

SERMONS

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;

BY THE

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LATE OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND CHAPLAIN TO
THE RIGHT HON. THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY SAMUEL DREW, A. M.

AND A

DISSERTATION ON HIS CHARACTER, PREACHING, &c.

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LONDON

PRINTED BY H. FISHER, SON, AND CO., FOR
THOMAS TEGG, 73, CHEAPSIDE.

1841.

SERMON LXXIII.

GOD A BELIEVER'S GLORY.

And thy God thy Glory.—Isaiah lx. 19.

I LATELY had occasion to speak on the verse immediately following that of our text: but when I am reading God's word, I often find it is like being in a tempting garden, when we pluck a little fruit and find it good, we are apt to look after and pluck a little more, only with this difference, the fruit we gather below often hurts the body at the same time that it pleases the appetite, but when we walk in God's garden, when we gather fruit of the Redeemer's plants, the more we eat, the more we are delighted, and the freer we are, the more welcome; if any chapter in the Bible deserves this character and description of an evangelical Eden, this does.

It is very remarkable, and I have often told you of it, that all the apostles preach first the law, and then the gospel, which finds man in a state of death, points out to him how he is to get life, and then sweetly conducts him to it. Great and glorious things are spoken of the church of God in this chapter; and it struck me very much this evening ever since I came into the pulpit, that the great God speaks of the church in the singular number; how can that be, when the church is composed of so many millions gathered out of all nations, languages, and tongues? How is it, that God says, thy Maker, and not your Maker, that he speaks of the church as though it consisted only of one individual person? The reason of it is this, and is very obvious, that though the church is composed of many members, they have but one Head, and they are united by the bond of one Spirit, by whom they have the same vital union of the soul, with God, and therefore it teaches Christians not to say to one another, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, or Cephas," but to behave and live so, that the world may know that we all belong to one common Christ. God revive, continue, and increase this true Christian love among us! Of this church, thus collectively considered, united under one Head, the blessed evangelical prophet thus speaks, "Violence shall no more be beard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders, but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates, (where the magistrates assemble, and the people go in and out,) praise." From this text, a great many good and great men have gathered what they call the Millennium, that Jesus Christ is to come and reign a thousand years on earth; but I must acknowledge that I have always rejected a great many good men's positive opinion about the season when this state commences, and I would warn you all against fixing any time; for what signifies whether Christ comes to reign a thousand years, or when he comes, since you and I are to die very soon? and therefore instead of puzzling

our heads about it, God grant we may live so that we may reign with him for ever; and it seems to me, that whatsoever is said of this state on earth, that the millennium is to be understood in a spiritual sense, as an emblem of a glorious, eternal, beatific state in the kingdom of heaven. "The sun shall no more be thy light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and in order to prepare us for that light, and show us the nature of it, while we speak of it, may it come with light and power to our souls! He adds in our text, "And thy God shall be thy glory;" this is spoken to all believers in general, but it is spoken to all fearful believers in particular; and I do not know that I can possibly close my poor, feeble ministration among you here, better than with these words; though, God willing, I intend, if he shall strengthen me this week, to give you a parting word next Wednesday morning; and O that what has been my comfort this day in the meditation on this passage, may be yours and mine to all eternity. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the evangelic prophet saith, "Thy God thy glory."

The Holy Ghost seems, as it were, particularly fond of this expression: when God published the ten commandments upon mount Sinai, he prefaced it thus, "I am the Lord," and not content with that, he adds "thy God;" and the frequency of it, I suppose, made Luther say, that 'the gospel deals much in pronouns, in which consists a believer's comfort:' but if there were no other argument than this, it would cut up that destructive principle by the very root, that pretends to tell us that there is no such thing as appropriation in the Bible; that our faith is only to be a rational assent to the word of God, without a particular application of that word made to our souls. This is as contrary to the gospel, and to the experience of every real saint, as light is contrary to darkness, and heaven to hell. My brethren, I appeal to any of you, what good would it do you, if you had ten thousand notes written in large characters by the finest hand in London; suppose you have got them, as many men have, and it is a very convenient way, that they were put into your little pockets made on the inside of your coat; suppose you should say, my coat is buttoned, I have all these here next my heart: when I come to look at them, I find there is not one note payable to me, they are all either forged, or payable to somebody else, and therefore are good for nothing to me. All the promises of the gospel, all that is said of God and Christ, can do us no good, except that God and Christ be ours. The great question therefore is, whether the God we profess to believe in, is our God? not only, whether he be so in general, *that* the devils may say; but whether he be our God in particular. The devils can say, O God; but the devils cannot say, my God, that is a privilege peculiar to God's chosen people, who really believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore, my brethren, a Deist cannot say, my God, my Christ, because he does not believe on that medium by which God becomes our God. That was

