

44-2.0.25.

1815 The conſtraining Influence of the Love
of Chriſt :

9967
A S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D,

In the Church of the United Pariſhes of

St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Mary Woolchurch-Haw,
Lombard-Street,

BEFORE THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LORD-MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND
SHERIFFS,

On the 30th Day of March, 1800,

By *JOHN NEWTON, Rector,*

FOR THE

Benefit of the Children

BELONGING TO

LANGBOURN-WARD CHARITY-SCHOOL;

AND PUBLISHED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S PERMISSION,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE TREASURER, TRUSTEES,
AND COMMITTEE, OF THE SAID SCHOOL.

Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works,
and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Matt. v. 16.

L O N D O N:

Printed by H. L. GALABIN, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street;

And ſold, for the Benefit of the Charity, by

Mr. AYRES, *Treasurer*, No. 160, Fenchurch-Street;

Mr. CAREL, *the Maſter*, at the School-Houſe, Line-Street;

And Mr. BATT, *Clerk to the above Pariſhes*, Sherborn-Lane.

[Price One Shilling.]

To the **TREASURER, the TRUSTEES, and**
COMMITTEE,

OF THE

CHARITY-SCHOOL

OF

LANGBOURN-WARD,

THIS SERMON,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED AND PRESENTED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

JOHN NEWTON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE preacher cannot publish this Sermon as an exact copy of what he delivered from the pulpit. Some interval passed before he was desired to print it. His recollection is much impaired by age; and he had no notes to assist it: but the plan is the same. He hopes and believes that none of the leading sentiments are omitted, and that the additions, if any, are but few. As it is, he commends the perusal to the candour of the reader and the blessing of Almighty God.

A
S E R M O N.

2 CORINTHIANS, V. 13, 14, 15.

For, whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For, the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.

THE apostles, and first preachers of the Gospel among the heathens, exhibited to them a phenomenon perfectly new. The Greeks and Romans had known persons, among themselves; who had strenuously exerted their talents and activity in the pursuit of fame, power, or wealth; but they now saw men no less indefatigable and persevering in prosecuting a design which, far from procuring them either honour or profit, exposed them, wherever they

A 3 went,

went, to contempt, stripes, imprisonment, and death. Their professed aim was to make others as happy as themselves in the possession of an unseen Good. For the attainment of this end, they willingly gave up all prospect of worldly advantage, though they were generally treated with scorn and cruelty by the most of those whose best interests they wished to serve. This was a disinterested benevolence of which the philosophers, the pretended friends of wisdom and virtue, had no idea; nor were the means they employed better understood. They preached Jesus Christ, and him crucified!* For, endeavouring to persuade their hearers to place their whole hope and dependence upon one whom they had never seen, but who had been publicly executed as a malefactor; and to affirm that this Jesus, who died upon the cross, was yet alive; † that He, who could not save himself from an ignominious death, was the author of eternal salvation to those who believed on him; for these strange assertions, they were pitied or despised, as visionaries, by those who did not revile them as hypocrites. Thus Festus, who seemed to have a favourable opinion of St. Paul's integrity, when he heard him relate the manner of his conversion, thought that no man, in his sober senses, could talk so; and therefore he said, with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself. ‡

But his Lord and Master was treated thus before him, and upon similar grounds. His zeal for the honour of his Heavenly Father, and his compassion for the

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. † Mark, xv. 31. ‡ Acts, xxvi. 24.

the souls of men, carried him so far, that we read, his friends, that is, his relations according to the flesh, and who really wished him well, sought to lay hold of him, and restrain him; for, they said, he is beside himself.*

