

THE
NEW-JERSEY PREACHER:
OR,
SERMONS
ON
PLAIN & PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

BY SOME OF THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH,
RESIDING IN THE STATE OF NEW-JERSEY.

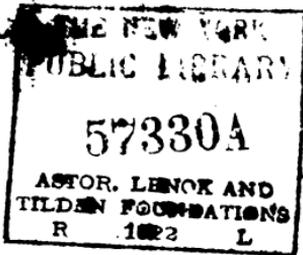
VOL. I.

Edited by
1847

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though ~~you~~
you by us; we pray *you* in Christ's stead ~~to be~~
to God....2 Cor. v. 20.

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District of New-Jersey, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the thirty-first day of March, in the thirty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States of America, George S. Woodhull and Isaac V. Brown, of the said district, have deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit :

“The New-Jersey Preacher, or Sermons on plain and practical subjects. By some of the ministers of the gospel residing in the State of New-Jersey. Vol. I. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.— 2 Cor. v. 20.”

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “ An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned ;” and also to the act, entitled, “ An act supplementary to an act, entitled an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical, and other prints.”

ROBERT BOGGS,

Clerk of the District of New-Jersey.

PREFACE.

THE present state of the world presents a prospect, highly interesting to the philosopher and statesman—and not less so to the real christian. The encouraging and gloomy scenes are so mingled together, as alternately to excite emotions of hope and fear. When the christian looks abroad on the earth, he discovers, comparatively few, who profess to believe and practice the precepts of the gospel.* The extensive continents of Asia and Africa are almost wholly immersed in the darkness of Pagan superstition and idolatry, or led away by the delusions of Mahomet. Europe has for many years been a *field of blood*; and our own beloved country has lately engaged in a sanguinary conflict with a powerful nation.

In the midst of this gloom and confusion, there is still something that gives to the christian an animating hope

* The following ingenious calculation will serve to shew of what small extent the christian religion is, when compared with those many and vast countries, that are overspread with Paganism or Mahometanism. Supposing the inhabited world to be divided into *thirty parts*, only *three* of those parts are possessed by christians of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communion—*two* by christians of the Greek church—*six* by Jews and Mahometans—and the remaining **NINETEEN** by Pagans.

It is to be observed that this calculation was made before the late discoveries of the north west part of America, the north east part of Asia, the vast tract of New-Holland, New-Guinea, and the numerous other islands in the Pacific ocean.—How much greater then must the numerical difference appear at the present day between that part of mankind who enjoy the light of christianity, and that part who are now groping in Pagan darkness!

Miss Hannah Adams' view of religions, p. 496.

that the time is not far distant, when heavenly light and peace will be diffused through this dark and troubled world.

The increasing number of young men who are willing to devote themselves to the work of the gospel ministry—the numerous Missionary and Bible Societies that have been established in G. Britain and America within a few years past—the lively interest taken in our own country in the establishment of Theological seminaries—the spirit of liberality that has been manifested by all denominations of christians, in sending the Scriptures and a preached gospel among the Heathen—the avidity with which books on religious subjects are sought for and read, give us reason to hope that the dawning of a brighter day is near at hand.

Surrounded by such scenes, it surely becomes the duty of professing christians, and more especially of the ministers of the gospel, to be diligent and zealous in promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. There is no object of greater magnitude—there is nothing on which the peace and happiness of mankind so much depend as the diffusion of the knowledge of a crucified Saviour. The universal practice of the truths and precepts of the gospel would put an effectual stop to fraud and injustice—to deadly feuds and animosities between nations, and individuals, and make this world a peaceful abode where the great Creator would delight to dwell with the workmanship of his own hands. It is the gospel of Christ that raises man to that dignity in the scale of beings for which his nature is designed—it is this that throws light on the darknes of the grave, and cheers us with the enlivening prospect of a glorious immortality,

To spread the knowledge of divine truth ; to concentrate the exertions of many in holding forth the *word of life* in a plain, forcible and engaging manner ; to give (if possible) some check to the progress of iniquity ; and to stir up professing christians to diligence and fidelity, are among the great objects that have induced the editors to engage in the publication of this volume.

