

*from Dr. Sprague
1871*

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DISCOURSE

Commemorative of the late

REV. ROBERT BAIRD, D.D.

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COMMEMORATIVE

OF THE LATE

REV. ROBERT BAIRD, D. D.,

DELIVERED ON OCCASION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE

AMERICAN AND FOREIGN CHRISTIAN UNION,

IN THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, CORNER OF FIFTH AVENUE AND
TWENTY-FIRST STREET, NEW YORK,

ON SABBATH EVENING, MAY 10, 1863.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.,

MINISTER OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, ALBANY.

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1863.



DISCOURSE.

JOHN IV. 34.

MY MEAT IS TO DO THE WILL OF HIM THAT SENT ME—

The Mediatorial economy, so far as respects the grand Agent who conducts it, is essentially a system of gracious subordination. The great work, which was to have its issue in man's redemption, He undertook not by constraint but willingly; and yet it was pre-eminently a work of humiliation, a work of obedience. It was in the spirit of that declaration,—“Lo I come to do thy will, O God,” that He became a sojourner in our ruined world; and in all that He did and suffered here, in the cause of our salvation, He was only performing a mission,—acting as a subordinate to his Father who had sent Him. And as the work in which He was engaged was in itself superlatively glorious, so He addressed Himself to it with proportional alacrity and diligence. From the earliest unfolding of his humanity to his triumphant ascension

from Olivet, He was always about his Father's business. All his faculties, human and superhuman, were thus employed. The most formidable obstacles never discouraged Him. The bitterest persecution never overawed Him. The prospect of the final baptism of blood only stirred the depths of his soul into more intense action. He was always on the alert to communicate instruction, both in public and in private, and his manner of doing it was at once most simple and luminous, condescending and considerate. His heart overflowed with sympathy for human wo; and nearly all the miracles He performed in attestation of his Divine mission, were for the feeding of the hungry, the healing of the sick or the maimed, the dispossessing of the demoniac, or the giving back of the dead to weeping friends. Even while the agonies of the Cross were in progress, and the spear was just ready to enter his heart, He pronounced a sentence of forgiveness upon a repenting sinner and a fellow sufferer by his side; and the interval between his resurrection and ascension He improved in communicating to his disciples more particular instructions, and thus confirming their faith, and preparing them for the grand enterprise to which they were commissioned. In all this He

was furnishing a practical illustration of his own declaration in the text,—“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.” He was so absorbed in the great object of his mission that his labours in its behalf made Him forgetful even of his necessary food. In short, throughout his whole ministry, He acted habitually under the influence of a ruling passion.

Herein is Jesus an example to all his followers; and especially to his *Ministers*, whom He has constituted his primary agents in carrying forward the work which He Himself inaugurated by his personal presence on earth, and which He is still sustaining and directing from his mediatorial throne in Heaven. Let our theme, then, be *the Ruling Passion of the Minister of the Gospel, who walks in the footsteps of his Lord.*

I. Notice, in the first place, *the simplicity of the principle* which this ruling passion involves, and according to which its movements are directed—the principle is that *the will of God is the only standard of duty.*

The judgments of the world, and even of the Church, as to what a minister ought to be and to do, are various, and often unreasonable and contradictory. There are multitudes who would

annihilate all the spiritualities of his office, and make him tolerant, if not patronizing, towards at least the more decent forms of worldliness; while many others, from a mistaken jealousy for the dignity of his vocation, would forbid to him the exercise of a naturally cheerful spirit, and require him to forego, in great measure, the innocent enjoyments of social life. There are some who protest against the preaching of doctrine, and are always crying out for more of the practical element,—as if there were any doctrine of the Bible that is not of essentially practical tendency; and there are others, by whom discourses, founded on the precepts of the Gospel designed for the regulation of the daily life, are stigmatized as lacking in vital warmth, as if the Saviour could have uttered, or the Apostles recorded, any thing that was not fitted to make men better. There are some who will have it that the pulpit is betraying its trust in every sermon in which the severer truths of the Bible are not specially prominent; and there are others who are never satisfied with a discourse which does not treat directly and formally of the glorious prospects of the believer. There are some whose ears are always open to welcome the subtleties of metaphysics, and there

are others to whom the slightest tax upon their faculties is a signal for going to sleep. Now is it not manifest that the minister who should take counsel of these various tastes, and undertake to deduce from them a rule of action, would find himself embarrassed at every step; and would not the temporizing, vacillating course into which he must necessarily fall, not only defeat the end of his ministry, but render himself an object of contempt?

How very different, how entirely opposite, a standard of ministerial conduct is the will of God! Here all is simple, clear, consistent. If a minister will know how he must preach the Gospel, or how he should conduct in difficult circumstances, or how he can do most for the advancement of Christ's cause, let him take counsel of the will of God, as it is revealed in the precepts and example of Christ and the teachings of the Apostles, exercising, at the same time, a spirit of docile dependence on Divine illumination, and but one path, and that a plain one, will open before him. It may indeed be a way that is hard to travel,—a way in which there will be not only difficulties to be met but formidable enemies to be encountered,—but still it is the way towards which the finger of God unmis-

takably points. So, too, it is quite possible that cases may occur, so involved and embarrassed in some of their relations, that a minister may very reasonably pause in doubt, and even distress, over the question,—what the Lord will have him to do; but, in the faithful use of the appointed means, the light will be sure to come. And now mark the effect which a recognition of this simple standard must have in giving complexion to a minister's labours. It will save him the perplexity, the faltering, wavering habit, incident to determining his course upon any other principle. It will render him proof against the manifold temptations to a compromise with some or other of the various forms of evil. It will act as a helper to his moral perceptions, a quickener to his moral sensibilities, and will impart firmness, consistency, energy to his whole character. In short, it will impress upon his ministry the features of wisdom, love and power. It will make him an epistle known and read of all men.

