

# S E R M O N S,

B Y

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S E R M O N

# S E R M O N    I V .

THE FIRST PROMISE OF THE REDEEMER.

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GEN. iii. 15.

*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

**T**H E prophecy contained in these words, is the first opening of Christianity, the first intimation of the Messiah, the first promise of redemption to fallen mankind. It is on this account remarkable. It is remarkable also in respect of its occasion, and of the manner in which it was pronounced.

God created our first parents in perfect innocence, and designed them for immortality. The same goodness which determined him to create them, and to give them so noble a nature, disposed him likewise to make ample

provision for their support and their comfort. He placed them in the garden of Eden, which his own hand had adorned, and in which he had planted *every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food* \*. He gave them liberty to feast on all the variety of fruits which it contained: and, for trial of their obedience, forbade the fruit of only one tree in the midst of the garden, but forbade them that, with this express threatening, *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die* †. Unthankful for the abundance which God had allowed them, regardless of his prohibition, unawed by his threatening, first Eve solicited by the serpent, and next Adam seduced by his wife, did eat the one forbidden kind of fruit.

THAT it was the devil, who tempted Eve, is acknowledged by all. It is the general opinion, either that he entered into one of the serpents of the field, actuated its body, gave it speech, and made it his instrument in the temptation; or else that he assumed the form of one of them, and appeared in its likeness. Had either of these been the case, Eve could scarcely have failed to be surpris'd and terrified: the serpents of the field were familiar to her: when she heard one of them speaking,

\* Gen. ii. 9.

† Ver. 17

and

and speaking rationally, she would have immediately run away, and knowing him to be only one of the brutes, she would not have easily allowed herself to be by him persuaded out of her obedience to God.

SOME are therefore of opinion, that the devil did not, on this occasion, either employ any of the brute serpents, or appear in the form of any of them. That he did, seems indeed to be implied in the words with which the history is introduced, *Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field\**. But it seems to be implied in them only as they stand in our translation: the original may with equal propriety be rendered, *Now there was a serpent more subtle than any beast, or than all the beasts of the field†*: not one of the beasts

\* Gen. iii. 1. † As the words taken by themselves bear this translation, so their construction with the sequel, seems to require it. If we follow the common version, by the serpent who was thus subtle, we must understand the serpentine kind in general, and then the next verb *וַיֹּאמֶר* will have no nominative: *And he said unto the woman, Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Who said this to the woman? Not surely the serpentine kind in general; but it alone had been mentioned before. It must have been some one individual serpent that said so; but no such had been so much as hinted at. Accordingly they who follow this interpretation are forced to allow an ellipsis of the nominative, making Moses to say. "The serpentine kind was more subtle than any beast of the field, and the devil, speaking out of (or assuming the form of) one individual of that kind, said unto the woman," &c. This is extremely harsh and violent.*

of the field, but a being far more intelligent than any of them, than of them all together, a being of an higher order, the devil. In the account of the creation which Moses had before given, he had no occasion to mention the devil: but being now to relate a transaction in which the devil was the first mover, he very properly introduces it with an intimation, that there is such a being as the devil. But why does he call the devil a serpent, if he neither assumed the form of one, nor used one as his instrument? He might very properly call him a serpent, without any regard to his form, on account of his subtlety. It is common to express a rational being by the name of some animal to whose qualities his disposition bears a resemblance; there are instances of it in parts of scripture not the most figurative\*; the serpent has been considered in all ages as an emblem of malice and of cunning; the scripture insinuates this very reason for giving the name to the devil; he is *that old serpent called the devil and Satan, which DECEIVETH the whole world* †. He might be called a serpent, likewise, on account of his own angelic form. All the names of intellectual things and spiritual beings are figurative, being taken from those material and sensible things which bear

\* Mat. iii. 7. xii. 34. xxiii. 33. Luke iii. 7. xiii. 32. 2 Tim. iv, 17. † Rev. xii. 9.

an analogy to them. Seraphs were supposed to resemble the winged fiery serpent in their form, and had their name from them, on account of this resemblance: the *fiery serpents* which *the Lord sent among the people* of Israel in the wilderness, are called *serpents seraphim* \*; and the *serpent of brass* made by Moses on that occasion, is called simply a *seraph* †. The devil probably appeared to Eve in the form of a seraph, she took him for an angel of light, conversed with him as such, and therefore listened to him without surprize, without suspicion, and was easily persuaded by him. It was this serpent, metaphorically so called, that tempted Eve: it is this one individual serpent, the devil, not the whole serpentine kind, nor any particular species of it, that is spoken of through the whole of this history. This supposition agrees perfectly with the whole tenour of the history, and clears it from many difficulties in which the other suppositions have involved it.

SOON after our first parents had sinned, they heard the voice of Jehovah ‡. They had often heard it; and always hitherto it had been pleasant to them. But now it was terrible; they endeavoured to hide themselves,

\* דגחשים שרפים Num. xxi. 6. † שרף ver. 8. ‡ Gen. iii. 8.

God found them out, and extorted a confession from them, that they had disobeyed their maker. First Adam owned that he had eaten, but accused the woman of having given him the fruit. Next Eve confessed that she had eaten, but laid the blame upon the serpent: *the serpent*, that serpent, probably pointing to him, or casting her eye upon him, *beguiled me, and I did eat* \*. This serpent, the tempter, was present: either detained by the power of God; or of choice, exulting in his success, eager to overhear the doom of the deluded pair, to enjoy his victory, and to triumph over them.

BEHOLD now God appearing in the *Scheminah*! the two apostate parents of the human race, and the Seraph who had tempted them to apostacy, stand before him. He sits in judgment, and passes a separate sentence upon each. He passes sentence first upon the Tempter †. This was fit in order to check his exultation: it made him feel that, in reducing them to misery, he had reduced himself to greater misery. If we consider the sentence as passed on the brute serpents, it is trifling and liable to endless difficulties: but if we consider it as respecting only the devil,

\* Ver. 9---13.