We believed that a work of this kind, consisting of sermons, by ministers of the gospel residing in the State of New-Jersey, on practical and important subjects—adapted to be read in families or in religious societies—preserved free from useless and unedifying controversy—and recommended by its novelty and variety to the laudable curiosity of individuals, could not fail to excite a lively interest through the churches in this state, and contribute largely to the edification and improvement of christians.

Our devout and humble prayer is, that the great Head of the church would give a blessing to this work, that it may serve to promote his glory, and the salvation of our fellow-men.

We cannot close these observations without returning our thanks to our Reverend fathers and brethren, who have so promptly complied with our request, in contributing materials for this volume.

If sufficient encouragement be given, to warrant the undertaking, we hope at no distant period to present to the public another volume of the “New-Jersey Preacher.”

GEORGE S. WOODHULL, } EDITORS.
ISAAC V. BROWN, }

NEW-JERSEY, July 24, 1813.

ERRATA.

- Page 49, line 8 from the bottom, for *creation* read *creature*
57, line 14 from the top, for *healing* read *feeling*
66, line 8 from the bottom, for *feint* read *faint*
do. line 3 do. for *perfect* read *perfect*
68, line 4 do. for *purse* read *pure*
96, line 7 do. for *intrusted* read *instructed*
164, line 4 from the top, for *promise is* read *promises are*
174, line 16 do. for *tenfold* read *twofold*
185, line 3 from the bottom, for *few* read *many*
298, line 15 from the top, for *victorioies* read *victories*
359, line 1 on the top, for *earl* read *early*
362, line 11 from the top, for *difficult* read *defective*
365, line 8 do. for *corrupt* read *correct*
348, line 2 from the bottom, for I. read II.

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BY ROBERT FINLEY, A. M.

Pastor of the Presbyterian Congregation of Baskingridge.

NEW-JERSEY PREACHER.

SERMON VII.

Matthew v. 14.—Ye are the light of the world: A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

TO man in paradise, all things were full of light. His eye was single, his understanding clear, and the divine image was bright upon his soul. This was sufficient for his direction in his passage through the world, and if this were not sufficient, the light of the descending divinity was daily displayed before him. Happy for him if with such helps he had continued his journey to the heavenly land. But when he sinned his situation was greatly changed. He stumbled and fell upon the very brink of everlasting darkness. But as God had ordained, not entirely to cast away a sinful race, it was necessary that our first parent should be supplied with a little light. What was given him was large enough to keep him from despair; and yet so small as to be expressive of the divine displeasure. He no more enjoyed the perfect assurance of the love of God which he once possessed; nor did he see the heavens continually open to him as before: but was left to follow the twinkling ray of an obscure promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Instead of the quickening splendor of the present divinity, the mission of angels and their ministry made up the light of unhappy man. In this manner the father of lights communicated himself in the days of the patriarchs. In the midst

of night only a star appeared and that but rarely. As the designs of mercy were opened up, the Lord gave a clearer light coming down himself on mount Sinai ; but not in such a manner as he appeared in the happy garden. There in the mildest and most condescending manner he unveiled his glory. But on Sinai he shrouded his awful light in darkness, making the cloud his chariot and the thick cloud his pavilion. In process of time a clearer light shone forth, and the Baptist preached repentance for the remission of sins. Afterwards, the sun of righteousness arose with healing in his wings, and happy they who walked in his light. Yet it was but a short period that the sun of righteousness continued to shine on earth. He made a few revolutions and then removed to shine in brighter worlds, and display his beams amidst the glory of everlasting day. Before his removal he had enlightened a portion of our race, and restored the lost image of God to their souls. Having done this he departed, leaving them by their light to lighten the world, till time shall be no more. Ye, said he, are the light of the world ; let your light shine before men. The collective body of christians is by Christ's appointment designed to illuminate mankind. Their lives are ordained as the medium through which, in general, men will see religion and judge of it as true or false ; the way-marks by which they will learn the road to heaven, or for want of which they will err from the way of righteousness and perish in their error. In a situation attended with so much importance and accountability, it becomes the follower of Christ to present the brightest points of their christian character before the world, and at the best advantage, lest their light be found as darkness.—Our subject naturally leads us to consider,

