

THE
PRESBYTERIAN CASKET.

VOL. III.

JANUARY, 1852.

NO. I.

CITY MISSIONS:
IN VIEW OF

Our Emigrant Population.

A DISCOURSE on the Seventy-Second Psalm,
Delivered in the Presbyterian Church on
Lafayette Square, in behalf of DOMESTIC
MISSIONS.

BY THE REV. DR. SCOTT.

[Published by Request.]

THIS psalm, my brethren, is a metrical prayer. It seems to have been composed by David just before his death, when he settled his own son Solomon's succession to his throne. It is the prayer of a father for his child—the dying blessing of a patriarch upon his son. It is the prayer of a king for his successor, and of a patriot for his country. It is also the prayer of the people for their sovereign. One reason why the aged king clothed this prayer of his affections and of his faith in verse, no doubt, was his desire, that while the people were praising God in holy song, they might, at the same time, be praying for his son. This psalm, considered in its literal application to Solomon teaches:

First, That parents feel a deep concern for the welfare of their children. This is natural and proper. The best thing parents can give their children is the knowledge of God. This is better than gold. Although it is true that parents cannot impart saving grace to their children, yet they can teach them the Holy Scriptures, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Catechism. They can set them an example of faith and godliness. They can use, with unwearied pains, the means of education and of grace. They can pray to God to give their children wisdom and grace to know and do their duty. They can bring them to Jesus by

prayers, precept and example, and Jesus can give them a new heart.

Secondly, David's example teaches us that we should feel a degree of anxiety for the prosperity of our country after we fall asleep with our fathers. It is natural for a pious man to desire that those who come after him on the stage of life, should be more useful and serve God better than he has done. It is a mean, narrow, little, selfish spirit, that cares nothing about the church and the country, when we ourselves are gone to the grave:

"The generous mind is not confined at home;
It spreads itself abroad through all the public,
And feels for every member of the land."

He that is unwilling to do anything for posterity, because posterity has done nothing for him, shows conclusively that his own father has acted on his own principles, and that neither the past, present nor future will feel his loss.

Thirdly, The royal psalmist penned these lines for the use of the people—not only for their enjoyment in singing, but that in their singing they might also pray for his son Solomon, their King. It is an apostolical injunction to fear God and honor the King. We are to pray for all that are in authority that we may lead godly and peaceable lives.

Another, a higher, and a far more important view of this psalm is to consider it as a prophecy of the prosperity and perpetuity of the kingdom of Christ, under the type of Solomon. Even Jewish expositors allow that this psalm refers to the Messiah. There are many passages in it which cannot be applied to Solomon. The pious old king having set his beloved son on the throne, seems to have become transported with joy and gratitude to God, and then to have given utterance to the thoughts that were within him by the spirit of God. In pouring out from the fulness of his pious heart his blessings on the young king, and upon the people, the coming of the great Messiah that was to spring from

THE CASKET.

VOL. III.

APRIL, 1852.

No. IV.

SERMON:

BY REV. WALTER R. LONG.

SPIRIT OF THE PRESENT AGE.

“For, verily, I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. — *Matt.* xiii. 17.

PROPHETS and righteous men of old desired to see the times of the Messiah. They looked forward to his advent and his spiritual reign, as the consummation of the happiness of the just and the hopes of a dying world. “Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.” The prophets looked forward to the coming of the Messiah and the triumph of his reign, as the gratification of their wishes, and the fulfillment of the prophecies. The chief desire of all righteous men, in all ages, has been to witness the coming and upbuilding of the Redeemer’s kingdom. The fathers of old time “having all obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some *better* thing for us, that they *without* us should not be made perfect.”

They desired the blessings we enjoy, but they were reserved for us. Other ages had been inspired with expectation by exceeding great and precious promises. In the age of Christ’s disciples, promise was fulfilled and hope gratified. They rejoiced to see and hear those things which many prophets and righteous men neither had the pleasure of seeing nor hearing.

We live in a still more favored age: an age of grand results. Multitudes have desired to witness them, but generation after generation has “died without the sight.” “Our eyes see, and our ears hear.” Our age is characterized with magnificent developments, which

cannot fail to inspire us with *gratitude* that we live in such an eventful *era*.