† Ver. 14, 15.

it has great propriety and dignity, and every part of it is expressed with very striking beauty. He appeared now, as he had appeared while tempting Eve, in the seraphic form; and all the expressions used in the judgment pronounced against him, have a double reference to that seraphic form, and to the serpentine form which it resembles. *And the Lord God said unto the serpent*; not unto the serpents of the field, but unto the serpent who now stood before him, the same individual being who is spoken of through the whole history: to him solely, the whole sentence is directed, without the most distant intimation that any part of it regarded the serpents of the field. *Because thou hast done this; Thou*; not a brute serpent; a brute serpent neither did, nor could have done it; but the one seraphic serpent the devil; he it was who had beguiled Eve. Therefore, says God, *Thou*, the same individual serpent, the devil, *art cursed above all catile, and above every beast of the field*: thou art devoted to a punishment which, far superior as thine original nature was to theirs, shall render thee more vile, abject, and miserable, than the meanest of the brutes, more an object of God's displeasure, and of the hatred of all good beings, than any other creature is. *Upon thy belly shalt thou go*: this is not meant against the brute serpents; it is not true of  
all

all of them, for flying serpents, it is said, continued to exist after this ; of the other serpents it would have been impertinent, for to them going on their bellies was essential from the creation. It was directed only to the seducer ; and, if it be explained according to the usage of scripture stile, it will appear in respect of him to have great truth and propriety. It was directed to him in his seraphic form, which resembled the serpentine ; the manner of expression is chosen with a view to that resemblance, and intimates his punishment in allusion to it ; it intimates that he was now as much degraded as if his seraphic form were converted into that of a groveling serpent, as if from flying on high, he were reduced to creep upon his belly. This figurative expression, at least one perfectly similar to it, is used elsewhere in scripture, and had become proverbial, to signify a reduction to the lowest affliction and humiliation : it is very deep affliction which the Psalmist intends to describe, when he says, *Our soul is bowed down to the dust, our belly cleaveth unto the earth* \* ; it is what in the preceding verses he had called, *affliction, oppression, being killed all day long, counted as sheep for the slaughter, cast off by God* †. Its simple meaning in this curse is, Thou shalt be de-

\* Psal. xliv. 25.

† Ver. 22, 23, 24.

graded

graded from all thine original dignity and celestial glory, thou shalt lose all the prerogatives of thy nature, thou shalt be cast down to shame, and infamy, and reduced to an abject and vile condition. *And dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life*: the meaning is not, Thou shalt feed wholly upon dust, but, Thou shalt lick up dust together with thy food: still the allusion to serpents, whom the devil's seraphic form resembled, is beautifully kept up. But it is not a sentence pronounced against brute serpents; it was true before of them, that they licked up dust along with their food; and this is not peculiar to them, it is common to them with all animals that feed from off the ground. Here too the terms are metaphorical and proverbial; but they are not unusual in scripture; they convey an idea similar to what is expressed in the preceding clause, they contain an amplification of that idea; they signify a state of bondage, captivity, imprisonment, and the lowest depression. It is such a state that Micah means, when he prophesies that *the nations shall lick the dust like a serpent* \*; it is a state in which they should *be confounded* †, and *move out of their holes like worms out of the earth* ‡. There is a similar expression in one of the Psalms, *I have eaten ashes like bread* ||;

\* Chap. vii. 17. † Ver. 16. ‡ Ver. 17. § Psa. cvii. 9.

which,

which from the title of the Psalm, from the occasion to which it is referred, and from many plain descriptions of bondage and distress through the whole of it \*, has undeniably the same signification. David prophesying of the Messiah, says *His enemies shall lick the dust †*; and and Isaiah foretells that, in the completion of the Messiah's kingdom, *dust shall be in the serpent's meat ‡*. Both probably had this original curse directly in their eye, and, to intimate that they had purposely retained the metaphorical terms of it, which imply this plain sentiment, That the devil was to be thenceforth in a state of the most abject depression, and the most wretched captivity, groaning under present anguish and overwhelmed with dreadful expectations. In terms therefore metaphorical indeed, but the precise import of which may

\* The title is, *A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed*. It is generally considered as a lamentation on account of the miseries of the Jews during the Babylonian captivity. The state lamented under the figurative expression now quoted, is described in other terms answering precisely to our explication of its import; *I am in trouble,---my days are consumed like smok, and my bones are burnt as an hearth; mine heart is smitten and withered like grass;---by reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin;---mine enemies reproach me all the day, and they that are mad against me, are sworn against me;---thou hast cast me down;---the stones of Zion are thrown down, and it is laid in dust: And in giving deliverance, the Lord is represented as regarding the prayer of the destitute---hearing the groaning of the prisoner, and loosing those that are appointed to die.*

† Psal. lxxii. 9.

‡ Chap. lxxv. 25.

be ascertained by the scripture language in other passages, the Tempter is sentenced to a state of miserable degradation and bondage; to the very state which Peter describes in plainer terms, in terms extremely unlike to those used in this sentence, but surprisingly synonymous with them, *God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment* \*.

So far the sentence was absolute; it expressed simply the condition to which the Tempter was instantly degraded. The remaining part of it is expressive of the condition of the devil in relation to mankind. In expressing it God introduced a promise comfort-

\* 2 Pet. ii. 4. This passage is an exact commentary on the words of Moses, corresponding to them, clause to clause. Moses describes the Tempter as a superior intelligence, and intimates that he appeared in the form of a Serpent: Peter speaks of *angels*. Moses says that God pronounced the Tempter *worse than all cattle, and above every beast of the field*; Peter says, *God spared not the angels*, that is, he treated them with severity, and inflicted a heavy punishment upon them. Moses says, *Upon thy belly shalt thou go, thou art cast down into the lowest humiliation and affliction*: Peter says, *He cast them down into hell*. Moses says, *Do not shalt thou eat all the joys of thy life*, words which imply abject bondage and captivity: Peter explains them in this very sense, *He delivered them into chains of darkness*. Peter intimates that even this was not properly their state of punishment, but that they are *reserved unto judgment*: Moses hints not at this in the first part of the sentence; but he does intimate it in the latter part, when he speaks of *braving the serpent* - *beast*.

able to man: this was great kindness to our first parents; by this their fears were alleviated, and a beam of consolation was darted into their guilty hearts, before themselves were sentenced to sorrow, labour, and mortality. It is contained in the text; *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

WHEN this promise was first delivered, it was, no doubt, only like *a light that shineth in a dark place*\*: it was just sufficient to relieve the thickness of the gloom, to let in a twinkling ray of hope, to give an indefinite conception of some comfortable and happy event, a conception analogous to the indistinct view of bodies in a glimmering light. Our first parents would naturally conclude from this promise, That the devil's malicious designs against them, were to be in a great measure defeated; but they had not a full conception either of the extent and consequences of his designs, or of the nature and manner of the promised deliverance from them. The promise was, however, admirably adapted to the circumstances of his temptation, and to the apprehensions which they could not fail to entertain. He hoped,

\* 2 Pet. i. 19.

perhaps,

perhaps, by deceiving the woman, to bring on them immediate death, and extinguish the whole species at once, and they would readily fear this: but God promises that the woman shall have seed. The devil had deceived her under the specious pretence of friendship, and expected to have gained her wholly and firmly to espouse his cause and interests: but war is proclaimed between him and his seed, and the woman and her seed. He had intended the utter ruin of mankind, and rejoiced in the thought that he had accomplished it: but it is declared that he had accomplished his own destruction, and that, though he should have some success in the combat, its issue should be much more fatal to himself than to his adversary. The import of this promise has been illustrated by posterior prophecies, and still more by the event, so that it is made to shine to us like *the day-star*. With regard both to the succeeding prophecies, and the descriptions of the event, some are expressed in terms similar to those used here, on purpose to show that they belong to the same subject; and others are expressed in very different terms, either in proper words or in dissimilar metaphors, that by comparing them all together, we may the better apprehend the precise meaning of all the terms, and understand the whole subject more perfectly. Examined by this light, the text will be found not only to con-

tain a promise of the Redeemer, which is commonly observed in it, but also, which is not so commonly observed, to represent in brief, but with great exactness, the whole religious and moral state of this world; from the fall of man to the consummation of all things.