II. Consider, in the next place, the *amplitude of the range* within which the ruling passion of the Christian minister operates—it is the *whole* will of God in respect to him.

How wide is the range of a minister's *duty*!

That which emphatically constitutes his vocation is the preaching of the Gospel—and surely to preach the whole counsel of God, rightly dividing the word of truth,—to illustrate and enforce all the doctrines and duties of Christianity, in accommodation to the various characters and wants of men, must of itself give no inconsiderable scope to both the intellectual and moral faculties. But, besides the preaching of the word, the sacred office includes various duties of a more private nature, such as admonishing the wayward, directing the inquiring, counselling the perplexed, encouraging the timid, and comforting the sorrowful. So, too, every minister has more or less to do in conducting the general concerns of the Church; and there are some who are specially designated to this work, and whose whole time and strength are given to some or other of those great objects that tell directly and powerfully on the moral renovation of the world. There are some who cross the ocean to find their field of labour in remote parts of the earth; some whose ministry, instead of being confined within a very limited territory, is well nigh commensurate with an entire Continent. There are some whose appropriate work

is the training of young men for the sacred office, in order not only to repair the ravages that death is all the time making in the ministry, but to send off new recruits into the regions of Pagan darkness to encounter the adversary on his own chosen ground. And there are those whose ministrations are partly through the press; who bring the great truths of the Word in contact not only with the ear but the eye, and thus multiply their message a thousand fold. All these are the legitimate duties of the ministry. They may not all devolve on any one man; but they all fairly pertain to the sacred office, as it has been constituted, and is continued, by the will of God.

But if the range of ministerial effort be great, that of ministerial *influence* is far greater. The act is visible, palpable, immediate; but the effect may be invisible, intangible, remote—the vibrations of the blow that is struck here to-day, may be felt on the other side of the globe a century hence. A minister stands up before his congregation, and proclaims his message in simple reliance on God's grace to give it effect—he knows that his utterances have fallen upon the ear; but whose heart has been moved by them, if any, he cannot even conjecture. But some one has been sitting

within the sound of his voice, upon whom his words are acting as the fire and the hammer upon the rock; and thus has begun a process which ere long terminates in a genuine conversion to God; and the subject of that experience turns out to be a devoted missionary, who will plant the standard of the Cross in some of the strongholds of Satan's empire, and whose very name will be a power throughout the whole progress of the world's evangelization. Yonder is a minister on whom devolves the conduct of some great benevolent enterprise—he works day and night to subordinate various and sometimes apparently conflicting agencies to the one grand object to which his life is devoted; and, however circumscribed may be his sphere of action, his range of influence scarcely knows a limit—there is not a Continent, perhaps there is scarcely a country, in which the benign results of his labours are not, to some extent, realized. Yet another case—a minister sits in his study, and commits to paper his thoroughly matured thoughts on some subject of vital connection with man's highest interests; and the result is a volume that is translated into various languages, and works its way as a power for good into the minds and hearts of millions.

These cases may suffice as an illustration of the vast extent of the influence of the ministry—it may work silently, it may work imperceptibly, but its field is the world.

III. I only ask your attention, further, to *the grandeur of the results* which the ruling passion of the faithful minister accomplishes.

You may see this, first, as it stands connected with *the destiny of the human soul*. What a noble specimen of creation was the soul, as it came, bearing the Divine image, from its Maker's hands! But what a fearful change did sin make both in its character and its condition! Instead of loyalty came rebellion; instead of purity, pollution; instead of conscious innocence, the sting of guilt; instead of the prospect of a glorious immortal life, the untold horrors of an ever living death. Here now is a problem too deep for the angels—whether recovery is possible; and, if so, by what means. God's infinite wisdom and mercy solved the problem in favour of the human soul—a decree went forth from the eternal throne that it should be reinvested with the glory which it had lost; or rather that it should rise the higher for having sunk so low; that it should shine the brighter for having undergone an eclipse; and this was to be

effected by a new and gracious economy, of which the Son of God Himself was the appointed Conductor. Now the ministry of the Gospel is the most powerful auxiliary which He employs in aid of the soul's redemption. The great work, so far as respects the harmonizing of the Divine attributes in the sinner's forgiveness, and the procuring of the Holy Spirit for his sanctification, was done on Calvary; but the proposing of the terms of salvation, the beseeching of sinners to be reconciled to God, all the addresses which are made to the conscience and the heart through the senses,—these are a matter of human instrumentality, and are especially identified with the mission of the Christian minister. When, therefore, the minister, in the exercise of his ruling passion, goes about holding forth the word of life, endeavouring to bring sinners within the attracting power of the Cross, and to keep Christians along in the strait and narrow way, he is labouring in the great cause of the human soul,—to assist in restoring to it the Divine image, and in sending it forward on a mission of wisdom, and love, and glory, that shall reach down through all the ages of eternity.

