

A MEMORIAL

OF THE

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE, - - -	vii-viii
CH. 1.—Person and Constitution. Dignity and Courtesy of Manner. Early Habits and Maxims. Influence of Example in a Different Sphere. - - -	1-3
CH. 2.—Enters Rev. Thornton Rogers' School. Religious Impressions. Decision. Personal Covenant. Diary. University of Virginia. Christian Activity there. Dr. White's Testimony. Goes to Union Theological Seminary. Zeal. Devotional Spirit. Humility. Liberality. - - -	4-28
CH. 3.—Dr. Sampson as a Student. Wise and Resolute Plan. Thoroughness. Intense Application. His Scholarship—its Range and Accuracy. - - -	29-32
CH. 4.—Characteristics as a Teacher. Tact. Vivacity. Earnestness. Patience. Intercourse with Pupils. Hebrew Prelections. - - -	33-37
CH. 5.—Dr. Sampson as a Preacher. Simplicity of Spirit. Logical Arrangement. Elevation of Thought. Steadily advancing Reputation. Lesson of Encouragement to young Divines. - - -	38-41
CH. 6.—Intellectual Traits. Genius and Talent. Symmetry. Analytic Faculty. Imagination. Memory. Candid Estimate of his Powers. - - -	42-45
CH. 7.—Failure of Health. Fluctuations of Disease. Flattering Hopes. Increased Diligence. Dr. Sampson's last Sermon. Final Attack. Concern of the whole Community. Prayer in Presbytery. Dying Exercises. - - -	46-54
CH. 8.—Practical Teachings of such a Life. Reward of Patience and Faith. Humility crowned with Honor. The Price of great Usefulness. Home Institutions must be sustained. Men of deep toned Piety and profound Scholarship demanded, - - -	55-65
SERMON I, - - -	69-87
II, - - -	88-103
III, - - -	104-122

S E R M O N S .

## SERMON I.

PROVERBS, XXIX, 1.—“ He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

IT is plain, from Scripture and from facts familiar to every observing and reflecting mind, that there is a controversy between man and his Maker. It is plain, too, that all the guilt of this controversy must be chargeable upon man; that, while its adjustment would be to his infinite gain, its continuance must result in his infinite loss; that God, on the other hand, is perfectly holy and happy in himself, altogether independent of the creature, who can neither add to his essential glory, nor detract from it in the least. And yet the history of redemption discloses this remarkable fact, that every proposal for a reconciliation of this difference has proceeded from God only, and that he has provided all the means necessary to secure it, while man has ever maintained the attitude of a thoughtless, sinful, and, if left to himself, persevering rejecter of all his proffers of peace.

It is my purpose, on the present occasion, to review some of the methods by which God administers his reproofs and presents his calls to a settlement of this controversy, and then to consider the *awful* consequences that must befall the man who, in the language of the text, “hardens his neck” against them.

I.—1. I observe, then, in the first place, that God frequently reproveth and loudly calls sinners by his *providences*.

These providences are both prosperous and adverse, merciful and afflictive; but strange to tell, the former greatly exceed the latter. Everywhere around us we see the bountiful goodness of God: daily we are ourselves the too thoughtless, thankless recipients of unnumbered blessings. God speaks to us for the most part kindly, and always in love. There are very few who do not experience more largely of his mercies than of his judgments: there is not one who does not receive infinitely more and better things than he deserves. Of his judgments we all see more than we suffer: of his mercies we all share freely, while we merit none.

The goodness of God invites us to repentance. He makes his appeals to our gratitude, to lead us back to obedience. We have forfeited his favor, but he manifests his unwillingness to cast us off, until the various expedients of his love have been tried. By unceasing kindness he would draw us back from the world, and gather our affections around himself. He would regain our confidence by constant displays of his forbearance and renewed evidences of his compassion.

But God also speaks to us by severer dispensations of his providence. These, as I have already said, we are oftener called upon to witness in others, and learn the lesson which they are designed to impart, without having it impressed upon us by sad experience of our own: but not unfrequently God does lay his hand

heavily upon ourselves, and warn us, in a way that we cannot but hear, if we will not heed. Our earthly fortunes are blasted in the full tide of enjoyment; our cherished hopes are disappointed in the near prospect of a happy consummation. Our best laid schemes are ever liable to defeat; our brightest anticipations often terminate in vanity. Health fails us in the vigor of our days, and in the hour of fancied security we are brought nigh to the grave. Friends desert us in the time of our greatest need; foes multiply when our means of defense are fewest and feeblest. Our nearest kindred are taken from our embrace, when our heart's affections are most entwined around them; the strongest ties that bind us to the world are often, in quick succession, severed forever.

I would affectionately ask my hearers, Are any of you strangers to these things? Is there one here to whom God has never spoken in some one or more of these and such like methods? Have his mercies been so multiplied to you and around you, that his judgments have been even far out of your sight? Has he never laid you on a bed of sickness, and taught you to feel that you ought to make your peace with him before the great day of his judgment shall come? Has he never impressed upon your mind the paramount importance of eternal things, and the high interest you have in laying up treasure in Heaven, by giving wings to your earthly riches, frustrating your worldly projects, disappointing your cherished hopes, or humbling your proud aspirations? Have you never seen the extremity in which you felt the need of a friend on high?

Has no near and endeared relation, perhaps the partner of your bosom, or the children of your love, the father or mother who gave you birth, or brother or sister, whom you loved as yourself—have none of these been torn from your fond embrace, and your affections left to linger around the tomb that enclosed their lifeless remains? My hearer, it was God who did it; and perhaps as to time and circumstances, more with reference to you than to the loved one whom, you may be permitted to hope, he has taken to himself. You needed the reproof; and though severe, it was given in kindness. God doth not willingly afflict. By these things he designs that men shall live, and in all these things, we ought to be able to say with Hezekiah of old, is the life of our spirits.

2. I observe, again, that God loudly and solemnly admonishes us by *his Word*.

Here he brings before us all those truths which we ought to know, and in every variety of form that we could desire, in order to arrest our attention and secure our salvation. The perfections of his holy character and the great principles of his government are clearly revealed. Our own sinful natures and helpless condition, together with the means of recovery, are fully exhibited. Duty is made plain, and all the motives are urgently pressed which ought to influence moral and intelligent creatures.

Without dealing longer in general statements, let me ask, who is it in this congregation that does not or may not know, from the Sacred Scriptures, that *God is a holy God*; that his government is a perfect govern-

ment—administered upon the eternal principles of justice and truth ; that sin is abominable in his sight, and can never pass with impunity, but must meet its desert in the offender or a substitute? Who is it that does not or may not know, from the Scriptures, that *he is himself a sinner*, by nature and by practice ; that the very thoughts of the imagination of his heart are only evil continually ; and that except a man be born again, by the almighty power of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God? Who is it that does not or may not know, from the Word of God, that there is *one only, but he an all-sufficient Saviour* ; that that Saviour has borne our sins in his own body on the tree, so that God can now be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus ; that in view of this great sacrifice for sin, the arms of mercy are wide extended to receive every returning penitent, and that *none* who come unto him shall in anywise be cast out? Who is it that does not or may not know, upon the authority of God's unerring Word, that there is a day appointed, in which the divine Saviour will sit enthroned in his glory, and *judge all nations* ; that the decisions of that great day are according to his own holy law, and with special reference to our acceptance or rejection of his proffered mercy ; and that those decisions are final and irreversible forever—so that Heaven or Hell must be the everlasting dwelling place of the soul, crowned with inconceivable and unfading glory, or wrapped in inextinguishable flames, and vexed with the torment of eternal despair?

