

hearts—that reposed upon our affections—and whose opening virtues were the theme of our admiration, and the object of our hopes—then, then we feel with the broken-hearted Job, that “man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.” Calamity of this description comes upon the soul as the approach of winter comes upon the earth—dark, cold, and stormy; and, for a season, it withers every flower that expectation or hope had planted. We have often seen a tender and delicate flower modestly raising its head over the surface of the earth; and its gradual development attracting our attention, we have beheld it opening its golden cups to receive the gracious dew that comes down from heaven, and unfolding its leaves to salute the light that shineth in the morning. We have seen it in the fulness of its beauty, blushing under the influence of its own loveliness, and pouring sweetness upon all around it. But this is not all. We have seen the same flower, struck by the frost, or smitten by the storm; its delicate stalk broken, its leaves withered and scentless; and its once beautiful form stretched dead upon the ground, and corrupting the very spot that it once perfumed by its fragrance. So it is with man: for “*he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.*” This delineation, however, applies with peculiar force to those who die in their youth. They constitute a mother’s pride, and a father’s joy. They are the olives that grow around his table; but death falls upon them like a mildew, and that too, while they are putting forth their blossoms, and ripening into maturity. For a while, parental love and medical skill form a defence round the drooping object of their solicitude; but the ruthless destroyer, thirsting for the life of his victim, breaks through this feeble covert: makes bare his gaunt but irresistible arm—administers the fatal blow—and leaves behind him an incontrovertible proof that “*MAN COMETH FORTH LIKE A FLOWER, AND IS CUT DOWN.*”

AMICUS.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE A MORAL PRINCIPLE.

Deuteronomy viii. 2.

MOSES, having brought the Israelites to the borders of Canaan, under divine direction now recapitulates the history of their forty years’ wanderings; their deliverances, mercies, and ingratitude; their disobedience, and punishments. He reminds them also, that the design of God’s dispensations was precisely the same as that of the publication of his commandments: “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee,” &c.

This passage develops the principle, that divine providence is a moral principle. “The Lord thy God led thee;” here is a distinct recognition of divine providence; “to humble thee, and to prove thee;” here is as distinct an avowal of a moral purpose.

By providence, we understand God’s most wise and gracious preservation and government of all his creatures; a superintendence which regards the most minute circumstance of human life especially; directly bestowing every good; permitting every evil; and constantly over-ruling natural evils for moral good; and this without interfering with the natures of the respective agents, but leaving the distinguishing characteristics of each entire and inviolate.

The doctrine of a particular providence is a most necessary and fundamental truth of religion; “a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.” The notion of a God without a providence is irrational and absurd. All things speak for God, and his immediate operation. Even motion itself is no attribute of matter, but is impressed upon it from without; so that whatever moves, demonstrates the presence and power of God as the first great Mover. All second causes and laws of nature, as they are termed, are but modes or instruments of divine operation; intermediate links between us and God. The whole chain of causes must centre in him; and the whole system depend on him, the only independent Cause. Thus, by an exact and suitable arrangement of second causes, God provides for the wants of all his creatures. “In him we live, and move, and have our being. He leaves not himself without witness, in that he doeth good, and giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our

hearts with food and gladness. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”

Nor may we here admit that voluntary humility, and seeming honour, but real dishonour, to God—the supposition that many of the events of life are too mean and worthless to be deserving of the divine regard. His providence takes a sweep as ample as his creating power, and a superintendence as minute as his omniscience. If he is the Lord and Giver of life, the smallest animalcule subsists and finds its enjoyment only by the constant operation of his providence. That which was not too insignificant for him to create, it cannot be beneath his condescension to care for. The whole is but the assemblage of parts; and, however minute the parts, their great number makes them of great consequence; and the whole can only be cared for by watching over the component parts. Nothing can be too insignificant to be matter of divine regard, which affects the happiness and moral well-being of man: and who can say how small a circumstance may give a new turn to events, which shall give a new turn to character, and affect our everlasting destiny? Who then shall presume to say what circumstances are great or small in connexion with others and with eternity? Not to observe that the history of the Israelites, as all other history, marks a particular superintendence, it is enough to reply, in the language of our Lord, “The hairs of your head are all numbered.” This declaration cements all facts into a beautiful and lofty pile of demonstration, which defies all the opposition of faithless philosophy. He who is at the head of providence offers this illustration of its particularity; “The hairs of your head are all numbered.”

Brethren, willing or unwilling, we are all witnesses to this doctrine. Every man, whether he has sought it or not, has experienced or observed events, over which no human being could have control, and which could not, by a pagan and too natural philosophy, be resolved into chance, fate, or accident; since there has been a manifest design and intelligence in the connexion of means with an end. Who of us has not had passages in life, which, however we may have obliterated first impressions, at the time compelled the acknowledgment of a particular providence?