So, too, the actings of this noble passion are intimately connected with *the mediatorial triumph*.

The humiliation to which Christ submitted was with reference to his exaltation that should follow—the agony of the Garden and of the Cross was the preparation for, the condition of, that crown of mediatorial glory, which He found waiting for Him on his return to Heaven, but which will still be receiving new gems until the ransomed are all gathered in. Every redeemed soul that ascends is a fresh memorial of the victory that He gained when He bowed his head and gave up the ghost. In every instance in which the preaching of the Gospel becomes the power of God unto salvation, the Saviour sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. Is not that a grand result which a minister reaches, when, with all his darkness and all his feebleness, he helps to render more glorious the very throne on which the Redeemer sits?

And, finally, in the workings of this ruling passion may be seen *a most signal illustration of the Divine perfections*. For, which of these perfections is not impressively displayed in that plan of redeeming mercy which it is the design of the Christian ministry to carry into effect? Is not every regenerated, redeemed soul a monument of the Divine *wisdom*—for what wisdom less than infinite could have devised a way in which sin could be pardoned

in consistency with the rights of **Jehovah's** throne, and the harmony of all his **attributes**? Is not every such soul also a monument of his *power*,—inasmuch as he has been the **subject** of a new creation; a monument of his *justice*,—as the claims of the perfect law, instead of being **infringed**, are honoured, in his gracious acquittal; a monument of his *holiness*,—as it is the Holy Spirit that has begun and is carrying forward the **purifying** process in his heart; a monument of his *mercy*,—as he is delivered not only from a **fearful** but a justly deserved doom; a monument of his *faithfulness*,—as the principle of spiritual life is **sustained** and *matured* in fulfilment of a gracious **promise**? Now when the Christian minister, full of **trust** and zeal, addresses himself to his work, and the **word** which he dispenses enters, as the **element** of a new life, into many hearts, especially when his **labours** are attended with what we call a **revival** of religion,—is there not, to every eye that has **received** the power of spiritual discernment, a **wonderful** manifestation of the Divine glory? If there is a spot **on earth** where God may be said, in **very** deed, to dwell with men, and to cause his **glory** to pass before them, surely it is where the **ruling** passion of the Christian minister is at once **accomplishing**

its work and receiving its reward, in instrumentally recovering many lost souls to holiness and Heaven.

Thus I have endeavoured, in the briefest possible manner, to illustrate the ruling passion of the Christian minister, in respect to the simplicity of its principle, the amplitude of its range, and the grandeur of its results. And I have done this simply as an introduction to what I have to say of that honoured and beloved minister of Christ, the tidings of whose recent death have circulated in a note of sadness all over the Christian world. Of so remarkable a life as his has been, it is impossible to bring within the limits of this exercise more than the merest outline; but I shall be able to say enough to show that his ministry, from its beginning to its end, was one unceasing exemplification of the power of the ruling passion.

What strikes us first, in connection with the life of Dr. BAIRD, is *the extent, the variety, the effectiveness of his labours*. Of the two former of these qualities we may form some adequate idea from tracing the details of his history; but of the latter our conceptions must necessarily be imperfect, partly because the results of his ministry have as yet only begun to be developed, and partly because of

the ready absorption of individual influence in the great world of thought, and feeling, and action. I will endeavour to place him before you in several distinct relations, and leave you to judge of the aggregate of blessing which both the Church and the world have received through his instrumentality.

First of all, I present him to you as a *Teacher of youth*. In this capacity he began his labours in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, immediately after leaving College in 1818. At the close of a year, he entered the Princeton Theological Seminary, where he took the regular three years' course of study, but with it connected a three years' course of teaching;—the first two years as the instructor of the children of a few families in the place,—the last year as a Tutor in the College of New Jersey. His connection with the College was marked not only by great fidelity, but by mingled firmness and kindness, which secured to him at once the respect and the affection of the students. On the completion of his theological course in 1822,—partly, it would seem, from a distrust of his own talents for the pulpit,—he took charge of an Academy in Princeton, and retained his con-

nection with it between five and six years. Here, as in the similar positions he had previously occupied, he showed great tact and thoroughness as a teacher, and his school enjoyed a highly respectable and liberal patronage. Not a few of the youth of whom he had the training have since made a shining mark; among whom I may mention those bright but now extinguished lights, JAMES and ADDISON ALEXANDER.

Let us view him next in the capacity in which he performed his most important services, and won his brightest laurels,—I mean as an *Agent in the different departments of Christian benevolence*. It is doubtful whether, when he left his school at Princeton, he expected ever to become a settled Pastor—his aspirations seem to have been in another direction—the Master to whom he had devoted himself knew that he was better adapted to a wider field; and hence Providence opened the door for him into that field; and it turned out that, when he had once entered it, he was there for life. He had indeed begun his work as an Agent the year before he gave up his school. He had become deeply interested in the Nassau Hall Bible Society, and had originated a plan for supplying every destitute family in the State with a

copy of the Sacred Scriptures, within one year. The plan, though deemed impracticable by many, was finally adopted; and, chiefly through his personal exertions, it was accomplished by the distribution of ten thousand Bibles in six weeks. Next, we find him, in 1828, the General Agent of the New Jersey Missionary Society; and, at this period, he was instrumental in directing public attention to the very defective means of education then existing in the State, and ultimately of moving the Legislature to a radical improvement of their public school system. In 1829, he accepted the General Agency of the American Sunday School Union, in connection with which he travelled all over the country, and performed a vast amount of acceptable and effective labour. The success of his efforts in this field may be inferred from the fact that, whereas, when he entered it, the revenue of the Society did not exceed five thousand dollars, and the labourers employed were not more than half a dozen, when he retired from it in 1835, its revenue had become twenty-eight thousand, and the number of its labourers had increased to fifty. His Agency marked a bright epoch in the history of this Society.