IN what remains of this discourse, I shall illustrate the several particulars of this promise; and then make some reflections on it.

FIRST, It is here intimated that the woman should have seed; and it is intimated in such a manner as to imply an accurate prediction of the miraculous birth of the Redeemer.

OUR first parents probably apprehended, and the Tempter hoped, that God would condemn them to immediate death. While they were trembling under this apprehension, they hear God declare that the woman shall have seed: this was comfortable to them; it implied that their lives were to be prolonged. At the time, they would perhaps conceive these words to mean only any descendant from them. That Eve expected the person thus promised, in Cain her eldest son, is by some thought to be intimated by what she said at his birth, which they render, *I have gotten a man, the Lord\**.

*Lord*\*. It was even merciful in God to give them only an obscure and general intimation of the great Deliverer: had they known that he was not to appear till after so many ages, it might have sunk them in dejection.

BUT however obscure their conception of him may have been, this intimation is very precise; it is an exact description of a wonderful event, of the extraordinary and miraculous conception of the Saviour of mankind. The posterity is always reckoned after the man; this expression, *the seed of the woman*, is without a parallel in scripture; the most learned Jews hold it to be wholly unaccountable. But *their minds* are, as the apostle affirms †, *blinded*, and there is *a veil upon their hearts, in the reading of the old testament*; else, singular as the expression is, it needed not appear inexplicable to them: for they have in their own scriptures, a prediction expressed indeed in different words, but which in sense perfectly coincides with it, and explains it. *Behold*, says Isaiah ‡, *a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son*. That person who was born of a virgin is with the strictest propriety called *the seed of the woman*; he is, what no other ever was or shall be, the seed of the woman only, not of the man.

\* Gen. iv. 1.    † 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.    ‡ Chap. vii. 14.

The expression would indeed be improper and inexplicable, if there were not such an event corresponding to it; and if there be such an event, this singular expression was doubtless chosen on purpose to mark its peculiarity.

IT is in the gospel that we find that wonderful event. Jesus of Nazareth was born of the virgin Mary, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost. Matthew mentions this\*. Luke gives a particular account of it †. Paul takes notice of it in terms which point out Jesus as the person designed in this first prophecy: *When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son made of a woman ‡*. He had no father but God: God himself, by his own immediate operation, as the psalmist had foretold, *prepared a body for him ||*. This event, absolutely singular, without a parallel, was, in terms which exactly suit it, foretold four thousand years before it happened, in the very infancy of the world, to the first human pair.

SECONDLY, It is foretold in this prediction, that there should be a perpetual opposition between this person and the devil. Satan was already the declared enemy of mankind;

• Chap. i. 18, 20. † Chap. i. 26. 38. ‡ Gal. iv. 4. § Heb. x. 5, and

and one horn of a woman is, by the appointment of God himself, to enter the lists with him, and war against him. *I will put enmity, says God, between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.* Satan probably hoped that the matter was absolutely determined, and our first parents finally and irretrievably ruined, by the overthrow which he had already given them; and they feared that it was so: it must have yielded them some comfort, even to know that there was still room for a contest.

THESE words are addressed to the same serpent who had been spoken of all along. Being thus addressed to one, they cannot refer to all the brute serpents. They refer not to any of them; there is no greater antipathy between mankind and them, than between mankind and all other frightful and destructive animals: and it is, not mankind, but Christ Jesus, that is here principally intended. The devil who had deceived Eve, the prince of the apostate spirits, is the serpent here meant. By his seed, we must understand such progeny as an angel can have. His seed denotes primarily the evil spirits who were partakers in his apostasy, or his followers in defection from God. It includes also wicked men: they are corrupted by his temptation, they are

formed by his influence, and they bear his image; and on this account they are in scripture called *the children of the devil*, and as such opposed to good men, who are named *the children of God* \*. These are the parties on one side of this contest.

THE parties on the other side are *the woman and her seed*. It is Jesus Christ who is meant by *the seed* of the woman; the manner of expression points to him: he is the principal in this opposition to the devil. The woman herself is also mentioned: Eve could never certainly think without detestation of the devil, who had so maliciously deceived her. But by the woman is not meant Eve alone; Christ was not the seed of Eve exclusive of Adam; his virgin mother was equally descended from them both. The woman is not mentioned here, because she was to bear any peculiar enmity to Satan; her enmity is common to all of her posterity who resemble her in detesting the devil and his works: but she is mentioned, because it was she that had been deceived by Satan, and, perhaps chiefly, to give occasion for predicting him who was peculiarly *the seed of the woman*: accordingly in the following clauses, the mention of the wo-

\* 1 John iii. 9, 10.

man is entirely dropt, and only her seed spoken of. Good men are indeed, under Christ, engaged in this contest; but their being engaged in it, is not directly intimated by the expressions here used; it is only remotely and by a metonymy implied, as they may be considered, according to the representations of scripture in other places, as members of Christ, and fighting in his strength.

IT is here foretold then, that there would be a perpetual and irreconcilable opposition between the devil, evil spirits, and wicked men on the one hand, and Christ on the other hand. From the moment of the fall, it has been so, in every sense in which the prediction can be understood.

IN the strictest sense, it intimates a *personal* contest between these parties; and in this sense it was literally fulfilled. Devils and wicked men have from the beginning exerted themselves in propagating idolatry and vice, and overwhelming the world with misery. That the Son of God was personally engaged, even before his incarnation, in counteracting their designs, there are many hints in scripture; his *goings forth have been from of old, from the days of the age; and he continued to give them until the time that she who was a-*  
*bearing*

*bearing had borne* \*. But after she had borne, after the Son of God had become the seed of the woman, there was a personal contest in the properest sense. The devil himself tempted Christ in the wilderness; and by his instruments he laboured incessantly to defeat his views, to raise prejudices against his person, his doctrine, his actions, and his miracles. Herod endeavoured to murder him in his infancy. The Jews persecuted him all his days, and at last crucified him. In so doing, they showed that they were, as our Saviour on this very account calls them, *serpents †, a generation of vipers ‡, of their father the devil ||*: they did his works, and they were instigated by him. By the same instigation Judas betrayed Christ to death; Satan had *entered into him §*, and moved him to it. On the other hand, Jesus Christ resisted the devil, and, during the whole of his life in the flesh, opposed his designs and interests, casting out unclean spirits, healing those diseases which sin had brought into the world, combating the vices of wicked men, and, till his hour was come, eluding and defeating their malicious attempts against himself. Since his exaltation he is invisible, but he is represented in scripture as the head of the

\* This is the true sense of Mic. v. 2, 3.

