

4.
THE LAST SOLEMN SCENE!

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE CHURCH
IN BACK-STREET, BOSTON,

MAY 22, 1768.

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WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF
CHRIST. PAUL.

PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD, O ISRAEL. AMOS.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is not from an imagined merit in the performance, nor vain hope the preacher entertains of being thought to have offered something new upon a subject so common, so long treated in the Churches by very many far abler hands, that the following discourse, composed without thought of the press, is obtruded on the public eye.

Books upon this subject are in the hands of all, the work of eminent divines, to whom the present publication would not affect to be unobliged; to these the preacher would have chosen to refer the public, and with these to leave them. But earnest importunity, disdainng a repulse from obstinate refusals, and not to be wearied out by studied long delays, has at last constrained him to offer to the world, such as it is, THIS FIRST FRUIT OF HIS MINISTERIAL LABOURS.

Some arguments, which for want of time, were but just hinted in the delivery, are here inserted at their intended length: This has contributed to swell it in the press beyond the usual size of a pulpit-discourse. The greatest care has been taken not to abuse the public by an imposition of a something else on them, instead of the discourse for which they had subscribed. They may be assured the train of thought has suffered no discernible alterations; it is taken from the brief sketch of the composition from which it was delivered: But, as it was not committed to writing 'till the publication became inevitable, the writer cannot so far depend on his memory as to promise his reader the same language he heard from the desk.

Amidst many defects in this performance, which it will not be difficult for the critical eye to spy, and of which the preacher is very sensible, he shelters himself under the importance of his Subject; which, without his aid, must recommend itself to the serious attention of all who are not above trial at the bar of CHRIST.

If any interesting truth is here unfolded, he flatters himself, that will induce the candid reader, easily to overlook deformities of style and composition, to which a multitude of scenes, of incessant hurry, made it impossible for the writer to attend. GOD is the only patron whose protection it craves. To him alone it is humbly dedicated. If he will deign to accept so poor a mite, from an offerer so very unworthy; if he will be pleased to go forth with it into the world, and by it, promote his own Glory, and the good of every reader, or even the salvation of one Soul; it will satisfy the highest ambition, and be a gracious answer to the humble Petition of

THE AUTHOR.



THE LAST SOLEMN SCENE !

2 THESSALONIANS i. 7, 8, 9, and 10th Verses.

The LORD JESUS shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST : Who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his Power ; when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.



ALL THINGS ARE FULL OF

GOD !—His glory shines in all.—

His greatness is declared in every atom :—His invisible things are understood by what his hand has made.* The grandeur of creation,

poured in upon the sense from every quarter, overwhelms the thought, and strikes the sensible spectator in a maze : suitably did David feel its force, when he exclaims, “ When I consider thy Heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained ; What is man that thou art mindful of him ?” † That the like impression may reach your hearts, look around Immortals—view every grace that smiles in Nature’s countenance—see her variegated plumes ! here forests rise in stately

* Romans i. 20.

† Psalm viii. 3, 4.

pride—there fields with fruitful seasons laugh and sing—here valleys clad in all their blooming gaities, and fraught with the rich splendors of the Great—there tow'ring mountains, in aged majesty, presiding over all: look upward and admire yon pensil clouds, those floating magazines of food and physic to our world: stretch further still your prospect: see those radiant lamps that rule the seasons* and gloriously bespangle the vast expanse—see worlds on worlds in myriads, yet in the exactest order, croud immeasurable space; then pause and think how great—august the frame! how expressive of the hand of the great Architect! how calculated to proclaim his praise! all these must drop. Their grandeur shall ere long be so reduced as to leave their places but a mighty void. Mourn ye admirers of created systems, ye devotees of nature, the beloved subject of all your studies—the mistress whose acquaintance dubs you wise, exalts your fame, and crowns you with that philosophic state—the theme of all your rhapsodies (less honors being paid to her creator) is soon to be no more! ye too shall witness to her fate. Does sadness cloud your faces at this news? The text declares a secret yet more awful—a grand event attending nature's exit; an event in which you are much more concerned.

OUR eyes behold mankind move daily on in thoughtless security, lulled in the lap of carnal ease; they live in daily abuse of the present, and no futurity is regarded by them; † “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,” is the only conclusion drawn from the uncertainty of their existence here; and appears a motto inscribed in capitals on all their conduct. They live—they die—and nothing in hereafter gives them the least concern! But are they right in this?—Have

* Genesis i. 16.

† 1 Corinthians xv. 32.

they not souls that must survive the struggle in which these bodies sink into their clay? Yes. We have it from the best authority, though "the dust return to the earth as it was, the spirit shall return to God who gave it,"* return to receive its final sentence, and so be introduced to endless bliss or unremedied woe. Nor shall the earth conceal the dust forever; it must not mingle in the ruins of a tottering world. The oracles of Heaven inform us a dreadful crisis is at hand, when this globe, whose surface hitherto has been but a huge vault for sleeping corpses, as if surfeited with human carcases, shall, at its maker's high command, vomit up the sickening contents, and deliver to judgment all the bodies it had devoured; when "the dead, small and great, shall stand before God,"† and an impartial trial, in the face of all worlds, shall doom their very bodies, together with the souls that did actuate them here, to a fulness of celestial joy, or aggravated woe, among infernals to all eternity. This is the awful scene our text presents us with—this the great day, first in JEHOVAH'S eye, though last in the event—the day for which men and things received existence:—when CHRIST shall "appear to judge the quick and the dead;"‡ appear in such wise as shall at once wipe off the disgrace of the cross, vindicate despised religion and its reviled votaries, and remove all the prejudices arising in this life, from suffering virtue and triumphant wickedness, shewing his wise designs in that administration, and amply rewarding both according to their works: a day appointed of the Father for the consummation of all things; a day revealed, as most certainly approaching, by the united voice of sacred writ: foretold by angels,§ prophets,|| apostles,* and our

* Ecclesiast. xii. 7. † Revelations xx. 12. ‡ Acts x. 42. 2. Timothy iv. 1. § Acts i. 11. || Genesis iv. 7. Psalm xcvi. 13
* 1 Thessalonians iv. 15, 16, 17.

LORD himself,* even from Enoch the seventh from Adam,† to John the survivor of all the disciples:‡ a day when the Son of God, to whom the Father, in consequence of his mediatorial work, has committed all judgment,§ will come in such a manner as shall give greatest glory to himself—joy to all that believe in him—and terror to every ungodly soul. “When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed,” &c. O solemn, dreadful hour! big with the fate of worlds. Nor shall a soul in this assembly miss its proper share in the dread issue of it. To be prepared for it is our only errand to this world—the one thing needful in it. How stupid then is that negligent mind, how guilty that dissipated hour that shuts it from our thoughts! Instead of an apology for this essay to turn your meditations to that important theme, in the present sacred season of attendance in the house of God; though it pretends not to offer any thing new on a subject so fully treated by the best divines in every age, whose help my feeble hand need never be ashamed to use; I shall freely claim the concurrence of your prayers, whilst I say, O fountain of light! to whom the issues—the every step of the grand process is already known no less than when thy Majesty shall bring the vast idea into an event, give light to a purblind eye—teach a stammering tongue to speak thy will—let life, and strength, and divine improving grace be now supplied whilst, from this thy sacred word, we humbly may attempt to consider,

I. THE manner of CHRIST'S appearance to Judgment; And,

II. THE business of that awful day.

BUT what have I proposed? To speak of that glorious descent appointed from eternity to give the last

* Matthew xvi. 27. † Jude xiv. 15. ‡ Revelations xi. 18. § John v. 22. 27.

display of CHRIST to earth! A triumph in which 'tis meant to make the grandeur of the Eternal to shine out to every eye! Where all the equipage of Heaven are summoned in array! A triumph, at sight of which, earth to the centre quakes—Heavens melt—all nature swoons away to be revived no more! Retract my soul, the too presumptuous aim—give over the too arduous task. This is a scene, the celebration whereof baffles the tongues of seraphs; the contemplation of it amazes the angelic hosts, and breeds a solemn silence through all the heavenly courts. No mortal tongue then can unfold, no human thought can scan it. The day itself, and that alone, can sufficiently declare its glory. Some descriptive hints, however, are kindly handed to our labouring minds by revelation; and though no perfect picture of this grand event can be collected thence, only a few of the most interesting circumstances being there discovered, yet since we have no other clue to lead us through the trackless labyrinth, to follow these is now our business.

BUT may I not be allowed first to premise, what is taken for granted in the text, and what it therefore is not my province here to prove, 1. That it is certain there will be a day of general judgment. The justice essential to the nature of God makes this necessary; it requires that the approbation of good and abhorrence of evil, that is infinite and unalterable in the Governor of the world, should be always shewn towards every moral agent in proportion to the good or evil found in his character; rewards must ever be correspondent to the virtues, punishments ever proportioned to the sins of men. Nothing is more evident than that this is not the case in the present life; we see the wicked here oftentimes swimming in the midst of earthly comforts, as if rewarded for impiety—and the

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virtuous sometimes loaded with peculiar distresses, as if inflicted as punishments of virtue. Since it is certain then that there is a God that judgeth the actions of men,* that Judge is just†—justice must reward and punish in the proportion due—that does not universally take place in this world; therefore 'tis equally certain there is a judgment yet to come, and the effects of it concerns another life.

NATURAL conscience, that deputy of Heaven in every human breast, does give an hourly testimony to this truth; not only as a monitor of what we ought to do; but especially as a censor of what we have done: it looks back on every act, approves, or condemns, and so proves every man his own judge: but this is not altogether with its approbation: it creates sweet peace and confidence within, and fails not to beget sad inward accusations and dire foreboding terrors whenever it condemns; and all this without reference to any thing to be expected in this life;—thus it shews that conscience is not so much a judge as a witness provided against a future judgment.‡ So prevalent are the operations of this principle within, that the heathens themselves have ever had an apprehension of a judgment to come; we find this idea largely diffused through the writings of the ancients, though buried in a chaos of inconsistent rubbish—the fruits of the untutored human mind naturally ignorant of the things of God.

BUT the witness of God is instead of a thousand arguments to confirm this truth: a few instances of this have been quoted already; but the scriptures are full of instances; he that runs may read them; and whoever reads his Bible, cannot but perceive the point firmly established in almost every sacred page.

* Psalm lviii. 11. † Genesis xviii. 25. ‡ Romans ii. 15.

2. THE next thing to be premised as necessary to pave the way for what follows, is an answer to the important query, "Who shall be judge?" For that purpose, I need only ask to whom does it immediately belong to judge of the fidelity of a servant rather than his own master,* or of the fealty of a subject rather than his prince? GOD is the master whom all are bound to serve—the prince to whom we owe subjection—The great legislator who to all obedience hath the justest claim: therefore is "GOD the judge of all."† To GOD the supreme judiciary power originally belongs. If GOD, as GOD, be the judge of all, then whosoever is GOD is invested with this prerogative: it follows that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, being one and the same Deity, possessed of the same essence, power and dominion, are the proper subject of that authority by which all worlds shall be judged.—But the actual execution of this power, at that day, is particularly devolved on the Son: it is by him only the Father and the Holy Ghost shall act in that business: besides that supreme, original authority of which he is possessed of, as GOD, Christ hath, as God-man, a delegated power to judge the world, by commission, derived from the Father expressly, and by way of concomitancy from the Holy Ghost also: ‡ the sacred records asserting this truth, have likewise condescended on a reason of this œconomy, viz. "Because he is the Son of man." Not that his being of the human race was the simple reason of his being judge; the same reason would exalt every man to that high office, and so would preclude any judgment at all, as no objects would remain among men towards whom the office should be executed; but because of the Three Persons which are GOD, he only is also the

* Romans xiv. 4. † Hebrews xiii. 23. ‡ John v. 27.

