

EVANGELICAL PIETY.

A

FARE-WELL DISCOURSE,

101076

Preached from Philippians i. 27, 28.

BY GEORGE DUFFIELD,

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The following discourse is given to the public in compliance with the request of the members of the Author's late charge. It was prepared in the midst of numerous engagements and frequent interruption. On the 15th of March he tendered his resignation to his Congregation. A committee was appointed to confer with him on the subject and ascertain his reasons and motives in so doing. After a full and cordial interchange of sentiment the Committee acceded to his wishes and with expressions of deep regret consented not to throw any obstacles in his way, confiding in his judgment on the point of his duty. On the 21st the Congregation consented to accept the report of the Committee. On the 23d the Presbytery of Carlisle dissolved the pastoral relation between him and his charge and dismissed him to join the (Assembly's) 2nd Presbytery of Philadelphia. During that week he visited nearly all the families of his charge and on the following Sabbath terminated his pastoral labours among an affectionate, united, and sorrowing people with the discourse contained in the following pages and which at the earnest request of some members of his late charge is embellished with a Mezzotint likeness of the Author.

FARE-WELL DISCOURSE.

Phil. i. 27, 28. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God.

The apostle Paul, at one period of his ministry, was thrown into great perplexity by conflicting emotions. The toils, embarrassments, disappointments, perils, persecutions, and anxieties, incident to the preaching of the gospel, rendered him desirous to finish his course, and enter into rest. But his love for souls, and desire for the glory of the blessed Redeemer, his affection for those that had been converted by his instrumentality, and the delight he experienced in the service of Christ, made him willing to toil on and protract his stay in this wicked and wretched world. For him to die, he felt would be gain.

He would escape from the din of strife, the perils of life, and the scenes of warfare, which here afflicted and oppressed his spirit. But for him to live was to advance the cause and glory of Christ. Christ was the charm of his life, and all he thought of or cared for. The only thing he felt it to be worth living for, was to promote and exalt the dear and adorable Jesus who had died to save him, and turned his wicked heart from the love of sin to the love of God. He was, therefore, "in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better:" but, being convinced, that "to abide in the flesh was more needful" for the church, he was willing still to live and labour. If God had any thing for him to do, in advancing the spiritual welfare of christians at Philippi, he felt persuaded he would prolong his life, and so order it in his providence that he should yet visit them, and labor among them. He was perfectly willing to do so, and for their comfort and joy let them know his feelings on this subject. One thing, however, in the mean time he felt to be of essential consequence,—he could not and cared not to conceal it,—that it was the ardent desire of his heart,

that the dear people of God at Philippi, the members of that church, which he had been instrumental in establishing, notwithstanding the terrible trials and persecution he had to encounter in so doing, should maintain an elevated piety, fully up to the standard of the gospel. Whether present with them or absent from them, nothing in relation to them could give him more real joy, than to know this to be the fact. It was the sum of his heart's wishes for them. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God."

It should be the earnest desire, and assiduous effort, of every minister of Christ, that the tone and character of the piety in their several charges should be brought up fully to the standard of the gospel. On the present solemn and tender occasion, I shall not be accused of egotism in saying, that it is the desire of my heart, and will contribute to my

great delight, to know, when permitted to visit, or to hear of, this church, that you, its beloved members, maintain a piety conformed to the gospel standard.

The text affords an opportunity to illustrate some of the essential features of Evangelical piety,—that which it behoves you to maintain and evince before the world. The exhibition of them is given, as my parting instruction to each one among you who names the name of Jesus, and as the expression of my earnest desire and expectation in relation to your future life.

I. Where true Evangelical piety prevails, there the gospel of Jesus Christ will have the paramount and entire control of the conduct. The word “conversation” does not convey the full import of the apostle’s expression. It denotes the actions of the life,—the deportment of christians as citizens of the great commonwealth of Israel. This, in all our social relations, should be consistent with the gospel of Christ.

“Gospel” is a word of comprehensive import, and in its most expansive sense, denotes the good tidings which the Lord Jesus Christ announced to the world. All that He

taught in the way of precept and advice, or of instruction as to the scheme of redemption, and the moral government of God, is in itself good and conducive to the real happiness of those who hearken to his counsels. It is in this wide and popular sense the apostle uses the term in the text.

It is not necessary to give a sketch, even of the more lofty themes which Christ has unfolded in the Holy Scriptures. There are a few attitudes, however, in which the entire system of His revelations may be contemplated; or, in other words, a few general classifications of those numerous and invaluable truths which He has inculcated, and to advert to which may be of use, in an inquiry as to the definite import of the gospel of Christ.

1. It is a **SYSTEM OF DIVINE TRUTH**. By this it is not meant, that the Bible is constructed on any philosophical or metaphysical principles;—nor that the truths of the scriptures, are strung together in systematic form and order;—nor that they are mere doctrinal statements or didactic propositions;—nor that they consist of general abstractions or logical definitions:—but, that it has pleased the Spirit of God to reveal to us, certain great

and important **FACTS**, and essential to be known, in relation to the existence, character, and government of God,—the original and history of our race,—the nature, relations, responsibilities and destiny of men,—the ruin of the human family, and the redemption of Jesus Christ,—and the great moral means designed of Heaven for the renovation and sanctification of men. The gospel of Christ lets us know the facts in the case, and that with great plainness and precision.

It is true there is a sublime beauty, a wonderful simplicity, in all the works and ways of God, and that, as, in the material universe around us, we discover great and important principles, which we may trace through an almost endless series of developements, so, in the moral government of God, the facts disclosed to our attention involve the simplest and sublimest principles. There is in them the philosophy of nature,—the infinitely wise and wonderful adjustment of things, which every reflecting mind discerns in some degree, as it ponders the developements of facts.

Newton in discovering the law of gravitation, originated no new truth, but simply drew aside the veil which obscured the minds

of men, and gave them a clear and distinct view of the admirable structure and harmony of the universe. The law was in operation thousands of years before the prying inquisitiveness of men detected it, and it was no sooner stated, than it was seen to be, obviously, the grand principle which forms the very basis of the whole mechanical structure of the Heavens and the earth. It is so in reference to the great facts and principles disclosed in the gospel. They are not the dogmas and doctrines of science,—not propositions or conclusions elaborated by human investigation,—not abstract positions fortified by cogent demonstrations,—but plain and solemn statements of facts,—an unvarnished representation of things as they are.

Reason never would have elicited them, for they lie beyond its sphere of original observation. 1. Cor. 7—10. They possess a claim on our attention and confidence, which nothing but the truthfulness of Almighty God who has announced them can give. Compared with the great facts disclosed to us by the testimony of Christ, the ever living and faithful witness, all theories and systems of human philosophy, are as the mists and

shadows of the fading day to the beamy brightness of the meridian sun.

To act consistently with the gospel of Christ in this respect, therefore, it is essential, that Christians should explore the sacred volume,—make it the man of their counsel, and embrace the truth in all the freshness and simplicity in which it is revealed by God. The Bible must be believed, not as conforming itself to the deductions of human reasoning, for its premises are often very fallacious; but as containing the declarations of an infallible being. To follow our own reasonings, and approve of the revelations of scripture only as far as they correspond to their deductions is to imitate the glow-worm which shuns the light of Heaven, and crawls forth through the darkness of night in the light of its own sickly rays. The Christian should rather soar like the eagle and gaze on the orient orb of day. The Bible unfolds a world entirely beyond human intuition. Our knowledge of it, is obtained by faith. Its facts are disclosed to us, and demand our credence as percipient and rational beings, not because we can demonstrate them by processes of reasoning, but because the God of truth has spoken.

Thus to betake ourselves to the living fountain of light and truth, stands opposed to the proud aspirings of boastful reasoning, and to the servile deference which is sometimes paid to creeds and confessions of faith. To these, in their proper place, there should be no objection, but, if a man will let his conversation be as becomes the gospel of Christ, he must look far beyond the narrow limits of the creed of his church. The sacred scriptures, and they alone, are the infallible rule of faith and practice. To exalt any creed and confession of faith whatever, and magnify it as such, is far from becoming the high dignity of citizens of Zion. Often the creeds of human structure serve the purposes of ecclesiastical usurpation and ambition, and are employed to enslave the minds of men. There is an immense range of truths in the Bible, which are not to be found in any creed of man. There is a mine of inexhaustible truth in the sacred volume, and human creeds, at best, are but a few ingots forged from it. To raise the alarm, and excite suspicions, when men advance beyond the limits of their church's creed, in exploring the sacred volume, is not to act becoming the gospel,

but to exalt the creed and undervalue the Bible.