Yes, my hearers—we know all, or may know, (and



if we do not, this is our sin and our folly,) we know, or may know all that we need to know. The grounds of difficulty between us and our Maker are clearly stated; the means of adjusting it are all provided and accessible; the invitations to a settlement loud, and affectionate, and full. And I would ask, What stronger appeals could be presented than are in the Word of God, to induce us to cease our rebellion and be reconciled to him? What more exceeding great and precious promises? What more terrible threats and tremendous sanctions? What more awfully solemn and soul stirring truths? Ah, my hearers, if all other proof were wanting, the fact that we can slumber, surrounded by light from Heaven disclosing matters like these, with the knowledge too that we must all very soon make the trial of their truth, would furnish an unanswerable argument for our deadness in sin, and consequent just exposure to the eternal condemnation of God.

But we pass on to speak of other methods of reproof; and

3. Observe, in the third place, that God admonishes us again and again by his *ministering servants*.

There are regions of the world, less favored than this, where this remark could not be made with truth. But let us not forget, my hearers, that it is the discussion of our own privileges and responsibilities which most of all concerns us.

God has been pleased not merely to devise and execute a plan of salvation, and make that plan known to us in his Word, but he has appointed an order of men

in the church, whose duty it is to study that Word, and press its great truths upon the attention and consciences of men. He well knew the appalling and death-like apathy that reigns naturally in our minds on the most important of all subjects, the salvation of our souls; that though our rebellion was against the God of Heaven, it was maintained not only with a high hand, but with a heart ruinously reckless of the consequences: and therefore, in addition to his Word, which would otherwise lie comparatively unread and unheeded, he has given us the ministry of reconciliation to reason with us, from that Word, of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come: to urge upon us continually its solemn admonitions and reproofs: to make known the way of life which it reveals; and, in the name of the great Redeemer himself, to entreat men to be reconciled and saved: to publish peace from God to all who submit to the terms of his mercy, and to point out the terrible overthrow of those who despise his Son, their Saviour, and madly and wickedly persevere in their rebellion.

As the ambassador of God, I stand before you this day; and, in his name, I solemnly ask, how often have you met his accredited ministers, and heard from their lips the message which he sent you—respectfully perhaps, but with no earnest heed—or, it may be, with thoughtless trifling and frivolous behavior in the very sanctuary of his holiness! Who that hears me has not often heard, from the sacred desk, the holy requirements of God's law, and the gracious invitations of his Gospel? Who that hears me has not witnessed,

in the outward administration of water, the significant representation of that inward purification without which no man shall see God; and in the simple but impressive ceremonial of the Supper, the evident memorial of that awful decease which was accomplished at Jerusalem, when the blood of the Son of God was shed for the remission of sins? To these repeated warnings I add another, and I beg you to remember that mercies misimproved cease to be blessings, and turn into curses. You have, my hearers, like Capernaum of old, been exalted to Heaven in point of privilege—may you not receive her doom! Had you never heard a sermon before, and should you never hear one again, you have heard enough this day to render you utterly without excuse when you stand before the bar of God! This indeed, the Scriptures tell us, will be the case with those who never so much as heard that a Saviour had died for the redemption of sinners; how much more with those upon whose ears these glad tidings fall like the words of a tale a thousand times told, and to whose heart Heaven and Hell make almost no appeal, from very familiarity to the thought!

4. But these are all monitors without. God has given us two faithful ones within. The *first* which I mention, is *natural conscience*.

There is in every man a moral sense or conscience, which sits supreme amongst the faculties of his soul, and approves as right or condemns as wrong his feelings and thoughts and words and actions. It is not indeed always right nor equally acute in its decisions; nor does it always give the same verdict in different

or even in the same individuals; but to deny its existence for this reason, as some do, is to go contrary to the plainest dictates of every man's consciousness. We all have this witness for God within us; and whether well or ill informed, whether right or wrong in its decisions, those decisions are according to what it believes to be the will of God, for whose rights it always pleads. As well may we deny the existence of reason, or any other faculty or operation of the soul, as to call in question this most deeply seated and commanding amongst them all. It may be stifled, or stupified, or seared as with a hot iron; but we believe that the man is yet to be found who is of sane mind, and yet wholly destitute of a conscience. It may even approve where it ought to condemn, or condemn where it ought to approve; but it is not therefore the less really a judge of all that we feel and think and say and do: nor will it either approve what it believes to be wrong, or condemn what it believes to be right: nor will it ever be satisfied while we do not respect its decisions.

Of the existence of such a faculty or operation of the soul as I have described, we all have the highest evidence of which our nature admits—I mean our own consciousness. So true is this, that we assume it to be in every man around us; and we respect or despise others according as they appear to respect or despise the authority of this internal monitor and judge.

To bring this matter home, my hearers, let me ask, Who in this audience will admit that he has no con-

science? That there is nothing within which distinguishes between good and evil, however outwardly he may confound them? That there is no principle in his nature which pleads the cause of God and right, and creates a clamor in the soul when these are wronged and outraged? You cannot do it. Conscience itself will not allow it. Well do you know its terrible upbraidings for wickedness which, perhaps, the world knows nothing of, but which, conscience tells, is known to God, whose righteous judgment you cannot escape. Well do you know its daily remonstrances for secret, it may not be heinous, and yet it may be *heinous* sins. Well do you know the disquietude which you often feel under its convictions of guilt, when, at the same time, you remember that you must soon die, and that you have neither found nor sought an interest in the Saviour's blood. Well do I know that your consciences occupy the ground that I assert this day and at this moment, when I tell you that it is not one of your least enormous sins that you have so often and so long withstood every call of God's grace to flee from the wrath to come, and, despite all the convictions of your better judgment, have gone on in thoughtlessness, and worldliness, and sin, at the risk every hour of your soul's eternal undoing. In vain do you say, peace! There can be none that is worth the name, till you find it in the settled controversy that is between you and God. To that settlement conscience urges whenever you give it the opportunity to speak, and often when you would be glad to hush its voice: and if at last you appear before the

bar of God an enemy unreconciled and peace not made, conscience, you well know, will be your most bitter accuser, pleading guilty to all the charges that shall then be read from God's book of remembrance, and to none more loudly than this, that you knew your duty but did it not.

5. But there is a higher and holier monitor still who condescends to dwell with men, and call them to repentance of their sins and peace with God. This monitor is the Holy Spirit of God, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

“It is expedient for you, (said our Saviour to his disciples in his last address, just before his crucifixion,) it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

This, my hearers, if I may so speak, next to his Son, is God's best gift to men. The Spirit comes to finish what the Son began; or rather to apply and seal the benefits which he, by his obedience and death, had purchased for his people.

How he operates we pretend not to know; but this we do know from the Word of God, that it is the Spirit who alone works efficaciously and always powerfully in the hearts of men, and presents his other and oft repeated calls in such a way as partially, or wholly and savingly, to awaken them to duty. It is an opinion of the older writers, not easily controverted, that

all the virtue that is in the world is to be ascribed to the Spirit of God; that but for the restraining and impelling power of his grace, we should all be outright and at once devils incarnate, devouring and devoured of one another, and doomed of course to eternal death!

Abstract from the heart of man the grace of God—which in this case can only be the work and influence of the Holy Spirit—and may be called common grace, because, under the present peculiar dispensation of suspended justice, that mercy may have its course, all men share it in greater or less degree—abstract, I say, this grace from the heart of man, and what have we left but the original curse of unmitigated spiritual death, fitting us for all the deeds of darkness to which we shall be freely competent whenever God shall, as at any time he justly may, remove us from our present favored state to that world of woe where grace no longer restrains and moves, and death triumphantly reigns?

