

T H E
AMERICAN PREACHER;
O R A
COLLECTION OF SERMONS
FROM SOME OF THE
MOST EMINENT PREACHERS,
NOW LIVING
IN THE UNITED STATES,
O F
DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS
IN THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

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S E R M O N. LXXV.

CHRIST the WAY, and the TRUTH,
and the LIFE.

BY

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John, xiv. 6.

JESUS saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the FATHER but by me.

THE whole design of religion is to point out the road to real happiness, and to put mankind in possession of it; to engage them to a life of piety and morality in this world, and to train them up for a fulness of glory and perfection of peace in that which is to come. Viewed in its true light therefore, separated from all abuses, superstition on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other, it has the most benign influence on the welfare of civil society, and is the most promotive of the best interest of the human race. The evils which have

flowed from a persecuting spirit, and the wars commenced, and the blood shed by nations in religious quarrels are not the native effect, but the horrid abuses of religion. The best things on earth are liable to be perverted by the corrupt passions and ignorance of man. The candid mind of philosophy, that forms a just estimate of human life, when contemplating moral subjects, will attribute the evils which it beholds to the true cause. So far is the spirit of true religion from being a disadvantage to, or increasing the miseries of, society, as some superficial, half-thinking men have affirmed, that its whole system of duties and doctrines directly tends, and is wisely calculated, to mitigate every wo, to soften every sorrow, to inspire every rational joy, and to diffuse over the world humanity and benevolence; to purify and refine, to ennoble and exalt human nature and human happiness. Consequently, one of the most interesting questions which can be proposed on the subject of religion, is, how shall we secure to ourselves its blessings? or what is the way for us acceptably to serve God in time, and to be fitted for the enjoyment of him in eternity? This grand question is satisfactorily answered by our Saviour in the words now read. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*

He begins his discourse with his disciples, by consoling their hearts with the thoughts and

hopes of heaven. *Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? Then come in the words of the text. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the FATHER but by ME.*

I. It is proposed, in the sequel, to show how Christ is the way, and the truth, and the life. And,

II. To point out the impossibility of our obtaining acceptance with God but by him.

I. In what respect our Saviour is the way, the truth, and the life is what is intended, first, to be considered and illustrated.

He declares to his disciples in general, and to Thomas in particular, that he is the way to happiness for all mankind. For he must be the way, and the truth, and the life to one as much as to another; because all the world equally need his guidance, instruction and atonement. His gospel is as necessary for one as for another, and no man can obtain the favour of God, or reach the peaceful abodes of

a blessed immortality, but by him. When Christ says he is the way, how are we to understand him? What ideas does he intend to convey to his disciples of himself? **I AM THE WAY.**

He is the way of access to God in prayer and other acts of homage,--of pardon for the guilty,--of justification and peace with God,--of the expiation of sin,--and of happiness.

He is the way of access to God in prayer and other acts of homage. We can acceptably serve God only through the mediation and intercession of his Son. As fallen creatures, we are in ourselves utterly unworthy to approach the divine throne, or to come before a holy and sin-hating God. He is of purer eyes than to behold sin, or the sinner, but with detestation. He hates with perfect abhorrence all the workers of iniquity. His wrath, indeed, is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. No act, either of impiety or injustice, can be concealed from his knowledge, or escape his resentment. An innocent and perfectly holy creature, who had never lost his rectitude, or offended his Creator, would in his own name directly address himself, without any Mediator, to the all-wise and sovereign Lord of nature. But a fallen and guilty creature, who has lost the favour and offended the Majesty of heaven and earth by innumerable sins, cannot draw near to him in

his own name. He, on the other hand, is altogether unworthy so much as to lift his voice to the eternal throne for mercy, and can have no assurance of a gracious audience and acceptance.

The anxious inquiry of conscience is, *Where with shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand of rivers of oil? shall I give my first born for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

This anxious inquiry may be satisfactorily answered. All such expensive and painful expedients are utterly unavailable. Jesus Christ is the appointed medium of worship, is the only way of access to the FATHER. In him our prayers, our praises, our gratitude, and confession of sin may be accepted. He is all-worthy, though we be infinitely unworthy. With him the Father is ever well-pleased, though he cannot look upon us out of him, but with abhorrence. His merits are infinite, and his intercessions all-powerful. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man. He is the only medium of access to HIM who is the hearer of prayer, and fountain of grace. No other is appointed or permitted. Our persons and services, our

thanksgivings, and all our religious duties and ordinary conduct can be acceptable only in the name of Christ. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Our Lord graciously promises all his followers, that the Father will always hear them in his name, and bestow upon them every needed blessing. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