2. The gospel is A PERFECT CODE OF MORALS. Instead of giving us profound dissertations about the nature of moral obligation, it brings into view the great principles of human action, and dictates its precepts, as the circumstances of society, and its various relations may require. Disdaining the maxims of a selfish world, it requires the supreme affection of the heart for God, and gives us a few elementary principles of endless practical application. Its grand and fundamental requirement—the sum total of its precepts, is “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself.” The human heart is appealed to as the spring of all human actions, and by regulating it, the gospel seeks to regulate the entire man. There is no morality worth the name, which does not begin, and is not consummated in the love of God.

To act as it becomes the gospel, therefore, in this respect “love should in all our actions glow.” Selfishness must give place to the dictates of benevolence. Our interest must be sacrificed to the claims of God: and every purpose, and every joy, be sought in subor-

dination to the high behests of Heaven. Thus to act stands opposed to the miserable narrow minded views of expediency, and the suggestions of prudence, which often render the professed friends of Christ mere traitors in disguise :—to the proud self righteous spirit of pharisaism, which makes not the love of Christ the root and spring of all obedience to the law of God, but aims at its own advantage or applause :—and to the violent querulous spirit of bigotry and intolerance which makes the creed of the church the rule of duty, and the standard by which to estimate piety.

3. The gospel is A SYSTEM OF SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE. Its solemn and precious truths are the vehicles of divine energy. A melting and subduing power, accompanies the belief of the great facts, which Christ has disclosed. Who can believe that he is by nature a child of wrath and an heir of hell, and that Christ has interfered and brought deliverance, without experiencing humble and grateful emotions? Who can believe other facts of revelation and remain indifferent? Hard indeed must be the heart, which will remain callous, in view of its amazing truths

It is the realising influential belief of what the gospel affirms, that can alone move and break the heart of man. There are no objects in their nature so well calculated to do it, as those which the gospel discloses. A yawning hell, a broken law, a damning guilt, a full salvation, a free pardon, a justifying righteousness, a purifying influence, a dying Saviour, an ample atonement, a mediatorial kingdom, a heaven of glory, a reconciled God and Father, a glorious intercessor, an heavenly Comforter, an eternity of delight,—these are among the objects which the gospel presents to faith, and which if apprehended and believed, cannot fail to produce an impression.

To act as becomes the gospel of Christ, therefore, is to evince the efficient influence of a belief of what God says. We must show that we are wholly governed, in all our plans and modes of thinking and feeling and behaving, by the Spirit of God. He must regulate our conduct, and we must be careful not to grieve and vex that Spirit, and resist and rebel against his strivings. We must walk in the Spirit and live in the Spirit,

we must be "filled with the spirit," and betray that tender, prayerful, agonising frame of heart, which indicates, that we believe the truths and facts of the Bible, and that our minds and hearts are under His leadings who, "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26.

Thus to act stands opposed, to that miserable degrading formality in religion, which makes many professors no better than mere automatons, moved by regular ministerial winding up, and the adjustment of certain springs of pride, prejudice, conscience, and sectarian predilections:—to the fiery zeal and contentious spirit of those who are actuated by party interests and designs:—to the cold calculating selfishness of such as remain undecided and inactive, on all great questions of moral reform, till they find how the popular will is likely to be affected towards them:—and to the bigotted deference which is paid to certain consecrated technics whose import is not well understood, and to certain ecclesiastical men and councils whose opinions and judgment are held to be of first importance. The gospel can never become the vehicle of divine influence to those, who, instead of be-

ing "led by the Spirit of God," allow themselves to be led by men. To follow under party banners, in the spirit of strife, and sectarianism, and schism, instead of the meek, forgiving, humble, prayerful, laborious, and benevolent spirit of Christ,—is utterly unbecoming the gospel of Christ, and proves a man's religion to be mere delusion, or fanaticism.

4. The gospel is **A SYSTEM OF BENEVOLENT ENTERPRISE**. Christ came to earth on an errand of love. The grand design of God in the diffusion of his gospel is to spread peace and joy throughout the world. All holy beings delight in deeds of benevolence. It is the delight of God to promote the bliss of his universe: and, to be destitute of benevolence, is to be devoid of His Spirit. Just as the gospel advances in the world and its principles are developed, it displays itself to be the grandest scheme of benevolent enterprise ever witnessed in it. Heaven and earth are united in lofty plans for the salvation of men. The richest sources of benevolent feeling are opened up, and the mightiest resources are combined, in one vast and well directed system of effort, to accomplish what human

sympathies may suggest, human hearts devise, human hands effect, and human means procure, for the promotion of glory to God, peace on earth and good will to men.

To act as it becomes the gospel, therefore, in this respect is to labour, by personal effort, and by pecuniary means, for **THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.** With this object at heart, and full in view, the various benevolent institutions of the age—its Bible, missionary, tract, education, Sunday school, societies, and other efforts for reform will share in our solicitude, prayers, and patronage. We shall feel that we are not sent into this world to get riches for our families, and leave after us great possessions for our children, but to work for God, and for the welfare of our fellow men.

It is utterly inconsistent with the gospel of Christ, for men to cherish their heart chilling selfishness, their miserable prejudices, their attachment to the world's wealth and honours, and their bigotted and exclusive regard for the narrow, and perhaps deleterious, interests of their sect, which makes them withhold their efforts for the conversion of the world, save as they may be made by their own

church. Let the wretched miser stand aside, and count his gold, and his twin brother the bigot, calculate the interest of his sect and party, but let not the Christian demean himself, and disgrace the master whom he professes to serve, by any niggardly and contracted feelings on the subject of the great enterprises of benevolence, which aim distinctly at the conversion of the world to Christ. The parsimonious, churlish spirit, is alike opposed to the interests of personal religion, and to the prosperity of Christ's kingdom. God never honours or employs those who indulge it in effecting great good in the world.

II. True Evangelical piety, which ministers should labour to see among their people, produces firmness and decision. Paul was anxious to know that the Philippian church stood fast. Attempts had been made to seduce by flattery but had failed. The wicked wished to have an alliance with it so that it might tolerate their views, but Paul had rebuked the effort. He had been violently assaulted as the consequence, and had encountered severe and terrible persecution. Christians at Philippi had been called to endure the grief and pain of seeing the minister

of Christ, so tenderly beloved by them, driven from their midst, by the malice and opposition of enemies. But these things had not overcome them. They stood fast, and maintained the ground they had taken. Lydia, and the Jailor and others had been converted and idolatry had received such a shock in that city, that the men who profited by the superstition and ignorance of the people, who made their gains by the vices of a depraved community, could no longer hold up their heads as they once did, and receive the homage of their fellow citizens. Whatever envy or malice, had been excited by the reformation, effected through the instrumentality of Paul, the converts in Philippi were not shaken by it. They had come out openly and decidedly on the side of Christ, and bore their testimony firmly and undauntedly against popular vices. Nor could they be deterred from doing so, by Paul's departure from them.

Men sometimes acquire influence over their fellow men, and by kindness, persuasion and appeals to interest and prejudices, and other means, bring them to do things which are not cordially approved. In such cases having

committed themselves, through the influence of friendship, or from the caresses of flattery, or with a view to selfish interests, they will, for a season, persevere ; but let the pressure be withdrawn,—let the man be removed, for whose sake, or at whose instance, it was done—and they will soon relapse into their former ways. It was not thus at Philippi. The gospel had been embraced in the love of it. The profession of Christ, and the renunciation of all their sins, were cordial matters—done out of choice, and therefore they stood fast.

The same firmness and decision, will characterise all, who, from like causes, profess the religion of the gospel. Where a professing people have taken ground with Christ,—and, with hearty choice, come out openly as his witnesses to bear testimony for God and against the sins of men, there will be no hesitation and vacillation. Only let it be seen, that the blessed Redeemer condemns this and the other custom,—that popular prejudice is opposed to Him,—and there is no room left for consultation. True Evangelical piety requires, and will prompt to, a firm, zealous, and persevering testimony against it. The

world's prudence is a cowardly virtue. Expediency, according to the world's suggestions, is a mere weather-cock, and where men hearken to advices from this quarter, they will never maintain their ground consistently against any vice. But christian firmness and decision will frown upon this miserable adulation of a sycophantic world, and smile at its angry menaces. This is the piety needed at the present day, which will make the members of the church espouse manfully the cause of Christ, and take a firm, decided stand against the horrid crimes, long nurtured in society, yet countenanced by many professing christians, and nestling in the church. Some of them shall presently be noticed. In the mean time I remark,