The Apostle Paul was not mad; he spoke the words of truth and soberness; he knew whom he had believed; he knew the worth of immortal souls, and the importance of eternity. He had once fiercely opposed the Gospel, breathed out threatenings† and slaughter against the disciples, and, not content with the mischief he had done in Jerusalem, was hastening to Damascus to vex and wrong the believers there; but he was arrested in his journey by a light and a voice from heaven; he found himself in the power of that Jesus whom he had persecuted, and who is pleased to consider all that is done, either for or against his people, as done to himself. The furious Paul, of Tarsus, was humbled, pardoned, and, in a few days, commissioned to preach that faith which he had so pertinaciously laboured to destroy. From that hour renouncing all connection with his former friends, the chief priests and council, and all expectations from them, renouncing likewise that righteousness of the law in which he before had boasted, he devoted himself to the service of his Lord and Saviour and of the cause which he had opposed. His ardour was astonishing and exemplary. Unwearied by labour, undismayed by danger, unaffected by hardship

A 4

and

* Mark, iii. 21. † Acts, ix.

and suffering, but supported and cheered by the presence of Him whom he served, he preached the Gospel in season and out of season, publicly and from house to house, in Judea, in Asia, in Greece, in Italy, and many other parts of the Roman empire. For this zeal in seeking to promote the good of others, of strangers, of enemies, at the expense of all that was dear to himself as a man, he found, as he expected, in almost every place which he visited, open oppositions, and secret conspiracies against his life: he was scourged by the Jews, beaten with rods by the Romans, and confined in prisons and chains; he was likewise the marked object of general contempt; the wise men of the times despised him as a babbler; he was deemed by many the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; many said, Away with such a fellow from the earth,* it is not fit that he should live! But when, in defiance of all discouragements, he still pressed forward, as if he had done nothing, while any thing more remained to be done, accounted the disgrace he met with his honour, and gloried in his chains,† we cannot wonder, if the more moderate of his observers, who knew not his principles, thought that he was surely beside himself.

The only apology he saw fit to make is expressed in my text. The bulk of mankind in Christendom, by whatever name they are distinguished, pay little more regard to the Gospel than the Jews or heathens did

* Acts, xxii. 22.

† Acts, xxviii. 20.

did in the apostle's days. The heart of man, in its natural state, is the same in all ages, devoid of either taste or inclination for the things of God, till visited by power from on high. Faithful ministers are still liable to be thought beside themselves, by some, for the subject-matter of their discourses; by others, for the importunity and freedom of their addresses to the consciences of their hearers. We are, however, encouraged by St. Paul's example, and we adopt his apology: If we are beside ourselves, it is to God. — We speak in his name, and the message we deliver, so far as agreeable to the Scripture, is from Him, and to Him we are responsible. If we are sober, if we expostulate and reason with you in familiar language upon the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death, and a future judgement, and other truths, which none but infidels will venture to deny, it is for your sakes.

The word Enthusiasm is often used, by the same person, in two very different senses. It is a term of commendation when applied to orators, poets, painters, or sculptors, and expresses the energy of genius. No one is expected to excel in the fine arts without a portion of enthusiasm, and it is supposed essential to military prowess. But it has quite another acceptance in religious concerns. If a minister of the Gospel is warm and earnest, he is frequently stigmatized as an enthusiast, that is, as the imposers of the name would have it understood, a person of a weak mind and disordered judgement; if he be really sincere;
for,

for, many are willing to suppose that his enthusiasm is no more than a mask or veil, assumed to cover the artful views of a designing hypocrite.

For myself, it is a small thing for me to be judged by man's judgement.* At my time of life, nearly the close of my seventy-fifth year, it behoves me to think it very possible, yea, not improbable, that every time I appear in the pulpit may be my last; and, when I look round upon this respectable congregation, I doubtless see some persons before me who will never hear me again. Perhaps we shall meet no more in this world; but we shall certainly meet before the tribunal of the Great Judge, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden. Then *I* must give an account of my ministry, and *you* must give an account of yourselves to God. Surely, if I believe what the Scripture teaches of the evil of sin, the glory of the Saviour, the worth of the soul, and the importance of eternity, you will allow me to speak with the same degree of emotion. As this may be my last opportunity, if there were but one person amongst us, who has not yet attended duly to these great subjects, I must not let him depart as he came; I must warn him by the terrors of the Lord; † I must beseech him by his tender mercies; I am desirous to save both my own soul and the souls of those that hear me. ‡ Whether I be beside myself, or sober, it is for the cause of God and for your sakes. The love of Christ constraineth me.