a noble saying of Luther, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God;" that is, I will have nothing to do with a God out of Christ. Now, this is a Deist's glory; Lord Bolingbroke values himself upon it; I am astonished at that man's infidelity and cowardice. I do not like those men that leave their writings to be published after their death. I love to see men bold in their writings. I like an honest man, that will put out his writings while alive, that he may see what men can say against him, and then answer them; but it is mere cowardice to leave it to the world to answer for it, to set us a cavilling after they are got into the grave: says he, I will have nothing to do with the God of Moses; and I suppose the principles of that Deist made one pretty near to him ask as soon as his breath was out of his body, where do you think he is gone to? another replies, where do you think, but to hell? God grant that may not be the portion of any here.

The question then is, how God is our God; *thy God*. My brethren, our all depends upon it; what signifies saying, This is mine, and that is mine, if you cannot say, God is mine. The best thing that God has left in the New Testament, is himself: "I will be their God," that is one of the legacies; and "a new heart also will I give them," that is another; "I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts," that is another; but all *that* is good for nothing, comparatively speaking, unless God have said at the same time, for they are all inseparable, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Now, how shall I know that God is my God? I am afraid, some people think there is no knowing; well then, if you think so, you set up a worship, and go and erect an altar, and instead of receiving God in the sacrament as yours, go and worship an unknown God. I am so far from believing that we cannot know that God is ours, that I am fully persuaded of it, and would speak it with humility, and I would not choose to leave you with a lie in my mouth, that I have known it for about thirty-five years, as clear as the sun is in the meridian, that God is my God. And how shall I know it, my brethren? I would ask you this question, Didst thou ever feel the want of God to be thy God? Nobody knows God to be their God, that did not feel him to be his God in Christ: out of Christ, God is a consuming fire. I know there are a great variety of ways in people's conversions, but still, my brethren, we must all feel our misery, we must all feel our distance from God, all feel that we are estranged from God, that we bring into the world with us a nature that is not agreeable to the law of God, nor possibly can be; we cannot be said to believe that God is our God, till we are brought to be reconciled to him through his Son. Can I say, a person is my friend, till I am reconciled to him? and therefore the gospel only is the ministration of reconciliation. Paul says, "We beseech you, as ambassadors of Christ, that you would be reconciled unto God." This is to be the grand topic of our preaching. We are to beseech them, and God himself turns beggar to his own creatures, to be reconciled to him. Now this re-

conciliation is brought about by a poor sinner's being brought to Jesus Christ; and when once he sees his enmity and hatred to God, feeling the misery of departing from him, and being conscious that he is obnoxious to eternal wrath, flies to Jesus as to a place of refuge, and expects only a reconciliation through the blood of the Lamb; without this, neither you nor I can say, God is my God. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." The ministers of Christ must take care that they do not preach an unknown God, and we must take care we do not pretend to live upon an unknown God, a God that is not appropriated and brought home to our souls by the efficacy of the Spirit. But, my brethren, we cannot say, God is our God, unless we are in Jesus Christ. Can you say, such a one is your father, unless you can give proof of it? You may be bastard, there are many bastards laid at Christ's door. Now, God cannot be my God, at least I cannot know him to be so, unless he be pleased to send into my heart the Spirit of adoption, and to admit me to enjoy familiarity with Christ.