And there is an absolute promise that all our prayers, which flow from faith as the principle, which are aimed at the divine glory as the end, and which are guided by the word as the rule, shall be answered. *Therefore I say unto you. what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them:* He ever acts in the capacity of an intercessor at the the right hand of the Majesty on high. *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.* All our religious duties, prayer, praise and other acts of homage can ascend to the throne of the universe with acceptance only in the name of Christ. He is, then, the way of access to the Father, and no man can come unto God but by him. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath con-*

secrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. And having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

2. Jesus Christ is also the way of pardon for the guilty. The very idea of pardon always presupposes guilt. An innocent being needs no forgiveness. He who has never offended in thought, word, or deed, can have no guilt to be washed away by a pardon. But sinful creatures stand in perishing need of a remission of all their transgressions. And this can be had only in the Mediator. We have no merit of our own to purchase the forgiveness of sin. Though, as transgressors, we stand in absolute need of a pardon, tho' we must finally and forever perish without it; yet we cannot have it from ourselves. Can we rely on our own good deeds, on our own virtues for pardon, or on the justice of the Deity, or the mere clemency of his nature? Some have carried their notions of human merit so high, as to take to it alone for introduction to the favour of God, and admission into glory, when they shall bid adieu to this mortal scene. I remember to have heard, that a very noted infidel of our own country was wont to express himself with regard to acceptance with his Maker, on this wise; "I would rather, says he, loose heaven, and incur damnation; I would rather miss of the

“favor of the Deity, than not merit it by my
 “own virtues. If my dignity, if my merit
 “will not procure for me a seat in the mansions
 “of blifs, then farewell happinefs. I will ac-
 “cept of happinefs only as the fruit of my own
 “good deeds.” The humble Christian fhudders at
 fuch language and fentiments. He feels his
 utter unworthinefs of eternal life, or a pardon.
 He has no merit to plead; no virtue of which
 to boast. The more he fees of the fpotlefs pu-
 rity of the divine nature, and unlimited extent
 of the divine law, the lower is his opinion of
 the pretended merit of man. He feels that
 nothing he ever has done, or ever can do, can
 procure the forgiving pity of God. Not on
 works, but grace, doth he rely. If his ini-
 quities were to be ftrictly marked againft him,
 he is confcious he could not answer for one
 in a thoufand of them, and therefore pleads
 that God would not enter into judgment with
 him; for in his fight no flefh living could be juft-
 ified. He feels that Chrift is the way of pardon.
*In whom we have redemption through his blood, e-
 ven the forgivenefs of fins.* Through his blood all
 our tranfgreffions may be done away, fo that
 they fhall neither rife up in this world to our
 fhame and confufion of face, nor in the world
 to come to our utter and final condemnation.

How ardently do good men defire to be
 freed from the guilt of fin, and penalty of a
 righteous, but violated law. *Have mercy on me,
 O Lord, according to thy loving-kindnefs; accor-*

ding to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions ; wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Again, in the words of the same pious saint, who was deeply affected with a sight and sense of the number and heinousness of his sins. *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.* All who are burdened with a sense of the number and greatness of their follies and sins, cannot but prize forgiveness from a holy God. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*

3. Further, our Saviour is the way likewise of justification and peace with God. Our justification before God is a point peculiarly interesting to all mankind, and equally concerns all of every age and condition. It consists of two parts, acquittance from guilt, and a title to life. It is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are liberated from the penalty of a broken law, and accepted as righteous in his sight, only on account of the righteousness of a Mediator. When a sinner is convinced of his sin, of his lost and undone condition by nature, and is brought to believe in the mediation, and to accept of the atonement of the Son of God, according to the covenant of grace, or method of life constituted in the gospel, a justifying act is passed upon him by his Maker in heaven ; he is declared to belong to his kingdom, and no longer liable to bear the penalty of a broken law.

Justification literally signifies judging one to be just. A man is said to justify himself, when he asserts his innocence, or denies that he has been to blame in any instance. We justify another, when we appear on his behalf, and undertake his vindication. Among the Jews, this was a law-phrafe, or was used in reference to their courts of justice. *If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.* The word *justify* was borrowed from courts of justice, and applied to the case of mankind in regard to the sentence of the supreme Judge; and in order to have its primary meaning duly preserved, when used with respect to the justification of fallen man before a holy and just God, it must imply an acquittance from sin, as exposing to eternal death, and the grant of a sure title to everlasting life. And we are justified in the name, as well as pardoned through the blood, of Jesus Christ. As we are sanctified by his Spirit, so we are justified by his righteousness. Pardon, justification, sanctification, and peace with God all go together. These invaluable blessings all flow to us, as well as every other favour, whether temporal or spiritual, through a Mediator. *And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Here justification and sanctification are spoken of as coming to us in the name of a Redeemer. St. Paul is most full and clear

on this great subject, that Christ is the way of justification. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* That Christ is the way of justification and acceptance with God is most clearly expressed in the following words: *Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

