



*The Bible a code of Laws ;*

A

# SERMON,

DELIVERED IN PARK STREET CHURCH, BOSTON,

SEPT. 3, 1817,

AT THE ORDINATION OF

**MR. SERENO EDWARDS DWIGHT,**

AS PASTOR OF THAT CHURCH ;

AND OF

MESSRS. ELISHA P. SWIFT, ALLEN GRAVES, JOHN NICHOLS,  
LEVI PARSONS, & DANIEL BUTTRICK,

*As Missionaries to the Heathen.*

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BY LYMAN BEECHER, A.M. *R.*

*Pastor of a Church of Christ in Litchfield, Conn.*

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“ There are many of the prevailing errors of the present day, which I cannot with any patience see maintained to the utter subversion of the Gospel of Christ, with so high a hand, and so long continued a triumph, when it appears so evident to me that there is no foundation for any of this glorying and insult.”

EDWARDS.

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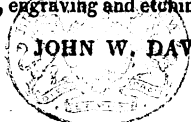
1818.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, to wit :

*District Clerk's Office.*

*Seal,*  
Be it remembered, that on the fifth day of December, A. D. 1817, and in the forty second year of the Independence of the United States of America, Flagg & Gould of the said district, have deposited in this Office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, *to wit* : " The Bible a code of laws ; a sermon, delivered in Park Street Church, Boston, Sept. 3, 1817, at the ordination of Mr. Sereno Edwards Dwight as pastor of that church ; and of Messrs. Elisha P. Swift, Allen Graves, John Nichols, Levi Parsons, and Daniel Buttrick, as Missionaries to the Heathen. By Lyman Beecher, A. M., pastor of a church of Christ in Litchfield, Conn.—"There are many of the prevailing errors of the present day, which I cannot with any patience see maintained to the utter subversion of the Gospel of Christ, with so high a hand, and so long continued a triumph, when it appears so evident to me, that there is no foundation for any of this glorying and insult."—*Edwards.* In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, " An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned : " and also to an act entitled, " An act supplementary to an act, entitled, An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned ; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

JOHN W. DAVIS, } Clerk of the District  
of Massachusetts.



# SERMON.

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PSALM XIX. 7, 8, 9, 10.—“THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT, CONVERTING THE SOUL: THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD IS SURE, MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE: THE STATUTES OF THE LORD ARE RIGHT, REJOICING THE HEART: THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD IS PURE, ENLIGHTENING THE EYES: THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS CLEAN, ENDURING FOREVER: THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD ARE TRUE, AND RIGHTEOUS, ALTOGETHER. MORE TO BE DESIRED ARE THEY THAN GOLD, YEA, THAN MUCH FINE GOLD; SWEETER, ALSO, THAN HONEY, AND THE HONEY-COMB.”

WE have, in this Psalm, a concise account of the discovery made of the glory of God, by his works and by his word. “The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.” But these disclosures of the heavens, “whose line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world,” though they illustrate the glory of Jehovah, and create obligation, and discover guilt; are not sufficient to restrain the depravity of man, nor to disclose an atonement for him, nor to announce terms of pardon, nor to sanctify the soul.

But the Law of the Lord is perfect. Adapted to the exigencies of a lost world, it speaks on all those subjects, on which no speech is heard from the heavens, and is attended with glorious efficacy. It converts the soul; it makes wise the simple; it rejoices the heart; it produces a fear of the Lord, which endures forever; and to all who have felt its sanctifying power, it is more precious than gold, and sweeter than honey.

The text, then, teaches us to regard the word of God

as containing the laws of a moral government revealed for the illustration of his glory in the salvation of man.

In discoursing upon this subject, it is proposed

- I. To illustrate the nature of moral government ; and,
- II. To show that the Scriptures are to be regarded as containing a system of moral Laws, revealed to illustrate the glory of God, in the salvation of man.

A moral government is *the influence of law upon accountable creatures*. It includes a law giver : accountable subjects : and laws intelligibly revealed, and administered with reference to reward and punishment. To accountability in the subjects are requisite, understanding to perceive the rule of action ; conscience to feel moral obligation ; and the faculty of choice in the view of motives. Understanding to perceive the rule of action does not constitute accountable agency. Choice without the capacity of feeling obligation, does not constitute accountable agency.—But the faculty of understanding, and conscience, and choice, united, do constitute an accountable agent. The laws of God and man recognise these properties of mind, as the foundation of accountability.—A statue is not accountable ; for it has no faculty of preception or choice : an idiot is not ; for, though he may have the faculty of choice, he has no competent understanding to perceive a moral rule, nor conscience to feel moral obligation ; and a lunatic is not ; because, though he may have choice and conscience he has not the unperverted exercise of his understanding.

The faculties, then, of understanding, conscience, and choice, constitute an accountable agent. Their existence is as decisive evidence of free agency, as the five senses are of the existence of the body ; and nothing is inconsistent with free agency, or annihilates the evidence of its existence, which does not destroy one or more of these faculties of mind.

Law, as the medium of moral government, includes precepts and sanctions intelligibly revealed. The precept is directory ; it discloses what is to be done.—The sanctions are influential ; they present the motives to obedience included in the comprehensive terms of reward, and punishment. But, to have influence, the precepts and the motives must be presented to the mind. The law in all its parts must be intelligible ; otherwise it is not a law. A law may be unknown, and yet be obligatory, when the ignorance is voluntary ; but never, when it is unavoidable. The influence of law, as the medium of moral government, is the influence of motives upon accountable creatures ; and the effect of this influence is always the actual exercise of free-agency in choice or action. The influence of motives cannot destroy free-agency ; for it is always the influence only of persuasion, and results only in choice, which in the presence of understanding and conscience, is free-agency. If there were no objects of preference or aversion exhibited to the mind ; there could no more be choice or free-agency, than there could be vision without external objects of sight. Direct irresistible impulse, moving the mind to action, would not be moral government ; and if motives, in the view of which the mind chooses and acts, were incompatible with free agency, accountability and moral government would be impossible.

The administration of a moral government includes whatever may be necessary to give efficacy to its laws. Its chief influence is felt in the cognizance it takes of the conduct of subjects, and the evidence it affords of certain retribution according to their deeds. In some points, there is a coincidence between natural and moral government ; and in others, a difference. They agree in this fact, that the subjects of each are influenced to act, as they would not without government. To suppose complete exemption from any kind or degree of influence from

without, to be indispensable to free-agency, is at war with common sense, and daily observation, and every man's own consciousness. What is family government; what is civil government; what is temptation, exhortation or persuasion; and what are the influences of the Holy Spirit; but the means, and the effectual means, of influencing the exercises of the human heart, and the conduct of human life? To deny the possibility of controul by motives, without destroying free-agency, annihilates the moral government of God, and is atheism. It shuts him out of the world, and out of the universe, as moral governor. It blots out his laws as nugatory; emancipates every subject from his moral influence; and leaves him not an inch of territory on earth or in heaven, over which to sway the sceptre of legislation. He must sit upon his throne as an idle spectator of all moral exercise and action; receiving no praise for what he has done for saint or angel. "By the grace of God I am what I am," was a falsehood upon earth, and a lie that can never be repeated in heaven.

Natural and moral government may agree, also, as to the certainty of their influence. It may be as certain that an honest man will not steal, as if he was loaded with chains and could not move a finger; and it may be as certain that an intemperate man will drink to excess, when he has opportunity, as if the liquid were poured down his throat by irresistible power. But they differ entirely as to their subjects, and the manner of producing their results. Natural government is direct, irresistible impulse. Moral government is persuasion, and the result of it is voluntary action in the view of motives.

Free-agency cannot be conceived to exist, and probably cannot exist, in any other manner, than by the exhibition of motives to voluntary agents, the result of which shall be choice and action. The precise idea of moral

government, then, is the influence of law upon the affections and conduct of intelligent accountable creatures.

II. I am to show that the scriptures are to be regarded as containing the laws of a moral government, revealed to illustrate the glory of God, in the salvation of man.

The glory of God is his whole character. The illustration of his glory, is the exhibition of that character to intelligent beings, as the object of supreme complacency and enjoyment. The plan of Redemption is the particular system of action, which the most high has chosen as the medium of illustration ; and this plan is the system of moral laws contained in the Bible. That the Bible is to be regarded as revealing a system of moral laws, is evident from many considerations. The Most High has there revealed himself as a law-giver. His power, wisdom, and goodness, his justice, mercy, and truth, are exhibited not as abstract qualities, but as attributes illustrated by the laws and administration of a moral government. Man, the subject of these laws, possesses indisputably all the properties of an accountable agent, understanding, conscience, and the faculty of choice ; and in the Scriptures, is recognised as accountable. Did the Most High create all things to illustrate his glory ? It is a glory, which can be displayed only in the administration of a moral government. How can justice be manifested where there are no laws, and no accountable subjects ? How can mercy be displayed where there is no transgression ; or truth be illustrated where there is no intelligent mind to witness the accordance of declaration with fact, or of conduct with promises ? The Most High is expressly denominated king, law-giver, and judge. The legislative, judicial, and executive power are in the same hands ; and the Scriptures are denominated the law of the Lord, his statutes, his commandments.

The contents of the Bible illustrate its character as a



revealed system of precepts and motives. There is the moral law in ten commandments ; and its summary import comprised in two ; and there is the gospel, no less than the law, composed of precepts enforced by sanctions. As a *rule of life*, it adopts the moral law ; but as a *system of salvation*, it prescribes its own specific duties of repentance and faith, enforced by its own most glorious and fearful sanctions. Whatever instruction is contained in the Scriptures, historical or biographical, it is all directory, as a precept, or influential, as a motive to obedience. All the institutions of the Bible have for their object the preservation of truth in the mind, or the impression of it upon the heart as the means of restoring men from sin to holiness. The day of Judgment, as described by our Saviour, consummates the evidence that the Bible is to be regarded as embodying the laws of the divine moral government below. On that day, the graves open, and the dead, small and great, stand before God, and are judged according to the rule of action disclosed in the Bible, and the deeds done in the body.

### INFERENCES.

I. If the Scriptures are to be regarded as containing the laws of a moral government, revealed to illustrate the glory of God in the salvation of man ; then undoubtedly they have, on all subjects on which they speak, a determinate meaning. It is the peculiar property of laws to be precise in their requirements and sanctions. A law, which requires nothing specific, is not a law. If it may mean, and does mean many things, and yet no one thing in particular, it has no being.

If the Bible does not contain, in its precepts and doctrines, a distinct and precise meaning ; it contains no meaning ; it gives no illustration of the glory of God, no account of his will, of the state of man, of the character of the Sa-

viour, or of the terms of life. A blank book of as many pages might as well have been sent down from heaven, for reason to scrawl its varied conjectures upon, as a bible whose pages are occupied with unmeaning or equivocal declarations.

II. If the Bible contain the laws of a moral government in the manner explained ; then it is possible to *ascertain*, and to *know that we have ascertained*, its real meaning. It not only contains a precise meaning, but one, which being understood, carries with it the evidence of its own correctness. It is often alleged, that there are so many opinions concerning the doctrines of the Bible, that no man can know that his own belief is the true belief ; and, on the ground of this supposed inevitable uncertainty, is founded the plea of universal charity and liberality :—sweet sounding words for universal indifference or universal skepticism ! For who can be ardently attached to uncertainty ; or who can believe any revealed truth with confidence, when his cardinal maxim is, that the doctrines of the Bible are obscure and uncertain ?

But who is this, that libels his Maker as the author of an obscure and useless system of legislation, which no subject can understand, or, if he does, can have competent evidence of the fact ?—so obscure, that they who discard it wholly are little incommoded by the loss, and entitled to little less complacency than those who grope in vain after its bewildered dictates ;—so obscure, that those who err, are more entitled to pity than to condemnation, and afford as indubitable evidence of *fidelity* in examination, and *sincerity*, in believing *wrong* ; as those do, who by mere accident have stumbled on the truth without the possibility of knowing it.

This is indeed a kind hearted system in its aspect upon man ; but how tremendous its reaction upon the character of God. Why are his revealed Statutes with their

sanctions so obscure? Because he *could not* make them intelligible? You impeach his wisdom. Why then are they so obscure? Because he *would not* make them plain? You impeach his justice; for he commands his truth to be loved and obeyed;—an unjust demand, if its obscurity prevent the possibility of understanding it.

But it is demanded; *How can you know* that your opinion, among various conflicting opinions, is exclusively correct? You may believe that you are right, but your neighbour believes that he is right; and you are both equally confident and both appeal to the Bible. If the question were, how can I *cause my neighbour to know* that his opinion is incorrect and mine true; I should admit, that the difficulty, in given cases, may be utterly insurmountable. But to suppose, because I cannot make others perceive evidence which I perceive, that, therefore, my perception brings with it to me, no evidence of truth, implies, that there is no such thing as *moral certainty* derived from evidence; and that the man, who believes a fact upon evidence, has in himself no better ground of certainty than the man, who believes a fact without evidence, or even against evidence: that a reality, actually seen and felt to be such, affords to him who either sees or feels, no higher evidence of its existence, than a fiction, supposed to be a reality, affords of its actual existence. That is, a non-existence, without any evidence of being, may possess as high claims to be recognised as a reality, as a real existence, supported by evidence: for error in competition with truth is in fact a non-existence opposed to a reality.

