

**The Power of Holiness in the Christian Ministry.** /

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**DISCOURSE**

**DELIVERED, BY APPOINTMENT, BEFORE THE**

**DIRECTORS, PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS,**

**OF THE**

**THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**OF THE**

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT PRINCETON,**

**SEPTEMBER 29, 1834.**

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**BY**

**ALBERT BARNES.**  
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**PHILADELPHIA:**

**PRINTED BY WILLIAM F. GEDDES,—9 LIBRARY STREET.**

**1834.**

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## P R E F A C E .

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THE following editorial note appeared in the "Presbyterian" of Oct. 23, 1834. As the editor was not present at the delivery of the discourse on which he has felt it his duty to animadvert, it is presumed that he has been misinformed. The only thing of difficult solution in the affair is, that when affirmations are so confidently made from hearsay, there should have been no more pains taken to ascertain the exact truth in a case where the truth was so easily accessible. The sermon is now printed, among other reasons, to show that it is NOT a "philippic against the old school." Of the representation made in the note, of the "dangerous doctrine" referred to, the readers of the discourse will be able to form an opinion from the sermon itself.

ALBERT BARNES.

*Extract from the "Presbyterian" of Oct. 23, 1834.*

"We feel bound in this connection to state, that Mr. Barnes, whose name is so prominently associated with the controversies in our church, has been appointed a director of the Theological Seminary at Princeton—a member of the committee for examining the students in that institution; and that, at the very last meeting of the directors, he preached, by appointment, a sermon before the professors and students, which was highly objectionable, as a philippic against the old school, and as inculcating upon the students the dangerous doctrine, that the science of religion was just as susceptible of improvement, as the science of Botany!"

## DISCOURSE.

Acts xi, 24. *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord.*

In this passage of Scripture, we have an account of the character of a minister of religion; and of his success in his work as consequent upon that character. Three traits of character are presented, manifestly, with a design to account for his success;—that he was a good man; that he was full of the Holy Ghost; and that he was full of faith. His success was evidently connected with personal holiness. The design which I have now in view, is to show, as I may be able, the power of holiness in the Christian ministry.

Knowledge is power; and the history of nations has been little more than an exhibition of this power, at the expense of the weak and the ignorant. Early in the history of man, the Chaldean advanced beyond his contemporaries in the science of astronomy,—a science easily perverted to astrology,---and of the occult art of magic, and a vast system of jugglery and necromancy was established all over the East. The power of civilized over barbarous nations is now every where felt and acknowledged. Hordes of barbarians are easily vanquished by a well disciplined military band; and a knowledge of arts and arms gives to comparatively feeble physical strength, mighty power over the savage portion of mankind. The conquest of Mexico and Peru was the effect of the superior knowledge of the Spaniard, combined with ambition, and the love of gold; and this continent has been subdued, and its mighty native tribes have disappeared, because the European had advanced beyond them in science and the arts.

But holiness is power also. God rules the universe of mind, not by physical power, but by holiness. In all unfallen worlds this power of his holiness is felt; and the moral influence of his justice, and goodness, and purity, and love, shall serve to bind that universe in order. Physical power shall be necessary to restrain and bind the wicked; but the universe of pure minds may be confederated and controlled by the conviction of the infinite purity of God. The pervading conviction of the presence of an all-present perfect Being, inspiring confidence every where; of a God of holiness, who cannot err, and in whose government all interests are safe, shall bind that universe in perfect harmony and peace. The power of holiness is not less than that of knowledge. Its conquests in our world shall yet be not less extensive, and its omnipotence not less deeply felt on mind, and on the destinies of nations, than knowledge has been. United with intelligence, it is destined, under the divine blessing, to revolutionize the world. Its power has been felt in changing nations, in conquests not like those of Pizarro, but of peace; in an influence not like that which man puts forth when he makes a descent on unoffending Africa to bind its innocent inhabitants and consign them to slavery because he has superior knowledge joined to superior wickedness; but in an influence that shall restrain the impetuous passions of men; that shall call forth their active energies; that shall break up combinations of wickedness; that shall demolish the strong ramparts of superstition; and that shall revolutionize nations. In order to illustrate this, we may inquire.

I. In the first place, why it has been undervalued, even by ministers of the gospel. One reason is, that it has been extensively regarded as adapted

only to weak minds. Whether it has been, that it is supposed that comparatively few men of dazzling and splendid genius have been Christians, or that the mildness and meekness of the gospel have been mistaken for imbecility of intellect and meanness of spirit, yet certain it is, that the world has regarded eminent piety as adapted only to feebleness of mental powers.—Another reason is, that science is encompassed by all that is brilliant, and splendid, and attractive to the young mind. Arts and arms have been held up to universal admiration. The eloquence and poetry of the world, have been employed to give fascination to the conquests of the warrior, and to the achievements of science. The world has had an *interest* in keeping its great objects of ambition before the mind, and in disparaging the power of holiness. What piety could do, has been uncelebrated or unsung; or often celebrated in homely strains, that have not enlarged men's conceptions of its power.—Another reason is, that there is a prevalent impression among young men that humble piety has a tendency to quench the fires of genius; to wither the intellectual powers; to destroy independent thinking; to annihilate true manliness of soul; and to produce imbecility of effort, and meanness of spirit. Young men with difficulty are so brought to understand Christianity as not to suppose that it was intended to cramp and enfeeble the native vigour of intellect. When they look for scenes of enterprise, and activity, and mighty effort, they contemplate the doings of ambition, or the achievements of science. When they think of weakness, imbecility, and want of energy, they think of them in connection with the Christian religion. Infidelity to them appears bold and manly, in comparison with the fear of God; and religion, to their view, is not adapted to *call forth* talent, but rather to check and restrain; or at all events merely to form to mildness, and amiableness of manners. Splendid deeds, such as become splendid talents, they think are reserved for the pursuits of the world; and talent if ever called forth, is to be in connection with some enterprise of genius, or of ambition. The most dazzling, and imposing talent of the world has been exhibited in the way of sin; and the most splendid rewards of enterprise, in view of such minds, have arisen from such exhibitions.