Son of Man: it was therefore a part of the glory justly due to him, as the reward promised by the Father in the covenant of redemption, for his humiliation in assuming man's nature, as well as his obedience and sufferings in it, to be entrusted with the sole power of judging, in that same nature in which he himself was judged.—The designs of the day seemed also to require that all be done in open sight of every intelligence; this would demand a Judge *visible* to all. It is only “the pure in heart who can ever see God.”* Had not the judge then been man, the wicked could not have seen who condemned them; so would their doom have been far less grievous than when they must see themselves stand before the despised Mediator. And was it not graciously calculated for the comfort of the saints at that day, that the business of determining their eternal states is in the hands of one who partakes with them of the same flesh and blood? † One who, by long experience of every innocent distress, has learnt the tenderest sympathy with their infirmities ‡—one who bought their bliss with his dearest blood—yea, of one who has united them to himself in a marriage-covenant by the power of his Spirit?

If it now be asked when? Where shall the Judgment begin? And how long shall the solemn scene continue? Instead of an answer, it may be observed, as these are questions of speculation only, it would be quite impertinent to detain this audience with them, further than just to say, The first cannot receive a positive answer from any creature; when other glorious things, hid in the eternal breast from the beginning, shed their surprising lustre on our eyes in revelation, this has been kindly still concealed, that so the dreadful secret might be a constant check to guilty slum-

* Matthew v. 8. † Hebrews ii. 14. ‡ Hebrews iv. 15.

ber, and wrest from the secure presumor's hand, that old delusive word, *TO-MORROW*. Whatever may be said of prophecies that are not yet accomplished, he that considers the power of that *GOD* with whom a thousand years are but as one day, will see no absolute necessity for prolonged months to complete *JEHOVAH'S* work, and will rest assured that *no mortal can say this solemn scene will not open on us all before the next rising sun.*

NOTWITHSTANDING what some abler divines have advanced, in answer to the next enquiry, to prove the place of judgment to be in the valley of *Jehosaphat*, or on the mount of *Olives*—the former grounded on *Joel* iii. 2.—the latter on *Zech.* xiv. 4. and *Acts* i. 11. Yet I humbly apprehend the arguments drawn from these texts will totter of themselves—if it is but considered, that the first speaks only of the judgments that were to fall on the nations that had troubled the *Jews*, after that people should be enlarged by *Cyrus*, and that *the valley of Jehosaphat* does not point to any particular place, but respects the degree to which the humbling judgments of the *LORD* should abase these nations (the word *Jehosaphat* being supposed, not a proper, but a common name signifying *the judgment of GOD.*) The second is only a poetical and sublime description of the power with which *GOD* shall defend his Church against its enemies after the destruction of *Jerusalem* by the hand of *Titus*; the mount of *Olives*, the station chosen on account of its nearness to the temple, cleaving in the midst as if to make a plain and easy way for the succours that come to its relief, beautifully describes *GOD'S* nearness to his church, of which the temple was a type, and his kind care to remove whatever should obstruct her relief in every season of distress: neither of these texts prove any thing at all relating to the place of the last judg-

ment : and that in the *Acts* plainly refers to the manner, not to the place of CHRIST's second coming ;— indeed, for the assembly which that day will convene, no mountain, no valley, nay, nor (as I conceive) the face of the whole earth would be able to afford sufficient room ; there is no region known to us that would not be liable to that objection, but the extensive region of the air ; and here, to put an end to all debate, here the word of GOD seems to have fixed the spot for judgment—1 *Thess.* iv. 17.

How long this supreme court shall sit is uncertain to every one but him who sits as Judge ; when we consider that this day is appointed not to discover any thing to GOD which he had not found out before, not to reverse the dooms that have already fixed the states of men, nor yet to find some better reasons for confirming them ; nay, nor even to convince the minds of the condemned of the justice of their sentence, or let saints see the rich grace that saved them ; but entirely for the information of others, to display to all the assembled universe the propriety of GOD's conduct to every individual ; this thought seems to infer that it will be a long session, since all the thoughts and words and works throughout the lives of all the sons of men, must then be brought to light in the view of all spectators ; hence some have been led to conclude it will comply as many years to judge them, as it has taken up to transact them from the beginning to the end of time ; and some, ever fond to turn dizzy with their own calculations, have run their chimeras round and round even to three hundred and sixty-five thousand years. But when we reflect on the astonishing changes that all creation must then feel—the wondrous alterations that shall pass on the bodies—the enlarged capacities then given to the minds of all men—and the God-like power by which all this is effected,

we shall perceive less reason for that conclusion.— Will it be more difficult for the same Omnipotence at that day, to make the minds of men capable of seeing, in a moment, all that has passed through the life of a whole class of sinners, whose very countenance will speak the secrets of their souls, than to raise their scattered ashes into life? If not, then there will be no need for deferring the measure of the sinner's cup—or delaying the consummation of the bliss of saints thus long. How soon can the work be dispatched by him that comes on the important errand? How easily in a day—in an hour—(the names that inspiration usually gives this awful season) can this coming Judge avenge him of his adversaries, and return in triumph at the head of chosen and redeemed millions, to present them at his Father's throne?

THESE things thus premised, let us return to the point from which we first digressed; and take a view of some of the attending circumstances of CHRIST'S appearance as the sacred glass of his own word brings them to our eyes.

1. FROM every warning we have of this great day, we must conclude that it will be most sudden: it is designed to give to all worlds the highest discovery of the majesty of GOD that such creatures are capable of receiving; it may hence seem necessary that it be introduced all at once; the mind of the spectator would otherwise be prepared for greater pomps, by being accustomed to the lesser; and in proportion to that preparation the lustre would the less surprize.

GOD has not left himself without a witness, nor men without sufficient warning of this dread hour: that it is fast approaching we are repeatedly assured; "the hour cometh." But when? No creature can declare. No plea remains for man's security: no circumstance to tell him he is a moment safe. And yet,

so hardened is the human mind, no warning does alarm. Men still are found as stupid and supine as ever. They eat, they drink, they marry and are given in marriage;* they greedily indulge every sensual joy; and lay the rein loose on every unbridled lust; heedlessly wandering on from sin to sin, whilst God, and all eternal things, are cautiously kept out of sight; and thus are like to persevere until the midnight-cry does rise, "The Bridegroom cometh."†—Yea, he is already come!—Sinners are overtaken in their wild career—and, before they were aware, are caught asleep! whilst men are growing bold in iniquity, and say in their hearts, "The LORD delays his coming;—at an hour they think not the Son of Man cometh"‡—Cometh in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye!—at the midnight of security, when mankind wrap themselves in fancied peace—a peace they dream *immortal*—they feed the cob-web-hope with dear-bought vanities—and fondly hug the golden phantom in their arms; this awful pomp at once will burst as from the thickest darkness, sudden as the electric fire, collected in its floating vehicle, and *drawn* near the provoking object, its destined prey, discharges in full sheets—the mark is reached ere yet the flash is seen—so sudden breaks this day that never shall conclude! so sudden the alarm. "THE JUDGE IS COME," with all its terrors strikes the careless ear, like travailing womens' unexpected pains.—As death finds some, so judgment many; the day before, mens' hearts are full of mirth; their merchandize—their pleasures—and their honors are all their care: But lo! as the night-thief breaks in when least suspected, so when security is greatest, the awful trumpet finds them out. Oh! how will hardened finners, whom no hope could

* Matthew xxiv. 38. † Matthew xxv. 5, 6. ‡ Luke xxii. 45, 46.

draw, nor fear drive, whom law and gospel long beset in vain—how shall they start from their couches—stare in astonishment! how curse their madness—and beg annihilation, when waked by the trump of GOD, and called to trial! how shall all such among you, whether within or around these walls, continuing such 'till then, earnestly wish (and alas! shall wish in vain) that they had this day listened to the truth, and taken the alarm! watch therefore, for sudden will the coming of the Son of Man be.

2. THIS consideration itself informs us, that the revelation of the LORD JESUS to Judgment, will be no less *dreadful* than sudden: when men are sunk down on the pillow, lulled in their nightly repose, to be roused by a midnight-alarm would doubtless surprise—the fire-bell's stroke startles the most hardy: How then shall the sinners in Zion be afraid? What fearfulness shall surprise the hypocrite,* when the thunders of JEHOVAH knock at the door—when all the artillery of Heaven is discharged in his ears?—To-day, whilst peace displays her pleasing banners, and sinners, warned of the wrath to come, are called to flee to them for shelter, they can be hardy enough to “laugh at fear;” and mock in their hearts at each voice from on high; JESUS is still “despised and rejected of men,”† their hearts perceive “no form nor comeliness in him,” and his ways, to make them desirable; thus is “the evil day put far off,” and all Heaven's bounty is snuffed at with scorn:—But at the little looked for day, when “JESUS is revealed from Heaven”—when this humble, yet rejected, sutor to their hearts appears clothed in his native majesty; “every eye shall see him;” nor see him with the usual cold neglect—“all

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* Isaiah xxxiii. 14. † Isaiah liii. 3.

the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."* To see him whom they have despised, and whose cause they have opposed, now prove himself the only name by which men are saved"†—to see the meek, the patient Lamb, altered into the furious Lion of the tribe of Judah—to see him coming, armed with power, and determined in just wrath to avenge the united quarrel of his broken law, and long rejected grace—and themselves obliged to stand before his bar—and wait their endless dooms from his mouth—O ! How shall their hands be strong ?—How can their hearts within them endure so dreadful a prospect ?—If the voice of God, when kindly interposing for his people's direction in the way to bliss, made *Israel* tremble, and holy *Moses* fear and quake ; O ! How shall the offender stand the frowns of Omnipotence, when he comes arrayed in all his terrors—when the dispensations of his grace are come to a full period ? Ah ! How must a sense of guilt affright him, when conscience can be no longer stifled—and no shelter from the burning wrath of the LAMB appears ? What shall I say ?—The boldest sinners, who can glory in their shame—the haughtiest offenders—the lawless and disobedient, too mighty for reproof, shall rise with faces pale—with ghastly looks—with smiting knees ; O ! what throbbing hearts ! what weeping eyes ! what wringing hands ! shall I ask the cause ? The man of sorrows is clothed with majesty ; the great and terrible day of the LORD is come.

3. NOR is the suddenness the only thing that makes the coming of the LORD thus terrible ; the glory of his appearance will be too great to be endured by "flesh and blood"‡—how different from the weeping infant in the manger at *Bethlehem* ! how unlike the scorned sufferer that groaned on *Calvary* ! Oh ! what

* Revelations i. 7. † Acts iv. 12. ‡ 1 Corinthians xv.

pomp is here ! 'tis Heaven—all Heaven, descending in its grandeur !—*Before*, his deity was veiled—his beauty masked—his brightness clouded—he was clothed with dishonor—received with contempt—thrust out of life with every token of shame ; but now the veil is taken off—the native splendor of his person shines unsufferable to mortal eyes ; his human nature bright beyond conception—how admirable then the divine !—O wondrous, wondrous person, which cannot be completed, but by all the glories of them both united ! how glorious that face ! when all the beauteous rays of the Father—of the Spirit shine in it. All Heaven's transcendant lustre meets and centres here.—It strikes us dumb.—Words fail.—Imagination cannot paint it.—Some circumstances of it are graciously revealed, but the essential glory there to be displayed, no creature ever could conceive.

I. AMONG these, our text informs us, one not inconsiderable is, “He is revealed from Heaven ;”—thence did he come as the bread of life to feed the hungry and save them that were lost*—thither he visibly ascended before his chosen witnesses†—there he now sits enthroned in highest dignity at the right hand of power !‡ there is he now retained, concealed from our sight ;—and there must be retained 'till the restitution of all things ;§ and then from thence he visibly descends—descends with all the pomp of God.