Now the man, who holds an erroneous opinion, may be as confident of its truth, as the man, who believes the truth; but is there, in the nature of things, the same foundation for his confidence? Has not the man, who sees the truth and its evidence, *knowledge*, which the deceived man has not? If you deny it, you deny first principles; you annihilate the efficacy of evidence as the basis of

knowledge, and introduce universal skepticism. Every vagary of the imagination and every prejudice of the heart are as likely to be true without evidence, as points most clearly proved.

But if the *confidence* in truth and falsehood be the same, how can you be sure that you *do see* what you think you do; and that *your* opinion is not the mental deception? It is the same question repeated, and I return the same answer—I can know, if my opinion *be* correct, that it *is* so; because evidence seen and felt creates a moral certainty; because reality affords evidence above fiction, and existence affords evidence above non-existence. What has fiction to do to annihilate realities; and what has deception to do to cancel the perceived evidence of truth?

If you would witness the folly of the maxim, that truth and evidence afford no certainty amid conflicting opinions, reduce it to practice. The man who dreams is as confident that he is awake, as I who in reality am awake. Is it then doubtful which is awake; and utterly impossible for me to decide whether I dream, or my neighbour? The lunatic feels as confident that he is a king, as the occupant of the throne. The royal personage then must hold his thoughts in equilibrio; for here is belief opposed to belief, and confidence opposed to confidence. Do you say that the man is insane; but he believes all except himself to be insane; and who can tell that any man is in his right mind, so long as there is a lunatic upon earth to question it?

Godwin taught, and many a robber has professed to believe, that private property is an encroachment upon the rights of man. If your purse, then, should be demanded upon the highway, you may not refuse; for the robber believes his opinion about liberty and equality to be true, and you believe yours to be true, and both are equally

confident. It is also a *speculative opinion* about which you differ, and one concerning which great men have differed, and perhaps always will differ. You need not reason with him ; for, since you cannot be sure that *you* are right, how can you expect to make *him* know what you cannot know *yourself* ? and, as to the law of the land, it would be persecution for a *mere matter of opinion* to appeal to that, even if you could. Besides, how could a court and jury decide what is true amid conflicting opinions on the subject ? And what right have they *authoritatively to decide, and bind others by their decisions, upon matters of mere speculation* ?

But how shall a man help himself, who really and confidently believes falsehood to be truth ? Just as other men in other cases help themselves, who by folly or crime have brought calamities upon themselves. How shall a man help himself, who has wasted his property ?—Perhaps he never will, but will die a beggar. How shall a man help himself, who through negligence or crime has taken poison and fallen into a lethargy ? He may never awake. Believing falsehood to be truth may be a calamity irretrievable. The man must perish, if the error be a fundamental one, unless he renounce it and embrace the truth ; and his case, in many instances, may be nearly hopeless. Instead of its being a trivial matter what our opinions are ;—it is easy by the belief of error to place ourselves almost beyond the hope of heaven, in the very region of the shadow of death. What a man *may* do and *ought* to do, is one thing ; and what he *will* do may be fatally a different thing. “ Their eyes have they closed, lest at any time they should see and be converted, and I should heal them.”

III. If the Bible contain a system of Divine Laws, it is easy to perceive the high importance of revealed truth. It exhibits the divine character as the great object of

religious affection. It embodies the precepts of the divine moral government; prescribes the affections to be exercised, their nature, object, and degree, and the actions by which they are to be expressed. It embodies all the motives by which God restrains his subjects from transgression, and excites them to obedience. It exhibits the character of man as depraved and lost; and discloses by whom, and by what means, an atonement has been made, and upon what terms pardon may be obtained. It is the means employed by the Spirit of God to awaken the sinner to a sense of his danger, and to bring home to his heart a deep conviction of his guilt and just condemnation. It is by the *Truth*, that the Spirit of God converts the soul, and sanctifies the heart, and sheds abroad the love of God, and awakens hope, and diffuses peace and joy.

The truths of revelation are as important as the illustration of the glory of God, and as the happiness of the holy universe, caused and perpetuated by their instrumentality through all his dominions, and through eternity. In the view of this subject, how irreverent the maxim, "*No matter what a man believes, provided his life be correct.*" a maxim, which abrogates the law of God in its claims upon the heart; annihilates the doctrine that intention decides the moral nature of actions, and the doctrine that motives are the means of moral government; and reduces all obedience to the mere mechanical movements of the body. No matter whether a man believe or disbelieve in the divine existence; whether he love or hate the Lord; whether he trust in or despise the Saviour; whether he repent of his sins or remain incorrigible; whether his motives to action be good or bad. If the mere motion of his lip, hand, and foot, be according to rule, all is well. Is not this breaking the bands of Christ, and casting away his cords? Is it not saying to Jehovah,

“Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?” With equal irreverence, it is alleged to be of little consequence what a man *believes*, provided he be *sincere*. But what is sincerity? It is simply believing as we profess to believe; and the unblushing avowal is, that the Bible is a worthless book, no better than the Alcoran, or the fictions of Paganism, or the superstitions of Popery. “No matter what a man believes, *provided he does believe it!*” Falsehood, then, believed to be true is just as pleasing to God, and just as salutary in its influence upon man, as the combined wisdom and goodness of God, disclosed in his own most holy code of revealed laws.

The merest fictions of the brain, or the most malignant suggestions of a depraved heart, are as salutary as the laws of God. What authority have you for this opinion? Where have you learned that Jehovah is regardless of his honour, and the manifestation of his glory; is regardless of his laws, and their sanctions; is regardless of man, and the object of his affections, and the means of his salvation? You have not learned this from the Bible. You are an infidel, if you believe the maxim that it is no matter what a man believes provided he be sincere; and if you believe in no God but such an one as this maxim supposes, you are an atheist. The great end of all the works of Jehovah, according to the Bible, is the manifestation of his true character to created intelligences as the source of everlasting love, and confidence, and joy, and praise. But this glory is not an object of direct vision: It is manifested glory; and the system of manifestation is the plan of Redemption disclosed in the Bible, and carried into effect by the Spirit of God in giving efficacy to revealed truth in the sanctification and salvation of man. It is by the church, that he makes known to principalities and powers, in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God. Without just conceptions, then, of revealed truth, the true

character of God is not manifested, and cannot of course become an object of affection, or source of joy. Erroneous conceptions of revealed truth, eclipse the glory of God, in its progress to enlighten and enrapture the universe. They propagate falsehood concerning God through all parts of his dominions where they prevail, undermine confidence, annihilate affection, and extinguish joy. They arrest the work of redemption; for moral influence is the influence by which God redeems from sin, and revealed truth embodies that influence. When that light has been wantonly extinguished, God will not sanctify men by the sparks of their own kindling; or hold those guiltless who have perpetrated the deed. The most High is not regardless of the opinions his subjects form concerning Him. He has given them the means of forming just conceptions of his character; and if they wantonly libel their Maker to their own minds, or to others, He will punish them. He is not indifferent what objects we regard with supreme affection, and as our supreme good. He has exhibited his true character, and commanded us to love Him; and, if we pervert his character and worship other gods, He will punish the idolatry. He is not regardless of his own laws, nor of the moral influence by which He restrains and sanctifies. He has made them plain; and it is at our peril, if we falsify them, and break their force upon our own minds, or the minds of others. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind."—"Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved:—And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie,



that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." Do these passages teach, that it is of no consequence what a man believes, provided he is sincere ?

IV. If the Scriptures contain a system of Divine Laws ; then, in expounding their meaning, their supposed reasonableness or unreasonableness is not the rule of interpretation.

It is the opinion of some, that the Scriptures were not infallibly revealed in the beginning ; and that they have since been modified by art and man's device, until what is divine can be decided, only by an appeal to reason. What is reasonable on each page is to be received, and what is unreasonable is to be rejected. The obvious meaning of the text, according to the established rules of expounding other books, is not to be regarded ; but what is reasonable, what the text *ought* to say, is the rule of interpretation. Every passage must be tortured into a supposed conformity with reason ; or, if too incorrigible to be thus accommodated, must be expunged as an interpolation.

It is admitted that without the aid of reason the Bible could not be known to be the will of God, and could not be understood. Reason is the faculty by which we perceive and weigh the evidence of its inspiration, and by which we perceive and expound its meaning. Reason is the judge of evidence, whether the Bible be the word of God ; but that point decided, it is the judge of its meaning only according to the common rules of exposition.

Deciding whether a law be reasonable or not, and deciding what the law is, are things entirely distinct ; and the process of mind in each case is equally distinct ;—The one is the business of the legislator, the other is the business of the judge.

In *making* laws, their adaptation to public utility, their

expediency, and equity, are the subjects of inquiry ; and here the reasonableness or unreasonableness of a rule must decide whether it shall become a law or not. But when the Judge on the bench is to *expound* this law, he has nothing to do with its policy, or utility, or justice. He may not look abroad to ascertain its adaptation to the public good, or admit evidence as to its effects. He is bound down rigidly to the duty of exposition. His eye is confined to the letter, and the obvious meaning of the terms, according to the usages of language.

But what is meant by the terms *reasonable*, and *unreasonable*, as the criterion of truth and falsehood? It cannot be what we should *naturally expect* God would do; for who, beforehand, would have expected, under the reign of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, a world like this; a world full of sin and misery. It cannot be what is agreeable to our feelings or coincident with our wishes; for we are depraved; and the feelings of traitors may as well be the criterion of rectitude concerning human governments, as the feelings of the human heart respecting the divine.

The appropriate meaning of the term *reasonable*, in its application to the Laws of God, is the accordance of his laws and administration with what is proper for God to do, in order to display his glory to created minds, and secure from everlasting to everlasting the greatest amount of created good.

But who is competent, with finite mind and depraved heart, to test the revealed Laws and Administration of Jehovah by this rule? To decide upon this vast scale whether the doctrines and duties of the Bible, and the facts it discloses of divine administration are reasonable or not, the premises must be comprehended. God must be comprehended; the treasures of his power, the depths of his wisdom, the infinity of his benevolence, his dominions

must be comprehended ; the greatest good must be known, and the most appropriate means for its attainment. All his plans must be open and naked to the inspection of reason, the whole chain of causes and effects throughout the universe and through eternity, with the effect of each alone, and of all combined. Reason must ascend the throne of God ; and, from that high eminence, dart its vision through eternity, and pervade with steadfast view immensity, to decide whether the precepts, and doctrines, revealed in the Bible come in their proper place, and are *wise* and *good* in their connexion with the whole ; whether they will best illustrate the glory of God and secure the greatest amount of created good in a Government which is to endure forever. But is man competent to analyze such premises, to make such comparisons, to draw such conclusions ?

If God has not revealed intelligibly and infallibly the laws of his government below ; man cannot supply the defect. If holy men of old spake not as the Holy Ghost gave them utterance, but as their own fallible understandings dictated ; and if, since that time, the sacred page has been so corrupted, that exposition according to the ordinary import of language fails to give the sense, then it cannot be disclosed ; and the infidel is correct in his opinion that the light of nature is man's only guide. The laws of God are lost, the Bible is gone irrecoverably until God himself shall give us a new edition, purified by his own scrutiny, and stamped by his own infallibility.

Apply these maxims concerning the fallibility of revelation, and the rule of interpretation to the laws of this commonwealth. The wisdom of your ablest men has been concentrated in a code of laws : But these laws, though perfect in the conception of those who made them, were committed to writing by scribes incompetent to the duty of making an exact record, and the publication was

entrusted without superintendence to incompetent workmen, who by their blunders, *honest indeed*, but many and great, defaced and marred the volume : to which add, that at each new edition every criminal in the state had access to the press and modified the types unwatched, to suit his sinister designs. What now is your civil code?—You have none.—The law is so blended with defect and corruption, that no principles of legal exposition will extricate the truth. What then shall be done? Your wise men consult, and come to the profound conclusion, that such parts only of the statute book as are reasonable, shall be received as law ; that what is reasonable, each subject of the commonwealth, *being a reasonable creature*, must decide for himself ; that the judges, in the dispensation of justice, shall first decide what the law ought to be, and thence what it is ; and that such parts of the statute book, as by critical torture, cannot be conformed to these decisions, shall be expunged as the errata of the press, or the interpolation of fraud. And thus the book is purified, and every subject, and every judge is invested with complete legislative power. Every man makes the law for himself, and regulates the statute book by his own enactments.