III. That true Evangelical piety will secure unity of spirit among the members of a church where it prevails. It is the spirit, the rational and immortal soul of man, that rouses and stimulates the entire animal mass of our being. Every member, every organ, every function, are under the direction, or subordinate to the great interest, of the one all pervading and all actuating mind. Thence an illustration is taken by the apostle

for the more vivid exhibition of that unity, which should characterise the action of the members of any particular church. They should feel and act, as if actuated by one mind or soul. Nothing but the efficient influence of Evangelical piety, can permanently secure this. The blessed Spirit of God has clearly taught, in the sacred scriptures and there only, what is that one purpose and way, which we are all bound to adopt and follow. Adherence to Christ, and the prosecution of the great interests of His glory, in opposition to the corruptions of the world, is what the Spirit of God is striving to secure among all that profess His name. Just as any deviate from this, will they become versatile, and be found conflicting with each other in various ways suggested by envy, jealousy, ambition, malice and the like. But where the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus are prosecuted, agreeably to the directions and plan proposed in the Bible, and urged on the conscience by the Spirit and providence of God, there will there be unity of spirit. Brethern will love each other for Christ's sake, and treat each other with that courtesy, and Christian respect, and mutual

confidence, and good will, which are necessary to the general harmony. They will find no time, and place for the indulgence of envy and malice, and rage, and revenge, and other baneful passions and purposes, for they will be occupied with other and better things. They will not spend their strength and talents, in crimination and recrimination, embittered polemics, and electioneering cabals and intrigues, for the purpose of exalting this and the other idol of their party, but whatever is done, whether we eat or drink it will be for the glory of God. Where the heart has really and fully made choice of Christ and entered into His service for His sake, and not with any selfish design, there christian character will be formed in the same mould, and there the members will constitute a body nerved and braced together, all animated, all wakeful, all active, and actuated by the one living spirit of Jesus Christ.

Creeds and confessions of faith, ecclesiastical canons and decrees, legislative and judicial decisions, the councils of the church, cannot secure this. They have no life in them: nor can they breathe the hallowing

fire, into the bosoms of Christ's followers, which shall melt down all asperities of character, all jealousies, envyings, rancour, pride, ambition, malice and other hateful affections, and mould them together as one great living mass, pervaded and actuated by the Spirit of God. It is true evangelical piety that forms the life blood of the church, and distributes through its members the vital warmth and nutriment. And it is pleasing to see the one body of Christ, all over the world, cemented and compacted, not by sectarian rules and regulations, not by party strifes and peculiarities, but found in all Evangelical societies and alike affected and actuated by the one blessed spirit—the spirit of truth and love, the Spirit of holiness and of God.

IV. Where true Evangelical piety prevails in a church, there will be efficient co-operation among the members for the faith of the gospel. When Paul says “with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,” he means what we would, were we to say, striving together with one soul; that is, the efforts of Christians for the faith of the gospel, should be made, in such a concurrent operative way, as to evince, that all are

actuated by but one purpose, and that, one of deep and heart felt interest. But what is meant by the faith of the gospel? On this point sad mistakes are made by some.

1. The faith of the gospel does not consist in the dogmas of any system or school of Theology. Different men have arranged, and sought to illustrate the great truths of the gospel, by means of certain metaphysical assumptions, which, have been so incorporated with the doctrines, and as it were identified with the facts of scripture, that it is almost impossible, for ordinary minds and ignorant professors, to discriminate between the truths of the Bible, and the additions of men. And these systems have been so instilled into the mind in early life, and their techniques so uniformly employed as the vehicles of thought, that they have attached to the forms of speech, and phrases of man's invention, as much sacredness, and even more than to the oracles of God.

Thus one class of theologians assume it that the agency of God, in the gracious government of the mind and heart of man, is a direct independent effort of Omnipotence—a physical efficiency, and all their views of the

great doctrines of election, human depravity, regeneration, sanctification, human dependence, and the final salvation of believers, are materially affected by the metaphysical idea that entwines itself around the system, and gives shape and colouring to the whole.

Another assume it, that life is a substantial *principle* or essence, immediately created by God, with powers peculiar to itself, and designed to produce all those actions and phenomena we call vital: and accordingly, their views of the nature of the new birth and the influence of the Spirit, of human depravity and the nature of holiness, of the sinner's guilt and "the perseverance of the saints," correspond with the false metaphysical assumption on which their system is based.

Others again assume, that holiness, or as they sometimes call it, "original righteousness," is a positive entity or quality of simple created nature, and this metaphysical notion, shapes their views of the fall of man, the nature of corruption, the transmission of depravity, original sin, regeneration, sanctification, the impossibility of falling from grace, and other kindred doctrines.

While others still assume it, that it is upon the principles of *commercial justice*, we are to estimate the righteousness of God's conduct in constituting Adam the representative of his offspring, and Christ the surety of sinners, and thus they differ greatly, in their views of the nature of representation, imputation, substitution,—the design, nature, and extent of the atonement,—the guilt and accountability of sinners,—the design of the gospel offer, and other topics, from those who contemplate these things in the light of God's *public justice* as the moral governor of the universe. And what is greatly to be deplored;—so great is the pertinacity of some men, and so utterly averse are they to candid and careful investigation, that they will not discriminate between the simple facts of scripture, and the philosophical and metaphysical additions of dogmatic and scholastic theology, but denounce all, who will not admit the correctness of their illustrations, as though they rejected the great and cardinal doctrines of the christian faith. Angry zeal, ecclesiastical electioneering, the spirit of denunciation, and efforts, to pour contempt on those who are more precise in their discrimination, and to organize parties and

measures for excluding them from the church, they account to be "striving together for the faith of the gospel." It is a pitiable sight, and methinks satan never more gloried, and grinned more horribly a ghastly smile, than when he sees good men thus deceived, and mistaking the spirit of vengeance and bigotted attachment to phrases and party, for "striving together for the faith of the gospel."

2. Neither does the faith of the gospel, for which we must strive, consist in the creed of this or the other church. Most creeds with which I am acquainted, set forth merely the views of a particular church, on certain great truths of religion, relating to the character of God, and of Christ, and the mediatorial work and kingdom. They contain but little about duty and practice, and the vices and habits to be renounced. Against such as are consonant with the scriptures, although but partial, and especially our own, we have no objection as far as they go. They are excellent systems of theology and a satisfactory arrangement of important truth. But the faith of the gospel for which we must strive together, is not the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the larger and

shorter Catechisms, nor the Heidelberg Catechism, nor the Augsburg Confession, nor the thirty-nine articles, notwithstanding these forms of sound words contain much that is gospel.

3. Nor does the faith of the gospel consist in a speculative Orthodoxy. Religion may become a matter of science, and studied as such, and there may be great skill in casuistry too, where the individual has not even believed the great facts of christianity in their bearing on himself. It is surprising to see how deep an interest may be excited in the heart, in the study of controversial theology, and how great an excitement may be felt in defending and maintaining its truths. Hundreds have mistaken their zeal in such matters, as did Jehu his for the Lord of hosts, and lived and died utter strangers to the faith of the gospel, for which they thought themselves to have been earnestly contending.

4. Neither does the faith of the gospel consist in a vain Antinomian confidence in Christ which cries peace, and lulls the conscience to sleep, while the man neglects his duty and lives in sin. There is a presumptuous trust, which is sometimes mistaken for believing

but, when carefully examined, proves itself to be essentially of the same character with the stoics apathy and imperturbable self complacency, or the Turk's blind and stupid submission to fate. It is a melancholy fact, that many thus pervert the grace of God, and so apprehend the doctrines of the divine decrees, and justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ, as to cry peace, peace to their own souls when God has not spoken peace.

5. Neither does the faith of the gospel consist in any created principle miraculously implanted in the heart, like the instincts and appetites of our species. There is a loose way of speaking about faith, which makes very false and pernicious impressions on the minds of many. It is called a *principle*, in contradistinction from those acts and exercises, which are voluntary in their nature, and so represented as to lead many to think, that it is as much the simple product of God's natural or physical Omnipotence as any created substance whatever. A sense of dependence on God for its production may indeed thus be induced, but it infallibly weakens the sense of obligation to believe. God is

the author and finisher of our faith, and both in the same sense, but his agency in its production is radically different from that which He exerts in creating or originating a simple entity. Faith is, properly and specifically, the act or exercise of mind, which a rational and voluntary agent puts forth, in giving full and cordial assent to testimony. The testimony or word to be believed is essential to the origination of faith, and who so makes his statement, with such truthfulness and evidence, as to secure the undoubting conviction of truth in another's mind is the author of his faith. What he states, and is believed, may exert a permanent and efficient influence on the feelings and actions, and in this sense his faith may be said to be a principle of action in him; but such language is intelligible in no other sense. Now God alone, by His Spirit, is competent to present the truth, with that force of evidence, which will beget and maintain the confidence of the heart, and is therefore properly "the author and finisher of our faith." To resist the evidence of truth when He speaks is horrible guilt. To believe what he says cannot take place without being measurably affected, and in a way correspondent with the nature

of His communication. When the truth of what God says, is cordially believed, it will exert a permanent and controlling influence. In this sense the faith of the gospel may be denominated a principle but in no other. To strive for it, therefore, is not to contend for the dogma of scholastic Theology, that faith is a principle implanted in the soul; but to assert, maintain, and evince our belief of the reality of the things which Christ has affirmed. In a few words,

6. The faith of the gospel is the influential efficient belief of the great truths and facts, which Christ teaches, and which belief purifies the heart, reforms the life, and overcomes the world. The phrase denotes the objects and facts revealed by Christ, as they are rightly apprehended by our minds. It is the actual believing with the heart to righteousness—the bringing of our own minds and hearts, and endeavouring to bring the minds and hearts of others, under the powerful and controlling influence of the truth as it is in Jesus, for which we are to strive together. This is an object worthy of our efforts. Christians should labour to quicken and encourage each other in their belief of the truth,

and, where Evangelical piety obtains, there such efforts will be made, in the social prayer meeting, the spiritual conference, the Bible class, and by other means of religious instruction and fellowship. They will also feel solicitous for each other's improvement in religion, and labour, by admonition, exhortation, reproof, and in various ways to "comfort" and "edify one another".