We have peace as well as justification by him. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the way of peace, as he is our peace-maker; as he reconciles us to God; as he appeases the divine anger towards us; and gives us his own peace. *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.* He preaches the doctrines of peace. He opens the counsels of eternal peace. By him we have peace and joy in believing. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.* He is the way of justification, acceptance and peace with God, as it is by him all these rich and invaluable blessings come to us. In him our persons are justified, our ser-

vices accepted, and our peace established. **He is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

4. Again, our Saviour is the way of the expiation of sin: Sin must be expiated, or favour can never be extended, with consistence, to the transgressor. It is of so odious and vile a nature, and so ruinous in its consequences, that the sinner can never be liberated from its guilt, till full and ample satisfaction be made to the justice and holiness of God. The rights of the Godhead must be secured. As the ruler of the universe, he must see that virtue is countenanced through all his extensive dominions; that vice is frowned upon; that his laws and government are maintained; and that rebellion is effectually discouraged. For him, in his rectoral character, to do any thing by which it might appear to the intelligent creation that he did not hate iniquity and love righteousness to an infinite degree, would be an injury to the public good, the glory of the universe. We may fairly conclude, therefore, that he will take the wisest and best possible measures to convince the intellectual system, that none can insult his government, oppose his authority, or trample under foot his laws, with impunity. As the sovereign Lord of nature, he is the revenger of evil; and his clemency can never be exercised, in any case whatever, in a manner which is incompatible with the rights of justice. But when his law, which is holy, just and good, is magnified, and

made honourable ; when the awful dignity of his government is fully vindicated ; when the infinite glories of his character are most signally displayed, and his sacred authority openly manifested, then sin is expiated, a pardon may be extended, and a holy God left at liberty to save and bless. By the blood of a crucified Saviour, the law, character, perfection, government and authority of the Deity are all vindicated and honoured ; and consequently sin is expiated. All is done that was requisite to be done in order for mercy divine to flow down upon a guilty world. When John the forerunner of Christ saw him, he speaks of him as the expiator of sin in the following manner, pointing his disciples to him : *The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* How did he take it away? Not by expelling it from the system ; for we still behold its ravages in the moral world. Not by changing its nature ; for its nature is always the same ; and its inherent turpitude can never be diminished, and our Lord's sufferings, manifold and exquisite, as they were, altered not the nature of things ; but he *took away the sin of the world* by making an atonement, or doing what laid a sufficient foundation for God, in the character of the righteous Lord of heaven and earth, to extend pardon, peace and salvation, in a manner compatible with the sacred claims of justice, to all penitents ; or, in the language of inspiration, that God might

be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The Redeemer of man died and suffered what was necessary to be done and suffered, in order that repentance and remission of sins might be consistently preached to all nations, and offered to all sinners. He left no part of the work, which was assigned him, undone. He completely performed the will of the Father. He did not fail in one single point. Accordingly, he says, in his tender and pathetic address to the Father; *I have glorified thee on earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* And when we go forward, and view the astonishing scene of his crucifixion, which caused the sun in the firmament to hide his face, and all nature to utter a groan, we find that he did not expire, till he could say, **IT IS FINISHED.** The will of God was **FINISHED**; the salvation of man was **FINISHED**; the jewish dispensation of rites and forms was **FINISHED.** All was **FINISHED** that was in the eternal counsels of the parent of men and angels to be done, in regard to the way of life for lost men, dead in trespasses and sins. All was finished which the Saviour had undertaken to perform.

How full is the scripture of this idea, that Jesus Christ has made an atonement for human guilt? The few following passages will be particularly cited, out of many more that might be adduced with equal propriety. *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship*

one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. It has a purifying and cleansing power. It washes away the deepest stain of guilt; cleanseth us from all sin. Again, he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. His propitiation is infinitely full. It has a sufficiency of merit for the pardon of all sin, and bears the same aspect on the sins of all, without any exception. We may not limit the merits of the precious blood of the Son of God. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. We are told, that he tasted death for every man; that is, he has, by his sufferings and death, procured pardon and peace for every one without exception, who will comply with the terms upon which pardon and peace are offered. These terms are faith and repentance. The gospel points out a way for all, and offers mercy to all who will accept. No one is excluded. An honorable door of salvation is opened to all. And none who are disposed to enter, will be excluded. We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. In these words we find no limitation or exception. The gates of the celestial paradise will be barred against none, on account of a deficiency of merit in him, who stained the cross on mount Calvary with his blood, to pro-

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cure salvation for lost man. There is no want of readiness on the part of Deity, or of merit on the part of the Redeemer. Man alone, if he perish, must to all eternity bear the blame of his own destruction. God has an ear to hear, and an arm to save. Jesus Christ has an infinite fulness of merit. The true reason why sinners miss of salvation is assigned in these words: *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.*

The apostle to the Hebrews declares, that as the blood of the jewish sacrifices availed to purify the flesh, so the blood of Christ avails to expiate sin, or to purify the conscience. *For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*

5. And lastly, Jesus Christ is the way of true happiness, in opposition to all the false schemes of happiness, which mankind have struck out for themselves. The first and strongest desire of nature is after happiness. All sigh after, all wish for, all pursue the dear object. The high and low ranks of life equally seek it, though in different ways. The young and old are ardent in their enquiries after it. The learned and unlearned are restlessly engaged in the search.

