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John T. Pressly

Pastor of the First United Presbyterian Church, Allegheny City, Pa.
Moderator of the United Presbyterian Synod 1858

THE PULPIT

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OF THE

ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH.

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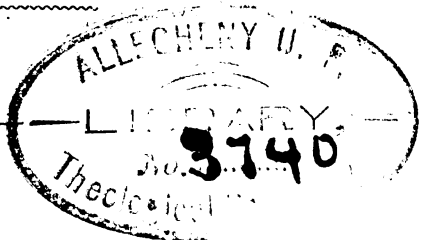
SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

OF THE

FOUR SYNODS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

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EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.  
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INTRODUCTION.

BY

REV. JOSEPH CLAYBAUGH, D. D.

THE Telegraph is a wonderful invention, but not more so than the art of recording and transmitting thought to distant ages; and not half so useful. By this art the sages of the most remote antiquity, though dead, yet speak, and pour the treasures of their gifted minds into our ears, mould our thoughts, carry us back to their own age, and enable us to live amid scenes with which they were conversant. We sit at the feet of Reformers, and Apostles, and Prophets, and hear the voice of men who thousands of years ago spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The Telegraph may reach from the Atlantic to the Pacific and may even begirt the globe, putting cities and towns along its entire circle into instantaneous communication as to the interests of the moment; but this art puts the countless millions of successive ages, down to the latest generations, into communication with the noblest minds of the past, up to the very infancy of time; and that in relation to our everlasting interests. Thus Paul and Moses, for example, become the permanent instructors of the human race. The information which the Telegraph conveys, would in time reach us by other means; while, but for this art, all the wisdom of the past would be irrecoverably lost.

The power of thus transmitting the productions of mind has been greatly increased by the art of printing, carried as it now is to wonderful perfection. And God *times* all these inventions, and makes

them subservient to His own cause. Thus, from the earliest ages the art of writing served to hand down His truth; the art of printing was introduced in time to aid in the revival of its knowledge; and modern inventions and improvements, not excepting lightning and steam, are to be subservient to its rapid and universal diffusion.

The design of "THE PULPIT OF THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH," is not only to bring the whole church into communication with the minds of its respective ministers, whom they could not otherwise hear, but to bring the present, and future generations, into communication with the ministry of the past. It is not merely to extend the voice of the living ministry, so that they may severally speak to the thousands of the church, but to revive the voice of our fathers and send it down, along with the voice of their sons, to posterity. The fathers will be enabled to speak to us, and the brethren North, South, East and West, will be enabled to speak to each other's congregations, and all to coming generations, that all may see how with one voice they proclaim the wonderful works of God.

Who would not count it a privilege to sit down and hear the founders and pioneers of our church? Many of them were master-workmen, who faithfully and ably served their generation; but few of them have left anything in print. The manuscripts of many of those sermons which edified the church in their day, it is presumed, yet remain; and the Pulpit, by placing them before its readers, would direct their minds into the very same channels of thought, into which these men of God directed the minds of our predecessors.

And the present ministry and church may here find a standard worthy their study. The sound, solid, savory instruction of these fathers may do much to *crane up* the modern pulpit and church to a nobler eminence. They had little of the tinsel now so much in request; but they had the eloquence of thought, the eloquence of hearts inditing good matter and speaking the things which they had prepared touching the king, the eloquence of men who came with the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

We need a *church literature*, and this will be one means of furnishing it. The influence of a church also depends much on its being known, and this depends greatly on its authorship. On account of their western location, and their congregations being

chiefly rural, the ministry of the Associate Reformed Church are, considering their number and their qualifications, in comparative obscurity. Situated as they are, their principal means of becoming known, and thereby exerting an influence at large, is that very means which they seem to have most neglected—the **PRESS**. By this means we have it in our power to make ourselves known and felt in the great Christian brotherhood; and it is hoped, that the **PULPIT** will contribute much toward bringing us into more direct communication with the several parts of the Evangelical Body.

Heaven will bring the servants and people of God of all generations into close communion, mind with mind, heart with heart. The church triumphant and the church militant are one—one family, part in heaven and part on earth. The church militant, in all its branches, is one. By publications, such as this is designed to be, we may obtain a faint realization of these truths. The minds of the different parts of the church being brought into communion with one another, and the minds of the people of God now on earth being brought into communion with the minds of those venerated teachers who are now around the Throne, we may discover that brethren in Christ, everywhere and in all ages, think and feel alike—are one in principle and affection; that the children of God scattered abroad in different quarters and sects, have the same Master, the same cause, the same duties, labors, trials, and supports; and that those who are now gone to glory, traveled the same path which we are journeying, and were sustained by the same faith and hope. And thus we may, on the one hand, be comforted while we bewail the divisions which rend the church; and stimulated, on the other, to be “followers of those, who, through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Oxford, Ohio, January 16th, 1850.

THE PULPIT
OF THE
ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH.

SERMON I.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.

BY REV. JOSEPH M'CARRELL, D. D.

Pastor of the First A. R. Church, and Professor of Theology in the A. R. Theological Seminary, Newburgh, N. Y.

"BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

1 *Peter* 1: 3, 4, 5.

It is a declaration of the Word of God, which is confirmed by universal experience, "man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Wherever we turn our eyes, we discern the traces of uneasiness, disappointment, and distress. And even those whose gay appearance might seem to denote the greatest enjoyment, are inwardly tortured with unsatisfied desires, which, viper-like, prey upon their vitals and extort from them the anxious cry which breaks upon our ears from every quarter, "who will show us any good?" Nor can the Christian plead any exemption from the common lot. On the contrary, in addition to the ordinary calamities of life, he has to endure fightings without, and fears within, the

subtle temptations of Satan, the ensnarements of the world on the one hand, and its persecutions on the other; and, worst of all, the plague of his own heart, the sin that dwelleth in him, which sometimes separately, and sometimes with united force, distract and almost overwhelm his soul. "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." But while the believer takes his full share of suffering with the men of the world, he enjoys a consolation they know nothing of. That consolation is the hope of eternal glory and joy. From the depth of his distress he raises his heart to his home in heaven, and rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Under the influence of the spirit of inspiration, Peter, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, addresses the Hebrew Christians, scattered through various parts of Asia Minor, and entering into the condition and feelings of those to whom he wrote, he excites them to the discharge of their appropriate duties by presenting to their view their character and state, their privileges and prospects.

Inferring their eternal election from its fruits, and denominating the church from the better part of it, he takes his beginning from the source of all saving blessings, the electing love of God, and tracing the various links in that golden chain of covenant blessings which unites God to man, and draws man up to God, he touches upon their regeneration by the power of the holy spirit, their justification by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then as his mind stretches forward to eternity in a rapture of praise, he exclaims, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

The reigning idea in the text is *the Christian's hope*; and we have passed before us, first, its author; second, its motive; third,

its proximate cause; fourth, its nature; fifth, its ground; sixth, its object, and seventh, its security.

I. Its author, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The character of God considered absolutely, is calculated to appall the heart of the sinner. His unspotted holiness, His inflexible justice, His inviolable truth, make it absolutely necessary that He should hate and punish sin. And while the law thunders in his ear, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do it, the guilty soul flies with dismay from the presence of Him whom he despairs of appeasing, and whom he cannot love. But, when these consuming glories of his character are reconciled and blanded with His mercy and His love, in the person and work of Emanuel, God-man Mediator, God with us, then can the soul that sees Him thus, approach Him with confidence, although covered with pollutions and black with crimes. Although our Lord Jesus Christ is in his essential glory, God equal with the Father, yet, as he condescended to become a servant in performing the work of Mediator, the Father is called his God and Father. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God;" the eternal life which was with the Father, and which was manifested unto us, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

In the proclamation of his grace, God offers to become a father to every sinner who believes upon the name of his son Jesus Christ. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." There is one honored and

happy family of which God is the Father, and Christ the first-born among many brethren; "Go unto my brethren, and tell them that I go unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." In this tender and endearing character is God the author of this blessed hope. But why should God bestow this precious benefit upon any of our ruined sinful race?

II. The moving cause is "his abundant mercy." There is nothing in us to draw the love or deserve the favor of God. Enemies in our hearts to him by evil works, nay, enmity itself by nature against him, what could we expect, but fearful wrath and fiery indignation. A very mass of moral pollution and guilt, with what complacency could Infinite Purity regard us? Verily, the only reason is to be found in himself, in the overflowing fullness of His own compassion. Because I am God and not man, therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed; for as the heavens are high above the earth, so are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts. From this exuberant goodness proceeded the new birth, as

III. The immediate cause of this good hope.

Such fruits as this gracious hope never can grow upon the dead trunk of our fallen, unrenewed nature; as the stream cannot run higher than its fountain, no heavenly hopes can emanate from earthly minds. Hope is the desire and expectation of something future, which is regarded as good. But the unrenewed mind has no taste or relish for spiritual enjoyments: nay, it disgusts and hates them, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The pleasure which unrenewed men take in religious exercises, is derived from something in them, or connected with them, which pleases their carnal nature, and not on account of the delight they enjoy in communion with God. The more entirely spiritual such exercises are, the less they are relished. Nay, were it possible that such persons should be admitted into heaven, with reverence be it spoken, not all heaven could make them blessed. But when in regeneration the Holy Spirit makes the redeemed sinner

partaker of a divine nature, implants holy tastes, and excites holy desires, then can the soul, encouraged by the good word of the Lord in his precious promises, stretch forward in the hope of a happiness, holy as its author, large as its utmost wishes, and lasting as eternity. It is important then, to mark,

IV. Its distinctive nature "a lively hope." The word rendered lively, signifies *living*, and the contrast which it implies, is not between the different degrees of vigor in a true hope, but between a true and a false. Alas! how many there are in the Christian church whose hope leaves them as earthly-minded as it found them, and has no more efficacy in supporting them under afflictions, or exciting them to holiness of life, than if the inspired descriptions of the happiness of heaven were the fictitious history of some ideal world. But this living hope, like everything else that lives, is efficient, is active, according to its distinct nature. Passing the confines of time, it apprehends the unseen glories of the eternal world, and keeps the believer steady amid all the fluctuations of earthly things, "Which hope we have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail."

But on what ground can a sinner hope? Will a God, of infinite purity, whose throne is established in justice and judgment, suspend or reverse the laws of his moral government, for the sake of saving a creature that hates him, from the just demerit of his crimes?

Here is a problem which had baffled the wisdom of the schools for ages, and would have baffled it forever. But blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the problem is solved in the scriptures of truth, "When in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." The Lord Jesus was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification, and therefore,

V. The ground of the Christian's hope, is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. This grand fact of our holy religion, lays the surest foundation for the sinner's

hope. But for this, the tomb of Joseph had entombed for ever the hopes of man. But as our Lord Jesus not only died, but rose again in our stead, as the surety and representative of the church, which he purchased with his own blood, the fact of his resurrection is the testimony of God that he had gloriously succeeded in the work which he had undertaken to do, that he had finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. The justice of God, then, as well as his mercy, his faithfulness, as well as his love, are concerned in giving us a well-grounded hope.

VI. The ultimate object of this hope is, "An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Every word is emphatical. *It is an inheritance.* Regenerated by the divine spirit, and adopted into his family, believers become the children of God, and, if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: all things are ours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or death, or life, or things present, or things to come; all things are ours; and we are Christ's; and Christ is God's. When the spirit of inspiration would exalt our conception of the reward of the saints, he takes his illustrations from the grandest, most precious, and most delightful of earthly objects, and denies of them those imperfections with which they are ever found connected. It is a kingdom, but a kingdom that shall never end; a crown, a crown of glory, a crown of glory that fadeth not away. And rising to faults, true critics dare not mend, he exalts our conception of their blessedness, by showing the impossibility of its adequate expression; for it is a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory. In the language of the text, there is an implied contrast between the things that are seen and temporal, and those which are unseen and eternal.

It is incorruptible. Every earthly inheritance soon perishes, and goes to decay. The vicissitudes of this mortal life are continually mocking the hopes of those who serve the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Let them acquire as much of the object of their idolatrous

desires, as they will, let them swim in the pleasures of sensual indulgence, or feast their eyes with their glittering hoards, or be borne on the wings of fame through the whole earth, the proudest monument they can erect to their darling idol, will crumble under the hand of all-consuming time, or be levelled with the dust, by the unseen stroke of a wonder-working Providence, in the twinkling of an eye. Riches take to themselves wings and fly away; and favor is deceitful. The man who today is the idol of the populace, may tomorrow be the object of their bitterest execration. The multitudes that cried hosanna to the son of David one day, on another cried crucify him, crucify him. And those who seek their happiness in sensual enjoyments, may see their character and their doom reflected in him who said to himself, soul take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, for thou hast much goods laid up for many years: but to whom God said, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. So perishable is every earthly good. Not so the believer's inheritance. Consisting in entire deliverance from sin and misery, the perfect restoration of his whole nature, soul, body and spirit, to primitive perfection and beauty, and the beatific vision of God in glory, his happiness, instead of lessening, will grow with the growth, and strengthen with the strength of his glorified faculties, as they are for ever expanding under the culture of the Lamb, in the midst of the throne, who feeds his people, leads them by fountains of living waters, and wipes away all tears from their eyes.

It is undefiled. The word, in the original, is derived from one which signifies a stone, the asbestos, that grows cleaner and brighter by the action of fire. So the distinguishing characteristic of this felicity is its purity, holiness, which will only become more manifest and glorious through the revolving ages of eternity. The reason is obvious; the perfection and happiness of our nature, consists in the love and service of God. Whenever then, this divine order is broken, and men love and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore, nothing but moral pollution and misery can ensue. But when we shall be restored to primitive

perfection, and glory has completed what grace began; not a spot shall stain the bright robes of our salvation. We shall be holy as God is holy, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

It fadeth not away. The beauty of every earthly object soon vanishes; what at first filled its possessor with rapture, soon becomes stale and insipid; but the flowers of paradise are in perpetual bloom. The beauty of the Lord our God will be continually unfolding to our enraptured view. From our knowledge of the past, and of the perfections of God, we may be permitted to infer the future. What delight must have filled the heavenly hosts, when at the almighty fiat, the world sprang into being; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. There was a new display of the glories of Him whom they delighted to honor. What delight unutterable, must have thrilled the spirits of the redeemed, when the announcement of the angels on the plains of Bethlehem, was repeated in heaven, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." When will they be tired of singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, to Him that was slain, and redeemed us to God by his blood, and made us to our God kings and priests? When will they have exhausted the themes of praise and adoration, which shall have been furnished in the short period of this world's duration? And shall eternity afford no new display of the divine glory? And shall that period ever arrive, when they shall have grasped, and enjoyed, and exhausted the infinitude of Jehovah's glory? It cannot be. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their

foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

Ah, cries the timid believer, this inheritance is glorious indeed, beyond description or even conception of mortals. But my heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. How shall I know that my hope will not fail me in the time of my greatest need? that although now rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, I shall not before tomorrow's sun be mingling my groans with the damned! Be of good cheer, the text contains the security of your hope.

VII. "Reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

Both the inheritance and the heirs are in safe keeping, for they are in the hands of God. If indeed, the enjoyment of the object of this hope depended in any part upon ourselves, we never could be sure that that part would be performed, and therefore the most fearful uncertainty must always pervade our prospects. But we have not so learned Christ. The God of salvation has taken the work into his own hands. "I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from me. I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments, and do them." His power redeems the pledge which his faithfulness had given, gives life to their souls that were dead in trespasses and sins, works faith in them by the same mighty power which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and through the medium of that faith which he implants and constantly sustains and nourishes from on high, enables them to draw from the fullness that is in Christ, grace to help in every time of need, until they are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." As the heirs are preserved, so that they shall not forfeit their title, so the inheritance itself is reserved in heaven safe from the vicissitudes and storms of earth.

Although believers even in this life enjoy some of the first fruits of the inheritance, and when absent from the body are present with the Lord in all the felicities of the spirits of the just made perfect, yet it is reserved for the day of judgment to put them into the full possession of the purchased possession, "ready to be revealed in the last time." Then shall the corruptible put on incorruption, and then mortal put on immortality, and the triumphant song be sung by all the host of the redeemed: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then in soul and body perfect in their master's image, with what delight unutterable shall they hear from his lips the sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"Heaven lifts its everlasting portals high,
And bids the pure in heart behold their God."

Such, O believer in Jesus, is thy living hope! What motives does it furnish for thankfulness, resignation under the unavoidable calamities of life, and devoted obedience to God? Happy Christian! Although the rich and the gay, and the great ones of this earth, may affect to look down upon you with contempt, holy angels minister unto you as heirs of salvation; all the stores of Providence and grace are open for the supply of your wants, and heaven itself awaits you at the end of your course. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.

Why, then, should you not endure with patience, those salutary afflictions which your heavenly Father is pleased to employ as means of your sanctification, to wean you from this world, and to prepare you for glory. These are found in the list of your privileges, "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." And the light affliction,

which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

He that hath this hope on Him, Christ, purifieth himself even as he, on whom it terminates, is pure. The more vigorous and lively our hope of spending a happy eternity in the presence of that Saviour, whom, having not seen, we have been enabled to love, and believing in him whom we have not seen, to rejoice sometimes with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the more faithful and diligent will be our endeavors to serve him in the world. If we confidently expected a visit from a highly-esteemed and much-respected friend, how cheerfully diligent should we be, that our house might be set in order, and everything prepared for giving him a joyful reception; and the more, the nearer the time of his expected arrival approached. "Behold," says Jesus, "I come quickly, and my reward is with me." And are we willing that he should find us encumbered with the cares, and polluted with the pleasures of life; our graces languishing, our corruptions strong, and ourselves more disposed to dread his presence, than to say, in the language of the church and with strong desire, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." If so, we have reason to call in question the genuineness of our hope; for either the essential principles of our nature cease to act when exalted and purified by divine grace, or the hope of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, will nerve our arm in the spiritual warfare with might invincible, quicken every faculty in the divine life, and induce us to lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us. Can we look upon the recompense of the reward, regard it as our own, and view its rapid approach, and not be stirred up to meet it? "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." "Blessed

is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." A few short days or months, or years at most, and all that is distressing in this vale of tears, and all that remaining unholiness of heart and life, which now so often wrings with penitential sorrow the believing soul shall be done away forever; and your feet, O believer, even yours, shall stand within the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem; your eyes behold the king in his beauty, and your heart overflow with the enjoyment of his love.