These views show how little credit we may take to ourselves for any virtue that pertains to our character, since in this respect we are what we are by the grace of God, and can credit to ourselves only our sins. And yet some men are relying here alone for justification before God! Not upon free grace in Christ, but upon their own works; though these, as far as there is in them “any virtue and any praise,” are themselves the product of God’s gracious Spirit!

To these common operations of the Spirit then, acting through the medium of our understandings and

consciences, are we to ascribe all those movements within us which we all sometimes feel towards a reformation of our lives, and addressing ourselves in good earnest to the work of our salvation. They cannot come from Satan, who never aims to produce a salutary impression upon the heart. They cannot come from ourselves, since but for the grace of God we should, like devils, be utterly destitute of every semblance of a principle of spiritual life, utterly bereft of the faintest feature of the image of God which we originally wore. They proceed from the Spirit of God, which ever strives with man, more or less powerfully, until he is either savingly converted, or in just retribution for his waywardness and folly, he is abandoned to hardness and blindness, and, as we may suppose, to speedy death. It is this Spirit of the living God, that impresses upon our minds and hearts the appeals of his providence and word and ministers, and gives life and energy to the remonstrances of conscience. He is not restricted in his operations to times, nor places, nor persons. Sometimes he moves the assembled multitude to enquire what they must do to be saved—sometimes he arouses the solitary slumberer to cry out at midnight for mercy. At one time it is the preaching, at another the reading of the Word which he causes to arrest attention and awaken feeling. At others, it may be, in deep retirement and without any outward exciting cause, the sinner is made to take alarm at his very thoughtlessness in the midst of so much guilt and danger. A general awakening is often spread through a whole community; while



at other times, two may be grinding at the same mill, and one be taken, but the other left.

Have you, my hearer, never witnessed such things as these? Are you yourself an utter stranger to these strivings of the Spirit—it may be, by other methods and in other circumstances? Has he never followed you, as if loath to give you up, into the very haunts of vice, and inscribed upon the door posts, “This is the way to Hell, going down to the chambers of death!” Has he never checked the giddy thought by the recollection that God was present and you immortal? Has he never disturbed your peaceful pursuit of the world, by raising the question, “What shall it profit, if you gain it all and lose your soul?” Have you never been almost persuaded to be a Christian? Have you never found it hard to get your full consent to let some favored season pass, and you remain unsaved? Have you never feared that the Spirit grieved and once departed, would never more return and leave you forever undone? Oh have you never dreaded the bitter lamentation, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!” Have you never secretly prayed, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” Say, fellow sinner,

“Hath something met thee in thy path  
Of worldliness and vanity,  
And pointed to the coming wrath,  
And warned thee from that wrath to flee?

Sinner, it was a heavenly voice,  
It was the Spirit's gracious call;  
It bade thee make the better choice,  
And haste to seek in Christ thine all.

Spurn not the call to life and light ;  
 Regard in time the warning kind :  
 That call thou may 'st not always slight,  
 And yet the gate of mercy find.

God's Spirit will not always strive  
 With hardened, self-destroying man.  
 Ye who persist his love to grieve,  
 May never hear his voice again."

II. This leads me (in the second place) to consider briefly the awful result of "hardening the neck" against all the reproofs and calls of God's grace.

I need not stop to tell what is meant by "hardening the neck against God." Have you thus far resisted every admonition, and are you this day refusing the invitations of his mercy? Then have you up to this very hour been doing the very thing. God only knows how much longer you may persevere; how much oftener you may turn a deaf ear to his remonstrances, before that overtakes you which is threatened in the text. "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

1. *He shall be destroyed.* God hath said it, and who shall reverse it? I know, my hearers, that we like to lay the flattering unction to ourselves, that all will be well; at least, better than we had feared: that we are pleased to hear soft and smooth things from the sacred desk. But God forbid that I should pervert his message, or lighten the burden of his word! "I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my Word, every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that smooth their

tongues and say, He saith, Behold I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies and by their lightness: yet I sent them not, nor commanded them." I solemnly admonish you, then, my hearer, whoever you be that art making light of the reproofs of the Lord, that destruction from God is in the way before you. Go on, and you will overtake it. "God is not man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it; or, hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

2. But "he that hardeneth his neck" shall not only certainly, but "*suddenly be destroyed.*"

God is merciful, but he is also just: he is long suffering, but his anger, when it does kindle, is kindled quickly. He does not threaten *speedy* (mark the distinction,) but *sudden* destruction: it may be long deferred, but when it does come, it "cometh like the whirlwind." Under the dispensation of his grace, sentence against an evil work is not often speedily executed; and therefore the hearts of men may be fully set in them to do evil. But, my hearers, though delayed in mercy to you, the execution is none the less sure; and though judgment may slumber for a season, it will one day break forth and fall upon the sinner with terrific haste! Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, but it shall not be well with the wicked. The Lord is a jealous God, and a revenger. He will take ven-

geance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, but will not at all acquit the wicked. He hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. The mountains quake, the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence. Who can stand before his indignation? Who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him!

Such, my hearers, is the prophet's description of his coming. Can you venture to meet him as you are? Will you close your eyes against the signs, and your ears against the warnings that he gives you, and go recklessly forward till his judgment shall surprise you like a thief in the night, and there shall be none to deliver? For,

3. Observe, in conclusion, that he that hardeneth his neck shall be destroyed, not only suddenly, but *without remedy*.

There is a period in our progress in sin, my hearer, it is a most solemn truth! beyond which the mercy of God goes no longer with us. Then our ruin becomes remediless. Not that the mercy of God is so limited that it cannot, in view of the atonement of Christ, cover sins of any magnitude and in any multitude—but that God has, in his infinite wisdom and justice, himself fixed the limit to which the sinner may go in the violation of his law and abuse of his mercies—but not beyond, without sealing his eternal doom! At that point the Lord says, My Spirit shall not always strive! And then there is no more hope! Where this

limit is in any man's life we pretend not to say: God only knoweth, as it belongs to him alone to say where mercy shall end and justice begin. Perhaps few reach it before death, but for aught we know, many pass it long before.

In this view of the subject, my hearers, destruction comes literally in a moment, and is irreversible forever. One last neglected opportunity or call fills up the measure, and God says, Let him alone! The heart is henceforward steeled against every persuasion, and the Spirit of God, aggrieved, takes its everlasting flight. The man may have no very awful forebodings; but his end draweth nigh, and he cannot escape. Often did wisdom cry without, and utter her voice in the street in the chief places of concourse—saying, “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof.” But every invitation has been spurned, every warning unheeded, every privilege abused: and now justice ascends the throne. “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at naught all my counsel and despised all my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you, then shall ye call upon me, but I will not answer. Ye shall seek me early, but ye shall not find me: for that ye hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; ye would hear none of

my counsel; ye despised all my reproof; therefore shall ye eat of the fruit of your own way, and be filled with your own devices." The ruin now is final and complete. There is no means of removing or mitigating the sufferings of the soul. There is no Saviour to heave off the dreadful weight of divine wrath—no Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool the parched tongue!

My hearer, have you made your peace with God? Or, having neglected it, will you do it? As his ambassador, I make the proclamation of peace. What message shall the waiting angels, the ministers of the Great King, bear back to the Court of Heaven? Ye messengers of the living God, report it not to the King of Heaven, that this is a stiff-necked people, who harden their hearts against him!

Let us look to the God of mercy, that his anger kindle not against us, and we be consumed in his wrath!

## SERMON II.

PSALM LXXXV, 6.—“Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee.”