† Mat. xxiii. 33. ‡ Mat. iii. 7. xii. 34. Luke iii. 7. § John viii. 41---44. ¶ Luke xxii. 3. John xiii. 2. 27.

church,

church, constantly employing his power for promoting true religion, virtue, and happiness: and the devil is represented as the ruler of the kingdom of darkness, and, along with wicked men, intent upon, and active in opposing him and promoting the contrary views.

BUT the words of the prediction need not be restricted to such a personal conduct. The devil is here spoken of as the head of the apostasy, who had become a rebel against God, set up a kingdom in direct opposition to God's kingdom, a kingdom of wickedness, and laboured to spread sin and misery; and his offspring are considered as acting under him in carrying on his plan: when these persons are therefore in this way mentioned, the cause in which they are engaged may, by a very common figure, be understood. Christ is here predicted precisely as the Head of man's recovery: from the moment of the fall, he was, by divine appointment, the governor of God's kingdom here below, the kingdom of righteousness and felicity: and therefore, though he alone be mentioned, both they who are the subjects of his kingdom, and the cause which is its great object, may, by the same figure, be intended. By this very figure, all good is ascribed to God, and all evil to the devil: this implies the same idea which we suppose in the text;  
and

and this is the common language of scripture. These two kingdoms, the kingdom of Satan, and the kingdom of God of which Christ is the immediate governour, are contrary and irreconcilable in every point, in their natures, in their views, and in the principles which their respective votaries act upon. It is here predicted, That neither of the two should absolutely prevail in the present world, that there should be a perpetual struggle between them. The prediction has been precisely accomplished. It is an exact description of the present mixed state of things, in which good and evil, virtue and vice, happiness and misery, though in different proportions, yet still are blended together, and counteract each other.

IT has been accomplished in the character and condition of every individual of the human race. Every human character is imperfect and mixed. Since the fall there has not been a single mere man either uniformly good or uniformly bad. The worst men are not wholly destitute of all good qualities, and the best are not altogether free from vice. In some men, very great virtues have been united with very great vices. In the wicked sin is predominant, and goodness in the righteous; and some waver so irresolutely between the two,

or seem to possess them in such equal degrees, that it is hard to say to which class they belong. In every man, there is *a law in the members, warring against the law of the mind*\*; in every man, *the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other* †. Conscience and good affections oppose corrupt appetites and passions, and are opposed by them; they instigate us by turns. The condition of every man is mixed. Pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity are mingled in his cup. The sufferings of some, and the enjoyments of others are great and many: but none ever passed his life either in pure happiness, or in unallayed misery.

It has been accomplished likewise in the general state of the world. In all ages and nations there has been a mixture of good and bad men, united in the same societies, in the same families, but pursuing opposite plans of conduct; to both there has often been *one event, and all things have come alike to all* ‡. In some parts of the world, idolatry and corruption have prevailed; in others, true religion has been established, and has produced considerable effects. The vices and the preju-

\* Rom. vii. 23.

† Gal. v. 17.

‡ Eccles. ix. 2.

dices of men oppose the prevalence of truth and goodness; and these in their turn check vice and error. The wicked hate the righteous, lay snares for their virtue, and study to afflict them; the righteous is *clean contrary to their doings, he was made to reprove their thoughts* \*. In every period of society, these things have taken place; in the most uncultivated nations, there have appeared virtues, rough but bold and active; the civilization of mankind, while it refines their virtues, too often likewise multiplies their vices, and introduces new species of corruption. In the early ages, the piety of the patriarchs formed a contrast to the depravity of the generations in which they lived, and maintained a struggle with it. The old world was *corrupt before God* †: Noah alone was *a preacher of righteousness* ‡, and *condemned the world* §. In Sodom, *just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked* §; and *he seemed to them as one that mocked* \*\*. In the heathen world, a few disapproved, and in some instances opposed the general corruption; but they were baffled by its power. The Israelites enjoyed a true religion: but idolatry overspread the rest of the world; and upon themselves, that true religion had not universal or constant influence.

\* Wisdom. ii. 12, 14. † Gen. vi. 11. ‡ 2 Pet. ii. 5. § Heb. xi. 7. § 2 Pet. ii. 7. \*\* Gen. xix. 14.

Good men were raised up to reprove their defections: but they were disregarded and persecuted by those who would not be reclaimed. Even the full erection of the kingdom of the Redeemer, in the gospel dispensation, has not annihilated this promiscuous state of things. Hell and earth, devils and wicked men, both Jews and heathens united their efforts to prevent the reception of the gospel, and to persecute all who preached or professed it; and since it was established, the cunning of the enemy, and the ignorance and ill designs of men have conspired to fally its beauty, to enervate its power, and to defeat its success, by adulterating and corrupting it, by traducing and maltreating its genuine adherents, and by promoting infidelity and irreligion. But by the favour of divine Providence, by the invisible, but efficacious exercise of that power which is committed to Jesus Christ, and by the undaunted fortitude and the indefatigable labours of the apostles and other good men, the gospel met with an extensive reception, gave a check to false religion and evil practices, and has since then been always in some degree retained, has been at times reformed from corruptions, has had some good influence on the general state of the world, and has rendered many truly virtuous and holy. Christianity is wholly calculated for  
opposing

opposing vice and promoting purity and goodness; and as long as there is wickedness in the world, it will prompt men to resist this holy religion: *every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd\**. Righteousness and unrighteousness, Christ and Belial are as contrary and irreconcilable as *light and darkness †*; and, like these, they divide this world between them.

SUCH is and always has been the actual state of this lower world: that this would be its state, was predicted in the very beginning of the world. The scripture always supposes this to be the state of the world, and often expresses it in terms which correspond to those of this prediction, and point it out as the fulfillment of it. To the eye of sense, men are the only actors in the scene; but the scripture constantly represents it as carried on likewise by invisible actors. The scripture considers this world in the precise light of its being God's world, and governed by him; and both the predictions of the old testament, and the history of the new, represent the government of it as committed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the virtues of good men as supported by

\* John iii. 20.

† 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

him. The scripture represents the devil as opposing the laws and the interests of the kingdom of God and of Christ, as seducing wicked men and making them his willing instruments in promoting his designs, as corrupting the church by *sowing tares* \*, as tempting and afflicting good men. It therefore calls him *the enemy* †, the *adversary*, and describes him *as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour* ‡: and good men, while endeavouring to avoid vice and adhere to truth and goodness, it represents as *resisting the devil* ||, *standing against his wiles*, and *wrestling not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places* §.