But what shall I say to you, who, being without Christ, are without hope, and have neither part nor lot in the great salvation? You, also, have an inheritance, but it is the worm that dieth not, and the fire that shall never be quenched. As eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love Him, equally unutterable and inconceivable are the height and depth, the breadth and length of that woe, intolerable and eternal, which shall be the portion of those who continue to neglect so great salvation: Turn, then, to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: flee to the city of refuge lest the avenger of blood overtake you. By the horrors of that pit of perdition and despair to which your steps are now tending; by the glories of that heaven upon which you have turned your backs; by the allegiance which you owe to the King Eternal, and the judgment seat of Christ, before which we must all appear; I enjoin you to flee for refuge to the hope set before you. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. If you do so, the promise and the oath of Him who cannot lie, are pledged that you shall have strong consolation. But if you refuse, you have the same securities that woe, woe, woe, shall be unto you forever.

SERMON II.

THE GRACE OF CHRIST.

BY REV. J. T. PRESSLY, D. D.

Pastor of the A. R. Church, and Professor of Theology in the A. R. Theological Seminary, Alleghany, Pa.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

2 Cor. 8: 9.

It is a striking peculiarity of that system of religion which is revealed in the Bible, that it proposes to meliorate the moral condition of man, by first changing his heart, and then regulating his life. Viewing the moral condition of man in the light of truth; contemplating the human character as it really is; looking fairly at the fact, that the heart of man, is not right with God, and consequently that the very fountain of moral action is poisoned, the primary object of that religion of which Jesus Christ is the author, is to change the heart. From the heart, proceed evil thoughts, and these display themselves in murderous and unhallowed practices. And according to the philosophy of the Bible, the only effectual way to check the flow of these deadly streams, is to purify the fountain.

But overlooking the true character of man's condition as a sinner, the various systems of false religion which have prevailed in the world, have expended their feeble energies, in endeavoring to restrain and control the evil propensities of our depraved nature, while they have neglected to purify the fountain in which they originate. And hence it came to pass,

that under the influence of paganism, so far was the moral condition of the world from being improved, that every species of wickedness became prevalent, until the most impious and horrid abominations were incorporated with the very services of religion. And such was the moral condition of the world, when Jesus Christ appeared on earth, the light of the world. In that system of religion which he delivered to mankind, it is an elementary principle, that we must be born again, before we can see the kingdom of God. While the heaven to which christianity proposes to conduct us, is a habitation of holiness into which no unclean thing can enter, its primary object is to produce purity of heart, as an indispensable qualification for the enjoyment of future blessedness. "Blessed are the pure in heart," is its divine language, "for they shall see God."

In the cultivation of purity of heart, and in preparing himself for the enjoyment of the heavenly state, the disciple of Christ, may not confine his attention exclusively to his own individual interests; but, under the expansive influence of genuine benevolence, must act with respect to the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men. Hence that important precept of christianity, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

And here christianity as a practical system adapted to the improvement of man's moral condition, has decidedly the advantage over every other system of religion. While the precepts of the gospel are of the most pure and exalted character, and while the virtues which it inculcates have the most direct tendency to promote human happiness; obedience to these precepts and the practice of these virtues are recommended by a most noble example. Are we required to evince our submission to the will of God? We have proposed for our imitation, the attractive example of our Lord, who regarded it as his meat to do the will of Him that sent him; and whose language is, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." Are we called to the exercise of humility? We have in the life

of our divine Master a complete exemplification of this Christian grace, whose very name is unknown to the most perfect systems of paganism. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; and yet, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Are we exhorted to the exercise of meekness and patience under injuries? We have presented to our view the example of Him, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not. And in the passage before us, in which the Apostle is exhorting his brethren of Corinth to manifest their Christian benevolence in ministering to the supply of the wants of those who were destitute, his grand argument is drawn from the example of our Lord. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In these words there are three things which demand our attention,

I. The original dignity and glory of our Lord; He was rich.

II. The humiliation to which he submitted, and the grace therein displayed. Ye know the grace of Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor.

III. The important blessings resulting to us from his humiliation. That ye through his poverty might be rich.

I. The first subject which demands our attention is the original dignity and glory of the Lord Jesus. He was rich. If we contemplate the character of Jesus Christ, simply as the son of Joseph and Mary; if we view him in the light of certain modern systems of theology, it would evidently be an abuse of language to speak of him as one who was rich. His parents were not of the opulent or dignified class of society. They were indeed pious, and consequently in the best sense of the word, honorable individuals; but still their allotment was in the humble walks of life. As a man, therefore, the son of Joseph, was not an heir, either to the honors, or to the wealth of the world. Descended from parents in compara-

tively obscure circumstances, the world, ignorant of his true character, rejected him, while it inquired in derision, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" But though, while he was in the world, the world knew him not, "We," says an Apostle, "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Who then I ask, is this son of man, in relation to whom there have been from the beginning such discordant opinions? To this inquiry I reply,

(1). He is a divine person; and therefore with infinite propriety, the Apostle says, he was rich. And in confirmation of this position, my difficulty is not to find proof in the oracles of truth, but to make a selection from that abundance and variety of proof which appears on almost every page of the Bible. There is not a name peculiar to the living and true God; there is not a title or an attribute, which distinguishes the self-existent One from all created beings, which is not in the lively oracles appropriated to that Jesus, whose name, is to the Christian as ointment poured forth. Is Jehovah, that peculiar name which designates the self-existent and independent God; a name which distinguishes the true God from all those false deities, which are vanity and a lie? This name is by the spirit of inspiration again and again applied to the son of God. For example: the prophet Isaiah, when in vision he beheld the glory of the Lord, exclaims, "Wo is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts."—Isaiah 6: 5. "These words were uttered by the prophet," says the Apostle John, "when he saw the glory of the Lord Jesus, and spake of him."—John 12: 41. Is creation the peculiar work of the Almighty? Jesus Christ was in the beginning with God, and was God. "All things were made by him, and without him, was not anything made that was made."—John 1: 3. Is religious worship to be offered only unto God; and do the sacred scriptures denounce the most fearful maledictions against those who serve other gods? It is the solemn command of heaven, that all men should

honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. "And when he bringeth the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him."—Heb. 1: 6. Is eternity the peculiar attribute of the living God? "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."—Heb. 13: 8. If then plain language has any meaning; if the oracles of truth do not contain an empty parade of insignificant phrases; then, beyond controversy, that Jesus who is the beloved of our souls, and in whom is all our hope of salvation, is in very deed, "THE GREAT GOD OUR SAVIOUR."

(2). Jesus Christ is likewise the sovereign proprietor of all things in heaven and in earth; and is therefore with the utmost propriety said to be rich. To him the earth with all its fullness, and the heavens with all their glory belong of right, for his power called them into existence. Of old he laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands. The vast blue vault of heaven; the dazzling splendor of the sun; and the sparkling brilliancy of the starry firmament, are only exhibitions of a portion of that infinitude of glory which is in himself. The beauty which adorns the landscape; the fragrance which perfumes the air; and the loveliness in which the flowers of the field are arrayed, are only emanations from that infinite fullness which is in him, who is altogether lovely. All the beauty, and the grandeur, and the glory of creation are from him, and to him they belong. On him the eyes of all things wait, and from his vast storehouse, he gives them their meat in due season. He opens his hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing. The earth is his, with the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. Every beast of the forest is his; and the cattle upon a thousand hills. He knows all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are his. He clothes the pastures with flocks, and covers the valleys with corn for their supply; and the earth is full of his riches. And while he sustains in being the archangel who bows before his throne, and ministers to cherubim and seraphim supplies of bliss out of that inexhaustible fountain which is in himself,

his beneficence does not pass unheeded the young ravens which cry unto him. This Jesus, then, to whom belong the underived glories of the Godhead, and who is the possessor of heaven and of earth was *rich*.

II. But he who was rich became poor. Let us then in the next place contemplate the humiliation to which the Son of God submitted, and the grace and condescension therein displayed. The language of the Apostle, very plainly conveys the idea, that the Lord Jesus for the accomplishment of an important object, voluntarily submitted to be brought down from an exalted to a humble condition. Though he was rich yet he became poor. As we have already seen, he was essentially the everlasting God; the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the ending; and yet he appeared in our world an infant of days. He was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person; and yet, "forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he humbled himself; made himself of no reputation; and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. His creative power called the earth with all its fullness into existence; his hand stretched out the expanse, and by his spirit he garnished the heavens with beauty; and yet he appeared among men the babe of Bethlehem; he was born in the stable of a public inn, and was cradled in a manger. Though he was the eternal lawgiver to whom angels and men owe allegiance, he was made under the law, and was made a curse for us. Though he was fairer than the children of men; the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, he became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. He was the Lord of the universe and the proprietor of all things, and yet he submitted to such a state of poverty, that, as he himself declares, while "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, the son of man hath not where to lay his head."

He to whom all the treasures of earth belong, humbled himself to a condition so destitute, that his daily wants were supplied by the contributions of charity; and a fish of the sea, furnished the small sum which was requisite to enable him to testify his dutiful subjection to the laws of the land.

And for whom was such marvellous condescension displayed? On whose account did the son of God submit to such amazing humiliation? It was not for those exalted intelligent beings who excel in strength, in wisdom and in glory—those holy ministers who do his pleasure; but for “your sakes.” For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. And the object to be accomplished was not less grand and glorious, than his humiliation was amazing. It was to exalt from degradation and wretchedness our ruined and rebellious race; a race of sinful and ungrateful creatures whom he needed not; a race, whom he could by a word have remanded back to their original state of nonexistence, and whose place he could by a word have supplied with another race of intelligent beings, all obedient and holy and happy.

When the Apostle would awaken the sympathies of his Christian brethren in behalf of the suffering poor; when he would arouse the spirit of compassion toward the destitute, the grand motive is drawn from the grace and condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Ye know the grace of Christ.” He points to that elevation of glory from which the Son of God descended; he contemplates him as high above all nations, and his glory as above the heavens; and he calls upon his brethren to fix their attention upon him, who from the height of his glory humbled himself, that he might raise the poor out of the dust, and exalt them to be kings and priests unto God. And with this bright example of the grace and compassion of Jesus before them, he calls upon them to manifest that the same mind is in them, which was also in their divine Master. Did he who is the Proprietor of heaven and earth, become poor for our sakes, and shall we who owe all that we possess to his bounty, refuse a small contribution

to alleviate the distresses of those for whom he laid down his life? No! I will not think so dishonorably of your Christian profession, replies the Apostle; "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But that we may be assisted in forming something like adequate views of the grace of Christ, let us proceed,

III. In the last place to consider the important benefits resulting to us from this grace. "That ye through his poverty might be rich." At his original creation, man was constituted lord of this lower world. "And God said to our first parents, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." And while the earth with the various animals wherewith it was stored, was subjected to the dominion of man, its nourishing fruits were given to him for food. But when man rebelled against his God, the inferior animals manifested an unwillingness to own his authority; and at the same time the curse of God descended upon the earth, with its varied productions. And the Lord God said unto Adam, "cursed is the ground for thy sake." But in Christ Jesus, who was made a curse for us, we not only obtain deliverance from the curse of the law, but have a right to the enjoyment of temporal mercies. The basket and the store of them who are in Christ, are blessed.

1. I remark then, in the first place, that, as the result of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus Christ who became poor for our sakes, the believer is made rich in the enjoyment of the blessings of the present life. I admit, that according to the mode of computation which is common among men, he may not be rich. He may not be able to lay claim to thousands of gold and silver; nor to boast of his extensive possessions. But still, I contend that according to the estimate of truth and reason, the Christian is rich, in so far as what is conducive to human happiness in the present life is concerned. "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters

shall be sure." These blessings include everything that is really necessary for man in this life; and the promise of the God of truth and faithfulness, is the Christian's security that they shall be enjoyed. And the man on whom God bestows bread and water, with his blessing to crown them all, possesses a treasure more valuable than any amount of mere gold and silver.

I should indeed render myself liable to the charge of offering an insult to the good sense of my hearers, were I to affect to despise the wealth of this world, or to represent as destitute of value, the bounties of a benignant Providence. The possessions of this world are the gifts of God; and like all the gifts of heaven, they are good in themselves, however they may be abused by the depravity of man. But it is not in the nature of these things to render an immortal being happy. Happiness is the gift of God; and it depends not upon the extent of man's possessions, but upon the state of his mind. And the wealth of this world and the bounties of divine providence are conducive to human happiness, only in so far as the blessing of God makes them subservient to that end. I repeat it then, that the man who enjoys a competency of the good things of this life, with the blessing of God super-added, is truly rich. For, this accompanying blessing of the Lord maketh rich; and therefore, a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.

Contrast with his lot, the condition of the man who is rich in the possession of earthly treasures, but who is a stranger to that peace of God which the world cannot give; and whose temporal enjoyments are not sweetened by the accompanying blessing of heaven. His garners may be filled; his coffers may be overflowing, and wealth may be wafted in upon him, by every passing breeze. His table may be covered with every luxury which the appetite can crave, or wealth can command. But in the midst of plenty, anxiety and care may destroy all relish for the comforts of life; and after all, it is but little of his abundance that he can enjoy. And while surrounded with a profusion of heaven's bounty, the man is

often rendered wretched, when he looks forward to the time when all these things on which his heart is set, must be left behind him; and nothing shall remain but the mortifying reflection that he once enjoyed but abused them.

Disciple of the Lord Jesus! be not envious when you behold the prosperity of such men. Their condition may well awaken in your breast the spirit of commiseration, but should not excite your envy. Jesus Jehovah, being your shepherd, however humble your allotment in life may be, you are authorized in the triumphant language of faith to say, "I shall not want." "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." Did he not spare his own son, but deliver him up for you? How then shall he not with him also freely give you all things? And why should you disquiet yourselves with anxious cares on the account of raiment? "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Is that Jesus, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, your Saviour? Can you claim Him who is the Proprietor of all things in heaven and earth as your friend and portion? Then, verily you are rich; for in him "all things are yours." "Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's."

But more especially, I remark

2. In the second place, that through the poverty of Christ, the Christian is made rich in the enjoyment of spiritual blessings. And where shall I commence, if I undertake the enumeration of these blessings? They cannot be reckoned up in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more

than can be numbered. But brethren, let me refresh your souls, by recalling some of them to your remembrance.

Then though you were once dead in trespasses and in sins, you have been created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. In your unrenewed state you served divers lusts and pleasures, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; the end of which things is death; but now in Christ Jesus, you are become the servants of righteousness; your fruit is unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life. You were once in a state of spiritual bondage under the dominion of the god of this world, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience; but you have been redeemed from this spiritual thralldom, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Formerly you were under condemnation, justly exposed to the wrath and curse of God; but you have been justified freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. You are now the favored partakers of the blessedness of that man whose sin is forgiven, whose transgression is covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. Temptations may assail you, and iniquities may sometimes prevail against you; yet still it is your privilege to rejoice in the assurance, that there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. You were once children of wrath; aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise; but now you are adopted into the divine family, are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. In your former condition, you were the subjects of moral pollution and sin reigned in your mortal body; but now in Christ Jesus, your body is made the temple of the Holy Ghost; and divine grace has begun in your souls a good work, which shall be performed until the day of Jesus Christ. And what shall I say more? I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Though I walk through

the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou my Saviour and my God, art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Lord it is enough! "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

From this subject, we may learn

1. In the first place how deplorable must be the condition of the human family; since, to exalt man from the degradation and wretchedness and misery of his fallen state, it was necessary that the Son of God should become poor. Mistaken views with regard to the true character of our condition as sinners, lie at the foundation of the most hurtful errors which have disturbed the peace of the Christian world. He who adopts the principle, that the injury we have sustained by the fall, amounts to nothing more, than that thereby we are placed in a world where we are exposed to temptation, and rejects the humbling truth, that our nature is wholly depraved, finds it difficult to see any necessity for a divine Saviour. And hence the bright diadem of the Redeemer's divinity is impiously torn from his head, and the character of the great God, our Saviour, is reduced to the level of a fallible man. And when men have explained away the plain and obvious meaning of the Bible which describes the natural understanding as darkness, and the unrenewed heart as enmity against God, they see no necessity for a divine Spirit to regenerate the soul which is dead in trespasses and in sins. And from the rejection of our Lord's divinity, and unscriptural views with regard to the operations of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, result most of the pestilential errors which prevail. And these two radical corruptions of the truth may be regarded as having origin chiefly, in false views of our fallen condition. But is our condition by reason of the fall such, that to redeem our souls from destruction, God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up unto death? Then, judge of the arduous nature of the work to be accomplished,

from the exalted character of its Author. Were we in such a state of wrath and condemnation, that it became necessary that he who is God over all, blessed forever, should be made under the law, and be made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law? Then estimate the magnitude of the evil from which we are redeemed, by the infinite value of the price that was paid for our redemption.

