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*Capt Champlin  
with the author's best respects*

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**SERMON,**

ADDRESSED TO THE

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY,

IN GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT,

SEPTEMBER 1, 1830,

AT THE INSTALLATION OF

**THE REVEREND JOEL MANN,**

AS THEIR PASTOR.

---

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN ALBANY.

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# SERMON.

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## PSALM XLV. 4.

AND IN THY MAJESTY RIDE PROSPEROUSLY, BECAUSE OF TRUTH,  
AND MEEKNESS, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

IN the psalm of which these words are a part, we have a magnificent description of the glory of Messiah, and of the establishment of his kingdom. It is the production of a mind evidently acting under a powerful impulse of the Spirit of God, and enraptured by its own burning and lofty conceptions. In the very commencement of the psalm, the writer seems to have been transported by the sublimity of his subject; and in speaking of the things which he hath made touching the King, or the Lord Jesus Christ, he addresses his discourse in an abrupt manner, directly *to* him; so that it may be regarded either as a prophecy or a prayer. After referring in general terms to the perfections of Messiah, and celebrating his grace as the prophet of the church, he breaks out in a petition, or perhaps more properly in a prediction, that he would assume his regal power, and subdue the world unto himself. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory, and thy majesty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness."

That these words, and the psalm with which they are connected, were originally designed to apply to the Messiah, there is conclusive evidence from the psalm itself; for there

is no other being on earth or in Heaven to whom they can be applied without absurdity and impiety. But if the internal evidence were less decisive, the Apostle has settled the matter for all who are willing to acknowledge his authority, by quoting the fourth and fifth verses, in application to Christ, in his epistle to the Hebrews: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

The text and the verses immediately connected with it, exhibit Messiah in the habiliments of war, and as at the head of a most illustrious enterprise. It is as if the prophet had said, "Armed with the word of God, rendered effectual by the power of the Holy Ghost, thou wilt go forth in the greatness of thy majesty, subduing the nations to thyself, and every where establishing the reign of truth, and peace, and holiness."

With this explanation of the text, let me call your attention, for a few moments, to the DESIGN, the SUCCESS, the MAJESTY, of the enterprise to which it refers. "And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness."

I. Its DESIGN. This is intimated in the words, "because of," or for the promotion of, "truth, and meekness, and righteousness."

The subject of the change to be effected by this grand enterprise, is man—his understanding and his heart. The one is to be enlightened, the other subdued. This is what our text contemplates. But to be more particular—

1. There is here a reference to the establishment of *truth*—*Truth* in opposition to *ignorance*. I know that God has revealed himself to man in his works, as well as in his word;

insomuch that there has never been a moment since the wonders of the earth and of the firmament first burst upon the human eye, and the candle of the Lord was first lighted up in the human breast, but that man has been, in a greater or less degree, inexcusable for his ignorance of divine truth. But that such ignorance has existed, does exist, the history of the world furnishes the most palpable evidence. There have been in every age—there are at this hour, multitudes—in spite of all the light that shines around them from the works of God—ignorant of the first truths of natural religion. And there are other truths of the utmost importance for man to know ; truths in which are bound up the elements of his own eternal destiny—which yet he never *could* know, independently of a special divine communication. Now it is the purpose of Messiah to dissipate all this ignorance, whether it relate to things which are, or are not, within the legitimate range of human reason. The light of truth is yet to shine through that dense cloud which now overshadows so large a proportion of the earth. Man, whether his lot be cast in lands now pagan, or now christian—man, in every variety of condition, and of every shade of character, is yet to be delivered from the thralldom of ignorance, and his understanding to be brought in contact with the truth of God. The existence, the character, the government of Jehovah, the relations which man sustains to him both as a creature and a sinner, and especially the wonderful scheme of redemption by Christ ;—the knowledge of all this is to be diffused every where ; so that a man shall no longer have occasion to say to his neighbor or to his brother, ‘ Know the Lord ;’ for all shall know him from the least unto the greatest.

