the wisdom and goodness of God, taken from the present state of the world. It will not always be thus: These things are only permitted for a season by the great Governor of the world, that he may draw immense, eternal good out of this temporary evil. This is the very key which the Apostle himself gives to all in the words above recited: “God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” In view of this glorious event, how well may we cry out, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” although for a season “his judgments were unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.” (Rom xi. 32, 33.) It is enough, that we are assured of this one point, that all these transient evils will well; will have a happy conclusion; and that “mercy first and last will reign.” All unprejudiced persons may see with the eyes, that He is already renewing the face of the earth: And we have strong reason to hope that the work he hath begun, he will carry on unto the day of the Lord Jesus; that he will never intermit this blessed work of his Spirit, until he has fulfilled his promises, until he hath put a period to sin, and misery, and infirmity, and death, and reestablished universal holiness and happiness, and caused all the inhabitants of the earth to sit together, “Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever!” (Rev. vii. 12.)

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SERMON LXIV.

THE NEW CREATION.

“Behold, I make all things new.” Revelation xxi. 5.

1. What a strange scene is here opened to our view! How remote from all our natural apprehensions! Not a glimpse of what is here revealed was ever seen in the heathen world. Not only the modern, barbarous, uncivilized Heathens have not the least conception of it; but it was equally unknown to the rein
Heathens of ancient Greece and Rome. And it is almost
little thought of or understood by the generality of Christians:
mean, not barely those that are nominally such; that have the
form of godliness without the power; but even those that in a
measure fear God, and study to work righteousness.
2. It must be allowed, that, after all the researches we can
make, still our knowledge of the great truth which is delivered
to us in these words, is exceedingly short and imperfect. As
this is a point of mere revelation, beyond the reach of all our
natural faculties, we cannot penetrate far into it, nor form any
adequate conception of it. But it may be an encouragement to
those who have, in any degree, tasted of the powers of the world
to come, to go as far as they can go; interpreting scripture by
scripture, according to the analogy of faith.
3. The Apostle, caught up in the visions of God, tells us in
the first verse of the chapter, “I saw a new heaven and a new
earth;” and adds, (verse 5,) “He that sat upon the throne said,”
(I believe the only words which he is said to utter throughout the
whole book,) “Behold, I make all things new.”
4. Very many commentators entertain a strange opinion, that
this relates only to the present state of things; and gravely tell
us, that the words are to be referred to the flourishing state
of the Church which commenced after the heathen persecutions.
Nay, some of them have discovered, that all which the Apostle
peaks concerning the “new heaven and the new earth” was ful-
filled when Constantine the Great poured in riches and honours
on the Christians. What a miserable way is this of making
the whole counsel of God, with regard to all that grand
train of events, in reference to his Church, yea, and to all ma-
and, from the time that John was in Patmos, unto the end of
the world! Nay, the line of this prophecy reaches farther still:
does not end with the present world, but shows us the things
at will come to pass, when this world is no more. For,
5. Thus saith the Creator and Governor of the universe:
Behold, I make all things new;”—all which are included in
expression of the Apostle, “A new heaven and a new
th.” A new heaven: The original word in Genesis (chap. i.)
in the plural number; and, indeed, this is the constant
usage of Scripture; not heaven, but heavens. Accordingly,
ancient Jewish writers are accustomed to reckon three hea-
s; in conformity to which, the Apostle Paul speaks of his
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being caught "up into the third heaven." It is this, the third heaven, which is usually supposed to be the more immediate residence of God; so far as any residence can be ascribed to his omnipresent Spirit, who pervades and fills the whole universe. It is here (if we speak after the manner of men) that the Lord sitteth upon his throne, surrounded by angels and archangels, and by all his flaming ministers.

6. We cannot think that this heaven will undergo any change, any more than its Great Inhabitant. Surely this palace of the Most High was the same from eternity, and will be, without end. Only the inferior heavens are liable to change; the highest of which we usually call the starry heavens. This St. Peter informs us, "is reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." In that day, "being on fire," it shall, first, "shrink as a parched scroll;" then it "shall be dissolved, and shall pass away with a great noise;" lastly, it shall "flee from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and there shall be found no place for it."

7. At the same time "the stars shall fall from heaven," the secret chain being broken which had retained them in their several orbits from the foundation of the world. In the mean-while the lower or sublunary heaven, with the elements, (or principles that compose it,) "shall melt with fervent heat," while "the earth, with the works that are therein, shall be burned up." This is the introduction to a far nobler state of things, such as it has not yet entered into the heart to conceive,—the universal restoration, which is to succeed the universal destruction. For "we look," says the Apostle, "for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 7, &c.)