O ! glorious *scene* !—my Brethren, let us try to realize it ; see, far above the region of the stars—in the empyreal Heaven—that place long honored with the throne of him whose presence would be a Heaven in hell, see there, at the appointed hour—the preparation made—the armies marshalled—the gates flung open ;

* Matthew xviii. 11. † Acts i. 9. ‡ Matthew xxvi. 64.
§ Acts iii. 21.

and, from thence, quicker than thought, comes forth in one continued flood, the light of Heaven, each of its beams far, far out-shining a thousand suns like that which gilds our globe—and there behold, gloriously exalted on a throne of burnished *Æther*, THE SON OF GOD; crowned with that majesty that shone in making and supporting worlds, brightened by redeeming love, and finished by all the grandeur Heaven can afford.* Behold that glorious sight—the out-lines of it are drawn by an infallible pencil: “The Ancient of days—his head white as snow”—his hairs like shining threads of light—“his eyes as a flame of fire—his feet like the finest burnished brass—clothed in a garment white as snow”—this robe of glory reaching down to his feet—“and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle”—“his voice” majestic, “like the sound of many waters—his countenance like the sun shining in his strength.” A “face, from before which the earth and the Heaven (not able to stand the majesty of his looks) flee away”—and flee ’till they can flee no further; no place of hiding being found for them—nor need we wonder, for see!—his throne is like the fiery flame—his wheels as burning fire—a fiery stream issues out before him—behind him the flame burneth; thousand thousands minister unto him; ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him,† What a picture is this? O sirs! can you rejoice to see it?—

* This thought, if I mistake not, the reader may find expressed with all the force of language in YOUNG’s *Last Day*, a Poem which I remember to have read with pleasure; from which, as well as from the *Night-thoughts*, if the books were now by me, I should have taken pleasure to have obliged my readers with this, and many other thoughts on this subject, in the emphatic words of that incomparable author.

† Daniel vii. 9, 10. Revelations i. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Think ; for Oh ! He bends his course this way. He comes as “ the brightness of the Father’s glory—the express image of his person.” He comes in all the power of GOD—power to which all nature stands obedient ; whose awful beck makes all revolving worlds, as if struck dead with fright, to stop their wheels.*

HE comes in the full exercises of all his mediatorial powers also ; power by which to wrest the key from death’s cold hand—knock off his fetters—set his prisoners free—and trample down that aged conqueror of all our race—Power over hell and all its fiends, by which to summon forth, convict, condemn, and execute the sentence on these untamed enemies of GOD and man : a sentence just—though new to them—bearing an additional load, proportioned to the enormous guilt they had continually been heaping up by all their hellish crimes since first they were hurled down from bliss ; a sentence which but now seems to begin their hell ; compared to this their former torment might be called a Heaven.—Power too over men, by which the Kings—the mighty of the earth—yea, all the sons and daughters of *Adam*, at a call, are brought, with their first father, to the bar—to stand obedient to the unresisted nod of the great Judge : How great the glory—how God-like the power with which CHRIST comes to Judgment !

2. NOR shall he come alone : we have already said all Heaven descends with him ; yea, saith the text, “ When the LORD JESUS shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels”—or, as the word more strictly might be rendered, the angels of his might—the messengers of his power. Could he, when humbled here on earth—by a word of his mouth, have commanded “ more than twelve legions of angels to

* Joshua x. 12.

do his pleasure?"* No wonder then if myriads on myriads, ambitious, now fill up his train—no wonder the scene be magnificent indeed, for the sacred volume leaves it beyond doubt that "all the holy angels shall now stand around him."† But for what end?—Have they been, in time, as ministering spirits, servants as well as watchmen of the best interests of the heirs of Glory?‡ Now shall they gladly fly on wings of love to gather the elect from the four winds.§ Were they, 'till now, employed in the kingdom of his providence, endowed with excellence of his strength to do their LORD'S commands,|| and by consequence the daily witnesses of the conduct of the wicked in this life? How readily shall they now summon sinners to the bar—and assist at his mandate to execute the sentence to each sinner respectively addressed?* O glorious triumph! Who shall be able to endure the splendors of that day?

BUT these shall not be all his retinue: such is the condescension of our great Redeemer, it is not enough to receive sinful men to favor; to admit them where himself is to behold his glory—and drink immortal bliss from every ray they see; but when he comes to give a full display of all his riches, they must needs be honored with a share in the tremendous pomp.—We are told by him who cannot lie, that the LORD shall not come to judgment without ten thousands of his saints in company;† assured that whenever he appears, all those that sleep in JESUS he will bring along with him;‡ not one forgotten; none then left behind; from the still-born babe, to the Christian sunk in years, every soul that died in CHRIST, shall then come at his

* Matthew xxvi. 53. † Matthew xxv. 31. ‡ Hebrews i. 14. § Mark xiii. 27. || Psalm ciii. 20, 21. * Matthew xiii. 41, 42, 43. † Jude xiv. ‡ I Thessalonians iv. 14.

beck, to find its body and receive its brighter crown: all—all shall come—each shining with a glory borrowed from his LORD; urging his golden lyre with many a gladsome stroke in the triumphant anthem. O glorious fight! where millions unnumbered as the grains of sand, shall appear in splendid ranks, what heavenly joy sparkles in each eye! what love and wonder glows on every cheek! the least among them decked in heavenly beauties—bought with JESUS' blood—surpasses far the beaming glories of the meridian sun. O sinners, haste to JESUS' loving arms, while grace is offered, that you may one day mingle with this glorious throng. Fear not, Christians, the meanest, weakest, darkest of you shall be there: your notes too shall be heard amidst the *Allelujabs* of that happy train!

3. ONE other circumstance of the judge's glory mentioned in the text, is, "he comes in flaming fire;" more literally, "the fire of a flame," *i. e.* the most piercing heat to which a fire can be raised; I have no doubt but the word *fire* is often used in scripture as a figure to express the wrath of GOD; yet I cannot agree with those who think it only metaphorical in this place—the Apostle is evidently now describing the visible appearances of that awful day—all the rest are allowed to be literal—Why then should this be explained away to a figure only? Nor will I deny that the whole mass of elementary fire hitherto dispersed in due proportion through all material worlds; shall then probably be collected into one place—whilst suns—planets—clouds from on high—earth and waters from beneath, on the divine mandate, all at once discharge their flaming stores, 'till every spark they had contained since their creation, is quite exhausted; yet I must beg leave to differ from those, however numerous and respectable they be, who have asserted this, or some

material fire newly created, is what these words refer to; that fire seems to break out chiefly after the judgment is past—this fire is seen as soon as CHRIST is revealed—a fire in which “he comes from Heaven:” that fire is probably designed (may I not beg the liberty that others take, to express their own conjectures?) to form a material engine of eternal torment for those wretched crouds, that now must carry with them material bodies to those doleful regions, where, ’till now, their souls alone had lain in anguish proper to a spirit, anguish that could be called fire only in a figure; in that fire, though not without this of a spiritual kind, the devil and his angels, with all the damned crew, shall plunge, and sink from gulph to gulph forevermore; but it shall never touch the heavenly throng—they see it with their eyes—but see it afar off; who then can think it will come near the Judge?—But the fire in the text is represented as his cloathing—his atmosphere—his vehicle to judgment. The judge is in the midst of it.

If it is here objected that the appearance of God to men, in ancient days, were in the midst of fire; it is granted; but these were only symbols of the divine presence, and so cannot affect this argument at all: and yet it would be very hard to prove that fire to be material; it scorched not *Moses*—nor did it burn the quaking mount—yea the bush in *Horeb*, though the seat of this flame remained untouched.

By the flaming fire here spoken of, I would rather understand that glory of the Judge’s person mentioned above:—This will be such as, like a burning blaze, no mortal eye could bear—so great, that sun and moon and stars are totally extinguished at its first appearance: as the sickly glimmerings of a taper are quickly lost, soon as the eastern sun darts his first morning beam across the horizon; so disappears all created light, when

light's great ocean original first shews his face : at sight of this, " the sun shall be darkened, the moon will not give her light—the stars of Heaven shall fall"*—the Heavens, unable to endure such brightness, flee before it—the vast expanse, as a flaming scroll, furls all its faded beauties, rolls itself together, and departs as in shuddering horrors : † nor are the Heavens alone affected—the whole earth feels the shock—as this glorious being descends, see, the trembling islands are displaced—melting mountains shrink out of sight—rocks rend—and universal nature sends out her dying groans ! and when to this piercing light is superadded his almighty power—(power with which every thing in this unequalled personage, with which every thing essentially issuing from him is necessarily fraught) then, as I conceive, it acts like " flaming fire" indeed ; for as fire will strengthen and refine whatever has a nature like its own, spark kindling spark, and flame increasing flame ; whilst on the other hand it suddenly destroys whatever it meets that cannot be changed into its own image, so shall the flaming fire we speak of, whilst it refines the saints—" tries all their works" ‡ as the furnace trieth gold—burns up their stubble—and brighten their whole persons into his own most beauteous image—at the same time prove a consuming fire to the unchanged sinner—the wicked shall be like chaff before this flame : by this " the day shall burn as an oven," § (and if the instrumentality of material fire, spoken of above, were not employed at all, this would be sufficient) by this might earth be quickly burnt up—Heavens melted—and creation blotted out : woe to the man that unprepared meets this flame !

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* Matthew xxiv. 29. † Revelations vi. 14. ‡ 1 Corinthians iii. 13. § Mal. i. 6.

THUS shall the lightnings flash; And shall no thunders roar? Nothing more certain. For this day, in a special sense, they were made: for this day are those thunders kept that none can understand: and then shall all be fired off: shall roll without cessation from the highest Heaven—with majesty more awful than when rebellious angels were thence, of old, hurled down.—Hark! immortals—hark that dreadful sound—peal on peal, as it breaks from every low'ring cloud, mingled with the roarings of the affrighted ocean—the groans of bursting caverns—the clatterings of wasted bones—the hideous murmurs of the quaking earth, convulsed in her last pangs—the yell of devils—and the dreadful shrieks of damned sinners—but louder than them all, the trump of GOD! Oh dreadful scene! shelter, dear JESUS shelter—nature faints—the immortal spirit totters at the sight!

THE LORD shall descend in thunders—“with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, with the trump of GOD:”—the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise.”—’till even they that are entombed shall hear and come forth to enquire, what power can knock so loud.—It is “the voice of the Son of GOD”—No less could make them live—Angels shall be dispatched before him, to give the dread alarm to sleeping worlds. For this that trumpet sounds—sounds far otherwise than that at *Sinai*; with knell more awful than if all the elements, drawn up in array, had fallen on each other, and were just now engaged in mortal combat: the strongest blast Omnipotence itself hath ever raised: I need not bid you harken; it strikes all ears in Heaven, earth and hell—awakes the silent dead—and sets universal nature trembling: this dreadful clangour, with a shriller note than that of ten

* 1 Thessalonians iv. 16.

thousand clarions together, shall rouse the sleeping dust: and you, my friends—even *you*, to whom his charming voice, in loving accents, speaks in vain to-day—whose ear no present sound from Heaven does pierce to purpose—even *you* shall hear it—and if deaf till then, shall hear with dread: O sirs! in the terrors of it, let me persuade you to be wise betimes—Anticipate the horrors of this hour: and flee—flee to the refuge under JESUS' wings; O flee whilst yet you may, from all this coming wrath.

SUCH circumstances are the smallest part of what we are taught to look for as the attendants of this dreadful day. Thus “will the LORD JESUS be revealed from Heaven.” But for what end all this pomp? What important cause employs so much the majesty of Heaven? What is the business of this grand advent?