I. Wherein consists the light of the christian's life.

II. The ways in which he can best present his light before men.

I. Wherein consists the light of the christian's life.

In shewing this, it would be an easy matter to fill up several discourses. The christian graces might be all enumerated, each of which contributes something to adorn the man of God. But some of the more eminent parts of the christian character, and which at once enlighten the beholder and attract him toward heaven, are, gentleness and love, innocence and separation from the world—superiority to the vicissitudes of life and heavenliness of mind—humility and repentance.

1. The christian's light consists in gentleness and love. If it were not so these characteristics would not be so often mentioned nor so much insisted on in the holy scripture. They are there described in such a manner that a beam of light seems to accompany the very recommendation and description. "The wisdom that is from above," saith the apostle James, "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace," James iii. 17, 18. The sun of righteousness sends his beams in benignant influence upon the heart, rendering it soft and pliable and affectionate. Does the apostle ever appear to more advantage than when he writes to the Colossians? "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted not the gospel of God only; but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us," 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8. While he thus expresses himself, we are satisfied, that Christ had imparted to him his own temper

and dispositions.—I do not mean to say that an angry christian is an impossible character; nor that it is unlawful for the best of men to be angry on just occasions. But I mean to say, that passion though it may be sometimes necessary and often lawful, is like the angry cloud which darkens rather than enlightens the traveller. It is difficult to persuade mankind that the lamp of holiness burns amidst hardness, unkindness and severity. However badly they may judge in other things, they will readily decide with the apostle; that “where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work,” James ii. 13. The world judges rightly in this, it being utterly impossible for the grace of God, in any considerable degree to dwell amidst the conflictings of the angry passions. The spirit of truth speedily departs from the realms of noise and strife and seeks some more tranquil habitation. In secret silence of the mind; our God and there our heaven we find.—This gentleness of disposition derives great lustre from being connected with that love which is solicitous for the happiness of others. The man who is easy, and amiable and gentle in his manners, soothes and interests the beholder. But love takes hold upon his heart. It is love in the Saviour’s character that constrains us, and so endears his precious name to our hearts. To the power of this he resorted, when every other influence failed him, in his desire to convince and save the inhabitants of Jerusalem. His flowing tears bespoke the pity of his heart, and had they not been given up to a blind and obdurate mind would have convinced them, that as God is love, so the fulness of the Godhead did dwell bodily in him; he was so filled with love and compassion for their souls.

And when christians possess this temper and to such a degree as to persuade the world, that they have a real compassion for the perishing state of men, they have gone far to make sinners believe in the necessity of being born again. Love and pity will do more to enlighten and persuade, than a thousand cold and unfeeling arguments. Perhaps, a great reason why ministers have so little success in persuading men, is the want of a fervent charity for their souls. Indifference to the interests of others, whether temporal or spiritual, too much resembles the temper of the world, which has never been enlightened by the Spirit of truth.

