

FAMILY SERMON—II Cor. v. 21.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

No one of the infinitely numerous and benevolent dispensations of the Almighty Father of the Universe, so forcibly marks the extent of his love to his fallen and sinful creatures, as the atonement made by the shedding of Christ's blood. Whether we view the cost of the sacrifice, the mighty preparations for its consummation, or the unbounded extent of its beneficial effects, we are equally impressed with the truth of the Apostle's observation—"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."

When man fell from the state of innocence in which he was created, an offence was committed against the laws of a Being of infinite justice. Of the same nature are all our sins. Infinite justice, to obtain full satisfaction of the offender, must require infinite punishment. But happily for fallen and degraded man, the same Being who is infinitely just is also infinitely merciful, and the one attribute is as powerful as the other. But how were they, in the case of fallen man, to be reconciled? There was but one possible mode, viz. by atoning to infinite justice for the transgression. But who could make this atonement? Could frail and sinful man, who forms the lowest link in the chain of intellectual beings, could he, who was himself laden with sin, presume to offer himself as a sacrifice for the sins of others? or could an angel of light, who, though he be a ministering spirit in the presence of God, is yet imperfect and liable to fall, be considered a sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and atonement for the sins of a whole world? No. An infinite and perfect being alone could atone to infinite justice. The only begotten Son, therefore, of the Father, "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," He, "who knew no sin," was the only person who, "by his one oblation of himself once offered, could make "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, "and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Such was the cost of the sacrifice.

We come next to consider the preparations for its final consummation.

The prophet Isaiah, who has been emphatically styled the evangelical prophet, describes a vision in which he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne," surrounded by seraphim who perpetually chanted forth the praises of the Lord of Hosts; and that he heard also "the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I, send me." From this passage we may suppose, the almost inspired author of "Paradise Lost" borrowed the sublime conception of the Lord assembling the Host of Heaven around his throne, and asking who shall go and redeem fallen man, when