Nor will their efforts be confined to themselves. They will strive to win souls to Christ, to bring the great truths of religion to bear on the minds of the impenitent, and to appeal to their consciences in personal conversation, by Sabbath schools, by the public preaching of the word, by the circulation of Tracts, and in every practicable way, to influence their fellow men to believe the testimony of Jesus Christ. I cannot admit that an intellectual assent to certain doctrines in Theology, even though they be true, is the faith of the gospel. A speculative Orthodoxy often prevails, where there is an utter destitution of the faith of the gospel. Accuracy, skill, and great attainments in Theology, have no necessary connection with the cordial influential belief of what Christ says,

in all its simplicity and extent, and which invariably leads to self denial and the practice of holiness. To hear men talk about contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and living in the neglect of various duties, under the influence of various sinful passions, puffed up with spiritual pride, angry and vindictive in their spirit, unjust in their dealings, unfaithful in their intercourse with impenitent sinners around them and in rebuking their iniquities, is truly a melancholy spectacle. Such, men by their disputes, and bitterness, and clamour in favour of a speculative orthodoxy, and by their neglect of the practical duties of Evangelical piety, and of the cultivation of a forgiving self-denying spirit, disgrace religion, caricature the faith of the gospel, and contribute to the ruin of souls.

V. True Evangelical piety renders a people who are actuated by it, utterly fearless of the opposition of their adversaries. A time serving or what is often called, a prudent, cautious spirit, never effects much for Christ. In so saying, I am not to be understood to censure proper delay and inquiry, where the spirit of duty is not clearly and

satisfactorily determined. There are circumstances, and occasions, in which the course of action proper, can only be ascertained by diligent observation, and a balancing of all arguments and objections, but generally, embarrassments requiring such delay and caution relate only to the measures of policy to be adopted in promoting great social interests. In all cases of moral reform, where the vices of the community are directly and distinctly visible, and clearly condemned by the law of God, there is no choice left us, nor excuse for delay in action. On all such questions, we must take our stand at once, against the world, and on the side of Christ. He has told us, that the world will hate us, and persecute us, and probably destroy us—that their opposition is certain—and therefore that, to act the part of a neutral, and hesitate about avowing our principles, and bearing our testimony against iniquity, till the world can be conciliated, is high treason against Heaven.

God's design in making men Christians is to revolutionize a sinful world; to destroy all its corrupt usages, and practises, and to

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publish a condemning testimony against its consecrated, beneficed, and honoured vices. We must, if true to Christ, pursue them even to the sanctuary, and censure the money-changers there, whose selfishness and cupidity, will allow the temple of God to be polluted for the sake of gain. Even the lofty pharisees, and learned rabbis, whose comments and glosses on the law often gild iniquity, must not be feared. With Christ's law and truth on our side, we must ferret out iniquity, even when it skulks behind the altar of God, and clothes itself in the garb of religion. To do so requires great courage, and nothing but true Evangelical piety can inspire it.

When confident that Christ has commanded it, and his honour and glory require it, there will be no shrinking: nor will there be any wrathful and malignant emotion. Love for the blessed Redeemer, and for the souls of men, will prevent all bitterness of spirit, and enable us to be firm, resolute, undaunted, in our opposition against their sins, yet tender and compassionate towards their persons. To irritate should never be designed; yet often it cannot be avoided. The world's ha-

tered against Christ, will be inflamed, by the Christian who is decided and consistent ; and none will be more ready to fan the flame, than the high priests and pharisees, whose pretensions to religion fall below the standard of Evangelical piety.

One consideration, that contributes to induce, and to sustain, an intrepid spirit in him that is actuated by true piety, is the confidence, he may and ought to have, of the ultimate success and triumph of the cause in which he is engaged, and the perdition of those that oppose it. The terrifying menaces of the wicked against the righteous, which are induced by the latter's efforts at reform, and for the advancement of religion, are, to the Christian eye, a manifest token of their destruction who make them. It is proof, that we are on the side of Christ, and will be approved and sustained, and saved of God, when the wicked hate us, and hate our measures, designed to benefit our fellow men.

In the midst of all the cunning artifices of self righteous Pharisees, and the noise and clamour of the wicked Sadducees, yea and of the violence of the rabble, the Christian need not fear. The cause in which he is engaged

is the cause of God. Having truth and right on his side, it shall triumph. Mighty combinations, legislative enactments, invading armies, chains, prisons, fire and faggot and death, cannot utterly subvert the cause of Christ. It survives the tempests of human passion. It sustains the shocks of human vengeance, and although for a time, it may be thought the wicked have triumphed, and the noble edifice has been destroyed, it shall, like the fabled phoenix spring forth out of its ashes into fresh life, and flourish when the men, who sought to crush it, shall have disappeared and been forgotten.

God will support his own cause. The principles of right and truth, shall in the end be established, and it were unbelief, baseness, cowardice of the worst description, for those who are conscious of their reliance on God, their entire devotion to His cause, and their respect for His law, to be terrified by their adversaries. Zeal and contention, excited by the spirit of bigotry, may be indulged in relation to, the creed of a church and its sectarian interests, the dogmas of theology, and the opinions of men; and some may even become martyrs to these things, but such intre-

pidity is no token of the perdition of adversaries or the ultimate salvation of God.

One ecclesiastical organization after another, and one generation after another, actuated by the spirit of violence and persecution, of bigotted attachment to forms and phrases, of proud and lofty prejudice, of schism and sectarianism, have risen up in the world, and been utterly destroyed: but the true followers of Christ, whose strength is in the mighty God of Jacob, who are God's witnesses on the earth, and testify against the crimes, and varnished corruptions of the world, have never been, and never will be, utterly destroyed. Based on the eternal principles of right and truth, rallying round the standard of Christ, and not a sect or party, espousing His cause, and labouring for the subjugation of the world to Him, they may dismiss their fears, and discern, in the rage and menaces of their foes, the sure token of their ultimate triumph, and of everlasting confusion and perdition to their adversaries. "Fear thou not," says God, to a people actuated by the spirit of Evangelical piety. "I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I

will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shall not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought." Isa. xli. 10—12.

The above remarks have been intended, to prepare the way for the application of the great truths involved in the text, to the circumstances of our present interview. These, I trust, will be an ample apology for the tax imposed on your time and patience, by an attempt, to improve this tender and solemn occasion, in some appropriate advice and exhortations, addressed to this church and congregation, in their collective character, and to this audience in their various individual relations.

I shall not be accused of vanity, if for a few moments, under present circumstances, I advert to the period of my life spent among you, and to the history of nineteen eventful years, during which I have had the charge of your precious souls. I came to you a

stripling in years, but just passed the period of my minority, with little experience of the deceitfulness of the heart, and still less of the world. A few venerable sires and matrons can recall the circumstances under which my ministry among you was commenced. After several years of sad and violent conflicts of feeling and party contentions, which rent asunder those who should have been with one mind cordially striving together for the faith of the gospel, it pleased the great Master of assemblies, to honour me as the occasion of this church's becoming united, and ceasing from public altercation and strife. How little of the spirit of prayer prevailed, in what a very limited number of families there had been an altar erected to God, how indistinct and imperceptible in many cases, was the line of demarcation between the church and the world, to what extent the pride of life, the pleasures of earth, the lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh, were indulged and sought, by young and old, and how the vices of card playing and gambling in the public taverns, of intemperate eating and drinking, of public balls and dancings, of riots

and revelry among the youth, and other demoralising habits, obtained an unblushing and ascendant influence over many,—and how the discipline of the church lay prostrate, and the ordinances of Christ's house, both Baptism and the Lord's Supper, were administered without requiring satisfactory evidences of a change of heart, you need not to be informed.