The Spirit of the Present Age is evinced by the *practical results of science*.

Science, in all ages of the world, has proved a *handmaid* to religion. The day in which we live furnishes ample evidence of the fulfillment of the prophecy — “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”

The present age is distinguished rather for its useful inventions than for valuable discoveries. Discoveries are *prior* to, and therefore may be regarded as the *parents* of inventions. A discovery is the act of finding, or bringing to light, some hitherto undiscovered thing, fact or principle, having a prior existence unknown to man.

An invention is the practical application of the discovery to some particular purpose. Thus, the polarity of the magnet has always existed in nature; but the knowledge of the fact was a most valuable discovery, the application of which to the mariner’s compass was a most useful invention of human genius, by the aid of which the commerce and face of the whole world has been changed. So, also, the elasticity of *steam* was observed, and experiments were made by scientific men to employ it as a useful agent for two and a half centuries before the application of its unsurpassed and controllable power to a great variety of useful purposes. James Watt applied it successfully to his improved steam engine; but it is more commonly admitted that our countryman, Robert Fulton, was the first who succeeded, in 1807, in the application of steam to the purpose of navigation.

Now, what do we behold as the results of the mysterious pointing of the magnetic needle, and the mighty power of steam? We see the majestic steam palace darting along, like a thing of life, up and down our rivers, through our harbors, gulfs, seas, and tra-

why you do not believe these things?" I thus threw the *onus probandi* upon him. His friends looked mighty pleased, and seemed greatly to enjoy the idea of the coming conflict. He did not seem quite so well satisfied, but took the measure of me from top to toe, and seemed revolving the matter in his mind. At length he said, "Why, sir, I don't believe it, because it is utterly contrary to reason and common sense." "But," said I, "that is no argument, remember; do you believe the Bible?" "Yes, sir, I do; I am not a Deist." "I am very glad to hear you say so; now we have some ground to go upon. Is there such a word in the Bible as Devil and Satan?" "Yes, sir." "And pray, sir, what do those words mean?" He did not like them at all, but presently said, "They mean a great many things." "Then it will be easy for you to tell me one; give me the one that comes first to mind." He looked very blank; at last he said, "The words very often mean the grave." "Grave," said I, "we'll try that, sir. In the Book of Job you read, 'There was a day when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the *Grave* came also among them.' He was very grave indeed — and his companions roared with laughter. 'It does not mean grave there,' said he. 'Well, as you have been rather unsuccessful at first, you had better try again.' 'It sometimes means an evil principle within us,' he replied. He is coming near to the mark now, thought I; and I said, 'We'll try that. You read in the Gospel, by Matthew, that our blessed Lord was led of the Spirit into the wilderness forty days, to be tempted of the evil principle within him. Do you believe that Jesus Christ had an evil principle within him, such as you and I have, sir?' 'No, sir, I don't.' 'Then, that won't do; give me another.' But he was not able to stand that; and he looked at me as if he would have murdered me, and roared out, 'I did not speak to you, sir.' I told him that he spoke to every man who had a grain of reason and common sense, and appealed to his friends whether I had a right to claim that character; and, amid great laughter, they declared that it was evident I had too many grains for him. And there we sat till we had finished the argument. This suffices as an illustration of a practical mode of dealing with such men. Almost everything, under God, depends upon a wise and judicious

commencement: and I believe that ninety-nine per cent. of your infidelity is like this young man's, and that one breath of Scripture and common sense will blow it all away.

For The Casket.

A WORD FOR THE BIBLE.

BY THE REV. W. A. SCOTT, D. D.