My brethren, I told you the other night that the grand controversy God has with England is for the slight put on the Holy Ghost. As soon as a person begins to talk of the work of the Holy Ghost, they cry, You are a Methodist. As soon as you speak about the divine influences of the Holy Ghost, O! say they, you are an enthusiast. May the Lord keep these methodistical enthusiasts among us to the latest posterity. Ignatius, supposed to have been one of the children that Jesus took up in his arms, in his first Epistle, (pray read it,) written soon after St. John's death, and we value nothing so authentic as what was written in the three first centuries, bears a noble testimony to this truth. When I was performing my first exercises at Oxford, I used to take delight to walk and read it, and could not help noting and putting down, from time to time, several remarkable passages. In the superscription of all his Epistles, I remember, he styles himself *Theophorus*, that is, Bearer of God, and believed that those he wrote to, were so too. Somebody went and told Trajan, that one Ignatius was an enthusiast, that he carried God about him. Being brought before the emperor, who (though in other respects a good prince) was a cruel enemy to the Christians: but many a good prince, does bad things by the influence of wicked counsellors, like our king Henry the Vth, who was brought in to persecute the poor Lollards, for assembling in St. Giles's fields to hear the pure gospel, by false accusation of being rebels against him. Before such a prince was Ignatius brought. Says Trajan, who is this that calls himself "a bearer of God?" Says Ignatius, I am he, for which he quotes this passage, "I will dwell in them, and will walk in them, and they shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." The emperor was so enraged, that, in order to cure him of his enthusiasm, he ordered him to be devoured by lions, at which Ignatius laughed for joy. O! says he, am I going to be devoured! and when his friends came about him, he almost danced for

gladness. When they carried him to execution, he smiled, and turning about, said, Now I begin to be a martyr of Jesus Christ! I have heard that the lions have leaped from the martyrs, but, when they come to me, I will encourage them to fall on me with all their violence.—God give you such enthusiasm in a trying hour! This is to have God for our God: “he that believeth, hath the witness in himself,” as it is written in this blessed word of God, and I hope it will be the last book that I shall read. Farewell, father, farewell, mother, farewell, sun, moon, and stars! was the language of one of the Scotch martyrs in king Charles's time, and it is amazing to me that even Mr. Hume (I believe) a professed Deist, in his History of England mentions this as a grand exit, and also that seraphic soul, Mr. Hervey, now with God, that the last words of the martyr were, Farewell thou precious Bible, thou blessed book of God.—This is my rock, this is my foundation, it is now about thirty-five years since I have begun to read the Bible upon my pillow. I love to read this book, but the book is nothing but an account of the promises which it contains, and almost every word, from the beginning to the end of it, speaks of a spiritual dispensation, and the Holy Ghost, that unites our souls to God, and helps a believer to say, My Lord, and my God! If you content yourselves with that, the devil will let you talk of doctrines enough. O, you shall turn from Arminianism to Calvinism. O you shall be orthodox enough, if you will be content to live without Christ's living in you. Now when you have got the Spirit, then you may say, God is mine. O this is very fine, say some, every body pretends to the Spirit: and then you may go on, as a bishop once told a nobleman, My lord, these Methodists say they do all by the Spirit, so if the devil bids them murder anybody, they will say the Spirit bid them do it; and that very bishop died, how? why, horrid! the last words he spoke were these, “The battle is fought, the battle is fought, the battle is fought, but the victory is lost for ever.” God grant, you and I may not die with such words as these. I hope you and I shall die and say, “The battle is fought, the battle is fought, the battle is fought, I have fought the good fight, and the victory is gained for ever.” Thus died Mr. Ralph Erskine, his last words were. Victory, victory, victory! and they that can call God their God, shall by and by cry, Victory, victory! and that for ever. God grant we may all be of that happy number.

If we can call God our God, we shall endeavour, by the Holy Ghost, to be like God, we shall have his divine image stamped upon our souls, and endeavour to be followers of that God who is our Father: and this brings in the other part of the text, “Thy God thy glory.” What is that? The greatest honour that a poor believer thinks he can have on earth, is to boast that God is his God. When it was proposed to David, that if he killed a hundred Philistines, he should have the king's daughter for his wife, (and a very sorry wife she was, no great gain turned out to him;) says he, “Do you think it is a small thing to be the son-in-law to a king? a poor stripling as I am here, come

with my shepherd's crook, what! to be married to a king's daughter, do you think that is a Small thing? And if David thought it no small thing to be allied to a king by his daughter, what a great thing must it be to be allied to the Lord by one Spirit? I am afraid there are some people that were once poor that are now rich, that think it a great thing, that wish, O that my family had a coat of arms. Some people would give a thousand pounds, I believe, for one. Coats of arms are very proper to make distinction in life, a great many people wear coats of arms that their ancestors got honourably, but they are a disgrace to them as they wear them on their coaches. But this is our glory, whether we walk or ride, whatever our pedigree may be in life, this is our honour, that our God may be our glory. "O what manner of love is this, (saith one,) that the Lord doth bestow on us, that we should be called the sons of God!" born not of the will of man, born not of flesh, but born from above. O God, grant that this may be your glory and mine!