That such views should have some influence on those who are preparing for the ministry, will not be a matter of marvel to those who are acquainted with the mind of man. It is usually the slow work of years to lay aside the hopes of distinction which we have long cherished, and to fix our anticipations in our work mainly, on the conquests which *holiness* can make. Like others, ministers are trained in the schools, extensively under the influence of motives drawn from the hope of eminence. Like others, they may have aspired to rise high in the estimation of the world. The creations of genius may be as attractive to them as to others; the walks of literature may be as fascinating, and the desire of eminence in the literary world may have as many charms for them by nature, as to the most enthusiastic and devoted courtier of public applause. It is not improbable that no small part of the education of young men who are preparing for the ministry has been conducted under the influence of principles appealing, not to their *piety*, but to their *ambition*; or at best, has been an education where the hope of distinction, and the hope of doing good have been mingled in not very equal or desirable proportions. The transition from such a place to the preparation for the ministry, where the only and the sufficient appeal for calling forth the intellectual and active powers should be the desire to honor God, and to make the most of mind in his service, is often very great. It might be an investigation very melancholy in its results, to go through even a Theological Seminary, and take an impartial admeasurement of the energy that is put forth under the influence of some sort of ambition—the love of literary ease, or of distinction in sacred literature, or of eloquence,

compared with the powers called forth with the definite desire to glorify God in the salvation of souls. Youth does not soon lay aside the hope of distinction among men; and genius and talent, even in consecrated walls, do not easily acquire the subdued lessons of heavenly wisdom; or soon learn that the gospel has higher power in summoning forth the dormant energies of the human mind, than the most dazzling crowns, or the most splendid distinctions which the world can bestow.

II. A second observation to be made in order to illustrate our proposition is, that piety often derives a peculiar cast and complexion from external circumstances. Essentially the same indeed at all times, yet it partakes in its leading features of the prevalence of philosophical systems, and of the habits of thinking among men. Christian piety is retiring; it has often been the subject of unsparing and unrelenting severity; and it has often suffered itself to be moulded by the world around, rather than attempted to impress its own features on that world. At one period it becomes contemplative, abstract, and monastic. Such was its cast when it unhappily came in contact with the philosophical speculations of men. It gradually laid aside its aggressive spirit; its active and enterprising character, such as had distinguished it when it called up the living energy of apostles; and it sought rather to mould the philosophy, than the hearts of men. Much of the best talent that the church has possessed, has thus been employed in abstract speculation;—in an unhappy experiment, it would seem, to show that the powers of mind are circumscribed within very narrow limits. And perhaps this may be characterized as the prevailing piety of the Christian church. Christianity, disgusted and sickened with the pomp, and ambition, and crimes of the world, has sought exclusion and retirement. The feeling has come to be extensively prevalent, that its object was not so much to make an aggression on the world, as to withdraw from it; not so much to endeavour to revolutionise mankind, as to abstract its few votaries from all contact with the world, and to seek their purity by an entire separation. It seems to have been forgotten that he who originated the Christian system, framed it to meet the world, and to be aggressive, and subduing, and transforming in its character. The great lesson, the church has been slow to learn, that piety may be most pure, and holiness most mighty, when making aggressive movements in sin; and that the apostles were in a fairer way to become perfectly holy than the cowed and hooded man who gives his days and nights to his cell and his beads. Occasionally, indeed, holiness in its native power has burst forth, and shewn what it is destined to be. So it was in the days of the apostles; so in the time of the Reformation; and so in individual instances in all times. The remark which I am now making is, that the piety of the church has evinced two leading forms, that which is contemplative, monastic and retiring; and that which is bold, open, and aggressive. The former seeks rather to *retain* that which is already gained, than to make new conquests; it contemplates the existence of an organized Society whose business it is to *secure* what is gained, rather than to extend its achievements; the cultivation of a field already rescued from the wilderness of nature, rather than the enterprise of causing the wilderness to bud and blossom as the rose. The other contemplates the wide world as the vast field for Christian enterprise; and assumes that that world is to be subdued; and that talent in the church, however rich and varied and splendid, is lost which does not put forth an aggressive movement on the mighty mass of wretchedness. Which of these kinds of piety is most in accordance with the spirit of the New Testament, it is not now our object to inquire.

It is in accordance with our purpose to remark, however, that the form which the piety of the church seems destined to assume in these times, will and should be, that which contemplates direct active movement for the conversion of the world. What would the piety of calm, and contemplative