Further : The empire of *truth* is to be established in opposition to that of *error*. If we look abroad into the world, we shall find that ignorance—bad as it is—is not the worst usurper that has gained possession of the human mind : there is, both connected and disconnected with this—error ; false notions even in respect to the first principles of religion. The poor Pagan is not only ignorant of the true God, but he bows down



to a reptile or a block, and believes that a reptile or a block can save him. He is not only without any knowledge of Christ and his salvation, but he believes that salvation will be the fruit of his own superstitious and senseless observances. The miserable dupe of Mahomedan imposture is not only ignorant of the holy Heaven which the Bible reveals, and of the new and living way into it by the blood of Christ, but he is firmly entrenched in the delusion that Heaven is a place for sensual joy, and that he must fight his way into it at the point of the bayonet. And in christian lands, even where the light of truth shines as brightly as the light of heaven, who need be told that there is a fearful amount of error ;—error on subjects most vitally important to man's salvation ? Yes, *there is* to be found the man who declares that there is to be *no* punishment in a future world for the wicked, notwithstanding the Bible has declared that the wicked “shall go away into *everlasting* punishment ;” the man who maintains that the shedding of Christ's blood is not necessary to human forgiveness, notwithstanding the testimony of God is that “without the shedding of blood, there is no remission ;” nay, there is to be found the man, who can close his eyes against the light of nature, as well as of Revelation, and deny his own immortality, and the government, and even the existence of God, while every thing within him, and every thing without him, is lifting up its voice to rebuke his unbelief and infatuation. In opposition to all this, the reign of truth is every where to be established. Even where error has held its throne for ages, and the voice of man has spoken nothing *but* error, while the voice of God has been continually proclaiming truth ; even there, where it seems to have entrenched itself most strongly in the habits, and prejudices, and depravity of man, its dominion will ere long be broken up ; all the false systems of religion which have prevailed, or now prevail, among the nations, will have fled before the power of truth, just as the morning cloud upon the mountains retires before the rising sun.

Again: It is the purpose of Messiah to establish the dominion of truth *in its practical influence*, in opposition to a *belief that is merely speculative*. However it be accounted for, the fact cannot be questioned, that there are multitudes who are not only familiar with the truths of God's word, but who profess an unwavering belief of them, in whose minds they exist merely as the elements of a barren speculation. They can talk about them intelligently, and perhaps will defend them against the cavils of unbelief; but their faith is the faith of the intellect merely, and its influence never descends to the heart. Their system is beautiful, is correct; and there is in it an amazing power; but of that power they are experimentally as ignorant as if their understandings had never been brought in contact with the living word. Now over these minds truth is to gain a practical ascendancy. It is to erect its throne in the heart, and to bring into captivity all the affections; and thus, instrumentally, to sanctify and control the whole man. In other words, men believing the truths which God has revealed, are to feel and act agreeably to their convictions. Hence we find that in connexion with truth, the psalmist mentions,

2. *Meekness*. We know how little of this spirit belongs to the unsanctified nature of man. The history of human nature is little more, so far as the intercourse of men with each other is concerned, than a record of malicious designs and injurious actions. Man instead of finding a brother in his fellow man, has too often found in him an enemy; and instead of meekly forgiving the wrongs which he has received, has too often shown himself ready to avenge those wrongs, by acts of violence and blood. You may see this malignant spirit displaying itself even in the hallowed retreats of domestic life; separating those whom God, in his providence, has united; pouring mildew over the best hopes of a family, and causing briars and thorns to come up in the path of old age. You may see it too in neighborhoods, where the leaven of malice sometimes works like the leaven of death; withering every plant of