2d. In innocence and separation from the world. The innocence of Adam made him a fit object for the love and regard of angels. It arrayed him with a robe of light and crowned him with a crown of glory. And being lost by his apostacy from God, his fine gold became dim, and the excellency of his character departed. Sin is called in the scripture by the name of darkness, and the father of lies is represented as the prince of darkness. God, because of his perfect holiness is called that *light in which there is no darkness at all*. Whosoever becomes a follower of God as a dear child, is assimilated to him who dwelleth in the light, and is exhorted to cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. We cannot help admiring the lives of those who pass through a polluting world, without materially injuring their christian character, by any great departure from the perfect rule of righteousness. There is something in the heart of man, notwithstanding his fall, which makes him remember primeval purity, fix it as the standard of all that is excellent, bow before it wherever it is in any good degree discernible, and mark it as

the leading star which conducts to heaven. The world is in reality but little influenced by those disciples, whose lives are not unblemished, however splendid their talents, however great their attainments, however brilliant their accomplishments. If they admire them, it is for their strength of mind, and elegance of taste, but not as proper guides to heaven. Their lives only, have influence on the hearts and consciences of men, who bear a proper resemblance to their Lord and master, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."—Connected with innocence of life, is *separation from the world*. Not an austere withdrawing from the endearments of society, nor slothful negligence of appointed duties. But that temper and conduct which in the midst of all the rational enjoyments of society, and the diligence of a faithful steward, still exhibits the character of a pilgrim and sojourner. There is something exceedingly impressive about the man, who can persuade the beholder that he believes and feels himself made for a better world. "Be not conformed to this world," is a direction of the greatest moment. It is to little purpose to persuade men to take their affections from the earth, unless we can at the same time persuade them, that we have not selected the companions, the fashions, and the interests of the present life as our best portion. The father of the faithful is conspicuous among the cloud of witnesses, who "when called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and went out not knowing whither he went, and sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose

builder and maker is God; confessing that he was a pilgrim and stranger in the earth," Heb. xi.

3d. The christian light consists; in being superior to the troubles of the world, and in heavenliness of mind. The children of this life who have no better hope and look for no better portion, act consistently with themselves when they keenly feel all the vicissitudes of life. They have here their gods and no wonder if they are troubled, when these are lost or endangered. They know no other happiness. But God and man expect something more from those who have received a kingdom that cannot be moved, and are made heirs of an inheritance, that fadeth not away. Not that the good man loses the sensibilities of his nature, or puts off the feelings of humanity. The infusion of divine grace does the more soften the heart. The pious parent does not love his children less for being made partaker of the grace of God, but the more, viewing them as immortal beings. Nor does the pious youth less esteem and reverence his earthly parents, because he hath a father in heaven. He loves them more abundantly because the love of God hath strengthened and refined his heart. The christian may therefore feel under his various afflictions. But while he feels and mourns, he feels and mourns as those who have a better hope. "Therefore," saith the Psalmist, "will we not fear, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High," Ps. xlvi. 2, 4. The character which interests mankind and makes them wish they were possessed of it, is that of the man who weeps and is afflicted when the tender ties of nature are unloosed. But who smiles through

his tears, looks upward, cries Abba Father, and is assured that his beloved interests are still safe. On viewing such a life, it is easy to discover that the end of that man must be peace; and scarcely any one can forbear devoutly wishing himself possessed of such a frame of mind. The disciple that is cast down but not destroyed, perplexed but not in despair, who looks away from the things that are seen and temporal, thinks of the things which are unseen and eternal, and casts his anchor within the veil, makes every beholder wish himself a christian.—Especially, when combined with this temper, there exists a heavenliness of mind. Men must see some resemblance of heaven, before they can be persuaded to seek it, and they can no where so well discern it as in the lives of those who are journeying thither. While the patriarch in the cool of the evening walks in his fields, contemplating his eternal rest: while the psalmist remembers God on his bed, converses with him, and rejoices in the shadow of his wings: while the apostle has his conversation in heaven, from whence he looks for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, to change his vile body; they carry a divine illumination, not upon their souls only, but almost on their very countenances. I once heard of a little child, who being asked by a pious mother, whether he would not wish to be like a certain one of his relatives; answered, no. Being asked in like manner concerning another; he answered, no. These were both professing christians; but they had not in operation, the unction from the Holy One, nor were they like persons who waited for the coming of the bridegroom. But when he was asked what he thought of a friend who was eminent for a useful life, and for com-

munion with God: he answered, oh! mother, I wish I may live and die like him.