My brethren, if God is our God and our glory, I will tell you what we shall prove it by: whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we shall do all to the glory of God. Religion, as I have often told you, turns our whole life into one continued sacrifice of love to God. As a needle, when once touched by a loadstone, turns to a particular pole, so the heart that is touched by the love of God, turns to his God again. I shall have occasion to take notice of it by and by, when I am aboard a ship: for as soon as I get on board, I generally place myself in one particular place under the compass that hangs over my head. I often look at it by night and by day; when I rise, the needle turns to one point, when I go to bed, I find it turns to the same point; and often, while I have been looking at it, my heart has been turned to God, saying, Lord Jesus, as that needle, touched by the loadstone, turns to one point, O may my heart, touched by the magnet of God's love, turn to him! A great many people think they never worship God but when at church; and a great many are very demure on Lord's days, though many begin to leave that off. I know of no place, upon the face of the earth, where the sabbath is kept as it is at Boston. If a single person were to walk in Boston streets in time of worship, he would be taken up; it is not trusted to poor insignificant men, but the justices go out in time of worship, they walk with a white wand, and if they catch any person walking in the streets, they put them under a black rod. O! the great mischiefs the poor pious people have suffered lately through the town's being disturbed by the soldiers! When the drums were beating before the house of Dr. Sawell, one of the holiest men that ever was, when he was sick and dying, on the sabbath day, by his meeting, where the noise of a single person was never heard before, and he begged that for Christ's sake they would not beat the drum; they damned, and said, that they would beat, to make him worse. This is not acting for the glory of God; but, when a soul is turned to God, every day is a sabbath, every meal is a spiritual refreshment, and every sentence he

speaks should be a sermon; and whether he stays abroad or at home, whether he is on the exchange, or locked up in a closet, he can say, O God, thou art my God!

Now, my dear friends, can you, dare you say, that your God is your glory, and do you aim at glorifying the Lord your God? if your God is your glory, then say, “O God, forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world.” What say you to that now? do not talk of God’s being your glory, if you do not love his cross. If God is our glory, we shall glory not only in doing, but in suffering for him; we shall glory in tribulation, and count ourselves most highly honoured when we are called to suffer most for his great name’s sake. I might enlarge, but you may easily judge, by my poor feeble voice this last week, that neither my strength of voice or body will permit me to be long to night, and yet I will venture to give you your last parting salutation; and though I have been dissuaded from getting up to preach this night, yet I thought, as my God was my glory, I should glory in preaching till I died. O that God may be all our glory! All our own glory fades away, there is nothing will be valuable at the great day but this, Thou art my God, and thou art my glory. It was a glorious turn that good Mr. Shepherd, of Bradford, mentions in one of his sermons, where he represents Jesus Christ as coming to judgment, seated upon his throne, in a sermon preached before some ministers. Christ calls one minister to him, Pray what brought you into the church? O, says he, Lord, there was a living in the family, and I was presented to it because it was a family living. Stand thou by, says Christ. A second comes, What didst thou enter into the church for? O Lord, says he, I had a fine elocution, I had pretty parts, and I went into the church to show my oratory and my parts. Stand thou by, thou hast thy reward. A third was called, And what brought you into the church? Lord, says he, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I am a poor creature, vile, and miserable, and unworthy, and helpless, but I appeal to thee my glory, thou sittest upon the throne, that thy glory and the good of souls brought me there. Christ immediately says, Make room, men, make room, angels, and bring up that soul to sit near me on my throne.—Thus shall it be done to all that make God their glory here below. Glorify God on earth, and he will glorify you in heaven. “Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,” shall be your portion: and if so, Lord God Almighty make us content to be vilified whilst here, make us content to be despised while below, make us content to have evil things spoken of us, all for Christ’s sake, yet a little while, and Christ will roll away the stone: and the more we are honoured by his grace to suffer, the more we shall be honoured in the kingdom of heaven. O that thought! O that blessed thought! O that

soul-transporting thought! it is enough to make us leap into a fiery furnace; in this spirit, in this temper, may God put every one of us.