Hitherto the theatre of Dr. Baird's benevolent

efforts has been exclusively his own country ; but the time has now come when he is to take a wider range ; and nearly the whole residue of his life is to be devoted to the one object of enlightening and reforming the nominally Christian world. His mind had been in deep sympathy with this object for several years ; and his studies and general reading had been chiefly in the same direction ; and now the Providence of God makes his duty so clear that nothing remains to him but to go forward to the discharge of it. Sometime previous to 1835, a number of benevolent individuals in this country had had their attention drawn towards France, and other partially evangelized European countries, as a promising field for missionary labour ; and in that year these gentlemen, then known as the French Committee, selected Dr. Baird as a suitable person to take up his residence, for a few years, in France, with a view to help forward, in various ways, the cause of evangelical religion in Continental Europe. Having accepted the appointment, he crossed the ocean, with his family, and made his home in Paris for three consecutive years. During this period, his duties were at once manifold and arduous. He shared with the Rev. Mark Wilks the Sabbath-day ser-

vices, designed especially for English and American residents of the French capital. He held a regular Saturday evening service at his own house, consisting of devotional exercises and familiar illustrations of Scripture. He lost no opportunity of circulating the Bible and Religious Tracts. He was always on the alert to commend the cause in which he was labouring to the thoughtful and benevolent regards of his own countrymen, who, from time to time, visited France; and, in instances not a few, he succeeded in securing from them liberal contributions. By the information which he was constantly furnishing to several of our benevolent institutions at home, he was instrumental in quickening their energies, and enlarging their resources, and enlisting them, to some extent, as auxiliaries to his own work. But what perhaps contributed more than any thing else to give importance to this period of his sojourn abroad, was the philanthropic mission which he performed, through several European countries, in aid of the Temperance cause. In London, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Leipsic, Berlin, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Brussels, he engaged in this work with his accustomed diligence and earnestness, making himself felt by

all sorts of people, from the humblest menial to the crowned monarch. After this memorable tour, he spent several months in Italy; and, at a still later period, visited Moscow, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and several cities in Poland and Austria, for the double purpose of pleading the cause of Temperance, and of gaining information that he might turn to account in his main work. Having now accomplished the objects of his mission, to the full satisfaction of the associated gentlemen under whose auspices it had been undertaken, he returned to the United States, with his family, in the spring of 1838.

Meanwhile, the enterprise for which he had been the Agent had taken an enlarged and more definite form, in the establishment of the Foreign Evangelical Association, which soon after took the name of the Foreign Evangelical Society. And since the ability and fidelity of our friend, in connection with this work, had already been so thoroughly and so successfully tested, it is not strange that the new Society was disposed still to retain him in its service, or that he was himself willing to remain in it. Accordingly, in 1839, he returned with his family to Paris, and resumed his labours under the fresh impulse he had received

from the cordial sympathy and vigorous co-operation of his American friends. But it is impossible, within the limits now assigned to me, to follow him through his protracted subsequent course—I can only hint at a few facts of the most general nature, and leave you to wait for the details till the hand of filial affection has performed the grateful office of framing a fitting memorial that shall include them all.

From the period we have now reached (1839) Dr. Baird continued to labour for this Society, as Corresponding Secretary and General Agent, for ten years, when it was merged, with the Protestant Society and Christian Alliance, in the American and Foreign Christian Union; and from that time till his death, with the exception of about two years, (from 1859 to 1861, when he was Secretary of the Southern Aid Society,) he served the Christian Union as Corresponding Secretary. During this period, he travelled through nearly every European country, and some of them several times, besides visiting Greece, and Turkey, and Syria; and everywhere he sought either to create new influences, or to give direction and impulse to those already existing, in favour of evangelical religion. Thirteen passages across the ocean he

made subsequently to that period—about six years he spent in Europe—the rest in his own country; but whether there or here, the one great object had constant possession both of his mind and of his heart. He was present at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in London in 1846, and again in London in 1851; also in Paris in 1855; in Berlin in 1857; and in Geneva in 1861. On all these occasions, he participated largely in the deliberations and doings of the Body, and, in several instances, resisted steadfastly what he deemed an unreasonable interference with the delicate question of American Slavery. The years that he has passed on this side the water, we all know have been years of unintermitted toil—besides performing an almost incredible amount of labour in his office, he has traversed the country through nearly the entire length and breadth of it, over and over again; and there is scarcely a city or a large town in which he has not brought some influences to bear in favour of his object. The results of his labours, even as they are already developed, I cannot attempt to represent. I wish I could give you the statistical details, contained in a sermon which I heard from him a few weeks before his death, illustrating the blessed change

which has taken place within the last twenty-eight years, in the countries in which and for which he has been labouring. Suffice it to say they showed a wonderful advance in the principles and spirit of a pure Christianity—they showed that the Redeemer has been all this time travelling in the greatness of his strength, to clothe with new life not only individuals but nations, which were spiritually dead. Dr. Baird did not, indeed, in this statement, make the slightest allusion to his own agency in connection with this change; and we all know that he has had many excellent co-adjutors in his work, some of whom, but for considerations of delicacy, I should love to name; yet sure I am that no one of them all would think himself dishonoured by its being said that no small part of the vital power of the Society was concentrated in our lamented friend. Others have done worthily, even nobly, but Robert Baird is the only man whom every body thinks of whenever the Society is mentioned.