Under these circumstances, to unfurl the standard of Christ, and to assert the necessity of that religion which commences in a radical change of heart, and secures a uniform and consistent abstaining from every appearance of evil, could not fail to bring him that did it, into collision, with those whose vices were reproved, and whose profession of Christianity was that of a mere theoretical scientific conviction of its divine original, and not of the vital, purifying, humbling, and self denying influence of their own personal belief, and experience of the reality of its great truths and facts.

To assert and maintain the claims of Evangelical piety, to draw the line of demarcation between the followers of Christ and the world, to bring the truth to bear directly on

the hearts and consciences of the hearers, and make them feel that they needed, and were in danger of eternal damnation, without the regenerating grace of God, to rescue the ordinances of Christ's house from the profane and polluting touch of those who gave no evidences of personal piety, to recover a prostrate discipline, and to elevate the standard of religion in the church and induce its professors to live supremely devoted, in soul, spirit, and body to Christ, and to shew forth his praise, were the great ends proposed and sought in my public preaching and private visitations, among you.

In prosecution of these ends, different measures were adopted, such as the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper, the public administration of Baptism, the formal recognition of other Christian churches, and the invitation of their members to occasional communion though belonging to different ecclesiastical sects, the refusal to baptise the children of those who did not profess their faith in Christ, the organization of meetings for social prayer and christian fellowship, the weekly exposition of the scriptures, Sabbath schools, and Bible classes, formal and public covenan-

ting with God and his church to lead a holy life when admitted to sealing ordinances, the introduction of a Psalmody adapted to the christian dispensation and calculated to promote Evangelical feelings, the cultivation and eliciting into exercise such spiritual gifts on the part of professors, as might be rendered serviceable to the cause of Christ, the patronage of benevolent institutions, and different means adapted to circumstances and designed to secure the effusions of the Spirit and the revival of pure and undefiled religion. Occasionally these, and kindred measures, irritated the wicked, disturbed the pharisee, and excited prejudices and antipathies against us, and drew forth public and private censures for innovation, the departure from the tradition of the elders, and disrespect for the memory of the fathers who had fallen asleep. How often the public prints were made the channel of scurrilous and slanderous attack, and by some who had promised to sustain and co-operate with us in the service of Christ, may be known to many, but will be obvious to all at the judgment day.

But one great leading purpose was had in w, and that was to honour Christ by bring-

ing all I could be instrumental in influencing so to do, to come up to the Bible standard of piety. At every step, as this purpose was prosecuted, and attempts were made to elevate the tone of piety in the church, I had to encounter opposition, in a greater or less degree from some. Personal friends became enemies, and those whom I once accounted leaders, deserted and turned against me, so that I understand the experience which Paul related to Timothy "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." 2 Tim. vi. 15.

It were unpardonable vanity in any man to say, that in the commencement of his life, he had the knowledge and wisdom, or understood, as well, the mode of accomplishing his designs, as he had and did, after some years experience. For any one so to assert, is to proclaim his own disgrace, and to confess his want of observation and diligence in the prosecution of the business of his life. Furnished with the mere science of the schools, and the Theology acquired within the hall of a Seminary for ministerial education, and with no experience derived from actual personal observa-

tion of the influence and effect of truth upon the minds and hearts of men, and often perplexed in my own apprehension of spiritual things, as I was at the commencement of my ministerial labours, it would be altogether sinful affectation in me to refuse to acknowledge that "days should speak and increasing years should teach wisdom." Job xxxii. 7.

In the progress of my labours among you, I am free to confess, that early prejudices have been laid aside, different views on several practical subjects have been adopted, and a very great change experienced, in relation to that mode of presenting the truths and facts of the scriptures, which appears, best calculated, under God, to secure the conversion of sinners, and the advancement of Evangelical piety in the church.

The Antinomian tendency of certain metaphysical and philosophical explanations of the doctrines of grace, and which I am far from believing is seen or suspected by some who advocate them, but which necessarily grows out of the very language and illustrations and technics employed, has been convincingly but painfully, demonstrated to me, as, in the good and gracious providence of

God, I have been furnished with such ample opportunities for observation and investigation, by having been brought in close contact with hundreds of different minds, in different degrees of cultivation, by personal converse in the inquiry room, about the state of their souls, during several extensive and powerful revivals of religion.

Its deleterious effects, both upon the impenitent, and the professing christian, were witnessed with pain and anguish. but I now bless God, that by much careful observation, and study, of the workings of the human mind, when manifestly under the leadings of the Spirit of God, and of the manner in which the great truths and facts of Scripture have been apprehended by common sense, and not according to the suggestions and light of a false philosophy, I have long since repudiated a mode of explaining the doctrines of grace, which embarrassed my own mind, hampered me in making the free and unlimited offer of the gospel, and prevented me from so pressing the conscience as to make the sinner feel that God was in the right, and he was wrong,—that his sin was his crime rather than his misfortune,—and that to con-

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tinue unregenerate a single hour or moment, was to resist the Spirit of God, and prosecute a rebellion that rendered him deserving of the deep damnation of Hell.

The opposition and trials, the griefs, and burdens of my heart for years together, to which this has subjected me, are known in some measure to you. But I had rather sustain them all again, and encounter tenfold more, than not to have been led into those views of the gospel of the grace of God, which have filled my own heart with overwhelming delight,—which operate as an incessant spur to activity in the service of God,—which goad and distract the indolent professor,—which cut men off from every excuse or apology for their sins,—which tear away the hopes of the hypocrite and self-deceived,—which promote revivals of religion and facilitate the attainment of a lofty piety,—which prove mighty, in the hand of the Spirit, to the conviction and conversion of sinners,—which exalt and ennoble the character of God and His government,—and which have been so signally owned and blessed of Him, for the salvation of souls.

In addressing you, my beloved hearers,

who have felt the power of these truths in your own experience, and whose hearts have waked up to increased and ardent prayfulness and effort for your own advancement in personal piety, and for the conversion of sinners, I feel very confident, that I shall obtain your interested and affectionate attention, on this occasion, while I urge on you as a church, the solemn responsibility resting on you to maintain an elevated standard of piety among you, and to press, individually, forward after its loftiest attainments. I trust you have been brought to see and feel that there is nothing, in this world, worth living for, but to honour and exalt the blessed Redeemer, by a walk and conversation becoming the gospel, and unitedly striving together for the faith of the gospel, to be seen in its power in your own minds, and in its reforming and subduing influence on the world around you. Much is to be done by you, and but a little season remains in which to do it.

I cast my eyes around this audience, and behold a few, but very few of those with whom I first commemorated the dying love of Jesus Christ, nearly nineteen years since.

Of the 155 members who then formed the members of this church, 75 are dead, others are removed, and gone, and but 29 remain. In less than nineteen years more, where will the balance be? Eternity shall answer where for most. And even among those, who, since that time, have been gathered into the fold of Christ, how great has been the change. Of 918 received into the communion of this church during my ministry in this place, 94 are known to have died, many others have removed, and been dismissed, leaving at this time, 464 members of the church. Of most, it is my blessed privilege to think with delight, and say with Paul "as also you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even so ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." 2 Cor. i. 14.

Some have given us pain, and do yet cause us grief, from whom we could part with greater ease, did they "building up themselves on their most holy faith and praying in the Holy Ghost, keep themselves in the love of God," and were now confidently "looking for the mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 22, 23.

I shudder lest by any means there may be

one, who has received the grace of God in vain, and feel somewhat as did Paul, when he said "Would to God ye would bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, least by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Cor. xi. 1—3.

Allow me then to press you, one and all, who name the name of Jesus, to aim at, and labour after, the highest attainments in Evangelical piety. As a church you are like "a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid." The light of your example will shine, and be felt around, whatever that may be. Reproach has already fallen on you,—some for Christ's sake, and much for my sake. Many will look and wait for your halting. The glorious displays of the Spirit of God, in the midst of you, have been pronounced the ebullitions of enthusiasm, and even some of the ministry of our own beloved church, have spoken against the scenes which have melted your hear-

and called them delusive—mere animal excitement.

In the present agitation of the public mind, and unhallowed controversies about the evils and reality of revivals, many will enquire what is your condition. If the standard of piety should decline among you, and the spirit of faith and prayer, of holy and devoted living, and of self-consecrating and self-denying adherence to Christ and practice of Christian duty, should decay among you, the wicked will rejoice and say “aha, so would we have it,”—the cause of Christ would be injured, and the dear blessed Spirit of God, grieved, and insulted by you, will take His flight. How important, therefore, is it that every one of you remain, “steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

This cannot be done without maintaining an elevated tone of piety. It is essential that your religion should come up to the Bible standard. Let the gospel of Christ assume entire and paramount control over your conduct. Evince and maintain the firmness and decision, which Evangelical piety produces. Let no considerations or circumstances whatever, destroy that unity of spirit, which now

happily obtains among you. Strive together, with resolute and invincible purpose, for the faith of the gospel, disdaining all disputes about theological questions that gender strife, and evincing, that the living, practical, influential, energetic belief of what Christ says, exerts more power over you than the dogmas of theologians, the interests of party, the peculiarities of schools, the speculative creed of your church, and the antinomian presumption, which many mistake for faith, while they have not that hope which makes its possessor "purify himself even as God is pure." And in the prosecution of the great interests of religion, see that you remain fearless and undaunted, forgiving, yet unbending and intrepid in the service of Christ, notwithstanding you should suffer from your adversaries even to the injury of your name, and the spoiling of your goods. In doing so, allow me to notice some things, which will merit your especial attention.

