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Book

THE

NEW-JERSEY PREACHER:

OR,

SERMONS

ON

PLAIN & PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

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

VOL. I.

Edited by

George S. Woodhall
1813

Woodhall
Editor

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.

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ZIX

SERMON II.

ON EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

Psalm lxxvi. 16.

Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done
for my soul.

BY THE REV. JOHN M'DOWELL, A. M.

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NEW-JERSEY PREACHER.

SERMON II.

Psalm lxvi. 16.—Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

IF any subject, proper to be made known, be deeply impressed upon the mind, and supremely and delightfully engage the thoughts and affections, the tongue will declare it; and it will be the chief and most delightful topic of conversation. Of the truth of this remark, there can be no doubt. It is proved by the declaration of our Saviour, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” Matt. xii. 34; and it is proved by daily observation and experience. If therefore we be christians, we shall delight to meet with our fellow christians, and engage with them in conversation on experimental piety. And true religion must either be very low, or be entirely wanting in the heart of that person who seldom speaks on the subject, or extends not his conversation beyond the doctrines and forms of religion, or speaks in an uninterested and heartless manner. The scripture saints, as appears from their history, engaged much in religious conversation: This was especially the case with the pious king of Israel, who penned the greater part of the Psalms; in the Psalm which contains our text, he was so filled with a sense of the divine goodness towards him, that he invited the people of God to come and hear what the Lord had done for him, that they might be encouraged and strengthened from his experience, and might

unite with him in praising God for his goodness—"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."—

By those who fear God we are to understand his true people. The whole of true religion is frequently expressed, especially in the Psalms, by the fear of God. And indeed it would have been almost, if not altogether in vain, for the Psalmist to have called on any but the people of God to listen to the relation of his experience. They would either not have understood him, or would not have entered into the spirit of his conversation, or would have wondered why he spake in such strains on a subject which appeared to them unintelligible or uninteresting. But the people of God would understand his language, and would hear with delight and improvement this favoured and experienced servant of the Most High relate what the Lord had done for his soul.

Experimental religion is a very fruitful subject; and if our hearts have experienced the rich grace of God, we cannot be at a loss for topics of conversation. The subject is inexhaustible, and will employ with renewed delight and rapture the tongues of the redeemed throughout eternity. We may tell our fellow christians, that the Lord hath chosen, redeemed, called, justified, adopted, sanctified and comforted our souls. In these particulars you have the division of the ensuing discourse.

1. The true christian may say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare he hath" *chosen* "my soul." Before the foundation of the world, he thought of me, and while he passed by others, placed his love on me, and determined to redeem and save my soul. And he did this when he foresaw I would, when brought into being, break his laws, trample on his authority, render

myself vile, and justly deserve his eternal abhorrence and wrath. He then laid the plan of my salvation—he then registered my worthless name in the lambs book of life—he then chose me in Christ. And it is in consequence of this everlasting, electing love, that I now love him. As saith the Apostle John, “herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us;” and, “we love him because he first loved us,” 1 John iv. 10, 19. Here, in the eternal, electing love of God, is the origin of all that astonishing love towards us which he has since manifested, and which he will continue to manifest for ever: let us unite with the Apostle Paul in saying, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace,” Eph. xi. 3, 4, 5, 6.

2. The Christian may say, “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare “he hath” *redeemed* “my soul.” Descended from an apostate parent, from him I derived a corrupt nature, and in him I became exposed to the curse of the divine law—in him I died. As soon as I became capable of moral action, the seeds of sin in my nature began to grow, and discover themselves. I became guilty of actual breaches of the divine law, and thus to original sin added actual transgressions. The divine holiness, justice, and truth, and the honor of the divine law, required that the curse of the law, which was eternal death, should be executed. And unless the

holiness of God could be illustrated, his justice satisfied, his truth vindicated, and the honor of his law maintained, I could not be saved. And where was the person to be found in heaven or upon earth who was competent to, or who would undertake the work of removing these difficulties, and providing salvation? No created being on earth or in heaven was competent to the work.