Providence is not to be regarded as a distinct system, but as an auxiliary part of the scheme of redeeming mercy. The whole is now necessarily restorative. Herein it differs from the dispensation established in Eden. While man continued sinless, providence was a simple continuance of unmingled blessing. There was then no curse. Earth had then felt no wound; had suffered no blight. There were then no elemental wars. The human body had not been stricken with disease; it could not bend with age. Man’s mind was not yet ignorant and wayward, the sport of circumstance and temptation. His soul was not yet vicious and rebellious, and needed not the restraint of afflictions. These evils and dangers resulted from the fall; and then it became needful, if God would save man, to establish a new system of providence. Evils are now to be watched and provided for, to be repelled or meliorated. Man’s viciousness must be restrained, and often punished. His thoughtlessness must be roused; and those religious considerations which he would uniformly spurn with disgust, must frequently be forced upon him as salutary and necessary. Thus, the purpose of God to redeem and save man, is made the basis of the present providential administration. The great truth now made prominent, is, that God “will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.”—*Rev. F. A. West.*

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

CAN ANY MAN expect to be saved from his inward sin in the other world? None, except such as hold the Popish antisciptural doctrine of purgatory. “But this deliverance is expected at death.”—Where is the promise that it shall then be given? There is not one such in the whole Bible! And to believe for a thing essential to our glorification, without any promise to support that faith in reference to the point on which it is exercised, is a desperation that argues as well the absence of true faith as it does of right reason. Multitudes of such persons are continually de-

ploring their want of faith, even where they have the clearest and most explicit promises; and yet, strange to tell, risk their salvation at the hour of death on a deliverance that is no where promised in the Sacred Oracles!

“But who has got this blessing?”—Every one who has come to God in the right way for it. “Where is such a one?”—Seek the blessings as you should do, and you will soon be able to answer the question. “But it is too great a blessing to be expected.”—Nothing is too great for a believer to expect, which God has promised, and Christ has purchased with his blood. “If I had such a blessing, I should not be able to retain it.”—All things are possible to him that believeth. Besides, like all other gifts of God, it comes with a principle of preservation with it; “and upon all thy glory there shall be a defence.” “Still, such an unfaithful person as I cannot expect it.”—Perhaps the infidelity you deplore came through the want of this blessing: And as to worthlessness, no soul under heaven deserves the least of God’s mercies. It is not for thy worthiness that he has given thee any thing, but for the sake of his Son. You can say, “When I felt myself a sinner, sinking into perdition, I did then flee to the atoning blood, and found pardon: But this sanctification is a far greater work.”—No; speaking after the manner of men, justification is far greater than sanctification. When thou wert a sinner, ungodly, an enemy in thy mind by wicked works, a child of the devil, an heir of hell, God pardoned thee on thy casting thy soul on the merit of the great Sacrificial Offering; thy sentence was reversed, thy state was changed, thou wert put among the children, and God’s Spirit witnessed with thine that thou wert his child. What a change! and what a blessing!

What then is *this* complete sanctification? It is the cleansing of the blood that has not been cleansed; it is washing the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin; it is the making one who is already a child of God more holy, that he may be more happy, more useful in the world, and bring more glory to his heavenly Father. Great as this work is, how little, humanly speaking, is it when compared with what God has already done for thee! But suppose it were ten thousand times greater, is any thing too hard for God? Are not all things possible to him that believes? And does not the blood of Christ cleanse from all unrighteousness? Arise, then, and be baptized with a greater effusion of the Holy Ghost, and wash away thy sin, calling on the name of the Lord.—*Dr. A. Clarke’s Theology.*

YOUTH ADMONISHED OF SCEPTICISM.

IN conclusion of this head of discourse I would admonish all, but the youth of both sexes especially, to beware of that fashionable scepticism, which, under pretence of exalting reason and science, depreciates the scriptures. Without the scriptures, reason would have been blind, and science would have been obscure; one half of the world’s history would have been lost, and the chronology of all nations would have been founded on fable. Man would have remained ignorant of himself, and a stranger to his God; the slave of passion, the child of disease, the victim of fear, and an heir of death. He would have had no correct views of morality, no balm for the wounds of his conscience, no cure for his innate depravity, no hope beyond the grave, and consequently, no remedy against the fear of death.

The Bible, in the estimation of one of the greatest men that ever lived, “contains, independently of its divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass, from all other books that ever were composed, in any age, or in any idiom. The two parts of which the scriptures consist are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance, in form or style, to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or even Arabian learning; the antiquity of these compositions no man doubts; and the unrestrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired.” So thought Sir William Jones; and after such a testimony, from such a