friendship, and poisoning the very fountains of social enjoyment. You may see it in still larger societies, breaking down ancient landmarks, blotting out noble institutions, and spreading desolation through an extensive community. You may see it especially breaking forth in the storm of war, when one nation goes forth to murder another, and ten thousand graves are open, and ten times ten thousand hearts are agonized, to gratify the malice, it may be, of a single individual. And I am constrained to say, you will sometimes find the same spirit operating, even among the professed followers of the Saviour ; and that too in reference to the interests of his kingdom : you may see them yielding themselves up to the asperities of party—I had almost said, fighting over the memorials of their Redeemer's death. But in the progress of Messiah's victories, this spirit is to be banished from the earth ; and in place of it, there is to come a spirit of universal benevolence ; a spirit which will not voluntarily inflict an injury on the one hand, or avenge one on the other ; a spirit whose kindly influence will convert the family, the neighborhood, the community, the world, into a scene of happiness, and a nursery for heaven. Wherever this spirit has prevailed, and just in proportion as it has prevailed, so it *has been* already : let its prevalence become universal, and the effect will be completely realized. But,

3. In the train of truth and meekness, follows *righteousness*. By righteousness here is meant much more than common justice between man and man—it implies a regard to all God's commandments, including not only the outward acts of duty, but the inward exercises of piety ; not only the performance of the external deed, but the performance of it from right motives. In the most restricted sense of the word—considered merely as including a part of the external duties which men owe to each other in their social relations—what a melancholy lack of righteousness is there in the world ! But if we consider it in the larger and only legitimate sense, as including the homage of the understanding, and the heart, and the life to God, then how much smaller still is the number whom we

may reasonably regard as righteous ! How few are there comparatively, how few have there ever been, who have seemed in any degree to forget themselves in doing good to others, or in a regard to God's glory ! What a vast multitude of the dwellers on the earth at this moment, never bow the knee to God in acknowledgement of his goodness, or in confession of their sins ; never so much as inquire what is his will, much less, discover any disposition to do it ! How rarely do you find even a single family, all whose members are, in the scriptural sense of the word, righteous ; and if you extend your views over a larger community, is there not a still more melancholy disproportion between the number of those who serve God, and of those who serve him not ? And even in respect to those who, on the whole, furnish evidence that they belong to the number of the righteous, how much infirmity, and dross, and corruption, do they daily exhibit, and how much reason have they to say that, when they would do good evil is present with them ! But mark the approaching change ! It is the purpose of Messiah to establish and extend the reign of righteousness till it shall become universal. It is his purpose to eradicate the vices, and cure the disorders of the human heart ; to bring man every where to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God ; to cause the human character, degraded as it now is, to rise in the beauty of holiness to a happy degree of conformity with his own. It is his design to raise up still brighter models of virtue and piety, and to cause their number to increase a thousand fold, and thus to shed a constantly increasing moral lustre upon the world, till it shall have experienced an entire renovation.

II. Having now presented before you the design of the enterprise in which Messiah is engaged, I proceed, secondly, to speak of its success :—" Ride prosperously." We will consider the *certainty* of this success, and the *means* by which it is obtained.

Its *certainty*. This depends on nothing short of the promise of God. He has declared that his Son shall see of the travail

of his soul and be satisfied ; that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the seas ; that Zion shall enlarge the place of her tent, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations ; that the heathen shall be given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. Thus hath Jehovah promised, and all the perfections of his character are pledged that every promise of his shall receive a full accomplishment. These heavens may be, and shall be, rolled together as a scroll ; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; and all that is fair and beautiful in the material universe be blotted out ; but rely on it, the faithfulness of God shall never fail ; the grand enterprise in which his Son is engaged shall never come to nought. Ye whose interests are identified with the success of this enterprise, have nothing to fear for the result ; nor would ye have any thing to fear, though the mountains should be carried into the midst of the sea.

Here then we rest with absolute assurance. God hath promised that this enterprise shall succeed, and therefore we know it will succeed. It has succeeded in a measure already ; and what is past is a pledge of what is to come. Lift up your eyes and survey the moral state of the world, and compare it with what it was a few centuries or even half a century ago, and say whether unbelief on this subject is any thing short of madness ? Once admit the moral perfections and government of God in connexion with this view, and there is no room left even for doubt : the evidence is not only brought home to your understanding, but rendered palpable to your senses, that Messiah is marching prosperously forward in the accomplishment of his purposes ; that every thing in the system of providence is tending towards the universal establishment of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.