We

* 1 Cor. iv. 4. † 2 Cor. v. 11. Rom. xii. 1. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

We may observe from this passage,

1st, The grand leading motive of the apostle's conduct, *The love of Christ constrains us.*

2dly, Two doctrines which virtually comprehend the whole subjects of the Gospel-Ministry. 1. The provision which the mercy of God made for the recovery of fallen man, *One died for all*; whence he infers, 2. *Then were all dead.*

3dly, The end he had in view, and which he hoped and expected to obtain, by insisting on these truths wherever he went. That they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again.

I. The love of Christ was the apostle's chief motive; it constrained him, *συνεχει*; bore him along like a torrent, in defiance of labour, hardship, and opposition. Many of us know the force of love in social life, and feel a readiness to do, bear, or forbear, much for those whom we greatly love. But there is no love to be compared with the love of Christ. He is the brightness of the Father's glory,* the express image of his person, God manifest in the flesh; all things were created by him and for him; for, this high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity,† in the fulness of time, assumed our nature into personal union with himself, was born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, that sinners, believing in his name, might not only escape deserved condemnation, but might receive the
adoption

* Heb. i. 3. 1 Tim. iii. 16. † Isaiah, lvii. 15.

adoption of sons.* For this great purpose, he emptied himself; and, though in the form of God, he appeared upon earth in the form of a servant, submitted to a state of poverty, reproach, and opposition, was despised and rejected of men, lived a suffering life, and terminated his sufferings by a cruel and ignominious death; for, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.† Therefore God highly exalted his human nature, and has given him a name above every name. The Lamb, once upon the cross, is now the Lamb upon the throne, possessing and exercising all power in heaven and on earth. Yet he is still mindful of those for whom he suffered; his heart is made of tenderness; his bowels melt with love; he appears in the presence of God, for them,‡ as their great high priest, advocate, and intercessor. By his holy word, he invites, and by the power of his Holy Spirit he draws, and encourages, and enables, the weary and heavy-laden to come unto him for rest. He declares, that they, who apply to him, he will *in no wise* cast out;§ and he promises to save them *to the uttermost*; to support and guide them safely through all their conflicts, temptations, and trials, while they are here; to lead them safely through the dark valley of the shadow of death; and then to receive them to himself, that they may be ever with him to behold his glory.||

Such

* Gal. iv. 4, 5. † Phil. ii. 8. ‡ Heb. ix. 24.

§ John. v. 37. Heb. vii. 25. || John, xvii. 24.

Such is the love of Christ; — or rather we may be ashamed of the faintness of our conceptions of this love. When we attempt to consider the glory of his divine person, the depth of his humiliation, the unknown sorrows and agonies which wrung his heart in Gethsemane and on Mount Golgotha, and that he endured all this for his enemies, even for those whose hearts were, both by nature and habit, alienated from him, the power he exerts in reconciling them to himself, the blessings he bestows upon them in this life, when they are renewed by his grace, and the eternal happiness he has prepared for them in a future state, — I say, when we attempt to conceive of this love, in its origin, progress, and effects, we are soon overwhelmed, our thoughts are swallowed up, and we can only wonder and adore in silence. This love of Christ to sinners is inexpressible, unsearchable, and passing knowledge; it is an ocean without either bottom or shore.