2. In the next place, let us learn to estimate correctly the extent of our obligations to the grace of Him who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that through his poverty we might be rich. Did he descend from the elevation of his glory, and appear in our world, in the likeness of sinful flesh? Did he become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that we who were by nature children of wrath, might become the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty? Then does it well become every redeemed soul to exclaim, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" Did he lay down his life for us, and shall we be reluctant to yield any sacrifice, which he may require at our hands? Was it his meat to do the will of his Father in accomplishing the work of our redemption? And shall we be unwilling to submit to his yoke? Nay! verily; but under the constraining influence of his love, we shall be prepared to say, Thy yoke, O my God and Saviour is easy and thy burden is light. I am thine; thou hast bought me with thy blood; therefore through thy grace strengthening me, I will glorify thee in my body and in my spirit which are thine.

3. And finally; let us learn to imitate the bright example of our divine Lord, by ministering as we have opportunity, and as God has furnished us with the means, to the necessities of our fellow-men. Did that Saviour whom we profess to love and serve, come from heaven to earth to minister to poor sinners of our race? Let us then manifest, that we are partakers of his spirit. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his

bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

To minister to the temporal wants of our fellow-men, however, is the least duty of Christian benevolence. The poor have immortal souls, which must as certainly perish for ever, if deprived of the bread of life, as will the corruptible body decay and perish if left destitute of the meat which perisheth. While therefore, in the good providence of God, the bread of life is dispensed liberally to us, through the medium of his word and the ordinances of his grace, shall we not sympathize with the millions of our race who are sitting in darkness and in the region and shadow of death? In the midst of our abundance, shall we not commiserate the condition of our fellow-men who are suffering under the destructive influence of a famine, not of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord? Brethren, ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And with this divine example before you, show to the world that the same mind is in you which was also in Christ Jesus. And while you enjoy and value the privileges of the gospel, think of those who are groping in darkness, where there is no vision, and where the people perish; and let your sympathies be aroused in their behalf. To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Amen.

SERMON III.

SIN AND DEATH, OR GRACE AND LIFE.

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"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Rom. 6: 23.

THE text exhibits a summary view, both of the law, and of the Gospel; and while the former speaks in the language of warning and terror to the sinner, the latter addresses him in the sweet accents of peace, of hope, and of forgiving mercy. In both respects it is worthy of our serious attention. Lightly as many regard sin, it is no trivial affair. It is a transgression of the Divine law, which is holy, and just, and good; and which, in some measure, "is written on the heart and conscience of all men"; but which God our Creator and Lawgiver has more clearly revealed in his word, and summarily expressed in the Decalogue; at first proclaimed to the Hebrew nation, by an audible voice amidst the thunders of Sinai's awful mount. This law of God, commonly called the moral law, is perfectly adapted to the condition and character of men in all ages, and under all dispensations. It necessarily arises from the relation in which man, as a rational and moral agent, stands to his Creator; and, consequently, is of perpetual and universal obligation. Now, sin, which is a transgression of this holy law, cannot but be highly offensive in the sight of God, the great lawgiver. It is a voluntary and downright opposition to his holy nature and his rightful government. Sin must, therefore, be viewed, whatever the sinner may think to the contrary, as involving in it guilt of the most aggravated kind;

at once contemning God's authority, rebelling against his government, and throwing off the allegiance which man owes to his Maker. Accordingly, a holy and a just God manifests his abhorrence of sin by the awful penalty he has annexed to the transgression of his law; and this is death. "The wages of sin is death!" And tremendous as this penalty is, it is what every sin, whether original or actual, justly deserves. For a holy God, the righteous governor of the world, hath declared, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." This was the awful penalty incurred by the breach of the covenant of works by Adam, as the covenant head of his race: "For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." And it is the penalty incurred by every transgression of the law in its covenant form, since that time to the present day. It is therefore with great propriety denominated the wages of death. The transgressor of God's law has merited it, as justly as the servant or the soldier deserves his stipulated reward, and the payment of it will sink the impenitent and unpardoned sinner down to hell. This is the import and language of the broken law of God to every unconverted sinner. And were it not for the provisions of grace made known in the Gospel, here the matter must end. As the broken law, with its incurred penalty, could afford no hope to the sinner without a revelation of mercy, so there could have been no way of escape for the guilty. In this dangerous and hopeless condition, when the transgressor had no right to expect anything but the execution of the righteous sentence of the violated law, the blessed Gospel of Christ comes to his relief. It addresses him in the sweet accents of love and forgiving mercy:—"But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." A blessing and a curse are here set before us; and the contrast may well recommend to us the religion of Christ, and encourage his followers to perseverance in a life of faith and holiness. This seems to be the immediate object of the passage in the connection in which it is used by the inspired Apostle. It presents to our view the very different results of sin and holiness; one of which is death, and the other eternal life.

Following the order of the text, we would invite your attention to these two points :

- I. The just recompense of sin, as denounced by the law.
- II. The gift of grace, provided for our relief and revealed in the Gospel.

I. Your attention is invited to the just recompense of sin, as denounced by the law. And it ought to be viewed as a dreadful recompense ; and dreadful it is, in its nature and consequences. It is death. When men labor hard in any service, it is just and reasonable that they should receive their reward ; and, in most cases, the prospect of it operates as an encouragement to labor and diligence. It is no less just and reasonable that when men are the faithful and voluntary servants of sin, they should have their reward. But in this case the prospect of payment, instead of operating as an encouragement, ought to fill their souls with terror and dismay : " For the wages of sin is death." But, dreadful as it is in itself, it is the recompense which the transgressor of God's law has justly merited ; and which, without laying hold on the hope set before him in the Gospel, he may certainly expect. But what does this recompense include in it? *It includes in it,—*

1st. *Death temporal.* Once this world was the seat of health, of life, and of enjoyment. But the entrance of sin has marred the purity, the joy and the blessedness of this earthly paradise, and turned it into a house of mourning and of death. The threatening, in case of disobedience, annexed to the covenant made with man in a state of innocence, was,—“ In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die!” Man disobeyed his Maker ; and by this act of rebellion involved himself and all his posterity in one common ruin. Death, and all our woes, came by sin. This is not a matter of mere opinion, or of doubtful disputation: “ By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” This divine testimony furnishes the true and only satisfactory solution of this awful and universal catastrophe, with regard

to the whole human family. Had not man sinned, his body would have been immortal as well as his soul. Disease would never have distressed us, nor death destroyed us. The desolations made by death on the successive generations of men, would never have taken place. But man has sinned, and therefore, he deserves to die. We are, therefore, warranted to view natural death as the just recompense, as the wages, of sin. And, ah! under this view, what destruction has sin wrought on the earth! What mourning and lamentation has it caused to its millions and millions of inhabitants! The scene is enough to chill us with horror, did we view it aright. Look back, and ask yourselves, Where are the countless multitudes of mankind, in the ages that are past? Their numbers cannot be told; and yet they have all passed away, as a shadow: they have been swallowed up, by the monster Death. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets? do they live forever?" No, they are gone; and other generations must soon follow.

Cast your eye over the hundreds of millions of the human family which now dwell on the face of the earth, and ask yourselves, where you and they must shortly be! In a very short period, the period of a few years, not one will be found alive who now breathes the vital air. They are all hastening on with rapid and unremitted steps to the house appointed for all living. It is recorded that Xerxes, the Persian monarch, wept on reviewing his numerous army, when he reflected that not one of them, at the end of a hundred years, would be found alive. How much more cause have we to weep, when we anticipate the desolations which will be made by death on the earth, among its hundreds of millions of our fellow-men, within a much shorter period of time: especially, when we contemplate this scene of mortality in the light in which the word of God warrants us to view it; as the execution of the penalty of God's violated law; as the infliction of the curse, due to sin. Such is the fruit of sin on our mortal bodies. It hasteneth us all to the tomb. It brings distress and bereavement and sorrow into the domestic circle.

It strips us of our dearest relatives. It cuts off the young in the bloom of youth, and the aged have nothing to hope. Man goeth to his long home. It is sin which arrays against us everything that is fearful in the universe. It summons to its aid, disease and pain and sorrow and disappointment and bereavement and woe; and, having marshaled all its forces, it brings up the monster death in the rear, to close the fearful scene. Behold, and see, that sin is an evil and bitter thing. This is the just recompense of sin. But this is not all. *The wages of sin include in them,—*

2d. *Spiritual death.* The day in which man first sinned, he became liable to the stroke of natural death. That very day he began to die a death temporal. The seeds of mortality took deep root in his bodily constitution, which ultimately produced his dissolution. But worse than natural death, that very moment in which man first sinned, he became the subject of spiritual death: moral death seized upon his soul. He lost the moral image and favor of God, in which he had been created; and which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. And this is the fallen and deplorable condition of all men in their unregenerate state to the present day. They are under the influence and power of a moral or spiritual death. They have no personal interest in the favor and friendship of God. They are all by nature the children of wrath, and the heirs of hell; and, as inseparably connected with the loss of his favor, they are entirely destitute of his moral image. They are wholly alienated from God in their minds and affections. Hence they are described in the word of God, as being "dead in trespasses and sins:" and the consequence is, that all men, in their unconverted state, without exception, have no relish for holy and spiritual exercises and enjoyments. They have no desire after communion with God; nor take any delight in his service, or the exercises of his worship. Sin has darkened their understanding, so that they have no right perception of divine truth. Their affections are carnal, and sold under sin. Their heart is set in them to do evil. It rises up in enmity and rebellion against a holy God; and its language is, "De-

part from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." In accordance with these scriptural statements of man's natural depravity, the history of man, in every age, exhibits an awful picture of human depravity: and in every part of the world, where the light of the Gospel has not shone,—idolatry, and wickedness, and licentiousness, have prevailed, in their most odious and debasing forms. Now all this springs from that deep-rooted and dreadful depravity which has tainted and corrupted all the faculties and affections of the soul of man: and it is very appropriately represented under the figure of death. It is in fact a moral and spiritual death, and if viewed in a right light, will be considered as the just recompense of sin. And an awful recompense it is. What can be more awful in itself or more dreadful in its consequences, than to be without the image and favor of God—to be under the polluting and enslaving power of sin—under the influence of a heart filled with enmity to God and his law? and which habitually and willingly cherishes a reigning aversion to God, to Christ, to holiness, and to everything worthy of the name of religion! In the view of it, we ought to appropriate, with the deepest humility, the lamentation of the Prophet,—“The crown is fallen from our head: Wo unto us, that we have sinned!” Nor is this all. The recompense of sin, includes in it,

3d. *Eternal death.* We do not mean by this, that either the body or the soul of the transgressor of God's law will be at last annihilated or blotted out of existence. This might be justly viewed as a desirable privilege by a wicked, impenitent man, who is destitute of the hope which the Gospel inspires. But by eternal death we mean the eternal separation of soul and body from the favor and enjoyment of God, and their consequent and everlasting misery. The Scriptures warrant us to believe, that natural death will be inflicted on the wicked and impenitent as a curse; and although it prostrates the body in the dust, it does not annihilate it. In the resurrection morn it will be raised up again, under circumstances of fearful import. “For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and

shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Neither doth death annihilate the immortal soul. This survives the shock which for a time separates it from the body, and it immediately returns to God who gave it, to render its account, and hear its sentence. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment." And whatever this sentence may be immediately after death, it will be more publicly confirmed in the day of the general judgment. In that day, the wicked and unbelieving, their soul and body again reunited, will be eternally cast out from the gracious presence of God, and separated forever from the enjoyment of his favor. The tremendous sentence of the righteous and omniscient Judge will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And the awful result will be, that they will go away into everlasting punishment. What will be the precise form and nature of this punishment, we cannot fully tell or conceive. But we are warranted by Scripture to believe that it will not only be inconceivably great, but that it will be eternal in its duration. The same word that is used in the original to express the endless duration of the blessedness of the righteous in heaven, is also made use of to express the endless duration of the wicked in hell. The finally lost, therefore, will not be able to look forward to any period in which their misery will either be mitigated or brought to an end. "There the worm dieth not, and the fire shall not be quenched." Cast out from the presence and favor of God, excluded from the society and fellowship of all holy beings, they will be given up to the stings of an accusing conscience, the horrors of remorse, and of endless despair; where no ray of hope will ever enter, and where the smoke of their torment will ascend up forever and ever. This is eternal death, the wages of sin; its just recompense, as denounced by the law of God. This brings us to the consideration of the second point presented in the text.

II. The gift of grace provided for our relief and revealed in

the Gospel. And it is thus expressed : " But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And here we have a theme on which we may dwell with delight. The broken law of God, in the lightnings and thunders of Sinai's awful mount, denounces nothing but its curse or penalty on the transgressor; and this is death. But the Gospel speaks in the sweet accents of love and forgiving mercy. It announces the most joyful tidings to sinful, dying men. It points them to a complete remedy from the curse of the broken law. " The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And here it may be remarked, that the gift of grace is directly the reverse of the wages of sin. This is death: That is life; and it is eternal life.

Eternal life is a blessing of very extensive import and meaning. It includes in it,

1. The continuance and enjoyment of natural life, so far as it is for the glory of God and the spiritual good of his believing people. The Gospel nowhere warrants Christians to expect an exemption from the stroke of natural death,— " For it is appointed unto man once to die." The sentence of mortality has gone forth against the whole human family, in consequence of the introduction of sin into the world; and it would be vain for any to expect a dispensation from the execution of the sentence. All sooner or later must be subjected to the stroke of natural death. But the eternal life, which is the gift of God, and which the Gospel reveals, does warrant all true believers—all who believingly accept of this gift—to expect exemption from natural death as a curse, or as the penal execution of the sentence of the broken law, in regard to themselves. Their Redeemer in his death destroyed the sting of death, which is sin; and it is this which arms death with all its power to strike its victim in the light of a curse. On the behalf of his people, as their surety and substitute, He has endured the penalty of the broken law in all its extent, and therefore it cannot fall upon them. He has vanquished death, and entirely changed its character in regard to believers, and turned it into a blessing. Thus, in the rich grant

of covenant blessings secured to them in Christ, death is set down as one of them. "Death is yours." Although believers have no exemption from the stroke of natural death, the gift of grace does secure them against the infliction of natural death as a curse; In this respect it can have no power over them. And besides, the gift of eternal life does secure to them the continuance and enjoyment of natural life, so far as it is for the glory of God and their spiritual good. The promise is often fulfilled in their experience, "With long life will I satisfy him." And when they view their life, with all the outward blessings connected with it, as the gift of their heavenly father; they experience a blessedness in the enjoyment of it, of which the men of the world, with all their abundance and luxuries, have no knowledge or experience.

But I go on to remark,—

2. That this gift of grace, provided for our relief and revealed in the Gospel, includes in it the enjoyment of spiritual life on earth. Spiritual death, as has already been stated, constitutes a part of the curse, or the wages of sin. That eternal life, therefore, which is designed, in the mercy of God, to counteract the curse and to secure believers against all its dreadful results, must include in it spiritual life. This is the opposite of spiritual death. And this spiritual life must be viewed as including in it even in this life the enjoyment of God's favor, and a life of holy delight and communion in his service. All, therefore, who accept of the gift of God's grace, offered in Christ, through the Gospel, are made actual partakers of spiritual life. They are restored to the favor of God, which they had forfeited and lost by sin. By accepting of Christ, in the exercise of faith, who has made peace by the blood of his cross, they become united to him as their justifying head; and in virtue of this union, what he has done and suffered, fulfilling all the claims of the law and justice of God, becomes theirs, for their pardon and justification. God, who justifieth the ungodly, looks upon them as they are in Christ, and thus they are accepted in the Beloved. He is pacified towards them for all that they have done; all their sins are

blotted out, and they shall never come into condemnation. O, what a blessed privilege is this! The favor of God is life, and his loving kindness is better than life.

And they who are made partakers of spiritual life are not only restored to the favor of God, but they are restored in some measure, even in this life, to the image of God; and thus become qualified for his holy service and communion on earth. The kingdom of God is set up in them. Although they were once dead in trespasses and sins, they are now made alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Spirit of God, by his renewing and almighty power, has quickened from the death of sin, and raised them to newness of life; so that they should no longer serve sin, but live to the glory of God. And in virtue thereof, they seek after higher degrees of conformity to God's holy image, by steadfastly walking in the way of his commandments and ordinances; and deriving all this out of the fullness that is in Christ by union and communion with him. This is the nature of that spiritual life which commences in the day of a sinner's regeneration, and which is the gift of God; and where it is once commenced it will never cease to exist, until it issues in the full enjoyment of eternal life. It aspires after, and will be satisfied with, nothing less than perfect holiness—complete assimilation to the holy image of God. Hence it has been justly remarked, that grace is glory begun; and that glory is grace made perfect.