But, O astonishing love! "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my" perishing, lost "soul." He redeemed my soul! and this too, Oh! in what a wonderful and mysterious way! and at what an infinite price! "not with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. i. 18. He so loved me that he gave his only Son to be my Saviour, and redeem my soul from eternal woe: and truly, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 10. When no less a person could effect the great work of the redemption of lost sinners, God spared not his own Son.—When the Son of God "looked, and there was none to help," "then said he, lo I come, to do thy will, O God," Isa. lxiii. 5. Heb. x. 7. In the fulness of time, a body was prepared for him and he stooped to a union with our nature. Though "being in the form of God," he "thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" he "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," Phil. ii. 6, 7. He was "made under the law," which man had broken, and he fulfilled it. He submitted to the most humiliating circumstances, and the most trying indignities for me. He emptied himself of his glory that

I might be crowned with everlasting glory—He became a servant, that I might become a Son of God. “Though he was rich yet, for” my “sake he became poor, that” I “through his poverty might be rich,” 2 Cor. viii. 9. and become heir of all things—“He” was “made sin for” me “who knew no sin ; that” I “might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2 Cor. v. 21. “He bare” my “sins in his own body on the tree,” 1 Pet. ii. 24. He received on his own head the stroke of divine justice due to me, and which must have forever sunk me, beneath its awful weight—“He was wounded for” my “transgressions, he was bruised for” my “iniquities ; the chastisement of” my “peace was upon him ; and with his stripes” I am “healed,” Isa. liii. 5.—His soul “was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” Matt. xxvi. 3, 8, that my soul might be filled with everlasting joy—He was in an agony and sweat blood in Gethsemane—He endured the hidings of his Father’s face, that I might dwell in the light of his countenance—He became “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” Phil. ii. 8, and died, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring” me “to God,” 1 Pet. iii. 18.—He descended into the grave that he might conquer death and the grave for me.

But who can describe his love ! It was infinite. Mortal strains cannot reach it ; yea, saints in heaven fall infinitely short of doing justice to this subject. This love has “a breadth, and length, and depth and height, which passeth” finite “knowledge,” Eph. iii. 18, 19.

Let us speak of his person. He is “the brightness of his” Father’s “glory, and the express image of his person,” Heb. i. 3. “His name” is “wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of

peace," Isa. ix. 6.—He is "full of grace and truth," John i. 14. "Unto" them "which believe, he is precious," 1 Pet. ii. 7.—He is "the chiefest among ten thousand—He is altogether lovely," Cant. v. 10, 16.

Let us speak of his redemption. It is complete. He is God, and therefore able to save. He is man, and therefore fitted to obey, suffer, and die. He is God and man in one person. And thus the proper works of each nature are ascribed to the whole person; and the obedience and sufferings of the human nature derive an infinite efficacy from its union with the divine nature. The Father has accepted the satisfaction: I therefore need not fear, and do not fear to put my trust in him as an all-sufficient Saviour, and to commit the dearest interests of my immortal soul to his care.

3. The christian may say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare he hath" called "my soul."—He saw me lying in the same mass of ruin with the rest of mankind. My mind was carnal, and it was enmity against him. I loved sin. I was walking with the multitude the broad way, which leadeth to destruction. God called after me. He gave me pious parents, who early dedicated me to him, and put upon me the seal of his gracious covenant; and who endeavoured by their prayers, their instruction, their example, and their affectionate reproofs and corrections, to bring me to a saving acquaintance with God, and divine things. But, although my conscience under these means frequently rendered me uneasy, still I continued a stranger to God; I wandered from him and loved to wander.—He cast my lot in a christian land. He brought me within the hearing of a preached gospel. By this he called after me, day after day and year after year, instructing, inviting,

warning, reasoning and expostulating with me, threatening me, and lamenting over me. But when he called, I refused! when he stretched out his hand I disregarded. He poured out his spirit—many of my companions became serious I paused and became thoughtful. But still I loved sin, and soon said to my convictions, “go your way for this time, when I have a more convenient season, I will send for you.”—He visited me with alarming providences; death snatched my friends from me, and disease threatened his approach to me. I trembled, I wished to die the death of the righteous; but I refused to give God my heart. I besought him to remove his hand from me, and promised amendment. He heard me, and granted my request; but I forgot his goodness and my promises, and returned to carelessness and sin. My heart became harder, my mind blinder, and my conscience less tender. O wonder of patience! that I was born with and not cut down in my sins!