8. One considerable difference there will undoubtedly be in the starry heaven, when it is created anew: There will be no blazing stars, no comets there. Whether those horrid, eccentric orbs are half-formed planets, in a chaotic state; (I speak on the supposition of a plurality of worlds;) or such as have undergone their general conflagration; they will certainly have no place in the new heaven, where all will be exact order and harmony. There may be many other differences between the heaven now is, and that which will be after the renovation: But these are above our apprehension: We must leave eternity to explain them.
We may more easily conceive the changes which will be
thought in the lower heaven, in the region of the air. It will
no more torn by hurricanes, or agitated by furious storms,
destructive tempests. Pernicious or terrifying meteors will
be no place therein. We shall have no more occasion to say,

There like a trumpet, loud and strong,
Thy thunder shakes our coast;
While the red lightnings wave along,
The banners of thy host!

All will then be light, fair, serene; a lively picture of the
day.

All the elements (taking that word in the common sense,
the principles of which all natural beings are compounded)
be new indeed; entirely changed as to their qualities,
though not as to their nature. Fire is, at present, the general
destroyer of all things under the sun; dissolving all things that
within the sphere of its action, and reducing them to their
primitive atoms. But no sooner will it have performed its last
great office of destroying the heavens and the earth; (whether
mean thereby one system only, or the whole fabric of the
verse; the difference between one and millions of worlds
being nothing before the great Creator;) when, I say, it has
one this, the destructions wrought by fire will come to a per-
end. It will destroy no more: It will consume no more
will forget its power to burn,—which it possesses only during
the present state of things,—and be as harmless in the new
heavens and earth as it is now in the bodies of men and other
imals, and the substance of trees and flowers, in all which
experiments show) large quantities of ethereal fire are
; if it be not rather an essential component part of every
material being under the sun. But it will probably retain its
ifying power, though divested of its power to destroy.

It has been already observed, that the calm, placid air
be no more disturbed by storms and tempests. There will
no more meteors, with their horrid glare, affrighting the poor
children of men. May we not add, (though at first it may
like a paradox,) that there will be no more rain? It is
sirable that there was none in Paradise; a circumstance
which Moses particularly mentions: (Gen. ii. 5, 6:) "The
God had not caused it to rain upon the earth.—But there
up a mist from the earth," which then covered up the abyss.
of waters, "and watered the whole face of the ground," with moisture sufficient for all the purposes of vegetation. We have all reason to believe that the case will be the same when Paradise is restored. Consequently, there will be no clouds or fogs; but one bright, refulgent day. Much less will there be any poisonous damps, or pestilential blasts. There will be no Sirocco in Italy; no parching or suffocating winds in Arabia; no keen north-east winds in our own country.

Shattering the graceful locks of yon fair trees;
but only pleasing, healthful breezes,
Fanning the earth with odoriferous wings.

12. But what a change will the element of water undergo, when all things are made new! It will be, in every part of the world, clear and limpid; pure from all unpleasing or unhealthful mixtures; rising here and there in crystal fountains, to refresh and adorn the earth "with liquid lips of murmuring stream." For, undoubtedly, as there was in Paradise, there will be various rivers gently gliding along for the use and pleasure of both man and beast. But the inspired writer has expressly declared, "there will be no sea." (Rev. xxi. 1.) We have reason to believe, that at the beginning of the world, when God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear," (Gen. i. 9,) the dry land spread over the face of the water, and covered it on every side. And so it seems to have done, till, in order to the general deluge which God determined to bring upon the earth at once, "the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up." But the sea will then retire within its primitive bounds, and appear on the surface of the earth no more. Neither, indeed, will there be any more need of the sea. For the earth will naturally produce whatever the inhabitants want,—or all mankind will procure what the earth affords, by a much easier and readier conveyance. For as all the inhabitants of the earth, our Lord informs us, will be equal to angels; on a level with them in every thing but

Omnis feret omnia tellus,
13. But it seems, a greater change will be wrought in the earth than even in the air and water. Not that I can believe the wonderful discovery of Jacob Behme, which many so eagerly intend for; that the earth itself, with all its furniture and inhabitants, will then be transparent as glass. There does not seem to be the least foundation for this, either in Scripture or reason. Rarely not in Scripture: I know not one text in the Old or New Testament which affirms any such thing. Certainly it cannot be inferred from that text in the Revelation (iv. 6:)

And before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal. And yet, if I mistake not, this is the chief, if not the only scripture which has been urged in favour of this opinion! Rather can I conceive that it has any foundation in reason. It has been warmly alleged, that all things would be far more beautiful if they were quite transparent. But I cannot apprehend this: Yea, I apprehend quite the contrary. Suppose every part of a human body were made transparent as crystal, would it appear more beautiful than it does now? Nay, rather, would shock us above measure. The surface of the body, particular, "the human face divine," is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful objects that can be found under heaven; could you look through the rosy cheek, the smooth, fair head, or the rising bosom, and distinctly see all that lies within, you would turn away from it with loathing and horror!