Two other particulars are here foretold, That the issue of this contest shall be fatal to the devil and his cause, and That he shall notwithstanding have some successes in the course of it. These particulars shall be considered afterwards. In the mean time, brethren, since the present life of good men is such a warfare, *take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye*

\* Matt. xiii. 25. 39. † Ib. and ver. 28. Luke x. 19. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 8. || Ver. 9. Jam. iv. 7. § Eph. vi. 11, 12.

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*may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand* \*. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might* †.

\* Eph. vi. 13.

† Ver 10.

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### E R R A T A.

Page 55, l. ult. *for* intention, *read* intension. P. 61, l. 12, *read* room, l. 22, *put a comma after* examination. P. 74, l. 2, *for* of them all, *read* them all. P. 79, l. 26, *read* worms of; l. 29, *for* cvii. *read* cii. P. 80, l. 8, *del.* in. P. 91, l. 8, *for* conduct, *read* content. P. 106, l. 12, *for* them it, *read* them in it. P. 130, l. 27, *after* Rom. iv. 3. *insert* Gal. iii. *after* Gen *del.* Gal. P. 157, l. 2, *read* would it not. P. 162, l. 1, *for* more, *read* worse. P. 169, l. 4, *read* their folly. P. 232, l. ult. *for* weakneis, *read* meeknefs. P. 234, l. 16, *read* their tempers. P. 258, l. 15, *for* foundation, *read* fountain. P. 269, l. 2; *for* in a, *read* in thy. P. 271, l. 2, *for* to, *read* in. P. 273, l. 25, *for* greatest, *read* chief. P. 301, l. 6, *read* its necessity. P. 304, l. 21, *for* and, *read* not. P. 305, l. 1, *read* can practise. P. 309, l. 12, *for* thoughts, *read* thought. P. 321, l. 2. *read* only prohibits. P. 370, l. 8, *for* most, *read* more.

# S E R M O N S,

B Y

ALEXANDER GERARD, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN KING'S  
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A N D

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN  
ORDINARY IN SCOTLAND.



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M D C C L X X X.

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# S E R M O N     V.

THE FIRST PROMISE OF THE REDEEMER.

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GEN. iii. 15.

*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

**F**OR understanding the meaning of this prediction, and perceiving its accomplishment, it is necessary to know, to whom the sentence of which it is a part, was addressed, and against whom it was pronounced. The preceding discourse was, therefore, introduced by showing, That it regards, not the brute serpents, neither the whole kind, nor any particular species of them, but solely the devil, who had tempted Eve, and who is called the serpent on account of his malicious cunning, and probably too on account of his own seraphic form. It is thought to have resembled the serpentine; and, if it did, it gave a natural

occasion both for the name by which the devil is here mentioned, and for the metaphorical expressions employed in the sentence pronounced against him.

THE first part of that sentence intimates the condition to which the devil was immediately condemned, and, in metaphorical but expressive terms, describes it as abject, vile, and miserable. The second part of it declares what would thenceforth be the condition of the devil in relation to mankind; and it contains a prophetic delineation, general, but very precise, of the religious and moral state of this lower world, from the fall of man to the consummation of all things. It is delivered in these words, *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* The particulars of this prediction are four; I proposed to explain them in their order.

FIRST, It is here intimated that our first parents, instead of being subjected to immediate death, should have posterity: the expression *the seed of the woman* runs through all the clauses of the text; and it is an expression which naturally implies the miraculous conception of the great Deliverer, which points to, and had an exact completion in Jesus  
Christ,

Christ, who being born of the virgin Mary, was the seed of the woman only, not of the man,

SECONDLY, It is here declared that there would be a perpetual opposition between the promised Deliverer of mankind, and the devil, who had seduced them into apostasy: *I will put enmity, says God, between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.* These words may signify a personal contest between that Deliverer on the one hand, and evil spirits and wicked men on the other: and such a contest there was, especially after that Deliverer had become *the seed of the woman*, in the days of Christ's flesh. The words may likewise signify a struggle between the two opposite causes, the cause of virtue and happiness, of which Christ is by God's appointment the head, and the cause of wickedness and misery, which is patronised by the devil, and espoused by vicious men. Considered in this light, they contain an accurate description of the mixt state of things, which has actually taken place in this lower world, ever since the fall. Virtues and vices, good and bad qualities, are united in the character, and pleasures and pains, enjoyments and sufferings, are blended in the condition of every individual of the human species. In every age, in every nation, in

every society, good and bad men live promiscuously together, sharing in the same blessings, involved in the same calamities, but actuated by opposite principles, and engaged in contrary courses. I formerly explained these two parts of the prediction.

**THIRDLY,** We are here assured that the issue of this contest shall be fatal to the devil and his cause.

**THIS** part of the prediction is expressed in terms which might agree to the brute serpents; *It, the seed of the woman, shall bruise thy head.* But it refers not to them: to have foretold that men should now and then kill a serpent by crushing its head, would have been trivial and unworthy of the occasion. It has a much more important meaning. The terms are only borrowed from brute serpents, to be metaphorically applied to the seraph who had beguiled Eve. The metaphor is perspicuous and strong. It is in the head of the serpent that its poison lies; and the crushing of its head immediately and most certainly kills it. The figurative expression here used has, therefore, this plain meaning; That the descendant of the woman, now promised, shall obtain a complete victory over the devil, deprive him of his power to hurt, abolish his dominion and influence, and finally punish and destroy him.

HE had succeeded in deceiving the woman ; she now appeared weak and wretched in his eyes : but this very woman, it is foretold, shall be his destruction ; from her a person is to spring, who shall reduce him to greater weakness and deeper wretchedness. He had hoped to become absolute lord of this lower world : but, as it was declared in the preceding clause, that his usurped dominion over it would be always incomplete, it is here foretold that this dominion shall be at last totally overthrown. Our first parents could not but understand his designs against them, so far as to perceive that he had seduced them into sin, and that he had intended to subject them to death, and to deprive them of the happiness for which they were made. When, therefore, his destruction, by means of the woman's seed, was predicted, they must have seen that the prediction implied an assurance, that his malicious contrivances against mankind would be defeated, their sin forgiven, and themselves delivered from death and restored to happiness. It led them to expect a redeemer in human nature, who would recover them from that state into which, through the temptation of the devil, they had fallen.

THIS part of the prediction has not received its full accomplishment : it regards the final issue of the contest proclaimed in the

preceding clause, and which was to continue through the whole of the present state: till that contest, therefore, be concluded, till the present state of things come to an end, the accomplishment of this promise must remain incomplete. But it has been already fulfilled in some part; it is fulfilled in every advantage which Christ obtains over the devil, and in every advantage which the cause of virtue gains over the cause of vice: so far it is illustrated by the event. At the same time, in other passages of scripture, we have many descriptions of the issue of that contest, and of the manner in which it shall be brought about, which render this first intimation of it much clearer to us, than it could be to our first parents. Some of these descriptions are expressed in so plain an allusion to the text, as to direct us to regard the subject of them as intended by it, and fulfilling it; and others are expressed in terms fit for throwing light on those which are employed here, and rendering their meaning easily intelligible.