philosophic speculation do, in restraining and opposing the ever active energies of this age, and in giving direction to the enterprise of these times? It is certain also that the religion of this age is becoming shaped with a very distinct reference to the prevalence of the gospel in all nations. And it seems almost as if God had reserved the discovery, and the subjugation of this Western world as an appropriate field on which to call forth the kind of Christian enterprise that should be adapted to the introduction of the millennial morning. Piety in this Western world is to be active, or to be useless. The times will not bear any longer, contemplative and philosophic religion, as in other periods of the church. Piety in the American churches is to be that which shall aim at subjugation and conquest; that shall develop itself in enterprise; that shall seek its glory in revivals of religion, and in planting the gospel on every continent, and in every island of the sea. The enterprise which can turn a continent like this into a fruitful field; which can ascend our streams, and climb our mountains, and form highways on all our hills and in all our plains; which can cause immense forests to disappear, and cities and towns to rise, as by enchantment; and which, not satisfied with *this* immense domain, seeks to whiten every sea with the sails of commerce, is enterprise which when it receives a religious direction is just adapted to the introduction of a state of millennial glory. One of the most interesting subjects of reflection is the influence which the world---in this single instance not unhappily---exerts on the church. Every new species of enterprise throws back a new influence on the church. Every man that penetrates our western forests in pursuit of gain, undesignedly exerts an influence on the active powers of the church. He shows that with equal ease those forests may be penetrated to bear the gospel to the benighted wanderers. Every boat that ascends our distant streams, exerts an influence on the church. It reminds men that they who are the professed friends of God *should* have as much enterprise, and be willing to brave as many dangers, as they who navigate those waters, impelled by the love of gold. Every vessel that goes from our shores to the Pacific or the Indian oceans; that penetrates the cold of the North, or that sails along the pestilential coasts of the burning zone, throws back an influence direct into the bosom of the church. If these seas may be penetrated by the love of gain, they may be by the love of Christ. If our canvass may whiten every ocean bearing the adventurer for gold, it may, bearing the missionary of the cross. If burning regions may be visited for commerce, and rivers on distant continents ascended by Americans for gain, they may be by Americans intent on the conversion of the world. And they will be. This is not the age, and this is not the land in which to immure piety in a cloister; or to make it unlike the vast enterprise of the times in which we live. The power of holiness is to be felt. Its energies shall be called forth. The subjugation of this mighty land to civilized life, the felling of our forests, the levelling of our mountains, and the filling up of our vales, and the spreading forth of our enterprise over all nations, is to be in more ways than one, a completion of the promise that every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill be made low, and the rough places plain, that the glory of the Lord may be revealed, and all flesh see it together. Isaiah xl, 4, 5.

III. I proceed, in the third place, to illustrate directly the power of holiness, or to show that it is adapted to call forth, and to make the most of the human powers.---That man is in ruins, will here be assumed. That the wreck is melancholy and universal will not be a matter of argument. That man has no native holiness will also be a point supposed to be admitted. Yet he is mighty still; and great in his ruins. We are often amazed at the wrecks of former greatness; and instinctively ask whether all that is great might not be recovered, and the powers restored---as the pensive traveller that leans on the broken fragments of a column amidst the ruins

of Palmyra or Thebes asks whether all the ancient grandeur of such a city might not be recovered, and still greater magnificence might not rise from those ruins. That man may be restored to primeval dignity, and elevation of character, has been the almost universal belief of mankind. It has been and must be believed, that this shattered intellect might be repaired; and somehow, the balance be restored to the moral feelings. And the attempt has been made. One class have sought it by philosophy and science; one by active enterprise; vast numbers by the stimuli of ambition, and the love of eminence; many by laws; and multitudes by some false system of religion. Somewhat, it has been almost universally felt that some scheme of religion was adapted to the case, and fitted to recover fallen man. Our belief is, that personal holiness under the Christian scheme, is fitted to make the most of the human powers.

(I.) The first inquiry is, what will be the influence of holiness on the *intellect*, especially of those who are engaged in the work of the ministry? Now we admit, that you may call forth the intellectual powers by other means than by a reference to the honor of God. It may be done under the influence of ambition. It may be done by a contemplation of the great names of the past, and by holding them up to admiration. It may be done by the hope of office; or, it may be, by certain ever active principles in the mind itself proclaiming its high origin. But can a man ever make as much of his intellectual powers in any other way as by bringing them under the influence of Christian piety? Can any substitute be adopted in the lapsed condition of human affairs that shall fill up the place made vacant by the want of love to God?

Here let it be remembered that the first influence of piety on the understanding is to produce the love of truth. Truth is the nourisher of the intellectual powers. Error paralyzes, perverts, destroys. It is a poison as deadly to the intellect as any can be to the body. The mind of man is made originally susceptible of being expanded, and matured by the contemplation of truth. The book of revelation is the expression of such truths as are adapted to man in his lapsed condition, and in all the periods that may attend the process of recovery here. Other truths may be in reserve for a higher state of being; but Christianity has expressed those truths which are adapted to our present state, and fitted to make the most of fallen man. In Paradise, the mind would have been expanded and matured by truth; in the fallen condition of man, God contemplates his recovery by the instrumentality of truth; in Paradise regained, mind is still to be expanded and matured by the presentation of truth. The capacity of being influenced by truth, under the divine Spirit, pertains to mind in all conditions, and *but* for this, even Omnipotence might lose its hold on intellect, and moral government come to an end. Nor is that truth arbitrary, nor its application arbitrary. The system of religious truth which God has revealed for the recovery and the perfection of mind, is not destined for vain parade and pompous display—not like some splendid exhibition of fire-works around a battlement useless but to amaze, and alarm, and playing in pompous magnificence until an independent power comes in and accomplishes the work. The truth of God is adapted to the ends in view. It is just fitted to make a saving impression on mind though in ruins.