I have said that the success of this enterprise is certain ; nevertheless it is *progressive*. And in this respect, how does it differ from God's ordinary dispensations ? Does not the shining light shine more and more unto the perfect day ? Does

not the earth in the process of vegetation, bring forth first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear? Does not the face of nature gradually assume the dreariness of winter, and as gradually look forth in the loveliness of spring? In the development of the human faculties, is there not a regular progress from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood? And why should we not expect that this same progressive character should extend also to the dispensations of God's grace? No doubt if it were the good pleasure of Omnipotence, this grand enterprise might be accomplished at once: There might spring forth a miraculous agency, which should create all things new, and establish the empire of holiness throughout the world in the twinkling of an eye. But such has not been the ordinance of God. Hitherto the work has been gradual; and so every thing proclaims that it will continue to be; though it is according to the analogy of all God's other works that it should go forward with progressive rapidity, as it advances towards its completion.

But of this we shall gain additional evidence, as we contemplate the *means* by which success in this enterprise is to be gained.

In general this means is *the gospel*.

More particularly—

It is the *preaching* of the gospel. It were a supposable case that the Bible should have been thrown down from Heaven, bearing as it now does the signature of divinity, and have been left to work its way into the regards and affections of men, independently of any divine institution. It were a supposable case that copies of it should be multiplied to an indefinite extent, and that it should find its way into every country, and every village, and every hamlet, upon the face of the earth: and yet, I venture to say, however rich the blessing, if this were all, the day for the final catastrophe of nature might come, and find the great mass of the world travelling steadfastly towards perdition. The truth of God would indeed be diffused through the earth; but, in most instances, it would be truth lying on

the shelf—not enlightening the mind, or purifying the heart ; for I speak in accordance with the dictates of experience, when I say that most men will not contemplate the truth of God, unless it is brought out before them, and almost literally forced upon their attention. Hence the need of an institution by which this important end may be answered ; and in the preaching of the gospel it is answered ; for by means of this, not only is divine truth exhibited, but it is exhibited in a manner best fitted to secure for it a permanent lodgment in the mind and heart. In the instruction communicated by the living teacher, there is the indescribable effect of the human voice ; of eye meeting eye ; of countenance beaming upon countenance ; of all, in short, that enters into the art of persuasion, to aid the influence of the naked truth upon the heart and conscience. Hence we find that wherever the institution of a preached gospel has been enjoyed—in other words, wherever the truth of God has been faithfully exhibited by the christian ministry, there it has usually, sooner or later, taken effect : there the power of the gospel has been felt, and its triumphs often greatly multiplied. And on the other hand, wherever this important means has not been enjoyed, whatever other means *may* have been, there—I speak of communities—there you may confidently look for spiritual barrenness, if not for absolute desolation.

Closely connected with the preaching of the gospel, are the *ordinances* of the gospel ; and these are another important means of success in this great enterprise. In these, divine truth comes up to the mind in a palpable and living form ; appealing with all the power of most appropriate symbols directly to the senses. In the one is represented the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the ground of the sinner's pardon ; in the other, the influence of the Holy Spirit in the sinners renovation ; so that, in the two, there is a most striking exhibition of the love of God in the *whole* work of our redemption. The administration of these ordinances is most happily fitted to impress truth upon the conscience and the heart ;—not only to quicken, and comfort, and edify the believer, to

whom they are actually administered, but also to impress the sinner, who is merely a spectator, with the danger of his condition, and bring him to seek a refuge in the atonement of Christ. What better adapted than the ordinance of baptism to leave on the sinner's mind an impression of his need of the renewing of the Holy Ghost? And what more likely than a sight of the broken body and shed blood of Christ emblematically exhibited in the supper, to turn the eye of the sinner inward upon his own guilt, and bring him to abandon all hope of salvation except at the foot of the cross? Such God evidently designed should be the effect; and blessed be his name, this effect has been, still is, gloriously realized.