Another relation in which Dr. Baird must be viewed, if we would take the just measure of the influence of his life, and which was at once subordinate and subservient to the grand Agency we

have been contemplating, was that of a *Lecturer*. The subject of his lectures was the different countries of Europe, including a view of their geography, government, literature, religion, social life, eminent men,—of almost every thing, indeed, that could be a legitimate matter of interest or inquiry. The extent and accuracy of his details were truly wonderful; and the fact that he was reporting, in so large measure, the results of his own observation, gave to what he said a freshness that could never have been imparted to any mere compilation from books, while his universally acknowledged trustworthiness in every thing gave to his testimony an authority well nigh oracular. His lectures were characterized by an air of simplicity that brought them down almost to the comprehension of childhood, while yet they embodied a large amount of material that could not fail to be welcome to the most cultivated mind. Though they were not exclusively of a religious character, they had still an important bearing upon the great object to which he was devoted; so that, by the same means, he was communicating a large amount of general knowledge, giving a direction to the public mind favourable to his work, and ekeing out a moderate salary into an adequate support. These

lectures had been delivered, previous to 1856, about one hundred times; and they were generally listened to by large audiences, and with profound attention.

And, finally, it is impossible to do justice to our subject without hinting at Dr. Baird's labours as an *Author*. Few American clergymen have put the press in requisition more frequently, or to better practical purpose, than he; and none, it is presumed, have been honoured to have their productions pass into so many languages. Several of his smaller works have been designed to embalm the memory of departed worth or loveliness; and these take the tender and gentle tone which his nature would of course impart to them. Some of his other works, containing the results of his observation and inquiry in respect to his own and other countries, are justly regarded as authority on both sides of the ocean. His book on the History of Temperance Societies in the United States has been translated into the Danish, Swedish, German, Finnish, and Russian languages; and this has been done, in some instances, at the royal expense. Of his work, entitled "Religion in America," there have been translations into the French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Italian, Danish, Modern

Greek and Armenian languages. Several of his works have had a wide circulation in Great Britain, and have elicited high commendation from the most respectable authorities. Besides being the author of some ten or twelve volumes of various sizes, he has been the editor of two or three monthly magazines, one of which he was conducting with great care, when death put an end to all his labours. He was also a regular correspondent of a number of secular newspapers, the tone of which was always elevated and improved by his contributions. By his pen, as well as in other ways, it is not too much to say that he has impressed himself upon the character of his age, and constituted himself one of the world's benefactors.

I have not spoken of Dr. Baird in the character of a Preacher, because his preaching was so much a part of his Agency that the results of both were essentially identified. I may say, however, that those who came to hear him, eager to have their admiration awakened by splendid rhetoric or oratory, would be sure to go away disappointed; while those who could relish a luminous exhibition of the progress of Christ's Kingdom, made with the simplicity and tenderness of the Disciple

whom Jesus loved, would be equally sure to be edified and impressed by his statements, and could hardly fail to find themselves quickened into a livelier sympathy with the wants of the world.

In what I have said you have the merest outline of Dr. Baird's labours; but I am sure that it is enough to justify the position I have taken that he performed an extraordinary work. The question now arises,—*What gave him this remarkable success*, which has rendered his name like a household word in so large a part of the Christian world?

I might say, in general, that it was *the power of a ruling passion*; but this must be considered in connection with the means and the channels through which it has operated.

I remark, then, that this is no doubt to be referred partly to the *providential arrangement of the circumstances of his birth and early years*. Born in Western Pennsylvania, about two years before the close of the last century, at a period and in a region distinguished for primitive simplicity, he was thrown amidst parental and domestic associations and influences eminently conducive to a healthful moral development. He was introduced to the rugged labours of the field as soon as he was capable of being thus employed; and here as

truly as in the humble school in which he spent a portion of each winter, he was taking lessons which were to have their influence in the framing of an energetic and noble character. His aspirations for learning appeared as soon as he was capable of exercising intelligent thought; and though there were powerful obstacles to the gratification of his desire, a mother's wisdom, and energy, and love proved adequate to surmount them. He became a pupil in the Academy at Uniontown when he was in his sixteenth year; but his sensitive nature, which had never before been brought in contact with the rude world, recoiled so much at the ungracious treatment he received from some of his fellow students, that he broke away from the scene both of his studies and of his troubles, and went home. But this apparently adverse circumstance, instead of arresting his educational career, gave to it a new impulse—for his mother's disappointment at seeing him come back was more than he could bear; and, in a short time, he returned to his school, girded with fresh strength to encounter the taunts and ridicule which had before proved an overmatch for his endurance. And the consequence was that the boys who had laughed at him and worried him,