THAT the present is *a season of great spiritual declension*, I presume no one will deny. The absence of the Spirit of God from the great majority of the churches, unprofitable preaching and barren ordinances, the conformity of christian professors to the world, their want of religious life and comfort and joy, the prevalent indifference of sinners, their hardness and even daring resistance of the truth, and their warm pursuit of the world in all its forms, impress our minds, and forbid us to close our eyes upon the mournful fact. We may take up the lamentation of the psalmist, “Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clear gone forever? Doth his promise fail forever more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?”

Such a state ought to be distressing in the extreme to the christian and the philanthropist: and a revival is most desirable and needful. That we may feel it to be so, let us

I. *Consider the subject in its relation to our country.* And here observe,

1. First the *political engrossment* of our people.

National and state affairs largely affect individual interests, and every man in our republican country is a politician. The most momentous and intricate questions of peace and war find their way to every fireside, excite feelings in every breast, and elicit discourse from every tongue. The prolific press keeps political topics in perpetual contact with the public mind. The politics of the nation, and I may say of the world, form one great absorbing theme with all the people, and often exclude feeling and thought and action in what *vastly* more, and more *directly*, concerns their individual welfare.

It must be so. We cannot change it. But we want something to go with it, side by side, into every community, into every family, and into every heart. Yea, we want some powerful principle to preoccupy and permanently engross the mind, and give healthful direction to feeling and passion, the basis of all action. We want something to restrain ambition and covetousness, intrigue and fraud and corruption, in the government and in the people, and to diffuse, through all ranks and departments of the nation, industry and integrity, order and peace, the fear of God and the love of man.

Religion only can do it—the holy religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our help, my hearers, is in God only, and to him we should direct our prayer, “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”

2. Consider, secondly, *the rapid increase of our population*, unparalleled in the history of any people. Al-



ready we number about twenty-five millions of inhabitants, and doubling as we do, in little more than twenty years, before the present century has closed, we shall have one hundred millions spread over our soil. These all have souls—souls by nature estranged from God, and dead in sin. Long ere this the faithful, who are now in the earth, will have failed from amongst us; and without the life-giving power of the Spirit, we shall be left a nation without God, ready for destruction!

Religion, my hearers—true religion before God—is our great bulwark of defense. If Christ shall make us free, we shall be free indeed. Where his Spirit is, there is liberty, and there is life. But where this inward, spiritual liberty is wanting, the outward form cannot long subsist. A nation of slaves to lust has already lost its highest and truest freedom, and hastens to its doom. The fear of God is the beginning and the perfection of wisdom. This is true of nations as well as individuals. It is righteousness which exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people; and if in any case, in the strong language of Scripture, a land “*vomiteth* out her inhabitants,” it is because the land is defiled by their iniquities and their abominations.

Let, then, the influences of the Spirit of God upon our people cease; let our borders enlarge, and our people multiply, and iniquity prevail: and where shall the next generation be found? If we would produce the leaven of religion amongst us, the spirit of life must dwell in the churches. If we would keep up

the present proportion of religious influence to our growing population—and who will say that we *can do* with less—we must have the *reviving* influences of the Spirit amongst us. We cannot with any safety remain still. Our population is striding rapidly onward. We want something to go with it. We want in the people the wisdom of God and the power of God. This is the Gospel; and we want this in every heart. Now, my hearers, God's Spirit alone can put it there. Let us, therefore, direct our prayer unto him, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

3. Consider, thirdly, *the extensive spread of popery and other errors over our land.*

The Roman Catholics report about two millions of our people as regular communicants in their church; and claim at least an equal number as more or less under their influence. The principal source of their rapid increase is the constant heavy importation from Europe of a population wholly unacquainted with our institutions, accustomed at home to strong restraint, and ignorant of the right use and enjoyment of freedom. To these the Bible, which is at once the foundation and the bulwark of our liberties, is a book prohibited as dangerous to be read in the vulgar tongue. And look where we may, we find errors springing up, and prevailing more or less extensively all over our land. These all proceed from darkness and corruption, and are more or less mischievous in their operation. Some of them reach down to the very foundations of social existence, disturbing long established

and well tried maxims of wisdom and religion, and substituting in their stead the ruinous dogmas of a carnal philosophy or the intolerant fury of fanatic philanthropy. Of many the whole and legitimate work is to disorganize, and to pull down and to destroy whatever is fair and good, and ought to be firm and fixed in politics and religion.

What power, my hearers, can stay the progress and restrain the wicked working of all these, but the power of God? And what agency does he employ to set right what is wrong in man, and to set bounds to his folly and wickedness, so all pervasive and effective as that of religion? It is *this* that we want—a powerful and universal revival of pure and undefiled religion. And when our hearts are saddened at the prospect of the desolations of ignorance and error, and sin of every form and degree, let us remember that in *God* is our help, and to *Him* let us direct our prayer, “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”

4. Consider this subject, fourthly, *in connection with the destitution of ministers.*

In West Hanover Presbytery, consisting of some thirty-five or forty ministers, after allowing a fair proportion of the population to other evangelical denominations, we have seventy-five thousand souls dependent upon us (Presbyterians) for the ministrations of the Word of Life. Of these, allowing (what is largely above the fact) that fifteen thousand attend regularly in our churches, we have remaining sixty thousand souls, who are without the Word, and to a

large extent desecrators of the Sabbath. The city of Philadelphia has long been regarded as a sort of *head quarters* to Presbyterianism; and yet a few years ago the corresponding secretary of our board of education reported, that if we allowed eight hundred hearers over ten years of age in every church of all denominations, orthodox or heterodox, there would yet be one hundred and twenty thousand souls above ten years of age, left out, without even a place of worship. If such be the statistics furnished by the most favored spots and portions of our country, what should we hear from our most distant frontier, where states and territories are almost yearly added? The deep and heavy tide, too, of our population, is, as we have already seen, rapidly rolling onward, and has already bounded over to the Pacific coast. And yet the alarming cry of a decrease, or the scarcely more encouraging announcement of "a *small increase*" in the number of our candidates for the ministry, is from year to year, resounded in our ears. Our own Synod reported in 1842 to the General Assembly, nineteen candidates; in 1843, twenty; in 1844, twenty; in 1845, sixteen; in 1846, ten; in 1847, the same; in 1848, twelve; in 1849, sixteen; in 1850, ten; 1852, ten. Average from 1842 to 1845, eighteen and three-quarters. Average from 1846 to 1850, eleven and three-fifths.

We say nothing, then, of the millions of destitute souls in foreign lands. We point to the wide spread and still spreading population of our own country—to the thousands of our own land, who are as sheep without shepherds: and then, saying nothing yet of the

soul in the world to come, but limiting our views to the operation of such a state of things upon the present and future interests of our country, we solemnly and earnestly ask, What shall we do without revivals of religion? Let the still small but authoritative voice of the Spirit be heard no more in our schools, and academies, and colleges; let his life giving and sanctifying influences be withheld from the community and from the churches; let, as a necessary and speedy consequence, the pulpit become vacant and the voice of the ambassador of God be no more lifted to warn and invite the ungodly, and to comfort and encourage and establish the faithful: then tell me, how long our fair republic and boasted liberties shall stand, and we continue an orderly and prosperous and happy people, as we are, above all the nations of the earth? Truly, my hearers, we have a goodly heritage; but as its foundations were deeply laid in principles taught in the Word of God, so must the superstructure be firmly united in all its parts by the same divine and imperishable truths, or the whole must ultimately fall into ruins. How, then, ought our whole nation, as with one heart and one voice, to cry out unto God—the God of liberty and the God of nations—“wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”

II. The view of this subject, which we have thus far taken, makes its appeal alike to the patriot and to the christian. But *it has its special bearings upon the latter, which we propose, in the second place, to consider.*

