

To do justice to the work under notice, we present the few following extracts from the sermons :—

FROM SERMON ON DIVINE INFLUENCE.

“‘I will be as the dew unto Israel.’ The comparison in the text suggests the mysterious manner in which the effect is produced. We know that in a certain state of the atmosphere, the vapor which is exhaled from the earth is formed into dew—into innumerable small drops, sparkling on the blades of grass and other plants; and the result is their growth and fruitfulness. But how mysterious to us is all this! How and why is it that these things are so? All that we know amounts only to this, that from certain appearances or effects certain other appearances or effects follow. ‘The wind,’ says our Lord, ‘bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.’ The nature of that influence which produces the new creature—which sweetens the bitter fountain that sent forth, and could send forth only bitter waters, so that now it sends forth sweet,—how that influence acts on the mind so as to transform its moral character, yet leave it in the full possession of its natural freedom, we know not, and perhaps may never know. A thought casually thrown out, a verse of the Bible, which a man has read or heard a hundred times with perfect indifference, now lays hold on him, he tries to shake it off, but he cannot, it lies down with him and rises with him, it suggests other thoughts, other truths,—leads him to the Bible—to his knees. It puts another spirit within him. Now, why and how is all this? We cannot tell. The invisible God is dealing with this man, but the reasons and manner of his communings are a mystery which we labor in vain to penetrate. The same truth which searches this man’s heart, which brings Christ near to him and him near to Christ, excites no interest whatever in his neighbor sitting by his side. That neighbor is not even listening to it, is occupying his mind with something else, or perhaps is asleep. Whence this most important of all distinctions? How shall we account for it? Let us imbibe the spirit and copy the exercise of Christ expressed in the following humble, adoring ascription of praise to his Father, and surely the reason that satisfied Christ should satisfy us: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

FROM SERMON ON THE REDEEMER’S AGONY.—Luke xxii. 44.

“Surely to the contemplation of such a scene we should come with profoundest reverence. Not without humility and godly fear should we look into the interior of Christ’s pure and mighty mind when ‘the pains of hell gat hold on him, and he found trouble and sorrow.’ This agony he endured, not in the temple, not in the guest-chamber, but in the garden of Gethsemane, and in a sequestered spot in that garden. Only three of his disciples he permitted to accompany him thither, and he had scarcely announced to them the anguish of his heart when he retired to a little distance even from them. It was night; they were heavy with sleep; and I know not that this agony was witnessed by any but invisible beings.”

FROM THE SAME SERMON.

* * * “The communication of the comforts of the divine favor to him were now suspended. In God’s favor is life. A lively sense of his love is effectual to sustain and cheer the heart under the greatest calamities. It was this which enabled many a martyr to sing amidst tortures and flames. The consolations of God’s love were poured into their hearts, and they rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But such consolations Jesus was not now permitted to taste. They all were withdrawn and withheld. ‘My God, my God,’ he exclaimed, ‘why hast thou forsaken me?’ How heavy have been the troubles of a child of God from this cause! Compared with it, all other afflictions were felt as light. What can he enjoy if his Beloved has withdrawn himself and is gone, if a thick cloud rest on his soul which effectually intercepts the light of that countenance whose benignity creates the blessedness of heaven? What evil did the holy Psalmist