Holiness will restore the mind to the original love of truth; than which there is no surer indication, or index of intellectual advancement. See a man whose aim is *truth*, truth always; truth pure like its author, and you see a man whose understanding is advancing with the utmost rapidity and to its farthest growth. See a man like Newton intent on truth in astronomy, like Locke, intent on truth in mental science, like Bacon intent on truth in all sciences, and you see a man whose intellect is expanding to its utmost di-

mension. See him who is aiming at other objects; who seeks applause; who strives for distinction; who is reckless of the means; and you have found one, who, though his mind may sparkle, and dazzle, and confound, may yet be doing that which shall produce disproportion and disorder in his intellectual powers, as well as perverseness in his heart. Pre-eminently this is requisite in the Christian ministry. A minister of religion will be useful just as his mind is imbued with the truth of the Bible. He who wishes to give the utmost expansion to his intellectual powers, will give his days to the holy Scriptures. Not despising truth from whatever quarter it may come—whether it shall be borne to him in the recorded thoughts of other times; whether it shall speak in the lessons of past experience; whether it shall fall from the venerable lips of living wisdom; or whether some new view of truth shall open to his own mind, it will be borne gratefully to his understanding and his heart. He who loves truth will not be fastidious of the quarter whence it comes; and though it may run counter to his own prejudices; though it may infringe on some venerable form of belief; and though it may be opposed to much that passes for knowledge in the world, yet it will be welcomed to the heart; and its influence felt on the understanding and the life.

Holiness is the only thing that will produce true independence of thinking and investigation. He that fears God, and he alone, is the man who is in a fair way to be an independent thinker. He that feels that he is responsible to a higher than any earthly tribunal, is he who will be in a proper condition to make any proper use of his understanding. He who is time-serving; or who feels it to be for his interest to keep in with certain systems and parties; who has made it a point of conscience never to swerve from a system made ready at his hands; or who has laid it down as a maxim that the human mind in all subjects has been taxed to its utmost powers, and that no new and yet unseen view of truth is yet to greet the human soul, will lose the stimulus to exertion, and will pursue a course that shall tend to paralyze all his powers. There is nothing but the fear of God that will ever make a man truly independent in the investigation of truth, or in his conduct towards his fellow-men. It is by fearing God more than men, and venerating the system of truth in the Bible more than the system of the schools, that the human powers are put forth to appropriate effort, and called into the utmost discipline. What cramps the intellect of man? What creates the remarkable fact that so few men in any profession or party, ever think for themselves? Prejudice; reverence for the authority of venerable names, living or dead; pride of party; the domination of a leader; the interest of station; indolence; and vice. What will expand the intellect, and produce true independence of judgment? The fear of God. Not a daring and reckless self-confidence badly surnamed holiness, not that which denounces past or living wisdom; not that which scorns instruction; but that which surmounts passion; which humbles pride; which isolates man from his party; which prompts to the invocations of heavenly wisdom; and which urges in sincerity and prayer to the Bible.

Holiness will produce a sober, and just practical estimate of things. Some men accomplish nothing because the faculties are called with great disproportion into action. He who seeks to dazzle and confound the world, may cultivate his imagination. He who would control his fellow men, may study the arts of intrigue, and the policies of ambition. He only who fears God, will seek to make the most of all this faculties and powers of mind.---I am particularly interested in remarking that holiness will restrain, on the one hand, from a daring, and presumptuous love of speculation; and on the other, from denouncing all those who may suppose that they have a clearer understanding of a subject than we may happen to have. There are not a few minds whose besetting sin is a love of speculation; a fondness



for explaining the *mode* of things; a partiality for theory; and a habit of carrying these to all the subjects of theological inquiry. So far as I have had opportunity of observing, this propensity pertains to *minds*, and not to *schools* in theology. It appertains as really to every old school of divinity, as to every new school; and is found just as certainly, and to just as great an extent, in those men who declaim by the hour-glass against it, as in those who avowedly practice it. Now the observation which I am making is, that the fear of God and not attachment to any particular creed or system is the most mighty restrainer of the spirit that would be wise above what is written. There *are* subjects which are placed beyond the reach of the human intellect. Piety in the heart will fix the boundaries of investigation in those subjects better than creeds. There are things in theology not to be explained in this world. Humble confidence in eternal wisdom will better restrain from treading on those points, than all the barriers which authority and denunciation can throw around them.

On the other hand, it is no less true, that the love of holiness will prompt the mind to humble and earnest investigation. It will summon the soul to the legitimate use of all its powers, and that *may* open the mind on truths, even in religion, which the human mind, since the days of inspiration, has not clearly contemplated. It will not be doubted that the profound mind of Edwards contemplated some truths which uninspired intellect had not before so clearly seen, or that Robert Hall gazed on ever living truth with an intensity which perhaps had not before been vouchsafed to mortals. We are perhaps often in danger of erring in supposing that the human mind has reached the utmost limit in investigating moral subjects, and that that limit has been fixed with unerring accuracy in the venerable symbols that express the belief of other ages. Much unseemly ridicule, and much unwise contempt has been thrown at times on what has been denominated improvement in theology. Understanding indeed the word *theology* as referring to the system of truth in the Bible, it is certainly not a mark of unusually profound thinking to say that it is not susceptible of improvement. But our danger may be that of deluding ourselves by the sophism of a term. It is possible that among all denominations of Christians, there may be opinions held, or philosophical explanations offered, which are not in the Bible; and to remove these, would be an improvement of the system. It is possible that the Bible may be better understood, that the principles of moral government there developed may be better explained, that the character of the human mind, the laws of its action, and the ever varying forms of human guilt, that the way of access to the souls of men by truth, and the subject of evangelical morals and duties as adapted to the new developments of things on earth, may be better investigated and understood; and all this would be an advancement in theology. It is true that the system was perfect in the Scriptures when they were written. But so was the system of astronomy perfect when the morning stars sang together; nor have the revolutions of ages, or the wear of the vast machine, made any changes, or suggested any improvement on the mechanism of the heavens. It was true that the system of botany was perfect when God pencilled the flowers of paradise; and of chemistry when the air, and waters, and earths of the early creation were formed; and of anatomy when the first man trod the green earth of Eden. Succeeding ages have detected no fault; and made no improvement on these systems. But that does not prove that the toils of Newton, and Laplace, and Linnaeus, and Cuvier, and Davy, and Harvey, and Bell, have been without advantage to mankind. Nor is it demonstrated that the limit of advancement is yet reached; or that the human mind must here pause and hope to proceed no farther. These men have just opened illimitable fields of thought before the mind. And just so it may be in theology. The system was as perfect, in the Scriptures, as astronomy was before Newton