They who have obtained mercy, who do know him, love and trust in him, have likewise their peculiar and appropriate reasons for admiring his love. They often reflect on what they were doing, and whither they were going, when he first touched their hearts, and made them willing to receive him as their prophet, priest, and king. They are sensible that, if they had died in their ignorance, they must have been lost for ever; and, while they see many of their fellow-creatures, no worse by nature than themselves, who live in the world, without God, without Christ,

and

and die, it is to be feared, without any solid ground of hope, they rejoice, with trembling, for that undeserved and unfought mercy, which preserved them from going down into the pit of destruction, when their sins were unpardoned and their hearts unhum-
bled. They confess that they were barren trees in God's vineyard; and, though he had a right to expect fruit from them, and waited year after year, he found none. Why then were they not cut down as cumberers of the ground? It was owing to the gracious interposition of the Great Mediator whom they had long disregarded. Thus, as we have observed, it was with our apostle. The pride of his heart, and the prejudices of his education, had fired him with rage against the cause and the people of the Lord. He seems to have been no less active and furious in opposing them than Herod. But Herod was suddenly cut off, and devoured by worms; whereas Paul, of Tarsus, who had done much mischief, while meditating more, was suddenly convinced, humbled, and pardoned. We cannot wonder that the love of Christ was the constraining motive of his conduct from that time to the end of his life.

Oh, that we all knew the need and the worth of this Saviour! Then we should all love him! This will be the deciding point at last. St. Paul, writing by inspiration of God, says, in one place, Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.* In another place, under the same influence,
he

* Ephes. vi. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

he denounces an awful sentence against those who love him not. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. This was by no means the apostle's wish; he would willingly have been made an anathema himself, after the manner of Christ,* if he could thereby procure the salvation of his enemies who sought his life in every place. But he declared the will of God, that if any man, who hears, or might hear, the record that God has given of his Son, refuses to love and serve him, and lives and dies a stranger to his love, he must, he will, be accursed! for,

II. He is the One, the mighty One, who died for all. The sacrifices, which were types of his appearance in the fulness of time to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself, were appropriated for the instruction and consolation of the people of Israel. But now the partition-wall is broken down. The distinction between Jew and Gentile is removed. Jesus died, that all, of every age and nation, whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, who, to the ends of the earth, and to the end of time, should believe in his name, might live through him. As the sun, his great visible emblem, fills every eye with his light, and would do so, were they as numerous as the leaves upon the trees or the blades of grass in the fields, without the least diminution of his effulgence; so this Lord God, our Saviour, the sun of the intellectual world, is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Wherever

* Rom. ix. 3.

Wherever the word of his Gospel is known, he makes it his power, to the salvation of all who believe on him. The value and efficacy of his atonement and righteousness are inexhaustible. It is true the blind are in darkness at noon-day; but this Sun of Righteousness not only affords light to those who can see, but gives sight to the blind. He invites all to come to him for relief; but many refuse to apply. They prefer darkness to light, because their deeds are evil. But all who seek him, and wait for him, in the ways of his appointment, are graciously accepted; they receive their sight; they look to him, and are saved. He has declared, he that cometh I will in no wise cast out, whatever their former characters or conduct may have been; but they who, though repeatedly wooed and warned, will not come, if they persist in their obstinacy, must perish in unbelief; for, he is sovereign in the dispensation of his grace.

If One, if *this* One, the only-beloved Son of God, died thus for all; if the Lord of Glory humbled himself to assume our nature, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; it surely must be for some very important design, worthy of himself, and which he alone was able to accomplish. The apostle briefly states the necessity and urgency of the case, by way of inference: If one died for all, then were all dead. The Scripture abundantly declares the state of fallen man, of all mankind, to be a state of death. We are all, by nature, dead in a two-fold sense: dead in *law* and dead in *sin*.

When

When a criminal has been tried, convicted, and condemned to death, in a court of justice, we speak of him as a dead man, though the sentence be not yet executed, and the king has the prerogative of pardoning him, if he is pleased to exercise mercy. We indeed compare great things with small, when we attempt to illustrate the proceedings of God with men, by the usages which obtain among ourselves; yet, in some respects, they are often apposite, and the Scripture teaches us by them.