If there be any of you that have not yet called God your God, may God help you to do so tonight. When I was reasoning within myself, whether I should come up, or whether it was my duty or not, I could not help thinking, who knows but God will bless a poor feeble worm tonight? I remember, a dear friend sent me word after I was gone to Georgia, "Your last sermon at the Tabernacle was blessed to a particular person;" I heard from that person today: and who knows but some may come today, and say, I will go and hear what the babler has to say? Who knows but curiosity may be overruled for good? Who knows but those that have served the lust of the flesh and the pride of life for their god, may now take the Lord to be their God? O! if I could but see this, I think I could drop down dead for you.

My dear Christians, will you not help me tonight, you that can go and call God your God? Go and beg of God for me, pray to heaven for me, do pray for those that are in the gall of bitterness, that have no God, no Christ to go to, and if they were to die tonight, would be damned for ever. O poor sinner, where is your glory then? Where is your purple and fine linen then? Your purple robes will be turned into purple fire, and instead of calling God your God, will be damned with the devil. O think of your danger! "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!"

If you never were awakened before, may the arrows of God, steeped in the blood of Jesus Christ, reach your hearts now! Think how you live at enmity with God, think of your danger every day and every hour, your danger of dropping into hell; think how your friends in glory will leave you; and may this consideration, under the influences of the Holy Ghost, excite you to choose God for your God! Though the sun is going down, though the shadow of the evening is coming on, God is willing, O man, God is willing, O woman, to be a sinner's God, he has found out a way whereby he can be reconciled to you. I remember, when I saw a nobleman condemned to be hanged, the lord high steward told him, that however he was obliged to pass sentence on him, and did not know that justice would be satisfied but by the execution of the law in this world, yet there might be a way whereby justice might be satisfied and mercy take place in another: when I heard his lordship speak, I wished that he had not only said there might be a way, but that he had found out the way wherein God could be just, and yet a poor murderer coming to Jesus Christ should be pardoned.

You that can call God yours, God help you from this moment to glorify him more and more: and if God be your God and your glory, I am persuaded, if the love of God abounds in your hearts, you will be willing, on every occasion, to do everything to promote his honour and glory, and therefore you will be willing at all times to assist and help, as far as lies in your power, to

keep up places of worship, to promote his glory in the salvation and conversion of sinners; and I mention this because there is to be a collection this night. I would have chosen, if possible, to have evaded this point, but as this Tabernacle has been repaired, and as the expense is pretty large, and as I would choose to leave everything unencumbered, I told my friends, I would undertake to make a collection, that everything might be left quite clear. Remember, it is not for me, but for yourselves. I told you on Wednesday how matters were. I am now going a thirteenth time over the water on my own expense, and you shall know at the great day, what little, very little assistance I have had from those who owed, under God, their souls to my being here. But this is for the place where you are to meet, and where I hope God will meet you, when I am tossing on the water, when I am in a foreign clime. I think I can say, thy glory, O God, calls me away; and as I am going towards sixty years of age, I shall make what despatch I can; and I hope, if I am spared to come back, that I shall hear that some of you are gone to heaven, or are nearer heaven than you were. I find there is near £70 arrears. I hope you will not run away. If you can say God is my glory, you will not push one upon another, as though you would lose yourselves in the crowd, and say nobody sees me; but does not God Almighty see you? I hope you will be ready to communicate, and when I am gone, that God will be with you—as many of you will not hear me on Wednesday morning. O may this be your prayer, O for Jesus Christ's sake, in whose name I preach, in whose strength I desire to come up, and for whose honour I desire to be spent, O do put up a word for me, it will not cost you much time, it will not keep you a moment from your business. O Lord Jesus Christ, thou art his God! and, Lord Jesus Christ, let him be thy glory!—If I die in the waters, I shall go by water to heaven; if I land at the Orphan-house, I hope it will be a means to settle a foundation for ten thousand persons to be instructed; and if I go by the continent, as I intend to do, I hope God will enable me to preach Christ; and if I return again, my life will be devoted to your service. You must excuse me, I cannot say much more,—affection works; and I could heartily wish, and beg it as a favour, when I come to leave you, that you will excuse me from a particular parting with you; take my public farewell. I will pray for you when in the cabin, I will pray for you when storms and tempests are about me; and this shall be my prayer for the dear people of the Tabernacle, for the dear people of the Chapel, for the dear people of London, O God, be thou their God! and grant that their God may be their glory. Even so, Lord Jesus! Amen.