But is this the state of God's government below? Is the statute book of Jehovah annihilated, and every man constituted his own lawgiver? The man who is competent to decide, in this extended view, what is reasonable, and how, in relation to the interests of the universe, the Bible ought to be understood, is competent without help from God to make a Bible. His intelligence is commensurate with that of Jehovah ; and, but for deficiency of power, he might sit on the throne of the universe, and legislate and administer as well as He.

The mariner who can rectify his disordered compass by his intuitive knowledge of the polar direction, need not first rectify his compass, and then obey its direction ; he

may throw it overboard, and without a luminary of heaven, amid storms, and waves, and darkness, may plough the ocean, guided only by the light within.

V. From the account given of the scriptures, as containing a system of moral laws, it appears that a mystery may be an object of faith, and a motive to obedience. The idea of a mystery in legislation has been treated with contempt, and the belief of a mystery has been pronounced impossible. No man, it is alleged, can be truly said to believe a proposition, the terms of which he cannot comprehend. Hence has emanated the proud determination to subject every doctrine of Revelation to the scrutiny of reason, and to believe nothing which exceeds the limits of individual comprehension. Now it is conceded, that in the *precept* of a law, mystery can have no place; it must be definite and plain. It is also conceded, that no man can believe a proposition, the terms of which he does not comprehend. But the mysteries of revelation are not found among its precepts; and the proposition which is the precise object of faith is never unintelligible, but is always definite and plain.

A mystery is a fact, whose general nature is in some respects declared intelligibly; but whose particular manner of existence is not declared, and cannot be comprehended. The proposition which declares the mystery has respect always to the general intelligible fact, and never to the unrevealed, incomprehensible mode of its existence. A mystery, then, is an intelligible fact, always involving unintelligible circumstances, which cannot of course be objects of faith, in any definite form.

Allow me to illustrate the subject by a few examples. God is omnipresent. This proposition announces a mystery. The general intelligible fact declared is, that there is no place where God is not. The mystery is, how can a spirit pervade immensity.

That the dead are raised, is an intelligible proposition ; but “ how are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do they come ” are the attendant mysteries ; “ It is raised a spiritual body.” The intelligible proposition here is, that the materials of the natural body are reorganized at the resurrection, in a manner wholly new, and better adapted to the exigencies of mind ; but in *what manner* the spiritual body is organized, and how it differs from the natural body, are the attendant unexplained circumstances.

Take one more example ; the doctrine of the Trinity. The Scriptures reveal that there is *but one God*. They also reveal a distinction in the manner of the divine existence, which lays a foundation for mutual stipulations and distinct agencies in the work of redemption : which distinction is expressed by the names Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Now the proposition that there is *but one God* is intelligible. The proposition, that there is a deviation in the manner of the divine existence from the exact unity of created minds, is as intelligible as if the nature of this deviation were subjected to the analysis of reason, and brought within the limits of human comprehension. That this deviation from the *exact pattern of unity*, as exhibited in the *human mind*, is such as lays a foundation for ascribing distinct names, attributes, exercises and actions to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, according to the obvious language of the Bible, is as intelligible a proposition, as if the precise nature of this distinction was unveiled to the scrutiny of the human understanding.

Will it be alleged, that, where distinction approaches so nearly to absolute distinctness and independency of mind, there can be *no union* that shall constitute them one God ? To know this, you must be Omniscient, and comprehend the mode of the divine existence, and all possible modes of the existence of spirit. You must ascer-

tain that there is but *one possible mode of intelligent existence*, and *that*, the precise mode of unity which appertains to the mind of man.

You must not only be unable to see *how* any other mode can be, but you must be able to prove that it *cannot* be. But are you competent to do this? How then do you know that the divine Spirit does not exist; and why undertake to decide that he cannot exist, in such a manner as illustrates all that is declared of his unity, as one God and all that is implied in the distinction of names, and in the intellectual and social intercourse, stipulations, and distinct agencies recognised in the plan of redemption.

The whole force of the objection against the resurrection of the body was, how decomposed matter could be reorganized in a different manner, and yet be the same body. The Apostle's answer is, "thou fool," cannot he who organized the body at first, organize it again? And after all that heaven and earth and sea have disclosed of his skill in the diversified organization of matter, do you presume to say that the materials cannot be reorganized, in a manner wholly new, and better adapted to the exigencies of spirit? And to every one who demands how the Supreme Intellect can be *One*, and in any sense *Three*, according to plain scriptural declaration, the same answer may be given. "Thou fool," art thou Omniscient? dost thou comprehend all possible and all actual modes of spiritual existence? Can there be no mind but after the exact pattern of human intellect, and dost thou see it, and canst thou prove it? Why then dost thou array thine ignorance against Omniscience, and exalt thy pride of reason above all that is called God?—There is no alternative but to claim the infallibility of Omniscience, and deny the possibility of any distinction in the manner of the divine existence, which shall lay a foundation for the language employed in the Scriptures: or to take the ground

that no fact can be conceived to exist, or be proved to be a fact, whose *mode* of existence is incomprehensible, a position which destroys the use of testimony, and the possibility of faith. For the use of testimony is to establish the existence of facts, without reference to their mode of existence. But, according to this maxim, the fact itself cannot be conceived to exist *in any form*, unless the specific *mode* of existence be also comprehended. The *evidence* of its existence, therefore, is not testimony, but some intuitive comprehension of the *manner how* the fact exists; and the assent of the mind, that the fact does exist, is not *faith*, but *intuition*. Apply the maxim, and it will blot out the universe; for who can comprehend the fact of eternal uncaused existence. The fact then is not to be admitted, and thus we set aside the divine existence. Or if we admit a single mystery, and recognize the being of God; still we cannot take another step; for how can spirit create or move matter, or govern mind, and not destroy free-agency? It is a mystery; therefore there *is* no created world and no moral government. The sun formed by chance, placed himself in the centre, and the surrounding orbs, selfmoved, began their ceaseless course. But how can this be? It is a mystery:—and therefore there *is* no sun and no revolving system. A mystery then may be an object of faith; for the proposition which is the precise object of faith is always intelligible, though always implying the existence of unintelligible circumstances.

Nor are mysteries useless in legislation as motives to obedience. The Divine Omnipresence, though a mystery, is among the most powerful motives to circumspect conduct. And the resurrection of the body, and its mysterious change are urged by the Apostles as motives always to abound in the work of the Lord.

The doctrine of the Trinity pours upon the world a



flood of light. The peculiar mode of the divine existence lies at the foundation of the plan of redemption, as unfolded in the Bible, and brings to view, as a motive to obedience, an activity of benevolence on the part of God, a strength of compassion, a depth of condescension, and a profusion of mercy and grace, in alliance with justice and truth, which no other exhibition of the mode of the divine existence can give. It illustrates the riches of the goodness of God, and awakens that love which is the fulfilling of the law, and that repentance, and gratitude, and active obedience, which the goodness of God, thus manifested, could alone inspire.

VI. If the Bible contain a system of divine laws, revealed and administered with reference to the salvation of man ; then it is practicable to decide what are fundamental doctrines.

Those doctrines are fundamental which are essential to the influence of law as the means of moral government, and without which God does not ordinarily renew and sanctify the soul.

The following have been usually denominated fundamental doctrines.

The being of God ; the accountability of man ; a future state of reward and punishment without end ; and a particular providence taking cognizance of human conduct in reference to a future retribution. Are not these fundamental ? Could the laws of God have any proper influence without them ? Take away the lawgiver, or the accountability of the subject, or the cognizance of crimes by the Judge, or future eternal punishment, and what influence would the Scriptures have as a Code of Laws ?

To allege that the remorse and natural evil attendant upon sinning are the adequate and only punishment of transgression, is most absurd. Do the natural evil and remorse attendant upon the transgression of human laws

supersede the necessity of any other penalty? Is the impure desire suppressed, or intemperate thirst allayed, or covetousness dismayed, or the hand of violence arrested, by the appalling influence of remorse? It is always a sanction inadequate, which the frequency of crime diminishes, and the consummation of guilt annihilates.

The idea that gratitude will restrain without fear of punishment, where the confidence of pardon precedes sanctification, is at war with common sense. Try the experiment. Open your prison doors, and turn out your convicts to illustrate the reforming influence of gratitude, without coercion or fear of punishment. The idea that future discipline, for the good of the offender, constitutes the only future suffering, regards sin as a disease, instead of a crime, and hell as a merciful hospital, instead of a place of punishment. But how suffering in a prison with convicts old in sin shall work a reformation, no past analogy seems to show. Prisons have never been famed in human governments for their reforming influence.

The *eternity* of future punishment, considering the invisibility and imagined distance of the retribution, and the stupidity and madness of man, is indispensable. If the *certain* fearful looking-for of fiery indignation *without end*, exert an influence so feeble, to restrain from sin; the prospect of a *limited*, salutary discipline will have comparatively no influence. Nor is eternal punishment unjust or disproportionate to the crime. If the violation of the law in time, deserves punishment; it will no less deserve it, though the crime be perpetrated in another world; for probation and hope are not essential to free-agency or accountability, and the incorrigible obstinacy of the rebel will not cancel the obligation of the law. *Endless wickedness will deserve, and will experience endless punishment.* The deeds done in the body will determine the character, and shut out the hope of sanctifica-

tion. But rebellion will hold on its course unsubdued by suffering, and will be *the meritorious cause of eternal punishment*.

The above truths are essential to the moral influence of legislation generally. There are others which are no less essential to the Gospel, as a system of moral influence, for the restoration of man from sin to holiness. These are indicated by the peculiar ends to be obtained by the Gospel. If overt action and continuance in well-doing were all; simple reward and punishment might suffice. But man is a sinner; his heart is unholy; and new affections are demanded. Those truths, then, are fundamental, without which the specific, evangelical affections can have no being. To *fear*, the exhibition of danger is necessary: to *repentance*, the disclosure of guilt: to *humility*, of unworthiness: to *faith*, of guilt and helplessness, on the part of man, and divine sufficiency and excellence, on the part of the Saviour. There is a uniformity of action in the natural and moral world, from which the Most High does not depart, and which is the foundation of experimental knowledge, and teaches the adaptation of means to ends. Fire does not drown; and water does not burn; and fear is not excited by sentiments which exclude danger; nor repentance, by those which preclude guilt; nor affectionate confidence, by those which exclude dependence or the reality of excellence in the object.

To secure evangelical affections, the following truths are as essential, according to the nature of the human mind, as fire is essential to heat, or any natural cause to its appropriate effect; the doctrines of the Trinity, and the atonement, the entire unholiness of the human heart, the necessity of a moral change by the special agency of the Holy Spirit, and justification by the merits of Christ, through faith. The entire unholiness of the heart is necessary to beget just conceptions of guilt and danger; the

necessity of a moral change to extinguish self-righteous hopes, and occasion a sense of helplessness which shall render an Almighty Saviour necessary ; the doctrine of the Trinity, as disclosing a Saviour, able to save, and altogether lovely ; the doctrine of the atonement, to reconcile pardon with the moral influence of legislation ; and justification by faith instead of works, because justification by works cancels the penalty of law, blotting out past crimes by subsequent good deeds, giving the transgressor a license to sin with impunity to day, if he will obey tomorrow, provided his acts of obedience shall equal his acts of disobedience.

That these doctrines are fundamental, is evident from the violence with which they have always been assailed. The enemies of God know what most annoys them in his government ; and the points assailed clearly indicate what is most essential. The whole diversified assault has always been directed against one or another of the doctrines, which have been named in this discourse as fundamental ; and has had for its object to set aside either the precept or the sanction of Law, and reconcile transgression with impunity.

One denies the being of the Lawgiver : another discards the Statute Book as a forgery : a third subjects the Laws of Jehovah to the censorship of reason, and adds and expunges till he can believe without humility, obey without self-denial, and disobey without fear of punishment: a fourth saves himself the trouble of criticism, by a catholic belief of *all* the Bible contains, without the *presumption or fatigue* of deciding what the precise meaning is : a fifth pleads the *coercion* of the decrees of God, and denies accountability, and hopes for impunity in sin. Some however deem it most expedient to explain away the *precept* of the law. To love the Lord our God does not imply any *sensible affection*, any complacency or emo-

tion of the heart, but the rational religion of perception and intellectual admiration ; and by the *heart* is intended not the heart, but the head. Others assail, with critical acumen, the *penalty* of the law. Punishment does not mean punishment, but the greatest possible blessing which Almighty God in the riches of his grace can bestow, considering the omnipotence and perverseness of man's free-agency : and eternal punishment means a number of years, more or less, of most merciful torment, as the disease shall prove more or less obstinate.

In like manner, the attributes of God are regarded in the abstract, dissociated from every idea of legislation and administration, by reward or punishment. Goodness is good nature even to weakness ; justice is bestowing on men *all the good* they deserve, without inflicting any punishment ; and mercy is the indiscriminate pardon of those, whom it would be malignant and unjust to condemn. The goodness of God as a lawgiver, promoting the happiness of his subjects by holy laws and an efficient administration of rewards and punishments, is kept out of view. His character of Lawgiver is annihilated, and his glory as Moral Governor is shut out from the world, that man may sin without fear.