As we are rational creatures, capable of knowing our Maker, and our dependance upon him for life, and breath, and all things; we are bound to love God with all our hearts, to devote our strength, power, and faculties, to his service, to obey his commands, to avoid whatever is contrary to his known will, to believe his promises, and to seek our happiness in his favour. This is the law of our nature, it is indeed the law of all created intelligences, whether angels or men. When God created man upright, in his own image, this obedience and submission, and a disposition to seek his supreme delight in his Maker, were as natural to him as it is for a fish to swim or a bird to fly. But this law we have broken. We are now depraved, and fallen from our original righteousness. We are now in a state of rebellion against God. We renounce his authority, violate his commands, are governed by our own will, and seek our own pleasure and glory, distinct from, and in opposition to, the will and glory of our Creator! The law which we have

broken is holy, just, and good;* and, therefore, the sentence of condemnation denounced against the transgressors is righteous. We come into the world devoid of all real goodness, and with a propensity to every evil. The carnal mind is enmity against God. The heart of man, of all mankind† universally, is deceitful and desperately wicked; the thoughts of men, when compared with the Holy Law, are evil, only evil, and that continually. Thus we are in a state of condemnation. By nature, children of wrath. But we, through the mercy and long-suffering of God, are favoured with a respite. The just sentence is not yet executed; and the Gospel points out a way of escape and deliverance. For this purpose God sent forth his Son, that whosoever believeth in him might be saved; but he that believeth not is condemned already.‡

We are likewise dead in sin. We partake with the brute-creation in the animal life, but are highly distinguished from them by the rational life. There is likewise a spiritual life, of which our first parent was originally possessed, but he soon lost it. In this sense, when he sinned against God, he died instantly. What the poet ascribes to Beelzebub is true of man; he still retains some marks of his pristine greatness; he is majestic, though in ruins; he is alive as to the concerns of this world, and his attempts and success give indications of his native dignity: the sciences
and

* Rom. vii. 12. † Rom. viii. 7. Jer. xvii. 9. Gen. vi. 5.
‡ John, iii. 18.

and the fine arts exhibit proofs of his genius and ability: he undertakes to measure the earth, to weigh the air, and almost to number and marshal the stars. What discoveries have been made in geometry, natural history, and chemistry! What powers are displayed in architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, and music! But, with respect to the concerns of his immortal soul, and the great realities of the unseen world, man, by nature, is dead as a stone. The dead body of Lazarus was not more incapable of performing the functions of common life, than we, by nature, are of performing one spiritual act, or even of feeling one spiritual desire; till He, who, by his commanding word, raised Lazarus from the grave,* is pleased, by the power of his Holy Spirit, to raise us from the death of sin unto a new life of righteousness. He, whom we profess to believe will one day come to be our Judge, has assured us, that, except a man be born again,† he cannot even see the kingdom of God. He has no faculty suited to the perception of what belongs either to the kingdom of grace upon earth, or what is revealed of the kingdom of glory in heaven. The result of his closest reasonings and shrewdest conjectures upon these subjects leave him in utter ignorance and darkness. As no description can communicate an idea of sun-shine or the colours of a rainbow to a man born blind, so the natural man cannot discern the things of God, for, they can only be spiritually discerned.‡

B 2

But

* John, xi.

† John, iii. 3.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

But Jesus died and rose again. As our surety, he sustained the curse of the law to deliver us from condemnation; and, when he ascended on high to appear in the presence of God for us, he received gifts for rebellious man, eminently the gift of the Holy Spirit, that the Lord God might again dwell among them.* Thus the promise the Lord made by the Prophet Ezekiel is fulfilled, I will put my Spirit into you;† and then they, who before were dead, begin to live.

A load of guilt and depravity lies unfelt upon the dead sinner; but, when he receives the principle of a new life, he groans, being burdened. The eyes of his understanding are opened. New, and, till then, unthought of, objects press upon his notice. The views he now has of God, of himself, and of eternity, would overwhelm him, if he was not warranted and enabled to look to Jesus‡ as an all-sufficient and gracious Saviour. From that hour he lives indeed! his sins are pardoned, his fears dispelled, his heart beats with love and gratitude. Old things are passed away, and all things are become new. He now lives no more to himself, but to Him who died for him and rose again.