3. I remark, that eternal life, the gift of God revealed in the Gospel, includes in it the enjoyment of eternal blessedness in heaven. On this account, it is with the greatest propriety denominated, eternal life. The Gospel revelation does not bound the Christian's hope, or limit his enjoyments to the narrow limits of time. No! It dissipates the gloom of mortality; it sheds light over the darkness of the grave. It introduceth life into the mansions of the dead. Life and immortality are brought to light, through the Gospel; and rising high above vague conjecture and uncertainty, it strips death of all his terrors, and reveals to the dying Christian the joys of heaven; where the skeptic can see nothing but gloom and

annihilation and despair. And although death separates the soul and the body of the believer, it is only for a season. The soul released from its earthly tabernacle sustains no loss. It wings its course to the paradise of God. Absent from the body, and present with the Lord. And in the resurrection morn, the body will be awaked from its sleep, in virtue of the resurrection and power of Christ; be clothed with beauty and immortality; be reunited to its kindred spirit; be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air; where, with the redeemed of all ages, placed on the right hand of their Judge and Saviour, they will hear the joyful sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And they shall go away into eternal life. But who can tell its full import? It rises too high for our comprehension in our present imperfect state. This much the Gospel warrants believers in Christ to expect. It will be an eternal life of perfect holiness, in the presence and service of Christ. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Complete assimilation to Christ's holy image, will constitute an important part of this heavenly blessedness. It will also be an eternal life of enjoyment, under the smiles of heaven and of a reconciled God and Father in Christ. Every ingredient of earthly sorrow and bitterness will be removed, and they will be replaced with joys unspeakable and full of glory. And if anything could enhance the value of this felicity, and render it doubly precious, it is the assurance of its perpetuity. It will be eternal in its duration; and probably be rising higher and higher through the never-ending ages of eternity. You perceive, then, it is no ordinary blessing which the Gospel brings to view for our relief, and offers to sinful, dying men. It is nothing less than eternal life,

And, invaluable as it is, and much as we need it, we are not to forget that it is the gift of unmerited favor on the part of the giver. "But the gift of God is eternal life." As the wages of sin and the gift of God are directly opposite in their

nature ; so it ought to be noticed that death is the reward or wages of sin, but that life is the gift of grace. It is altogether unmerited on our part. It is not a reward of debt which we have merited by any righteousness of our own, or anything we can do, or have done. It comes to sinful men without money and without price. They entirely misunderstand the Gospel, who think that it demands or admits anything in the sinner meritorious of salvation. Our whole salvation, from beginning to end, will be to the glory of the rich and unmerited grace of God. Eternal life, in whatever aspect we view it, is the gift of God.

He provided it for sinful men in the eternal purpose of his grace, when he gave to Christ, as mediator of the covenant, a peculiar people, that he might redeem them from sin and death. No foreseen good quality in them, could have moved God to make such merciful provision for the deliverance of objects so unworthy, from the wages of sin. No: It originated in his good pleasure and unbounded love. To this source Christ himself ascribed it. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Eternal life is also the gift of grace ; because God freely offers it to sinful men without exception, in the dispensation of the Gospel. Were it offered to them on any other terms, they could have no warrant to accept of it. The offer of eternal life in the Gospel does not proceed on the principle of merit on the part of the sinner to whom the offer is made. It is held forth as the mere gift of God. He offers it to sinful men wherever the Gospel comes, not because they are worthy of it, but because they are sinners and stand in absolute need of it. The offer of the rich gift is not clogged with any prerequisites, or conditions, which the sinner must previously perform, that he may have a warrant to accept of it. On the contrary, it is, Take freely what is offered to you. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Eternal life is likewise the gift of unmerited grace, in regard to the actual bestowment of it on sinful men. It is owing to his rich, unmerited favor, and not to anything in themselves,

that they are made actual partakers of it in the day of believing. "By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." In the first moment of a sinner's conversion, God of his grace, and by the agency of his Spirit, begins that spiritual life in the soul, in the exercise of faith, which shall never end. In the exercise of the same unmerited grace, He preserves and carries it forward; and in due time will put him in the full possession of it in heaven, with all its blessed and glorious fruits. Whether, then, we contemplate it in its origin or progress or final consummation in glory, eternal life is still to be viewed as the gift of God's unmerited grace. And when the redeemed of all nations and kindreds shall be gathered home in their Father's house, and be put in the full possession of eternal life, their united and grateful acclamation will be, "Grace, grace unto it."

But in contemplating eternal life as the gift of God, and which the Gospel unfolds to our view, we may not fail to notice the channel of its conveyance to sinful men. And this is the mediation of Christ. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Although it is to be viewed as the gift of unmerited grace in respect to sinful men, who are the objects of it, yet we are clearly taught in Scripture that it was matter of purchase in respect to Christ, the Mediator and Ransomer. Unbounded and unmerited as was the love of God the Father towards sinful men, eternal life as the gift of his love could only be conferred on them in a way worthy of God and consistent with the glory of all his divine perfections. The penalty annexed to his violated law must be executed, either on the transgressor himself or his surety and substitute. The claims of divine justice must be satisfied. The dishonor done to God's righteous moral government by man's apostacy and rebellion must be repaired, or there could have been no redemption for sinful men. They must have received agreeably to the divine threatening, the awful penalty, the just recompense of sin. Without an adequate atonement for sin, "God can by no means clear the guilty." "Without shedding of blood is no remission." And

O, what a rich provision of divine love, that, in such circumstances, a ransom, one able and willing to pay the costly price, was found! And found, too, not among our fellow-men; not among the angels; for all these would have either shrunk from the mighty work, or have failed in the undertaking. But to the glory of the unbounded grace of God, and the salvation of men, our ransom was found in the person, the divine and infinitely glorious person of the Son of God. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." And this glorious and divine ransom, having taken the nature of those who had sinned, and as their surety bearing their sins, did, of his infinite grace, at the appointed time, pay the ransom, costly as it was. He gave his life a ransom for many. He redeemed us, with his own blood.

"The ransom was paid down, the fund of heaven,
 Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,
 Amazing and amazed, poured forth the price,
 All price beyond."

The atonement thus made for sin by the blood of the cross, lies at the foundation of the sinner's hope. In consequence of its infinite value, God can be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Here, then, in the mediation of Christ, we behold the channel through which eternal life, the gift of God, is conveyed to sinful, believing men. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And now, in the review of this important subject, let me call upon my hearers, especially such of them as are still unreconciled to God through faith in his Son, to lay the subject to heart, that you may be profited by it. You have heard what is the wages of sin. Its recompense is awful indeed. It is death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And dreadful as it is, in its nature, it is most just. It is what sin justly deserves, by the righteous sentence of the divine law, on account of its turpitude, and heaven-daring nature. And have you been brought to see that you are sinners in the sight of God,

and therefore justly exposed to the dreadful penalty? There is ground to fear that a great insensibility prevails in regard to this important matter. Whether men realize it or not, let them remember that such is the solemn fact. You cannot plead with any semblance of truth, that you have not transgressed the law of God: and its sentence is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Had you only been justly chargeable with one single transgression, it would have subjected you to the awful penalty. How much more, when you take into view your original guilt, and the actual depravity of your nature? Your oft-repeated and numberless sins, both of omission and commission, in thought, word and deed? Verily, every mouth must be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. Unless, then, you shut your eyes on the truth, and refuse to listen to the convictions of your own conscience, and the strivings of God's spirit, you must admit that you have deserved and are justly liable to the threatened and dreadful penalty. "For the wages of sin is death." The subject, then, deserves your most serious consideration, and calls upon you to reflect on your condition and prospects. And would to God that his truth, carried home on the heart and conscience by the power of his spirit, might convince you of sin, and awaken you to a sense of your immediate and impending danger!

But, convinced of your sin and danger, do you inquire, "Is there no hope in regard to our case? Is there no way of escape from the penalty of the broken law, which we have incurred, and from the wrath to come?" O yes, blessed be God for it, in the great mercy of God, there is a gift of grace provided for your relief, and revealed in the Gospel. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here we have a remedy provided which meets the sinner's case. If death, eternal death, be the wages of sin, and the just recompense of your transgressions,—consider, on the other hand, that life, eternal life, is the free gift of God through the mediation of Jesus Christ. This is the great remedy provided, in the mercy of God, to counteract the curse, and to redeem from

it. And to all, without exception, who accept of it in faith, it will afford perfect security against all its dreadful results. It brings prominently to view the precious truth, that where sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded. God is now revealed to us in the Gospel in the character of a reconciled God in Christ, and as reconciling sinners unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them who believe. And in this character he is offering in the Gospel to guilty, dying men, pardon and eternal life as a free gift, through the redemption that is in Christ. And in vain will you seek or expect eternal life, if you be unwilling to receive it as the free, unmerited gift of God, and as his gift conveyed to you through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Consider, also, that although eternal life be the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, it must be accepted, on our part: it must be ours in actual interest, that we may derive any saving benefit from it. Now this can only be done under the agency of God's spirit, in the exercise of faith. And this is the first and great duty to which sinners are called in the Gospel. Wherever the Gospel comes, with its joyful message, it meets the sinner, ready to perish in his sins, with this gracious call: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And as every hearer of the Gospel ought to view this as the most important of duties, so you ought to consider it as your immediate duty, as that which God is calling you to at this very moment. You have no permission from God to defer it a single day or a single hour. You cannot do so without great sin, and exposing yourselves to the most awful danger. The gift of eternal life, through Jesus Christ, is now in your offer—in the offer of every sinner without exception, who hears the Gospel—and if you reject it through unbelief, you know not whether the offer of so precious a gift will ever be renewed to you again. One thing is most certain; the longer you neglect this great salvation, the more improbable it becomes that you will ever accept of it. The longer you are

under the influence of an unbelieving heart, it will become the more hardened: the longer you live in the love of sin, it will be growing the stronger. The more you resist the strivings of the Spirit, the more hopeless your case becomes, and that you will ever be brought to genuine repentance. All these considerations urge the Gospel hearer to an immediate acceptance by faith of the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. And I am warranted to add, for your encouragement to attempt the duty without delay, God, who calls you to it, can give and is ready to impart the power to comply. At his gracious call, then, and relying on his promised aid, stretch forth the withered hand, and lay hold on eternal life. Hear the gracious declaration of a God of truth, saying to you in the record of the Gospel,—I give unto you eternal life; and this life is in my Son. Let your heart respond, in the exercise of faith,—We give our cordial assent to the truth of the precious record,—We accept with all our heart the infinitely valuable gift,—We believe that although death is the wages of sin, the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord,—And we this day set to our seal that God is true—fully assured that whosoever believeth on his Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Blessed is the Gospel hearer who, through grace, comes to such a decision, and makes such a choice, in the exercise of faith. Eternal life is yours. It is yours now, in its commencement and first fruits: and this is a pledge that it will be yours, in due time, in its full consummation in heaven. Well then may the Christian be encouraged to hold on his way, and be faithful unto death in the service of his divine Master; who, in the end, will assuredly crown him with eternal glory. Even so; come Lord Jesus. Amen.

PSALM XCVIII.

- O** SING a new song to the Lord,
for wonders He hath done:
His right hand and his holy arm
him victory hath won.
- 2** The Lord God to the people hath
made his salvation known;
His justice in the heathen's sight
he openly hath shown.
- 3** He mindful of his grace and truth
to Israel's house hath been;
And the salvation of our God
all ends of th' earth have seen.
- 4** Let all the earth unto the Lord
send forth a joyful noise:
Lift up your voice aloud to him,
sing praises, and rejoice.
- 5** With harp, with harp, and voice of psalms,
unto JEHOVAH sing:
- 6** With trumpets, cornets, gladly sound
before the Lord the King.
- 7** Let seas and all their fullness roar,
the world, and dwellers there;
- 8** Let floods clap hands, and let the hills
together joy declare,
- 9** Before the Lord; because he comes,
to judge the earth comes he:
He'll judge the world with uprightness,
his people, righteously.
- Rev. 5. 9; 14. 3.
Luke 2. 10—14.
Heb. 2. 14, 15.
Rev. 11. 15; 17. 14.
Mark 16. 15.
Luke 2. 30—32.
Rom. 3. 21—26.
Eph. 3. 4—8.
Luke 1. 54, 55, 72.
Rom. 15. 8, 9.
Mat. 28. 19.
Rom. 16. 26.
Mat. 21. 9.
Rev. 5. 9—19.
Rev. 19. 1—7.
Rev. 5. 8; 14. 2, 3.
James 5. 13.
Eph. 5. 19.
Mat. 25. 31, 34, 40.
Rev. 19. 6.
Acts 17. 31.
Mat. 25. 31—46.
1 Thes. 1. 10.
1 Pet. 1. 3—13.

SERMON IV.

THE LORD DOETH ALL THINGS WELL.

BY REV. SAMUEL FINDLEY, D. D.

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“And Jacob their father said unto them, me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.”

Gen. 42: 36.

THIS is the language of great perplexity and distress. Jacob was a good man; but his goodness did not exempt him from the severest blasts of an adverse providence. He had but two sons by her whom he loved and cherished as his chosen bosom companion. Over the supposed cruel death of one by the beasts of prey, he had, long since, experienced the heart-rending pangs of the bereaved father. The younger of these two, now the only remembrancer of her who was numbered with the dead, was demanded of him, and, as he feared, never to be returned. Under these circumstances, the thought of parting with Benjamin cut him to the heart. Therefore, he cries out, in the agony of his soul, “All these things are against me.” But, behold, the interior wheels of the divine providence are about to unfold stores of beneficence, in the reverse proportion, of all that is grievous in his present condition. Joseph, whom he had long since supposed to have become a prey to the beasts of the forest, was living in honor and splendor in Egypt. Benjamin had been desired, by him,

that he might lavish upon him the caresses of an only brother, Simeon was about to be set at liberty; and the whole family was about to be most kindly entertained and nourished by his beloved and long since lamented son. Thus all was making for his comfort and advantage, that appeared so black and dismal, and from whence he expected nothing but ruin. But Jacob's was not a singular case. How frequently does our divine Benefactor surprize his afflicted and tempest-driven sons and daughters, on earth, by loosing their sackcloth and girding them with gladness, by giving them "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?"

We shall proceed to show from this text,—

I. That God's dealings with his people, even when he is working their deliverance and designs their good, are often dark and intricate.

II. Whence it is that a child of God may be ready to conclude *that* to be *against* him, which is really *for* him.

III. The grounds on which we may conclude, that what the Christian apprehends to be against him, shall terminate in his favor.

IV. Why it is that the Lord chooses this way to promote the best interests of his people.

I. We are to show, that God's dealings with his people, even when he is working their deliverance, and designs their good, are often dark and intricate. This was eminently the case with Jacob. God designed to preserve, sustain, and nourish him and his family in Egypt, by Joseph's advancement there. But how unlikely, and even distressful, the means by which so desirable an end was brought about! And yet the end was so eminently accomplished by these means, that we cannot now perceive how the same amount of good could have been effected for Jacob and his family by any other means.

If Joseph had not been sold into Egypt by his unnatural brethren, Pharaoh's warning dream could not have

received its interpretation, nor the requisite provision against the famine have been made. And if any other than a son had been employed in Joseph's stead, he would not have been inclined to exercise the same nursing care of Jacob and his family, which Joseph did, and which their emergencies required: and the discovery of everything dark to Jacob was made just at that juncture of time when his case most needed the beneficence which Joseph's elevated condition enabled him to extend.

Thus, also, it was with the children of Israel, four hundred years after this; when God undertook their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The first appeal to Pharaoh, by Moses and Aaron, in their behalf, only increased his fury, and rendered their bondage the more intolerable. Of *this* you have their joint complaint to Moses and Aaron, Exod. v: 20, 21, "And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came from Pharaoh; and they said unto them, the Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." We have a corresponding complaint made by Moses to God,—*vers.* 22, 23: "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For, since I came to Pharaoh, to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people: neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." And after Pharaoh had released them from their bondage, and they had marched to Pihahiroth, by the Red Sea, how fearfully were they situated! See Pharaoh with his armed forces pressing them on the rear; impassable mountains on the right and on the left, forbid any attempt to escape by flight; and the rolling billows of the Red Sea on their front, rendered a movement in that direction, of all others, the most hopeless and ruinous. But so it was. Had Pharaoh overtaken the children of Israel in any other situation, the interposition of Providence for their deliverance and enlargement would not have been so conspicuous. Nor can we conceive how their enemies could,

otherwise, have met with so decided an overthrow. By the straits in which God's people were so fearfully and hopelessly involved, they were induced to cry unto God, and he at once set them completely free, and buried their enemies in deadly ruin. The watery element, which at first, on their advancing, in accordance with the divine command, threatened their utter ruin, proved the means of their security, and the destruction of their pursuers. Surely, in this case, God loosed the sackcloth of the Israelites, and girded them with gladness, and turned the shadow of death into the morning. Of this every Israelite was conscious, at the time. This is evident from the song with which they celebrated the event, as recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus.

Such, also, was the character of God's dealings with Job. He purposed to bless Job more eminently in the latter than in the former stage of his life. But, in the mean time, and in order to this, he is stripped of all his possessions, and reduced to the deepest distress. He is plundered by his enemies, and censured and reviled by his friends; Satan is set loose upon him, with all his cunning and malice; and spares not to employ upon him all the arrows that he could draw from his quiver of fiery darts: and God himself writes bitter things against him. He also felt that he was set forth as a mark for the arrows of Jehovah's quiver. But all Job's reverses were but the outworks of the machinery of Providence in his case. This machinery is composed of a wheel within a wheel—and they continued to roll on, until, in their successive evolutions, his righteousness was brought forth as brightness, and his salvation and enlarged prosperity became conspicuous as the noonday. Job, xlii: 10.—“And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.” v. 12: “So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning,” &c.

That God's dealings with his people, even when he is working their deliverance, and designs their good, are often dark and intricate, is illustrated and confirmed by the history of

David. He was destined by the divine Providence to the throne of Israel. While he was yet in his boyhood, this destination was intimated to him by the anointing oil, with which Samuel, by the divine direction, consecrated him to that office. His ultimate attainment of the crown, was now rendered as certain, as the truth of God was unquestionable. Yet who that can read, has not read with thrilling interest the intervening storms of adversity, and bleak scenes, through which he had to make his way to his destined elevation? See him, the object of King Saul's most inveterate envy, and pursued by him as a partridge in the mountains; see him, seeking for refuge at a foreign court, from the implacable spirit of his persecutors. Even his faith, at times, gave way to the suggestions of fear; and we hear him complain, "I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul." But every event, in his case, was in the hand of an infinitely wise and good Providence, and was instrumental in either heightening his qualifications for or advance his progress toward the throne of Israel. But instances innumerable, of the same or a similar kind, might be adduced. Time would fail to particularize the case of Mordecai, and the Jews in his day: of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But why multiply instances of this kind? It is God's uniform mode of acting. "Before honor is humility," is one of the standing laws of his providential government. And "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The Saviour himself could get no way to the crown, but by the cross: and those that follow him must be content to walk in his steps. We must suffer with him, if we would be glorified together. God frequently deals with his people, in this world, as the Saviour did with his disciples, when he says, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." His way is in the sea, his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known. But his word assures us, that infinite wisdom and infinite goodness will never forsake us; and that however multiplied our afflictions, the Lord will at length, deliver us out of them all.

