

**MAN, THE NOBLEST WORK  
OF GOD. A  
DISCOURSE. ALSO, NOTES  
OF A VISIT TO THE NORTH**

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Man, the Noblest Work of God. A Discourse. Also, Notes of a Visit to the North by Thomas Greenbury

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MAN, THE NOBLEST WORK OF GOD.

A DISCOURSE.

ALSO,

NOTES

OF A VISIT TO THE NORTH.

BRING AN ACCOUNT OF

RAMBLES AMONG MOORS AND MOUNTAINS, MINES  
AND WATERFALLS.

BY

THOMAS GREENBURY,

PRIMITIVE METHODIST MINISTER.

"O WHAT A MIRACLE TO MAN IS MAN!"

"What a chimera is man! what a surprising novelty! what a confused chaos! what a subject of contradictions! what a professed judge of all things, and yet a feeble worm of the earth; the great deposer and guardian of truth, and yet a huddle of uncertainties; the glory and scandal of the universe!"—PASCAL.

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SECOND EDITION.

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ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

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## PREFACE.

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But few words will suffice to introduce this little volume to the reader. With respect to the "discourse," the substance of it was delivered to a crowded audience at St. John's, Weardale; since which time it has been considerably enlarged and elaborated. Its delivery from the pulpit has been owned by God to the salvation of immortal souls; and the author humbly hopes that Jehovah's blessing will now accompany the printed page, as it did the living voice.

As to the "Notes," they contain the history of their own composition.

The author takes this opportunity of tendering his warmest thanks to his intelligent friends, the Rev. James Dawson, and the Rev. C. C. McKoshic, for their kindness in examining the manuscript previous to its going to press.

It is with a degree of diffidence that the author sends forth this little work into the world; if, however, its readers be induced, by its perusal, to admire more ardently the beauties of nature, and thence to adore more fervently the God of Nature, his object will be accomplished,—his labours will not have been in vain.

THOMAS GREENBURY.

17, Prospect-place, Drypool,  
Hull, June, 1859.

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## MAN, THE NOBLEST WORK OF GOD.

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"WHEN I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?—PSALM viii. 3, 4.

DAVID was evidently a man of majestic mind. If he could not fully comprehend the problems which modern science has solved, still he was no stranger to that knowledge which at once elevates and humbles; he was no stranger to himself; he was no stranger to his God. This must be admitted, so long as those sacred poems remain which emanated from his mind. In diversified strains of holy sweetness, they convey to our hearts the most delightful lessons. The fervent, deep-toned piety of the Psalms cannot be accounted for, except on the theory of a peculiar inspiration. Like the needle seeking the pole, or the anxious eyes of a loving child seeking the smiles of a father's countenance, did the mind of Israel's royal minstrel turn towards heaven. See him where we may, in the cave surrounded by lion-faced men, on the mountain brow, hunted like a frightened partridge, or in the security of his own palaces, still his mind turns towards heaven. If we see him crest-fallen after a defeat, or elated after a triumph, still his mind turns towards heaven. If we see

him wandering in the wild desert, or seated on the monarch's throne ; if we see him prostrate on the dust, smiting on his guilty bosom, or arrayed in his royal robes, swaying his kingly sceptre, still his mind turns towards heaven. If we see him battling with the savage bear, or grappling with the growling lion ; if we see him seated on the green sward, amid his fleecy flocks, or going forth with his simple sling to fight the mail-clad giant ; if we see him wielding the bloody battle-axe, or sweeping the strings of his melodious harp, still his mind instinctively turns towards heaven. Hence it is that his sacred songs are so exquisitely adapted to the condition of every saint, in every age, in every circumstance, and in every clime. They have wiped away the widow's tears, relieved the orphan's sorrows, comforted the mourner, soothed the penitent, cheered the soul of hoary age, gladdened the spirit of buoyant youth, and have trembled on the martyr's fire-scorched lips as his spirit has burst from its flame-shroud and soared to glory !

Beautiful, heavenly, holy strains ! They have rolled down from age ; firing the souls of lofty poets, sweetning the lips of lovely children, smoothing the pillows of dying saints, and uniting in one the hearts and voices of worshipping thousands ! And still they seem as fresh, as sweet, as lovely, as powerful as ever ; yea, accomplishing even mightier triumphs than when first chanted !

We have selected a sublime passage from one of those peerless poems for our contemplation :

—“When I consider *thy* heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” Now, the meaning of the Psalmist is inexplicable, unless we admit that he knew something of the real magnitude of the starry globes. If he only viewed them as a multitude of brilliant spangles glittering on the black brow of night; or as a host of sparkling studs decking her azure robe, what was there in them so to have dwarfed this world with its countless inhabitants? But we believe that a glimpse of the starry scheme burst like a revelation upon his soul; and considering at once the immense magnitude of those rolling worlds, with their harmony, order, and beauty, he exclaimed in astonishment, “*When I consider thy heavens, what is man?*” This was his *first* impression; but it speedily yielded to a more correct view of the peerless dignity of man, for he exclaimed, “Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.”

But the mind of the royal minstrel soared *above* the starry heavens, to the “*heaven of heavens;*” to the gorgeous palace of God’s immediate presence; and as he thought of all the brilliant worlds that rolled and blazed between him and the throne to which he looked, he was wrapt in an extacy of astonishment, that God should be mindful of, or visit poor, feeble, guilty man.