III. This was what the apostle aimed at, and expected, as the result and reward of his labours, that the love of Him who died for all might constrain those, who live, to live no more to themselves, but to Him.

When

* Ps. lxxviii. 18. † Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ‡ Isa. xlv. 22.

When the sinner, who was too long governed by the mean and narrow principle of self, is enabled to believe in Jesus for salvation, he feels the force of the apostle's words, Ye are bought with a price, ye are no longer your own,* therefore glorify God with your body and your spirit, which are his. This thought expands his mind and elevates his aims. So far as his faith is in exercise, he is constrained by love, inspired by gratitude, and animated by confidence and hope, to live no more to himself, but to Him who loved him, and gave himself for him. He is now the devoted servant of his Lord, is governed by his precepts and example, and employs his time, talents, and influence, to promote the welfare of his fellow-creatures for the Lord's sake.

His new principles have this effect upon him in whatever situation the providence of God places him. If he be poor, they teach him contentment, frugality, and industry; if rich, he is moderate, condescending, and bountiful, and ready for every good work, either to promote the knowledge of the Gospel or to relieve the necessitous. The golden, plain, and comprehensive rule, of doing to others, as he could reasonably wish others, in similar cases, would do unto him, is inwrought into the very temper and habit of his mind. In a word, the true Christian, whether in public or in private life, whether a husband or a wife, a parent or a child, a master or a servant, whether possessed of rank and wealth, or ap-

B 3

pointed

* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

pointed by the providence of God to sweep the street for his subsistence, in all stations and circumstances, is ambitious to let his light shine before men, for the honour of God, and to be filled with those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to his praise and glory.

Should these effects of the constraining love of Christ be disputed by persons of any candour, we could, degenerate as the present times are, refer them to living instances. We can point out to them persons, who once were a burden to themselves, a terror to their families, a nuisance in their connections, who, by receiving the truths of the Gospel, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and by feeling the constraining love of Christ, are, in all these respects, become new creatures. And I little doubt that there are those now before me, to whom I may say, Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

What shall we then say of the attempts of modern philosophers, so called, who, if they could prevail by spreading the gloomy sophisms of infidelity, would deprive mankind of that light and comfort of which the Holy Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is the only source. But, as the raging waves of the sea, in a storm, make no impression upon the rock against which they successively dash themselves into foam, and die away at its foot, so their most subtle, laboured,

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

laboured, and malignant efforts to suppress the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,* will only issue in their own confusion. *Magna est veritas, et prevalebit.* Truth will triumph over all opposition. The Church of God, composed of all the living members of that body, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the living head, is founded upon a rock, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. There will always be a people, who, animated by a sense of the constraining love of Christ, will bear testimony to the power of his grace, and give evidence by the general tenour of their conduct in life, their patience and peace in affliction, their love to their fellow-creatures, and their joyful hopes of immortality, when flesh and heart are fainting, that they have neither followed cunningly-devised fables, nor amused themselves with empty notions of truth.

It is upon this ground that I am encouraged to solicit your liberal assistance to the School of Langbourn-Ward. I seldom say much upon these occasions, having had repeated proofs of the generosity of my stated auditory, and no reason to doubt the goodwill and concurrence of the rest of my hearers. Let the sight of the children before you plead in their behalf. The institution I am now to recommend will, I hope, preserve these children, and many more in succession, from those habits of idleness, intemperance, and profligacy, which too frequently mark the character of those who were destitute of instruction

B 4

and

* 1 Tim. i. 11.

and education in their early years. By the benefit of our public charity-schools, and particularly of this, (as you may observe in the printed account,*) many boys have been trained up to honesty, sobriety, and usefulness, who might otherwise have been nuisances to society; and some have not only obtained a good character as apprentices and servants, but, by their integrity and industry, have reputably risen to affluence and influence. Could all the children of the poor be thus cared for, be taught the first principles of religion, and habituated to respect the Lord's Day, and to attend on public worship, it is probable that the number of depredators who infest our streets and roads, or break into houses, and end their unhappy lives on the gallows, would be much diminished.