All representations of the character of man, at variance with the scripture account of his entire depravity, have for their object the evasion, in some way, of the precept or penalty of law. One does it by pleading his inability to obey the law of God ; and takes his refuge from punishment in the justice of God while he continues in sin. Another pleads not guilty in manner and form as the scriptures allege. He denies the necessary coincidence of holiness in the heart with overt deeds, to constitute obedience, and pleads his good actions in arrest of God's decision that "there is none that doeth good, no not one." He denies that the heart is desperately wicked. If it

were true of *Adam* a short space ; the promise of a Saviour made *his heart better*, and has made *all hearts better* : and, if not yet very good, they are so good as not to need a special change ; so good, that attention to the constituted forms of religion duly administered will, by God's blessing, make them good enough, without farther care or perception of change, as sun and rain cause vegetation and harvest, when the seed is sown while the husbandman sleeps.

No supreme and perceptible love to God is recognised as obligatory, no deep sense of guilt, no painful solicitude about futurity, no immediate repentance or faith including holiness, and no sin as being committed ; while repentance and faith are deferred for the slow operation of forms, in making the sinner better, by the unperceived grace of God. The Law with its high claims upon the heart, and the Gospel with its holy requisitions, are made to stand aloof ; while the sinner, without holiness, by dilatory effort, prepares himself to repent, or by lip service and hypocrisy, prevails on the Most High to give him repentance unto life. The whole law and Gospel are thrown aside, and the whole duty of man is epitomised in the short sentence, *Thou shalt sincerely use the means of grace as faithfully as thou art willing to use them ; and, by the grace of God through the merits of Christ and thine own well-doing, thou shalt be saved.*

In the same manner, are the terms of pardon divested of holiness to accommodate unholy hearts, reluctant to obey, and fearful of punishment.

Faith is intellectual assent to revealed truth, without holiness, and too often without good works ; or it is believing that one is pardoned when he is not, and *knows he is not*, in order that he may be pardoned. It is any thing but the affectionate confidence of the heart in the Saviour, and the unconditional surrendry of the soul to Him. The rapid river in its haste to the sea, is not more

violent to sweep away obstructions or evade them, than the heart of man to remove or evade the humbling demand of immediate love, repentance and faith, as the terms of pardon.

But who are those who most bitterly inveigh against these doctrines which we regard as fundamental? Is it the most serious, the most devout, temperate, chaste, and circumspect class of men. Is it, judging from their lives, according to the Bible, the righteous, or the wicked, the church of God, or the world. For the righteous, according to the Scriptures, love the truth, and the wicked are opposed to it.

Now if we find the most holy men, the most sedate, prayerful, and exemplary people, leaguings against these fundamental doctrines, grieving at their prevalence, and trembling at their effect in revivals of religion, and praying to God with tears to check their prevalence; we must abandon our confidence in these doctrines as the true system.

But if the Atheist, the Deist, the profligate, the votary of pleasure, and the sons of violence and lies, regard them with a common and almost instinctive aversion; then we must cleave to them as receiving from the world the distinctive evidence of their truth. They have always been charged with embodying blasphemy, and leading to licentiousness; and, if the charge be well founded, doubtless the blasphemers and impure have always been their advocates. But what is the fact? Are the irreligious and profane, the licentious, the worldly, and the vain, the advocates for the doctrines of total depravity, regeneration by special grace, justification by faith, and eternal punishment? With scarce an exception, they have been open-mouthed and bitter in their opposition, reviling both these doctrines and those who preach them. From age to age, they have been the song of the drunkard, and the

standing topic of profane cavil and vulgar abuse. If good men, through misapprehension, have sometimes seemed to be opposed to them, they have given evidence that the opposition was only a seeming one; while in reality their hearts were in sweet accordance with them. But there are, it must be confessed, some, whose moral conduct may not have been profligate, who have given unquestionable evidence that the feelings of their hearts, as to these doctrines, were in exact accordance with those of the blasphemer and the profligate. These conclusions concerning the doctrines which are fundamental, are however controverted; we therefore appeal to a tribunal more infallible than our own judgment.

Those doctrines are fundamental, then, without whose instrumentality God does not renew and sanctify the hearts of men.

That man is unholy and unfit for heaven, without sanctification, is certain. That God is the agent, and truth the means of sanctification, is equally manifest; and the fact that some men do experience a change in the affections, both as to their moral nature and object, is as certain as any fact can be made by testimony. The witnesses testify to their own consciousness of such a change. Of this, they are as competent judges as of any thing appertaining to their own experience. The fact alleged is, that once they loved the world more than God, and that from a given aera, more or less determinate, they have regarded the Lord their God with an interest and affection, wholly new in kind, and superior in degree, to their love for any other object. That they regard him with a good will, and complacency, and confidence, and gratitude, and joy, entirely unknown to them, until they became the subjects of this special change.

The *number* of the witnesses is overwhelming. To the testimony of the three thousand, renewed on the day



of Pentecost, may be added the accumulated testimony of every intervening age, to this day ; for there never was a time, even in the dark ages, when the doctrine of regeneration by the special agency of the Spirit was not confirmed, by the testimony of those who professed to have experienced this change.

The *capacity* of the witnesses for judging correctly allows nothing to be subtracted from the weight of their testimony, for it has not been the feeblers only, and children, nor the poor and the ignorant ; but *men*, aged, middle aged and young ; men of affluence, of refined manners, of strong powers of intellect, of cool judgment, of firm fibre and undaunted courage, of extended knowledge and cultivated taste, of antecedent moral and immoral habits, who have united their testimony, with multitudes of every other class of society, and with the poor Hottentot and Esquimaux, and have declared that with them, old things had passed away, and all things become new.

The *credibility* of the witnesses as persons of veracity, would not be questioned on any other subject. To this we may add, that most of them conducted, before the alleged change, as if they did not love supremely the Lord their God ; and afterwards, to their dying day, and in the hour of death, conducted in many respects, in a manner inexplicable upon any other supposition than the reality of the alleged change. It is surprising, that men as philosophers do not believe in the doctrine of regeneration, even though they had no confidence in the testimony of the Bible ; for no fact in natural philosophy, no phenomenon of mind is established by evidence more satisfactory in its nature, than that which establishes the reality of a change of heart. No fact was ever proved in a court of justice, by a thousandth part of the evidence, which concentrates the testimony of millions to the fact of the actual renovation of the heart.

But do not the professed subjects of this change oftentimes apostatize? Sometimes they do; but more than ninety in one hundred do not apostatize. If the *apostacy* of ten be allowed in evidence against the reality of the change, the *perseverance* of ten balances the unfavorable evidence, and leaves the unimpeached testimony of eighty competent witnesses in favour of the blessed reality of the change. Upon testimony thus circumstanced, what would be the decision in a court of justice?

But it is alleged by some, that they have experienced all that appertains to this change of heart, and know it to be vain. That they may have experienced fear and trembling, such as the faith of devils inspires; and that these fears may have been succeeded by composure and joy, such as the hope of the hypocrite affords; may be admitted. But "what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?" What is the blade without root that withereth, to that which beareth fruit; the plant, which our heavenly Father has planted, to that which he taketh away because it is unfruitful; the lamp without oil that goeth out, to that, which is replenished and shines with growing light to the perfect day? Is it incredible, that a heart, "deceitful above all things," should be deceived; or that a heart, "desperately wicked," should find no abiding pleasure in a religion, which it *professed*, but did not *feel*? "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for, if they had been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us." It is not a new thing to resist the Holy Ghost; nor an impossible, nor (we fear) a rare event, by stigmatizing the work of the Spirit, to commit a sin, which shall never be forgiven. May God grant that the lightness, with which some men treat their past convictions of sin, and fears of punishment, do not prove at last the too sure indications of that hardness of heart and blindness

of mind, to which, in his most tremendous displeasure, the blasphemed Spirit gives up the incorrigible sinner.

This moral change then, *an indubitable fact, and indispensable to salvation*, is, according to the Scriptures, accomplished by the power of God giving efficacy to *truth*." Men are begotten again by the *gospel*, born of incorruptible seed, which is the *word of God*, and sanctified by the truth. These blessed operations of the Spirit are experienced sometimes in solitary instances, like single drops of rain in a land of drought; and sometimes multitudes, almost coterminously, become the subject, first, of solicitude and conscious guilt, and afterwards of love, joy, and peace.

But it is also a matter of fact, and a tremendous fact it is, that, so far as these glorious displays of the renovating grace of God are accomplished by the instrumentality of preaching, they are exclusively confined to the exhibitions of these doctrines, which we have enumerated as fundamental. Where these are faithfully preached, the arm of the Lord is not *always* revealed in revivals of religion; though few ministers, in that case, spend their days without cheering interpositions of divine grace giving seals to their ministry. But where the doctrines of the Trinity, the entire unholiness of man, the necessity of regeneration by special grace, of the atonement, justification by faith, and future eternal punishment are not preached, or are denounced and ridiculed, there the phenomena of revivals of religion never exist, and solitary instances of regeneration are comparatively unknown; and where they do exist, they are regarded as the effect of delusion, or as proofs of a disordered intellect, rather than as indications of a merciful, divine interposition. The fact is unquestionable; and the statement of it is not invidious, because it is a subject of exultation on the part of those unhappy ministers, who discard the above doctrines, and whose people are the subjects of this melancholy exemption from

the convincing and renewing operations of the Holy Spirit. In such places, the light does not even shine into darkness ; but all is as the valley of the shadow of death. No jubilee trumpet is heard announcing a release from the bondage of corruption, and calling the slaves of sin into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Such places are not the hill of Zion, upon which descend the rain and the dew of heaven ; but they are the mountains of Gilboa, upon which there is no rain, neither any dew. They are the valley of vision, in which the bones are very many and very dry, and no voice is heard proclaiming, " O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord ;" and no prayer is made, " Come, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." No voice announces a spiritual resurrection ; and no influence from above begins it. All is silent as the grave, and motionless as death.

VII. If the Scriptures contain a system of divine Laws, then the doctrine of the entire depravity of man is not inconsistent with free-agency and accountability; for depravity is the voluntary transgression of the law ; and the law is, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ;" and entire depravity is the constant refusal to love, in this manner, the Lord our God. It implies, not that men's hearts have no kind sympathies, no social affections, or that these are sinful, or that their actions are all contrary to rule ; but only, that they have no holiness, no supreme love to God, and therefore, do not with the heart obey, but do, with the heart, voluntarily and constantly, disobey the law. The principle assumed in the objection is, that if men will with the heart obey the law of God in part, then they are free-agents, and blameable for not obeying perfectly. But if they violate the law wilfully and wholly, so as not to love at all, then they are not to blame. If a man regulates his temper according to the gospel one day, and the next indulges malignant disposi-

tions, he is a free-agent, and liable to punishment; but if he exercise no right affections, and every imagination of his heart be only evil, then the wrath of heaven must sleep, for the man has become *too wicked to be the subject of blame*. If a subject violate one half the laws of the land, he may be justly punished; but if he should press on and tread them all under foot, his accountability expires, and he may bid defiance to retribution.

VIII. The view we have taken of the Scriptures as containing a system of divine Laws, illustrates the obligation to believe correctly and cordially, the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, and the criminality of error on these subjects.

It is a favorite maxim of some, that men are not accountable for their opinions, with respect to the doctrines of revelation:—Because there is no specific command that this or that doctrine shall be believed:—Because they are so obscurely revealed that no blame can attach to misunderstanding them:—Because no one doctrine is absolutely indispensable to salvation:—Because the doctrines of the Bible are subjects of mere theoretical speculation, of no practical influence:—and, Because belief and disbelief are not voluntary, but the mechanical and unavoidable result of evidence, or want of evidence.

It is admitted, that there is no specific and formal command, that the doctrine by the Trinity, or total depravity, or regeneration of special grace, or justification by faith, or eternal future punishment, shall be believed; for these come under the head of motives or sanctions; and who ever heard of a special enactment requiring subjects to believe the declarations of a lawgiver, with respect to the sanctions of law? The obligation to understand and believe the doctrines of the Bible, is involved in the nature of the Bible as a book of law. The subjects of Jehovah are bound to understand the laws of his government, under

which they live, and to believe his declarations, without a special enactment, and a subjoined penalty. They are bound to understand the character of God, the great Object of religious affection, and Foundation of moral obligation, and to act with such a temper, and under the influence of such motives, as God has required. But a law is never understood, whose *precepts* only are recognised, and whose *sanctions* are unknown. The character of God is not correctly and adequately disclosed by the precepts only of his Law ; and the motives to obedience, and the principles of holy action are found no where but in the doctrines of revelation. If men, as accountable creatures, are bound to act as God commands ; they are bound to understand those doctrines, which disclose the principles and motives of action ; and this the Scriptures, in general terms, do command expressly and often. The command is reiterated in various forms *to know the truth*, a term comprehending the whole revealed system : *to love the truth*, not a part, but the whole truth, which is the Word of God : and *to obey the truth*, which is to believe what God has revealed, and to do what God has commanded, with the temper, and under the influence of the motives, which He has disclosed as principles of holy action.