lived; yet it is possible that there are truths, and relations of truths, which the mind has not yet contemplated. And it is certain that there is no pursuit of truth so adapted to expand the mind as the contemplation of the character of the Creator of all, and of the relations *which* we sustain to him, and of the wonders of the incarnation, and the atonement, and of the immortal destiny that opens before us in an advancing eternity.

One remark may be made here, about truth as revealed in the Bible. It is, that the expressions which occur in the Scriptures are adapted to cover all the ground which the utmost investigations of the mind may make. Penned indeed in an obscure age, and amidst a people the reverse of eminent for science, and by a people, too, evidently ignorant of many truths now perfectly familiar to us, yet the *language* which they employ, meets the utmost discoveries of future times. A man whose mind is imbued with the sublimest views of the modern astronomy, will peruse the glowing language of David in the sixth Psalm, as if it had been penned under the freshness of the discoveries of Newton. There is not a declaration of the Bible respecting the glories of the heavens; the grandeur of the universe; the wonders of the human powers; the divine wisdom illustrated in his works, or the operations of mind, which does not cover, as if originally designed to express, all that is now, or that will hereafter be known. To a mind imbued with the science of modern times, those expressions convey far more than they could in the obscurer views of the times of Moses, and David; and one of the principal achievements which remains for the intellect of the world to accomplish, is to make use of modern science, and the laws of mind as now understood, and developments of Providential purposes, as Cuvier has done in fossil remains, in illustration of the principles of the Bible:--an undertaking, assuredly, in which there may be some improvement on the forms and systems of the older divinity; and an employment, which perhaps, of all others, may yet be best fitted to expand and refine the intellectual powers of men. Butler, and Paley, and Dick, and the authors of the Bridgewater Treatises, have laid the foundation of what is yet to open to the human mind views of truth on which the Fathers never gazed, and that train of argumentation which is yet to call into the service of Christianity the profoundest intellect of the world. Hitherto, talent and learning have extensively prided themselves on being dissociated from the Christian system. There, may yet be found the connecting link, which shall bind the talent of the earth to the cause of Christianity, and compel the advancing, and somewhat proud and independent sciences, to become willing handmaids and allies in the spread of the gospel to all nations.

(2.) A second illustration of the power of holiness in the ministry, may be contemplated in its calling forth the active powers. The experiment has never yet been fairly made, to see how much, pure and ever burning piety might accomplish in calling forth the active powers of man. What mighty energies ambition and sin might summon into being, has been exemplified; and unhappily, when we wish to gauge the powers of man, we are compelled to resort to some such melancholy exemplifications. History is little else than the record of such disastrous achievements, in contemplating which, we stand almost equally amazed at the exhibition of gigantic intellect, and fiendish malignity. Alexander, and Cesar, and Napoleon, have amazed the world by their daring, and by the immense powers of mind in the service of ambition; Nero, Cesar Borgia, Richard III. have shown to what prodigious efforts unmingled sin may summon the human powers; and D'Alembert, and Diderot, and Voltaire, have shown to what almost supernatural feats of intellectual prowess the mind may be summoned in a united effort to corrupt a nation, and dethrone religion from the hearts of men. Here talent has been concentrated by sin. Ambition or crime, points all the powers on a single object; and the world trembles before the amazing

intellect of fallen man. But when we contemplate the application of holiness to the mind, we see it in broken, irregular, and disjointed efforts. We cannot point to an instance in mere human nature, where the powers have been as entirely concentrated, and called forth by holy effort, as they have been under the control of ambition or infidelity. A few indeed, have approximated to it; and we refer to them as rare exceptions to the common laws of holiness over men. The energies of Paul were called forth by piety; and Baxter, and Edwards seemed disposed to make trial of what mind could do under the influence of Christianity; and Howard is said to have pursued his object with an intensity which the nature of the human mind forbade to be greater. But why do we refer to these instances as standing like far distant lights in the darkness of the past? It is because the power of holiness has not yet been applied to the *mass* of the Christian world.

There are two melancholy facts that stand forth in the past history of the world. One is, that talent that might have made itself felt on the destiny of men, has slumbered, and been lost. At any single period of the world there has been talent enough for all its great purposes of improvement. Who can believe that Luther was the only man that ever dwelt in a cloister endowed with native powers to effect a revolution in nations? Who can believe that there is not power enough in the Church, to carry the gospel to all the world?---The other fact is, that genius is often wasted, or burns and blazes for naught. Now splendid talent is called forth by some daring scheme of ambition. Smitten and foiled in its design, it shrinks back on itself, and withers, and is lost to the world. Now it is excited by some wild Utopian plan for the philosophic improvement of men. Life is exhausted in the scheme, and the misdirected talent falls useless to the dust. Now splendid genius seems to be called forth by the mere love of intellectual exercise; by the mere fondness for its play; and a useless poem or a novel is all the memorial that the man lived. And now talent, and enterprise just adapted to all the hardy enterprises of making the race better, expends itself in some wild and devious plan of wanderings, like that of Ledyard; or in exploring the memorials of ancient folly, like that of Belzoni.