But it is a reflection that forces itself upon the contemplative mind, when surveying the human race in general, looking back on the past ages of the world, and among the various nations that people the globe, that the most have been unsuccessful in their endeavours after the attainment of the wished-for object. They have erred wide from the mark. Wisdom here failed. The highest philosophy of the wisest heathen was here confounded, and had innumerable false notions of happiness, but none the true. It would be no small labor even to enumerate their widely differing and contradictory notions of the CHIEF GOOD. And it would give us pain, as it would be a full proof of the weakness of human reason, and folly of human pursuits. The world by wisdom knew not God. *Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. He is then the only way of true happiness, of spiritual wisdom. It is no where else to be found. But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depths*

saith, *It is not in me: And the sea saith, It is not in me. It cannot be gotten for gold; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls: For the price of wisdom is above rubies. The Topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it; neither shall it be valued with pure gold. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept cloſe from the fowls of the air? Destruction and death ſay, We have heard the ſame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. The way of true wiſdom or happineſs is in Chriſt. Of God he is made unto us wiſdom, as well as righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption. In him is our happineſs; happineſs here and hereafter,—in both worlds. As from him we have help, ſtrength, righteouſneſs, forgivenneſs and peace; ſo in him is true happineſs. In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and all the eſſential ingredients of felicity. The beauty of holineſs is its tendency to happineſs; and no religion can be of any ſervice to man, or be genuine, or can claim a celeftial origin, but what lays a certain foundation for bleſſedneſs, but what tends to make its votaries inherently good, and to lead them to the poſſeſſion of a ſubſtantial good, a permanent bliſs. Mankind in general, and eſpecially half-think-*

ing and conceited philosophers, are prone to place all religion in external rituals, in something which is wholly foreign to its nature. Its very genius is to make us virtuous and happy, to bless man on earth, and exalt him to glory after death. Well may we say then to Christ, as the disciple did in the days of his flesh, *Lord, to whom should we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life.* No thing, no person under the sun, no nor the collection of all together, can give any solid, satisfactory happiness to any child of man. The world itself, the gay, giddy, thoughtless world allow this unawares, while they acknowledge, nay vehemently maintain, no man upon earth is contented. Discontent fills all the stations of life from the highest to the lowest. Where is the man who is contented with his lot? And if no man on earth be contented, it is certain no man is happy. For whatever station we fill, discontent is incompatible with happiness. Not only the giddy, but the thinking part of the world allow, that no man is contented. The melancholy proof of which we see on every side, in high and low, rich and poor. And generally the more any know, or higher their minds and manners are polished, the greater will be their discontent. "They know with more distinction to complain, and have superior sense in feeling pain." It is true, indeed, every one has some fancied scheme of bliss, which pleases for an hour or day; in which he hopes to be happy; but though

Hope blooms eternal in the human breast,
Man never *is*, but always to *be* blest-- He
is walking in a vain show, which will soon van-
ish away. So that universal experience, both of
our own and that of all our acquaintance and
friends, clearly proves that, as God made our
hearts for himself, so they cannot rest till they
rest in him; that till we acquaint ourselves with
him, we cannot be at peace. As a scorner of
the wisdom of God seeketh wisdom and findeth
it not, so a scorner of happiness in God seek-
eth happiness, but findeth it not. All on earth
is empty and fading. Nought below the sun can
open to us the treasures of real and durable
bliss. In Jesus Christ alone is real blessedness
to be found. He is the WAY of happiness for
a ruined world.

S E R M O N LXXVI.

The preceding subject continued

John, xiv. 6.

JESUS saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the FATHER but by me.

IN discoursing upon these words, what was proposed, in dependance on divine help, was to shew how Jesus Christ is the way, and the truth and the life. And then point out the impossibility of obtaining acceptance with God but by him. We have already attempted to shew in what respects he is **THE WAY**. *I am,* says he, **THE WAY**.

II. We proceed to consider in what respects he is **THE TRUTH**, and **THE LIFE**, the other two points included under the first division of the subject.

He is the *truth*, in opposition to the types and shadows of the jewish dispensation; in opposition to all false doctrines and religions; and as he revealed the only true system of faith and practice.