To consider this, brings to the
 II. d. section of this discourse.—It is, O hear it, sons of men, it is to JUDGMENT! already it has claimed your notice, that the unequal distribution of good and evil in this life, would leave the goodness, righteousness, and purity of GOD in the dark, were this the only issue of all things. The particular judgment of each departed soul, which the moment after death, sends it to a lasting mansion suited to its nature, would justify the ways of GOD to man: but all this would not vindicate his government to waiting worlds, who see not private judgments; nor silence the reproaches of Heaven's malicious foes. Hence this day has been appointed to manifest to all intelligents at once, the perfect rectitude of all he did. Although a state of trial did require variety of *fortune*; and, for a moment, the brightest fate lay clouded; yet an eternity awaits; in it shall all things be set right. Yes, the obscurity ceases at its first approach; and through in-

terminable ages, the holiness and justice of the sovereign shall be declared pure by every subject's final doom: For this purpose, at the dreadful crisis here considered, all worlds shall be summoned to behold—while angels and men are called to judgment—publicly tried—and a sentence past on each, which all rational natures must acknowledge right.

NOR shall the souls of men alone appear; their bodies too, must be produced; these very bodies that have borne you to God's house to-day. Be not surprised, my brethren, at this assertion; I readily grant our bodies in this life, like the prophet's golden lamps,* are in perpetual flux, ever shifting old materials for new; and, like a running stream, we cannot see them *twice* in all respects the same; nor is it necessary that all the particles, of which our bodies have consisted from first to last, be raised again; then would they resemble mountains more than men; any one sett of these constituents is the body; and it ought to be remarked, there are essential *stamina* that still remain unchanged, from the unborn embryo to the hoary head entombed; these are laid in the grave—these raised at that day, clothed with whatever suit of matter they had worn in life, whether the ashes lodged with them in the same pit, or (what is not impossible) some of the atoms they had deposited in every stage of life, now gathered and conjoined with these, are yet that very body that had lived, and breathed, and walked on earth: if not the very same, it is no resurrection, a new creation only; nor would the justice of that unspotted tribunal ever consent to reward one body more than it could one soul, for the services and sufferings of another; far less consistent would it be to put an innocent, a new-created frame to endless

* Zechariah iv. 2, 11.

torture for the sins committed by another, that, if it shall exist at all, exists only as senseless earth, and feels not the general wreck of nature in which it mingles.

NOR is the raising the same body at all impossible ; that all-piercing eye, to which our substance long before our birth, to which our every thought, whilst but a forming, lies quite naked, can easily distinguish dust from dust : that mighty voice that spoke the *fiat* when all worlds arose, can without pain recall each severed atom to its proper body—though scattered by winds—washed away by waves—and separated to either pole ; though rotten in the dust, grown up in vegetables ; and these, eaten by men, wrought into garments, or burnt as our common fuel ; though devoured by animals, which fall a prey to the teeth of animals more fierce than themselves, and the bodies of these last becoming human food, are blended with some other frames that must be raised as well as they ; yet, by the hand that built them out of nothing at the first, shall all that is their own be now brought back, and an immortal structure raised from these materials, more glorious, or frightful, than ever flesh beheld.

OF this, nature affords a variety of emblems—the springing of a seed that was dead and buried in the earth—the revival of the plant in spring, that seemed totally destroyed by the winter's frost, may daily give the blush to the most labored scruples of the infidel with regard to resurrection :—with a good grace then may the Apostle challenge men to say, “Why it should be thought a thing impossible that GOD should raise the dead,”* when he had the doctrine proved by facts : he need but let the notorious instances of the children at *Shunem*† and *Sarepta*‡—the daughter of

* Acts xxvi. 8. † 2 Kings iv. 35. ‡ 1 Kings xvii. 22.

fairus§—the widow's son at *Nain*||—a *Dorcas*,* or a *Lazarus*,† speak plainly for themselves—he need only turn them to the writings of *Moses*, *Daniel* and *Job*, to convince them this doctrine was no novelty‡—yea, might make their own eyes their teachers by what they daily see.

THOUGH these same bodies shall all be raised again—yet, in very different circumstances; both saints and sinners shall be revived by Omnipotence; but the resurrection of the former, is owing to a secret energy from that of CHRIST, reaching the bodies that, by covenant, had been united to himself in a bond which death could not untie; just as the vital influence is diffused from the head, down through the members of all this mortal frame—the resurrection of the wicked is the effect of the absolute power of GOD, exercised by CHRIST over his enemies, for their destruction, as an appendix to his mediatorial office: both shall be raised *strong* (stronger than any material body in the world) *immortal*, *incorruptible*, *incapable* of using meat, drink, apparel, or any sensual object; beyond the reach of aliment, digestion—circulation, or (with respect to saints at least) any gravitation to weigh them down: But Oh the difference! The saints are raised *spiritual*, not that they are changed into spirits; then they could not be bodies in any sense at all; but with as much refinement as bodies can receive; though that shall make them differ in appearance from their present selves, more than the finest lawn can differ from the earthen seed it sprung from;—more than the clearest crystal can from the ashes it is made of—yea, more than yonder sun, which is but perishing matter more refined, can differ from the mud that incom-

§ Mark v. 41. || Luke vii. 11, 15. * Acts ix. 40. † John xi. 39, 44. ‡ Luke xx. 37, 38. § Daniel xii. 2. Job xix. 26.

modes the streets; from this spirituality it is presumed their bodies will be so *light* as, like our thoughts at present, they may move (on God's behests) through future worlds, swifter than lightning darts across the globe.—

2. *Immortal*, incapable of sickness—weariness—or pain*—fortified to bear an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory; fit to be eternally employed in acting for, beholding of, and singing praises to the God that is all their joy; and that without supply of nourishment from any thing created; they live on God alone, as well as in him for evermore.†

3. *Glorious*, as the soul, at entering into Glory, must be stripped of all the rags of filthiness—corruption—imperfection that were about it in this life; so when these bodies are about to be received there, they must be purged of every defect they labored under here; infirmities that *offend* the body, are no less incapable of an entrance there, than those that hurt the soul: † *Jacob* will not there go halting—nor *Mephibosheth* lame—the eyes of *Isaac* will not be dim—nor *Leab's* tender; no sores, no blemishes, no deformities, nor decrepitness at all shall be among them; no dwarfs of immortality—no giants there of monstrous size—no feeble infant of a span—no wrinkled face—nor heads drooping with the weight of years:—no faded sickly aspect—no withered or uncomely feature in the general assembly of these first born. All *comely* in the bloom of endless youth; and though we have no ground to say there will not be some diversity of looks and statures, by which, as it is in faces on the earth, each will be easily distinguished from the rest, yet it is perhaps most probable none will be advanced beyond full maturity—none fall below it. But,

* Revelations xxi. 4. † Matthew xxii. 30. ‡ Revelations xxi. 27. Isaiah xi. 9.

IT must not be forgotten that the quintessence of their beauty is *the image of their Lord*; though in degree the difference between his comeliness and theirs, will be greater than between the noon-day sun and the dimmest twinkling star, yet it is no uncertainty that every one of them shall be fashioned like his splendid body*—brightened with his brightness—*glorious* with reflection of the beams of his glory; “they behold him with open face”—the rays of his beauty strike not on them as sun-beams do upon opaque bodies—but as upon a lively mirror that is thereby made to shine like them, and reflect them back on every beholder; thus “they are changed into his image, from glory to glory:” † This it is that makes all “the righteous to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father” ‡—but not all with equal splendor; since all their beauty springs from the impression made on them by his, the nearer they advance to him that is the fountain, the great centre of it, the greater impression they must needs receive, and the more gloriously they must needs shine; grace and glory differ only in degree; the moral image of the LORD here begun in the souls of men in regeneration, and gradually increased as the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work proceeded, is but the same principle with which made perfect, they shine in Heaven; and, which, as the occasional cause, produces this external lustre on the bodies there, that have been instruments of the exercises by which it was increased here: it follows that the more of this image any person has obtained in life, the nearer to the LORD he comes at death; and (since the doctrine of the constant increase of glory in the saints in Heaven *before the day of judgment*, may justly be disputed though after it, that doctrine seems clear to me) by consequence

* Phil. iii. 21. † 2. Corinthians iii. 18. ‡ Matth. xiii. 43.

the nearer to him he shall be stationed at the resurrection; the more grace therefore any man has exercised here, the more beautiful he shall appear at that day. The traces of the graces he had exercised, though all now swallowed up in love and joy—the memorials of the works of charity and faith in which he had taken pleasure—the scars of persecution borne for CHRIST, though now the brightest spots upon him—all—all shall appear to enhance the splendors of the Christian by his Saviour's side:—thus, though every one is as glorious at that day as his capacity will admit, yet shall it rise in some degree above the rest, “as one star differeth from another star in glory.”*

—But ah! the horrid contrast to all this that glooms in the appearance of the rising rebel-crew: marks of immortality, it is true, their bodies bear: but marks that prove them engines only of immortal tortures—their strength does only contribute to make them capable of greater pain: O sinners! glory no longer in the fairest face—cease the daily contemplation of “the idol in the glass”—quit the ill-spent drudgery of pampering the rotten carcase: for here it issues; as saints are raised in the image of their King; so all the damned appear in the likeness of the gloomy prince of darkness—stript of all the external beauty that was upon them—beauty which many have abused as a means to bring them there; blackened with all the deformity of hell: Where now is the sparkling poison of the wanton eye? Altered into the baleful image of horror and despair—the very picture of the ugliest fiend below: wherever they roll their eye-balls, their ghastly looks are telling all within them. The very visage of the sinner points out the favorite passion of

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* 1 Corinthians xv. 41, 42.

his soul, as strongly as if you saw the drunkard rise rolling in his vomit—the lascivious taken in the adulterous moment—the prophane lips just stretched open with their usual blasphemies—the thief caught in the nick with his fingers in his neighbour's coffers—the murderer just plunging in the fatal dagger in the dark: brought to the bar in such circumstances as these, who can wonder that some appear more direful spectres than the rest? The crimes encumbered with the greatest aggravations, put on the blackest hue; so shall the sinner, loaded with them, make the most monstrous figure at that day: horrid pre-eminence!

BUT all—Can you behold it first?—All appear like incarnate devils; What haggared ugliness? What obscene forms?—What blackness?—What monstrous shapes are here? What malice—rage—despond—envy? What shocking—hateful——but I must forbear!—For what tongue can utter? What ear can bear to listen? “O my soul! come not thou into their secret;—unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united.”*

BUT to recover from this digression, whatever differences in their forms, yet, “in the same flesh,” raised by a power like that which made them, “shall saints see GOD:”† these very bodies, that in this life are sin's devoted slaves, shall justly feel sin's wages in the other. To raise them then—to call them from the grave, is one of the works of this important day.‡ Angels, for this, are dispatched from on high, to have them ready when He comes. An invitation this, you cannot fit: a call the deafest ear shall hear!

THE human congregation being brought together, we are instructed a public trial shall ensue; the Judge's

* Genesis xlix. 6. † Job xix. 26. ‡ Matthew xiii. 41. Matthew xxiv. 31.

eye, piercing through every being, discovers, in a moment, all that men would fain secrete : the standard of a perfect law is now erected ; and to it all mankind are brought : it is none other than the moral law, one naturally binding every moral agent as soon as created, previous to any revelation—a law that cannot pass neglected one moment of its subjects being ; nor call for less than perfect obedience in every moment ; nor overlook one thought, or word, or act in the accompt : nor doom the least defect to any less than a penalty that is infinite ; a law whose binding force can never change, before good and evil come together, and the awful throne of the great law-giver is overset ;* by this standard, then, shall every man be measured ; the man who, weighed in this impartial balance, is found wanting, who, not conformed to this upright rule, hath nought to answer for his obliquity, shall meet the doom it has denounced.