Moreover, the power of the gospel as it is displayed in *the christian life*, is another means by which the enterprise of Messiah is to be conducted to its grand result. The ministry of reconciliation has been entrusted to a distinct order of men; and it is right that it should remain with them; but there is a sense in which laymen may preach, and even females may preach, and that, not on the sabbath only, but on every day in the week—I mean, by letting their conversation, their deportment, be as becometh the gospel of Christ. And rely on it, this is the most persuasive, the most energetic, the most efficient, of all kinds of preaching. It has made the heart of many a sinner yield, who could hear of the terrors of judgment, and of the sufferings of Calvary, without an emotion. Nay it has worked a cure for skepticism itself: it has not only disarmed the infidel of his malignity and impudence, but it has melted him down into a disciple of Jesus, when all the logic and all the eloquence in the world might have been exhausted upon him in vain. There is something in human nature which cannot easily hold out against the power of a consistent devoted christian life. You may tell a man what is true and what is right, and you have done comparatively little; and you need not wonder if he goes on his way as indifferent both to the one and the other as before you attempted to enlighten or admonish him. But suppose that to the language of the lips you join the more impressive language of the life;—sup-



pose that you show him the path to Heaven, not merely by pointing towards it, but by walking in it; and it is scarcely possible but that he should be impressed with the value of religion, and there is great reason to hope that he will realize its power. It is by this means especially that private Christians are to co-operate with ministers of the gospel. Let the church feel her responsibility on this subject, and act in view of it, and she will arm her ministers with a kind of Omnipotence. Their words, under such an influence as she will impart to them, will be sharp arrows in the hearts of the King's enemies.

I only add, under this article, that *all that mass of machinery which the present age has set in motion in its moral and religious institutions*, is to be reckoned among the means of securing the final success of this glorious enterprise.

On this delightful subject, Brethren, the time does not permit me to enlarge; and blessed be God, it is unnecessary; for it is one of the most auspicious of all the signs of the times, that it meets us every where, and in every form; and that he who would know nothing concerning it, must close his eyes, and stop his ears, or find his home away from an enlightened christian community. There is in the great system of benevolent operations at the present day, a spirit that can move the world; and that is destined, under God, to bear a most important part in regenerating the world. It would be almost an insult to the understanding of a child, to tell him how this spirit has already converted the wilderness into a garden; how it has broken up the strong holds of superstition and delusion; how it has poured the light of truth and salvation on the path of the wretched and the dying; how it has caused thousands of infant voices to sing hosannas to the Son of David; how it has converted the prisoner's dungeon into a bethel, and though it may have left the chains upon his hands and his feet, has proclaimed liberty to his captive soul. It is a noble characteristic of the benevolence of the age that it is inventive as well as expansive: while it traverses the world with an eagle's eye, surveying the complicated miseries of man, it finds out remedies for every variety of human wo; or rather it brings

the gospel, in various ways, to bear upon the great moral disease of human nature. When I see what it *has* done, I anticipate with confidence what it *will* do ; and in the bright visions of faith I seem to breathe the atmosphere, and behold the light, and lose myself amidst the glories, of the millennial morning. I am sure I do not mistake when I think I see the angel in his flight with the everlasting gospel, having already well nigh reached mid-heaven ; and when I see him advancing in his course with still stronger and more rapid wing, there is no enthusiasm, there is no delusion, in calling upon generations but a little way before us, to stand up and hail the day when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, and the grand enterprise of Messiah shall be fully accomplished.

III. It remains, thirdly, to speak of the MAJESTY of this enterprise—"And in thy majesty"—

This will appear whether we consider *the nature of the enterprise*, or *the character of its author*.