I. He is **THE TRUTH**, in opposition to the

types and shadows of the jewish dispensation. That dispensation, in its very structure, was wholly typical. Upon the very face of it was written, in characters legible to every discerning eye, imperfection. Its frame was only temporary, not designed either for a perpetual duration, or an universal extension. It was, indeed, wisely contrived by its Author, the true God, who never does any thing in vain, to effect the purposes he had in view, to prepare the way for, and to introduce in due season, a more complete and full manifestation of his infinite love and rich grace. One peculiar nation was to be called out, and distinguished from all the rest of the world. They were hedged and fenced in by a system of laws and ordinances, both civil and sacred, which would always keep them a distinct people from the rest of mankind; and by them was the knowledge of the true God and his worship to be communicated to other nations, at different times. Abraham the son of Terah, who lived at Ur, a city in Chaldea, was the person upon whom the divine wisdom fixed to be the head and founder of this favourite nation. Accordingly, in the seventy fifth year of his age, and in the year of the world two thousand-twenty and two, God appeared to him, and commanded him to leave his country, and his kindred, and his father's house, and prepare to go into the land which God should show him; at the same time promising to make him a great nation, to bless him, and to make his name great; and more-

over, that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed, that is, from him the Messiah should descend. After the lapse of many years, at the time appointed in the decrees of the supreme Being, Moses is raised up to be the leader of the oppressed Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and made the instrument of revealing to them the system of their laws and ordinances, civil and sacred. Hence the Jewish dispensation is frequently called the Mosaic æconomy. This was well fitted to accomplish all its own purposes. All its system looked forward to the Messiah. He is the substance of the antient types and shadows of the legal dispensation. All the offerings, sacrifices, purifications, washings and other ceremonies under the law, were only to prepare the way for our Saviour to come in the flesh; to introduce the Christian dispensation; and to prefigure the gospel. Christ is the substance, they were the shadow. He is the truth, they were only types. *For the law having only a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sin. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sin every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Therefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; but a body hast thou prepared me,*

In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offerings and burnt offerings for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law. Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; he taketh away the FIRST that he may establish the SECOND. Thus it appears that the legal was wholly superseded by the Christian dispensation; and that Jesus Christ is the truth, in opposition to, and distinction from, all the types and shadows of the Mosaic system.

2 He is the truth, in opposition to all false doctrines and religions. He styles himself the true and faithful witness. The law was by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. And unto the angel of the church of Laodicea, write these things, saith the Amen, the true and faithful witness, the beginning of the creation of God. He was the faithful witness for God, and to man. John his harbinger testified of him, under the metaphor of the *true light*. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The true light in the moral world, in distinction from all false lights and impostors, which have, in various ages and countries, risen up and deceived many, to the disgrace of human nature and reproach of religion.

He is the truth, in opposition to all error,

delusion, false religions, and false modes of worship and idolatries among mankind. All idols and idolatries are called in scripture VANITY and a LIE. But Jesus of Nazareth is the truth.

Error and imposture, in all ages, have overspread the world, and obstructed human liberty and human happiness, as dark and gloomy clouds, overcasting the sky, shut out the pleasant and cheering beams of the natural sun, the parent of the light and palace of day. How many false religions have there been? and how much superstition blended with truth! painful sight to the eye of benevolence, and the loathing of rational philosophy! What daring impostors, in one age and another, have arisen to lead away the unwary and ignorant, and to establish themselves in power and riches! Nay, how many in the Christian world have pretended to extraordinary light and communications with the invisible world, to visions and impulses; and say, lo! here; and lo, there is truth! In distinction, therefore, from all error and imposture, false modes of worship, idolatry and superstition, is our Saviour *the truth*.

And as he was the true witness of the Father, so he always declared his mind and will plainly and clearly, without disguise or fraudulent designs. He always spoke the truth. He always acted according to the truth. He never, in his sermons and instructions, counsels, warnings and doctrines, departed from the truth.--And further.

3. He is the truth, as he revealed the only true system of faith and practice. He received his commission from the God of truth, and ever conducted agreeable to its tenor, without going beyond or falling short of it. To have exceeded it, would have been presumption. To have left any part of it unfinished, would have betrayed unfaithfulness. It was his meat and drink to do his Father's will, to which he was all attention and obedience. The doctrines which he taught were precisely what God would have revealed. The ordinances which he instituted were exactly what he was ordered to establish. The modes of worship which he enjoined were, not only such as reason approves, but such as he was authorized to appoint. He came not to do his own will, but the will of HIM that sent him. Accordingly, he that receiveth him, receiveth the Father that sent him. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. Every departure, consequently, either from his doctrines or ordinances, or way of worship, is a departure from God. His design in coming into the world, among other important objects, was to be a light to it; to teach the way of life in truth :-to call mankind off from all idols and idol-worship; and to bring them back to truth and duty, from which they had widely strayed; to restore the worship of the one only living and true God. Long had the world been buried in idolatry and ignorance, in darkness and superstition. They were lost in a labyrinth of error. They were wandering in a wilderness of delusion and false religions.