1. Be sure that your religion is that of principle—deep rooted, settled, invincible principle. It is not the flash of feeling, not the ephemeral excitement, not the pleasurable indulgence of the social sympathies, not the paroxysms of

party zeal, not the pride of wealth, or of sect, or of influence, or of numbers, that is to furnish the stimulus to effort; but the all constraining love of Jesus Christ, and of His holy and righteous government.

Honesty, integrity, liberality, and the absence of covetous and avaricious feelings and desires,—the prosecution of your temporal interests on principles of Evangelical morality, and not on the false and pernicious maxims of the world, are essential to the commendation of your religion. Let it never be said, to the reproach of this church, that any of its members break their word, violate their engagements, defraud their neighbour, play tricks in trade, practice extortion, oppress the poor, receive the wages of iniquity, and disregard the dictates of Evangelical charity, if they can retreat and find protection under cover of the law. “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things.” Phil. iv 8.

2. Maintain an intelligent, consistent, efficient and devoted attachment to revivals of religion. They are the choice blessings of Heaven to the church,—the rich and gracious developements of the grand Evangelical promise of the Spirit, and essential to the promotion of a lofty piety, and to the introduction of the millennial glory. Without revivals of religion, wide spread and powerful, frequent and of long and perpetual continuance, the powers of iniquity will gather strength, the floods of ungodly men will increase, the purity and glory of the church will be sullied and lost, our valuable civil and political institutions and the very liberty of our country itself will be jeopardded, corruption will overspread the face of society, our youth will grow up in sin and ripen for destruction, and hundreds and thousands of precious souls, will utterly and eternally be lost.

You have learned their value, and felt their power. You have seen the stately stepplings of the Lord in your sanctuary, and can point to many successful labourers in the vineyard of Christ, converted among you, and brought, in answer to your prayers,

from the ranks of rebellion, and enlisted under the banners of the Captain of salvation. You have seen the profane swearer become the devout worshipper of God,—the filthy lecherous creature “washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God,” 1 Cor. vi. 11, the tender youth devote his budding years to the service of Christ, and the hoary head, that had been bleached in the blasts of temptation, bow down with reverence and delight at the altar of our God. You have seen the lion converted into a lamb, the churl become liberal, and the sons of Belial made the sons of God.

With such sights and scenes in your recollection, it would be iniquity of the foulest kind to undervalue, and cease to labour for the promotion of, revivals of religion. Heavy, heavy will be the woe that shall fall on this church, if ever it becomes prudish, and skeptical, and indifferent, on the subject of the blessed effusions of the Spirit of God. I charge you, as you would not have Ichabod engraven on these walls, and the glory of God to depart from this sanctuary, that you beware how you lose your interest and con-

fidence in revivals of religion. Heed not the noise and strife abroad in the church, on this subject. If others will hunt after "the evils of revivals," and prate about these things till they make the righteous weep, and the wicked laugh, do you turn away from them, and seek the blessings of revivals, their presence and power.

To this end, be careful to cultivate the spirit of prayer. Study, and learn from your own experience, the efficacy of the prayer of faith. Be "filled with the Spirit," and live continually in accordance with His influence and leadings. Disdain the strifes indulged in with regard to new measures. Reject not a measure, which God blesses, because it is new : nor adhere to one, which is unattended with good, because it is old. When circumstances justify and call for it, summon the holy convocation, and prevail on brethern in the ministry to protract their labours among you, while the Spirit of God is poured out, and sinners may be converted. Take no part in measures that gender strife, and tend to schism, but whatever measures, God in his providence suggests, and his Spirit owns, for the conversion of sinners, and

the revival of religion, let them meet your hearty approbation. Inquire of the Lord, and regard His opinion, in preference of that of titled divines, and dignitaries in the church, who have never laboured in revivals. On this subject be decided. I speak openly and fearlessly. Labour zealously, and efficiently; and let nothing deter you from endeavouring always to have the Spirit of God in the midst of you. If the world laugh, let them laugh: if Priests and Pharisees wag the head, heed them not, but be willing to be known, and called, A REVIVAL CHURCH,—a church who feels it to be her duty, and privilege, to labour for, and enjoy, revivals of religion.

3. Take fair and strong ground on the subject of Temperance. I trust the day is not distant, when you will refuse to retain in your communion, any who will use and vend Alcoholic liquors. Let not a single member of this church withhold his or her name from the Temperance pledge. The cause of Temperance is the cause of God, and the churches owe it to Him that has redeemed them, and to a guilty dying world, to set a bright and clear example of temper-

ance. They are bound to go further in this cause than the world, and where, after all that has been said and done for the advancement of the Temperance Reformation, ministers and churches do not take strong ground, and bear their loud and full testimony against intemperance, and set a consistent example of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors it is a burning shame and a crying sin. We cannot think that such ministers and churches can ever be blessed with revivals of religion. They stand in the way of the Spirit of God, and are doing much to people the realms of everlasting woe, and fill the earth with the tears, and cries, and lamentations of the hundreds and thousands of wretched orphans and widows, rendered such by the intemperance prevailing.

On this subject I speak with deep interest. It is indeed a matter of gratulation to know that you number but one among you, and he removed without your bounds, who vends ardent spirits; but the Temperance Reformation has by no means gone to its proper extent. There remains yet stronger ground to be taken, to arrest the march of death. Till Alcoholic and fermented wines are excluded

from your tables and your houses,—till it is seen and felt to be as disreputable, and remote from temperance, to make use of them, as it is in relation to ardent spirit, this important Reformation will drag heavily.

We owe it to the cause of Christ, and to the perishing slaves of appetite, to set an example of self denial here, that will give us vantage ground, in our attempts to prevent Intemperance. Your example is already felt, and if all the members of this church will stand fast in one spirit, and with one mind strive together, to discountenance intemperance, in every practicable way, you will see a still greater number of taverns closed, and retail stores discard the deadly poison. As you wish well to the cause of revivals, as you long and pray for the purity of the church, as you would not consent to the annual immolation of 50,000 wretched drunkards, be prompt and energetic, be consistent, and zealous, in maintaining *total abstinence from ALL intoxicating liquors.*

4. Set an example of catholic liberality in religion. There is a liberality which is the result of indifference, and which is utterly consistent with a firm and faithful adhe-

rence to Christ. But there is another liberality, which springs from the love of Christ. Wherever His image is discerned, there will your affections be drawn forth. The dear friends and followers of Christ are not confined to any particular Evangelical sect, but may be found in all. Whatever may be thought of the advantage and lawfulness of separate ecclesiastical organizations, it certainly is a disgrace to religion, and a stumbling block to the world, to see different sects all ranging themselves under their several sectarian banners, and prosecuting their sectarian interests in the spirit of exclusion, and enviously and jealously refusing friendly co-operation with Christians of other denominations. Long may the spirit of sectarianism be excluded from the Presbyterian church in these United States! The Lord defeat their counsels and plans, who would substitute the spirit of exclusion and inordinate attachment to our ecclesiastical institutions, for that catholicism, which will secure a liberal patronage for, and cordial co-operation with, the great national and voluntary associations originated in the spirit of christian benevolence.

The spirit of sectarianism is the spirit of schism. We are bound to love Christ's people wherever we meet them, and to strive together for the faith of the gospel. It is not in reference to separate churches, or distinct ecclesiastical associations, that we are required to stand fast in one spirit. The command sweeps over the whole Christian community, and till there is a truce in this party strife and sectarian zeal and effort, till there is a coming together, and co-operating, on the great, broad, and obvious principles of the gospel, for **THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD**, the world will want the grand convincing proof of the divinity of the Saviour's mission, for which He prayed. John xvii. 22, 23.

This can be done, without disturbing, or destroying, the separate organizations of protestant churches. Let the churches discard the spirit of rivalry, the envious proselyting spirit, which makes them prosecute their separate sectarian interests as first and superior to the general interests, of the cause of Christ, and of a dying world;—let them meet occasionally in general conventions for the purpose of devising ways and means, and efficiently co-operating, for the conver-

sion of the world;—let them become more interested in the great questions of moral reform, and aim more distinctly at the subjugation of the world to Christ;—let them cease from exalting and magnifying minor differences, and concede to each other liberty of opinion, in matters which are not essential, not obviously revealed in the scriptures, and wholly prudential or philosophical;—let Christ, and not church, or party, be the watch word, and the rallying point, and we shall soon see some sublime specimens of a unity of spirit, and a striving together for the faith of the gospel, which shall make the powers of hell to tremble.