Let us next take a view of those changes which we may reasonably suppose will then take place in the earth. It will more be bound up with intense cold, nor parched up with intense heat; but will have such a temperature as will be conducive to its fruitfulness. If, in order to punish its inhabitants, God did of old

Bid his angels turn askance
This oblique globe,

neky occasioning violent cold on one part, and violent heat on the other; he will, undoubtedly, then order them to restore to its original position: So that there will be a final end, the one hand, of the burning heat which makes some parts scarce habitable; and, on the other, of

The rage of Arctos and eternal frost.
15. And it will then contain no jarring or destructive principles within its own bosom. It will no more have any of those violent convulsions in its own bowels. It will no more be shaken or torn asunder by the impetuous force of earthquakes, and will, therefore, need neither Vesuvius, nor Etna, nor any burning mountains to prevent them. There will be no more horrid rocks, or frightful precipices; no wild deserts, or barren sands; no impassable morasses, or unfruitful bogs, to swallow up the unwary traveller. There will, doubtless, be inequalities on the surface of the earth; which are not blemishes but beauties. And though I will not affirm, that

Earth hath this variety from heaven,
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale;

yet I cannot think gently-rising hills will be any defect, but an ornament, of the new-made earth. And doubtless we shall then likewise have occasion to say,—

Lo, there his wondrous skill arrays
The fields in cheerful green!
A thousand herbs his hand displays,
A thousand flowers between!

16. And what will the general produce of the earth be? Not thorns, briers, or thistles; not any useless or fetid weed; not any poisonous, hurtful, or unpleasant plant; but every one that can be conducive, in anywise, either to our use or pleasure. How far beyond all that the most lively imagination is now able to conceive! We shall no more regret the loss of the terrestrial Paradise, or sigh at that well-devised description of our great Poet:—

Then shall this mount
Of Paradise, by might of waves, be moved
Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood,
With all its verdure spoil'd and trees adrift,
Down the great river to the opening gulf,
And there take root, an island salt and bare!

For all the earth shall be a more beautiful Paradise than Adam ever saw.

17. Such will be the state of the new earth with regard to the meaner, the inanimate, parts of it. But great as the change will be, it is nothing in comparison of that which will then take place throughout all animated nature. In the first part of the creation were seen the most deplorable...
of Adam’s apostasy. The whole animated creation, whatever be its life, from leviathan to the smallest mite, was thereby made subject to such vanity, as the inanimate creatures could not be. They were subject to that fell monster, Death, the conqueror of all that breathe. They were made subject to its fore-runner, sin, in its ten thousand forms; although “God made not death, neither hath he pleasure in the death of any living.” How many millions of creatures in the sea, in the air, and on every part of the earth, can now no otherwise preserve their lives, than by taking away the lives of others; by tearing in pieces and devouring their poor, innocent, unresisting fellow-creatures! Miserable lot of such innumerable multitudes, who, insignificant as they seem, are the offspring of one common father; the creatures of the same God of love! It is probable not only two-thirds of the animal creation, but ninety-nine parts of a hundred, are under a necessity of destroying others in order to preserve their own life! But it shall not be always so. He that sitteth upon the throne will soon change the face of all things, and give a demonstrative proof to all his creatures, that his mercy is over all his works.” The horrid state of things which present obtains, will soon be at an end. On the new earth, a creature will kill, or hurt, or give pain to any other. The serpent will have no poisonous sting; the adder, no venomous breath. The lion will have no claws to tear the lamb; no teeth to grind his flesh and bones. Nay, no creature, no beast, bird, fish, will have any inclination to hurt any other; for cruelty will be far away, and savageness and fierceness be forgotten. So that violence shall be heard no more, neither wasting or destruction seen on the face of the earth. “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,” (the words may be literally as well as figuratively understood,) “and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: They shall not hurt nor destroy,” from the rising up of the sun, to the going down of the same.

But the most glorious of all will be the change which will take place on the poor, sinful, miserable children of men. These had fallen in many respects, as from a greater height, so into a lower depth, than any other part of the creation. But they shall “hear a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men: And he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be their God.” (Rev. xxi. 3, 4.) Hence will arise an
unmixed state of holiness and happiness, far superior to that which Adam enjoyed in Paradise. In how beautiful a manner is this described by the Apostle: “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: For the former things are done away!” As there will be no more death, and no more pain or sickness preparatory thereto; as there will be no more grieving for, or parting with, friends; so there will be no more sorrow or crying. Nay, but there will be a greater deliverance than all this: for there will be no more sin. And, to crown all, there will be a deep, an intimate, an uninterrupted union with God; a constant communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit; a continual enjoyment of the Three-One God, and of all the creatures in him!

SERMON LXV.

THE DUTY OF REPROVING OUR NEIGHBOUR

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.” Leviticus xix. 17.

A great part of the book of Exodus, and almost the whole of the book of Leviticus, relate to the ritual or ceremonial law of Moses; which was peculiarly given to the children of Israel but was such “a yoke,” says the Apostle Peter, “as neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.” We are, therefore, delivered from it: And this is one branch of “the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.” Yet it is easy to observe, that many excellent moral precepts are interspersed among these ceremonial laws. Several of them we find in this very chapter: Such as “Thou shalt not gather every grape in thy vineyard: The shalt leave them for the poor and stranger. I am the Lord your God.” (Verse 10.) “Ye shall not steal, neither lie one to another.” (Verse 11.) “Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: The wages of him that is hired shall