He came therefore as a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of the people of Israel; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us; to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace. He came to proclaim peace on earth, good will to men, and glory to God in the highest; to reveal the whole counsel of heaven, the mind and will of the Deity; to tell us what to believe and how to live. His religion may be thus concisely characterised, the science of truth and duty; the art of living virtuously in time, and happy in eternity. He is the only infallible guide. Under his teachings we need not fear delusion. In his school is the sublimest philosophy; in his life is seen the sweetest philanthropy; from his gospel arises the purest joy. No other guide is perfectly safe, because liable to err; if liable to err, of course liable to bewilder and mislead us. No man or body of men, however pious and learned, can be an infallible guide to souls beclouded with darkness, and straying in the paths of folly and error. Alas! poor blinded man, corrupted by passions, seduced by interest, loving to wander! In a Redeemer mayest thou, O wretched man, implicitly confide. Look to him, there, in that blessed teacher come from God, is no error; no false doctrine; no useless ceremonies. With him thou needest not fear imposition. He is the

only safe and infallible guide to felicity. He has unequivocally told thee, what to believe and how to live, and revealed the only true system of faith and practice.

There remains but one particular more to be elucidated, under this head of discourse, and that is, to enquire in what respect Jesus Christ is the *Life*. We have seen how he is the way, and the truth. We are now to enquire how he is the life. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.*

And he may, in a remote though proper sense, be denominated the life, as he has life in himself, and imparts to all the living. As God, clothed with all the divine attributes, he has life in and of himself. *For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* He inhabits eternity; is the King of kings and Lord of lords; dwelleth in light unapproachable and full of glory. As he is God, we received from him our natural life, rational existence, with all its variety of rich blessings. In him we live and move. He gives to all life, and breath, and being, and all things. His omnipotent arm stretched out the heavens over our heads, as a curtain; established the earth; fixed the sun in the firmament; bid the moon to shine; and spread around, in gay profusion, the beauties of nature. Is not this an orthodox creed? Is it placing our Redeemer on an eminence too lofty and

magnificent? What saith the scripture, the only rule of faith and practice with rational Christians! Thus we read; *In the beginning was the word, & the word was with God, & the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

He has life therefore in himself originally and independently; and gives to all life and breath, and being, and all things, and of course may fitly be called life.

In a still higher and more exalted sense is he the life, as he purchased by his atoning blood, and bestows by his purifying grace, spiritual life. The natural life which we enjoy is derived from him as God; and the life of grace which believers have is immediately from his Spirit. For the Spirit of Christ dwells in all believers. He is then the believer's life in a direct and glorious sense. He lives in them by his grace and Spirit; not only procures for them the blessing of a rational existence, but the far superior blessing of spiritual life. *I am crucified with Christ*, may every believer say, after the example of the apostle, and in the same sense precisely; *nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Jesus Christ is therefore most eminently the believer's life. He is the fountain of it; It flows

from him: It is maintained by him, as the branches are maintained by the nutritive juice of the vine; For, according to his own beautiful simile, he is the vine, and believers the branches. It is increased by him: For wherever a good work of grace is begun, it will not be left, but be carried on from one degree to another, till it reach perfection. And when death arrives in all its awful glooms and solemn shades, it will be consummated by him in life eternal. *If ye then be risen with Christ (this is the very reasoning of St. Paul) seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* He, in brief, is the believer's life in regeneration, in justification, in progressive sanctification, and in glorification. By his dying merits he bought life for believers. By his living example he marked out the path of life. By his righteousness he intitles them to everlasting life. By his Spirit he nourishes up the life of faith. And, as the final Judge, he will say unto them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Further,

He may be denominated with great propriety the LIFE, as after the wastes and glooms of death he will raise all to life again. It is appointed for all men once to die. The debt

of nature must be paid. The decree is past, the dreadful sentence hath gone forth, *Dust we are, and unto dust we must return*: And Oh, how often is it fulfilled before our eyes! Man, poor frail man, goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. Around us we every where behold a busy multitude: Restless and uneasy in their present situation, they are incessantly employed in accomplishing a change of it; and, as soon as their wish is fulfilled, we discern by their behaviour that they are as dissatisfied as they were before. When they expected to have found a paradise, they find a desert. And after all the vain show of life has passed, death closes the awful scene. There is not only no distinction in, but no exemption from, the grave. There mingle persons of every age and character, of every rank and condition in life, the young and the old, the poor and the rich, the gay and the grave, the renowned and the ignorant. The smiling infant, the blooming youth, and the hoary head must all do homage to the king of terrors. Our friends who have gone before us to the solitary mansions of the dead, walked about in their day as we do now on the earth, enjoyed their friends, beheld the light of the sun, and were forming designs of future days.--But now to them all is finally closed. To them no more shall the seasons return, or the sun arise. No more shall they hear the voice of mirth, or behold the face of man. They are swept from the world, as though they had never been.