In respect to the *nature of the enterprise*, notice first the *object*, and see whether there be no moral grandeur associated with *that*. We have seen that its immediate design is the universal establishment of truth, and meekness, and righteousness, in the earth ; but let it not be forgotten that even this is with reference to a still higher end—the complete redemption of an innumerable company of souls, and the gathering together of this ransomed host in the region of immortality. If you will estimate the magnitude of this object, fasten your eye on the destiny of a single regenerated soul ; and contemplate it as it develops itself during the ages ; and amid the glories, of eternity. That soul was lately a captive to its corrupt propensities ; and bore upon itself the marks of the curse ; and seemed ripe for a world of unmingled pollution, and undying misery. But it has already escaped the dominion of the curse, and is clothed with the beauties of holiness ; and is destined ere long to become an inhabitant of the third Heavens, and an associate with angels, and a partaker of the never ending and ever growing joys of immortality. Say

whether the lines of moral grandeur are not impressed on the destiny of that soul? But instead of one, suppose—what is really the fact—that there be ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, raised from exactly the same degradation to exactly the same felicity and glory; suppose that from having been sinners lying under the wrath of God, they have become seraphs rapt in the vision of God; suppose them all gathered together around the throne with crowns on their heads and palms in their hands, and destined to constitute a part of the glorified community of Heaven through eternity; and then tell me whether there be not majesty in the enterprise of which this is the result? Say rather, whether there be not in all this a degree of majesty, which causes the mind, when turned to it, to labor under the burden of its own conceptions?

But with this there is another object combined in which the majesty of this enterprise is not less manifest—for it is the ultimate object—I mean *the glory of God*. I know there is a glory in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; there is glory beaming forth from all the works of nature, and all the works of providence; but every other exhibition of glory is like twilight compared with noon day, when contemplated in comparison with that which we may see in the redemption of the church. What attribute of Jehovah's character is there which does not gather a brighter lustre from the salvation of men? Is it his holiness? Never does he appear so holy, as when he is giving up his Son to death, to preserve the honor of his law. Is it his justice? Never so inflexibly just, as when laying on Christ, with his own consent, the iniquity of us all, that he might be the justifier of him that believeth. And surely it is not his mercy—for his mercy, as it is manifested in this dispensation, reacheth unto the clouds, and constitutes the burden of the everlasting song of Heaven. What say you then of the majesty of that enterprise which brings such a revenue of glory to God in the highest;—an enterprise which, beyond any thing else, brings out the divine character to the admiration of the intelligent universe?

Nor is there less of majesty pertaining to the *means* by which these high ends are accomplished. This means, as we have seen, is the gospel; and where in the universe is another system of truth, which bears such indelible marks of moral greatness, as the gospel? And in the manner of its operation—how simple indeed, but yet how sublime! How it has gone forth into the world, unaided by any human power, to accomplish its deeds of mercy! How it has resisted all communion with the policy of the world, and by its own inherent energy, subdued nations unto itself! How it has stood, and prophesied over the slain, and the dry bones have lived! How it has proclaimed the mandate—‘let there be light,’ and light has come forth from the thickest moral darkness! How it seems, at this hour, to be travelling on the wings of the morning, diffusing every where in its progress, its healing and purifying influences! I ask again, is there not majesty here? Do not the character of the gospel, and the simplicity and energy of its operations, impart to the enterprise of Messiah an unparelled moral sublimity?

But the majesty of this enterprise is farther evident from *the character of its author*. There was a majesty in his *human nature*, such as no other man ever exhibited. It was the majesty of perfect benevolence; for his life was a perpetual scene of labors, and sufferings, and sacrifices, for the benefit of a world that hated him. It was the majesty of filial piety; for on the cross, he did not forget his poor mother, but commended her to the special regard of a disciple. It was the majesty of unexampled patience; for amidst the most excruciating sufferings that ever fell to the lot of man, not a murmur ever escaped him. It was the majesty of entire devotion to his Father’s will; for in reference to his final agony he exclaimed, “Not my will, but thine be done.” It was the majesty of a spirit that could forgive enemies and murderers; for just before commending his own spirit into his Father’s hands, he commends those whose hands were stained with his blood to his Father’s forgiveness. In short, it was the majesty of every

human virtue, shining forth in the perfection of beauty and loveliness.