1. And first, *its bearing upon the walk of christians.*

It is the will of our Saviour that christians be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Why else does he leave them in the world, and not take them at once home to himself? It is by these metaphors that he himself designates them, and indicates the hallowed savor and redeeming influence that they should diffuse over all around them. They are elsewhere compared to leaven, which continues to spread till the whole lump is leavened: and they are declared to be "the epistles of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." They are represented as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises (or, in the margin, the virtues) of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light." They are called the people of God, bought by the precious price of the blood of his Son, "who gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Surely, my hearers, if we be the people of God, we ought to show ourselves to be such. The Saviour demands it. We have covenanted with God, in the presence of men and of angels, to do it; and the world expects it of us, and have the right to expect it. We make high professions. God is our father by adoption into his family. Jesus Christ is our King and our Saviour, and our all sufficient help. The Holy Ghost dwells in us as in his own temple, to purge out all iniquity, and, by his mighty power, subdue us wholly unto God. We profess to have renounced the world,

to have chosen the service of God, and to live for eternity and for Heaven. Surely there ought to be a difference between the children of light and the children of darkness; between those who are alive unto righteousness and those who are dead in sin; between those who renounce the world and live for Heaven, and those who love the world and pursue its shadows; between those who have the mighty power of the Holy Ghost within them, and those in whom, as the children of disobedience, the prince of darkness works and reigns.

How sad is the time when these high professions are disregarded as empty and vain: when these solemn vows, which bind us to God, are forgotten and broken: when these holy and distinguishing privileges are neglected and powerless: when the line of demarcation between saints and sinners is nearly or wholly effaced, and the christian is seen breaking over the bounds which God has set to him, and joining with the thoughtless and deluded multitude in swift and hot pursuit after the deceitful vanities of earth! Oh! how much better to see him living above the world: to see him, by a holy life, separating himself from sinners: to see him true to his professions, and true to his vows, and true to his God, and true to himself, and true to his fellow-men, everywhere and at all times and in all things showing a burning desire for the salvation of souls, an indomitable zeal for the glory of Christ and the prosperity of his kingdom, a holy deadness to earth, and a life hid with Christ in God!

But how shall it be? How shall this sad slumber,

like the sleep of death, pass away, and God's people awake to a new and vigorous spiritual life? There is nothing too hard for the Lord, and in *him* is our help. In our need and our distress let us look unto him, "Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

2. But again—*this subject has its bearings upon the enjoyment of christians.*

We bless God, that our religion is not properly one of gloomy austerities, and lifeless forms, and heartless and joyless duties. Blessed be God, that the more we have of it, and the more we yield ourselves to its control, the more our peace abounds—peace passing all understanding; and the more our joys are multiplied—joys unspeakable and full of glory. Blessed be God, that whilst this happiness is such as the world cannot bestow, it is such as the world cannot destroy: that even our penitence for sins, and our toils and pains and persecutions for Jesus' sake, are full of life and health and peace and joy to the soul.

But oh! how sad to see the christian turning from the fountain of living waters to the broken cisterns that can hold none! to see him so dead to the unspeakable joys of a spiritual life in Christ Jesus, that he turns to the world to satisfy with carnal things the earnest cravings of the immortal soul! to see him so insensible to the exquisite pleasures of doing good, that he resorts even to doubtful, and sometimes sinful expedients, first to get and then to hold his earthly gains!—in a word, to see him so blind as to join hand in hand with sinners to seek in the creature what, it is



an immutable law of Heaven, shall be found in the Creator alone!

How much more desirable is it to see in every professing christian an ardent lover of his God, full of joyful hope and trust, a devoted follower of the Saviour, glorying, like the apostle, in distresses for his sake—a temple of the Holy Ghost, resplendent with the beauties of holiness and peace—a true, firm, and faithful christian, wearing the outward expression of inward peace with God, and of constant and confident expectancy of rest and rejoicing and inconceivable glory in the new and heavenly Jerusalem above.

God, my hearers, can do even this for us, and would be sought of by us to do it for us. While, therefore, we mourn over our worldly conformity, and grieve over our guilt that we have so little experience of the joys of his salvation, let us lift up our hearts in prayer unto him, “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may *rejoice* in thee!”

3. This subject has also *its bearings upon the reward of christians.*

Thanks be unto God, he requires no man to serve him for nought. “The wicked worketh a deceitful work,” i. e. a work that shall disappoint him, “but to him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward.” And oh! how great is that reward! Who can tell what degrees of *glory* there are in Heaven for those who love and serve their God with faithfulness and diligence even unto death? As it is written, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

How small in comparison would all this world be, if the attainment were possible, to its eager votaries! Yet how hard do they toil from day to day, and every day of all their lives, that they may get but a small portion of it at the most, and that uncertain at the best! They toil and strive, and yet perhaps die at last without enough to give them a decent interment! How poor is the service and how uncertain the rewards of this vain world!

But to see a christian turning from the service of God, and from seeking after the high glories of Heaven, to vie with sinners in the pursuit of the world—oh! how sad is it! What miserable folly is that which would sacrifice one degree of attainable glory at the right hand of God in Heaven forever, for all the wealth, and all the honors, and all the knowledge, and all the pleasure, that this poor world can possibly bestow upon its most favored votary during his short stay upon earth! And yet, my hearer, supposing that you are indeed a christian, who can tell how much of Heaven you have already relinquished, and relinquished forever, by loitering and dozing—to use no stronger expressions—during so much of your past life as a christian! We receive according to what we have done. Will you go on, and relinquish yet more? Is not your loss already enough? And is it not high time to awake out of sleep, and, reaching forth unto those things which are before, ought you not to be *pressing* toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Oh! can you afford, or can you consent, to exchange more of heaven for earth than

you have already done? Forbid it, Lord! Let every christian heart here cry out unto God, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee!"

III. But *our subject has a most solemn bearing upon sinners.*

We look around us at such a time as this, and what do we see? Countless numbers on every side, who, utterly regardless to all appearance of their eternal interests, eagerly press on to seize what they may of earthly good. God seems not to be in all their thoughts. Heaven and Hell are empty sounds, which have ceased either to attract or to alarm. Eternity appears to be of no moment compared with time: the soul sinks into insignificance in comparison with the body. The Heavens become as brass above our heads and the earth as iron beneath our feet: but their hearts remain hard and unmoved. Disease visits almost every household; death cuts down one and another of the aged and the young, who lift their dying voice to admonish and entreat: but all in vain. God's providences are misinterpreted or unheeded. His ministers sound the alarm; but all ears are deaf. Christ is set forth in visible emblems as crucified for sin, the Saviour that they need: but they still cry, by acts louder than words, "Away with him! We will not have this man to reign over us; and we desire not the knowledge of his ways." Nay, brethren, we answer from the pulpit, Do not so wickedly; God sees, and hears, and takes knowledge, and will hold to account: hear him, and you shall live forever; despise

his mercy, and you perish quickly and beyond redemption! And again, we hear the cry, by acts louder than words, Away with him, away with him! And give us the world, the world, the world!

We look again, and what do we see? We see in this careless throng our own neighbors and friends and kindred. One sees his wife—the wife of his youth. Another her husband—the hope of her days. One sees a darling child—the occasion of many a tear and of many a joy. Another an aged parent perhaps, still living in the world, but no longer able to enjoy it, and already tottering into the tomb! One beholds his sister—it may be the giddiest of the most gay. Another his brother—possibly the ringleader of the most reckless. All see fewer or more that they love—some, perhaps many, that they ought to love dearly: these all choosing the world, none seeking after God! And yet perhaps each one of the beholders has offered few believing prayers, uttered few faithful remonstrances, and put forth little effort to arrest the onward and headlong march of even those who are nearest and dearest to them!