were soon forced to respect him; and, at no distant period, his extraordinary diligence, in connection with his facility at acquiring, had placed him above them all, and given him the highest rank in the school. In 1816 he entered Washington College, a year in advance; but, in his Senior year, owing to some disturbance in the institution, he transferred his relation to Jefferson College, where he graduated with high honour in 1818. Thus auspicious were the circumstances of his education. To the fact that his eyes first opened on the light in a house in which the stern discipline of a good old Scotch Covenanter was combined with the thoughtful and earnest spirit of one of the best of mothers; to the fact that his earliest physical development was in the pure air of the country, and amidst the healthful labours of the farm; to the fact that there was in his mother's love a power to provide for his necessities, and in his mother's counsels a power, not only to set him forward in his studies when his resolution had begun to falter, but to impart to him a strength of purpose absolutely heroic; and that this and other circumstances combined to render his whole academic and collegiate career a highly successful course of intellectual culture;—to the

influence of these facts, I say, may be referred, in no small degree, the formation of the character and the habits from which such glorious results have been realized.

We may look, further, for the secret of Dr. Baird's wonderful success to his *highly favoured intellectual and moral constitution*. The more brilliant and imaginative qualities we all know he did not possess; nor was he in the least ambitious of the reputation of possessing them. Nor did he ever show himself a philosopher, in the common acceptation of that word; for whatever his capabilities in that direction may have been, he was too much absorbed in what was purely practical to have any time to spend in the regions of abstract thought. But, in the sphere in which he moved, he always showed himself possessed of a clear discernment of the characters and motives of men; of a calm and solid judgment, whose decisions rarely had to be reversed; and of great aptness in selecting the appropriate means for the accomplishment of his ends. He was remarkable also for comprehensiveness of mind; for originating or grasping a great and complicated plan, not only in its outline but in its details, and showing the harmony and mutual subserviency of its various parts.

While he had a habit of observation that overlooked nothing that came within his range, he had also a memory that held securely every valuable deposit that was made in it; of which, surely, those of us are witnesses, who have seen him stand up before an audience, night after night, and give off the most minute facts and dates by the hour, with unerring accuracy, without having a scrap of paper before him. His mind, in its actual movements, as I have already intimated, was in the highest degree practical—his thoughts, his plans, his efforts, were all with reference to some definite end. While he was ever ready to render due honour to minds accustomed to profound research, I think it was as much a matter of taste as of duty with him to let his own mind find its home amidst palpable common-sense realities.

Of Dr. Baird's moral qualities I had no knowledge until they had been purified and elevated by the influence of Christian faith; but I venture to say that even Christianity would not have made him all that he was, if Nature had not done her part well beforehand. That moral characteristic which would perhaps first arrest the attention of a stranger, was an ingenuous simplicity and guile-

lessness that revolted at even the semblance of double dealing. You saw it written upon his very countenance that he was a man to be trusted; and you wanted no voucher for his perfect integrity. Then he had a gentleness and loveliness of temper for which the dove or the lamb was not more than a match; qualified, however, by a fidelity to his own conscientious judgments which would not have dishonoured a Christian martyr; and by a readiness and conscious ability to maintain his own rights when justice or honour demanded it. He was prudent and considerate in all his movements, never taking a step rashly or in the dark; never placing himself in an attitude of doubtful propriety for the sake of compassing an end; never needlessly bringing himself in conflict with the prejudices or the interests of his fellow men. Not a small part of his work consisted in that most delicate of all services, the personal sollicitation of pecuniary contributions; but these applications were always made with such marked discretion and gentlemanly propriety that I believe it was generally felt to be a pleasure rather than a sacrifice to respond to them. Those who watched him most closely, must, I think, have failed to detect in him the semblance of envy, or jealousy, or any

selfish passion—on the contrary, he delighted in the happiness of others, and was the more happy himself when he could minister to it. And the same spirit that prompted him to rejoice with them that rejoiced, led him also to weep with them that wept; and many, I doubt not, remember their first meeting with him after they had been cast into the deep waters, as an occasion signalized by the exuberance and tenderness of his sympathy. Indeed, I should be at a loss to say which of the moral virtues was not beautifully illustrated in his character.

I remark, further,—though it is scarcely more than a specification under the general head of his moral qualities,—that among the elements of his great success was *his habit of untiring industry and indomitable perseverance*. No man that I have ever known has been a more rigid economist of time than Dr. Baird. He was frugal in respect to moments as well as hours and days. You would never find him unemployed, and yet you would never find him in a hurry; for he was so orderly and systematic in his work that it was hardly possible there should be any interference between the different parts of it. He read the daily papers with intense interest, but he read them chiefly in

the rail-car, as he was going to and from his work, when he could do nothing else. If he was passing a night at the house of a friend, he would remain with the family to interest or edify them till it was time for them to retire; and the next morning the fruit of his nightly labours would appear in a dozen letters ready to be sent to the Post-office. He would keep busily engaged at his office during the day, and then would be seen taking an evening train to go off to some village thirty or forty miles distant, where he would deliver a lecture an hour and a half in length, and rich in valuable instruction, and would glide back to the city in the morning in time to meet the earliest demands made upon him. Even sickness must take on a more than ordinarily enervating or threatening form in order to break materially his daily routine of engagements; and, in one instance, during his residence in Europe, he got up from a long and tedious confinement, when his strength had only begun to return to him, and set off on a journey of many hundred miles, in the prosecution of some of his benevolent objects. And what he undertook he pursued with a serene constancy, an unyielding strength of purpose, an intelligent and ever glowing zeal, that formed an almost certain

pledge of ultimate success. The reason why he was so rarely known to waver, or falter, or retrace his steps, was that his plans of action were always carefully and wisely matured, and he moved forward to the accomplishment of them with full confidence that he was in the right.