Whence is it, then, that a child of God may be ready to conclude *that* to be *against* him which is really *for* him? This is the

II. Enquiry, which is suggested by our text. The child of God is apt to conclude that to be *against* him, which is really *for* him,

1st. Because he is conscious of guilt before God. Those who truly believe in Christ, are fully convinced of the truth "That it is a righteous thing, in the righteous God, to execute vengeance on those to whom vengeance is due." They also view their sins before God in the aspect of their highest aggravations. Their conscience will promptly arraign them at the bar of their own judgment, and there, sentence will be sure to go against them. Then they look for the execution of the penalty of the divine law against sin. In this case, every frown of the Divine Providence is viewed in all the rigor of the judicial execution of divine wrath. And the subject becomes alarmed with the most horrific anticipations, while a voice is heard from heaven, "Who knows the power of this wrath?" Thus a self-conviction of sin must, from the very nature of our relations to God, who is the righteous avenger of sin, predispose the mind to apprehend evil, and evil *only*, from every providential visitation,—and to put the most unfavorable construction on every event that is in any measure grievous in itself. Hence, while the child of God continually cherishes the conviction that, in all he has endured at the hand of God, he has been punished less than his iniquities deserve; in his anticipations of the future, he can join with the Psalmist, and say, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments;" and hence his continual prayer is, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure." "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand?"

2d. Another reason why we are accustomed to view *that* to be *against* us, in the dispensations of the Divine Providence, which is *for* us, is, that while in the body we are more readily actuated with our *senses* than with *faith*. It is only by

faith that we can view any event that occurs in life, which is not for the present joyous, in any other light than as against us. The promises of the Gospel are adapted to the case of God's people under adverse providences. It is only by faith in these promises, that we can at all, in any case, see the light of God's countenance in a frowning providence. But the promises are appropriate objects of faith. Now we are taken up more with the objects of sense—with what we see with our eyes, and hear and feel, than we are exercised by faith in the promise which is adapted to our case. Our idea may be illustrated by the case of Peter, when our Lord bade him to come to him upon the sea: Peter's faith centering upon his Lord at first, he felt secure. But when the sea became tempestuous, his attention became absorbed with the apparent hazard of his situation; then his faith failed, and he began to sink. He recovered, however, the exercise of faith, and exclaimed, "Lord save or I perish!" A genuine faith always soars above all the stormy elements of earth. It was the faith of Daniel, that rendered him fearless of the lions' den—and that rendered those beasts of prey harmless companions to the saint of God.

We ought indeed to be diligent observers of the dispensations of Providence,—the operations of the Divine hand; but we should never disannex them from appropriate promises. To do so, is to let faith give place to sense. The promise is to providential events, what the soul is to the body. The event is the object of sense, the promise is the object of faith. The exercise of faith on the promises enables us to understand, and disposes us rightly to improve the providences of our lot. We are thereby kept from being very eminently elated by present prosperity, or greatly dejected by adversity. We thereby learn, both how to abound and how to suffer want. The danger is, in being too much taken up with the objects of sense and too little with the objects of faith. We cannot be engrossed equally with two opposite objects at the same time. We should cultivate the divine art of looking away from the objects of sense, that we may

be the more unencumbered in contemplating the objects of faith. We will thereby realize the wisdom, power, faithfulness, truth, and love of God, as pledged equally in the most reversive, as in the most prosperous events that fall out in our lot, to make all things work together for our good: "For we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

III. We propose to show the grounds on which we conclude, that what the Christian apprehends, for the present, to be *against* him, will terminate in his favor.

1st. We conclude this, from the nature of that relation which God sustains to him. God sustains to every genuine Christian, the endearing relation of a *father*. He says, "I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." And again—

"Such pity as a father hath
Unto his children dear,
Like pity shows the Lord to such,
As worship him in fear."

In this character he declares, that he has not given us the spirit of bondage again to fear; but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. And "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not, much rather, be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live?" "For they, verily, for a few days corrected us for their own pleasure, but he for our profit; that we might be partakers of his holiness." Now, though a father's scourge may be sensibly felt, and appear, for the present, severe to the child that endures it, yet who will suspect the father for any other than motives of benevolence toward the child? He finds a soul-ruining folly bound up in the heart of his child, and his only, yet his sure hope of getting it expelled, is by the rod of correction. Just so, as we are the children of God; our nature, yea, our whole life, is still, so long as we are in the body, fearfully defiled by the folly and madness of sin. Our heavenly father visits our faults

with the rod, and our sins with chastisements; but he has assured us, that "His loving kindness he will not take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail." Again, sin, in the people of God, is compared to dross, which defiles the precious metals. God is the great refiner. He refines his people as silver is refined. In order to this, he casts them into the furnace of affliction. But he at the same time stands by, and sees that nothing is injured or wasted by the fire, but that dross which must be purged away, at whatever expense. For "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Thus, "though no chastisement seemeth for the present to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them that are exercised thereby."

2d. From God's *love* to the Christian, we conclude that all reversive providences shall work together for his good. This charming perfection of his nature, he manifests very specially to his own people. That capital expression of his love, which he has made in the gift of his own and only son, to be a propitiation for their sins, secures and guarantees to them the most instant and intense manifestation thereof, in every possible emergency. "If God spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him also, freely give us all things?" "And if, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, much more, being now reconciled by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." "Love thinketh no evil." And hence we are assured, that "what is good the Lord will give." "He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

3d. The fountain of the great deep of God's everlasting love, has not only broken forth in the gift of his only son, but in exceedingly great and precious promises, which are yea and amen in Christ, to the glory of God the Father. These *promises* constitute a ground, on which we conclude, that present adversities will eventuate in the real good of God's people: What good can we imagine, that is not embraced in some of

the promises of God's covenant? In the making of these promises, with whom took he counsel, or who instructed and taught him? They all emanated from that same source of sovereign benevolence, whence he addresses his own people by the prophet Jeremiah,—“I know the thoughts which I think concerning you, thoughts of good and not of evil, to bring to pass an expected end.” In the face of our sins, in the face of the enmity of earth, the malice of hell, and the judicial vengeance of heaven, he made these promises, with all their surpassing sweetness and richness; and he has pledged his all-sufficiency to effect their accomplishment, in their proper time and place, in defiance of every obstacle that hell or earth can produce; and in accordance with all the claims of his righteous and holy law. As the fiery furnace, seven times heated, could not frustrate his purposes of good to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—nor the lions' den frustrate his shielding care of Daniel—neither shall any of the adverse providences that fall out in the lot of his people on earth avail, to prevent any or all the promises of his grace from receiving their due accomplishment in their experience.

IV. We propose to show why it is, that the Lord chooses this way to promote the best interests of his sincere and genuine followers. That he does so, is obvious from the case of Jacob. And still, we frequently find *that* turn out to be a mercy, which we had viewed and felt as an appalling judgment. How fervently did the disciples of our Lord deprecate, as a judgment, his leaving them to go to the Father! But now, herein we all admit, was manifested heaven's chief mercy to our fallen world. And, in the mystery of that wisdom which characterizes many of God's corrective providences, he seems still to say, in many instances, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” The fish that swallowed Jonah, appeared, in this act, to be the instrument of the Divine displeasure; but he was made, by a further manifestation of the Divine goodness, a very seasonable and efficient instrument of Divine mercy, for prolonging his

life and usefulness, and for his becoming a very instructive type of the Saviour. For, says the Saviour, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

This way God chooses,

1st. For his own glory. This appears in the case of Lazarus, John xi: 4.—"Then Jesus said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God; that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." God permits affliction to crowd into the lot of his people, that he may have a more eminent opportunity of showing forth the glory of his power, wisdom, goodness, and love—in, first, sustaining them under their pressures, and guiding them through their difficulties; and in, finally, delivering them from the being and appearance of all evil. He will at last glorify his name, in bringing them into a large and wealthy place, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

2d. To discover their corruption and try their graces. Deut. viii: 2.—"And thou shalt remember the way which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, and whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." It is the native tendency of affliction to call sin to remembrance. Thus it was with the widow of Zarephath.—"O thou man of God, wherefore art thou come to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my son?" Joseph's brethren experienced this to be the effect of their afflictions in Egypt, before the unknown Joseph.—"They said one to another, verily we were guilty, in the case of Joseph our brother." And Pharaoh, with all his obduracy, was constrained, by the pressure of affliction upon him, to say to Moses, "I have sinned against the Lord." This is one end that God has in view, in multiplying afflictions in the lot of his people, namely, to humble them under a sense of their sinfulness. Another end is to try, and exercise their graces. We would not know the worth of speech as a gift, if we never

had occasion to speak. No more, could we duly realize the worth of faith, hope, and patience, as graces of the Divine Spirit, if we were without affliction. We would have no occasion for their exercise. God, in adverse providences, furnishes a theater on which to call into exercise and display the various graces of his Spirit, to the glory of his great name.

3d. God designs, by adverse providences, very specially, to quicken and animate his people in *prayer*. The unexpected deliverances which he works for them, and his varied benevolent interpositions in their behalf, are calculated to excite the greatest fervor of gratitude, and the deepest sense of entire dependence upon him. How eminently was this verified in the case of Jacob; and also in the case of the Israelites at the Red Sea. And when the people of God are shut up in straits, as was Israel at the Red Sea, they must surely feel a lively sense of the necessity of calling upon God, whose arm is never shortened or paralyzed that it cannot save. The dictates of necessity in such a case correspond with the preceptive requirements of God's word. "In the day of trouble, see that ye call upon me; I will hear and deliver you, and ye shall glorify me."

Application. 1. Let us be diligent to enquire into our evidences of a new covenant relation to God. Is he our Father? Have we, by faith, appropriated him in this endearing relation? Do we delight in him—do we seek to him—do we confide in him, as such?

2. Let us beware of judging of God's purposes of grace by the external dispensations of Providence, which prepare the way for bringing them into effect, and which always conduce, on the whole, to their final accomplishment. The promise is, often, just about to be fulfilled, when, to the eye of sense, it seems to be at the greatest distance. "At the evening time," when least expected, "it shall be light."

3. Let us learn to be earnest and fervent in prayer, that our faith fail not, when surrounding circumstances seem to be most dark and discouraging. In every place, the Shepherd of Israel can come to us, and amid the deepest distress he can

relieve us. Isa. xli: 10-18.—“Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee;—yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold all they that were incensed against thee, shall be ashamed, and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee; they that war against thee shall be as nothing; and as a thing of naught. For I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not thou worm Jacob; and ye men of Israel; I will help thee saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer; the Holy One of Israel. Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small; and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel. When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.”

4. Let us learn to beware of entertaining low thoughts of God; as though he were a capricious or changeable being. We must believe him to be always the same, whatever changes we may undergo. And let us comfort ourselves with the consideration, that, so sure as we are the people of God, so surely shall the termination of our sojourning on earth put a period to all such complaints, as that contained in our text. Finally, let all the blasts of providential adversity with which we are met, urge us to increasing earnestness in making progress toward the better, the heavenly country. There the seed of the serpent shall no more have an opportunity to bite at the heels of the seed of the woman. There the wicked cease from troubling; there the weary are at rest. There—

blessed be God—there we shall have fullness of joy, and pleasures forever more. And there it shall be registered, as in letters of the finest gold, on the tablet of every heart,—

“THE LORD HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL.”

PSALM CXXX.

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| 1 | L <small>ORD</small> , from the depths to thee I cried. | Gal. 3. 10, 22. |
| 2 | M <small>Y</small> voice, Lord, do thou hear ;
Unto my supplications' voice
give an attentive ear. | Rom. 3. 19—20.
Rom. 10. 9—18.
Acts 9. 11. |
| 3 | Lord, who shall stand, if thou, O Lord,
should'st mark iniquity ? | Rom. 3. 19, 20. |
| 4 | But yet with thee forgiveness is,
that feared thou mayest be. | Heb. 12. 28, 29.
1 Peter 1. 17—19. |
| 5 | I wait for God, my soul doth wait,
my hope is in his word. | Heb. 6. 11—20.
Luke 2. 25, 38. |
| 6 | More than they that for morning watch,
my soul waits for the Lord ; | Acts 27. 29.
Rom. 8. 23—25. |
| | I say, more than they that do watch
the morning light to see. | Heb. 10. 35—37.
1 Peter 1. 13. |
| 7 | Let Israel in Jehovah hope,
for with him mercies be ; | Eph. 2. 4—7. |
| | And plenteous redemption is
for ever found with him. | Eph. 1. 7, 8.
Rom. 5. 20, 21. |
| 8 | And from all his iniquities
he Israel shall redeem. | 1 Jno. 1. 5, 9.
Rev. 1. 5 ; & 5. 9. |

S E R M O N V.

A PROSPECT FOR THE UNCONVERTED *

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“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Isaiah, 58 : 1.

THERE are few who like to hear of their faults. Tell them of their personal charms, and their virtues; praise them for their beauty, their gracefulness of motion, their wit, their learning, their morality, and they are pleased; but tell them of their sins and they become uneasy, and perhaps are offended. Some are so fond of praise that they will even show special kindness to a flatterer; they do not approve his character, indeed, but then, his flattery, though deceitful, is agreeable to them. Aware of the existence and excitability of this passion in all, and its strength and activity in some, there are few who like to tell others their faults. Even the ambassador of Christ, the official, religious instructor of men, is sometimes tempted to preach smooth things; he fears that he may give offence, if, in the way of direct address, he plainly and faithfully exposes the vices of his fellow-men. This, however, if he would not incur guilt by the neglect of it, he must occasionally do; for God has commanded him to do it. Cry aloud, is the language in which God addresses him, cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy

* A Discourse delivered on the morning of a communion Sabbath.

voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

The expressions, my people, and the house of Jacob, signify the same thing, the professing people of God; and if it be necessary that they should be told their sins, it is equally indispensable that non-professors should be reminded of theirs. And, indeed, there are always some among the professing people of God, who, in a great measure, identify themselves with the wicked; who afford proof that they are still "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity;" so that the text may be understood as requiring the ambassador of Christ to show to all classes of society their transgression and their sins.

If I were to discuss the text in the usual way, I would consider the duty which it enjoins; the manner in which this duty should be performed; and the argument by which it is enforced.

The duty enjoined in the text is this; the ambassador of Christ should, on suitable occasions, point out to his fellow-men, in a direct and explicit manner, the sins of which they are guilty. This is his duty, and it should be performed sincerely, plainly, faithfully, and affectionately. The argument by which this duty is enforced is the command of God. Cry aloud, &c.

But instead of discussing the text in the manner suggested, I intend simply to exemplify and discharge, with reference to one of the two great divisions of society, the duty which it devolves upon me; I intend to address the unconverted part of my audience, and point out to them, with as much distinctness as possible, the peculiar and aggravated sins of which they are guilty. I say peculiar and aggravated sins; for most of the sins which I shall mention, are offences against the gospel and its privileges; sins, which a pagan could not commit.

Now, my unconverted friends, will you favor me with your attention while I perform this necessary task; I say necessary; for if you will look at the text, you can easily see what my orders are, and from whom they proceed. Some of you are in your accustomed place, shall I say of worship? better,

perhaps, of resort on the Sabbath; some of you are occasional hearers, and some of you are what we call strangers. But none of you must think that I intend to insult you; I have no such design; and while I expect you to reciprocate the favor by a conduct becoming the house of God, my design is, to treat you as gentlemen; but then, I must, at the same time, treat you as impenitent sinners; as enemies to God and holiness; and these two kinds of treatment are not inconsistent with each other. A physician may treat his patient as a gentleman, and at the same time, as an invalid; and one, too, whose disease requires prompt attention, and severe applications. Do not think, then, that I am going to insult you; but rest assured that I will point out to you your transgression and your sins. Beseech the good spirit of God to give you a view of them which it is not in my power to do.

Do not think, however, that I purpose to show you all your sins. Do you think I could portray that heart which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked? Do you think I could count the grains of sand that are upon the sea shore? Do you think I could ascend to the sun on one of his own rays of light? I cannot do any of these things; so, I cannot show you all your sins. Who can understand your errors? you cannot do it yourselves; and if you would pray at all, this might be one of your petitions, "cleanse thou me from secret faults." As already intimated, I purpose to show you only some of your sins; but these shall be fundamental errors; complicated and heinous sins; sins committed against the gospel, against its ordinances, against its privileges, and against the grace of God, as manifested in the gift, not only of these things, but especially of his Son.