4th. The last part of the christian's light is humility and repentance. "And be ye clothed with humility," saith the apostle Peter. In his estimation, the christian's most beautiful apparel, was humility, and his most useful ornament, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. On the humble heart, God himself looks with approbation; and in his sight humility is of great price. Purple and fine linen, parade and equipage have their effect upon the human mind; but they have no tendency to convince the beholder, that the possessor is bound for heaven. Vanity and self-estimation excite men to great, sometimes to noble actions. But after all, they manifest but little of the spirit of heaven. Indeed few things excite greater disgust, than a mixture of high religious profession, and empty parade or swelling pride. When the apostle wished to make a deep impression on the Ephesians, and establish a conviction on their hearts, that he had the marks of a true apostle, he appealed to his humility. "Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and many tears," Acts xx. 19. Pride looks too much like the prince of darkness to lighten men to heaven. Even the lawful equipage of wealth sometimes lessens the christian's light. Let those therefore who would wish to hold forth the light to others, learn of Jesus who was *meek and lowly of heart*. Moreover, because in this world of weakness and temptation, offences must come, and the christian's light be for a season dimmed; therefore a light is requisite which can shine through and even dissipate his darkness. And such a light repent-

ance is found to be. The waters of contrition have a mighty efficacy to cleanse the heart. They cannot justify in the sight of God. This the blood of Christ alone can do. But they may purify him. "For behold this self-same thing, saith the apostle, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire," 2 Cor. vii. 11. While the heart is healed toward God, the wounded character is recovered in the sight of men. Few descriptions in the holy scripture, strike us more forcibly, than that of the prodigal especially after he comes to himself. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him; Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," Luke xv. 18, 19. It is almost the best evidence that can be given of real piety, when men after lapsing into sin, are truly humbled, and with sincere repentance recovered to God. It requires a greater effort of the soul to endeavour a recovery of what it has lost by temptation, than to make the first exertion toward a religious life. Offering to God the sacrifice of a contrite heart, is an act at which the world looks with wonder. For although it may for a while stand in doubt whether this profession of repentance is sincere; yet when it is once convinced of this, it is convicted, and desires to partake of the principle which has actuated the real penitent. Repentance is the grace which excites interest and joy, among the angels of God.—We proceed,

II. To consider the ways in which the christian light may best be made to shine before men.

Christ having committed the illumination of the world to his disciples, proceeded to inform them that it was

not proper to veil this light ; that they ought to act not like those who light a candle and put it under a bushel. In a word that they ought to let their light shine before men.—This may be done ; by the disciples standing foremost in every thing that is excellent and useful : by the uniformity of his conduct : and by making it appear, that his happiness consists in following Christ.

1. By standing foremost in every thing that is excellent or useful ;—the conspicuous place is always in the fore-front. There the soldier acquires his glory, and by doing good and being ready to communicate, the good man obtains the respect of others. “What do ye more than others,” said Christ, as he taught his disciples, where was their proper place in point of duty. While christians do not exceed others, in patience and forbearance, in activity and zeal, in love to God and charity to men, their light is not discernible. They are lost amidst the multitude, and cannot be distinguished. They should come out and be separate, therefore ; not with the vain-glorious forwardness of the man who seeks his own things more than the things of Christ, but with the sincerity of those who feel it a duty to be meekly conspicuous in every grace. Without wishing to attract the notice of the world, they should be desirous to make a good impression in favour of true piety. The pharisee was condemned, who to obtain the praise of men, fasted twice in the week, paid tythes of all he possessed, and for a pretence made long prayers. But the conduct of Nicodemus was more praise-worthy who was a disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews. It was a noble commendation of the Corinthians, that their charity abounded greatly. The forwardness of their minds was the pleasing theme of the apostle’s