But that which, above every thing else, gives the clue to Dr. Baird's extraordinary usefulness, is his *deep and all-pervading piety*, manifesting itself especially in his simple dependence on the Providence and Grace of God. The two qualities which, as moral virtues, growing on the stock of nature, were more immediately associated with the process of his spiritual renovation, became, subsequently, when matured and exalted into Christian graces, perhaps the brightest points in his religious character. When I tell you that he received his first enduring religious impressions, soon after entering College, *while teaching a class of negro boys in the Sunday School*, you will hardly need be told that the two qualities to which I refer are humility and benevolence. These, as graces of the Spirit, breathed in his conversation and prayers, and impressed themselves upon all the actions of his daily life. But that characteristic of his piety to which I here more particularly refer, was his

habit of acknowledging God in every thing;—of always taking counsel of his Providence, and seeking the guidance of his Spirit, in respect to duty; of habitually recognizing his goodness as the fountain of all blessing; of throwing himself back, in filial confidence, upon his gracious promises, in the darkest hour. He never offered what are sometimes called eloquent prayers; but he prayed with so much simplicity, and humility, and reverence, and godly fervour, that no one could resist the impression that he was speaking directly into the ear of mercy. Some of us have heard him conduct the devotions of our families; and I am sure we shall never forget how comprehensively, tenderly, appropriately, he led our thoughts and affections upward. I learned from his colleague, the other day, some interesting facts illustrative of his devotional habits in connection with his daily work. Regularly in the morning, when he came from his house in the country to his office, the first thing he proposed was that they should unite in imploring the Divine blessing; and in his supplications he would include not only the particular enterprise to which they were devoted,—the countries or portions of countries that formed the theatre of action for their Society, but all the

various branches of the Christian Church; all the institutions designed to help forward the conversion of the world; all the nations who are still sitting in the region of the shadow of death; and he was especially mindful of our own country,—his petitions in respect to it often taking their complexion from the morning news which he had read on his way to the office. Here, I repeat, was the grand secret of his power. He prayed with his whole heart—he prayed without ceasing—he prayed for every thing and every body—and the results of his labours witness that he was mighty with God and prevailed.

But, in connection with his Christian character, and as a part of it, I must not omit to speak of his *large-hearted catholicism*; for without this his great life-work never could have been done. There was that in his original constitution which rendered him eminently susceptible of this virtue—his naturally generous and sympathizing heart, when brought under the sanctifying influence of Christian principle, could not but open in fraternal recognition of all whom he could reasonably regard as the followers of Christ; and this quality was all the time being developed and matured by the very nature of his work. In his ecclesiastical

connection he was a Presbyterian—he was such both from education and from conviction; and he never forgot his allegiance to the Presbyterian Church; but, in the fulfilment of the particular mission to which Providence called him, his Presbyterianism was, to a great extent, merged in the common Christianity. With the most genial and graceful facility he could pass from one denomination to another, enlisting the sympathies and the co-operation of each just as effectually as if he had himself been identified with not only the denomination but the particular congregation which he was addressing. He never obtruded himself any where; never sacrificed courtesy or delicacy for the sake of making an opportunity to be heard; never urged his own claims at the expense of the slightest interference with those which were more imperative; but, wherever he went, his fine catholic spirit seemed to go before him, opening hearts, and pulpits, and purses in aid of his object. As his own heart found a congenial element wherever it found Christian disciples, so it generally met with a response worthy of its own enlightened liberality.

We have now glanced at the great work which Dr. Baird accomplished, and at some of the pecu-

liar gifts and facilities on which his success depended. But such a life as he has led,—a life of so much labour, and self-denial, and sacrifice, cannot be without its *reward*. This is the last thought with which I will detain you.

I say, then, his reward began here ; for we all took knowledge of him that he was a happy man. The genial smile with which he always met us, showed it. The alacrity with which he addressed himself to his arduous labours, showed it. The bright sunshine which his presence diffused through our dwellings, of which even the little children were not insensible, showed it. And the reason of it was, first, that he was conscious of being a true servant of the living God, and had many precious pledges of the Divine favour. And then he had a deep sense of the importance of the particular work in which he was engaged, and was cheered by the manifold evidences of success that were constantly reaching him. To say nothing of the honour which was shown him by many of the great ones of the earth, of the favourable notice which he received from several European Monarchs, of the fact that the College of which he was a graduate chose him to be its President ; he

enjoyed the friendship and confidence of a large part of the ablest and best men in his own country, and of many in nearly every country in Europe ; and those who have followed him in his foreign travels, and especially those who have taken letters of introduction from him to his friends, can testify that the mention of his name or the sight of his handwriting always touched a chord that vibrated in words or acts of Christian kindness. True, indeed, the honour that cometh from men, even the best of men, is not to be compared, as an element of enjoyment, with the testimony of an approving conscience, or with God's gracious smile, or with the assurance of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; but still it has a real and even great value, and as such is a legitimate subject for thankful acknowledgment.