GOD promises that in the *personal* contest, which had been just now foretold between Christ on the one side, and devils and wicked men on the other side, Christ should have the advantage, and at last obtain a complete victory.—Already he hath  
2
had

had great advantage. In every assault which the devil made upon him personally, in his state of incarnation, Christ was conqueror. When the devil tempted him, he baffled all his temptations. He cast multitudes of devils out of those who were possessed by them; and gave his disciples also power to cast them out in his name; thus depriving evil spirits of their dominion over mankind, and rendering them subservient to the glory of his miracles. In reference to this kind of miracles he says, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*\*. The terms in which he expresses the powers granted to his disciples, are remarkably analogous to those of the text, and point out these miracles as fulfilments of it, *Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you*†. These miracles are represented also as a *binding* of Satan‡. When Christ appeared, demoniacs seem to have been very common; if at that period they had been more common than before, it would have been taken notice of with surprize: since that time it is certain that they have been much less frequent; this is an instance in which Christ has given a signal check to the power of Satan. In spite of all opposition, Christ finished the

\* Luke x. 18. † Ver. 19. ‡ Mat. xii. 29. Mark iii. 27.

work given him to do on earth; he adhered to truth and goodness to the end: and when he died a martyr to them, he triumphed over the devil and all his agents, by rising again from the dead, and ascending into heaven. His ascension, the scripture assures us, was the celebration of his triumph, his accession to the kingdom here foretold. It assures us that, *when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive* \*; that *having by his cross spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly triumphing over them* †; and that he *is set at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come* ‡.—But it is at the end of the world, that Christ's victory will be complete. The preceding verse described the devil's present state; this clause foretells his final punishment, even that *judgment* to which Peter and Jude inform us that the fallen angels are *reserved* ||. It will be such as comes up to the full import of bruising the serpent's *head*. At the end of the world, Christ will appear in the glorious character of the universal judge, and will condemn the devils to perdition. He will cast them, says John, *into*

\* Eph. iv. 8.      † Col. ii. 14, 15.      ‡ Eph. i. 20, 21.  
 || 2 Pet. ii. 4.    Jude 6.

*the lake of fire and brimstone, where they shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever* \*. Then too the judge will condemn all wicked men, who have suffered themselves to be corrupted by the devil, and have co-operated with him in his cause, to the same punishment with him; he will send them *away into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels* \*, where they shall be punished with *everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power* †.

God here foretells likewise, That the *cause* of Christ, the cause of truth and righteousness, shall all along gain some advantages over the opposite *cause* of Satan, the cause of idolatry and vice, and shall finally triumph over it.— In conformity to this prediction, idolatry and ignorance of God have never prevailed so universally, but that some faint rays of religious knowledge have now and then shone forth in one part of the world or another. When they were too weak to lead men off from the practices of false religion, they notwithstanding often exposed its absurdity, and subjected it to just contempt. Some of the Pagans condemned the worship with which they complied; others acted a better part than was con-

\* Rev. xx. 10.

† Mat. xxv. 41.

‡ 2 Thess. i. 9.

sistent with the religion which they professed. The idolatry of the ancient world was the worship of evil spirits and wicked men; *the things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to devils, and not to God\**: the religion of Christ banished this idolatry; wherever it was embraced, it turned men *to God from idols, to serve the living and true God †*. This was, to lay waste the kingdom of the devil, and withdraw his subjects from their allegiance to him: the scripture represents it in this very light; it represents those gentiles who were converted by the gospel, as *turned from the power of Satan unto God ‡*. It is probably the establishment of Christianity on the ruins of Pagan idolatry, which John foresaw in prophetic vision, and which he describes in metaphors like to those employed in the text; *There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom*

\* 1 Cor. x. 20.

† 1 Thess. i. 9.

‡ Aët. xxvi. 18.

*of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night: and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony* \*• Even in the Christian church, indeed, Satan has introduced idolatry: agreeably to the prediction of the apostle Paul, *the man of sin has been revealed, the son of perdition, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness* †. But the same apostle foretells, that *this wicked one, the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming* ‡. As yet the prediction is not accomplished fully: but the accomplishment is far advanced; a reformation from Popery has spread over many nations; where the form of Popery is still retained, a great part of its power is lost. In due time the apostle's oracle shall be completely verified by the total abolition of idolatry from the Christian church: the period foreseen by John shall come, when it shall be proclaimed, *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her* ||.

\* Rev. xii. 7---11.

† 2 Theff. ii. 3, 9. 10.

‡ Ver. 8.

|| Rev. xviii. 2. 8.

CHRIST'S victory over the devil, implies also the prevalence of virtue over vice. This cannot generally take place in the present state; it had been already foretold that the present state would be always mixt. Yet in many particular instances virtue has prevailed. In all ages there have been many good men; and in every good man, virtue is predominant. Integrity has often triumphed over all the cunning and all the contrivances of wickedness. It is the very design of the coming and the religion of Christ, to promote virtue and discourage vice; *ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins †*. Sin is the work of the devil; he it was who introduced sin into the world; and *for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil ‡*. By his religion, multitudes have been recovered out of the snare of the devil, who were taken captive by him at his will\*. There seem to be intimations in the scripture, that the religion of Christ shall, in some future periods, exert its power more perfectly and more universally, and produce far more conspicuous effects. In the course of Christ's reign, *an angel is represented by the prophetical evangelist, as coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in*

† 1 John iii. 5.

‡ Ver. 8.

\* 2 Tim. ii 26.

his hand, and laying hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and binding him a thousand years, and casting him into the bottomless pit, and shutting him up, and setting a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled †. This doubtless implies some great restraint which shall at some time hereafter, even within the compass of the present world, be laid upon the power and machinations of the devil.—But we are certain that, at the end of this world, all God's elect shall be gathered together ‡, the living changed ||, and the dead raised, perfect and immortal. Then shall they be delivered from all the consequences of the fall, from sin, and guilt, and the grave, and shall reign in life by Jesus Christ \*. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory ††. Then death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire ‡‡, to be there consumed. Then there shall be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ||||. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain §. And there shall be no more curse, but the servants of God and of the Lamb shall reign for ever and ever \*\*. By this ex-

† Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3. ‡ Mat. xxiv. 31. Mark xiii. 27. || 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. \* Rom. v. 17. †† 1 Cor. xv. 54. ‡‡ Rev. xx. 14. |||| 2 Pet. iii. 13. § Rev. xxi. 4. \*\* Chap. xxii. 3, 5.

tirpation of sin, and death, and misery, the devil's contrivances against mankind shall be finally defeated. We are assured that the early prediction shall be thus fulfilled, for it is written, *That Christ must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet* \*.

