or he will never be happy in it; that which suits

another, may not suit me; what may wear easy on him, may be an incumbrance to me. Now to know whether a condition would accord with us, and be to our advantage, we must know ourselves better than we do; our strength and our weakness; our natural peculiarities, and our acquired propensities; our intellectual abilities, and our moral qualifications. And here another difficulty occurs. It is impossible for us to judge of ourselves in untried connections and situations; and the reason is obvious. We go forward to these scenes in imagination only, with our PRESENT sentiments and inclinations, not remembering that our characters are formed and unfolded by circumstances; that we change with events; that the friction of new objects elicits new feelings, quickens dormant guilt, and calls forth improbable corruption. The water is clear till the muddy sediment is disturbed. In private life Hazael abhorred the thought of inhumanity. When the man of God viewed him with tears, and predicted the cruelties of his future reign, he was filled with horror, and exclaimed, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" But he went forward, arrived at the foot of the throne, exchanged the man for the tyrant, and became the monster which he had execrated.

We are not only liable to err on the side of our hopes, but also of our fears. What in distant prospect filled us with anxiety and dread, as it approached more near was found the beginning of a train of friends and blessings, all hastening along to do us good. Had Joseph remained under the wing of his fond father, he would have lived and died an insignificant individual; but from the pit and the prison he steps up into the

second chariot in the kingdom, and becomes the favour of surrounding countries. Ah! if things had been arranged according to your mind, what afflictions would some of you have escaped, and what benefits would you have lost? For “though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.” And should we not principally value that which is MORALLY good for us; that which influences and secures our eternal welfare; that by which the safety of the soul is least endangered, and the sanctification of the soul is most promoted? Upon this principle I am persuaded many of you are ready to add your testimony to the confessions of former sufferers, and to say, “it is good for me that I have been afflicted.” “Disease,” says one, “commissioned from above, sought me out, found me in a crowd, detached me from the multitude, led me into a chamber of solitude, stretched me upon a bed of languishing, and drew up eternity close to my view; I never prayed before.” Says another, “my life was bound up in a beloved relation; I saw my gourd smitten, and beginning to wither; I trembled; I watched the process of a danger which doomed all my happiness to the grave; in that moment of bereavement, the world which had enamoured was deprived of all its attractions; I broke from the arms of sympathizing friends, saying, Where is God my Maker, that giveth songs in the night? I entered my closet, and said, Now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.” “Into what miseries,” says a third, “should I have fallen, if He had given me up

“in such an enterprife to my own counfel! I fhould
 “have advanced till I had fallen from a dangerous
 “precipice, if He had not hedged up my way with
 “thorns; at firft I murmured at the check, but when
 “I looked over, and faw the abyfs, I kneeled and faid,
 “Lord, I am thine; fave me in every future peril.”
 Thus by experience He has been convincing you, that
 “the way of man is not in himfelf,” and that “it is
 “not in man that walketh to direct his fteps;” and
 having feen the hazards to which you will be expofed
 in managing for yourfelves, you are now on your knees
 faying, “He fhall choofe our inheritance for us.”
 “Surely I have behaved and quieted myfelf as a child
 “that is weaned from his mother; my foul is even as
 “a weaned child.”

We have only one more view to take of the fubject.
 The defire of having things “according to our mind” is,

V. IMPRACTICABLE. Obferve only two things.
 Firft, the defires of mankind in ten thoufand instances
 are oppofite to each other; hence they cannot be all
 accomplifhed. Secondly, the plan of divine govern-
 ment is already fixed; the machine is in motion; it is
 rolling by, and we can neither arreft its progrefs, or
 give it a new direktion. “He is in one mind, and who
 “can turn Him? and what his foul defireth, even that
 “He doeth; for He performeth the thing that is ap-
 “pointed for me, and many fuch things are with him.”
 “Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatfoever
 “he pleafed.” “Declaring the end from beginning, and
 “from ancient times the things that are not yet done,
 faying, my “counfel fhall ftand, and I will do all my pleaf-

“ure.” How useless therefore is your anxiety! “Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?” You may repine; but you fret and rage in vain. God will not yield up the reins into your hands. “He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?” “Should it be according to thy mind? He will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose.” Having established a general principle, it will be necessary to make such an application as will preclude the abuse of it, and render it useful to promote resignation, to encourage our faith, and to animate our hope.