WHERE does a man get his benevolent feelings? From his mother. And where did she get them? From the Bible. If a man's humane feelings move him to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to build an asylum, or endow a hospital, or educate the poor, his humanity, in at least nine cases out of ten, has been excited or developed by the Bible. — Where or when has Deism or Infidelity, or Pagan philosophy, built school-houses for the poor, or asylums or hospitals for the unfortunate? The religion of Christ is the great lifter-up of the human race. The surest and shortest way, then, of providing for the comfort and happiness of the poor and the suffering, is to give them the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As it is better to put a man in the way of making a living for himself, than put him on the charity roll, so it is better to bring a man under the renewing and elevating influences of the Gospel, than to provide for his temporal wants by the gifts of charity. For the Bible teaches, *that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat*. The sum of human duty, in this matter, is happily stated by an inspired Apostle, in a single precept: "To be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The Bible teaches a man to be his own architect for this and the world to come. It inspires him with the *idea* and the means of making his own fortune. If cold philosophy could ever be aroused to the enthusiasm of taking a coarse and vulgar man, and clothe him and feed him, and yet do nothing for his moral renovation, he would remain essentially what he was. The dogmas of sects and the teachings of mere worldly philosophy, fall upon the hearts of men like moonbeams on marble tombs: they remain cold marbles still among the dead. The cold mountain mist must be dispersed by the glorious sun, before the icicles of the craggy cliffs are melted, and the sparkling streamlets pour their music upon the ear of nature's God. So the Gospel falls upon the human understanding like sunbeams on a rich soil, in

which are embosomed precious seed, and immediately the fruit appears. To make a man happy, he must have assurance of peace with his Maker, and of happiness in the world to come. His hopes must be excited to something above this world. He must be taught how to aspire after the soul's best and only portion — which is the favor of the everlasting God. This is the way the Bible teaches men to be happy and useful here, and to be happy forever.

THE SOUL—WHAT IS IT?

BY THE EDITOR.

Who ever saw a soul — how does it exist, and how does it act — what is its origin, and what is to be its destiny? Important questions these, but who can answer them?

Has Atheism any answer to solve a doubt or allay a fear? Can the oracles of heathenism throw any light on these questions? Can the records of human philosophy furnish a reply that can satisfy an anxious and inquiring mind?

Ask one who holds in his hand the Lamp of Salvation, and in whose intellect that Lamp hath shined, and he can tell. Ask one who hath ever sat at the feet of Jesus, and been taught of Him, and he knows something, and can tell something, but not all.

It is certain that man has a compound nature. The soul is a something different and distinct from the body. There is no source whence we obtain as clear and definite information on this point, as in that account which contains the beginning of human science, and records the origin of man's existence. That account is found in the first Book ever written, and in the beginning of that Book — “And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground.” Thus the human frame, that wonderful and curious piece of workmanship, was moulded, fashioned and put together. The “dust of the ground” was the material — the workmanship was God's. But still it was nothing but a body. There was no soul in it. It was nothing but a casket, prepared for the reception of the jewel it was designed to contain. As the casket is not the jewel, so the body is not the soul. It lay there, a beautiful and perfect body. It lacked none of its parts: there

were the hands — the feet — the head — the heart — the veins — the sinews — the bones — nothing was wanting. Still it was an inanimate body. The image of God had not yet been stamped upon it. There was not a spirit within; and, therefore, it was a motionless, dead body. And God saw that there was no spirit — no soul in that material form, so perfect in all its parts, which He had just fashioned. And what did he do? He *breathed* — yes, God *breathed* into man — “*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.*”

Contemplate the spectacle; for there are not many such themes that can engage our thoughts. There is first a consultation among the persons of the adorable Trinity. How shall man be made? After what likeness or pattern shall he be formed, that was to have dominion over the new creation? And what is the decision? “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” It was God who said the word.

And then we behold Deity stooping down upon that form, so symmetrical and curiously wrought, which his own hand had fashioned into a human body — yea, stooping down upon that form, in order to give it the impress of His own likeness. This was the finishing touch of creation — and God bent down to give that finishing touch to the last and most glorious work of his hand — He put himself in close contact with man, and “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” “*The breath of life*” — breathed it into his nostrils — the breath of God was breathed into him — and thus man became a living soul. It was then the Divine image was pencilled and portrayed upon his features — and the dull, clay countenance took a heavenly expression, and the closed eye opened, and began to beam with a celestial intelligence. It was then a spirit within began to inspire and animate that form of a celestial mould. It was then the spark of reason was kindled up in the soul. Then there was intelligence, understanding, and a conscience in that body which, just before, was without motion or life.

This was the origin of the soul of man. The origin is Divine. And if the question is asked, what is the soul? here is the answer: — It is *the breath of the living God*. This is the living spirit — the vital principle that actuates and inspires the mortal frame. This soul *cannot die* — it is an inspiration of the