In the first place, then, you profane the ordinance of baptism. A divine ordinance is profaned, when something like it is observed out of mockery of the true institution. The ordinance of the Supper is profaned, when a company of wicked persons, in partaking of a common meal, mimic the actions which a minister and people perform in attending to the eucharist. A divine ordinance, again is profaned, when it is not duly

appreciated, and religiously improved by those to whom it has been administered; and in this view of the matter, those of you who have been baptised, are unquestionably profaning the ordinance of baptism. I use the word profane purposely, because it includes every kind of offense against the ordinance in question. Though I cannot detain to exhibit the proof of all these points, yet you will no doubt agree with me, that baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, and of all its blessings; that it confers important external privileges, such as membership in the visible church, and external relationship to God; and that it creates solemn and important obligations. You are, no doubt, willing to admit the truth of all these statements; but you show by your conduct that you do not respect the covenant of grace and its blessings, that you do not prize the privileges which baptism confers, and that you are perfectly reckless of the duties which it creates. In all these ways, then, you profane the ordinance of baptism; you treat it with levity and disrespect; you treat it as a common thing, as a ceremony of no account; and I appeal to yourselves, if your guilt in so doing is not great. When you take it into serious consideration, do you not tremble at the thought of it? Let me suppose that you are unbaptised. Would you voluntarily and deliberately receive this sacrament, while you had no respect for that covenant, and those blessings of which it is a sign and seal? Would you do it, while you had no intention to embrace any of the privileges which it confers, and while you had no design to perform any of the duties which it imposes upon its recipients? Would any of you, in a deliberate and intentional manner, thus profane this holy ordinance? I presume not. But remember you are already baptised; your parents dedicated you in your infancy to God; they have told you so; they have acquainted you with the fact of your baptism; they have told you that they considered it to be both their privilege and duty thus to dedicate you to God; they have explained to you the grounds on which they considered it to be both their privilege and duty, and they have enumerated and explained to you the privileges

which your baptism confers, and the duties which it devolves upon you. You are baptised already then, and your guilt in treating the ordinance as you do, is just the same as it would be if you had been baptised since you came to years of maturity. There is no difference whatever. God assumed you, at the time of your baptism, into a visible relation to himself; he set his mark upon you: but you have subsequently disowned his authority; you have denied, and you are still denying this relation; you have cast off the God of your fathers. God, in his providence, so ordered things, that you received the sign of that blood which cleanses from the guilt, and of that Spirit who delivers from the defilement of all sin; but you profane the one, and do despise to the other. In one word, you profane the ordinance of baptism; you pour contempt upon it, upon its author, upon all that it represents and seals, and upon all the sacred and important duties which it devolves upon you. O impenitent sinners, do you know what you are doing in thus trifling with an ordinance of the Most High? Would you let any man abuse an article of property which you claimed? Would you let any man set fire to your house? no, you would resist him to the last; and, if he succeeded in his attempt, you would be glad to see him punished. Yet, you are not afraid, you are not ashamed to profane an ordinance of God. Surely you must know that he who has implanted in your bosom a principle of self-defence, a principle, under the promptings of which you are led to defend your person and your property, must himself be possessed of a similar principle; a principle which will lead him to defend himself, his works, and the institutions of his grace. Be entreated then, to consider seriously, the sin to which your attention has just been directed.

And let me remark, in the second place, that you are all guilty of unbelief. If any of you are not baptised, you are not profaning the ordinance of baptism in the sense already explained; but you are all, without a single exception, guilty of unbelief: and this, as we shall see, is a fundamental and aggravated sin. And, though my remarks will not be

inapplicable to those who are guilty of it, yet, I do not mean to charge you with infidelity, technically so called, with a deliberate and systematic rejection of Christianity, as an imposture upon mankind; but whatever may be your speculative belief in it, historically considered, you are, by your own admission, destitute of appropriating faith; and thus you have not "set to" your "seal that God is true;" you are, as we shall see, doing the very opposite of this: and your feeble professions of historical faith, cannot, in the face of your utter and continuous neglect of religion, redeem you from the deep disgrace of charging God with falsehood. An unbeliever, even if his unbelief has not assumed the form, and led, avowedly, to all the consequences of what is called infidelity, cannot please God. A believer, through the influence of temptations, may commit even heinous sins, and so incur the displeasure of God; but through the atoning blood of Christ, as the procuring, and through faith as the instrumental cause, he obtains forgiveness, and is restored to the Divine favor. But an unbeliever cannot please God at all. This is the doctrine of Paul, who informs us that, "without faith it is impossible to please" God; "for," continues the apostle, "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." An unbeliever then, cannot please God; he is, on account of his unbelief, an object of the Divine displeasure. "The wrath of God abideth on him."

Unbelief is a fundamental sin. While it is persisted in, piety is impossible. It prevents the sinner from returning to God; for, as Paul remarks, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." It was unbelief which ruined Adam. If he had believed the threatening, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," he would not have eaten of that forbidden fruit,

"Whose mortal taste

Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

It is through unbelief that all sinners persist in their wickedness, and refuse to return to God in the way which he has

appointed. Would sinners not only enter in at the wide gate, but travel onward in the broad way, if they seriously believed that it terminates in the regions of endless woe, and incurable despair? Surely they would not. Men do not act contrary to the testimony of their senses, or to knowledge which is derived ultimately from such testimony. A man will not cast himself into a fiery furnace, because his senses assure him that if he does, he will be consumed. But faith is equally as powerful in the regulation of one's conduct, as sense; indeed, it is more powerful, as you may learn from the eleventh chapter of Paul's epistle to the Hebrews. It is, then, through unbelief that sinners decline the offers of the gospel, and persevere in their wickedness. As those Hebrews, "whose carcasses fell in the wilderness," could not enter into the land of Canaan, "because of unbelief," so, for the same reason, sinners cannot enter into heaven. Their unbelief ruins them; it is a fundamental error: and to it, as such, the final condemnation of the impenitent is traced. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God."

But unbelief is a heinous offence, a particularly aggravated sin. It is so for various reasons, but chiefly because it is especially dishonorable to God. O sinners, are you aware of the dishonor which you do to God by your unbelief? are you at all conscious of the gross insult which you offer to the Majesty of heaven and earth? Your unbelief is a rejection of his testimony; you really, to speak in plain language, tell him that he is a liar. "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar: because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son." You do not believe the testimony which God has given of his son; and do you see the awful consequence of your sin? you virtually charge God with falsehood. O, the immensely aggravated character of this sin! If I were to inform you that at such a time, and at such a place, I saw a large tree shivered to pieces by a flash of lightning, and if you were to reply to me, "Sir, we do not believe you," would I not feel myself insulted, and especially if I were known to be a lover

of truth? most assuredly I would; and, in fact, some men can endure almost anything only an affront of this kind. Call them liars, even in an indirect way, and you rouse every indignant feeling of their souls. Yet, without the slightest compunction for it, you charge God with falsehood. Yes, though he is "not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent;" though it is impossible for him to lie; though "his truth endureth to all generations;" though all this be true, yet you make God a liar—you do not believe his testimony. What an insult! an insult which any of you would feel, deeply feel, and instantly resent, if it were offered to yourselves. What an insult! an insult offered, not to a man like yourselves, but to Jehovah, to God who made you, whose you are, and whom you are bound to love, and adore, and serve. O impenitent sinners, pause, and reflect on the heinous nature, the aggravated character of this sin; a sin which, under any circumstances which at all admit of its commission, is so dishonorable to God; but especially in your case, in whose experience there has been "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little."

But I must tell you of another sin with which you are chargeable. It is this; you slight the claims of the Saviour. This sin is involved in your unbelief; but still, that you may distinctly see its magnitude and enormity, we must detach it from the other, and consider it separately. And do you ask me, What are the claims of the Saviour upon us? I answer, they are the just and indisputable right which he has to you and your service. You will understand this point better, perhaps, if you attend to the following illustration. A man informs me that he has claims against another to the amount of one hundred dollars; now what does he mean by such language? he means that he is justly entitled to the one hundred dollars; they are the stipulated, and, if there were no stipulation in the case, the proper, the just reward of some service which he rendered to the man against whom he has these claims. Again, parents have claims upon their children; that

is, they are entitled, on grounds which we need not mention, to their affection, to their esteem, and, in some measure, to their service. The Saviour, then, has claims upon you; he is justly entitled to you and to your service. The claims which he has upon you are altogether right; they are neither greater nor less than they should be; they are claims which he could not relinquish, unless, indeed, he could deny himself and give his glory to another, and his praise to graven images. The claims which he has upon you are not only just, but inconceivably great. They are the claims of your Creator, Preserver, and kind Benefactor. Yes, sinners, Christ created you, and it is through his sustaining power that you now breathe; it is in consequence of his goodness that you are not now tossing on a bed of sickness, and moaning from the violence of pain. But this is not all; Christ has done for you what no created being could do; you are sinners; and for sinners, for precisely such persons as you are, he became, not only a man, but a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. For sinners he obeyed the law; for sinners he endured its penalty; as the prophet informs us, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." For sinners he wrought out an everlasting righteousness; and in the infinitude of his compassion, he says to you, even to you O sinners, "Hearken unto me ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price. Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke" — Christ has claims upon you, not only as a Saviour, but as a sovereign — "take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Behold, then, O sinners, the claims which the

Saviour has upon you; claims, founded on his supreme authority as God; on his munificence as Creator and Preserver of all; on his compassion, and mercy, and love; on his sufferings, and death, and burial, and resurrection, and ascension, and exaltation, and glory as a Redeemer; on his infinite excellence as God; on his perfect holiness and supreme loveliness as man. O the claims which the Saviour has upon you! they are high as heaven: they are deep as hell. They are seen in every breath which you draw, in every garment which you put on, in every meal of which you partake, in every sleep which you enjoy, in every Bible at which you look, in every sermon which you hear, in every judgment which you escape, in every blessing which you enjoy. Yet you slight these claims. O sinners, how shall I describe your sin? how shall I utter all your guilt? You are ready to imprison the man who resists your pecuniary claims, though they should not amount to five dollars; you are ready to send the sheriff upon him, seize his property, and expose it to sale; you are ready to do all this, though he should be a man in poverty, yea, in distress. You fly in horror and in wrath from the ungrateful son who disregards the claims of a hoary-headed parent; a parent who sweat, and labored, and toiled for him during his infancy and youthful years; you fly, I say, in horror and in indignation, from the ungrateful son who thus disregards the claims of a father or a mother; claims enforced by the strongest natural ties; by a thousand acts of parental kindness; by a hoary head and enfeebled knees; by trembling hands and a sorrowful heart; by a roofless house, and an appetite unsatisfied; yet, with amazing inconsistency, you disregard claims which are as much higher than these as God is higher than man; claims which are founded, not upon the hoary head and trembling hands of a fond parent, but on the personal qualities, the bloody sweat, the cruel sufferings, the shameful death, the exaltation, the glory of the Saviour. I am already overwhelmed with astonishment in view of your guilt: and yet, you have not seen it all.

I am going to show you, in the next place, that in slighting

the claims of the Saviour, you affront God, who sent him into the world, and undervalue and contemn the love which he has thus manifested. Your rejection of Christ, is a rejection of God; your contempt of Christ, is a contempt of God; your refusal to comply with the demands of Christ, is a refusal to meet the claims which God has upon you: for he appointed the mediation of Christ with this design among others, that through it you might be restored to his favor, and so, have a full opportunity of meeting the claims which he has upon you. But in slighting the claims of Christ, and refusing the benefits of his mediation, you despise God, who sent him into the world, having first appointed him to be the only mediator between himself and men. This is not my doctrine: it is not the doctrine of any man; it is the sentiment of Christ; hence the following language, in which he addressed his commissioned disciples: "He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." This, impenitent sinners, is plain, positive proof that your neglect of Christ terminates, ultimately, upon God. And what a sin! contempt poured upon the "Father of lights!" Who can estimate the magnitude of such a sin? In what light, do you think, does God view it? he must regard it as an affront, an insult. If you were to purchase a book of intrinsic worth, and elegantly bound: and if, with all imaginable politeness, you were to present it to friend, and entreat him to accept it as a gift, would you not feel mortified and insulted if he would not look at it; or if, having taken it into his hands, he should cast it into the fire, or tear it to pieces? Yet this is just the way in which you treat God; of course, the disproportion in the two cases, is almost infinite; but, still, the one illustrates the other. God, in his infinite love, has made a gift of his son to the world: to sinners generally; but you do not receive this gift; you treat it with indifference; some of you, perhaps, treat it with contempt; and the truth is, you are all doing, if not the utmost that you can, at least, much, to destroy it. You reject the Saviour himself: you trample his laws under

your feet: you love his worst enemies: you hate his cause, and your conduct tends to the subversion of his government. And now tell me if you are not guilty of insulting the Father of mercies, whose gift Christ is; tell me if he has not just cause to be displeased; and tell me if the sin of which you are thus guilty, is not inconceivably great. Be ashamed, sinners, be ashamed of this complicated sin; a sin which involves ingratitude, impoliteness, self-conceit, self-sufficiency, and, it may be, deliberate contempt.

And, though I have no disposition to overwhelm you with confusion, yet, I must remind you still further, that you resist and grieve the Holy Spirit. This, like every one that we have mentioned, is a sin of the first magnitude. But let us see if you are guilty of it. The spirit of God strives, in some measure, and to some point in their life, if not to the last moment of it, with all men. This may be inferred from what God said a short time before he proceeded to destroy the world by a deluge.—“My spirit shall not always strive with man.” This is very satisfactory proof that the spirit of God does strive with man: with mankind in general, as the language imports. And the Saviour says, speaking of the Holy Spirit: “He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” Now the spirit of God can be grieved, and he is grieved when men resist him, and sin, contrary to his suggestions. Hence the following language of Isaiah: “But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit.” And, to professing Christians, Paul delivers the following charge: “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.” Now, impenitent sinners, has the Spirit of God striven with you? Has he, by means of providential dispensations, by means of the word and ordinances, made any serious impressions upon your minds at any time? Has he sometimes rendered you uneasy in view of your sins? has he sometimes suggested to you that you were doing wrong; that instead of pursuing your present course, you should repent, forsake your sins, and believe on Christ? Doubtless he has; he is doing so, perhaps, at this moment. But you have, hitherto, withstood him; you

have resisted all his salutary influences; he has called, but you have refused; he has said, Come and I will bring you to Christ, to heaven, and to happiness; but you have peevishly and disdainfully replied: Let me alone, let me alone; I will follow my own inclinations, I will choose my own ways. Thus you have withstood and vexed the spirit of God.

And if I were to proceed in the specification of your peculiar and aggravated sins, I would notice, in the next place, your misimprovement of the long-suffering of God. This is his patient endurance of sinners and their sins. In the exercise of this attribute, he forbears to inflict upon them, immediately, the curse of the law which they are ever violating. And are you not objects of his long-suffering? He has spared you thus far, and he is still waiting to be gracious. But you do not improve his long-suffering; so far from this, you turn it to a bad account: and, because sentence against your evil works is not speedily executed, therefore your hearts are fully set in you to do evil. But I must forbear.

I have not, I am aware, shown you all your sins; but I have shown you some, of which, perhaps, you had scarcely thought before. You were probably consoling yourselves with the reflection that you are not gamblers, that you are not thieves and robbers, that you are not man-stealers and murderers, that you are not drunkards and extortioners. But O, my friends, you are sinners, sinners exceedingly in the sight of God. Yes, "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." Surely you may well exclaim, each one for himself, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

And now, sinners, the question with which we are both concerned, is a practical one: it is simply this: will you forsake your sins and return to God? And what a strange question! If I were to ask you a similar one in relation to many other things, you would laugh at me. If I were to put a rifle into the hands of one of you, and ask him, will you discharge the contents of that into your bosom? he would laugh at me; he would laugh at my simplicity in supposing

that he would take away his own life. Well, if it were not for some considerations which will be presently mentioned, the first question is just as strange as the second. When I ask you, will you forsake your sins? I virtually ask you, will you cease to murder, not only your bodies, but your souls! And if it were not for the corrupting, and blinding, and deceitful nature of sin, you would be astonished at me for asking you, will you forsake your sins and return to God? But so it is: you will not view this question as you do some others; it has been proposed to you, in some form, a thousand times perhaps, and it is now proposed to you again, and I wish to know what your answer is. It may be, with some of you at least, an unqualified negation; and if this be so, it implies an extremely hazardous determination, and one by which, I trust you will not long abide. I cannot, indeed, vouch for the certainty of your conversion: but there is one thing of which I am sure, and that is, that the motives to forsake your sins and return to God, are numerous and powerful.

If you do not forsake your sins, you will inflict great grief upon your pious relations. You are children, and have pious parents: and will not your conduct, if you persist in your sins, grieve these secondary authors of your being? will it not occasion them many tears, and many almost sleepless nights? will it not finally bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? O, ye youthful sinners, do you reflect that when you are enjoying your sinful recreations: when you are feasting in the house of your God, your pious parents may be even sickened with anxiety, and burdened, and pressed down with grief? But the case may be reversed; perhaps you are parents, and have pious children; and are you not ashamed that your offspring are beforehand with you in the possession and profession of religion? Will you persist in sinning against the God and Saviour of your dear children? will you persist in doing dishonor to their best friend? will you thus wound the feelings of your own offspring, and embitter the life of those whom you should love, and in whose happiness you should be most intensely interested? Surely, sinners, if

you have pious relations, you will not any longer treat them with so much cruelty; you will not any longer be a thorn in their flesh. Will you? I appeal to all your sympathies; will you any longer inflict such great grief upon your pious relations? It may be you will not, and it may be you will.

However, I must say to you further, that, if you do not forsake your sins, you will be ruined by them, and ruined forever. They will fill you with inconceivable regret, and with inconsolable grief, on a sick bed, and at a dying hour; they will involve you in all the horrors of the second death; they will drive you, with fearful violence, into those gloomy regions in which friendship, and love, and virtue, exist only in the recollection of their doleful inhabitants; with reference to which it is true that God has "forgotten to be gracious," and in which "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." You may rest assured I am telling you the truth: for God himself declares, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." The wicked shall be turned into hell, and abusers of gospel light, and gospel privileges, shall be turned into it under a sentence of aggravated condemnation. Of this there can be no doubt; for our Saviour affirms, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." It is certain, then, that your sins, if you do not forsake them, will ruin you forever. They will finally rob you of every vestige of virtue; they will finally sweep every comfort from you, and kindle around you the quenchless flames of hell. These are the words of truth and soberness; and you may rest assured that if you would escape the wrath and curse of God, you must forsake your sins.