They are carried away with a flood ; the wind has passed over them, and they are gone. What desolations has death made of the human race ! How are all past generations gathered into one lonely abode ! Must not our hearts be deeply affected with this awful lot of man ! But when we open the inspired volume, another world discloses itself to view ; our faith finds a resurrection there ; we are taught that this is not our final state ; and that at the end of the world, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, man shall come forth from the chambers of putrefaction and dust. The whole human race, both the righteous and the wicked, shall, the second time, have life from the Son of Man. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Behold he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see him, and they also which peirced him ; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. The bending heavens and burning world will proclaim his advent. And his almighty voice shall sound through all the regions of the dead, and the countless millions of the human race shall start into life, but for purposes infinitely diverse. *Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.* The sea shall give up the

dead which are in it: And death and hell shall deliver up the dead which are in them. Again, *Jefus faith unto her, I am the refurrection and the life.* That all mankind shall have a refurrection from the dead is moft evident from the following paffages of infpired truth: *But now is Chrift rifen, and become the firft-fruits of them that fleep.* For fince by man came death, by man alfo came the refurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even fo in Chrift shall all be made alive. And futher on; So it is written, *The firft man Adam was made a living foul, the laft Adam was made a quickening fpirit.* Howbeit that was not firft which is fpiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is fpiritual. The firft man is of the earth, earthy; the fecond man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, fuch are they alfo that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, fuch are they alfo that are heavenly. Now this I fay, brethren, that flefh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I fhew you a mystery: we fhall not all fleep, but we fhall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laft trump, (for the trumpet fhall found) and the dead fhall be raifed incorruptible, and we fhall be changed. For this corruptible muft put on incorruption, and this mortal muft put on immortality. So when this corruption fhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal fhall have put on immortality, then fhall be brought to paff the faying that is written, *Death is fwallowed up in victory.* O death, where is thy ftिंग! O grave, where is thy victory! Because our Saviour will raife all

the human race from the dead, he is said to be the plague of death and destruction of the grave. The calling up the body from its ruins in death is an article no where to be found in nature's creed. The most enlightened in the pagan world did not even think of or hope for it. When the body was deposited in the dust, they bid a final and eternal farewell to it. The Christian religion alone enables us to look through the wastes and glooms of death, with the pleasing hopes of a resurrection of the body; and it will be raised in such a manner too, as to be not only a fit and commodious, but splendid mansion for the residence of the immortal soul. *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

Again, Jesus Christ may fitly be called *the life*, as he gave his life a ransom for all. He laid down his life for the children of men. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He condescended to take upon him our nature, to live in obscurity, to undergo poverty, shame and reproach, and to expire in agonies for us. Man had sinned, had forfeited life and the favour of God, became exposed to death temporal and eternal: And no way could he be restored to the lost image and forfeited favour of God, be rescued from the ruins of the grave, and raised to life eternal, but by the Son of God undergoing for him the pains of

death. No arm short of the divine could afford relief. And such was his grace, such his benevolence, such his pity for sinning, guilty, dying men, that Jesus Christ condescended to lay down his own life to save him. *He gave himself a ransom for all. I am, says he, the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* He died that we might live. He left his throne of glory and tabernacled in clay, exchanged the hosannahs of angels for the reproaches of sinners, a crown of glory for a crown of thorns, and the form of God for that of a servant, in order to redeem fallen sinners. *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* He became poor that we might be rich; rich in Christian graces here, and heavenly glories hereafter. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

Lastly, Jesus Christ is *the life*, as he will be-

stow, at the conclusion of the present scene of things, eternal life on all his disciples. This is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even life eternal. He is called the true God, and life eternal. *This is the true God and life eternal.* When his friends and followers shall leave this world; when the places that now know them shall know them no more; when they shall come to walk through the valley of the shadow of death; when their probation-state shall be terminated, and time and the things of time be no more as to them, then he will receive them to the joys and glories of his kingdom, that they may be where he is, and behold his glory,--will admit them to participate of all the sublime felicities of eternal life. But the righteous shall go into life eternal. After pronouncing the blessed sentence of approbation, as the final and universal Judge, he will reign in life forever and ever with them, in that world where all tears shall be wiped away; where sorrow and sighing shall never enter; where all the soul shall feel, shall be perfect bliss; where all it shall express, shall be perfect praise; where love divine shall fill every heart, and hosannas exalted employ every tongue through the ceaseless revolution of eternal ages.

II. The other branch of the subject was to point out the impossibility of obtaining acceptance with God, but by Christ. *No man cometh*

unto the Father, but by me. As we have dwelt so long on the first division of our subject, to avoid repetition a few words only need be said on this.