To say, that the doctrines of the Bible are so obscurely revealed, as to supersede the possibility and the obligation of understanding them, is blasphemy. It is ascribing to Jehovah folly, or injustice, or both. It is annihilating the Bible, as a system of moral law ; for precepts, without intelligible sanctions, are not moral government. Government lies in the motives revealed ; and, if these cannot be understood, they are not revealed, and God does not administer a moral government except by the feeble impulse of the light of nature. And thus we land in infidelity.

The maxim, that no one doctrine of the Bible is abso-

lutely indispensable to salvation, and the inference, thence drawn, that truth is useless and error innocent, is a sophism. It is drawing general conclusions, from particular premises. For suppose, that no *one* doctrine subtracted from the system, *all the rest remaining* and being cordially believed, would exile the soul from heaven. What then? Does it follow, that the disbelief and rejection of *the whole system* would not be fatal? What if it be true, that no one kind of nutriment is absolutely indispensable to human life; does it thence follow, that all nutrition may be safely dispensed with? What if no one poison be so active, but that a very little may be received into the system consistently with life? Does it thence follow, that poisons are harmless, are nutritious, and may be safely employed as a substitute for bread? The fact is, that those, who discard the doctrine of the Trinity, discard usually every other fundamental doctrine. Their system is not merely different from, but opposite to that denominated orthodox; so that if one be true, the other is false; if one be sincere milk, the other is poison. Nor does it follow that, provided a *real christian* might, without believing some particular doctrine, *possibly* attain to heaven, he could therefore dispense with it without injury. *Much less* does it follow, that because a *christian* may not be absolutely destroyed, by some erroneous opinion, that therefore an *impenitent sinner* may safely adopt it. An error which may not suffice to *destroy* spiritual life in a *believer*, may be decisive to prevent the *commencement of it*, in the heart of an *impenitent sinner*. Thousands may die a death eternal, by the influence of an error, under the operation of which, a *christian* may possibly drag out a meager spiritual existence.

The opinion, that the doctrines of revelation are matters of mere speculation, of trivial practical influence, is a position at variance with the principles of law, with the

constitution of the human mind, and with universal fact. It is not true of the principles of natural science, that they are mere matters of speculation, and of no practical influence on man. It is the practical influence of the sciences, which constitutes their utility. They exert a powerful influence, in the formation of the human character, and the regulation of human conduct. The whole course of the daily business of the world moves on by the illumination and potent energy of the sciences.

Much less is it a fact, that truth, contained in moral laws, has no influence. It is here, that the kind of truth is precisely that, which is most adapted to move free agents, and comes to the understanding, and conscience, and heart, with a designed concentration of influence, surpassing all other influence but that of direct physical impulse. The whole motive in legislation lies in the sanctions of law; and these have their influence through the medium of opinion. *The motive to obedience is, as the opinion concerning it is.* If that be correct, the true motive is presented to the mind; if incorrect, the intended motive is thrust aside, and another substituted. To say, that the doctrines of the Bible embodying and presenting to the mind of man that moral influence, by which God governs him as a free agent, and an accountable creature, are mere abstract speculations, of no moral influence or practical effect; is charging God with incompetency, in legislation; and disrobing him of his character of Moral Governor; and destroying the accountability of man; and blotting out the light of the glory of God, as it would otherwise be displayed in his works of providence and grace. But upon what authority is it alleged, that the doctrines of the Bible have no practical influence? Does opinion in human governments, concerning the lawgiver and the sanctions of law, exert no influence upon the character and conduct of man? Why then should the laws and sanc-



tions of the government of Jehovah exert no influence, so that believing or not believing its fundamental truths shall have no effect? Doctrines in religion do exert a powerful influence. Have the doctrines of the Alcoran proved themselves idle theories, of no practical influence; or the doctrines of Paganism; or the doctrines of Popery? Have the doctrines of Calvin and Arminius no effect, or precisely the same effect? Why then oppose the one and eulogize the other, when both are equally good, or equally useless?

No truth in legislation, human or divine, is merely speculative; however it may appear such. What can be apparently more exclusively speculative than the opinion of the Gnostics, *that all moral impurity lies in matter?* But from this opinion, as a fountain, flowed the denial of the human nature and death of Christ, of the resurrection of the body, the celibacy of the clergy, the doctrine of penance and purgatory, and the host of cruelties and fooleries, which have taxed and tormented the world. Travel over benighted Asia, and witness the operation of the same opinion in the ablutions of the Ganges, and the self-inflicted torture of devotees to subdue the sin, which is in matter, and render the spirit pure and acceptable to the gods.

That Mahomet is the true prophet is a speculative opinion; but it has carried fire and sword in its course, and ruled the nations with a rod of iron, and dashed them in pieces as a potter's vessel.

That the Pope is the successor of Peter, and universal and infallible bishop, is a matter of mere opinion; but it is an opinion, which has immured the nations of Europe in a dungeon, and bound them in chains, and almost extinguished the human intellect.

They are mere opinions, that there is no God; that the end sanctions the means; and that death is an eternal

sleep : but fire, and blood, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, have attended their march over desolated Europe. Considering man as an animal, the atheists of the French revolution destroyed his life with as little ceremony, as they would crush an insect. The fact is, that among moral agents, opinions respecting law and the sanctions of law, are principles of action ; and no great aberration from rectitude in practice can be named, with respect to public bodies or individuals, which is not caused or justified by some false opinion. The opinion, that belief and disbelief are mechanical, to the exclusion of all influence of the heart, of interest, passion, and prejudice, is the consummation of folly.—Evidence may be so powerful, as to render incredulity impossible ; and so feeble, as to render belief impossible. But an entire temperate zone lies between these two extremes, in which inclination and aversion, passion and prejudice, exert as decisive an influence upon the understanding, as evidence itself. If not, whence the maxim, that no man may judge in his own cause ? Is it because all men are dishonest ? or is it because interest is known to pervert the judgment even of honest men ? Whence all the unmeaning talk about sincerity, and prejudice, and candour ? Who ever heard of a sincere, unprejudiced, candid pair of balances ? If the mind decides by scruples and grains of evidence, as the scales are balanced by weights ; why may not the honest judge decide in his own cause ? Can interest vary the weights in the balance ? How can he help himself without perjury, though the weight of evidence should be against his interest ? The fact is notorious, that inclination possesses a powerful influence over the judgment. Examination may be neglected on one side, and pushed on the other. The evidence in favour of our choice may be dwelt upon, and the eye be turned away from that which would prove an unpleasant fact.

It is practicable to suspend a decision ; to resist conviction ; to pervert arguments, which prove unwelcome truths ; and even to forget them ; and to treasure up for use those, which favour conclusions which we love.

The demonstrations of Euclid, if their result had been the doctrine of the Trinity, the total depravity of man, the necessity of regeneration, and future eternal punishments, would have produced as much diversity of opinion, and brought upon his positions as much contempt, and upon his book as much critical violence, as has been experienced by the Bible.

Erroneous opinions are criminal, because they falsify the divine character, and destroy the moral influence of the divine law ; because they are always voluntary, the result of criminal negligence to obtain correct knowledge, or of a criminal resistance of evidence, or perversion of the understanding through the depravity of the heart ; and because the belief of error is always associated with moral and criminal affections. It is never a mere act of the understanding ; the *heart* decides, and is never neutral. If a truth be rejected, it is also *hated* ; if an error be embraced, it is also *loved*. It is because men have no *pleasure* in the truth, but have *pleasure* in unrighteousness, that they are given over to believe a lie, and are punished for believing it, with everlasting destruction. The propagation of error is criminal, of course, because it is destructive to the souls of men, annihilating the influence of the divine moral government, and the means by which God is accustomed to renew the soul, and without which he does not ordinarily exert his sanctifying power.

IX. In the view of what has been said, how momentous is the responsibility of ministers of the gospel ; and how aggravated the destruction of those, who keep back the truth, or inculcate falsehood. It is, as if a man, not content with his own destruction by famine, should extend

the desolation, by withholding nutrition from all around him ; or not content with poisoning himself, should cast poison into all the fountains, putting in motion around him the waters of death. If there be a place in the world of despair, of tenfold darkness, where the wrath of the Almighty glows with augmented fury, and whence, through eternity, are heard the loudest wailings, ascending with the smoke of their torment :—in that place I shall expect to dwell, and there, my brethren, to lift up my cry with yours, should we believe lies, and propagate deceits, and avert from our people the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit.—And if there be a class of men, upon whom the fiercest malignity of the damned will be turned, and upon whose heads universal imprecations will mingle with the wrath of the Lamb, it will doubtless, my brethren, be ourselves ; if, blind guides, we lead to perdition our deluded hearers.

The present occasion requires that a more particular application of this discourse be made to the Pastor Elect, and to the Missionaries, who are about to be ordained to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles.

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#### ADDRESS TO THE PASTOR ELECT.

*My dear Brother,*

With the consequences of unfaithfulness in view, you are about to take the pastoral care of this church and congregation. Their salvation, according to the laws of the human mind, and the constituted mode of divine operation, is to be promoted or hindered by the instructions which you give, and the pastoral duties, which you perform or neglect. But be not dismayed. The reward of fidelity is

as glorious, as the punishment of treachery is dreadful ; and with the bible in your hand, and Jesus Christ with you always, you are thoroughly furnished, and can do all things. Your duty is plain. It is simply to explain and enforce the laws of the divine moral government, contained in the bible. Receive then, my Brother, that holy book, with implicit confidence, as including your commission and all you have to say.—Read it daily as a part of your devotion, and study it as a part of your profession.—But remember that yours is the office of an expositor of that divine book, and not of a legislator to revise and modify its sacred pages. Be not wise in your own conceit ; and dare not to be wise above what is written. Bring to your aid, for the exposition of the Scriptures, the resources of human learning ; but bring, with these, a heart humbled with a sense of its own deceitfulness and depravity, and filled with strong desires and groanings that cannot be uttered, for the illumination and guidance of the Spirit ; remembering that ignorance and unsanctified knowledge, alike puff up, and subject to condemnation.

That you may understand the Scriptures, examine them for yourself. Receive no opinions upon trust ; and allow no man to dictate what you shall believe. But do not use this your liberty as a cloak for rejecting the truth, and adopting licentious opinions. Dare to think for yourself ; and what you think, *dare to preach* ; knowing that divine wisdom has revealed no superfluous truths, and that all Scripture is profitable.

Dare to think for yourself ; but do not imagine that independence can compensate for indolence, or ignorance, or heresy, or hatred of the truth ; or that, to be independent, you must of course despise antiquity, and differ from the vast majority of the wise, and great, and good.

Dare to think for yourself. Let no creed bind you, because it is reputed orthodox, until you perceive its

agreement with the Scriptures. Then, though every where spoken against, adopt it; remembering that the bible may be epitomized, and its meaning be retained, and your reverence for creeds be only reverence for the bible.

Dare to think for yourself; and do not imagine, that the faithful avowal of truths, to which the hearts of men are opposed, demands less courage, than the promulgation of errors grateful to the feelings of human depravity.

Dare to think for yourself; but give to others the same liberty; and never raise the pusillanimous cry of intolerance, because others will not think their own opinions to be of as little consequence as you may think yours.

Explain to your people the moral law, as demanding love to God with all the heart; and their entire depravity, as destitute of this holy love; and their danger, as exposed justly to eternal punishment. Explain to them the nature of repentance, as the sorrow of holy love for sin; and the nature of faith, as the confidence of holy love in the Saviour. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, and the love of Christ, set before them the sorer punishment, of which he shall be thought worthy, who shall tread under foot the Son of God. When you have explained to your people the great duties of holy love, repentance for sin, and faith in the Redeemer; and have set before them the motives, which God has revealed; urge them with all possible importunity to an immediate compliance. Address them as free agents, without excuse for the least deviation from the perfect law of God, or for delay of repentance and faith, one moment. By the terrors of the Lord exhort, and by the mercies of God, intreat them instantly to be reconciled to God. Say unto them with reiterated importunity—"Thus saith the Lord, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear;" and wash

your hands of their blood ; and throw on them the tremendous responsibility of self destruction, if they will die.

Omit no excuse for impenitence, and no plea in mitigation of guilt :—no decree of God as having any influence to constrain them to sin, or render immediate repentance impossible : no doctrine of election or reprobation, as excluding them from heaven against their wills, and driving them reluctantly to hell : no doctrine of total depravity, as destroying free-agency, and rendering transgression involuntary and unavoidable ; no doctrine of regeneration by the special agency of the Holy Spirit, as implying any inability in the sinner to love, and repent, and believe, which does not consist wholly in his refusal to obey the Most High. The Searcher of hearts, perceives in these doctrines, no reason for modifying his demands of perfect, immediate, and constant obedience ; or for mitigating in any degree the penalty of disobedience ; or for relaxing the peremptoriness of command, or the earnestness of intreaty.