And if you have any disposition to perform this duty, so reasonable in itself, and so indispensable to your happiness, the merits and promises of Christ afford you ample encouragement. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. I care not how numerous and aggravated your sins are: if you forsake them, Christ will receive you, will bless you in time, and glorify you in eternity. "He that covereth his sins shall

not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Behold, then, the merits and the promises of Christ; survey the one in all their infinity, and the other in all their richness, and fullness, and freeness, and tell me if you have not ample encouragement to forsake your sins. And will you do it? If you do, the event will create joy among the angels of heaven. Behold, they will be ready to exclaim, behold those sinners! those rebels against him, in whose praise our harps are ever employed; lo, they have broken their agreement with hell, and have annulled their covenant with death; lo, they have renounced the world, and rejected the authority of Satan; lo, they have laid down the weapons of their rebellion, and are returned to God. Lo, we shall henceforth have the pleasure of ministering to these new heirs of salvation, and will at last enjoy the inexpressible felicity of carrying them up to our own delightful abodes. So many souls redeemed from sin, and saved from eternal wrath! Wake up, thou minstrelsy of this higher sphere, wake up thy noblest powers, and let thy pealing strains be heard afar off, even by distant earth's inhabitants. Yes, yes, if you forsake your sins, there will be joy in heaven, and joy on earth; joy in the church of God, and joy in families. If you, simultaneously, and from this very moment, forsake your sins, the invocation of the prophet will be pronounced by many a joyful tongue: "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

But after all that has been advanced, perhaps you will only say: We have no intention to persist in our sinful course to the end of life; but other engagements prevent us from attending to religion at present. I understand you, then, as saying that you will defer your conversion to a convenient season. This, then, implies that religion is of some importance, in even your own estimation; for, if it were not, you would not think of attending to it, even at some future and convenient season. But, then, you are in somewhat of an error. Religion is a thing, not only of some, but of chief importance. Solomon calls it, in so many words, "The principal thing." He remarks in another place, "Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it." And, again, after having taken a view of all the different pursuits and enjoyments of life, he says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Religion, then, is not only of some, but of chief importance; it must be so, inasmuch as it is adapted to the spiritual part of man's nature; to that part of his nature which constitutes him what he is, a rational being. Now, should not the most important thing be attended to first? Is not this the principle on which men act in relation to the ordinary affairs of life? Would any man let the present seed-time pass away unimproved, merely for the sake of turning into money the products of the last season? However important the latter may be, the former, he believes, is still more so; and, hence, he attends to it first! If, then, religion be of supreme importance, should you not attend to it first? Reason and common sense say so, and Christ says so: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Besides, if you persist in your sins, and defer attention to religion to a convenient season, as you choose to call it, your application to Christ, when it is made, may be too late to be successful. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me;

for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." If Christ should meet your future application to him with such withering rebukes as these, of what advantage to you would your convenient season be? It is indeed arrived, but his "accepted time" is past. And what if he should—if you subject him to the necessity? what if he should say to you, "But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble?" Could you object aught to such a treatment of yourselves and your convenient season? You would, doubtless, be as speechless as the robbish guest, to whom it is said, in the parable of the marriage feast, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?"

But there is another difficulty yet in the way of a safe postponement, to a convenient season, of your conversion; you may die before your convenient season shall have arrived. What is your life, sinners, even at best? "It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." And life, which is only a vapor at best, is, in some instances, scarcely even the shadow of a vapor. Your life is extremely uncertain. Your breath is in your nostrils: a week, a month hence, and you may be in your grave, covered with worms, and mouldering into dust. Be entreated, then, to forsake your sins, and return to God. The destiny, the unchangeable, the eternal destiny of your souls, may be suspended on your conduct during the present hour. Begin the work of your salvation now. Lift up your hands and your hearts to that compassionate Saviour, whose claims you have so long slighted. "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." If you had just buried one of your nearest and dearest relations, sadness would mark your countenance: and, instead of being in the merry group, you would be seen standing alone in silent grief. And are not your own souls as dear to you as your nearest

kinsman? and are not they dead? are they not dead in trespasses and sins? are they not under the curse of the law, and the displeasure of God? And can you not weep for yourselves? will you not put into requisition all the means of deliverance from your present condition? Where shall we see you during the intermission? shall we see you standing in groups under every green tree, and engaged in unholy conversation? shall we see you doing just as you have always done? Instead of this, be silent as the grave: seek a retired spot, where you can weep over your sins, and hold communion with Christ; he says to you, "Come now, and let us reason together." Let your intermission, then, be spent, not in trifling conversation, but in reasoning with Christ. It is his invitation, it is his command; and can you comply with it too soon? can you advance a solitary reason for deferring to reason with him immediately? No, it is not in your power. But perhaps you think I am cruel. What! have us to spend the intermission, and even the whole afternoon, in reasoning with Christ, instead of chatting with one another? And does not your situation demand the very course which I recommend? If one of you were to become suddenly sick during the intermission, and sick, apparently, unto immediate death, he would not, I am sure, hesitate to trouble both himself and others. He would not hesitate to employ some one to bring a physician to him, and to do it, too, with all possible haste. And yet, you will not submit to some trouble to get clear of your sins: your sins, which will certainly make you sick some day, though they may not to day; your sins, which, if not forsaken, will certainly involve you in all the horrors and sufferings of eternal death. What matchless inconsistency! what amazing folly!

O, unconverted hearers; we have cried aloud to you: we have lifted up our voice to you in the way of instruction, and remonstrance, and affectionate warning, and counsel. Do you lift up your voices to him whose "eyes are upon the righteous," and whose "ears are open unto their cry." And though you may say to us, after the manner in which Simon addressed

Peter and John, Pray thou for us ; yet, defer not, O defer not to pray for yourselves. "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously ; so will we render the calves of our lips. Assur shall not save us: we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy."

PSALM L

- T**HAT man hath perfect blessedness,
 who walketh not astray
 In counsel of ungodly men,
 nor stands in sinners' way ;
 Nor sitteth in the scorner's chair ;
- 2 But placeth his delight
 Upon God's law, and meditates
 on his law day and night.
- 3 He shall be like a tree that grows
 the streams of water nigh ;
 Which in its season yields its fruit ;
 its leaf doth never die ;
 And all he doth shall prosper well.
- 4 The wicked are not so :
 But like they are unto the chaff,
 which wind drives to and fro.
- 5 In judgment, therefore, shall not stand
 such as ungodly are :
 Nor in th' assembly of the just
 shall wicked men appear.
- 6 Because the way of godly men
 unto the Lord is known ;
 Whereas the way of wicked men
 shall quite be overthrown.

SERMON VI.

EARLY PIETY.

BY REV. ROBERT C. GRIER.

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“Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.”

Ecc. 12: 1.

THIS life is everything to man. Short and uncertain as it is, it involves the interests of an endless existence. It fixes our character, and determines our destiny; for we now form those relations which shall continue through all future being. The present, contemplated in this light, assumes an importance which eternity only can unfold; for the issues of the present are the realities of eternity; “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” No act should then be regarded as indifferent, no feeling, wish, or purpose, as insignificant; these are that by which we shall be judged, the evidence which shall either acquit or condemn us at the bar of God. The question which this life is to decide, is not whether we shall be *forever*, but whether we shall be ever *with the Lord*; now life and death, blessing and cursing, are set before us, and we must make our choice. This life, then, has bound up in it all that is either fearful or blissful in immortality. And, more than this, our future destiny is generally determined in the early part of our existence. If we shall have spent the vigor of manhood in waging a war against God our Sovereign, it is probable that we shall persist in our opposition. If we shall

have rejected the offer of pardon thus long, it is to be feared we shall continue to do so, until destruction overtake us, and that without remedy.

Youth, then, is the time to choose God as our portion, to accept Christ, who is the true God, and eternal life, to remember our Creator, his power to save and to destroy, his claims upon us, and avail ourselves of the gracious provision he has made for our pardon and salvation. Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.

We will state some reasons why youth should obey the command of the text.

Youth is the most *favorable* time for the duty enjoined. It is most favorable because of the state of your minds. To believe in Christ is difficult, in one sense, at any time; for it is directly opposed to the principles of our unregenerate nature. We know that youth are depraved, prone to sin, that it is not easy for them to submit to the Gospel. But whatever obstacles may now exist, these will be constantly increasing; you may now be bad, but you will be ever growing worse, so long as you continue under the power of sin. You are now most capable of candidly examining the word of God; you have not yet wedded yourself to a particular creed, to which you are determined to accommodate everything; you have not yet adopted a mode of life, in which it becomes your interest to decide against the truth; you have not yet become the slave of habits, openly at war with morality; you can, therefore, judge most impartially of that record which God has given us of his Son. Your heart is indeed the seat of corrupt inclinations, but these inclinations are not yet fortified by those prejudices that will naturally arise from a conformity to the opinions and practice of the irreligious. Your conscience, too, is now more tender; it now reproves you for sin; it is now a faithful monitor, to warn you of "the wrath to come" when you indulge in vice; every time it speaks unheeded, its voice becomes more feeble. See the youth who has been trained by pious parents, when first associated with profane and vicious companions, he is shocked at their impiety.

and hardihood, his feelings recoil at thus daring a just and omnipotent God. But these feelings become less powerful on every recurrence of such circumstances, and soon he will stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful; such is the natural and speedy consequence of familiarity with vice, and such is precisely the influence which irreligion will have on your feelings and conscience. The longer you condemn the authority of your Sovereign, the oftener you reject his offer of mercy, the more frequently you view with insensibility and ingratitude the tokens of divine love, you are increasing the difficulties, and magnifying the obstacles to your embracing religion. Let the corrupt principles of your nature be developed and matured, and they will bar your entrance into life. When your passions shall have been fostered by indulgence, your appetites confirmed by gratification, your understandings blinded by prejudice, and your consciences seared by vice, you will have done all you can do to rivet those fetters which bind you to sin, and to fit you for the judgments of a holy God. If, then, you regard "His favor which is life, and his loving kindness, which is better than life," do not thus banish yourselves from his presence; "cease" now "to do evil, learn" now "to do well;" take advantage of the present favorable state of your mind; come not under the fatal influence of vicious habits; they whose deeds are evil, love darkness rather than light. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may those who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well.

Youth is the most favorable time, because, now you have most leisure. A common excuse, with which the claims of God are set aside, and the clamors of conscience silenced, is the want of time. Ask an individual why he neglects the means of divine grace, why he fails to perform admitted religious duties: the prompt reply is, I have not time; I must provide for the support and comfort of my household. Thus, under the pretext of one duty, others are partially or entirely omitted. This excuse is never valid; it is dictated by a spirit hostile to God, and at variance with our own best interests;

it justifies no one for disobedience to the law of God; it has not even the semblance of truth in regard to the young. You are yet comparatively free from those troubles which embitter life, those cares which harrass the mind; you are not yet involved in those engagements which engross the attention, and which banish our eternal interests to neglect and forgetfulness. You are yet under the paternal roof, your parents and guardians are making provision for your present welfare, they are collecting your earthly treasures; and you should now commence laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Do not, then, waste your time, and dissipate your mind by the follies and vices so common to this period of life; live as if death, judgment, and eternity, awaited you: as if heaven or hell were to be your destiny. So number your days as to apply your heart to wisdom; you now have the time, and you ought to have the inclination.

Youth is the most favorable time, because of coöperation. The scriptures represent the life of the Christian, as one of activity and opposition; it is called a race, a warfare. Difficulties are to be encountered, enemies are to be met throughout his whole course; victory is but a prelude to conflict; foes, when subdued, rise, and again summon to the contest; foes, too, exercising all the caution, actuated by all the malice growing out of disappointment and defeat. Thus the soldier of the cross must endure "hardness," for he is engaged in an arduous and unremitting struggle, terminating only when he shall have destroyed his last enemy, death. But, however hard it may be for any to enter into the kingdom of God, there are trials and discouragements peculiar to the new convert. He has just passed out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and is liable to all the embarrassment arising from the novelty of his circumstances; exposed to all the danger resulting from inexperience and ignorance. He has not learned, yet, to bear the yoke of Christ; he is introduced into new society, must engage in new exercises, adopt new habits, his former associations are broken up, and directed into new channels: in a word, old things are passed away, and all

things have become new. He thus has the burden of the Christian, without his strength and patience; the enemies of the Christian, without his skill and courage. How important is it, then, that he have the coöperation of those who can direct and encourage him when thus pressed down under his difficulties? Intimidated by a hostile world, perplexed and confounded at the deceitfulness and wickedness of his own heart, pierced by the fiery darts of the wicked one, does not he especially need the sympathy and prayers of friends? Youth is the most favorable time to obtain these friends, and secure this interest in your welfare. Now the attention of the Church is fixed upon you, she is hoping that you will now come out from the world, and place yourselves on the side of virtue and religion; that you will now consecrate your talents and influence to the service of God. She is waiting and anxious to encourage every step you may make to this desirable choice.

From the old and middle-aged, she can expect but little; they have long enjoyed the means of grace, these privileges remain unimproved; to them the offer of eternal life has been often made, but as often rejected; it is then to the youth that the church looks, mainly, for her continuance and prosperity; from you she hopes to obtain those who shall be the honored instruments of her triumphs and her glory. This, then, is the most favorable time for securing her coöperation in "working out your own salvation."

But there are also others viewing your conduct with feelings of no ordinary interest, who are deeply concerned in your welfare, but cannot long sustain their present relations to you, they are your pious parents; they are constrained to desire your salvation, not only by christian love, but also by an affection stronger than death. Their "heart's desire and prayer to God is," that you may be saved; for this end, they have given you to their covenant - God in baptism; so soon as you were susceptible of instruction, they have directed your tender minds to your heavenly Father, they have told you of his love, and of your duty to return that love; they have borne you on

their prayers to God, and their earnest request is—Oh, that ye might live before him! Crown then their happiness by securing your own, and do it now, while they are thus wrestling with God, that their God may also be the God of their seed. Above all, remember that your salvation must be by grace, that if ever you repent and believe, it is God that will make you to differ from a world lying in wickedness. He is now saying to you “give me thy heart,” encouraging you with the promise, “they that seek me early shall find me.” Grieve not then his holy Spirit by your continued impenitence, do not provoke him to swear in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest; but seek him now “while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.” Youth then is the most *favorable* time for embracing the Gospel.

It is also the most *advantageous* period. Let it once be admitted that there are blessings connected with piety, that the favor of God is desirable even in this world, then wisdom enforces the command of the text, “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” If there was some earthly good offered to you, and you were convinced that important results depended upon its possession, would you defer its acceptance? Prudence would dictate a different and wiser course of conduct. Why, then, do you act less wisely in reference to your higher interests? There is a reward in keeping the commandments of God, “Wisdom’s ways are pleasantness, all her paths are peace; godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come.”

Religion in youth will have an *advantageous* influence on your enjoyments in life. We know that the wealth and emoluments of this world are not confined to the good, so far from it, that generally these are possessed more abundantly by the irreligious, but this fact does not prove their greater happiness. They have wants which these things cannot reach, a void which baffles all their ingenuity and resources. Amid all this profusion of blessings, the language of the soul is, “all this availeth me nothing.” The mind may be diverted but cannot be satisfied. Even in laughter the heart of the

worldling is sorrowful, and the end of his mirth is heaviness, But how different is it with the christian! his hopes are fixed upon things eternal in the heavens, his desires are filled with the pleasures at God's right hand.

"A little that a just man hath,
Is more and better far;
Than is the wealth of many such,
As lewd and wicked are."

The advantages of piety, however, are more clearly evinced in adversity and affliction. In times of prosperity the pleasures of sin can be substituted for the consolations of religion. The man who is without God when successful in his schemes; caressed by the world, surrounded by those loving and beloved, may, in the pride of his heart, ask, "who is the Almighty that I should serve him, or what profit should I have if I pray unto him?" But let the hand of God smite him, strip him of his riches and honors; let death wrest from him the object of his affection, and what has he more? Ye have taken away his gods. Prostrate him on a bed of death, and then direct him to any, or to all earthly good to soothe his pain and lessen his anguish; can pleasures, wealth or fame now solace his wounded spirit? Miserable comforters are they all! And what has it profited him to gain the world, and lose his soul? These things do not sweeten the bitterness of death; this world's glory lights not the valley of death. The christian has a hope able to sustain him in his afflictions, they come from a Father who has promised to make all things work together for good to those who love him; he reckons that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in those who are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Piety will, therefore, heighten and purify your happiness in prosperity; it will cheer and sustain you in adversity; death will no longer be to you the king of terrors, for the grave is but the portal through which you shall enter the mansions of rest, prepared for you in your Father's house. There are, moreover, other considerations which should induce you to obey the command of the text. You are now embarking in

those schemes and forming those connections which will have an important and permanent influence on your future conduct and destiny. Youth is the most advantageous period for embracing religion, because there is no other period in life so critical. Whether we regard the temptations with which youth are beset, their liability to yield to those temptations, or the disastrous consequences likely to result from their yielding, there is no class in society which needs more the guiding and controlling influence of religious principle. We have said that the virtuous and the good have their hopes directed to the youth; from them the patriot, philanthropist, and christian, look for those who shall honor and bless their race. But these are not all whose attention is fixed upon you. The vicious and profane know that they too must draw from your ranks their accomplices in iniquity; and they know that in all enterprises, whether political, moral, or religious, no expedient is more effective than that of enlisting youth. On the youthful mind are impressed those features which are to be stamped upon society; hence the worthless would go to the source of influence, and by poisoning the fountain, would send forth streams of pollution and death. It is here they would infuse the principles of skepticism, and the elements of profligacy, and that, too, with an ingenuity and perseverance worthy of a better cause. Countless are the appliances which are brought to bear for evil upon the unwary youth; there are a thousand allurements to entice him to vice—learning and science, poetry and eloquence, painting and music, everything that can command by its power, or fascinate by its charms has been directed into this current, sweeping into the vortex of ruin. Now, while all this force is employed for the destruction of youth, there is a fearful probability that it will succeed. That very susceptibility of impression which marks this period of life, and which renders it so favorable to religion, if improved, affords equal facilities to vice and error. If the affections be easily excited, and the sympathies enlisted, it is the more dangerous to come in contact with improper objects; if the conscience be more sensitive, a more hardening influence

will result from slighting its menitions; if the mind is more free from prejudice, it is also too frequently wanting in that intelligence and independence necessary to form correct decisions.