We turn, and look again, and where are they? They are gone, all gone to the grave! And oh! could mortal hand uplift the veil that hides from mortal eyes the great realities of eternity, what should we see? Turn over the truth speaking pages of this sacred volume, and read, and know: and as you read, think of the lake, and the worm, and the fire, and the brimstone, and the smoke, and the torment, and the weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth!

But can nothing be done to break their delusion, and save them from this dreadful end? Our best answer, perhaps, is that of the prophet when asked by the Lord, "Can these bones live?"—"O Lord God, thou knowest." Man's strength is weakness here. But nothing is too hard for God; and he will be enquired of to do it for us. Let him breathe upon these slain, and they shall live. The thoughtless will become serious, the sleepers will be awakened; the backsliders will be reclaimed, the prodigal restored, the spiritually dead quickened into new life, and perhaps even the hardened apostate renewed unto repentance. Then, do we mourn to behold transgressors, and to know their dreadful end? Oh! let us look to him from whom cometh all saving help, and plead, with the psalmist, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee!"

IV. We conclude with the consideration that *this subject is closely connected with the declarative glory of God.*

To glorify God, and to enjoy him forever, we are taught, is the chief end of man. Both these go together, and are alike the consequence of the life giving and reviving influences of the Spirit of God. Doubtless amongst the works of God, all glorious as they are, that of redeeming love and mercy furnishes the highest exhibition of his glorious perfection. We hesitate not to believe and to assert that the redemption of one soul by the blood of Jesus Christ, raising it from a state of sin and condemnation before God to one of holiness and acceptance in his sight, more glori-

fies God than the creation and garniture of a new and untainted world. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handy work ; but these shall perish and pass away, while the work of redemption shall stand ; and every soul that is renewed, and pardoned, and sanctified, and saved, shall remain an everlasting monument to the praise of all the glorious perfections of its Saviour, God.

Would we then glorify God and enjoy him forever, to the utmost of our capacities, let us seek the constant reviving influences of his spirit in our hearts, without which we can do nothing, and all about us must perish. Seeing, therefore, that the brightest manifestation of his glory and the highest consummation of our own happiness stand so intimately and so harmoniously united, let us all hasten to embrace Christ and his great salvation ; and that this may be realized, let every heart unceasingly pour out its prayer before God, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee!"

May he grant it, for Christ's sake !

### SERMON III.

ACTS, XVI, 30.—“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

THE history of this text has been read, and is doubtless familiar to you all. In obedience to a vision from Heaven, Paul had gone over into Macedonia to preach the Gospel. During his ministry, together with Silas, at Philippi, a chief city of the country, they met with a certain damsel who was possessed of a spirit of divination. Such possessions of the devil were common in those days. For many days together this unfortunate young woman, who was the source of much gain to her masters, followed Paul and his company, saying, “These men are the servants of the most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation.” This knowledge she, of course, received from the Spirit of God; who was further graciously pleased, through the agency of Paul, to deliver her from her bondage to Satan, and restore her to a sound mind and to the liberty of the children of God. When her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market place unto the rulers and magistrates, saying, “These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.” And the multitude rose up together against them, and the magistrates rent off

their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But, blessed be God! stocks cannot stifle praise, nor prison walls restrain the spirit and the power of prayer! At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. The keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, and supposing the prisoners had fled, drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, but that Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He saw the truth of what the possessed damsel had said, "These men are the servants of the most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation;" and conscience smitten for his sins, which provoked the wrath of that God whose power had shaken the foundations and unbarred the doors of the prison, he falls at the feet of his servants, and earnestly implores that they will teach him the way to escape from the ruin that impends over his soul. And they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."



A more important question, my hearers, obviously was never asked; and the trembling anxiety and earnestness with which the jailer propounded it, well became the interests which it involved. It is not one of those questions which concern the present life merely, and then mainly the body, to which the men of the world, by a common consent, allow an importance which absorbs all the energies of body and soul for life; but it is one which rises infinitely above and reaches infinitely beyond them. It is not, What shall we eat? and, What shall we drink? and, Where-withal shall we be clothed? These shall *soon* concern us no more, and *now* they do it too much. But it is, "What shall I do to be saved?" a question for every man and woman of our degenerate and ruined race, involving the interests of soul and body both, the extent and magnitude of which will not be known till eternity has disclosed what blessedness and glory are summed up in Heaven, and what anguish and horror are bound up in Hell!

The text calls directly for an exhibition of the *way and terms of salvation*, and I have selected it because I hope there are not wanting those amongst my hearers who feel a deep and reasonable concern on this great subject.

In order the better to understand it, it will be necessary to lay down some fundamental truths, which, I think, will require but little extension of remark to make *them* plain and to secure *your* assent. I observe, then,

I. In the *first* place, that God is a perfect God, and his government a perfect government.

Every moral and physical attribute, which is necessary to the perfection of the divine character and to the maintenance of the divine government, he possesses in an infinite degree. He is holy, and merciful, and just: and whilst all his purposes are sovereign and untrammelled by any creature, they never conflict with any one of his exalted attributes, and are always executed with unerring truth and exactness. His laws, therefore, are perfect laws, and they will be perfectly enforced. As they all have in view the good of the creature and the glory of the Creator, so must their binding authority be universally acknowledged and their righteous requirements be fully met. Under his holy administration, there is no possibility of evading their force. They must be obeyed, or the transgressor must suffer the punishment adequate, in the divine mind, to the heinousness of every offence, against His "holy and just and good" law. The truly righteous—which can only be affirmed of angels that never fell, are not more certain to stand approved and blessed in his sight than are sinners to be banished forever from his presence with his curse pursuing and pressing upon them, unless there be a Saviour who can stay the operation of divine justice against them, and open the way for the exercise of mercy. Witness the case of Devils.

Thus is it *with God*: how is it *with man*? In answer to this, I observe,

II. In the *second* place, that men are all, by nature, depraved and guilty rebels before God!

There is not one who has kept his law. "Not a

just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not!" Need I stop to prove what is confirmed by every man's conscience in his own case, and by universal observation of the lives of others? One glimpse of the divine law—binding alike on angels and men—in all its length and breadth, ought to confound the Pharisee, and stop every mouth before God! "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is the first commandment. Have you kept it? The second is like it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Have you done it? Let conscience answer, and we have the verdict, already recorded in the Scriptures, "All the world is guilty before God! We have all gone aside; have all come short: and there is none righteous; none that seeketh after God; none that doeth good—no, not one!" This verdict we cannot escape: and the sentence of God against all evil doers must, therefore, certainly impend over us, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" And though the full and regular *execution* of judgment may for a while delay, it will come—and when it does, it will do its work in righteousness.

But this is not all. Our carnal minds are enmity against God. The desires of our hearts are opposed to his holy will. His law imposes upon us restraints which are grievous to be borne, and requires duties which we have no heart to perform. We love sin—if not in all its forms, at least in the forms which we practice. The life of saints has no attractions for us: we prefer the pleasures and pursuits of the world.

Holiness to us is a bondage and a burden: to forget God, and do as we list, is the liberty in which we delight. Thus are our affections perverted: our choice is fixed upon wrong objects: we are afraid of God, but do not love him: we acknowledge his law to be right, and his service to be our duty, and even profess often to believe that it would be our highest happiness; but we do not keep his law; we do not love his service; and our happiness we seek in self-indulgence and in the pursuit and the possession of things which cannot, and which God never *designed* to, satisfy the longings of an immortal and sanctified soul.

Thus, my dear hearers, it seems that we are sinners, and that we love to be so. And if any man be disposed to deny either part of this proposition, I appeal to his life, and to his conscience when duly enlightened, to prove it all true. It is the doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures, whose faithful mirror reflects here, as elsewhere, but too perfectly the deep, inward convictions of the soul. The experience of us all is that it is true.