Now the same mighty energies of mind that are called forth by ambition, and the love of gold, or of song, or the same energy that seeks employment adapted to its nature, in traversing continents, and ascending streams, and penetrating frozen seas, may be called forth by the same principle that moved the mind of Paul, and Buchanan, and Martyn. Nay, higher powers of mind may be called forth by an inextinguishable desire to be holy, and to save the world, than the love of gold or fame ever yet has excited. If a man wished to make the most of his talents, to put them to the severest, and most enduring test; to labour simply to extend and prolong his influence, he would tread the path of Paul and Howard. The influence of the Cesars of the world shall die. The memorials of their grandeur, and power, shall perish. The influence of the name of Paul and Howard shall never die. The memorials of their toils shall be throughout the ages of millennial glory, and shall endure to the end of all things.

The Church must yet come to put forth its energies as a *matter of principle*. Its wealth, its buried talent, its energies, are yet to be called forth under the influence of holiness; or the world will slumber on in its sins. With all that is done, it is put to an open shame by the energies of the men of this world. We hear much of the self-denials and sacrifices of the Christian missionary. Our sympathies are appealed to, and our tears flow, in behalf of those who leave kindred and home, to cross the ocean to encounter the perils of other climes, and to breathe their life out in heathen shores. The appellation of *martyr* begins to be employed of those who give themselves to a missionary life, and their names begin to be blended with those who were led to the stake, or who lighted by their burning

bodies the gardens of the Roman Emperor. Such language must be changed. To be willing to preach the gospel to the heathen, or to die on a foreign coast unwept and unknown, is yet to be considered as one of the first elements of Christian piety. Do we forget that the Ganges, and the Senegal, and the Missouri, and the Amazon, that the Alps, and the Andes, and the lofty hills of Himmaleh, are no obstructions to men in the pursuit of gold? Do we not remember that Polar seas, and burning sands are no barrier to those who seek for gain? Do we not bear in mind that the track of the American is on the snows of the North, and on the sands of the Equator, in pursuit of the wealth of the world? Nay, do we forget that he breathes the pestilential air of Africa to drag its helpless victims into bondage, and that he asks not human sympathy, and breathes not forth a murmur? Our countrymen travel over the wide world. They breathe the air of every clime. They encounter every peril by ocean and by land. They do it without murmuring, and without appeals to our tears. If their bones whiten the beach of the shores of Africa, if they shiver in the cold of the north and die, if they pine in a foreign land, unblessed by the presence of a mother, or the tears of a sister, it is well; they seem to regard it as a matter of little moment. Such energies—nay, more than such, shall the pure principles of the gospel summon into action. And the church too shall yet feel that the highest talents in her bosom may find ample range in the vast fields of Christian enterprise; and that these talents are to be yielded without a murmur or a sigh in bearing the gospel to all nations.

(3.) A third topic of remark has reference to the *direct* work of the ministry. It is probably true that there is more talent and learning in the ministry in this country, than in any other profession. And it is unquestionably the fact that the ministry exerts more influence over mind than any other class of men. And yet no one can believe that a more entire devotedness to the work, a more thorough imbuing with the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, would not greatly augment the usefulness and power of the ministers of the gospel. It is certainly possible to make the ministry almost just what we please. A man who enters it with undivided aim, seeking the salvation of souls, may find it a life of peace and of joy. A man who brings with him one, or a dozen other motives; who makes the cultivation of holiness and the conversion of men a business by the way—a part of his scheme having reference to some other main object, will find his bed, as he should, a bed of thorns, and his death a blessing—perhaps the only blessing of his being, to his fellow men. Let the love of literature; let the desire of applause; let the purpose of gain find their way into his views, and they will be elements of disappointment and wretchedness. Now conceding all that we do in regard to the actual influence of the ministry of this country, is it an uncharitable supposition that that influence might be immensely augmented by an increase of holiness? Are there not ministers who have yet to breathe forth the first sincere desire for a revival of religion, and whose eyes remain yet to be blessed with a work of grace under their own ministrations? Are there not men who seem to labor for nought; who accomplish nothing; who live without plan, and who die without success in their work?

It is a subject of most painful lamentation that there is so much talent and learning in the ministry that is wasted. We do not mourn so much that young ministers die. It is the direct act of God. We mourn when they drag out a lingering death—a useless, idle, wasted existence; when they cease to cultivate their powers, expand their minds, enlarge their views, and when they live almost for nought.

If we are asked for the *reasons* why men accomplish little in life, perhaps they may be found to be the following. 1. Many men have no *plan* of life. What is done is done at irregular intervals, and by irregular excite-