But, my Brother, whatever may be your attainments in human science, your might in the Scriptures, your popularity as a preacher, or your estimation in the affections of your people ; let it all be counted less, in comparison with their actual conversion to God. Set your heart upon the great blessing of a revival of religion. Desire it speedily and constantly. Pray for it without ceasing, and stir up the members of your Church to concentrate, on this point, the whole importunity of the prayer of faith. And live, and preach, and pray, and act, in such a manner, as shall lay the best foundation to expect the blessing.

## ADDRESS TO THE MISSIONARIES.

*My beloved Brethren,*

If the Bible contains the Laws of the Most High God, for the restoration of man from sin to holiness ; then it is not a superfluous labour to translate the scriptures into the various languages of the nations, nor a superfluous charity to send Missionaries to preach the gospel to the Heathen.

There are not a few, who seem to regard the Heathen as not accountable for their depravity of heart, or criminal for their idolatry, and scarcely for their immoralities ; or as subjected to inconvenience by their superstitions. They are the guileless children of our common father, all affectionately striving to please him, in ways, different indeed from those of christian worship, but equally sincere, and about equally well pleasing to God, and equally benign in their influence to make men happy on earth, and to prepare them for heaven. What need then of all this sympathy for the Heathen, and of so much exertion and expense to relieve those, whose circumstances, for time and eternity, are as eligible as ours ? Why should their reverence for the religion of their ancestors be weakened, and their “ elegant mythology ” be stigmatized, and the gospel be thrust into its place ? Is not God merciful ? Let HIM then take care of the Heathen.\*

\* “ I would not lift a finger, said an infidel philosopher, to convert to christianity the whole Chinese empire.” This in him was consistent. But what shall be thought of those who profess to be Christians, who will not lift a finger in the great effort now making to evangelize the world ?



But whence are derived these conceptions of the moral character and state of the Heathen? Not from the bible. They are there all recognized as depraved; all under condemnation for their depravity of heart, and abominable deeds; all condemned for their idolatry, as the consummation both of folly and guilt, the result not of filial affection for God, but of enmity against him, and of a reprobate mind, to which God has given them up, because they did not like to retain him in their knowledge. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them, and they are represented as needing the Saviour, the bible, the sabbath, and the preaching of the gospel, for the same purpose, and in the same degree that we need them. If the gospel would be no blessing to them, it is none to us. If their superstitions are as salutary to them in their moral influence, as the gospel would be; they would be as great a blessing to us, as the Gospel is.

Make the exchange then, ye who profess such charity and philanthropy towards the heathen. Give them your bibles, and pastors, and sabbaths, and receive their idol gods, and brahmins, and religious rites. Demolish the temples of Jehovah; and rear up to roll through your streets the car of Juggernaut, "besmeared with blood of human sacrifice," and covered with emblems of pollution. Put out the Sun of Righteousness, and bring back the darkness visible. Kindle up the fires, that shall consume annually, in a circumference of thirty miles, two hundred and seventy five widows on the dead bodies of their husbands, and leave behind thousands of children, doubly orphans. Welcome to your shores the religion, which shall teach your children, when you are sick, to lay you down by the cold river side to die; and when their mothers shall shrink from the glowing flame, with their own hands to thrust them in. Welcome to your

hearts a religion, which shall teach you to entice your smiling children to the waves, and plunge them in, to attract by their cries the sympathy of strangers, or to perish and become the food of alligators. Welcome to your hearts a religion, which, if sin shall annoy, and the fear of punishment invade, will send you to drink of the waters that lave your shores, and wash in their flood, as your most effectual remedy. Fill your houses with Indian gods, of brass, and wood, and stone; and blow the trumpet of jubilee at your emancipation from the Gospel; and shout before your idols, "These be thy gods, O Israel!"

O, what superfluous benevolence has the Father manifested in giving his Son to die for those, whom the blood of bulls and of goats might have saved as well, as the blood of Jesus. What mere enthusiasm has actuated prophets and apostles, in their efforts to transmit to other ages a book so useless, as the Bible, and institutions no better than the horrid rites of pagan worship. When Jesus gave to the inspired band their high commission, "Go ye out into all the earth, and preach the Gospel to every creature;" why did they not perceive the mistaken zeal of their master, and announce, by anticipation, the discovery of later days, that the Heathen are holy enough without the Bible and the foolishness of preaching, and save ages of toil, and rivers of blood. But the Heathen are not holy. Read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and behold a portrait drawn by the pen of inspiration. "Filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." This is the result of that heathen mythology,

so "elegant;" and these are those children of our common Father, so sincere in their efforts to please him, and so pure, as not to need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Read the account of BUCHANAN, and you will perceive that the drawing is still to the life. No pollution is washed away; no stain of blood effaced; and no ray of light has fallen upon the canvass to alleviate the gloom. Read your bible, and you will perceive that no change for the better is ever to be expected, but from the diffusion of the bible, and the preaching of the Gospel.

*My dear Brethren*, the Heathen are neither holy nor happy.—They are depraved, and must be born again.—They are ignorant, and must be instructed.—They are profligate, and must be reclaimed.—They are debased by their superstitions, and must be raised.—They are tortured by vain fears and useless penances, and must be relieved.—The stern hearted god of this world rules them with an excruciating despotism; and their groans, disregarded for ages, have at length reached the heavens; and the voice of the Almighty has come down from above, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and you, brethren, have answered, "*Here are we, send us.*" God has accepted your offer; and you are this day to be set apart, to carry the Bible and to preach the Gospel, to the Heathen. It is a great, but it is also a glorious work; and you are not alone. God is with you:—Jesus Christ is with you:—the Holy Spirit is with you:—the hearts of all the pious are with you:—our substance, we pledge for your support; and our prayers, day and night, for your protection, and comfort, and for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the heathen, to whom you shall preach the gospel.

May the prayer-hearing God bear you in safety across the deep; open before you in Heathen lands an effectual door; make you the blessed instruments of raising, to the

fellowship of angels and justified spirits, thousands, who otherwise had died in their sins, and been wretched and miserable forever; and, after a long life, bestow upon you in heaven "joy unspeakable and full of glory."



## CHARGE TO MR. DWIGHT.

BY REV. SAMUEL SPRING, D.D.

WHEN Christ, the Prince of Peace, was born, the angels, who were his ministering spirits, proclaimed his birth to the shepherds in this seraphic strain; "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men." In the view, then, of the example of sinless angels, who need no Saviour, but yet take a lively interest in the salvation of the sinful children of men, shall not we, while assembled on this consecrating occasion, rejoice with those pure, disinterested spirits? For how shall sinners hear without a preacher? and how shall ministers preach to their perishing fellow mortals, except they be sent? Let us, then, at this solemn moment bow with reverence and gratitude before Christ, who has by his bitter death made an atonement for sin, who has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, leading captivity captive. For he now sits on the right hand of God the Father, dispensing gifts to men according to their necessity. He has blessed the human race with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the perfection of saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the church, till he shall return in majesty and glory to judge the world in righteousness and reward men according to their works.

With a view therefore to this benevolent appointment of our Saviour, and to the practice of the apostles, let us now give our brother the gospel charge or exhortation.

Reverend and dear Brother, as this branch of the exercises of the day devolves by appointment on me, you will lend an obedient ear to the following gospel instructions. The council having obtained satisfactory evidence of your natural, acquired, and gracious qualifications for the gospel ministry, have ordained you the Bishop of the church and people, who usually assemble

in this house, dedicated to public religious worship. *Here you are stationed.*

By the solemn act of consecration, you are authorized to preach the gospel of Christ in season, and out of season, and to administer the special ordinances, both in this and other places, where you shall be regularly called in the course of providence to officiate in Christ's name. The authority, which we exercise as the ministers of Christ, and the humble successors of the apostles, in ordaining you a minister of the gospel, we commit to you in the name of Christ, that you may assist in the ordination of faithful men to preach the unsearchable riches of his grace to saints and sinners. In the name, therefore, of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has charged us by his ministers to be faithful, we also charge you to be a faithful, discriminating teacher. The moral difference between the precious and the vile, notwithstanding their external resemblance of each other in some respects, you must impartially and judiciously make; for it will be made in the great day of decision by the Searcher of hearts. Let then the sacred volume and the inspired example of instruction be your directory in all instances. As the inspired teachers have treated the character of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so you will treat it. In their treatment of the heart of man in his natural, and gracious state, you will imitate them with strict conscientiousness and integrity. The total difference between that self love, which is common to all sinners, and is the substance of iniquity; and that love which every renewed person possesses towards God, his own soul and the souls of others, you will most carefully and accurately describe. Otherwise, your preaching will be very deficient. For the deceitfulness of the human heart is busily employed in calling evil good, and in putting darkness for light. Believe me, my young friend, the intelligible description of the radical difference between self love and holy love, or between holiness and sin, is one of the prominent features of faithful preaching. The gospel trumpet must not give an uncertain sound. To instruct your audience that sin consists in violating God's commands, and that holiness consists in obedience to them is not sufficient. This they all know and confess. But this is not that peculiar instruction which they generally need. They must be repeatedly informed what the object of that affection or desire is, which is the violation of God's command; and on the other hand, what that desire or affection is which is obedience to his command. By the moral object of man his moral character is ascertained. If we are ignorant of his object, we are of his character.

Beloved Brother, this ordaining council can testify from experience that the duties of your office, amid many temptations,

are numerous and pressing, and that your responsibility to Christ and the souls of men is ineffably great. But be not discouraged. The God of the prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, is your God. And as he has this day called you into his service, he graciously says to you: Fear not; lo I am with you. Abide in me, and I will abide in you. Forsake not me, and I will not forsake you. My grace is sufficient for you: it is made perfect in weakness. We hope then, you will early adopt and pursue that course of pastoral life, which will render the yoke of Christ easy and his burden light; and your office pleasant and delightful. Uniformly wait on God in your closet for grace to meet your flock in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. If you are a real child of God, according to your own hope and ours, you will find by happy experience, that the prayerful closet and the faithful pulpit are inseparably connected. The praying, devout minister in his study and family, is the affectionate and successful minister in the temple of the Lord; but he, who is cold and formal at home, will be cold and formal also in the sanctuary before the public assembly. The faithful and successful minister of the gospel not only instructs his people by his well digested discourses one day in the week; but every day in the week by his holy and exemplary life. Wherever they see him, they see Christ's minister, and their exemplar. The inspired volume is the source from which you will derive every lesson of instruction for your people. From this you will present comfort to the trembling Christian, who is destitute of evidence that he is the child of God. From this fountain of knowledge you will present necessary directions to those, who appear to be strong in the faith. From this too, you will awaken the careless sinner to a view of his danger; and point the convinced sinner to the only ground of hope.

Let families of affliction, and the chambers of the sick and dying have ample evidence of your pastoral love. The faithful pastor is intimately acquainted with the subjects of adversity, and they with him.

You will visit your people in prosperity and rejoice with them: but visit them no more in prosperity than shall comport with the imperious demand of your study. The beaten oil which you carry from week to week into the sanctuary, will always be a sufficient reason for passing by unnecessary visits. All judicious parishioners will prefer instructive sermons to polite conversation.

The rising generation have a high demand on the nurturing and instructive attention of their minister; and this class of your charge you will not neglect. They are young trees in your nursery; from which you expect seasonable fruit. You



will attend to them with much pleasure, and expectation of success.

Your pleasing manner of teaching hearers, who dislike the plain and pungent truths you deliver, must induce them to attend your ministry. Let not only your firmness, but your *moderation* and *discretion* be known unto all men. He, who endured the contradiction of sinners, has taught his ministers in what manner to treat opposers. Meet them with patience and kindness. Opposition is weak before christian love and tenderness.

Relative to ministerial intercourse, you will cultivate christian intimacy with those who harmonize with you in sentiment. The exchange of pulpit services by ministers, who agree in the cardinal doctrines of the gospel is, if not too often repeated, profitable both to themselves and their people. For by this means *they* have more opportunity for study, and their people the advantage of different gifts. The proper exchange of pulpits adds influence to ministers, nerves to the church, and honor to Christ, who teaches us to be of one accord, of one mind, and to live in peace.

In view of the solemn and interesting covenant relation entered into this day by you and the church and people of Park Street, we cannot but remind you, that we expect you will remain connected till death. We expect you will prove a faithful pastor, and that the people will support you honorably in the discharge of your office. We do not expect to hear within a few years, that you complain for the want of comfortable support; nor that the people complain of your not proving the man they expected at the time of ordination. But we expect to hear of increasing affection and advantage between you and your flock.

We shall close the exhortation by a few citations from scripture adapted to the occasion; "Watch thou in all things. Endure affliction; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry." Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Lord it not over God's heritage. Feed the flock of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseer, with milk and with meat as they are able to bear. Let no man despise thy youth. But let all men know that you have been with Jesus, that you have imbibed his spirit, that you understand his doctrines, and that you preach them according to his direction in a discriminating, faithful manner.