From these two fundamental propositions of the perfection of God's character and government on the one hand, and of the guilt and depravity of man on the other, I deduce

III. A *third*, which, if less obvious to reason, is certainly no less clearly taught in the Scriptures. This is, that in order to salvation, the law of God must be satisfied, and the sinner must be sanctified. In other words—without justification and sanctification, there can be no salvation to the sinner: and any system of

religion which fails of securing these two points, is radically defective and altogether inadequate to the exigencies of our case.

The necessity of justification at once appears from the Scripture truth, the force of which I trust we all feel, "that condemnation is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The necessity of sanctification is manifest from the Scriptures, which teach that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And from the obvious consideration, that without this thorough revolution in our natures, we could never delight in God's presence and service, nor enjoy the holiness and blessedness of Heaven.

Before I proceed further, the terms which I have employed demand some explanation. Now, in order to justification, the law must be satisfied; and what satisfaction the law requires, we shall better understand by briefly considering its demands upon the guilty transgressor.

In the first place, then, it is obvious that the law demands the *punishment* of the transgressor. The majesty and authority of the lawgiver and the law cannot be maintained where the offender is allowed to pass with impunity. So in human governments. The sinner, then, under the perfect government of God, must pay the debt of suffering which is due, or there must be found a substitute who can do it for him.

But granting that such an one may be obtained to suffer in our stead, this only exempts us from enduring the penalty ourselves. It does nothing to entitle us to a reward of blessedness. We may be kept out of

Hell—as we are this day by the grace of God—and yet be infinitely short of Heaven! This blessed reward is due only to obedience, and as the sinner has not rendered, and from the nature of the case, cannot render this, there can be no Heaven for him, unless a *worthy substitute* in the sight of God can, by a voluntary obedience which he is not bound to render for himself, satisfy this demand of the law and claim for the pardoned offender the reward which is due to righteousness.

Thus, I think, we see clearly what satisfaction must be made to the law of God, that the sinner may be saved. The penalty must be borne; this keeps the sinner out of Hell; the law must be obeyed; this entitles him to an inheritance in Heaven. And these must be done by one who is not bound for himself. And thus we see, too, what is meant by the justification of the sinner before God. It is to pardon his offenses and treat him as righteous, for the sake of the sufferings and obedience which have been rendered by a substitute that is worthy in the sight of God.

But allowing that all this may be done—that the sinner may be exempted from the suffering which he deserves, and be entitled to a reward which he has not earned—something more must be done, before he can enjoy his unmerited inheritance. The purchased possession is of a kind altogether unsuited to his nature. As well might we expect the wild beast that roams the forest and lives by carnage, to grace a palace and luxuriate on dainties, as that an unsanctified sinner should delight in the holy society and service of

Heaven. His desires, his pleasures, and pursuits, all run in another direction. He has no heart for Heaven; no affection for those who dwell there. The very thought of God makes him start with terror now; how can he stand in his presence and gaze with holy and angelic rapture on his ineffable glory? Prayer and praise, imperfect as they are, are wearisome here: how can he sing the song of the saints, or vie with angels to do him honor? He cannot do it. The sinner must be born again. Old things must pass away, all things must become new. The dead soul must be raised to life; the sinner must be made a saint.

We repeat it, then, that in order to salvation, the law must be satisfied, and the sinner must be sanctified. This brings us to enquire,

IV. In the fourth place, who is it that can take the sinner's stead, and satisfy the law? Who is it that can take the sinner himself, and make him an heir of holiness and life and glory?

Here every system of man, whether devised by his own ingenuity under the pressing sense of need, or perversely forced from the Word of God, fails of effecting the end, and leaves man a guilty rebel still, with no right to Heaven, and in the road to Hell.

In vain do some hope that after expiating their guilt by sufferings of their own, endured only for a season, they shall reap the reward of their own righteousness in everlasting blessedness. Their system assumes a righteousness of which, alas! it is the testimony of God, that they have none! It puts a period to the penalty of the law, which the Scriptures leave with-

out limit as to duration, while they assign the sinner over to eternal destruction. It thus fails to meet the demands of the law both of obedience and suffering, and makes no provision for the sanctification of the soul, even though it had power to raise it to Heaven. The flames of Hell may torment the body; a guilty conscience, nerved with strength, may rock and agonize the soul; but sin is not substance that it may be consumed; and sinful passions let loose in Hell, far from destroying one another, or exhausting themselves, become more malignant and vigorous from exercise. Hell is a poor place to prepare for Heaven in!

Equally in vain is it to tell us, as some do, that a man or an angel may undertake for us and accomplish the work. What man or angel, though the most exalted, is not bound to love the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and his neighbor as himself; and having done this, what more can he do, that may be set to the sinner's account? What man, or angel, though the highest that Heaven knows, could, in a few years of toil and persecution, and few hours of agony before and on the Cross, make satisfaction to the law for all the sins of a guilty race, committed by countless multitudes in every generation, each deserving, according to the divine decree, of everlasting destruction from the presence and glory of God? What man or angel, though the mightiest that God ever made, could raise a soul from death to life—thus exercising a power as omnipotent as that which spake creation into being, turns the hearts of kings like rivers of water, and breaks the chains that Hell



has forged around its helpless captives? And to what creature, infinitely removed as they all are below the great and glorious Creator, will God allow the praise of all Heaven to resound for the rescue of fallen man, through the countless ages of eternity?

No—It behooved another, far above every creature and every name that is named, whether in *Heaven* or on *Earth*, to undertake and execute for us. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coequal with the Father, in all respects divine, stoops to take our nature upon himself. It is not man, nor angel, but *God-man*, or God manifest in the flesh, that is our Saviour. It is he, whose are the worlds and all the inhabitants thereof: who holds in his hands the government and the law: dependent on no being, and bound to none beyond his own righteous ordination. Of his own account, therefore, he comes; and, moved by no obligation but his own merciful and sovereign purpose, he assumes our nature complete, saving sin; thus *freely subjecting himself to the law*, that he may meet all its demands upon the sinner, and not only deliver him from eternal death, but secure for him everlasting life. To purchase Heaven, he obeys the law: to save from Hell, he suffers death. Infinite justice accepts the substitute. No mere creature could ever so magnify the law and make it honorable. No obedience was ever so worthy, no suffering was ever so satisfactory. The law can ask nothing more: its claims are fully met. Our iniquities were laid upon him: his righteousness is reckoned to us. Hell was our desert; Heaven is our reward! It only remains that this Saviour be able to

take us, all deformed as we are, and fashion us after his own glorious image: that he be able to deliver us from the bondage of Satan, whose captives we are, and from sin, whose pollutions we love; and thus, while he gives us freedom, enable us to preserve and enjoy it: and he is all the Saviour, and the very Saviour that we need.

All this he can do, and will, for all who call upon him in truth. A new heart he will give them: new desires he will create within them, and new objects of pursuit he will set before them. He will never leave nor forsake them. In all the wilderness he will be their companion and guardian and guide: no enemy shall triumph over them, no weapon formed against them shall prosper. All the trials and difficulties of the way he will convert into blessings: all things, by his care, shall work together for their good. And when, their course being finished and their work done, they come to leave all that is dear on earth, he will take them to himself: Heaven will be their home, and in his presence they shall dwell: sorrow and sin shall have seen their end; and the high and holy joys of angels and saints shall be theirs forever and ever.

V. But how may we become interested in this Saviour so as to experience the benefits of his redemption? To this point all that I have said has been converging; and it shall constitute the *last* general topic of discussion.