With such views and expectations therefore, embark fearlessly and heartily in all the great projects of benevolence, which look forward towards the conversion of the world. Throw in your patronage, in aid of the voluntary associations which bring Christians of different denominations into close contact. Let the cause of Bibles and Missions, and Education, and Sunday schools, &c., receive their proper share of your regard. Especially let the missionary cause lie near your hearts. Let it share largely in your prayers and pat-

ronage. Esteem the monthly concert of prayer, and be yourselves determined, as God shall give you opportunity, to act the part of missionaries wherever you go, warning and counselling and intreating impenitent sinners, and striving, by plain and faithful personal converse, and earnest prayer on their behalf, to bring them to repentance. Overlook the narrow bounds of sect: break through the prejudices and trammels of party, and wherever you meet a sinner, be ready to tell him of Christ, and the great salvation; or a Christian brother, extend to him the hand of Christian affection and fellowship. Never countenance by your example or spirit the sin of schism.

5. Take right ground on the subject of slavery. The churches in this country cannot long refuse to act in relation to this matter, without incurring guilt. It is becoming daily more and more manifest that no man can be a Christian, and retain his fellow man in involuntary servitude any longer than he can adopt efficient means to restore to him his liberty. The bodies and souls of men are unlawful merchandise. God never gave man a right to enslave his fellow.

The cries of the needy and oppressed, will reach the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and the oppressor shall not escape the rod of his displeasure. In this, as well as other matters when men violate the laws of Heaven, Christians must be witnesses for Christ. Under the sin and curse of slavery our country groans, and never have we any reason to expect it will be remedied, till the church repents and abjures all participation in the matter. If ministers, and elders and professing Christians will not set the example, and bear testimony for Christ, against the cupidity, injustice, and oppression, which have been woven into laws and wrought into a system that are now making the name of a citizen of the United States that heretofore and yet high and honorable title, become odious abroad, there will be no attempt at reformation made by the impenitent around.

It is by the church, God seeks to reform the world: and to the guilt and shame of a christian community, it will be hereafter said, that to the vices of two million of degraded heathen, in the midst of them, cursed, and damned without number by the violence and pollution, the fraud and oppression and

avarice of a free population, did they turn a deaf ear and a callous heart. For the iniquity of such covetousness God is wroth, and will smite. Already has he smitten. "I have hid me saith God and was wroth but they went on frowardly in the way of their heart." Isa. lvii. 17. Woe to them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless! Isa. x. 1, 2. The Heavens cannot long remain serene. The black cloud of divine fury, is already skirting the horizon, and occasionally the distant thunder is heard, and the lightning gleams across the sky, to give notice of coming judgment. If men will not hear and lay it to heart: if they will not learn from the Word of God, and attend to the voice of His providence; if they will not fear, and repent, and annul the unrighteous and cruel laws they have decreed, the sighs and groans of a wretched and afflicted people, will be heard in Heaven. The sympathies of the world are begining to be moved on

their behalf, and if those who practise oppression, and support slavery by their approbation, example, indulgence of prejudice, and laws, will not be moved to emancipate their slaves, God will take this thing, ere long, into his own hand, and as He has said will "watch to bring evil on the oppressor."

It is true that the subject of emancipation is encumbered with difficulties, and that many well disposed and excellent men, have their fears about it, but none, nor all the evils incident to the immediate abandonment of the traffic in human flesh, and the relinquishment of all right, on the part of man, to the person of his fellow man, can be comparable with those, which will, and must, very shortly eventuate, if oppression does not cease.

Neither do the fears expressed, receive any countenance from the history of emancipation. In many instances, the evils are imaginary, and the difficulties vanish, when once the mind yields to the claim of Christ, and the heart is moved with sympathy for the distressed. It is competent for the States, in their separate sovereignty, to remedy this evil, and it would be an impeachment of talent and worth, altogether unpardonable to

after the great Captain of salvation, who designs the conquest of the world.

But enough of these general topics, designed to promote your efficient social influence as a church. A few words to several classes of my hearers and I have done.

1. To professors of religion. I have endeavoured to aid you, in your examination of yourselves, and, when first you professed yourself to be on the Lord's side, and since, have sought to exhibit to you, fully and clearly from the scriptures, what it is to be a Christian. To the word of God I have ever gone for the evidences of true piety, and oft have been constrained, as I believed that Word, to tear away the hopes that were destroying the soul. I have pressed the claims of Jesus Christ upon you, for your entire hearts, and poured contempt on every pretence to religion, that did not commence with, and was not sustained by, an unreserved and cordial and full surrender of yourselves and all you have and are to God. By some I have been called *denuciatory*, and accused of *harshness*; but God knows that it has not been, the feelings of my heart, but the harshness of the surgeon, who probed the wound

in order to effect a cure. My anxieties, and griefs, and yearnings of heart, and anguish, when called on to inflict pain on others, and bear testimony against their sinful ways, and hopes, and self flattery, have indeed been studiously concealed from them, but are known to the great Searcher of hearts. I could not, dared not, take part with the rebel, or self righteous pharisee, and self deceived hypocrite, against God.

Hereafter I am to have no charge of your souls, and perhaps no opportunity to probe your consciences. I beseech you, beware how you ever take comfort, while you are not distinctly *conscious*, that it is your supreme purpose, the choice of your heart, and your daily endeavour, to live WHOLLY for God, and to 'abstain from all appearance of evil.' May the great Head of the church, send you a pastor of deeper experience, of more extensive knowledge of the heart, and of greater faithfulness, who will search your hearts, and try your ways, that, if any of you have held fast to deceit, under my ministry, you may escape from your delusion before it be eternally too late. I long to hear that you will maintain an elevated tone of piety among

assume, that were they disposed to act in the matter, there is not wisdom enough among their statesmen, to devise the way for the safe and speedy emancipation of every slave on American soil.

It behoves Christian churches, to let their voice be heard on this subject, and by the testimony of truth, by the voice of kindness, by importunate prayer for the oppressed, and by their own example of repentance, by a refusal of all participation in the guilt of slavery, by affording facilities for moral and religious improvement to the coloured population, and by treating them according to their personal and moral worth, to exert an influence for the salvation of our country, and the restoration to their rights as rational beings, and as candidates for eternity, the two million of our degraded and afflicted fellow creatures.

On this subject, I hope every one of you will lay aside prejudice, and in the light of the Bible, and the providence of God, pursue your serious and prayerful investigation, so that none shall be found on the side of those whom God condemns, and take the part of oppression and violence, in opposition to His

claims. I know you will not misunderstand me, and suppose, that I advocate the amalgamation of colours, or the destruction of existing tastes and prejudices, in the regulation of social intercourse, but only that I plead for the extinction of those prejudices, which slavery engenders and fosters, and that the smile of approbation and hand of friendship, be given to our oppressed and injured fellow creatures, encouraging, and facilitating their efforts to render themselves happy, intelligent, respectable and worthy of our esteem.

We owe it to Him that hath redeemed us by his blood, and freed us from the yoke and bondage of our sins, to co-operate with Him in His attempts "to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and to proclaim the acceptable year, (the jubilee) of the Lord." Isa. lxi—1, 2. Let *your* influence be on the side of right and truth. Stand close by the law of God, and press in the footsteps of Him, whose sceptre is righteousness, and whose throne is the habitation of justice, that you be not deserted by the forces of Israel, in their triumphant march

after the great Captain of salvation, who designs the conquest of the world.

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in order to effect a cure. My anxieties, and griefs, and yearnings of heart, and anguish, when called on to inflict pain on others, and bear testimony against their sinful ways, and hopes, and self flattery, have indeed been studiously concealed from them, but are known to the great Searcher of hearts. I could not, dared not, take part with the rebel, or self righteous pharisee, and self deceived hypocrite, against God.

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you, and ever be "prompt to every good word and work." I sustain to most of you a very tender relation, and feel for you the solicitude of a parent. For, "although ye may have 10,000 instructors in Christ yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel." May "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thes. v. 23.

2. I turn to a few who cause me grief at present, I mean back-sliders, who have declined from the love and ways of God. I know not that there is one among you, who ought to be excluded from the communion of the church, and feel thankful, that there have been no gross out-breakings among you, although there have been scenes transacted, in the midst of you, and stumbling blocks thrown in your way, by some in whom you once confided, well calculated to ruin the souls of men. I have often wondered that the cases of defection were so few, and felt it to be a particular cause for gratitude, that notwithstanding the noise and strife around,

the impeachment of my motives, and the detraction of my character, on the part of those whose standing in society entitled them to respect, and who possessed the confidence of a large portion of the religious community, I have not been called to weep over those who have utterly apostatised, and turned again to work iniquity with greediness.