But there was something more in the character of Messiah than the majesty of human nature even in its perfection : there was here the moral grandeur of *the Godhead*. Who was it that opened the eyes of the blind, and unstopped the ears of the deaf? Who that unlocked the prison doors of the tomb, and gave back the dead to their weeping friends? Who that hushed the warring elements by a word? Who is it concerning whom it is said that he was in the beginning with God and was God ; that all things were created by him, and that he upholds all things by the word of his power ; that he is the first and the last, and has the keys of death and of hell ; and that he is over all God blessed forever? It is the same exalted personage who is concerned in conducting this mighty enterprise. And what unspeakable majesty must such a character impart to such an enterprise! Search through the Heavens above, and the earth beneath, and you will find no other character—no other enterprise, with which these admit of comparison.

Say now whether this enterprise on which we have been meditating, is not stamped with divine majesty. Compare it with the noblest human enterprise in which man ever engaged, and see whether the latter does not dwindle to nothing. Stretch your imagination to the utmost, and you can conceive of no moral sublimity equal to that in which Messiah appears travelling in the greatness of his strength.

Of the many important inferences which the subject suggests, the time will permit me to notice but two or three ; and those shall be selected with special reference to the occasion on which we are assembled.

1. Learn from this subject, in the first place, *the dignity of the ministerial office*. The christian ministry, as we have seen, constitutes an important part of the means by which Messiah accomplishes the glorious purposes we have been contemplating ; the establishment of truth, meekness, and

righteousness, in the earth, and ultimately the glory of God in the complete redemption of the church. Every christian minister, then, is, in a highly important sense, a co-worker with the Son of God, in the establishment of his mediatorial kingdom. There may be in his office little that is imposing in the view of the world, and he may have his lot cast in obscurity, and be doomed to great temporal privations and sufferings, and may even have his name cast out and trodden under foot of men ; yet, notwithstanding all this, there is a dignity pertaining to his work, which completely eclipses all the honor that cometh from men. I repeat, it is the dignity of being a co-worker with the Son of God ; of being a co-worker with angels, in accomplishing the noblest, dearest purposes of everlasting love.

I know, Brethren, that in thus speaking, I magnify mine office ; but I know too that this very consideration which I have suggested, is fitted, above almost any other, to keep us in the dust. For what are we that this high and holy office should be entrusted to us ? Earthen vessels, worms of the dust, miserable sinners like other men, who need all the power of that gospel which we preach to be exerted in our own salvation. Oh Brethren, rely on it, if we felt this subject as we ought, we should never deliver our message, but that we should return to our closets, and fall upon our knees with the prayer, ‘ God be merciful to me a sinner !’

2. The subject *furnishes powerful inducements to ministerial fidelity.* For the object for which the christian minister labors, is the grandest, holiest object which ever occupied the mind of man : it is an object upon which, above every other, angels delight to employ their noble powers, and which, from everlasting, has drawn towards it the most intense regards of Jehovah. And this is not all. It is an object which certainly shall succeed ; for the veracity of God is pledged for its success ; and the pledge which he has given in his word, he is redeeming by his providence in events that are occurring in our own day, and under our own observation. What other

considerations could we desire, Brethren, to render us faithful in our Master's service, patient in all the tribulation into which it may bring us, than that the cause in which we are engaged is the cause of God, the cause of the Redeemer, the cause of angels ; and that whatever obstacles may seem to oppose its progress, they shall eventually all be taken out of the way, and this cause shall flourish and triumph as a mirror to reflect Jehovah's glory through eternity ?