boast. For he bore them record, that according to their power, yea and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves, so that their zeal had provoked many. Religion must live and act to be visible to the world: and it must live and act with greater vigor than the spirit of the world, to have its proper influence. True piety forgets the things that are behind, and reaches to the things which are before. Every duty does not belong to every christian, God having marked out different lines for different characters. But in their proper sphere, every disciple ought to feel a holy ambition to be among the foremost, in whatsoever is lovely and of good report. They may be, and often are too tardy in their course of duty. But this very tardiness obscures the lustre of their character, and leaves a degree of doubt whether they are influenced by the spirit of Christ or not.

2. The christian's light is seen in the uniformity of his life. There may be light and life where there is great unevenness of conversation. But they are greatly obscured by such unevenness. While there are many ebbs and flowings in the current of the professor's life, he is often seen by the world as dark as its own children. Our Saviour has informed us that the water which he gives, shall become in him that drinks it, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, John iv. 14. It therefore becomes a fixed belief with men in general, that there is no true religion, where the course of christian duty does not proceed as evenly as the stream from the living fountain. For want of this the greatest acts of duty and even piety, are only like the blazing of a meteor, which flashes and is extinguished, and seems afterward only to increase the darkness. Light it is, but no one can be benefited by it; it is so sudden and tran-

sitory. The jealousy of man concerning the piety of others, will not suffer him to follow them unless they have some resemblance of Jesus Christ: "who is the same, to-day, yesterday and forever." They will suspect that it is melancholy, or enthusiasm, or hypoerisy, if it only appears on a sudden and disappears as soon. But where by the grace of God, the sense of duty, and the feelings of divine love operate with a steady influence and produce a uniform obedience to the will of God, there the best impressions are ever made in favor of piety. Such light is like that of the sun constant and uniform, to the praise and glory of God.

3. The christian's light appears, by letting others see that his happiness is increased by religion.

The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever. The heart pants after happiness, and wheresoever it can be found with the greatest certainty, men will most naturally go. It is certain that religion does soothe the afflictions, and griefs of our nature, and enlarge its joys. It is the duty therefore of every christian to grow in grace, that he may give religion its proper force upon his heart, in order to diminish the pressure of his afflictions, and render his life as tranquil and happy as possible. He may thus convince mankind, that it is a high privilege as well as duty to have received the Spirit of the gospel. Peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of adoption which embraces the promise of the heavenly inheritance, cannot fail of imparting an excellent savour to the name of those who have largely received them. When the afflicted heart is strengthened by confidence in God, so as to say like David, "when my father and my mother forsake me,

then the Lord will take me up :” when the happiness of prosperity is increased by the love of God : when gratitude for the kindness of our heavenly Father, enlarges the satisfactions of life : then it is made evident, that blessed is the man whose God is the Lord. How earnestly ought christians to strive for the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, and peace. They would themselves live and enjoy at a different rate. Love, the most active and delightful of all feelings, would promote a life of charity and equal justice ; and their joy would bear up their spirits, while they were expecting the blessed hope, the bright appearance of their Lord. Religion promises an increase of happiness to those who embrace it. It proposes to lighten the yoke and burden of human sorrows, and points to a way of pleasantness and to a path of peace. What it promises, it is able to perform. But before the world will fully believe this, it must have the evidence from the lives of professors, that they are really made more happy. The men of grace ought to find glory begun below. How can the world believe, unless the peevishness of the human heart is abated, the raging passions cooled, distressing cares destroyed, and the fear of death diminished visibly in the man of God ? God hath not designed, that our present condition should be a state of perfect happiness. But he meant that his children here should partake of some consolations which should teach the world as well as convince themselves, that they have chosen the better part.