The Lord would not give me up; but continued to call me, and sent his Spirit to accompany the call with his Almighty, and irresistible influences. Then, like the prodigal, I came to myself, and saw my wretchedness. I saw myself walking the broad way to destruction. I heard the law of God pronouncing its curses against me; and felt a load of guilt pressing down my soul into woe. Then my anxiety was excited in earnest; and I cried, “what shall I do to be saved.”—I then feared that the day of grace might possibly be past—I read, and heard, and prayed, and reformed; but could find no comfort. I heard the law rigorously demanding satisfaction for the past, and perfect obedience in future. I heard of the gospel plan of salvation; but my mind was blind, I could not understand it. My heart was proud,

and unwilling to submit—it was filled with unbelief, and I could not by faith lay hold of an offered Saviour. Ignorant of the deceitfulness of my own heart, I thought I was willing to give myself away to God; but that he was unwilling to assist me to make the surrender, or to accept the dedication. But he led me by a way that I knew not—he humbled my proud heart—he made me willing in the day of his power—he put his spirit within me—he took away my stony heart and gave me a heart of flesh—he enlightened my mind—he renewed my heart—he discovered to me the suitableness of the Saviour, and his ability and willingness to save. My heart approved of his character, and I was enabled to believe in him, and to receive and rest upon him for salvation as he is offered in the gospel.

Then was my soul comforted. “Old things passed away, and all things became new.” The character of God appeared to me glorious and worthy of my highest love—his law appeared holy, just and good, and I loved it, and heartily desired to render obedience to it.—Sin appeared to me odious and I detested it, and loathed myself on account of it, and wondered how I could live in sin with delight, as I had done. Jesus appeared precious to me, “the chiefest among ten thousand,” and “altogether lovely.” He appeared a suitable, an able, willing, and compassionate Saviour; and I felt as though I could and did venture my soul upon him, and commit my everlasting interests into his hands; and I heard him in his word speaking peace to my troubled conscience, and promising to me everlasting life. O fellow-christian! what a season was this! after the gall and wormwood which I had been compelled to drink! It was a day of espousals—a season of love. “Then was my mouth

filled with laughter and my tongue with singing," Psalm cxxvi. 2. O the riches of divine grace! that such a wretch was arrested in his career to destruction, while he was stopping his ears against the voice of mercy! and hath been brought to a saving knowledge of himself, and of Christ!

Fellow-christian, you have experienced this same grace, though there may be shades of difference in the manner and circumstances of your call, and the exercises through which you have passed. Like me, you were once blind, but you now see—you were once dead, but you are now alive—you were once lost, but you are now found. Let us unite in admiring, adoring and loving God. Why were we guests? Why were we made to enter while there was room, while so many have perished, and are perishing in their sins? We must ascribe it to the free grace of God. To grace we will give the glory—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory," Psalms cxv. 1. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to thine own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9.

4. The christian may say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare he hath" *justified* "my soul."—By the law of God I was condemned.—I had broken the divine law, and that awful denunciation "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10, was directed against me. By the law I was cursed and condemned to die eternally. How unspeakably dreadful was my condition! for who can endure the

tremendous wrath of Almighty God ! who can bear the ceaseless agonies of the second death !

But the Lord has justified my guilty soul. He has pardoned all my sins. By the operations of his holy spirit, enlightening my mind, and renewing my will, he enabled me to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ ; and believing on him, my “ faith was counted for righteousness,” Rom. iv. 5. By faith I apprehended the Saviour, and renouncing every other hope, I trusted to his merits alone for salvation. In consequence, agreeably to his promise—not for any good works of mine ; for so far from having any good works to recommend me, I deserved God’s eternal wrath—not for any merit in my faith ; for this was the gift of God ;—but of his free mercy, he imputed the righteousness of Christ unto me ; and for the sake of this righteousness, he pardoned all my sins—he annulled the sentence of the law against me which had doomed me to eternal death—he delivered me from the law as a covenant of life, and placed me under the covenant of grace. And truly I can say with David, “ blesed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered ; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity,” Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.

Further, for the sake of Christ, and through union to him by faith, the Lord has not only pardoned my sins ; but he has done more—he has accepted me as righteous, and received me into favour. He has not only delivered my soul from hell ; but has also given me a title to everlasting life. What riches of grace has he manifested in the justification of such a guilty, hell-deserving sinner ! Let us unite in, more fervently, adoring and loving him, and unreservedly devoting ourselves to him.

5. The christian may say again, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare he hath" *adopted* "my soul"—He hath not only pardoned my sins and accepted me as righteous; but he hath also received me into the number of his children. He condescends to call me his son, and permits me to call him, my Father—He loves me with a paternal love—yea, with a love infinitely greater and more tender than an earthly parent is capable of. And he has admitted me to the privileges of this high relation. With the tenderness and care of a father, he instructs me, provides for, corrects and protects me. "He hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into my heart, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6 "I have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but the spirit of adoption, whereby I cry Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with my spirit that I am a child of God: and if a child, then an heir; an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ," Rom. viii. 15, 16, 17. and "all things are mine; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come," 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. Fellow-christian! what amazing love is this? The Lord hath not only pardoned me; but he hath received me into his special favour—He hath admitted me into his family; and this, too, not as a servant, but as a son; and he hath made me an heir of heaven, and of all things.—Truly we who are the subjects of this love, have reason to exclaim with the Apostle John—"Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:—now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 1, 2.