But I know there are some among you, who, at this time, are far from God,—wandering like lost sheep in the wilderness. You know how I have counselled, and warned, and prayed with you, and wept over you, and how my hopes in relation to you, have been again and again dashed, and now I am called to leave you yet backsliding,—yet refusing to return to God with all your heart! I charge you to beware, that you do not utterly slide away from God. Another step—another day's delay, and you may sink in the mire of pollution—the strong blasts of temptation may overthrow you, and you may bring a reproach on yourselves and on the cause of God “For if after you have escaped from the corruptions in the world through the knowlege of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you be again entangled

therein, and overcome, your latter end will be worse than the beginning: for it will happen to you according to the true proverb, the dog has returned to his vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." 2 Pet. ii. 20, 22.

3. From you I pass to the impenitent, who have never yet professed to submit to Christ, nor felt the love of God. It is true you constitute but a small portion of my ordinary hearers. God has had mercy on this congregation, and on me also, in making so many turn from the error of their way. But here and there I discover a hoary head, or blooming cheek, or care worn visage, which mark those that yet are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise."

1. My aged friends! nearly 20 years have I come to you testifying of your guilt and danger, and warning you to flee from the wrath to come, and still you linger among those whose hearts are in the world, and live estranged from God. No altar for God has yet been reared in your house: nor does the blessed Jesus reign in your hearts. I have seen you on the brink of the grave, and pray-

ed by some of your bed sides, and witnessed the scenes of grief, that death had caused around you, and filled you with bitter lamentation, and still you withhold your hearts from God! Oh what a load of guilt are you bearing with you into eternity! Shall it ever be thrown off? I beseech you take the alarm. God is this day speaking to you by a new means. It may be the last that He will try. His Spirit grieved, and his Son rejected, to day, may secure eternal destruction to you. Oh then, "to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

2. And you that are immersed in the cares and business of life, with your families growing about you, and toiling for the wealth of this world, how vain are all your efforts after bliss, while you make not the everlasting God your portion! Some of you are aware that God has claims upon you: you are anxious your children should become his servants, but you feel that the riches and honours of the world absorb your attention and attract your regard. To serve God and mammon too, your own minds and consciences testify to be incompatible. One or the other you know must be renounced, as the object of supreme

pursuit; and while the world engages and has your hearts, you refuse to decide for God. You yield to the controul of earth, and push far off from you the thoughts of repentance. The same dilatoriness and indecision in your worldly business, you know would ruin you, and they will as certainly ruin your immortal souls, if you do not repent and amend your ways. God has been showing by His providence in this place, the utter folly and absurdity of those who "make haste to be rich." He can curse men's blessings, and make the prosperity of fools to minister to their destruction.

One after another may rise in great power and flourish and spread his branches "like the green bay-tree," but if the everlasting God be not his portion, ere long you shall look for them but they will not be found. Twenty years to come, will tell of as many and as great changes as the twenty years that have last been numbered with those beyond the flood. "The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." Psl. xxxvii. 20. Oh it will be a sad, sad parting you will have one

day to undergo! God calls upon you now to part, with all your ambitious, and covetous, and vain glorious schemes to enrich and exalt yourselves, and to give your hearts to Him. If you refuse a little longer, He will turn his hand, and despoil you of your gains, or he will send the grim messenger of death to tear you away from all your heart holds dear in this world. If, in the prosecution of your wordly gains, you lose sight of God, and stifle the voice of conscience; if you make increasing gold, your trust, and for its attainments sacrifice principle, the Lord "will cast away your substance." "Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not be unpunished." Prov. vi. 2. "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing." "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." "The ways of every one that is greedy of gain taketh away the life of the owners thereof." "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished." Prov. xiii. 11. It is a desperate warfare you are waging against God. The Lord will have you in derision. "He will destroy the house of the proud, but he will establish the border of the widow." "Your inheritance may be hastily gotten at

the beginning but the end will not be blessed." Prov. xx. 21. "The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death." Prov. xxi. 6.

These things you have been often told, but if you will not believe, and lay them to heart, you will find them true when it is too late to remedy the evil you are bringing on your own souls, and on those of your families." "He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want." Prov. xxii. 16. "Wilt thou then set thine eyes on that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." Prov. xxiii. 5. No longer pursue the airy phantom. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and then all these things shall be added unto you." Mat. vi. 33.

3. My dear young friends I turn to you with peculiar interest. I rejoice that some of you have consecrated the dew of your youth to God. Live only for Him, and determine to do all the good you can in the world. Hereafter, should our lives be spared, I hope to hear of your waxing valiant

in the faith, and contributing your efficient efforts for the honour and glory of our blessed Jesus,—and when my head is laid in the grave, may you rise to greater usefulness and ardour in the service of our God!

But some of you are old in guilt, though young in years. My dear children and beloved youth, how often has the Spirit striven with you, and conscience reproached, and God called, and Jesus plead with you, and yet you have refused to repent and forsake your sins? How often have I seen the tear start to your eyes, and trickle down your cheeks, when I have talked to you about Christ and your soul's salvation! How often have some of you come to the inquiry room, and asked what you should do to be saved, and yet when told have refused to meet the claims of Christ! You have brushed away the falling tear, you have braced your young hearts against the Spirit of God, and oh you have treasured up for yourselves, already, recollections, which, if you do not repent, will harrow up your souls in Hell. When I am gone you will think of all your foolish speeches, and your hard sayings, and your evil ways, and of what has been told you fro

time to time, and how you have despised the calls of God. Oh I fear lest of some of you it may be said, "and thou shalt mourn at last when thy flesh and thy body shall be consumed in the grave and say how have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me." Prov. v. 12. I leave you in a world full of snares and temptations, and who knows what will become of you? If you come to Christ, He will take care of you, and be your guide even until death, but oh if you refuse, everlasting horrors shall attend you to the judgment seat.

In conclusion: to all the members of this church, I say *stand fast in one spirit*. Look directly to God, and pray that He may send you a pastor who shall be more faithful than the unworthy servant, who has shared so largely in your esteem. Seek for one that will travail as in birth for the salvation of souls,—that will not fear or shun to declare unto you the whole counsel of God, who will aim directly and supremely at the honour and glory of Jesus Christ, and be willing to spend and be spent for Him—who will lift up

his voice, and cry aloud, and shew unto you, your transgressions, and who will set you an example of humble holy self sacrificing effort, to advance the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ. And that you may profit by his ministrations, maintain religion in your families, exercise authority over your children, and bring them under pastoral watch and care. Avoid every thing like a proud censorious and contentious spirit. Especially I entreat those of my friends, who have taken a deep interest in my personal trials and difficulties, to watch over their spirits, and avoid all malice and bitterness and evil speaking against those that have injured me. Cultivate the spirit of forgiveness, and the spirit of prayer, and if reviled, revile not again, and if reproached threaten not, but commit your souls, your interests, your unworthy friend, to God who judgeth righteously.

From you I ask the continuance of your esteem, and a remembrance in your prayers. Although for a saeson we may be separated in this world, let us hope to meet in heaven around the throne of God and of the Lamb. In discharging my duty among you, I doubtless have often erred, and often lacked.

For the kindness and confidence extended to me by you, I publicly tender you my sincere and hearty thanks. I carry with me many tender memorials of your affection, which time will never efface from my heart. To your attachment, and conduct in relation to me, under God, I owe much for my present standing and hope of future usefulness in the church of God. And "I rejoice greatly in the Lord that now at the last your love of me hath flourished again." Phil. iv. 10.

If in prosecuting the design of my ministry among you, I have incurred the enmity of any, as I know I have not been without enemies, I freely and fully forgive all the injury which they may have done me. To provoke their enmity I never desired or designed;—but when my views of truth and duty have conflicted with theirs, and faithfulness to the souls of men has compelled me to refuse compliance with their wishes, or obedience to their threats, I have chosen rather to sustain their ire, and encounter their opposition, than wound my own conscience and incur the displeasure of Christ. In relation to every slander, and all the impeachments of

motive, with which I have been tried, I calmly await the decision of the great day, and pray God, that both friends and foes may obtain forgiveness, and find mercy when He comes to judge the secrets of men.

In parting from the people of this congregation and of this place, I bear with me a heavy and melancholy thought,—I leave some still out of Christ and unreconciled to God,—aliens, strangers, wretched slaves of satan, and prisoners doomed to everlasting chains if they do not repent. I would have been exceedingly happy, to think that I leave none in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. But it is a sad and solemn foreboding I have, that to some it will be found I have proved a savour of death unto death. May God in great mercy grant that where all past means have proved unsuccessful, others may be furnished, which shall be owned and blessed of Him to the salvation of their immortal souls.

THE END.