We come now to improve this subject by one or two observations—

1. We may notice the goodness and wisdom of the divine providence, in appointing true christians to be the

light of the world.—All the other methods by which it had pleased God to make the light to shine in the dark places, had passed away, and become inexpedient. Sin effaced the image of God from the heart of man, and the light within was obscured. God who is light withdrew his spiritual beams from his offending creatures, and hid himself behind the thick cloud of iniquities. The ministration of angels ceased, after that the Angel of the covenant had come, the minister of better promises. The mixed and terrible scenes of Sinai wherein the law was given, were too dreadful ever to be repeated. The feeble light of types and shadows, fled away after the coming of the very substance.—The lamp of the ancient prophets was extinguished, and their succession broken. The beams of the morning star were absorbed in the overwhelming brightness of the sun of righteousness; and Christ, the true light, had withdrawn from the sight of men, to repossess his glory, and finish our salvation in the heavens—there remained therefore only the light of the Spirit in the souls of men, which Christ at his ascension promised to send down and that it should abide forever. This is the best and most convincing of lights. The image of God, clearly discernible in the lives of good men, is the most satisfying evidence of the certainty of religion. The nicest reasonings or the most solid demonstrations have but little effect, unless he that utters them is confessedly a man of God. It is only like the operation of a pleasing dream, the remembrance whereof glides insensibly away. But when the spirit of Christ's religion is displayed in the life of his disciples, it becomes substantial, it lives and produces its impression. Herod never felt the denunciations of the prophets; but the presence of the Baptist filled him with awe

and terror. This is a light too, the nature and force whereof is easily understood. It may be difficult for most men to enquire into the certainty of those various lights which God hath furnished to the world. But it is no difficult task to notice the workings of the Holy Ghost wherever they exist; and they are understood with almost equal ease by the rich and the poor, by the ignorant and the wise. One may not be able to read his bible, nor to understand the plainest book, and yet be fully competent to understand the language of a holy life—such a life continually addresses the observer; “we are journeying to the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it unto you, come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning us,” Num. x, 29.

2. How earnest ought every christian to be in his endeavours to make his light shine.—The motives to this duty are many and powerful; but especially those connected with our text. Others will be greatly benefitted, and the great and precious name of our God and Saviour glorified. The christian is surrounded with a cloud of witnesses, most of whom are in some way influenced by his example. It hath pleased God to create man with a strong propensity to follow the example of others whether good or evil. The wicked believe that there is a heaven, and a happy flock who are collecting there; and a hell where the neglecters of religion must feel the stings of a guilty conscience and the wrath of God. Perhaps at the same time they often doubt, wish that there was no heaven, that all things were uncertain in futurity, and that their prospects might be as good as others. In this mixture of certainty and doubt, they will often look upon the conduct of the disciple, to judge

whether his soul is really filled with the life of God, and whether the lamp kindled by the sun of righteousness is truly burning on his heart. How very much as to means does the salvation of the world depend on christians. They are set for the falling or rising of many. Groping in the darkness of sin, the world is left by God to the light of the Holy Ghost shining in his people, for their conviction and external guidance.—In this way will God be glorified also. When the disciples increased in faith and holiness, the name of Jesus was exalted. When they forsook their duty, it gave occasion to the enemy to triumph. When David sinned, the Lord said unto him by his prophet; “by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme:” and the apostle testifies the same to heedless christians: “for the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.” Too little do we think, how much the glory of God among men, and the honour of the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour rest on us his professed people. Men cannot follow Christ into heaven to see him there: but they can examine the character and conduct of those who profess to have received his Spirit and to be changed into his likeness. They will judge of the master by his household, of the parent by his children, and of our heavenly Father by his adopted children. And what a powerful incentive should this be to live a life of exemplary piety, and to shine as lights in the world, that thereby the name of God is exalted! What so glorious as the name of God! What so precious as the name of Christ! What end of man so high and excellent as the glory of his Creator: and what duty so urgent as that of living

habitually in such a manner as to make others glorify him!

Now to him that is light—to the bright and morning star—and to the Spirit of illumination be immortal praises—AMEN.