6. The christian, speaking of his experience, may further say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare, he hath" *sanctified* "my soul." By nature I was totally polluted, estranged from God, unfit for communion with him and the enjoyment of him, and wholly indisposed, and unable to do any thing really good and acceptable in his sight. In regeneration, the spirit of God gave me a new nature: he implanted a principle of spiritual life within me: this was the beginning of that work of sanctification, which he has ever since carried on. Although grace was implanted in my soul, the seeds of sin still remained, and tempted me to disobedience, backsliding and apostacy. But through the influences of the spirit, accompanying the means of grace, I have been kept from yielding the dominion of my soul unto my corrupt propensities; and, although, alas! with shame I have reason to speak it, I have too often yielded to the corruptions of my own wicked heart, and dishonored my God and Saviour; yet I humbly hope, sin has been mortified in my soul, and its influence gradually weakened, that I have a more pure and deep hatred of sin, and that I am filled with an increasing desire to be entirely delivered from it.

But this is not all that the Lord has done in the work of sanctification: he has by his spirit, not only mortified sin, but he has preserved and quickened grace, and caused me to "grow in grace," through the operations of his spirit. I humbly hope I have been enabled, not only more and more to die unto sin, but also to rise unto newness of life, and live unto righteousness, although I was regenerated, and then had a principle of spiritual life implanted in my soul; yet if God had left me then to myself, I should soon have relapsed, and yielded the

dominion of my soul to sin : without divine aid I could do nothing : I could not maintain what I had already received, much less advance in holiness. I needed continual communications from the fountain of divine influences ; and these communications, blessed be God, I have received. The Lord has preserved alive the seed of grace, which, by his spirit, he at first implanted in my heart ; and has caused me to grow in grace and the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, though alas ! with shame I have reason to confess it, I have not advanced according to the means which I have enjoyed. The Lord has also given me grace and increased and strengthened this grace, according to my necessities. When I have looked at my course of my duties, as marked out in the word of God, I have been ready to say, if this be the way to heaven, who then can be saved ? “ who is sufficient for these things ? ” But in the Lord I have found strength equal to my day. His strength has been made perfect in my weakness : and when I have been most weak—when I have most felt my own weakness, and distrusted myself and trusted in the Lord, I have been the strongest and have been enabled the most faithfully, and comfortably to perform my duty. Under trials at the approach of which I trembled, and which I knew not how to meet, his grace has been sufficient for me—He supported me by affording grace suited to suffering times. When I looked at my enemies—when I saw within me a numerous host of powerful corruptions—when I beheld without, the world presenting innumerable snares to draw me away from the path of duty—when I considered that Satan, endued with subtilty, and filled with malice, “ as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour,” 1 Pet. v. 8, and that I had to “ wrestle against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," Eph. vi. 12. When I looked around and saw how many who once bid fair for heaven had been cast down by these enemies, and destroyed or wounded—when I considered how many who had appeared to begin in the Spirit, and for a time to run well, had ended in the flesh, I trembled, and was ready to say, how can a feeble, helpless worm ever advance and hold out to the end, amidst such numerous foes, before whom, many who appeared much more likely to stand and conquer, have fallen? Surely I shall one day fall by the hand of mine enemies. But fellow-christian! to the glory of God be it, spoken, he has strengthened my soul; and weak and helpless as I am in myself, he has enabled me to encounter these numerous foes, and obtain the victory; and here I may and will set up my "Ebenezer, saying hitherto hath the Lord helped me."

It is true, and with deep self-abasement would I confess it, I have too often been ensnared by the world, I have too often yielded to my corrupt propensities, I have too often listened to the suggestions of the wicked one, and I have suffered severely for it. But when I have been thus ensnared, and have thus wandered and stumbled, either forgetful of the directions of my heavenly Father, I had become less watchful, and less frequently visited the throne of grace, or was less earnest in my supplications there; or, unmindful of where my strength lay, and trusting too much to myself, I went forward in my own strength. But, forever praised be his name! when I have wandered he has humbled me, and then restored my soul; when I have fallen he has chastised me, and abased me in my own eyes, and

when I have cried to him, has raised me up again, and established my goings. He has forgiven the past and given me new strength. And from past experience of what he has done for me, I confidently hope he will enable me to hold out to the end, and will finally bring me off conqueror and more than conqueror over all my spiritual foes. Come polluted, weak, and trembling fellow-christian, and hear what the Lord has done for me, polluted, weak, and helpless too—He has mortified sin—He has preserved, increased, and strengthened grace :—in six troubles he has been with me, and in seven he has not forsaken me ; and from my experience, be encouraged to trust in the Lord—trust in the Lord and you need not fear.