The awful times in which we live render these institutions peculiarly worthy of attention and encouragement. I cannot speak positively from my own knowledge, but I have reason to believe that the abettors of the French principles of infidelity and anarchy have seminaries where children, of all descriptions, find ready and welcome admission. It is even said that they are paid for their attendance. It is, however, certain, that a spirit of insubordination, and a defiance of all laws, human or divine, have rapidly spread, and are still rapidly spreading, among the lower classes of our people. The liberty and equality inculcated in these schools is not like that which, under our mild and equitable laws, gives every person an equal advantage for rising in life, by the proper and diligent

* See the statement at the end.

diligent improvement of his talents; but is adapted to confound all order and distinction, and to reduce us to the common level of a savage and barbarous state. It is therefore the common interest of all, and especially of persons of property, to exert themselves in their places to counteract this baneful design.

But I have a higher consideration to propose to you, who know the worth of souls, and have felt the power of the constraining love of Christ.

When a child is born that is heir to a title or a great fortune, it usually causes much joy to the family and much congratulation from their friends. The birth of poor children is less noticed; but the birth of any child, whether of a prince or a pauper, is an event of great, yea of equal, importance, if we form our judgement by the standard of the unerring word of God: When a child is born, a new existence begins which will never end. The present life of the children before you is precarious, but their souls are, by God's constitution and appointment, immortal. Perhaps you may see them no more upon earth, but you will surely meet them again, at the great day, when you, and I, and they, must all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ. Though education alone cannot convert them, it is in the number of those means which God has enjoined us to use, and which he has promised to bless for that purpose. Happy are they who are instrumental in saving a soul from death! Happy and honoured will you be, if, from a sense of his love, who, when he was rich, made him-

self

self poor for your sakes,* you, according to your abilities, imitate his example, in promoting the welfare of your fellow-creatures. You may do much in this way, by contributing to the instruction of poor children, and thereby shielding them from the snares and temptations to which ignorant and neglected youth are exposed. You know not but, in the day of final award, some of these children may stand with you on the right hand of our Saviour and Judge, and you may hear him say, Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these, ye did it unto me !†

Thus much in behalf of the school. But my heart is too much impressed by the sight of this numerous and respectable auditory, and by my sincere regard for the true happiness of every individual before me, to permit me to conclude till I have addressed you on a subject of more general concern. I am not preaching to Jews or Mahomedans, but to professed Christians. I am willing to take it for granted, that we all agree in acknowledging that the Scripture, the whole Scripture, is a revelation of the will of God. I hope there is not a person here, however immersed in the business, or drawn aside by the amusements and pleasures, of the world, who, if he were desired to throw the Bible, with deliberation and contempt, into the fire, would not be shocked at the proposal. I think he would say, If I have not paid that attention to the Bible which it deserves, yet surely I am not so wicked and presumptuous as to burn it. But permit me to
ask

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

† Matt. xxv. 40.

ask you in love, If it be indeed the word of God, why have you not paid that attention to it which it deserves? The same reasons, which would deter you from wilfully throwing it into the fire, should induce you to study it carefully, to make it the foundation of your hope and the rule of your life; for, if it be indeed the word of God, it is the rule by which your characters will be decided, and your everlasting state fixed, according to the tenour of the Gospel, which proclaims salvation to all who have repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to those only.

