

## WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

Does the Apostle mean simply to say, that he proclaims the historical fact, that Jesus died upon the cross? Surely not: about that there was no dispute, either on the part of Jew or of Greek: on the contrary, it was the very ground of their objections. He evidently means, We preach a crucified Saviour, as the distinguishing and saving doctrine of the Gospel; *unto us which are saved, it is the power of God: in other words, it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* This doctrine was to the Jews a stumbling-block, or stone of offence; not because they had any difficulty in admitting that sin might be expiated by sacrifice, a notion which was perfectly familiar to them, and characteristic of their own religion; but because they could not bring themselves to believe, that any person could be their Messiah, who had submitted to such an extremity of humiliation and disgrace. But to the Greeks, on the other hand, it would be no conclusive argument against the truth of a system, that its author had undergone a violent, or even an ignominious death; for some of their own most eminent and revered philosophers had suffered death, for imputed innovations in matters of religion. At all events, there was no foolishness in the notion, that a very excellent and wise teacher was unjustly deprived of life. The foolishness to them was that the death of Jesus on the cross should be declared to be the means of procuring salvation to mankind. This was a strange doctrine; not to be accounted for on their principles of philosophy; that Jesus Christ should be offered up upon the cross, as a satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and that, in token of that satisfaction, God should have raised him up from the dead on the third day.

If we inquire, in the next place, what satisfaction can have been made for our sins—for ourselves we are no more able to make any amends, or reparation now, than our forefathers were at any period of the world—our own reason can give us no answer: but the Scriptures tell us, that the death of Christ has effected it. He was crucified for our sins; his blood was shed, and his life poured out, as an atonement or peace-making for us. There is no other kind of atonement, no other means of peace pointed out in the word of God; but this is set forth in language as plain, as strong, and as affecting as the importance of the doctrine required.—*Bishop Elomfield.*

## BISHOP RIDLEY.

Very affectionate and truly beautiful is this excellent prelate's apostrophe to his college, Pembroke Hall Cambridge, just before his martyrdom.

"Farewell, Pembroke Hall, of late my own college, my cure; and my charge.—What case thou art now in, God knoweth I trow not well. Thou wast ever named, since I knew thee, which is not thirty years ago, to be studious, well learned, and a great setter forth of Christ's Gospel, and of God's true word. So I found thee, blessed be God, so I left thee, indeed. Woe is me, for thee, my dear college, if thou suffer thyself by any means to be brought from that trade. In thy orchard, (the walls, butts, and trees, if they could speak, would bear me witness) I learned without book almost all St. Paul's Epistles, yea and ween, all the canonical Epistles, save only the Apocalypse: of which study, though in time a great part did depart from me, yet the sweet scent thereof, I trust I shall carry to heaven with me,—the profit thereof, I think I have felt in all my life-time ever after."—*Harmer.*

## BISHOP WILSON.

A more interesting spectacle could scarcely have been exhibited to the eye of the philanthropist, than the Bishop's demesne presented. There he might have seen manufactories of different kinds carried on with greater energy and activity, than any prospect of secular advantage could have produced. Benevolence gave motion to the wheels, and charity guided every operation. Days of patriarchal simplicity seemed to have returned. The materials required in manufacturing garments for the poor, were procured in exchange for the produce of the demesne. Artisans of different kinds were busily employed in manufacturing these materials. The poor's wardrobe was kept always supplied

with garments of every size, suited to every sex and age. The poor who could weave or spin, repaired to Bishop's Court with their webs, their yarn and worsted, as to a general mart, were they bartered their different articles for corn. This traffic of charity was regularly carried on. Every species of distress found relief at Bishop's Court. Whether the hungry or naked applied, their claims were sure to be considered, and liberally answered. The attention of this real friend to the poor, extended to the minutest circumstances of their condition. He was in the habit of purchasing an assortment of spectacles, and distributing them amongst the aged poor, whose eye sight began to fail, that such of them as could read, might read their Bible by means of this seasonable aid: and that such of them as could not might, as their kind benefactor expressed it, use these glasses "to help them to thread a needle to mend their clothes." Imagination can scarcely picture a more pleasing and interesting scene, than that which presents the pious and venerable Bishop Wilson distributing spectacles amongst a crowd of the aged poor for such purposes as these.—*Stowell's Life of Wilson.*

## THE TRANSFIGURATION.

One great purpose of this singular scene of the Transfiguration seems to have been, to represent the cessation of the Jewish, and the commencement of the Christian dispensation. It appears to have been one very prevailing prejudice among the disciples, that the whole Mosaical law, the ceremonial as well as the moral, was to continue in full force under the Gospel, and that the authority of Moses and the Prophets was not in any respect to give way to the establishment of Christianity, but to be placed on an equal footing with that of Christ. To correct these erroneous opinions, this scene of the Transfiguration was presented to three chosen disciples. Moses and Elias were undoubtedly most proper representatives of the Law and the Prophets; and when the three disciples saw these illustrious persons conversing familiarly with Jesus, they probably were confirmed in their opinion, that they were of equal authority with Him. But the gracious words which issued from the cloud most clearly explained the meaning of what was passing before the eyes of the disciples: "Hear ye him, my beloved Son." The conclusion too of the whole scene harmonizes with this declaration: Moses and Elias instantly disappear; and "when the disciples lift up their eyes, they see no man save Jesus only." The former objects of their veneration are no more; Christ remains alone, their unrivalled and undisputed sovereign.

But, besides this primary and immediate design of the Transfiguration, that event was perhaps intended to answer other purposes of great utility. Among others it afforded a striking additional proof of the divine mission of Christ; for here was one of the few occasions in which God [the Father] Himself was pleased as it were personally to interpose and to make an open declaration from Heaven in favour of his Son. And besides this, a particular attestation was given on the Mount to two of the principal doctrines of Christianity; a general resurrection, and a day of retribution. The visible and illustrious representation of these doctrines in the glorified appearance of Christ, and Moses and Elias, is appealed to by St. Peter, who saw it, as one convincing proof, among others, that "he had not followed cunningly devised fables, when he made known the power and coming of our Lord."—*Bishop Porteus.*

We may make another use of the circumstances attending the Transfiguration of our Lord. At another time he told the Sadducees, who disputed the resurrection, that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The personal appearance of Moses and Elias, and their talking with our Lord, proves without doubt, (that is, if we are to credit the account) that the interval between the death of the body and the resurrection, is not a state of insensibility, but of life, activity, and, to the good, of glory, honor, and happiness.—*Ed.*

He that will believe only what he can fully comprehend, must have a very long head, or a very short creed. Many gain a false credit for liberality of sentiment in religious matters, not from any tenderness they may have to the opinions or consciousness of other men, but because they happen to have no opinion or conscience of their own.

He that is good will infallibly become better, and be that is bad will as certainly become worse: for vice, virtue, and time, are three things that never stand still.