

perhaps, in all its vast extent, had fallen, had become rebellious, had apostatized. In heaven, amid the very ranks of Spirits whom God had placed nearest his throne, rebellion, apostacy, was found : but of all those worlds which reason teaches us to believe may have their inhabitants as well as this one, perhaps not one had departed from its allegiance to God, and this alone was drawn along with those angels which kept not their first estate. Man, the inhabitant of this world, sinned and fell. He apostatized from his Maker, and became obnoxious to punishment. We enter not into any account of this melancholy event. We assume it as true, that man had fallen. He had broken the covenant which God had been pleased to make with him : he had incurred the sentence of condemnation : the wrath of God was impending : every successive generation, as it came into the world, came into an inheritance of misery and death : “children of wrath, and heirs of hell.” For this state of things a remedy was provided. The world was not left to perish. A marvellous plan was devised for its recovery or redemption. The hour of which Christ here speaks was the hour of the world’s redemption. The destinies of the world hinged upon it. It was emphatically “*the hour*.” Redemption was to be achieved : salvation was to be accomplished : our fallen and apostate race was to be restored.

*But why was this the hour ? Why was the work so long delayed ? Why was this blessed and glorious event so long protracted ? Why were ages suffered to elapse before its accomplishment ? To this there can be but one answer : “Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”* No doubt, God had wise and important ends to serve in fixing upon this hour. Thereby, the event itself was made more conspicuous. Its virtues or effects reached to the earliest period in time, the earliest moment of man’s apostacy. It was for the remission of sins that were past, as well as future transgressions. According to the all wise arrangements of God,—by his promises, by his prophecies, by the types which he appointed, the event was as if already transacted, and it was an object of faith from the very first. But by hanging it up, as it were, to a distant day, by appointing it for this particular hour, it became more conspicuous, and greater regards were drawn towards it. Thus, too, it became more manifest that man could not save himself, that the world could do nothing to retrieve its own state ; and Christ became emphatically “the desire of all nations.” But it is enough that this was the hour which God had appointed : it was *the hour* in the Divine counsels : it was the hour decreed from eternity, to which from eternity God had been looking forward. Christ was partner in the Divine counsels, and knowing that “the hour” had arrived, and prepared to accomplish all that was implied in it, addressing his Father, he says : “Father, the hour is come !”

But let us consider more specifically all that was implied in this hour, all that was to be accomplished in it.

And first, it was the hour to which the prophecies and types of the olden dispensation all looked forward. It had been long foretold and foreshadowed. It was predicted in the first promise of Christ in the garden. No doubt the patriarchs before the flood foresaw this very hour. They had it dimly, yet sufficiently for their faith, revealed or predicted to them. It was in the faith of it that Enoch walked with God, and that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. It emerged in still more glorious promise from the chaos of the deluge. Was it not seen in that bright bow which now spanned the heavens ? And did not Noah sacrifice to God as soon as he could build an altar on dry land ? Was it not still more clearly described in the promises and predictions to Abraham ? That hour was in his view when the ram was