ments. 2. Men indulge in visionary schemes; in wild, and erratic purposes. Men of genius, or that *would* be men of genius, often seek to strike out some path untrodden by ordinary mortals;—and the result is, that they just live to show that it *should* not be attempted by mortal footsteps. 3. Men neglect a continued discipline of the mind. Perhaps more than half leave their habits of study at a Seminary; and thus show that it was not pursued by principle, but by the trammels of authority. The highest advances, which some men make are when they leave the college; the best sermons which some men write—defective as they may be—are when they leave a Seminary. 4. Men neglect correct every day habits. They are urged forward by impulses, and circumstances. 5. Many men seem to want a conscience in relation to smaller matters. The improvement of their time, and their talents, they seem to forget is a matter for which they are responsible. 6. Many men seem to labor for no very definite object. They seem to have fixed their mind on no great purpose to be accomplished by their living. There is no one thing, or single *group* of things lying near together, that they aim at. There is much in the ministry that is the work of random; much energy that is put forth that is wasted; much learning that is unintelligible to the mass of the people; much discussion in which they feel no concern. Half the Shibboleths of any time or age, cannot be made intelligible to a Christian congregation—perhaps would not be worth the pains of learning them if they could be. I may add, that much talent is wasted, and much time expended among men in securing the ascendancy of party; and in a kind, and paternal supervision of all the churches. Not a few not very aged or experienced champions, deem themselves called upon to extend a kind oversight to all the churches. One thing has probably occurred to all; that true love to God and his cause, becomes usually more catholic and charitable with advancing age. More deeply sensible indeed of the evil, and the danger of error, yet it is more tender in its admonition; and the early voice of denunciation and alarm melts away into the tones of supplication that *God* would keep and preserve his church. The piety of age too may discern evidences of piety in a candid investigation of truth; and evidences of the safety of the church in efforts to promote the Redeemer's kingdom, and to multiply, and extend pure revivals of religion.

Now it will not be doubted that augmented holiness would greatly expand the usefulness of the ministers of the gospel. It would fix their wandering purposes. It would destroy their Utopian plans. It would recover back their wasted energies. It would silence their murmurs; and bring to a close, useless, and subtle speculations. It would lead man forth not to denounce, but to toil; not to utter the language of unavailing regret over the errors and follies of men, but to seek to put a period to them by converting men to Christ. For the best way to secure the orthodoxy and unity of the church, is to bring the great principles of the gospel to bear on the souls of men. The man who is blessed with an extensive revival of pure religion, is the means of convincing effectually and forever a hundred men of the doctrine of depravity, and of the atonement, and of the agency of the Holy Ghost, where he who simply labours to do it as a matter of abstract speculation, shall half convince, and imperfectly secure one convert to his dogmas. Holiness would concentrate the energies of men in the great purpose of saving the soul. It would unite their scattered purposes in a single plan—and secure, perhaps, all that we can hope to secure, *unity of effort in the conversion of the world as the crowning principle, in connection with unity of belief in those great essential doctrines that bear on the renovation of all mankind.* More than all, does this commend itself to us, because it will call the powers forth not in a wild and untried experiment; not in projects yet to be tested; but in that plan

which has been tried for more than fifty generations of men---the plan of converting souls by the preaching of the simple, but mighty gospel of Christ. Here we shall have no difference of opinion. Here no jars, and no contentions. Here we are in no danger of conflicting with the wisdom of past ages; with the sentiments of the Fathers of the church; with any creed of any Protestant denomination; with any deep felt attachment to standards of doctrine. From Paul, and Ignatius, and Clement, and Polycarp; from Cyprian, and Augustine and Jerome; from Luther, and Knox, and Calvin; from Howe, and Baxter, and Bates, and Leighton; and from the fathers and venerable men in our own church and of all churches, we shall meet with one concurring voice; we shall be cheered by one united sentiment. Labouring to apply the unadulterated gospel of Christ to the souls of men, we tread no dangerous ground of heresy. We are in a consecrated path, a way bedewed with the tears of the Saviour; and rendered sacred by the holiest toils of confessors and martyrs.

In one word, I, as a pastor of the church, may without arrogance or presumption, be permitted to remind the venerable guardians and guides of this institution, that the churches regard this zeal for the conversion of the world---this love of Christ which will cheerfully brave the dangers of sea and land to save a soul---as the prime element in the training of their sons. If I am acquainted with the feelings of the churches in this land, there is a universal breathing forth of fervent prayer to God that these institutions may train their sons first of all to strive for the conversion of men. Nor will these churches regard the cultivation of sacred literature however accurate, or enlarged; nor the knowledge of the system of sacred theology, however profound or liberal; nor the acquaintance with the doings of other times, however minute or enlightened, as having the semblance of a compensation for everbreathing piety, and a readiness to devote every energy of the life to the conversion of the world.

(4.) My next observation will have reference to the necessity of augmented holiness in the ministry of our own denomination. Probably there never has been an extensive body of Christians in the same situation as the Presbyterian church is at present in this country. From some cause---which it is not needful now to investigate, but in which the fact is presumptive proof in favour of the church itself---it has become the marked object of hostility among all classes of wicked men. It finds bitter enemies in every city, and town; enemies in all classes and ranks of life; enemies in all the editors of newspapers and pamphlets that consider themselves called on to make an attack on religion. It is accused of arrogance, and pride, and plans of ambition, and power; it is charged with aspiring to political influence and aggrandisement, and with being the chief offender in seeking a union of church and state; it is *somehow* regarded as of being more in the way of men of sin and infidelity than any other Christian denomination. Now while we repel these charges, it is well to derive lessons of instruction from all quarters. That all this is malice, and opposition to the gospel that has for some cause been concentrated on us, may be admitted, yet there is a *little* semblance of plausibility in all this opposition. There is undoubtedly more learning in the clergy of our church, than in any other in this country. There is more wealth; and there may be more intellectual and moral power. And there is more need, therefore, of single minded aims to promote the glory of God. Let the ministry of this country become as ambitious as their enemies charge on them; let them grasp at power---as they are suspected of doing; let them attempt to wield the influence with which they may be intrusted, and to abuse the confidence which is reposed in them; let them become extensively secular in their views, intriguing in their character, time-serving and ambitious, and human foresight cannot anticipate all the evils that might flow from it. To all this there is now no ten-

gency; our hope that there never will be, is to be laid in the aims and efforts made under the divine blessing, to make devoted holiness the prime business of all theological training.