While, dear friend, we present these instructions, which are divine, and paramount to all human advice; we remember our own manifold defects in the pastoral office, and hope you will by the grace of God, excel us all. We also remember that Paul may

plant and Apollos water, but that God giveth the increase. Put your trust then in God, and refer the event of your ministry to him, whether you prove a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. And while we call upon you to remember that you must soon be placed before the tribunal of God, to render an account of your stewardship, we remember that we must stand by your side, approved or condemned. Let us all then be diligent and faithful stewards, that we may receive the approbation of our Lord and Judge.

Finally, to God the Saviour, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, we commend you and your flock, praying that you may be a blessing to them and they to you; that you may often meet together with christian love and delight in this house of prayer, *and here* prepare to meet in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Thus may you have them as the seals of your ministry, and your crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. AMEN.

**RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP TO  
MR. DWIGHT.**

BY REV. JOSHUA HUNTINGTON.

**MY DEAR BROTHER,**

IN accordance with the usage of our churches, founded, as we believe, upon apostolic authority and precedent, you have now been inducted into the office of a christian bishop. To the emotions of your mind on this occasion we are not insensible. The solemn and interesting services in which we have been engaged, bear us back with lively recollections to the time, when the oversight of the flocks with which we are respectively entrusted was given us in the Lord. Then, when we were ready to sink under the weight of the charge, which we had tremblingly assumed, and the consciousness of our responsibility to him, to whom it must one day be rendered up, nothing, save the promise of Divine sufficiency, so allayed the anxiety, and strengthened the purpose of our hearts, as the plighted sympathy, affection, and aid, of our fathers and brethren in the ministry.

Presuming, dear sir, that in this, no less than in other respects, "as face answereth to face in a glass, so the heart of man to man," I rise with pleasure, to execute the office which has been assigned me by the Council, an office, which was originally performed by James, Cephas, and John, towards Paul and Barnabas, who were thus cordially received by their brethren of the circumcision, as coadjutors with them in the work of the Lord.

Take this *right hand* then, my brother, and take it, not as mine only, but, as that of this whole council, whose office I am deputed to perform, whose feelings to express. Take it as the testimony of our confidence in your christian character, and ministerial gifts; and as the symbol of that sacred harmony, communion, and love, which should ever subsist between us, as "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God." By this simple, but

significant rite, we acknowledge you as a minister of Jesus Christ, regularly consecrated to the duties, and fully entitled to the honours and privileges of our holy vocation; we welcome you into this part of the vineyard, believing that we have added to our number one who will be a helper of our joy; and we pledge to you, so long as your present views and character continue, our affection, encouragement, and support; not doubting your readiness to reciprocate, as opportunity may present, or occasion require, every office of brotherly kindness and love.

Once more, my brother, take this *right hand*, as the token of my personal friendship and esteem. Although the distance at which Providence has placed us from each other, since our entrance upon the stage of action, has rendered our intercourse small, and our acquaintance consequently slight, the relation which you sustained, which you still sustain to one, whom I can never cease to remember with veneration, gratitude, and love, gives you no ordinary place in my heart. I say the relation which you *still* sustain; for he, whom you had the honour and privilege to denominate father, "is not dead, but sleepeth." Nay, *he* does not sleep. His material part, indeed, is at rest in the tomb, and will continue there to rest, till the reviving voice of him who watches the slumbering ashes of the saints shall bid it rise. But his soul, his thinking, feeling, acting nature, still lives, in an infinitely purer, higher, nobler state of existence than the present. Ah! were "the spirits of the just made perfect" permitted to revisit our world, and bear a part in its concerns, what an interest would your departed parent take in the transactions of this day. And may we not indulge the fond, the animating belief, that he is actually here? that he is now hovering, as it were, around these altars; and participating in the felicitations of an event, than which, nothing, in the days of his flesh, could have given him greater satisfaction? As neither reason nor revelation forbids, we will cherish the pleasing, though it may be, illusive thought; and it shall compensate in a measure for the loss which his removal has occasioned. But I forbear to harrow up your feelings and mine, by reflections, which impart at best, but a mournful pleasure; and return from this partial digression, after breathing the wish, that the mantle of Elijah, with a double portion of his spirit, may fall and rest upon Elisha.

Brethren of this christian society, accept our salutations. We are not called here to day, to repair the ravages of death—to spread laurel upon the altars which have been recently hung with cypress. He, who lately went in and out before you, still lives; and lives to fulfil his ministry, with unwasted energy, and aug-

mented success, in another sphere. He has not forgotten you in your destitute state ; but rejoices, we doubt not, with us, in the auspices of this day—that “ the repairer of breaches ”—the “ great Shepherd and Bishop of souls,” ever mindful of his promise, has at length answered your prayers ; and given you, as we hope, “ a pastor after his own heart ”—one whose wish, and endeavour it will be, “ to heal that which is sick, to seek that which is lost, to bind up that which is broken, to bring again that which is driven away, and to feed and nourish all with knowledge and with understanding.” Receive him as such, we beseech you,—even as an ascension gift of the Lord Jesus Christ ; “ and esteem him very highly in love for his works’ sake.” Be candid towards him in your judgment, and moderate in your claims. Seek the guidance of that “ wisdom which is pure and peaceable ”—the exercise of that “ charity, which suffereth long and is kind.” Let it be your study, as we trust it will be his, that the connexion, which has now been formed between you, may be mutually beneficial and joyous—a connexion, which death itself will be unable to dissolve—a connexion, which you and your children will have reason to remember with pleasure, and celebrate with praise on the Mount Zion above. Encourage him to fidelity and holy fervour, in the execution of his sacred functions, by your attachment to the truth ; and your enlightened, steady, persevering zeal, for the worship, order, and discipline of God’s house. Our “ heart’s desire and prayer to God is, that ” your pastor may come to you from time to time, “ in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace ; ” and that you may attend upon his ministry, with hearts prepared by reading, meditation, and prayer, for the reception of his message. Though he come to you with the reasoning of Paul, and the eloquence of Apollos, he will come to you in vain, unless attended with the convincing, and subduing agency of the Holy Ghost. “ Strive together then in your prayers to God ” both for him, and yourselves—for him, that he may rightly divide, and for yourselves, that you may meekly receive, “ the grafted word which is able to save your souls.”

“ And now, dear brethren, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

## CHARGE TO THE MISSIONARIES.

BY REV. JEDIDIAH MORSE, D.D.

WE are here, fellow Christians, before God, angels and men, witnessing transactions of unusual interest—transactions, which we believe will have an extensive and lasting influence on the best welfare of man; which we trust are giving joy to angels, and are approved by God.

We have seen this young brother, endeared by many tender considerations, ordained to the good work of the ministry, to take the oversight of this large and beloved flock of Christ, who have been for so long a time in circumstances of peculiar peril, as sheep without a shepherd. This church and congregation will accept our congratulations on this auspicious event. Our heart's desire and prayer is, that God would set his seal to the sacred connexion, which now subsists between you and your pastor, and render it reciprocally happy, useful, and lasting. May the mantle of the father—precious is his memory—descend and rest upon the son.

Behold here another interesting spectacle. Five young men, having honourably completed a course of education, and being qualified, we trust, by the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, offer themselves to the service of the Lord, to occupy various and distant stations in heathen lands.

My dear brethren, By prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, you have been set apart to the work of the ministry, especially, to the peculiarly sacred office of Missionaries to the Heathen. Some of you are destined to labor among

the millions in Asia, and some among the Indian tribes in our own country. By the appointment of the ecclesiastical council, it has become my duty, to give you **THE CHARGE**.

Such is the nature of your office; so distant is to be the scene of your labors; so different will be your duties, from those of ordinary ministers of the gospel, that much must, of necessity, be left to your discretion, to be learned from your brethren, who are already on the ground. In Christian countries ministers have the care of churches and societies regularly organized and instructed in the oracles of God. They have but to enter into the labors of their predecessors. You are to go forth into uncultivated fields, into "the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty;" on which the beams of the Sun of Righteousness are only beginning to shine. You have of course peculiar ministerial duties to fulfil. There are, indeed, certain qualifications and duties common to ministers in christian lands and to missionaries among the heathen. These were distinctly and ably exhibited in the charge delivered to our brother. Receive that part of the charge as addressed to you. To the *peculiarities* in the office of a christian missionary, to your *appropriate* duties, I would direct your attention.

The heathen in Asia, to whom some of you are to be sent, resemble the heathen to whom the Apostles, the first missionaries of the cross, preached the gospel. As among the ancient heathen, there were men of wealth and learning; as they had written languages, and in these languages many books composed and published: so it is now with the heathen of India, and other parts of Asia. Learning has indeed declined among the Eastern nations since the age of the apostles; yet the remains of it still exist in their books, and among the priests, the class of men with whom learning is deposited. The apostles labored among idolaters. It is supposed by Sir William Jones, that the same gods, under different names, are now worshipped by the Hindoos, as were worshipped in the apostles' days, in Greece and Rome. If so, it is correct to infer, that their *manner* of worshipping also is essentially the same. Of the present race it may be said, as it was said of the ancient, by an inspired apostle, "When they know God, they glorify him not as God, neither are thankful, but have become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they have become fools: And have changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things." In the apostles then, you have an example for your imitation; a light to guide you in the path of your duty. Study then, their

history, and writings; observe their manner of preaching; mark their whole character and conduct; how holily and unblameably they lived; how meekly and how faithfully they labored; with what fortitude they suffered, and how readily and triumphantly they died in the service of Christ. "Go ye, my dear brethren, and do likewise."

Some of you are to be Missionaries to Indian tribes in our own country. These heathen have another character, and your duties of course will be different. They live a wandering life, which generates habits peculiarly unfavorable to the spirit and institutions of the gospel. The heathenism of our American Indians is less informed, and neither so gross, nor so wicked, as that of the Indians of the East. The Asiatics can themselves read the scriptures, having them translated into their own written languages; and you have but to learn their language in order to qualify you to preach to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. But the Indians of America have no written language, and in their unwritten language, no words to express a great part of the most important truths of the Bible. To express these truths, new words must be invented; and hence a translation of the scriptures into the Indian languages would be a Herculean labor; and after it were finished, it could not be read by those who speak the language, till they were taught, as our children are taught, to read it. But there is another objection more important still. The number of dialects spoken among the different tribes of American Indians is immense. It probably amounts to several hundred. The individuals, therefore, composing these continually diminishing tribes, who would be benefitted by any single translation, would be few; and if translations were attempted in all the different dialects, the difficulties which have been mentioned, would be multiplied an hundred fold. From these considerations, it is evident, that the advantages of translations into the Indian languages would be small, and the labor wholly disproportionate to their value.

By how few has Eliot's Bible ever been read! It is indeed a monument of the patient industry and piety of this apostle of the Indians; but there has not probably for a century, been an individual, even among the Indians, that could read it. No, my brethren, you are not to be employed in translating the scriptures, nor, to any great extent, in the ungrateful labor of learning the barbarous and barren languages of the Indian tribes. You are to be engaged in the more pleasant employment of teaching them (their *children* especially) your own language; and in that language you are to acquaint them with the arts and improvements of civilized life, and to instruct them in the religion of the



gospel. Let the Indians of our country be taught to read and speak the English language, and it will effect more toward civilizing and christianizing them, than all human means besides. To this object then you must direct your primary efforts. At the same time you are not to neglect other means of communicating useful knowledge; and by every method in your power, both by precept and example you are to impress their minds with the supreme excellence of Christianity.

To these observations I would add a few directions of a general nature, and which will deserve your attention to whatever class of the heathen you may be called to preach the gospel. Let it be your first care to acquaint yourselves with human nature, in the distinctive peculiarities in which you may find it among the people to whom you minister. Ascertain, as far as you can, what are their opinions of God, of his works; of themselves, of a future state, of their accountability. In these and other ways you will become acquainted with the prepossessions and prejudices, which are to be overcome. In encountering these prejudices, "be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Attack them with circumspect boldness; and while you give no needless offence, imitate the faithfulness and courage of the apostles, not shunning to declare, in due season, "the whole counsel of God." Let your instructions be simple and suited to the capacities of the people. Let your manner of instruction be affectionate and sincere, so that your hearers shall be convinced that you are in earnest, that you *believe*, and therefore *speak*." Let the truths which you preach to others be engraven on your own hearts. Feel their power yourselves, and you will be prepared to make others feel. Example, in all cases, in yours especially, is one of the best modes of instruction; and without this every other will be likely to prove ineffectual. In the character of the good man, Christianity is embodied, and his temper and life are a living monument of its beauty and its power. Thus Luke says of Barnabas, the eloquent Apostle; "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord." He affected much by his eloquence, more by his example. Let your light, therefore, so shine before the heathen, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Live in peace among yourselves, and in harmony also with other missionaries of every denomination, who may be called to labor with you. Secluded, as you will be, from your friends, and from many of the blessings of civilized life, you will feel peculiar need of this direction. Much of your influence among the heathen will depend upon your conduct towards each other. If

you dwell together like brethren in unity, it will give weight to your instructions, and recommend the gospel which you profess. If, on the contrary, you are estranged from each other, or from your fellow Christians, of other denominations, you can scarcely hope to unite the heathen in the bands of christian affection.