Suffer me, my Brother, about to take the spiritual oversight of this flock, to commend this subject to your special attention, as fruitful in considerations which are fitted to animate you to the faithful discharge of your duty. It cannot be necessary, at this stage of your experience as a christian minister, that I should admonish you that there are severe trials inseparable from your office ; and no one who engages in this sacred work has a right to be disappointed, if, in his own case, they should be *so* severe, as to put to a rigid test his faith in God's gracious promises. To mention only a single source of trial, and that one of the most common—there is none of us but may be destined to labor, for a long period, with little apparent success ; and may have occasion to say, from time to time, after delivering God's message—" Who hath believed our report ?" But if such should be your case—if the dews of divine grace should be, in a great measure, withheld from this field in which you are destined to labor, need I say that you have no reason—no right, to yield to discouragement ; for the cause to which you are devoted never can come to nought—never can even suffer any material injury : and if you labor faithfully, you have a right to hope that the seed which you are sowing will be carefully watched by the eye of the Master, and watered by his grace, and that ere long it will spring up, and bring forth fruit unto everlasting life. My Brother, go forward to the work which here presents itself to thee, with courage, with constancy, with perseverance : dare to attack the very principalities of sin, in reliance on Almighty grace : and amidst all thy labors and sorrows, hear a voice from the third Heavens,

saying unto thee—"Be thou faithful in thy work—faithful unto the death; and I, when the rewards of eternity shall be distributed, will give thee an immortal crown."

Among the grateful circumstances which attend your introduction to the charge of this highly respectable society, I am sure you cannot fail to reckon the fact that this event occurs during the life of a venerable father, who has filled up a long period of activity and usefulness in the service of this congregation.\* I ask leave to congratulate *him*, that he is permitted this day to stand among those whom he must regard as his own children, and from the threshold of the tomb to give them his blessing, and see them once more furnished with a spiritual guide. I congratulate *you*, that you may hope, while he is detained from his reward, to live in his regards, and counsels, and prayers; to be the privileged comforter of his last days, and to contemplate the serenity and brightness of his setting sun. May the spirit of Elijah rest upon Elisha!

Finally: Our subject teaches us that *we are to regard the establishment of the gospel ministry in any place, or its re-establishment after being suspended, as an auspicious event.* For by this means there is a moral machine of immense power put into operation, whose movements are destined ultimately to regenerate the world. Let a faithful ministry be established in any place, and there you may expect a gradual improvement in all that relates both to the temporal and spiritual interests of men: there you may look for an exhibition of all those social virtues which contribute to adorn and bless society: there you may calculate with strong hope on the visitations of divine grace; on the conversion of sinners, and the edification of God's people, and in all this, on a bright manifestation of God's glory. Well may any congregation hail such an event with joy and thanksgiving!

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\* The Reverend Dr. LEWIS still survives at the advanced age of 84 years, and greatly increased the interest of the occasion by being present, and delivering a pertinent and affectionate address to his former charge.



We rejoice, Brethren, in your joy that this is your privilege to-day ; that you are permitted, after a temporary suspension of a stated ministry, to welcome the return of its blessings. We exhort you to welcome them with a spirit of humble dependence on divine grace, and with earnest prayer to the Author of all spiritual illumination, and then they will be blessings indeed. Remember that your minister can do nothing effectual to bless or to save you, without your co-operation ; and that, if you would realize the benefit of his ministry, you must be fellow-helpers with him unto the kingdom of God. Let your ears, and your understandings, and your hearts, all be open to receive the truth which he dispenses. Encourage and aid him in his efforts to elevate the standard of morality and piety all around you. Be ye not not only hearers of the word, but doers of it ; letting your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

We congratulate you, Brethren, that you have chosen a man to be your pastor, who comes to you under the advantage of years of experience in the duties and trials of the ministry, and whose labors, while they have been eminently acceptable in the church, have been, in an unusual degree, honored by the Spirit of God. May scenes of divine love and mercy, like those in which he has been accustomed to mingle, be often repeated among yourselves ! We leave him with you in the grateful confidence that he will labor faithfully to promote your best interests, and that you will contribute all in your power to the success of his ministry. We commend him to your faithful regards, and you to his faithful labors, and both him and you to the blessing of God. Jehovah of hosts grant that Messiah may come among you in his majesty, and ride prosperously here, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness !

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