**FOURTHLY,** It is foretold in the text, that, though the seed of the woman should finally destroy the serpent and his seed, yet they would have some lesser successes against him and his cause, in the course of the combat.

THIS is foretold in terms which might be applicable to the brute serpent; *thou shalt bruise or bite his heel*. Jacob says with a similar allusion, *Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horses heels* †. This is a manner of attack natural to the serpent, its make scarcely permits its rising higher; and it will very readily bite the heel of him who is crushing its head with his foot. The sentiment is obvious enough, though the terms be figurative. The heel is not a vital part; a wound in it, however painful it may be, is not necessarily mortal; some smaller hurt is therefore inti-

\* 1 Cor. xv. 25.

† Gen. xlix. 17.

mated. It is intimated that, in destroying the power of the devil, the seed of the woman should receive a wound, but not a fatal wound, not one inconsistent with a full victory at last.

THIS part of the prophecy has had its accomplishment, with respect both to Christ himself, and to his cause.

CHRIST himself was far from escaping all hurt in the combat : but the hurt which he received, was such as may be justly represented by the bruising of his heel ; it answered not the malicious intention of the devil ; it proved not fatal ; on the contrary it was the great means of defeating the contrivances of the devil. The sufferings of Christ's incarnate state were manifold and grievous ; and he died a painful and ignominious death. It was *by the things which he suffered*, that he was *made perfect*, and *became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*\*. Even when they nailed him to the cross, they wounded only his mortal part : the divine and spiritual part remained unhurt, and he rose from the dead to eternal life, and glory, and dominion. In his death, his enemies thought

\* Heb. v. 8, 9.

that they had vanquished him ; but it was by his death that he completed his victory over them. It was *through death*, that *he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil\**. His death was the sacrifice for our sins, and obtained the remission of them : it was the ransom of our forfeited lives, it reversed the forfeiture by purchasing our resurrection from the dead ; it was the price of our salvation, and bought for us, not immortality on earth, but an immortality of happiness in heaven. It was because he *became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, that *God hath highly exalted him, and given him †* all that authority and power by which he will, at last, totally abolish the dominion of Satan, and condemn him, and all his angels, and all his adherents, to everlasting destruction.

THAT Christ should suffer in obtaining our deliverance from the malice of the devil, is expressly affirmed in the text, and must have been understood, by our first parents, to be implied in it. That his sufferings contributed to our deliverance, that they were an atonement for the sins of the world, is not necessarily implied in this prediction, nor could our first parents learn merely from the expressions

\* Heb. ii. 14.

† Phil. ii. 1, 8.

here employed: but even they were perhaps taught to perceive that this also was implied in the prediction. It is probable that animal sacrifices were instituted at this very time\*: and if they were, the institution of them would throw light on what is here said, illustrate the nature of the Redeemer's sufferings here foretold, unfold the manner of the redemption of the world, and show that it should be accomplished by the seed of the woman suffering and dying to make atonement for us. While God, in words, promised a suffering Redeemer, he at the same time instituted sacrifice as a type of

\* That animal sacrifices were originally of divine institution, has been often asserted, and seems to be proved by many conclusive arguments. Soon after the fall, it is certain they were in use; Abel offered an animal sacrifice, and was accepted for it: therefore they had been instituted before that period. But in all the interval, there was no season so proper for the institution, as immediately after the fall, when God appeared to Adam and Eve, and passed sentence on them. Sacrifice was instituted as the means of obtaining the pardon of sin; and the first sin had, at that season, been just committed. The lives of our first parents were forfeited by it; this was the fit time to substitute a sacrifice in their place. The Redeemer was now promised; what time more proper for the institution of a rite which is confessedly typical of him? That this was the very time, there is a circumstance in the history, which seems to indicate: just after passing sentence on the first pair, *God clothed them with skins*: it is probable that no animals had died of themselves before the fall; man got not permission to kill them for food till after the flood; what then are the skins with which they were clothed, so likely to have been, as the skins of the animals which, at the institution of sacrifice, God had appointed them to kill for the first offering?

him, to explain the promise, to keep alive the expectation of him, to promote reliance on him through all the ages which divine wisdom had decreed should pass before Christ was actually offered up, to be, in every repetition of it, a standing prophecy of the future redemption, that to this, men, in all succeeding generations, might have recourse by faith, for the remission of their sins. Agreeable to this, is the account which the apostle gives of Abel's sacrifice, the first that is recorded in scripture; he *offered it by faith\**, by faith in this promise of a Redeemer, with expectation of, and dependence upon him whom his sacrifice shadowed forth.

AGAINST the *cause* of Christ likewise, the devil often has, and through the whole course of the present state shall continue to have, considerable success; yet only such success as may be represented by the bruising of the heel. In the idolatry of the heathen world, the devil reigned for many ages; in it, he and his angels were worshipped and served as gods; till the coming of Christ, he seemed to carry all before him. Many and gross corruptions have been introduced into the Christian religion, have spread wide, and continued long uncor-

\* Heb. xi. 4.

rected:

rected: *the son of perdition hath opposed and exalted himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God\**, and he shall continue to sit for some time longer. In all ages of the world iniquity hath abounded; the wicked have at times been very many, and the righteous very few; in the purest societies and the purest periods, multitudes of bad men have been intermixed with the good; the vicious are often prosperous, and the virtuous depressed. The best of men are imperfect; in particular instances, sin triumphs over all their grace; the most cautious some times *give place to the devil †*, and he gets *an advantage of them ‡*. Wicked spirits and wicked men often fill the righteous with sorrows, and expose them to sufferings; *the devil casts them into prison and into tribulation ||*. Satan's first contrivance against mankind, was so far successful, that *in Adam all die §*. But all these successes of Satan in the prevalence of vice and misery, are slight and temporary; they shall not only be reversed at the last, they are always opposed, and often checked in the present state. Pagan idolatry was often exposed, and often reprov'd,

\* 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

† Eph. iv. 27.

‡ 2 Cor. ii. 11.

|| Rev. ii. 10.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

and has already been banished from many nations by the light of the gospel, and shall be banished from many more. Christianity, even when it is corrupted, retaineth force enough to give some check to evil works; when the corruption of it is most general, still some escape being infected; and after an interval, it shines forth again in purity and in power. The good oppose the devices of the wicked, make them ashamed of them, and prevent some part of the mischief which they would otherwise produce. Virtue is sometimes honoured and rewarded even in the present life. In all good men, grace, though sometimes baffled, prevails against corrupt lusts, and gradually mortifies them more and more; they repent of their sins; obtain the forgiveness of them, and become more circumspect and blameless in virtuous practice. When Satan is permitted to afflict them, it is only *that they may be tried*\*; when he has *great wrath* against them, it is *because he knoweth that he hath but a short time* †; their sorrows are succeeded by solid and permanent joys, and contribute to them; *the God of peace thus bruises Satan under their feet* ‡. They die not for ever; Christ will raise them up at the last day, to a new and glorious life.