There is much weight and pertinence in the following observations, which I quote, and address to you, my brethren, for your instruction. "When you consider the permanent consequences, likely to result from first impressions on the minds of pagans, the few advantages they possess for religious discussion, and the extreme confidence they are likely to repose in their spiritual guides, you must be conscious how important it is to "plant wholly a right seed." Your defective representations of truth will not soon be supplied, nor the errors you plant, extirpated. In laying the foundation of an edifice intended to last forever, it is desirable that no materials should be admitted, but such as are solid and durable. As it would be too much to expect that you should perfectly succeed in imparting the mind of Christ, might I be permitted to advise, you will lean rather to the side of *defect*, than *excess*, and in points of inferior magnitude, omit what is true, rather than inculcate what is doubtful; since the influence of religion on the heart depends, not on the *multiplicity*, but on the *quality* of its objects.

The attempts to convert the Pagan nations to Christianity, have been thought by some, to be *useless*; by others to be *chimerical*. We cannot condescend to reason with those of the first class. He must be not only defective in moral principle, but also deficient in understanding, who can cast his eye over the world, and survey christian and heathen nations, and calmly say that there is no such difference between them, as to authorise the attempt to convert the latter to the faith of the gospel.

The other objection is, that the attempt to persuade the Pagan and Mahometan nations to change their gods, to relinquish their ancient faith, confirmed by habit and interest, and in its place to embrace one subversive of all their former opinions, and requiring a new course of life, is visionary and chimerical. We should readily admit the validity of this objection, did we rely on human means alone; and did we not know, that such labors in times past had been successful. For a nation to change their gods is indeed a surprising event. Saith Jehovah; "Pass over to the isles of Chittim and see; and send unto Kedar and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed its gods?" A celebrated writer observes: "Idolatry is not to be looked upon as a mere speculative error, respecting the object of worship, of little or no practical efficacy.

Its hold upon the mind of a fallen creature is most tenacious, its operation most extensive. It is a corrupt practical institution, involving a whole system of sentiments and manners, which perfectly moulds and transforms its votaries. It modifies human nature in every aspect under which it can be contemplated, being intimately blended and incorporated with all its perceptions of good and evil, with all its infirmities, passions, and fears. In a country like India, where it has been established for ages, its ramifications are so extended, as to come into contact with every mode, and every incident of life.—So strongly is idolatry entrenched in the corruptions, and fortified by the weakness of human nature, that no example exists in the history of the world of a single city, family, or individual, who has renounced it, through the mere operation of unassisted reason—such is the fatal propensity of mankind to that enormity. It is the veil of the covering cast over all flesh, which nothing but the effulgence of revelation has pierced.”

Such is the idolatry with the influence of which you, dear brethren, will have to contend. When you contemplate the magnitude of the work, to which you are consecrating yourselves, and the difficulties which lie in the way to its accomplishment, you may well exclaim, “Who is sufficient for these things?” But yield not for a moment to despondency. The work is the Lord’s. You are to be workers together with Him. Your sufficiency is of God. “In the Lord have you righteousness and strength.” Through Christ that strengtheneth you, you can do all things. Go forth, then, to your labours in the exercise of an undoubting confidence in the promises of God, as well in those which relate to the future spread of the Gospel, and to the glory and exaltation of the Christian church, as in those, which regard the supplies of wisdom, strength, and consolation, to those employed in his service. “Faith, in a mysterious manner, connects the weakness of the creature, with the almightiness of God.” With such aid, what will be too great for you to undertake, or too difficult to accomplish? What, though the state of the people among whom you are to labour, like the dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision, may be “very many and very dry; yet there is power with God to bring together these scattered bones, to clothe them with sinews, to cover them with flesh, and to breathe upon them, that they may live, and stand upon their feet a very great army.” Labor with patience and perseverance. Despise not the day of small things. Look back and see what has been the ultimate fruit of labors, for a long time discouraging, among the Otaheitan, multitudes of whom have lately thrown their idols to the moles

and to the bats. Contemplate what CAREY and his associates, what MORRISON, and MILNE, and many others, have accomplished in the course of a few years of faithful labors.

You go forth to your work, brethren, under auspicious circumstances. The field before you, indeed, is immense, and your labor great. But your fellow laborers are already on the ground. You will profit by their experience; you will be comforted by their society, and you will prepare a way for others to follow after you.

Mark the footsteps of Providence in past events, in respect to missions to the heathen. First a few were sent, as pioneers, to grope their way amidst the darkness of heathenism, whose success prepared the way for others to follow them. Missionary Societies were then formed, to select, instruct, and support Missionaries; and Bible Societies, to satisfy the increased demand for the Word of Life. In proportion to the increased wants of the heathen, have the means of supplying them been multiplied. A missionary spirit has been given to an uncommon number of our young men; the silver and the gold, which are the Lord's, have been poured into his treasury for their support. Openings for the planting of the cross of the Redeemer are continually presenting themselves in every part of Asia, and its islands, in Africa, in South America, and remarkably among the Indians of our own country. The prospect is animating in a high degree. The work is the Lord's. All its parts bear the stamp of the divine hand, and move on with a regularity and grandeur, worthy of God. The path in which you are to tread, is visibly impressed with the footsteps of the Deity.

My dear brethren, let these prospects animate your hearts. You have important parts to perform in the great events of the moral world, which are now upon the eve of accomplishment. You are soon to depart to different and distant climes; to leave behind you parents, brothers, sisters, friends; the places of your birth; to abandon, in a great measure, the pleasant intercourse of civilized life; to dwell in climates to which you are unaccustomed; among heathen; and to become familiar with their abodes of ignorance and wretchedness. You know not, you cannot know, what trials and sufferings are before you. If you are wise, you will lay your account, as did the Apostle to the Gentiles, to "suffer many things;" but I trust you feel and can say, as he did, "None of these things move us, neither count we our lives dear to ourselves, so that we may finish our course with joy, and the ministry we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Be of good courage.

**Rest on the promises of God. They are very many, and very precious. They who suffer with Christ, and for his sake, shall reign with him in glory, and they who suffer most in his cause, shall be finally elevated to the highest seats at his right hand.**

**And now, my beloved brethren, may the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for Christ's sake, shed down upon you larger and still larger portions of the pure missionary spirit, and endue you abundantly with all good qualifications for your great work, and bless you with large success. AMEN.**

## RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP TO THE MISSIONARIES.

BY REV. JOSHUA BATES.

WHEN James, and Cephas, and John perceived the grace, that was given to Paul and Barnabas, they gave them the right hands of fellowship, that they should go unto the heathen.—So we, brethren, perceiving, as we trust, that a measure of the same grace is given unto you, for the same purpose, do now, in conformity to apostolic example and under the sanction of ecclesiastical council, give you these right hands. We give them, brethren, as pledges of our christian affection for you, and of our ministerial fellowship with you; and we hold your right hands, as pledges of your correspondent affection and fellowship. While we remain, to build up the churches of our common Lord in our native land, you are called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to them, that are afar off. Let us not forget, therefore, on the one part nor the other, that, while we stand in our respective lots, and continue faithful to our God and Saviour, we are brethren and fellow-labourers unto the kingdom of heaven.

Hence it will be perceived, that the act, which we thus publicly perform, is not an unmeaning ceremony. In it much is implied; by it much is intended.

Particularly, brethren, by this act we acknowledge you, as ministers of the gospel; duly qualified for the work, and regularly inducted into the office of evangelists; authorised not only to preach the gospel, but to administer the ordinances of the gospel; partakers of the same ministry with us, and fellow-labourers with us in the vineyard of the same Lord and Master.

By this significant act, we publicly tender you our christian and ministerial fellowship, and expressly promise, as far as our influence extends, to aid you in the work of the Lord. We shall

not indeed, be able to interchange with you many of those offices of brotherly love, mutual council, and ministerial intercourse, which are so pleasant and profitable to pastors of churches, in the same region. But, while you pursue the work of evangelists with zeal and fidelity, we shall view you, as "companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ"—we shall delight to call you brethren—we shall feel constrained to perform every act of brotherly love and christian fellowship, for the performance of which we possess the means and are furnished with the opportunity. Though absent in body, we shall be with you in spirit; we shall sympathise with you in your sorrows, and rejoice with you in your joys.

Acting in the name, and by the direction of our churches, we bring you their christian salutations; and declare to you their readiness to extend their love and fellowship, not only to you, but to those churches, which you may be the happy instruments of establishing on the foundation, and according to the order of the gospel—to all, who may be persuaded, through your word, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and devoutly to call on his name. We engage for ourselves and our churches, to pray for you, and do what we can for your encouragement and support. Daily shall we bear you on our hearts to the throne of grace; where, we trust, our prayers and yours, and the prayers of christians in every section of the christian world, especially on the first Monday of every month, will meet, and be consecrated by that Great High Priest, who offereth up the prayers of all the saints. We this day bespeak for you the prayers of thousands. We feel confident, that every christian in this house, at least, will not only pray for you and your missionary companions; but will contribute of his substance, as God shall prosper him, for the support of the missionary cause.

By this act we likewise express our approbation of your high calling and particular destination—we declare ourselves friends of missions and missionaries—we recognize the high command of the risen Saviour; "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Though in our own country the spiritual labourers are few, compared with the extent of the harvest; yet we dare not oppose your call, nor do we wish to counteract your desire to *go to the heathen*. We are not among those, who admit selfishness, in any of its forms, to be a legitimate principle of Christianity. In our estimation, a soul is as precious in the wilderness as in the city—in Asia or Africa, as in America—on the banks of the Ganges or Niger, as on the borders of the Mississippi, or the St. Lawrence. We cannot look with cold indifference on the bloody rites of pagan superstition; nor behold,

without mingled emotions of compassion and horror, the scenes of lewdness and cruelty, which it never fails to present to our view. We consider, as our neighbour, every man, in every nation under heaven, whom we are able to reach by a benevolent influence—to whom we have opportunity to communicate knowledge and happiness. Nor are we of the number of those, who think, that pure religion is a commodity, which may be diminished by exportation. On the contrary we believe, and both inspiration and experience authorise the belief, that it is of a nature to increase by communication; so that the more we impart to others, the more we possess ourselves. The evident increase of pure and undefiled religion in our country, since the state of the heathen world has excited the attention and called forth the benevolent exertions of the American churches, especially in those places, in which the cause of missions has received the greatest support, is in part a fulfilment of the promise; “He that watereth, shall be watered also himself;” it is a pledge of the fidelity of our covenant God; it is a token of the divine approbation of missionary exertions; it is an earnest of a still more copious effusion of the Holy Spirit on our beloved country. While, therefore we rejoice, that missionary exertions and ministerial labours are gradually increasing in extent, and continually obtaining an enlarged and more salutary influence at home; we rejoice too, that the heathen who are perishing for lack of vision, on our right hand and on our left, are about to receive the light of the gospel and the joy of salvation. While we behold, with gratitude to the Author of all good, a host of pious young men, devoting themselves to the work of the ministry, pursuing their studies under the patronage of societies, instituted for their assistance, and coming forward to replenish our churches with pastors, and our new settlements with missionaries; we bless too the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he hath inclined a few, to go to the heathen with the message of salvation. We remember with affection our brethren and sisters, who have left father and mother, friends and country, at the call of Christ, and for the salvation of those, for whom he died on the cross. Nor shall we, dear brethren, forget you and your companions in labour and suffering for Christ’s sake; or cease to pray the Lord of the harvest, to raise up, qualify, and send forth labourers into his harvest, both to the East and to the West, who shall follow your steps, strengthen your hands, and become your helpers in the Lord.

Brethren, go forth in the name of the Lord; and may his presence go with you. Go forth with humble hearts and praying spirits; and may the prayers of all christians follow you. Go forth to the heathen; and may the blessing of many, ready to



perish, come upon you. Go forth with the Bible in your hands, and the love of God in your hearts. Go forth with those, who run to and fro through the earth, to disseminate christian knowledge; and may He, who hath "the times in his hand," through your instrumentality hasten the time, when, at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess him to be Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.

Dear brethren, (I now address those of you, in particular, who expect soon to leave this western continent forever),— while we are constrained to sorrow most of all, because we shall see your faces no more; we are constrained likewise, by the love of Christ and the love of souls, to bid you, farewell. We wish you a safe voyage across the ocean; and a welcome reception in the land of your destination. We beseech the God of all grace, to be with you all, and bless you—to prepare you for your work and prosper you in your labours—to make you faithful unto death, and give you a crown of life. And may all the people say, AMEN.

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