First, Let not the conscientious christian suppose himself guilty of the disposition we censure, when he only indulges allowed desire. You may ask of God any temporal blessing conditionally, and with submission to the pleasure of the Almighty. Are you in trouble? afflictions are not immutable dispensations; and your praying for their removal will not be striving with Providence, if you are willing to refer the case ultimately to the determination of infinite wisdom and goodness, and to acquiesce in the decision. Thus did our Saviour; “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” To offer a humble petition differs widely from making a demand, or proposing a task. When our desires are rash, unqualified, impetuous, enforcing, they are not only offensive to God, but they injure the soul, and they injure our cause. If, to use the expression, when we insist upon an object, we are gratified, the indulgence is dreadful, it is a curse. Thus God punished the

sinful importunity of the Jews; "He gave them a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath." But if He loves you, in such a case He will be sure to deny you; he will teach you by his refusal, that he has a right to withhold, and that you have no claims upon the Giver; he will bring you to supplicate what before you seemed to order. He sees that while you are thus passionately eager, he cannot with safety indulge you with the object; you would make too much of it. He is a God of judgment, and he waits a cooler and more sober frame of mind, when you can receive it properly, and not be so lost in the gift, as to disregard the Giver. The best way for a christian to gain any temporal good, is to seek after a holy indifference; the moment it ceases to be dangerous, He will be ready to gratify you, for "He taketh pleasure in the prosperity of his servants."

Secondly, The subject preaches submission. It powerfully urges you to leave yourselves to the disposal of divine Providence; to lie as clay in the hands of the potter, willing to receive any shape he chooses to give you, or to take any impression he is pleased to impose; to keep your eye towards the fiery cloudy pillar, and to be ready to move as it moves, turn as it turns, pause as it pauses. And is not all this implied in your profession, resolutions, and vows? Do you not remember a time when you gave your God, what you had too long withheld from him—your heart? And have you not often since renewed this engagement? Are there no seasons in your experience, no spots in your walks, made sacred in your recollection by fresh dedications of yourselves to Him? When the will is in unison with

the will of God, which is perfect rectitude, it is ennobled. To be like-minded with God, is the highest honour we can ever possess; to surrender ourselves to his pleasure, is the purest act of obedience we can ever perform. It is the essence of holiness, to do what God loves, and to love what God does. And as nothing can be more pious, so nothing can be more wise than such a resignation. If your will corresponds with the will of God, you may be always sure of its accomplishment: "commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." This is the only way to be happy in a miserable world; on this all your satisfaction depends. He knows what things you have need of, and what will be for your advantage. Depend on Him. Follow Him. Secure His favour; refer all to Him, and leave all with Him. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep." "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Thirdly, Let the subject inspire you with consolation. Make use of the question to repress all the uneasinesses which you would otherwise feel when you contemplate the diversity of human affairs. Remember it when you think of the world, and your imagination is busied in schemes of revolution and reformation. Remember it when you think of the state of the nation, and deplore many things which appear deplorable, and desire many things which appear desira-

ble. Remember it when you think of the condition of the church; when you ask, “why such diversities of opinion among its leaders? why such frequent persecution of its members? why are they generally so poor and afflicted? Why are they all the day long plagued, and chastened every morning; while their ungodly neighbours abound in affluence and indulgence? Should the sinner live within, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day; while the faint lies at his gate, a beggar full of sores?” Remember it when you think of the circumstances of the family; when driven in from a troublesome world, and hoping to find an asylum there, you are forced as you enter to sigh with David, “my house is not so with God;” or what success in business, what servants, what children, what relations? Remember it when you think of your respective cases as individuals; of perplexities and fears; of losses and vexations; of pain of body; of imperfections of mind; of continuance in this world—“Should it be according to thy mind,” or “according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;” and “who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working?”

Finally, Let all this lead you forward, and draw forth your expectation of another, and a more glorious economy. Beyond this vale of tears lies a land flowing with milk and honey. You are now in a state of probation and discipline; but trials and corrections will not be always necessary. The denials and restraints, to which the heir of glory submits while he is a child, cease when he comes of age. You now walk

by faith, and not by sight; soon you will walk by sight, and not by faith. What you know not now, you will know hereafter. You will then find yourselves infinitely more happy by the divine disposition of all your concerns, than you could have been, had you always enjoyed your own wishes. When from the top of the holy hill of Zion, you shall look down upon the winding path of Providence, by which you ascended, you will praise Him for the means as well as for the end, admire his wisdom as well as his kindness, and say, "He hath done all things well."

Some of your friends and relations are gone before you. In his light they see light; to them the whole mystery is now explained. Blessed spirits, how we envy you! We see Him through a glass darkly; and half our time cannot spy Him at all; you see Him face to face; you know even as you are known. Well, christians, they are waiting "to receive us into everlasting habitations:" we shall soon join them; we shall soon unite in their acknowledgments and adorations, and this will be our eternal theme: "Marvelous are thy works, Lord God almighty! just and right are all thy ways, O thou King of Saints."