It is painful to a serious mind to observe how much the Bible is neglected. I have known some *great houses* in which this book could not be found. In others, if it has a place in the library, it is seldom removed from the shelf. Perhaps there is no book so little read, understood, or regarded, as the book of God, by multitudes who are not unwilling to be called Christians. What an affront is this to the Almighty! A message from the king, or an act of parliament, engages the attention of those who are interested in the subject-matter, while the revealed will of God, our Creator, compared with whom all the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth, are but as a drop of water to the sea, or the small dust upon a balance, is treated with indifference; though every person who can have access to it is deeply and equally interested in its contents. Should there be but a few of my hearers who, through their engagements
and

and pursuits in life, have hitherto been remiss and negligent in acquainting themselves with the principal facts and truths recorded in the Bible, neither my conscience nor my compassion will permit me to close my discourse till I have briefly expostulated with them ; as it is possible I may never have another opportunity, and perhaps the providence of God has brought them hither this morning for their good.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be amongst us in other respects, we are universally agreed as to the certainty of death and the uncertainty of life. We are sure that all must die ; and, after death, if the Scriptures be true, we must appear before God in judgement. Nor have we any warrant to assure ourselves that we shall live to the end of the present year, or even week. Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* We often read or hear of sudden deaths, and sometimes of those, who, after a lingering illness, die as suddenly, to their own apprehensions of the event, as if they had died by a flash of lightning. It is no less a proof than a fruit of that depravity, which the Scripture charges upon the whole human race, that men, who are so active and solicitous in managing the temporal transient affairs of time, to promote what they conceive most to their advantage, should be totally indifferent to what may be their allotment in a state unchangeable and eternal !

Permit

* Prov. xxvii. 1.

Permit me briefly to remind you, that the Scripture concludes us all under sin, and exposed to the just displeasure of our Great Creator, Proprietor, Law-giver, and Benefactor. He formed us for himself, and gave a thirst and capacity for happiness which only himself can satisfy. Our relation to Him, as intelligent creatures, who live, move, and have our being, in Him, and cannot subsist a moment without Him, binds us to love Him supremely, to devote all our powers and faculties to his service. This is the law of our nature. This law we have broken; we all of us have lived too long, and some of us are still living without God in the world. We have made our own will and our own gratification the rule and end of our conduct instead of his will and glory. We have incurred the penalty annexed to the breach of this law. We are sinners, the wages of sin is death, and the extent of that sentence is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. How shall we escape? What shall we do to be saved?

To those who are sensible of their desert and danger, the Gospel points out relief and a refuge. Jesus invites the weary and burdened sinner, and says, Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out. You have heard something of his glorious person, power, authority, and love. He is able, he is willing, he has promised, to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him. Oh, that to-day you may hear his voice and comply with his invitation. If you cordially

dially

dially receive the record which God has, by his own voice from heaven, given, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ! He will, for his sake, be well pleased with you, if you approve of this way of salvation, in which justice and mercy harmonize, which ascribes all the glory to God, teaches us to hate sin, and inspires the love of holiness, as essential to happiness, then this Saviour, and all the fulness of his salvation, will assuredly be yours. You will then renounce every other hope, you will no longer trust or boast in yourselves, but you will have a good warrant to boast and glory in your Saviour, and to say, In the Lord I have righteousness and strength. The Lord is my shepherd, therefore I shall not want, I need not fear ; he will support me by his arm, cheer me with his presence, protect me by his power, guide me by his counsels, and afterwards receive me to glory.

THE END.

*Number of Boys admitted in the LANGBOURN-WARD
CHARITY-SCHOOL, since its Foundation in 1702.*

Put out apprentices	391
To sea-service	16
Taken out, or otherwise disposed of,	743
Now taught in the school	50
	<hr/>
Total,	1200
	<hr/>

*The TRUSTEES and COMMITTEE return their thanks to the
Subscribers and Public at large for their support of the School, and
beg leave to inform them, that they have reduced the number of
Boys, and are about to admit GIRLS in their stead.*

SUBSCRIPTIONS gratefully received by Mr. AYRES, the
Treasurer, *Fenchurch-Street*, or by Mr. CAREL, the Master, at
the *School-House, Lime-street*.