The question is substantially that of the jailer; and we have only to consider the answer which he re-

ceived: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

This answer, we may perhaps infer from the language of his question, was not precisely what he expected. Like Naaman, the Syrian leper, he probably thought that the ministers of God would tell him to do some *great* thing—something that would serve to expiate his guilt, and *merit* the favor and salvation of God. But he received no such direction. The inspired preachers pointed him to a Saviour *widely* different from himself. They well knew that if his salvation turned upon *his doing*, his case, like that of all other men, was hopeless. They tell him, therefore, to look *away* from himself, and put his trust in *Christ*. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," say they—that he is what we have preached him unto you—a Saviour who has atoned for sin by his death, and purchased Heaven by his obedience; and as he has procured pardon and eternal life for all that will believe on him, so is he willing and able to perfect them in glory forever. They do not tell him that his conviction of sin was too shallow or too deep, or that his anxiety about his soul was excessive and needless: they do not tell him to make himself better, or to wait till he is so made. They point him at once to Christ as the Saviour he needed: who was willing to accept him just as he was, if he would commit himself into his hands; and, while he relieved him of the burden of his guilt, would, at the same time, free him of the bondage of sin. A helpless, ruined sinner, unable to avert deserved wrath or to merit favor which

he had forever forfeited, with a heart that still cleaved to the dust, and hardened, perhaps, under every effort of his own to break it; it was only to look, in this extremity of hopeless despair, to him that was *mighty to save*, and the work was done. He felt his need. By *grace* he *believed*: and, in the very act, embraced the Saviour to his heart. He is no longer the man that he was. The pardoned sinner is a rescued captive. He gave proof of the change. That same hour of the night, he took Paul and Silas, and washed their stripes: just before, he had thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks! How great the change! How complete the Saviour! The same voice that spoke his pardon, told him, "Go, sin no more." The same hand that removed the weight of wrath, took off the chains of bondage and of death! Go then, fellow-sinner, to Jesus on the Cross, for pardon—to Jesus on the Throne, for life and salvation.

In the improvement of this subject, I observe,

First. That we see in it the amazing love of God!

"God so loved the world," says John, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." How incomprehensible is this love! Angels, who once ministered in his very presence in Heaven, transgressed his law, and immediately they were cast down to Hell as monuments of his wrath, where they are this day reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the *Great Day*! The voice of mercy they never heard! A Saviour they never

knew! Man sinned—and before his condemnation is pronounced, he hears the glad tidings of a seed that should bruise the serpent's head! In the fullness of time the Saviour comes: and behold! it is God's own Son! Not in glorious form amid angelic hosts; not in pomp and state even such as earth can furnish; but in human nature, and in the form of a servant! Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; despised and rejected of men! Cradled in a manger and expiring on a cross!! And all for fallen, degraded, hell-deserving man! Ah! he died that we might live!

“In songs of sublime adoration and praise,  
 Ye pilgrims for Zion who press,  
 Break forth and extol the great Ancient of days,  
 His rich and distinguishing grace.  
 What was there in you that could merit esteem,  
 Or give the Creator delight?  
 'Twas ‘even so, Father!’ you ever must sing,  
 ‘Because it seemed good in thy sight.’”

And once more we sing:

“With pitying eyes the Prince of Grace  
 Beheld our helpless grief;  
 He saw, and, oh! amazing love!  
 He ran to our relief.  
 O! for this love let rocks and hills  
 Their lasting silence break;  
 And all harmonious human tongues  
 The Saviour's praises speak.”

*Again*—We see in the light of this subject the necessity of faith and repentance, and the intimate connection between them.

The two are not the same: but they always go together. They are distinct but simultaneous movements of the soul; and sustain a close and inseparable relation to each other, so that faith cannot subsist without repentance, nor repentance without faith. As the one loathes our own righteousness even, as filthy rags in the sight of God, so the other lays hold on Christ's righteousness as being alone but all sufficient to cover our sins. The one humbles and renounces self—the other exalts and accepts Christ. The one looks at our own sins with abhorrence and grief—the other looks to Christ's righteousness with approving confidence and joyful hope. The one meets the truth, that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord”—the other meets the Scripture, that “without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.” He that has one, has the other; and both unite in him that is born again. Hence it is that while our Saviour said to careless hearers, “Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise perish!” and Paul to the humbled jailer, “*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!” Peter addressing a multitude, who were pricked in their heart, and earnestly enquired “men and brethren, what shall we do?” Said unto them, “*Repent*, and be baptized every one of you *in the name of Jesus Christ* for the remission of sins.” And Paul taught publicly and from house to house, “testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, *repentance* toward God, and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” They all agree. In their true evangelical sense, though separate acts, the one involves the other, and

without either there is no salvation. You must believe, or you can't be justified; you must repent, or you can't be saved.

I observe, *again*, that this plan of salvation, however objectionable to the self righteous and to the worldly wise, appears good to those who feel that they are lost.

To repent is a hard task, because we love our sins: and to believe is humbling, because we love ourselves. Both strike at the very root of our pride, and revolutionize the inner and the outer man. But there is an extremity to which a man may be reduced, in which he will find comfort only by giving up all and doing both. It is comparatively easy to resist God, when in just anger he lets you do it: but let him rise in his power and smite you to the ground; let him turn conscience, all armed with daggers, against your soul; let him expose to your view the native blackness of your heart, and the flames of Hell ready to kindle around you: let him show you your impotency and guilt to the extortion of that cry of agonizing and self-depair, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" And then the grace which showed you the depth of your ruin, will make the process of deliverance acceptable and easy. It will be sweet to repent and rest the soul on Christ. So it was with the jailer.

I observe, *again*, that this plan is suited to all men; and as it is God's method of saving sinners, we despair of none.

Whatever some may think, the truth is, that by na-

ture we are lost, and if saved at all, it must be through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord. In Christ there is for the sinner complete redemption. The Gospel of his grace is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. We solemnly disclaim in ourselves, and utterly deny in others, any power to make this Gospel plan acceptable, or to awaken one soul to life. If in us you hope, your trust is a spider's web, and you are doomed to sleep yet longer like the dead. But we preach the Gospel of the grace of God; and, relying on that power which brought our Lord Jesus Christ again from the dead, and made the crowning act of the wickedness of his enemies—I mean his crucifixion—the finishing stroke of the very foundation of his church—we preach it, knowing not whether it shall prosper in this or that, but confidently believing that it shall accomplish that which the Lord pleaseth; that the stout-hearted and the stiff-necked shall sooner or later bend or break before it; and that it is destined ultimately to triumph and gladden the hearts of millions of every nation and kindred and tongue, who now groan under the yoke of bondage.

Finally, I observe, that if you are not saved, the fault is your own—and your guilt is awful.

The provisions are ample, and all things are ready. The Saviour stands with arms wide open to receive you, and asks, Will you not come? He shows the prints of the nails in his hands and the wound in his side, and asks, Can you not trust me? He points to the agonies of the Cross, endured for sins not his own, and asks, Will you not forsake them? He opens to



your view Heaven above and Hell beneath, and asks, Will you not be saved?

You refuse at your peril. Heaven is offered without money and without price. Reject the gift, and you despise the giver. Hell is open before you—go on, and you must go in! But in doing so, you trample under foot the blood of the Son of God. Impenitent hearer! you cannot go to perdition from a christian land, without passing by the Saviour—without treating the blood, which he shed, with contemptuous neglect. Go on, then, over the blood of the Saviour to the abyss of woe—but ah! when there, as the streams of wrath pour in upon your soul, Hell will resound with the torturing lamentation, “I am my own destroyer!”

No, my fellow-sinner—rather look and live! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.