\* Rev. ii. 10.

† Chap. xii. 12.

‡ Rom. xvi. 20.

SUCH is the first promise of a Redeemer to the fallen world, delivered in the sentence which God passed on the devil, by whose temptation it had fallen. It is, in the manner of the eastern nations and of the early ages, expressed in figurative terms borrowed from the serpent, for which the tempter's seraphic form gave a natural occasion. But the figurative terms used in it, imply very clearly,—an intimation of the miraculous conception of the Redeemer—a declaration that there should be a stated and permanent opposition between him and the devil, and that in consequence of this the present world should be a mixt and chequered state—an assurance that the Redeemer shall at last obtain a complete victory over the devil, defeat his contrivances against mankind, and make virtue and happiness to triumph for evermore—and a prediction that, in effecting this, he should undergo sufferings and death for us, and be exposed to some lesser hurts in respect of his followers and his cause. What these particulars import, and how they have been accomplished, I have endeavoured to explain.

THE reflexions on this subject, with which I proposed to conclude my discourse, shall be very short.

1. THE whole of this subject shows the greatness of God's grace and kindness to men. Every part of the curse pronounced on the tempter, spoke comfort to our first parents. God gave them this comfort, that they might not despond. He prevented their fear of instant death; he assured them, not only that they should live to have posterity, but that among them there should be one great person, the Redeemer of his race, and that, through him, mankind should at last triumph, and their seducer be utterly destroyed. God suffered not himself to be an object of mere terror to sinful man for a single day: in the very hour of the provocation he allowed not mankind to consider themselves as rejected by him. He gave them hope, that they might have a strong motive to return to him by repentance, and to study to regain his favour. To us, Christians, he has given stronger hope, by a fuller revelation of our redemption already accomplished: in this hope let us rejoice, and let our alacrity in endeavouring to please God, be in proportion to the brightness of our hope.

2. WHAT has been said, may confirm our faith in Christ, and his gospel. The prophecy which we have considered, is an intimation of the most marvellous events: and they

they have come to pass. They are the reverse of what the devil, with all his knowledge, looked for ; and of what, with all his cunning, he intended by his machinations : yet they were exactly foretold in the very beginning of the world. Who could have foreseen them at that time, but God ? They are his appointment. Jesus Christ is the deliverer here predicted ; to him every character of the deliverer belongs : he was born of a virgin ; he is in direct and irreconcilable opposition to the devil and his cause ; he hath already greatly broken the power of Satan, and hath revealed to us in what manner he will totally destroy it ; and he hath suffered and died in accomplishing this great design. On him we may safely depend, as the promised seed, the restorer of the lost world, the conqueror over Satan, sin, and death.

3. WHAT has been said, tends to give us a just conception of the state of things in this present world. It is obviously a mixt and imperfect state, and it has many appearances of irregularity and confusion. In it no character is wholly consistent or of a piece. In it virtuous and vicious men are intermingled, and connected together by many ties. In it neither is virtue uniformly rewarded, nor vice uniformly punished ; in innumerable instances

good and evil are promiscuously distributed to the righteous and the wicked; and in many instances the wicked flourish and prosper, while the righteous are unsuccessful and afflicted. These appearances of disorder have been remarked in all ages; they have been urged by some as objections against the justice of divine Providence, and they have sometimes perplexed the most modest and serious enquirers into the ways of God. But this very state of things, the text informs us, is the appointment of God himself; in the very beginning of the world, he declared that he had appointed it. Being his appointment, it is unalterable; in vain we fret and murmur at it; his sovereign will demands our submission. Being his appointment, it must be wise, and just, and gracious; the text shows it to be eminently such. It was when the parents of the human race had merited instant death, by which the species must have been totally extirpated, that God appointed this state of things: it was a gracious mitigation of their doom; it should be received by us as a favour and indulgence. It was when our all seemed to be irretrievably lost, that God appointed this state: it is a subject of gratitude and joy, rather than of regret and murmuring; absolute destruction must have been the portion of mankind, if God had not mercifully allowed them a new struggle

struggle against their seducer. The allowance is greatly merciful; by it God gives every individual a new trial, and a trial with the unspeakable advantage of its being under the conduct of the great Deliverer, for immortal happiness and glory. The seeming disorders of the world are but the means of our trial; if we behave aright, they shall contribute to our triumph. Great as they may be, they shall not be perpetual; evil shall be overthrown, good shall prevail; this is not our final state: it shall be succeeded by an everlasting state, in which virtue and felicity shall reign pure and unmixt.

4. BUT let us ever remember that this happy state shall be obtained only by those who belong to the seed of the woman, and that an opposite state of everlasting destruction awaits the serpent and all his seed. All men belong either to the one or to the other. This is the great distinction of mankind. Let us examine carefully, to which class we belong. Are we yet engaged in the apostasy from God? The devil is the head of that apostasy. Are we yet impenitent in sin? Sin is the work of the devil; and they who do his work, are his seed, and shall be destroyed with him. Fly from this misery; abandon sin without delay. Take Christ Jesus for your leader; embrace  
him

him as your Saviour ; practice his religion. Then shall you belong to the promised seed ; then shall you be engaged in the cause of God ; and then shall you be happy ; you shall share with your Redeemer in his triumph ; you shall live with him, and reign with him for ever.

## E R R A T A.

Page 55, l. ult. *for* intention, *read* intension. P. 61, l. 12, *read* room, l. 22, *put a comma after* examination. P. 74, l. 2, *for* of them all, *read* them all. P. 79, l. 26, *read* worms of; l. 29, *for* cvii. *read* cii. P. 80, l. 8, *del.* in. P. 91, l. 8, *for* conduct, *read* content. P. 106, l. 12, *for* them it, *read* them in it. P. 130, l. 27, *after* Rom. iv. 3. *insert* Gal. iii. *after* Gen *del.* Gal. P. 157, l. 2, *read* would it not. P. 162, l. 1, *for* more, *read* worse. P. 169, l. 4, *read* their folly. P. 232, l. ult. *for* weakneis, *read* meeknefs. P. 234, l. 16, *read* their tempers. P. 258, l. 15, *for* foundation, *read* fountain. P. 269, l. 2; *for* in a, *read* in thy. P. 271, l. 2, *for* to, *read* in. P. 273, l. 25, *for* greatest, *read* chief. P. 301, l. 6, *read* its necessity. P. 304, l. 21, *for* and, *read* not. P. 305, l. 1, *read* can practise. P. 309, l. 12, *for* thoughts, *read* thought. P. 321, l. 2. *read* only prohibits. P. 370, l. 8, *for* most, *read* more.