THERE is, originally, in nature's volume, sufficient promulgation of this law to all mankind ; and if our crimes effaced the notices of duty we are thereby favored with, our obligations to it cannot be in the least abated by violating them. But as GOD has been graciously pleased to renew these lost discoveries to some by revelation, it is reasonable they should be responsible for their superior advantages : by the several editions of this moral law, natural or revealed, Mosaic or Christian, they who enjoyed them shall be judged : † and unless they have taken shelter in the blood of him, who died to satisfy all its demands for sinful mortals, it will be found that “ every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before GOD : ” ‡ and

* Psalm xix. 7. Romans vii. 12, 14. Galatians iii. 10. James ii. 10. Romans vi. 23. Matthew v. 18. † Romans ii. 12. ‡ Romans iii. 19.

it is the rule of that impartial day, that every man shall receive according to his works :—This leads us to observe, that

It is to be considered as the great errand of the LORD JESUS, in this appearance, to assign to every man in righteousness, a portion for eternity ; the righteous and the wicked may live in near connexion in the present life, just as tares and wheat may grow together in the same field ; but now all masks are taken off—hypocrites are stripped of the gilded covering—their rottenness appears to all : and as sheep and goats, which feed on different soils, are usually divided into separate flocks ; so shall the faint and sinner now part company :* however hard to distinguish them with our pur-blind eyes, the first glance of the Judge shall point each to his proper companions : a total separation shall then be made ; a separation that is endless :—How many dear relatives shall then take a last look each of the other ? How many too indulgent parents shall then see darling children hurried to the left ? How many married pairs shall part, to meet, and love no more ?—And then the books are opened !† O ! my brethren, What various emotions may now be seen in that assembly ? Here joy—there terror—here despair—there extatic rapture :—How different their coming sentence may easily be read in their faces.

THE book of GOD'S remembrance first,‡ O ! hearer, think, How canst thou bear the opening of that volume—where all that can concern thee stands fair recorded ?§ It is answered in every tittle of a book that is thine own, viz. that of CONSCIENCE ; whose secret records, locked far within the breast, unseen per-

* Matthew xxv. 32. † Revelations xx. 12. ‡ Mal. iii. 16.
§ Romans ii. 15.

haps by him who was their theme, are opened now : those very pages where not a word appeared before, like secret ink, brought to the fire, are legible to all—pages well filled indeed ! and every day a page !—These two, like faithful witnesses in every thing agreeing, jointly give in a valid testimony of all thy thoughts, thy words, thy works ; each rightly stated as they are found conformed to the law of GOD, or otherwise. There all the dispensations of GOD's providence to thee are awfully noted down ; afflictions, warnings, privileges, mercies, opportunities, together with the improvement or the contrary that thou hast made, as truth declares.

THE book of GOD's law comes next ; it publishes before all worlds its purity and justice, the perfect obedience it requires, the dreadful penalty denounced on each transgression ; each tittle here must be fulfilled, or all the threatened load endured ; with this must every record of the former two be then compared—and by this judged right or wrong : and, O ! the dreadful issue : one single breach condemns :—all men are now found sinners : and thus are all the sons of *Adam* brought in condemned—not one justified here : the whole human race at one stroke cut off forever !*

BUT was there not a ransom found for guilty souls ? Yes. A ransom full, sufficient, suitable for every case ; a ransom free to all who would lay hold of it for life ; whoever is possessed of it shall yet be safe : perhaps the convict has fled for refuge to this hope—perhaps he is in CHRIST : This must be tried before the final sentence is made up :—and for that purpose,

—RECOURSE is had to the book of the Gospel : the mystery of grace is here unfolded—the precious pro-

* Romans iii. 20.

mises to all believers here recorded—the many calls and invitations—the many offers of peace and CHRIST, the many days of grace—the sermons—sacraments—admonitions—reproofs with which each one has been favored in life, are here read over; immediately annexed to each, your acceptance or refusal is entered on the record; if the former, then the righteousness of CHRIST supplies sufficient answers to all the charges in the other books—this owns the debt, and pays it all—and then the accompt, thus fully settled, is publicly crossed out; and all your growth in grace and labor of love, which you had long forgotten—and readily acknowledge now is not yours, but the work of GOD's own grace in you—yet all openly stand forth as so many witnesses to prove your title to that righteousness, and each shall be a jewel in your crown: * but if the latter, if all the offers of CHRIST have been rejected; if not a word is found in any page here to attest the happy hour of your espousals to the blessed JESUS, nothing remains to hinder justice to seek its own of you; and then all the curses denounced in the book of the law, shall be poured out in unmixed fury, in just proportion to the charges laid against you in that of GOD's remembrance, so loudly attested by the records of your own consciences.

No further evidence is needed to fix the eternal states of saint and sinner, yet to leave the matter beyond all hesitation, the Judge's hand, in sight of all the multitude, lays the book of life wide open; of all the denizens of *New-Jerusalem*; where, written with atoning blood, that of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," we may behold the names of all believers: O! now look in, my Brethren;—search for your own: if they are there, they are legi-

* Revelations xiv. 13.

ble—the eyes of faith, even here below, can sometimes read them in large red capitals; the gospel-book may give the notice of it: Hast thou accepted CHRIST? If so, thy glory rests secure; this clears at once thy right—nor man, nor devil shall ever rob thee of thine inheritance: if not, the silence of the book of life fully confirms thy doom; and all the world shall see thy misery just.*

NOT that there are real books then to be examined, that CHRIST may be enabled to judge aright.—No. He needeth not those helps which the weakness of our minds obliges us to use. These are figures chosen on purpose to bring down this mighty scene to our conceptions; by painting it in colours drawn from the well known process of courts of justice here below: figures the most significant that can be; they clearly shew that the wisdom of JEHOVAH, necessarily knowing all things, shall, at a glance, discover the characters and states of all in Judgment, in such a light, as all worlds must say is true; shall point out, as with a sun beam, every thought, and word, and deed to themselves, and all around, beyond all possible denial; so that to every sentence passed at that day, the consciences of all shall say *Amen*. However, the trials being over, and endless dooms pronounced without appeal, How shall the congregation be divided?—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment—those into life eternal.”†—Hence it appears,

THAT the business of this awful appearance is “to take vengeance on them that know not GOD, and obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST;”—all who have never known him spiritually, by an experimental discovery of his nature and perfections, made by himself to the eye of an awakened and re-

* Revelations xx. 12, 15: † Matthew xxv. 46.

newed mind; giving it a right idea of GOD, and especially displaying his "glory in the face of JESUS CHRIST;"* all who are without this, and so must be deemed utterly void of any true knowledge of GOD's nature, his existence, word, works, or any thing about him, shall then feel the wrath they did not fear: all who have lived and died in willful ignorance of GOD, even down to those who have sinned against the light of nature, when they had none better; much more than these taller sinners *here*, who regard not the gospel though published in their ears:—Go on, ye prophane, laugh at religion, despise its offered grace, call it cant-enthusiasm—sick-brain fiction—idle bugbears, and all you will—cast off all restraint—and *live like men*, as you are pleased to call the life of devils—yea rather that of brutes; but know ye, this day, from the LORD, "your damnation lingereth not!"† Long hath an injured GOD borne with your impieties, whilst some scoff at revelation—and deny futurity; others go on in sin, and say, "It is no harm; GOD surely must have mercy on the soul himself has made; he could not make a spirit to be damned; it is but a little we have enjoyed ourselves; time enough to turn from our pleasures yet—we must—we will indulge them now; our will shall be our master, let him hurt us if he can." Miserable wretches! you think GOD altogether such as yourselves;‡ look to the text and tremble; he can and will take vengeance, sudden vengeance, on all such, except they quickly repent.§

NOR shall they fare better who profess to believe the Gospel, and name the name of CHRIST, but in works deny both it and him: that faith that is sincere will purify the heart,|| and so produce new obedience;

* 2 Corinthians iv. 6. † 2 Peter ii. 3. ‡ Psalm l. 21, 22.

§ Luke xiii. 3. || Acts xv. 9.

CHRIST declares himself the author of eternal salvation *only* to them that obey him ;* for without such fruits faith is dead : † Ho all ye formalists ! ye false professors, hypocrites, the sharpest thunders of divine vengeance are levelled at your disguised breasts ! flee now to CHRIST ; confess your secret guilt ; cast your soul on him immediately ; accept his offered grace ; or you shall perish in the day of his fierce anger.— However long it may delay, all such shall surely be *punished* at last.

BUT how ? What is the doom ? And when inflicted ? That awful word, DEPART, does in a moment fix it beyond a possibility of change. It is no trifling penalty ; it is suited justly to sin's desert ; and therefore called “ destruction :” *destruction*, not of their beings (this O how desirable to them !) but of their bliss : it is banishment from him in whom alone true happiness is found ; banishment to endless distance, beyond the reach of every pitying look ; it is imprisonment in total darkness ; whose highest comforts are to be bound in the iron fetters of intolerable anguish ; wrapped in sheets of liquid fire ; torn by the relentless “ worm that never dies,” trampled, racked, yea perpetually ground to pieces by the teeth of devils, their only companions ; to be “ weeping, wailing, and gnashing the teeth,” without the least remission of their sorrows—without “ one drop of water to cool the tongue,” amidst incessant draughts of boiling brimstone ; yea to be ingulphed in the doleful lake of fire, and therein, without a moment's respite, sinking, like massy leaden globes, towards that bottom, which eternal sinking, under a load of boundless wrath, can never find. Oh dreadful doom ! where pain without a

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* Hebrews v. 9. † James ii. 17.

pause, in the uttermost extreme a GOD can inflict, torments the whole man, soul and body.

BUT is it for a day? Nay, did it end with years that number thousands for every moment since the birth of worlds, years that measure millions for each grain the globe, the universe converted into sand, could number, how glad would be the tidings! But ages multiplied as often into these as there are moments in that number, ages thus numerous beyond conception, will see their torments but just beginning to begin—the end as distant as at first; the text has said it; it is *everlasting*: despair ye worlds in woe—despair of any period to your torture. It never sees an end—Never! How sinks the soul at this most killing sound? It is the hell of hells. But wishing is in vain—it cannot be otherwise, for GOD is eternal—this is his unchanging wrath—it falls on an immortal being—a being whose sufferings, because finite, never can be satisfying—a being beyond the reach of mercy or of grace. Ah terrible!

BUT what aggravates this torment is, that it is not only exclusion “from the presence of the LORD;” but the very punishment comes from his presence; his immediate presence discovered, with a full sense of their own contrariety to this all-pervading, all-surrounding GOD, is the very instrument of the ruin of the wicked at this day; himself inflicts it by himself. The glorious brightness of CHRIST’S appearance, fraught with God-like power, we have already seen, is to every thing unlike itself, “a consuming fire.” This banishes the wicked into hell, and kindles about them tophet’s flames. The “glory of his power,” therefore, is here said to be the fountain of their woe; this is an Hebraism for his *glorious power*; and the words might as properly be translated *the power of his glory*. His power shall be magnified in magnifying holiness

in their eternal punishment : if so, woe ! woe ! woe ! to every one that falls under this awful frown : miserable beyond all thought, the man who then is found not to have "known GOD, nor obeyed the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST !" Sirs ! Is this case yours ? O ! fly to JESUS now by faith ; "acquaint now yourselves with him, and be at peace ;" or you may expect your eyes shall no more see good.*

FAR other is the portion of the godly in that day. Lift up your heads, O Christians ; all that has been said need give you no dismay. CHRIST's errand to the world is joy to you. The book of remembrance, it is true, shews reason large enough on every page, for your destruction ; and you really stand condemned by the sentence of the Law ; but the Gospel-book seals your acquittance ; there it is found you are Believers. You have been powerfully awakened by the Holy Ghost, to see yourselves undone : your hearts have felt the horrid evil of your sins—and bled in deepest anguish for their abhorred guilt : as you were realizing your doleful doom—owning its justice—and, as it were, just falling—sinking under it ; whilst, by the rueful taste of some present bitter drops, you were sadly anticipating the approaching shower, then did light break forth upon your souls, just as of old it did upon the darksome undigested heap of worlds unformed : † CHRIST, your morning sun, then shewed his face ; with raptures you beheld its beauty : the sight attracted all your astonished hearts—you flew to the magnet—and, stript of all your righteousness—and changed, by a new birth, into the divine nature, you did stedfastly cling to the beloved centre : willingly you embraced the offered Saviour ; and in his righteousness you have resolved to stand. This faith has