Jesus Christ then is the only way to the Father, to pardon, to peace, and to glory. He came to seek and save that which was lost. Man lost to God, in one sense, and lost to happiness, wanted a way opened for his return to God; restoration to his image, and re-instatement in his favour; to be renewed and justified; to be reconciled to God, and to have God reconciled to him; and to have a friendly intercourse commenced. This is done by the Saviour. And mankind can truly know, acceptably worship, and rightly serve the supreme Being, or finally see his face, and enjoy his presence, only by him. A mediatory salvation, a propitiatory sacrifice, an atonement for sin is of absolute necessity. The divine nature must be placated, the divine law honored, divine justice satisfied, and divine holiness displayed. We cannot come to the Father, but by the Son. He must be our mediator to introduce us to the throne of grace, and his Father's favorable regards. He must mediate and plead for us, be our advocate and patron, hope and dependance. *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. Neither is there*

salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, even Jesus Christ.

This is a doctrine of the highest possible moment in itself, and especially seasonable in the present day, when so many are casting off strict and pure religion, are recurring back to NATURE'S LIGHT, boasting that it alone is adequate, denying the Lord that bought them, and deluding and flattering themselves with the idea, that there is no need of a Saviour to expiate sin, and open the way to heaven and its felicity. Whatever high notions of the dignity of man and of human merit any may be disposed to entertain, to whatever vain refuges men may resort, whatever contempt they may affect to cast on the gospel and a mediatory interposition, it is an eternal truth, that no religion can be acceptable to the Deity, which doth not embrace the atonement of his Son. *No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* He is the only ark of safety. He is the only foundation of hope laid in Zion, upon which we may rest our eternal all. He is the sole dependance of lost man. Out of him there is no help, no hope, no remedy for the guilty. Pardon, salvation, peace and acceptance with the supreme Being out of him it is impossible to obtain. He is the way, the truth, and the life: *No man cometh unto the Father, but by him.* He is the help of the helpless, the hope of the

hopeless, the health of the sick, the strength of the weak, the riches of the poor, the peace of the disquieted, the comfort of the afflicted, the light of those that sit in darkness, the companion of the disconsolate, the friend of the friendless, the way of the bewildered, the wisdom of the ignorant, the righteousness of the guilty, the sanctification of the unholy, the redemption of the wretched, and, to say all in a word, the salvation of the lost.

In the review of this pleasing subject, can we refuse to admire the riches of a Saviour's condescension and grace? We know not how to think or speak worthily upon so delightful and beautiful a subject. Could we speak with the tongue of men and angels, in strains of celestial eloquence, the half of its praises would be still unspoken. All is stupendous humiliation, from his Father's throne to the accursed tree. All is astonishing exaltation, from the sorrow of death, and the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, to the joys of heaven, and the right hand of the Majesty on high. All his immense progress of condescension and love was for us. "His mysterious incarnation unites and endears us to God; his natural birth procures our regeneration; his unspotted life restores us to a blissful immortality; his bitter agonies give us calm repose; his bloody sweat washes away our manifold pollutions; his deep wound distils the balsom which heals our disorders; his perfect obedience is our first title to end

“less felicity; his full atonement purchases our
 “free justification; his cruel death is the spring
 “of immortal life; his grave the gate of hea-
 “ven; his resurrection the pledge of glory;
 “his ascension the triumph of our souls; his sit-
 “ting at the right hand of the Majesty on high
 “the earnest of our future coronation and exalt-
 “ed felicity; and his prevailing intercession
 “the inexhaustible fountain of all our blessings.”
 What grace! what benevolence! what mer-
 cy infinite, incomprehensible, unparal-
 lelled in all the records of eternity, are displayed in the
 redemption of a ruined world by a Saviour?
 Well might he say of himself, *I am the way,*
and the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto
the Father, but by me.

The whole discourse will be closed by a short
 exhortation to all that hear me; to repair to
 the Son of God for help and hope. Children
 of men, hear the voice of mercy and redeem-
 ing love. This day you have had set before
 you Christ Jesus the Lord as the way, the truth,
 and the life. No doctrine can be more impor-
 tant; no subject can be more interesting.
 Hear then the glad tidings of salvation and
 pardon. Behold him who is the way of life;
 the only path to eternal felicity; the wonder
 of angels; the joy of all heaven; the refuge
 of poor, perishing mortals. O! fly to this
 Saviour. Hear his sweet voice. Receive his of-
 fered grace. Be convinced of your need of
 help, and resort to him for pardon and peace,

as your teaching prophet, atoning priest and ruling king, the almighty friend of man. Then will your lives, in your respective places and stations, be useful; your death, when it shall come, peaceful; your account at the enlightened tribunal joyful; and your eternity blessed.