

**THE CONNEXION OF THE
DIVINE DISPENSATION
WITH THE DIVINE GLORY:
A DISCOURSE**

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The connexion of the divine dispensation with the divine glory: A discourse by Robert Winter

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ROBERT WINTER

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THE CONNEXION OF THE DIVINE DISPENSATION
WITH THE DIVINE GLORY.

A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE MONTHLY ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL
MINISTERS AND CHURCHES,

IN THE

CHAPEL OF THE REV. HENRY TOWNLEY,

White Row, Spitalfields.

ON THURSDAY, THE TENTH OF DECEMBER, 1829,

AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

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A DISCOURSE.

ROM. XI. 36.

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

WITH this comprehensive and devout acknowledgment, the inspired writer closes the doctrinal portion of this important and excellent epistle. He had largely expatiated on the great discoveries of revealed truth—the apostacy of man—the plan of recovery and redemption through the mediation of the Son of God—the holy requisitions of the Gospel—the exalted privileges to which christians are admitted in the life that now is—and their glorious and immortal prospects in the life to come. He had likewise traced the favourable distinctions beaming on a part of the human family, to the sovereign pleasure of God manifested in mercy to some, while others, by their unbelieving obstinacy, had shut against themselves the door of salvation. He had applied

these remarks to the state of the Jews and the Gentiles, the hardened unbelief and impenitence, which the Jews had manifested in their rejection of the gospel of Christ, and the extension of the proposals of salvation to the world of mankind. And hence, under the infallible direction of the Spirit of prophecy, he had conducted the attention of his readers forward to the day, when "the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought" into the christian church, and the yet more distant period, when "all Israel shall be saved."

Here the apostle, struck with admiration at the course of events reserved for future ages to unfold, pauses in his description, and surveys with the most profound reverence, the attributes, the government, and the designs of the Great Eternal. "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord; or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be given to him again?" And he closes the whole with the recognition of that grand and sublime principle which has been adopted as the basis of the present discourse. "For of Him," as the great original cause; "through Him," as the wise, and righteous, and merciful Director and Governor; and "to

Him," as the ultimate end of the whole and of every part, "are all things; to whom," therefore, be ascribed, by all ranks and orders of the intelligent creation, "glory for ever." And let every one express his cordial assent. "Amen!"

The text is very expressive of the theme appointed for our meditation this day. The principle which it asserts, in the spirit of enlightened and exalted devotion, is doubtless applicable, generally, to the arrangements of Divine Providence. God is the author, the disposer, the end of all. But the reasoning of the apostle, in the whole passage, leads us to view it chiefly in reference to the dispensations of religion; and thus it may be considered as declaring and illustrating "the connexion of the divine dispensations with the divine glory."

The subjects adopted in this circulating lecture, for the last ten months, have been presented to the public view in a series of important and instructive discourses on the chief dispensations relative to religion, with which God has blessed the world of mankind from the beginning to the present moment, and by which he purposes to manifest his glory, not only as long as this world continues, but to all eternity. That these dispensations—the past, the present, and the future—are con-

nected with the divine glory, is the topic to which we are now to attend.

The divine glory is the manifestation, in the view of intelligent creatures, of the attributes and the designs of Jehovah. Thus "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work," or the contrivances of his wisdom. It was a sublime, and at the same time a delightful view of the future extension of the knowledge of the true God, which he was pleased to give to the people of Israel by the ministry of Moses: "as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." The miraculous and visible token of the divine presence and favour, with which Israel was blessed, is frequently called the glory of the Lord, because it was the symbol or emblem of that manifestation of God which was made in his revealed word, and in the ordinances of his sanctuary. This manifestation is with as much explicitness as is adapted to the feebleness of the human understanding, more clearly unfolded in the gospel of Christ, in which the Most High "has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence," in perfect righteousness, in unparalleled love, and in unchanging fidelity. And it is in proportion to the development of these perfections of the divine nature, that we may be said intellectually to behold the glory of the Lord.

But of what nature is the connexion which we are to endeavour to trace between the divine dispensations and the divine glory? To this inquiry it may be replied in the three following particulars:—

1. It is a connexion of adaptation or tendency.

The dispensations of religion from the very beginning have been so obviously marked with the character of God, with the plans of his government, or with the methods of his grace, that it seems to be impossible that any one should contemplate them, as they are presented before his intellectual eye, without exclaiming, God is here! Were the holy Scriptures to be carefully read and studied, as the rule of faith and of life; especially, were that sacred volume to be considered in the reciprocal bearings and influence of each part on the whole, and were the methods which have been adopted for the dissemination of the Scriptures through the world, to be in continual operation; their tendency to unfold to every mind just and exalted views of the presiding Deity, could not but awaken the important reflection, "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." This leads me to remark,

2. That it is a connexion of purpose and design.