* Job xxii. 21. † Genesis i. 2, 3.

not been fruitless ; it has purified you from every lust— adorned you with every christian grace ; and kept them in growing exercise, in all the duties of morality and religion. You are found *saints*, not in name alone : your natures are renewed—your hearts cleansed, filled with the love of CHRIST ; and thence the conversation of *a saint* has issued. Hail ye highly favored of the LORD ! the sentence, on the evidence of those works that proved the grace of GOD in truth, in you, prevents all fear : it is “ Come ye blessed to your Father’s arms.” Transporting words ! Great was your joy at meeting an open entrance into Heaven at death ; but now that triumph is eclipsed : the reproach of all your tribulations, crosses, persecutions, is now wiped off—your former pains are all forgotten ; death is swallowed up in victory ; your souls now freed from every imperfection—your bodies, as you have heard, “ fashioned like to that of your exalted LORD ”—shining as the sun, by the reflection of the glory that bur- nishes in him ; hence, as his power and justice are ex- alted in the vengeance taken on every unbeliever ; so shall his love and grace, and every attribute at this day be *glorified* in the salvation of every saint : *glorified* with loudest songs of praise by the redeemed ones themselves, whilst they vie with each other who shall most display the riches of his grace ; recounting, as they sing, the wondrous steps of mercy towards them, and within them through all their lives ; publishing to every by-stander their own unworthiness—the free grace—and the glorious righteousness that saved them : and *glorified* in them, by admiring heavenly hosts ; the splendor of the members of CHRIST’s mystical body, now put on, shall not only be their own infinite bliss, but also shall redound to the honor of the head from which that splendor comes. Angels themselves shall wonder and adore, when, in the meanest saint, at that

great day, they see a work more glorious than all the worlds they ever had beheld rolling from the Almighty hand ; no wonder then if saints, thus dignified, be struck with astonishment, lost in love, and extasies of joy ; when, embraced kindly by their Judge, they triumph with him over all his enemies, and enter Heaven with Allelujahs worthy of that place.

THUS we have seen the business of that day ; O solemn period ! How grand the scene ! How tremendous the process ! We shall shortly see it. It might not be lost pains if we could here make a stand, and realize, in one view, what has been presented to our minds in these detached thoughts :—Then should we

BEHOLD the world in all the circumstances of the present day, mankind in general drowned in sensuality—securely sleeping in their lusts—living as they list ; drenched in every abomination—yet assuring themselves of lasting peace ; “ pulling down their barns and building larger,”* each taking his brother by the throat, saying, Give place to me, and singing the old requiem to his soul, “ Soul take thine ease ; thou hast much store laid up for many years ; † when Lo ! a sudden and unusual alteration is seen in the air ; it thunders from afar : how fast it approaches ! enlarging, deepening, one peal no sooner over, than another more alarming bursts over our astonished heads ; the mightiest winds, now rushing from all points at once, presage some fearful desolation ; whilst the thick repeated flashes throb through the sturdiest hearts ; but Oh ! here is something worse—the sun is darkened at once—the moon has lost its light—and just appears like a globe of blood—the stars are gone—universal nature is convulsed ‡—Ah me ! the earth, how strong it quakes ! it rends to pieces ! But hark that

* Luke xii. 18. † Luke xii. 19, 20. ‡ Matthew xxiv. 29.

dreadful note poured from above—it shakes the whole creation: amazing blast! the heavenly hosts did never listen to its equal.—

It is the TRUMP OF GOD! and speaks a language all shall understand; AWAKE YE SLEEPING DUST—ARISE, YE DEAD, AND COME TO JUDGMENT.— Words big with majesty and terror; their sound is gone to the world's end; and echoes life into the senseless earth: For see the awful scene that follows.— Earth pouring out the buried dust in trembling convulsions—tombs bursting—charnels rattling—severed atoms flying to their kindred clay—bone to its bone—thunders roaring—lightnings flashing—rocks rending—Heavens melting—nature fainting—and the Judge coming, to meet with him all worlds now fast preparing!

BUT not with equal speed; the dead in CHRIST claim precedence here: * their souls the Judge has brought down with himself; † glad they return to find their beloved dust, and flushed with joy, the waiting corpses they had left, receive their animating partners, delighted each in each: the body refined, purified, immortalized, will now be embraced (O with what rapture!) by the happy soul; and in what mutual extasies will the sleeping machine then open its long closed eyes, break its confinement, shake off its clay, awake to the wonders of that glorious hour, to sleep no more forever! How astonishing this sight to the generation then found alive on earth! to feel the ground heaving under their feet—see the human forms begin to shew themselves in the opened bowels of the teeming earth—some hairy scalps appearing in motion—some heads just shooting above the trembling surface—some far fetched limbs dropt down where the

* 1 Thessalonians iv. 16. † 1 Thessalonians iv. 14.

beholder stands, whilst clattering bones, now seeking their ancient stations, wafted in shoals on every hastening gale, at once stun the ear, and darken the prospect as far as eye can reach; see some half raised—some started to their feet—and crowding in for room among the living. But O! what joy appears fresh in the face of every raised faint!

ANGELS, dispatched “to gather the elect from the four winds,” stand ready on the spot to embrace and entertain them. If *Gabriel's hail* was once so sweet, whilst in this distant state, how shall the souls of faints exult, when saluted by whole hosts of well-known glorious Spirits, thus, “Arise, dear faints, long loved, and watched with tender pleasure, ye highly favored of the LORD, let us embrace you, and bid you welcome to the honors of this day: long have you been detained in trial; long labored under various afflictions—long groaned being burdened—and long maintained a warfare against sin and hell. But now the scene is shifted, your LORD is come down to take you to his arms, and avenge your injuries upon the persecutor's head; He is come! He is come! and stays for you yonder: He has sent us now to finish all the work of care assigned us over you since first you had a being, by calling you to meet him, and bearing you upon our wings to his embrace. Come see your LORD in splendor; a splendor like to which he soon will make yourselves appear. You shall see him as he is; for where he is you shall also be.” O sweet intelligence!

BUT sweetened more, when in their way they meet with their beloved friends. “The faints shall all be gathered together:”* but gathered so as may best serve to make each one's bliss to be the joy of all a-

* 2-Theſſalonians ii. 1.

round—as well as to improve each faint as a witness in the case of him that is next; hence families, parishes, kingdoms, may justly be conceived to be classed together as far as their state will now permit. O! the congratulations of husbands and wives; of parents and children; of friends who mutually helped each other to this joy; yea of strangers with whom communion has been held below, although never seen face to face—of ancient worthies—ancient saints.—How sweet the meeting of those who suffered together here for the LORD's sake! How delightful the recollection of all their trials, persecutions and labors of love! “And is this the reward of our poor, trifling and unworthy services? Is this the issue of our light afflictions? O wonderful grace! O wonderful, wonderful Saviour!” is their language.

THE children of *Abraham* being thus all assembled, the Heavens open! Light unsufferable issues forth in one glorious dreadful sea! and, higher than we can glance a look, the Ancient of Days, the source of life and death, appears in all his majesty: all Heaven shines forth in all its pomps; loud thunders roll, and flashing lightnings play around his train: angelic hosts attend in glorious files—each to his part, sounding his high praises in sweet celestial strains. Swift and majestic he descends: but see, far above the region of the clouds the triumph makes a stand: where, on an ærial base, richly emblazoned with the ensigns of the GOD, as he had already shewn them through all his works, a cloud of Glory, like to that the tabernacle once contained, now fashioned by divine skill into the model of a Throne of state, is speedily “pitched down.”* There the King of kings shall take his seat for Judgment. O glorious, dreadful sight!

* † Daniel vii. 9.

THITHER are this great assembly wafted up; and, O transporting thought! now placed on his right hand, and, on them all, his propitious eye sheds joy and life wherever it turns: sure earnest of their coming reception!

BUT O the contrast! Look down and see miserable worlds approaching, for the trumpet continues still sounding, and the wicked still rising, rising with reluctant horror and amazement, 'till all are delivered up to Judgment: see then, the howling millions come; when hell opens again its mouth, and spews up its contents: they come, dragged by tormenting devils, and by them forced into their hated, dreaded carcases; carcases more horrid and loathsome now than even in the grave. How bitter will the entrance into these be to the souls that left them, pained at the separation! How unwelcome their reception, and how dreadful, to the trembling corpse! What dire revengeful looks—what accusations—curses—sad accostings may we reasonably imagine now pass between them? Devils unveiled shall meet them at the grave's mouth; no more to sooth their consciences by the blandishments of vice; no more to whisper peace, and ensure the utmost secrecy; but, by cruel mockings, insults, and tormentings, to manifest their will and power; by these ministers of darkness, the tribes of woe are dragged to meet that Judge, whom both alike do hate and dread.

BUT, in assembling for that purpose, the reasons before laid down, induce me here to add, that every one joins his old select companions: and ere he is aware, he finds himself plunged into the croud of all his cursed relatives, friends, acquaintance, partners in impiety; for this is a day when none shall be parted from this sort of society of which his heart has hither-

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to made choice. Will this be an alleviation of the sorrows of the day? Ah No! These seasons are no more. All former fondness now turned to hatred, spight, malice, how unwillingly they come together! They hate to look each other in the face; what horrid salutations yell through all this wretched mob! Cursing at first sight, some their too negligent parents, others a husband or a wife, assistants in their guilt—some a darling child—others a dear companion, and every one his birth, his folly, himself; and especially the day in which he got the first acquaintance with those he finds around him. These mutually staring, and stared at, with gnashing teeth, and faces haggard as hell, they come, tearing themselves and one another, to THE BAR; but mingle no more with faints: they never loved their company as such, and now they shall have done with that incumbrance forever: they stand off—stand like criminals indeed—set aside on the left hand by themselves.*

ALL now are met. The concluding trump, commands all worlds to universal silence; when O! The Books are all unsealed! in presence of the whole concourse, the mighty Voice that spoke them into being, speaks again. His words are first addressed to his faints.—A strict account of them is taken: “all shall appear,” says the Apostle: the faint as well as the unpardoned sinner: all too “shall give account”†—shall be tried by the same rule—tried by their works: though this mode of trial ensures them condemnation by the law, yet it is the only way to prove them justified by the Gospel; they are tried by works that they may appear justified by Grace; facts are called for; and every thought, and word, and work, each in its place, is now produced to light. Their works are

* Matthew xxv. 32, 33. † 2 Corinthians v. 10. Romans xiv. 12.

now divulged in evidence of their interest in CHRIST, and qualification for eternal bliss. It has been thought by many sound divines, that no mention will be made of the sins of saints at all : that being already pardoned, and, as it were, blotted out of GOD's remembrance, they shall no more be brought into the saints' account; Satan not suffered to accuse the brethren then ; none shall presume to lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect :* but whether this be the case or not, it is certain, the naming of their sins will then be neither to their fear nor shame :—the Judge himself is advocate for them ; “ guilty of this, says he, and all is true, I found them—but here, ye wondering worlds, see here the scars that shew I bled ; I bled for them ; for these same sins I yielded to be slain.” O wonderful mercy ! The blood and righteousness of CHRIST answers for every charge ; answers to his greater honor, and their greater joy, than if no mention had been made of sin : Their faith, and love, and repentance, and all its fruits, since first the Spirit of GOD had changed their hearts, and brought them to CHRIST's feet, are now examined, to make their title clear to absolution by virtue of his death. And to discover the different degrees of glory they are ripened for, their former measures of preparation must be enquired into : now all their graces, talents and improvements ; all their works of justice to the oppressed—mercy to the poor—sympathy with the afflicted—all their labors of love, beneficence and charity to all mankind—even from giving all their goods to feed the poor, down to a single mite cast into the LORD's treasury—one word spoken for GOD—the smallest hint dropped for the conviction or edification of a soul, or “ a cup of cold water imparted to a disciple :”

* Romans viii. 33.

all their prayers, tears, and secret conflicts—all their afflictions, sorrows, persecutions, for CHRIST and his cause: all—all are now made public to the universe in full assembly:—the warm zeal—disinterested benevolence—divine love that was the spring of each, are all laid open—their injured characters now at last fully cleared—and such notice taken of their poor services as then astonishes themselves—and each article (so rich the grace that fixes the rewards) enhances the splendor of their crowns of Glory evermore.