But there is another remark, that more deeply and directly concerns us. Our church presents a remarkable aspect in another respect. The external opposition has not had the effect which such opposition usually has, of promoting internal concord. It is rent into parties; agitated by alarms; filled with suspicions, and not very charitable, or fraternal apprehensions; our presbyteries, and higher bodies have become the scenes of unbrotherly debates; confidence is giving way between man and man; and the attention is diverted from the direct work of saving men, to alarms, and strifes, and appeals, and rejoinders, and defences. Contests have arisen, the end of which no man can foresee; and suspicions are excited, which it is in the power of no man to allay. Now I certainly shall not here enter into any inquiry which party is right or wrong; or whether both be not alike to be blamed. My only design in introducing the subject, is to observe, that the great object aimed at on all sides, would be better gained by augmented holiness and zeal for the conversion of men. There is nothing that will so certainly secure the love of the truth, and practical perceptions of it, as untiring and constant zeal for the conversion of souls, and the glory of God. There is nothing that will so certainly allay suspicions, and produce concord, and good feeling, as a united effort to spread the gospel around the world. If my brother has a different way of doing it from what I deem best for me to use, it is not mine to contend with him, but by practical and more successful efforts, to show him, if I can, "a more excellent way." If men feel that they have much really to *do* in their own sphere; if they are impressed with the worth of souls; if they pant for the redemption of all mankind, they will usually feel that they have little time or talent that can be well spent in angry discussion, and debate. Which ever side or party may be right or wrong, in one thing, we shall all agree; that each and every party would be benefitted by a greatly augmented zeal for the conversion of the world; and by more of the meek, and mild, and kind spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. No man can well think on the state of things among us without tears. A torn, and distracted, and bleeding church; a host of enemies on every side; and in the mean time fewer revivals of religion, and perhaps less direct effort to promote them, than have occurred for many years. Who, in such a condition of things, whatever may be his theological views or preferences, will not most fervently pray that a spirit of more humble piety; a zeal for the conversion of sinners; and a united, and untiring wish for the spread of the gospel to all nations, may be vouchsafed by the Father of mercies to all our ministers and churches?

(5.) One topic remains. This entire world is to be converted to God; and it is to be done by the instrumentality of the Church. And it is perfectly apparent that this is to be a more definite object in the church; that it is to constitute more and more THE PLAN of the church, before it can be done. It is *as* apparent that it will never be done without augmented zeal and holiness in the great body of Christian ministers, and Christian people. It is not because there is not might in the arm, or willingness in the heart of God. It is not because there is not merit in the atonement of Christ—for the merit of that atonement shall yet be ample to the work. It is not because there is not power in the Spirit—for the conversion of the world shall yet be the glory, and the triumph of his operations. It is not because there is not wealth, and talents, and moral power in the church—for at this moment the church embosoms wealth enough to place a Bible in all the habitations of men; and talent enough, latent in its bosom, to bear the living message of truth to the ears of all nations. It is not because energy, and enterprise, under the divine blessing, may not accomplish this great result

—for no enterprise flags in this land and age for want of energy and talent. Cities rise in the wilderness, and new formed empires teem with a busy population, and the sound of the woodman's axe gives way to the din of commerce, and a plan of gain formed in a humble village, shall be executed on the other side of the globe, and all nations are becoming familiar with the voice, and the plans of the American. Since the first days of our history, no enterprise has failed for the want of energy or talent. No obstacle has been so great that it did not soon disappear. No perils so vast that they have not been encountered. And what is needed in the Church for the conversion of the world, under the attending agency of the Holy Ghost, is just the energy and talent consecrated to the cause, which have made our land what it is. Let our young men go forth into this field with the ardor which has converted this vast land into a fruitful field, and let our departing fathers lift their hands to bless them, and their eyes to heaven to implore divine mercy on them; let every age, and sex, and sect, cease contention, and join in one mighty movement for the salvation of man, and the world may, and must, and will, become subject soon to Jesus Christ. Holiness must unclench the grasp of avarice; holiness must enlarge the heart to pray; holiness must dissolve the bonds of selfishness; holiness must make mild and kind the eyes of the Christian brotherhood; holiness must relax the frown of suspicion, and bigotry; holiness must bind the energies to the love of truth and purity; and holiness must evince its power in teaching men to meet dangers and to cross oceans, leaving father and mother, and home, to make known the pure gospel of the Lord Jesus to all nations.

In conclusion, I may remark, that the prime object of a discipline for the ministry is the *training* in the spirit of the Saviour. Holiness is not a native plant of earth. It is a tender exotic; to be nourished amidst the ever-during storms, and frosts, and cold of a selfish world. It may wither and droop—even within the seclusions of a cloister, beneath the hood and cowl; or even in such walls as these. And it may wither *as much* there as in contact with the busy, anxious, oppressive, but often thrilling and exciting scenes where the Pastor, or the missionary spends his days. First of all duties, for the development of the intellect, and for calling forth the active powers, and for personal salvation, and for the welfare of the church, it is to be trained. It is to be the prime consideration in every lesson of instruction; and in every plan contemplating activity in the Master's cause. Better, far better, that a young man breathe out his life within the walls of the Seminary, and be borne thence to the house of the dead, than to be urged on by the ambition of literary distinction, and of popular applause, or of a decent and reputable living, into the ministry. The church asks from such institutions, none but those who are prepared, if such be the will of God, to labor amidst the most distant, and the obscurest tribe of men, or on the smallest island of the ocean, to secure the salvation of the world. Far from our Seminaries, and from the churches, and from our families, be men in whom this is not the prime object; and far be the day when other feelings shall find a lodgment within the walls reared by piety, for preparation for the sacred office.

THE END.