But all that our revered friend enjoyed here in connection with, or in consequence of, his earthly labours, was hardly a foretaste of the reward which is now being meted out to him in Heaven. No doubt there was a stream of blessing pouring into his soul, while he was undressing himself to put on his immortal robes. How consolatory must it have been to him to reflect that among those who were ministering so tenderly around

his death bed were his own children, who had already followed him into the Kingdom of Christ and into the ministry of the Gospel, and through whom he would still be represented in the different walks of Christian and ministerial usefulness! When he saw that his work was done, must not his soul have risen in joyful thanksgiving to God, who had enabled him to accomplish so much; and must not the reflection that he was going up to dwell with that Gracious Master whom he had loved and served so long, have made it easy for him to die? And then, when the first step out of the dark valley was taken, is it presumptuous to suppose that there were those, who stood ready to heap their grateful benedictions upon him as the instrument of their salvation? How much he may be permitted to know of the future progress of the work from which he has been taken, we cannot tell; but surely there is nothing unscriptural or improbable in the supposition that he has already found many gems in his immortal crown which he never saw here below; and that there are many souls yet to ascend from distant parts of the earth, who will hail him as their benefactor, for the first time, in the presence of the Mediator and amidst the songs of the ransomed.

Jesus, the Great Rewarder, is at no loss how to recompense his glorified servant. Be assured that, according to the measure of self-denial he has practised, of service he has rendered, of glory he has been instrumental of bringing to God in the Highest, will be the measure of his progressive exaltation to all eternity.

As Dr. Baird's ministry has fallen within one of the brightest periods in the history of the Church, so his death has occurred in the very darkest hour in the history of our nation. He had long been an intelligent and thoughtful observer, without being an active participant, of the political movements of the country; and signs of impending evil which many others had treated lightly, he, with his opportunities for wider and minuter observation, had looked upon with profound concern. He saw the dark cloud in the distant horizon, when it was no bigger than a man's hand; and his eye pierced it to the secret place of fire; and the flash of the lightning and the crash of the thunderbolt have long been witnessing for him that he was no false prophet. And since the storm has been raging, a sounder and firmer patriot than he the land could not boast. But he has manifested it, not by indiscriminate vituperation

against those with whom we are in conflict; not by enlisting in the ranks of partisanship, and denouncing all whose ideas were not in full harmony with his own; but by endeavouring to impress, especially upon the more controlling minds, his views of the actual reality of our condition, and the perils and duties incident to it; and, more than all, by labouring to have God's retributive hand acknowledged, with a view to the cancelling of our national guilt, and our restoration to the Divine favour. He has never been faint-hearted, even for a moment, because his eye has always been upward; and he died in the fullest confidence that these skies are destined to become bright again, and that if not the present acting generation, yet our children, or children's children, will behold this nation greater, better, happier, for having been thus cast into the furnace.

I have already alluded to the death of Dr. Baird as having been an eminently favoured one. So indeed it was—but rarely has a death occurred, the record of which has been the signal for such widely extended mourning. The same blow which made the fond wife a widow, and the devoted children fatherless, dissolved many other ties of near relationship in the region where he was

born; vacated the highest place of influence in the Society with which he had been so long identified; opened fountains of sorrow in the hearts of his friends in every State, in every city, and in many a village and hamlet, throughout the land; and finally made itself felt among the wise and good in almost every part of Protestant Christendom. It was a good time that his Master chose for giving him his dismissal; for surely it was most fitting that a life of so much care and toil spent in the service of Christ, and extending into a period of which blood, and fire, and darkness are the appropriate emblems, should close amidst the peaceful associations of the Sabbath Day; heralding the yet more glorious rest to which Death introduced him. He has passed the veil, and we shall see him no more; but his memory is safe every where. The village of Yonkers is honoured in having been the home of his later years, and the scene of his peaceful death; and I venture to predict that many a traveller who hears the name of that village pronounced, as the train slackens its speed, will reverently associate with it the name of this great Christian Philanthropist.

It is a testimony honourable alike to Dr. Baird and the Society which he has so long represented,

that the anniversary exercises of this evening should take their hue from the fact of his recent departure. Nevertheless, have we not a right to hope that out of these exercises by which we commemorate him, there may come a blessing to the cause for which he lived? Let his example of fidelity, of earnestness, of cheerful and laborious application to his work, under the full influence of a ruling passion, act as a living mighty power upon all who have been associated with him in this noble enterprise; and let the work go on till they shall be called to commit it to other hands; and then let it proceed till the great end of his aspirations shall be accomplished in the thorough evangelization of the nominally Christian world. We are standing to-night beside his grave; and the best monument we can erect for him is, by our sober and earnest resolves, our willing and liberal offerings, our fervent and unceasing prayers, to give a fresh impulse to the great work of his life. Thus shall we retain him here as a fellow helper in our Redeemer's cause, while he will be performing a yet purer and more exalted service, as a minister with angels around the throne.

CORRECTION.

The printing of this Discourse was nearly finished when I learned that two slight errors had escaped in it, which I had received upon authority supposed to be unquestionable. One is that Dr. Baird's Eastern tour extended to Syria, whereas it reached only to Smyrna—the other is that his book on "Religion in America" was translated into Modern Greek and Armenian—the truth seems to be that this was contemplated, but never carried into effect.

21.57 HB