LIFT up then your heads with joy, O Christians! Heretofore you have groaned for sin; now shall you exult in perfect love: you have longed for CHRIST; now he is come; no separation, no withdrawing more shall you ever mourn: you have suffered for him below; now shall you be glorified with him forever; and you shall find that “these light afflictions, which were but for a moment, have all along been working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”*—For hear your sentence, nay, rather your invitation to eternal bliss, sweetly distilling from his lips that bought it with his blood. “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Come with me to yonder bright world—to be forever in my presence—to dwell under my kindest smiles—to eat and drink with me at my table—to lay your heads upon my breast—your very souls upon my bosom—to be as glorious as my power can make you—as happy as the blood of GOD could buy—Come, enter now your loving master’s joy—and live and reign as Priests and Kings to me forever and ever.”—Hark the joyful sounds! All Heaven is ringing with their *Allelujabs!* wonder, love, joy, extasy, all join their acclamations,

* 2 Corinthians iv. 17.

Grace ! Grace ! Sovereign Grace ! resounds on every tongue. Angelic choirs now raise their highest notes ; now try their skill on all their harps of gold.

HIS words are works. No sooner had he said, than crowns of Glory, robes of heavenly splendor, palms of victory, did visibly adorn them all ; acquitted thus with honor, and accepted now as friends, they take their seats on the bench, in the quality of assessors near the Judge's throne ; " every man in his own order," the Apostles' seats, no doubt, exalted above others ; then every saint according to the measure of grace improved, and service done for GOD, by doing, or by suffering ; but " all the saints shall judge the world : " * the meanest of them shall be raised to this honor : † they shall not only be present to see the wickedness of men discovered, and give in evidence upon the trial, but shall approve their condemnation, and shout a glad *Amen* to every sentence.

WILL this be pleasant to the wicked to behold ? How will they feel at seeing those despised, persecuted, worthless creatures in their esteem, thus altered, and thus honored ? Our eyes shall answer this for us ; for see that multitude—how they gnaw their tongues for pain ! ‡ How they already gnash their teeth with rage, and burst their hearts with envy at the sight ! How earnestly they wish to tear CHRIST'S lambs to pieces ! But O !

THE Judge turns to the left in righteous fury ; and calls to all the howling crouds, now classed in bundles § fitted for the flames, " Draw near." Alas ! What trembling horrors, what dumb amazement, when, with vengeful frowns—and a voice more terrible than thousand thunders, he in determined accent, repeats

* 1 Corinthians vi. 2, 3. † Psalm cxlix. 9. ‡ Revelations xvi. 10. § Matthew xiii. 30. John xv. 6.

the challenge.—“ Draw near ye ignorant “ who know not GOD”—you are indicted, What is your defence? Draw near ye slothful and unprofitable, with all your misspent talents*—you are indicted as enemies to GOD, What is your defence? Draw near all ye neglectors of religion, and its exercises—you are indicted as self-murderers, What is your defence? Draw near all ye prayerless heads of families—you are indicted as murderers of your own children and servants, What is your defence? Draw near all ye profane swearers—blasphemers of me and my word—you are indicted for a train of treasons of the highest kind against the LORD of Hosts, What is your defence? Draw near all ye sabbath-breakers, ye absentees from ordinances—you stand indicted as robbers of GOD, What is your defence? Draw near ye scoffers at religion, its truths, and powerful influence—you are indicted for crucifying CHRIST, and pouring contempt upon the Holy Ghost, say, What is your defence? Draw near all ye persecutors of my children—you are indicted for defying the GOD of all the earth to battle, prepare now your defence. Draw near all ye licentious and intemperate, gluttons and drunkards—you stand indicted as destroyers of the work of GOD—as attempting to sink the human nature into that of brutes, and as murderers of your own souls and bodies both at once; What is your defence? † Draw near all ye adulterers, whoremongers, and lewd indulgers of your hearts in secret filthiness—you are indicted as haters of the purity, and sacrilegious defilers of the living temples of the Most High—What is your defence? Draw near all ye envious and malicious, ye covetous and proud, ye thieves and extortioners, ye

* Matthew xxv. 30, † 1 Corinthians vi. 9, 10, 11. Galatians v. 19, 20, 21. Revelations xxi. 8.

liars, slanderers and back biters, yea, and all the classes of empty meer formalists, who trusted in your civil conduct, and moral carriage; with all the sorts of painted hypocrites, loathsome to behold; come forth, and answer to the charge; ye stand indicted as rebels against the imperial crown of Heaven, and enemies to him that wears it, say, What is your defence?" O dreadful words! No more is needed for the sinner's own conviction: methinks he would be glad to pass off the stage *Condemned*, without a formal trial: but that every creature may see the grounds of each degree of woe that any criminal there receives as his respective portion; the books are open still. Each in his turn is brought forth in sight of all, and measured by the holy standard of the moral law; but every one is found *a decalogue inverted*; unlike the standard—the very contrary in every part. Now all the thoughts that passed through their breasts, each vain and idle word is charged home upon them, and not a misspent moment but enters into the account: sins of omission are little thought of now—but these are particularly dwelt upon, as we are informed in the 25th of *Matthew* by the Judge himself: How keenly then shall sins of commission, rising fresh to view, now sting the minds by which they had been long forgotten; when the Book of GOD's remembrance, loudly read in the ears of all, shall publicly proclaim the deeds of darkness the sinner thought unseen, the secret plots, the hidden scenes of vice, the lascivious or revengeful looks,* the wanton and the bitter words,† with all the wicked springs of every motion; each instance bearing its dire doom in front as it appears to public view! *Condemned, Condemned*, re-echoes from all the astonished hearers: poor souls! But O! Where

* Eccleff. xii. 14. † Matthew xii. 36. 1 Corinthians iv. 5.

is the ransom? May we not hope they have resorted to him for offered life? Perhaps some clause in the Gospel-book contains a sure reprieve. It is searched throughout. But ah! it is silent; quite silent on this head. We hear from every page what mercies have been slighted—what sabbaths—sermons—counsels were abused—what escaped dangers—what wonderful deliverances—what unseen provisions made were all despised—what afflictions, crosses, pains were kindly sent, but sent away without their errand; yea what convictions stifled—what motions of the Spirit impiously resisted—and, in short, what opportunities they have improved only as fresh occasions of discovering their despite against a crucified Saviour: but not a tittle of their taking hold of “the horns of the golden altar for a shelter.”

WILL they plead *not guilty* to the charge? Witnesses infallible are here produced. The glorious perfections of JEHOVAH that had been manifested in constant care of them through all their lives, shall now accuse and testify against them; whilst his omniscience sets all their sins in terrible battallia before them; ministers who painfully have brought them news of peace, and tendered faithfully a whole salvation, who prayed, and wept, and agonized in secret for them (O cutting thought!) must now stand forth and tell the dismal tale of a thousand efforts vain. Believing neighbors shall then be witnesses. And O alarming news! the believing husband shall give fatal evidence against the unbelieving wife—the believing wife shall not spare the unbelieving husband—parents shall then accuse their children—children their parents.—Yea the ungodly shall readily witness to each others condemnation—the greatest intimates in sin shall wink and cloke no more. What need for enlargement? Their own consciences shall be instead of

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* Matthew xxv. 32, 33. † 2 Corinthians v. 10. Romans xiv. 12.

now divulged in evidence of their interest in CHRIST, and qualification for eternal bliss. It has been thought by many sound divines, that no mention will be made of the sins of saints at all : that being already pardoned, and, as it were, blotted out of GOD's remembrance, they shall no more be brought into the saints' account; Satan not suffered to accuse the brethren then; none shall presume to lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect :* but whether this be the case or not, it is certain, the naming of their sins will then be neither to their fear nor shame :—the Judge himself is advocate for them; “ guilty of this, says he, and all is true, I found them—but here, ye wondering worlds, see here the scars that shew I bled; I bled for them; for these same sins I yielded to be slain.” O wonderful mercy! The blood and righteousness of CHRIST answers for every charge; answers to his greater honor, and their greater joy, than if no mention had been made of sin : Their faith, and love, and repentance, and all its fruits, since first the Spirit of GOD had changed their hearts, and brought them to CHRIST's feet, are now examined, to make their title clear to absolution by virtue of his death. And to discover the different degrees of glory they are ripened for, their former measures of preparation must be enquired into: now all their graces, talents and improvements; all their works of justice to the oppressed—mercy to the poor—sympathy with the afflicted—all their labors of love, beneficence and charity to all mankind—even from giving all their goods to feed the poor, down to a single mite cast into the LORD's treasury—one word spoken for GOD—the smallest hint dropped for the conviction or edification of a soul, or “ a cup of cold water imparted to a disciple:”

* Romans viii. 33.

all their prayers, tears, and secret conflicts—all their afflictions, sorrows, persecutions, for CHRIST and his cause : all—all are now made public to the universe in full assembly :—the warm zeal—disinterested benevolence—divine love that was the spring of each, are all laid open—their injured characters now at last fully cleared—and such notice taken of their poor services as then astonishes themselves—and each article (so rich the grace that fixes the rewards) enhances the splendor of their crowns of Glory evermore.

LIFT up then your heads with joy, O Christians ! Heretofore you have groaned for sin ; now shall you exult in perfect love : you have longed for CHRIST ; now he is come ; no separation, no withdrawing more shall you ever mourn : you have suffered for him below ; now shall you be glorified with him forever ; and you shall find that “ these light afflictions, which were but for a moment, have all along been working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”*—For hear your sentence, nay, rather your invitation to eternal bliss, sweetly distilling from his lips that bought it with his blood. “ Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Come with me to yonder bright world—to be forever in my presence—to dwell under my kindest smiles—to eat and drink with me at my table—to lay your heads upon my breast—your very souls upon my bosom—to be as glorious as my power can make you—as happy as the blood of GOD could buy—Come, enter now your loving master’s joy—and live and reign as Priests and Kings to me forever and ever.”—Hark the joyful sounds ! All Heaven is ringing with their *Allelujabs* ! wonder, love, joy, extasy, all join their acclamations.

* 2 Corinthians iv. 17.

Grace ! Grace ! Sovereign Grace ! resounds on every tongue. Angelic choirs now raise their highest notes ; now try their skill on all their harps of gold.

HIS words are works. No sooner had he said, than crowns of Glory, robes of heavenly splendor, palms of victory, did visibly adorn them all ; acquitted thus with honor, and accepted now as friends, they take their seats on the bench, in the quality of assessors near the Judge's throne ; " every man in his own order," the Apostles' seats, no doubt, exalted above others ; then every saint according to the measure of grace improved, and service done for God, by doing, or by suffering ; but " all the saints shall judge the world : " * the meanest of them shall be raised to this honor ; † they shall not only be present to see the wickedness of men discovered, and give in evidence upon the trial, but shall approve their condemnation, and shout a glad *Amen* to every sentence.

WILL this be pleasant to the wicked to behold ? How will they feel at seeing those despised, persecuted, worthless creatures in their esteem, thus altered, and thus honored ? Our eyes shall answer this for us ; for see that multitude—how they gnaw their tongues for pain ! ‡ How they already gnash their teeth with rage, and burst their hearts with envy at the sight ! How earnestly they wish to tear CHRIST'S lambs to pieces ! But O !