7. Once more the christian may say, “ Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare, he hath” comforted “ my soul.” According to his word I have found that wisdom’s “ ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace,” Prov. iii. 17. He has given me “ joy and peace in believing,” Rom. xv. 13. He has declared himself to be reconciled unto me, and has made my own conscience to be at peace with me. He has given me a hope of glory, which has supported and rejoiced me in my darkest hours ; he has granted me seasons of communion with himself, when my soul has been filled with inexpressible comfort, and joy unspeakable, and full of glory. In every trying situation, his precious promises have been appropriate, and a never-failing source of comfort ; they have been “ my songs in the house of my pilgrimage ;” in seasons of darkness, desertion, and spiritual distress, he has comforted me with such precious promises as these :—“ Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart,”

Psalm xlvii. 11. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted," Mat. v. 4. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," Ps. cxxxvi. 5. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer," Isaiah liv. 7, 8. Under afflictions he has comforted me with such promises and declarations as these:—"when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee—when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," Is. xliii. 2. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not. He" chastened us "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby," Heb. xii. 5, 6, 7, 10, 11. When I have been distressed with a sense of the difficulty of christian duties, he has comforted me by saying, "my grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9. Where my spiritual enemies have appeared formidable, and have terrified me, he has said to me, "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Mat. xi. 28. "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled,"

1 Pet. iii. 14. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. The Lord is my helper," Heb. xiii. 5, 6. "Fear thou not, for 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," Is. xli. 10. When I have looked forward, and considering my own weakness, and the numerous snares laid for me, have trembled, lest I should one day fall, and at last come short of that rest after which my soul breathed, he has comforted me with promises of perseverance, saying, "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," John x. 27, 28. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 38, 39. Under all the trials of life the Lord has comforted me, with the declaration, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Rom. viii. 28.

Thus we have attended to something of what the christian may say the Lord has done for his soul ; and looking forward, another wonderful theme for religious conversation is presented to the christian ; and he may speak of what he expects the Lord will yet do for his soul, viz. that he will glorify his soul. He may say, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 8. Soon I hope to enter into the rest which remaineth to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9,

and to be put in possession of “an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven,” 1 Pet. i. 4. Soon I hope to “inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world,” Matt. xxv. 34—to become a resident in “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,” Heb. xi. 10—and to wear a crown of “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” 2 Cor. iv. 17. Soon I hope to “sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,” Matt. viii. 11—and to join “the general assembly, and church of the first born, which are written in Heaven,” Heb. xii. 23. Soon I hope to be entirely freed from sin, and to serve my God with a perfect heart. Soon I hope to join the Redeemed in the song of Moses and the Lamb; and soon I hope to see my God and Saviour as he is. Fellow-christian! what a prospect is this! and what reason have we to join with all our hearts, in adoring and loving the Lord who has promised such blessings to us!

In the conclusion of this discourse, we may observe from what has been said, that christians need never be at a loss for conversation on experimental religion when they meet. The subject is inexhaustible. Even eternity will not exhaust it. And considering what great things the Lord hath done for his people, how can we belong to that number, if we seldom, or never when we meet, speak of these things to his praise and glory. Even the real people of God engage too seldom, and with too much indifference on this subject. Let them be humbled and excited by this subject more frequently to engage, when they meet, in conversation on experimental religion. Thus they will shew forth the praise and glory of God, and mutually edify and animate each other.

Another observation which is obviously suggested by this subject is, that salvation, in every step of it, is all of grace. The foundation stone was laid by grace, the superstructure is raised by grace, and the "head-stone will be brought forth with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it," Zech. iv. 7. Let christians be deeply impressed with this truth; let it ever keep them humble, and cause them to say, "by the grace of God, I am what I am," 1 Cor. xv. 10; and to ascribe all the glory of their salvation to free and sovereign grace. Grace will undoubtedly be the theme of heaven. Merit in the creation, as the cause in the least degree, of their salvation, will never be mentioned there by the redeemed.—Even now let their song be, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory," Ps. cxv. 1. And "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever—AMEN." Rev. i. 5, 6.