THE Judge turns to the left in righteous fury ; and calls to all the howling crouds, now classed in bundles § fitted for the flames, " Draw near." Alas ! What trembling horrors, what dumb amazement, when, with vengeful frowns—and a voice more terrible than thousand thunders, he in determined accent, repeats

* 1 Corinthians vi. 2, 3. † Psalm cxlix. 9. ‡ Revelations xvi. 10. § Matthew xiii. 30. John xv. 6.

the challenge.—“ Draw near ye ignorant “ who know not GOD”—you are indicted, What is your defence? Draw near ye slothful and unprofitable, with all your misspent talents*—you are indicted as enemies to GOD, What is your defence? Draw near all ye neglectors of religion, and its exercises—you are indicted as self-murderers, What is your defence? Draw near all ye prayerless heads of families—you are indicted as murderers of your own children and servants, What is your defence? Draw near all ye profane swearers—blasphemers of me and my word—you are indicted for a train of treasons of the highest kind against the LORD of Hosts, What is your defence? Draw near all ye sabbath-breakers, ye absentees from ordinances—you stand indicted as robbers of GOD, What is your defence? Draw near ye scoffers at religion, its truths, and powerful influence—you are indicted for crucifying CHRIST, and pouring contempt upon the Holy Ghost, say, What is your defence? Draw near all ye persecutors of my children—you are indicted for defying the GOD of all the earth to battle, prepare now your defence. Draw near all ye licentious and intemperate, gluttons and drunkards—you stand indicted as destroyers of the work of GOD—as attempting to sink the human nature into that of brutes, and as murderers of your own souls and bodies both at once; What is your defence? † Draw near all ye adulterers, whoremongers, and lewd indulgers of your hearts in secret filthiness—you are indicted as haters of the purity, and sacrilegious defilers of the living temples of the Most High—What is your defence? Draw near all ye envious and malicious, ye covetous and proud, ye thieves and extortioners, ye

* Matthew xxv. 30, † 1 Corinthians vi. 9, 10, 11. Galatians v. 19, 20, 21. Revelations xxi. 8.

liars, slanderers and back biters, yea, and all the classes of empty meer formalists, who trusted in your civil conduct, and moral carriage; with all the sorts of painted hypocrites, loathsome to behold; come forth, and answer to the charge; ye stand indicted as rebels against the imperial crown of Heaven, and enemies to him that wears it, say, What is your defence?" O dreadful words! No more is needed for the sinner's own conviction: methinks he would be glad to pass off the stage *Condemned*, without a formal trial: but that every creature may see the grounds of each degree of woe that any criminal there receives as his respective portion; the books are open still. Each in his turn is brought forth in sight of all, and measured by the holy standard of the moral law; but every one is found *a decalogue inverted*; unlike the standard—the very contrary in every part. Now all the thoughts that passed through their breasts, each vain and idle word is charged home upon them, and not a misspent moment but enters into the account: sins of omission are little thought of now—but these are particularly dwelt upon, as we are informed in the 25th of *Matthew* by the Judge himself: How keenly then shall sins of commission, rising fresh to view, now sting the minds by which they had been long forgotten; when the Book of GOD's remembrance, loudly read in the ears of all, shall publicly proclaim the deeds of darkness the sinner thought unseen, the secret plots, the hidden scenes of vice, the lascivious or revengeful looks,* the wanton and the bitter words,† with all the wicked springs of every motion; each instance bearing its dire doom in front as it appears to public view! *Condemned, Condemned*, re-echoes from all the astonished hearers: poor souls! But O! Where

* Eccleff. xii. 14. † Matthew xii. 36. 1 Corinthians iv. 5.

is the ransom? May we not hope they have resorted to him for offered life? Perhaps some clause in the Gospel-book contains a sure reprieve. It is searched throughout. But ah! it is silent; quite silent on this head. We hear from every page what mercies have been slighted—what sabbaths—sermons—counsels were abused—what escaped dangers—what wonderful deliverances—what unseen provisions made were all despised—what afflictions, crosses, pains were kindly sent, but sent away without their errand; yea what convictions stifled—what motions of the Spirit impiously resisted—and, in short, what opportunities they have improved only as fresh occasions of discovering their despite against a crucified Saviour: but not a tittle of their taking hold of “the horns of the golden altar for a shelter.”

WILL they plead *not guilty* to the charge? Witnesses infallible are here produced. The glorious perfections of JEHOVAH that had been manifested in constant care of them through all their lives, shall now accuse and testify against them; whilst his omniscience sets all their sins in terrible battalia before them; ministers who painfully have brought them news of peace, and tendered faithfully a whole salvation, who prayed, and wept, and agonized in secret for them (O cutting thought!) must now stand forth and tell the dismal tale of a thousand efforts vain. Believing neighbors shall then be witnesses. And O alarming news! the believing husband shall give fatal evidence against the unbelieving wife—the believing wife shall not spare the unbelieving husband—parents shall then accuse their children—children their parents.—Yea the ungodly shall readily witness to each others condemnation—the greatest intimates in sin shall wink and cloke no more. What need for enlargement? Their own consciences shall be instead of

and greater than the greatest of all other sinners, who yet hopes in JESUS; to beseech you, as on his bended knees, to rouse and flee from the wrath to come. O Dear Souls! Why will ye die? Here I proclaim a free welcome to all the favors CHRIST can do for you. He is able—he is quite suitable to your need—he is now willing—freely willing to save you—yes, while I thus coldly speak, the blessed JESUS stands knocking at your hearts for entrance,* and can you find in your hearts to shut out this dear stranger? O! consider your condition—mourn over your many sins—fall down *immediately* before the throne of grace, confess your sinfulness—spread your miserable condition before him—beg—cry—plead, with every breath you draw, for a new heart, and an assured interest in CHRIST—let nothing divert you—turn not your thoughts from this one object—take care of resting short of CHRIST—never rest, 'till you have found him speaking peace from Heaven†—bringing you from the horrid pit—setting your feet upon the rock, and putting a new song in your mouths: then shall this great day be looked for with joy—and come for your glory.

BUT on the other hand, if the queries above can be answered in the affirmative (as I trust they can by many of your consciences) then must I change my strain to you. The *Judgment* is the most comfortable subject of meditation I can offer to you. You are the Judge's friends, and he is yours. He that hath wrought you for this self-same thing is GOD.‡ Lift up then these drooping hearts—let all your fears give way to joy and praise. Let others faint and tremble at this prospect; but saints can find no object here of

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* Revelations iii. 20. † Psalm xl. 2, 3. ‡ 2 Corinthians v. 5.

terror. Are you in the midst of persecuting foes? A mighty friend is coming for your rescue. Do poverty and pinching want afflict you? He comes to change your rags for robes—your penury to a perpetual feast—and all your cares to crowns of glory. Have sickly bodies been your clog, and racking pains distressed you? He comes to “change these vile bodies into a likeness of his own:” the day is at hand when your heads shall ache no more—your spirits shall not fail, nor your weakened flesh drag heavily in the service of your God. Do sin and hell block up your way? Do strong corruption’s blows oft make you stagger? *This* is the time appointed to make an end of sin: He comes to “tread Satan under your feet;” he will make you “come near, and set your feet upon the necks of your enemies,” and rejoice; fight on then, ye christian warriors, a few strokes more, and victory shall declare for you, and end the strife forever. Does a hard rebellious heart now weigh you down, and make you weep in secret? This day will greatly change the scene, no sins, no burdens shall be left, no sighs, no sorrows then; but for every sigh a palm—for every tear a blessing. Is distance from your beloved JESUS your complaint? Does the hiding of his face give an emphasis to all your sorrows? Behold the day—the glorious day appears—when you shall take a final leave of darkness—his face shall never more be out of sight—no glass shall interpose between this object and your blessed eyes—nor any room be left for the least suspicion of a frown;—you shall no more complain of distance; but get as near your LORD as you can wish—shall lay your weary heads upon his loving breast—and in sweetest raptures feel his own soft hand wipe every tear away. And do you look upon this day with dread? My brethren (were I not unworthy to call you by that name) it is the

day of your redemption from all your woes. Say not, ah ! how terrible the scene ! It is *your* LORD that comes : it is that same JESUS who gave his very soul to prove his love to you : methinks I hear him kindly check the rising fears, with a “ Why are you troubled ? Why do *gloomy* thoughts arise in your hearts ? IT IS I MYSELF, I who have bought you with my blood ; have sued and won your hearts, and married your souls to myself—I who have held up your sinking heads a thousand times : have supported you in every trial—and on ten thousand occasions, by tokens of my love, have kissed your griefs away ; it is I, come, handle and behold ; an enemy comes not with scars—and hands—and smiles like these.” O Christians ! lift up your heads with joy ; he that comes to judge you is your advocate too : What have ye to fear from all the dreadful circumstances of this crisis ? It is but your elder Brother coming to plead his kindred’s cause, and fight their battles : Are the thunders of that hour affrightening to you ? Hush all the rumors of your minds : it is your Father hastening with all the *Father* in his heart, to seek his absent children out, and see what enemy shall dare to keep them longer from his eager bosom. Do the dreadful tribunal, the process, and the dooms appal you ? It is your husband, dressed in royal robes, come on a second journey, to take his bride forever to his arms ; trial is designed but to wipe off your spots ; himself has undertaken—and must answer to every charge against you, and you shall keep the field ’till all your enemies, sin, hell and death are driven from your sight, to everlasting woe :

O THEN dart up to Heaven, each day you live, the eye of confidence and hope—send to the courts above many a wishful glance—to speak the longings of your souls ; “ Why tarry the wheels of that princely cha-

riot? O why is his chariot so long a coming? When shall that glorious morning dawn, that will take me to the skies, where I shall sin and wound my blessed LORD no more? When shall I see these interposing Heavens drawn aside, that I may feast my eyes on my beloved? O when shall the trumpet break its tedious silence, that I may fly and meet him in the air? When shall the angelic convoy arrive to waft me where I may see him as he is? Hast thou not said "Yet a little while and ye shall see me?" And can it, dear Immanuel, be a *little* while if thou be absent? My soul faints; my heart pants, my flesh itself cries out, *O Lord, how long!* Hast thou not said "surely I come quickly?" My soul re-echoes a joyful *Amen*. Even so come LORD JESUS."

AND is this your language? Then be of good cheer, the LORD is not slack concerning his promise: ere long your highest expectations will be satisfied. Improve the few remaining moments to meditate on your portion: think of the love that has prepared it for you at such expense: lay out your hearts to no other use but to love him; shew that love by humble—holy—watchful obedience: give more and more diligence to ensure your peace with Heaven, to maintain peace in your own breasts—and cultivate peace with all men: live loose from this world—set no affection on any thing here—be ever "laying up your treasures all in Heaven;" keep close to ordinances; borrow a coal from the LORD's altar to keep your incense ever burning—cultivate the friendship and society of saints; the esteem of others is not worth the keeping: be zealous for GOD; stand up boldly for his cause—be not ashamed to own him in the world at all hazards: and if you be honored to suffer for him, take it patiently; thank your master for that favor—and "bless them that curse you:" seek nearer communion with

your LORD : labor for growth in every grace, and thus go on, go on, dear Sirs, with ten thousand blessings on your heads, unto the end : and then, when you shall see kings and subjects—great and small—sinners of every size cry for a rock to crush them—a kind mountain to cover them from that face before which the pillars of Heaven tremble, ye shall fly off and meet him with a song : “ This is our GOD ; we have wailed for him ; and now he comes to save us ! this is the LORD ; we have wailed for him ; and now we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation : ” In the midst of the amazing scene—when ye behold Heavens melting—earth quaking—suns dropping—stars dying—nature fainting—graves opening—hell yawning—sinners howling—devils yelling—the trumpet sounding—and the great cause of all approaching, ye shall “ stand still and see the salvation of your GOD ”—calm—unmoved—and with smiles of joy you will begin the song, “ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing—for he hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood—and made us Kings and Priests unto our GOD ”—thus, singing you shall rise—and as you rise shall sing louder and louder still—till your notes are heard by all the happy choir, who with increased pleasure join in your *Allelujabs*, and sweetly seal your praises with their loud AMEN.