Youth are also exposed to all the dangers arising from inexperience and credulousness; they know not themselves, they do not scrutinize others; conscious of their own ingenuousness, they suspect no one; they see not the poisoned arrows festering in the wounded spirit of the scoffer; they think not of that load of anxiety and remorse, concealed by the boisterous merriment of the inebriate; they discover not the slave of every unhallowed and insatiate passion, in the fashionable libertine. Thus the "want of experience gives the world much advantage over youth; many have gone into the haunts of sin, and finally into the world of woe, because, at the commencement of their course, they did not suspect the danger." Imagine a youth, entering the world, destitute of religious principle, his passions high, himself imprudent, impatient, confident, and the hazard is fearful, just in proportion to the interests at stake; a false step, at this time, is to be dreaded, not merely from its immediate effects, but, also, from the fatal influence it is likely to have on all future existence; he who has taken the first step in the downward road to ruin, has doubled the probability that he will not stop there, but that he has committed himself to a course of conduct, which will be deepening, and blackening, till merged in "outer darkness." Remember, then, thy Creator in the days of thy youth: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths; thou shalt walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. Say unto him, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth.

Youth is the most *honorable* time to embrace religion.

As God's creatures, we are bound to serve him; he, as our Creator and Preserver, has the most absolute claim upon us; but how greatly, if possible, is this claim increased and enforced by the endearing relation of Redeemer! bought not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the

precious blood of Christ, we should glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are his. God, whose throne is in heaven, and whose kingdom ruleth over all, waves his right as the Author of our being, and from his excellent glory, beseeches us by his mercies, that we would present to him "our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in his sight." The Most High assumes the affectionate relation of a parent, and entreats, "My son, give me thy heart?" How shall this infinite condescension and love be requited? What should be your conduct in view of this rich, divine grace? Is it honorable to withhold your love from him, who has first thus loved you? to requite such goodness with ingratitude and impenitence? You owe a debt to God which you can never pay, you should, at least, acknowledge it, and prove by a cheerful and holy obedience, that you are not regardless of the obligations which bind you to God. This consecration of yourself, is the most acceptable return which you can make, it is only by fruits of righteousness that you can glorify your heavenly Father, and every noble and generous principle of your nature impels you to such service. What would you think of an outcast, rescued from poverty and misery, placed in a circle of friends and surrounded with ease and affluence, should he despise his benefactor? but if he should take occasion from the kindness of his patron to insult his feelings; and trample upon his honor: is there a blacker feature of depravity, a more hateful trait in character? Yet how can those who abuse the forbearance of God, by encouraging themselves to continue in rebellion against him, free themselves from such dishonor? because God is kind, therefore you will offend him; "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Free yourselves from this charge, by giving yourselves away to God in an everlasting covenant—prove that you are not unmindful of all his gracious benefits, by spending and being spent in his service; this is all the return which you can make, it is all that God requires. Suppose that by a late repentance you may save yourself, he who aims at nothing more than

his own personal salvation, fails much in doing his duty. You are bound to make efforts to save others; you should, indeed, seek to enter heaven, but not *alone*; no, but surrounded by those whom you had been instrumental in introducing into happiness, who would be your crown of rejoicing forever. Now just as you lengthen the time of your impenitence, you are shortening your time for usefulness, and as you are under the most solemn obligations thus to honor God, you are defrauding him of that to which he has an undoubted and imperious claim; you are then by deferring repentance, "robbing God," acting most dishonorably.

By early piety you will especially glorify God, by the implicit faith you exercise in his word. He has declared that "wisdom's ways are pleasantness," but "the way of transgressors is hard;" you believe his testimony and turn from iniquity, that it may not be your ruin. You do not wait to make an experiment on the pleasures of the world, and after having proven their vanity and vexation of spirit, then confess the truth of the Bible. You do not seek the peace and joys of religion, because you have exhausted every other source of happiness; no, but because God has said "seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" you honor God by believing his word on his *own authority*, and by acting thus, you also consecrate to God, the *best* that you have; you give the powers of your body and mind while in their prime; you enlist in his service with the ardor of youth and the vigor of manhood; you devote to him your affections when purest and strongest, when in mind and body you are most capable of promoting his glory, thus affording the best evidence of the strength and sincerity of your love, standing forth an example to your companions, and a rebuke to those more advanced in life, and yet impenitent. Religion is never more lovely than in youth—it gives dignity to age, but amiableness to youth; they bring not their shattered constitutions, their palsied bodies, their doating and dissipated minds; not the torn, the lame, the sick, as their offering; but prove the goodness of their motives by the most costly sacrifice: they turn not from the

honors of the world, because its laurels have withered on their brow, they quit not the world, because the world has quit them; they yield themselves to God when admired and solicited by others; they press through a thousand allurements, and say to Him, "whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee."

It is the object of the Gospel, not simply to save men from punishment, but also to make them active instruments in showing forth the glory of God. This, however, cannot be the wish of those who defer repentance so long as they may have ability and opportunity for sinful indulgence. He who has wasted his energies in profligacy, and spent his powers in the service of Satan, waging a warfare against heaven, would, when on the threshold of eternity, make peace with God; having been a slave to the world and his lusts during life, he would die the death of the righteous; thus presenting to God, emphatically, a body of sin and death; may such an one not well fear the sentence, "ye shall eat of the fruit of your own way and be filled with your own devices." Honor God not only as your Saviour, but also as your Master, do not put him off until you have worn out yourself in the service of his enemies, and then come to him for salvation. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

In conclusion, we would remark to all who are postponing the great concern of working out their own salvation, how great is the folly of delaying this matter to a "*convenient season*." You are now, by your own confession, unreconciled to God and without hope, should you be called into his presence as you are; and yet you are silencing your conscience, calming your fears by looking forward to a future repentance; while you are thus avowedly living to anything but to God, you still hope all will be well, because you will *repent*. What do you mean by *repentance*? Simply, that when you are to be separated from the enjoyments of the world and the pleasures of sin, you will desire the portion of the righteous, the happiness of heaven. That when about to meet the dread retributions of eternity, you will tremble at the solemnities of

the judgment, and at the cup of perdition. Is this your repentance? Such a repentance can never save you. It is nothing but the recoil of your nature at those images of terror which flash through the darkness of death; it is but the longing of an immortal spirit for happiness. Repentance unto life involves necessarily a view of sin, as it respects God; it is an essential condition to this state of mind, that the sinner contemplate sin as that which is dishonoring to God—that which *he* hates—which he has marked with his curse in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, “they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.” If then you ever repent to any good purpose, your present conduct, and the very pretext by which you are excusing your conduct, will be to you a source of deep and bitter sorrow. You are now just filling up a cup of wormwood, which you will then have to drain to its very dregs. How irrational would you regard such a course of conduct in anything else than in religion? What opinion must be formed of an individual, who, in any other department of life, should deliberately and voluntarily adopt a course of action, which he knew would ultimately fill him with grief and self-abhorrence; not simply that such *might* be the result in despite of his efforts, but that he was acting in the face of a hope, yes, a *resolution*, that such should be the case? He could be viewed in no other light than as the victim of infatuation. It is only in religion that men can act so palpably irrational, and escape the suspicion of insanity. Thus, on the supposition that you will not be disappointed in your hope, that you will repent and enter into life, and delay, is *folly*.

But it is also extremely dangerous. Those of you who are really entertaining a hope of repentance, ought to be willing to examine the foundation of this hope; and, if you will do this honestly, you will discover enough to excite your fears and drive you from this refuge of lies. You will see that by far the most probable issue is, that, as you live, so you will die. If this contemplated change ever be produced, it must be either by yourself, or a divine agency. What reason have you to hope that ever *you* will produce it? you are now

opposed to making such a change in your character ; at least, not less so than at any former period of your life. You see that, thus far, the practice of sin has not disposed you to holiness, and can you believe such ever will be the effect ? can irreligion ever create a relish for piety ? No, but it can confirm your opposition, and embitter your hatred to the Gospel, and such is its legitimate tendency. There is, then, assuredly nothing in your present conduct, or plans, that can encourage you. But the truth is, that, if you ever repent, you will owe it to Divine grace ; if ever you shall come to Christ, it will be because the Father has drawn you. Now, although you can do nothing which will *oblige* God to bestow upon you the grace of repentance, you can do much to *provoke* him to withhold it, and if you will but reflect that now you are refusing his invitations of mercy, despising his salvation, you have cause for trembling ; in your distress you may call upon him, but it is written, “ I will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh ; ” and why ? “ Because I have called and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. ” Dare not, then, to act as if God were at your bidding, “ for ye know how that when Esau would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected ; for he for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. ” Trifle, then, no longer with your dearest interests, and while God is now commanding you to seek his face, may your hearts reply, “ thy face, Lord, seek we will, ”—Amen.

S E R M O N VII.

THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE LATE REV. DAVID L. PROUDFIT.

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“Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.”

Psalms, 87: 3.

THE prophets of old, in delivering the messages with which they were sent, made use of the language current at the times in which they lived. Hence their writings abound in figures, which, without a correct view of the Jewish economy, it would be impossible to understand. Taking their terms from things already in existence, they used them to represent those which were yet future, and in alluding to facts which belong exclusively to the new economy, or to the church at large, they employ expressions literally applicable only to the old dispensation. Apart from this view of the language which they used, it would be impossible to ascertain their meaning; and many of their writings would appear but the empty effusions of an overheated imagination, and vain predictions, which would never be fulfilled. For then should we find dignity and glory ascribed to things intrinsically of little value, and perpetual duration to things which have long since passed away. But taking the clue which themselves have afforded, and which the New Testament writers have shown us so clearly how to follow, their meaning becomes intelligible, and

their prophecies appear to be such as have been already realized, or the fulfillment of which may be looked for with the utmost certainty. For example, who has not been struck with the glowing descriptions of Jerusalem, found in many of the sacred writings? All that is stable in nature, or grand and beautiful in the conceptions of man, have been put in requisition to represent her perpetuity and glory. As a city, in extent, population, and magnificence of structure, Jerusalem was far surpassed by many of the cities of the east. So that if these descriptions were supposed to apply to her literally, apart from her connection with the visible church, they would appear but the exaggerations of a poetic fancy. But when we recollect that she is taken to represent the church universal, and that what is spoken of her belongs to that kingdom set up in our world by the God of Heaven, protected by His care, and designed, ultimately, to fill the earth, the language which, when applied to her literally, would be the mere extravagance of hyperbole, acquires a force and propriety with which the nicest criticism cannot find fault. That Jerusalem, and all the names by which that city was designated, were used for the church at large, is evident from the propriety of the figure in itself, from the tenor of the passages where these terms occur, and from their application in the New Testament. It is plainly in this sense that the expression, the "City of God," which was one of the appellations of Jerusalem, is used in the text.

The general subject here presented to view, is the glory of the Church.

As a degree of confusion sometimes arises from the distinction, the *visible* and the *invisible* Church, it is necessary to observe that these two should not be considered as distinct bodies, but different parts of one and the same body. It is true that what is asserted of the general term, is sometimes applicable to only one of the parts included under it. But this by no means destroys the unity of the whole. We employ the same manner of speech when we apply to the whole man, who is made up of soul and body, that which belongs exclusively to one

of these parts, without at all implying that the soul and body are the same thing, nor yet that either of them alone would form the person. Whenever, therefore, the word "Church," or any of its synonymous expressions occur without limitation, the whole is to be understood; and if that which is predicated of the general term be applicable to both the parts, it is to be referred to both, unless limited by the scope of the passage, or by other parts of Scripture. If, then, it be asked to which form of the Church reference is made in the text, I answer, to both. She is glorious in her external organization, when compared with the various institutions existing among men, and she is glorious in her invisible form, when compared with all the other works of God. And in these two views it is proposed to illustrate the subject.

I. If the *visible* Church be compared with other institutions of our world in the privileges which she enjoys, and the benefits which she confers, in the objects of her organization, and the adaptation of means to the accomplishment of these objects, she will be found immeasurably to excel them all. She has ever been the depository of all correct religious knowledge. While darkness, thicker than ever rested on the land of Egypt, enveloped the nations of the earth, she, like the Goshen of old, was illumined by the light of heaven. To her were "committed the oracles of God," and by this alone she is distinguished beyond all comparison. "For what nation," said Moses, addressing the Israelites, who then constituted the church, "for what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" To estimate the value of this privilege, look at the nations of the earth as they existed before the coming of Christ. Having corrupted or lost the knowledge of the true God, having forsaken or perverted the revelation originally made to man, and nearly obliterated even that law written on the heart, uncertain of what would be their future condition, or how to prepare for it, and unacquainted with those principles of religion and moral rectitude which are essential to man's welfare in this world, they were

given up to affections the most vile, and superstitions the most degrading. In vain were lighted the lamps of philosophy and literature, to dispel this darkness. Their light was enjoyed only by a few in the higher ranks of society, and to them they furnished but a feeble glimmering to guide them in their present state. Beyond the bounds of this life, no ray of theirs could ever penetrate. They could throw no cheering light into the dark valley of the shadow of death. And the proud philosopher, who boasted of the greatness of his knowledge and wisdom, must descend to the grave, ignorant as the plebeian he despised, of the destiny that awaited him. And as for the condition of the rest of mankind, the mind revolts from the contemplation. Sunk in the grossest ignorance, exposed to all the calamities resulting from passion unrestrained by reason or moral principle, having no intellectual pleasures which might serve as a solace to the miseries of life, or a refuge from the stings of conscience, the world was to them a barren desert, terminating in a dark and fathomless abyss. How different was the condition of the church of God. When "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, the Lord himself arose upon her, and His glory was seen upon her." While others were wearying themselves in the fruitless pursuit after happiness, and vainly tasking their powers to the utmost to discover the chief good; and the means of attaining it, she was instructed in those sublime principles of religion and morality, founded on the nature of man, and his relation to his Creator, which God alone could communicate, and the knowledge and observance of which are so essential to our welfare. While they were striving in vain to devise means of propitiating the favor of Heaven, to her were sent messengers directly from the Court of Heaven, to convey to her the knowledge and worship of the true God, and to direct her attention to that channel through which alone favor can come to sinners. While they were departing farther and farther from the truth, and becoming involved in deeper and more hopeless ignorance, she was continually receiving new accessions of knowledge, in the gradual unfolding of that plan

by which the wisdom of God is manifested in the redemption of fallen man. And when to the astral light of prophecy which the Jews enjoyed, was added the splendor of the Sun of righteousness, then indeed she appeared a luminous body in the midst of darkness, and the contrast between her and the surrounding nations became more striking. From that time, enjoying increased privileges herself, she began to exercise her influence on the world around. Trace her history in succeeding ages; the history, I mean, of the true church. See her sending forth her ministers to proclaim to dying men the glad tidings of salvation. See her by her influence ameliorating the condition, and elevating the character of those nations where she has become predominant, shedding her light on the darkness of the middle ages, and at length dissipating that darkness; breaking down the barriers which hindered the improvement of mankind, and affording free scope to the progress of civilization, refinement, and liberty. Compare those nations where she now exists in her strength, with those that have never yet felt her influence, and tell me if, in the privileges she enjoys, and the benefits she confers, she is not a glorious Church!

Equally worthy of our admiration are her organization, and the objects to be attained by it. Her members are called, not to a few occasional acts of service, but to an entire devotion to her welfare. They are required to place her prosperity above their chief joy, and to sacrifice all considerations which may conflict with her interests. The objects for which the church was instituted, are the mutual improvement of the members, and the extension of its limits by the dissemination of the truth as it is in Jesus. For the accomplishment of these objects, its members are bound by a solemn vow to exert all their energies, and, if necessary, to sacrifice even their lives. They are thus associated, not for attaining some temporary advantage, or for removing some temporary evil, but for mutual assistance and support in preparing for a future state, in changing and elevating their characters, and fitting them for communion with their Maker. And they are bound

to use all the means in their power to induce others to attend to the same all-important duty. To them are given the oracles of God, with a commission to use them for their own improvement, and to send them to every part of the world; and all who become members are bound by a solemn covenant to execute this commission to the utmost of their power. They are not called to a romantic enterprise, the accomplishment of which could bring no good to themselves or others, but to the deliverance of mankind from the thralldom of sin. Equipped, not with the weapons of carnal warfare, but with the whole armor of God, marshalled under the banner of the Captain of Salvation, and encouraged by his promises of success, they are sent forth to a crusade against the powers of darkness, in which all who enlist are bound by a solemn oath never to retire from the contest while life lasts, or a single province of our world remains under Satan's dominion. Since, then, this society combines in its organization and objects, all that is noble, enterprising, rational, and beneficent in other institutions, but without their defects, is it not worthy of our admiration? And will it not at this day, when everything calculated to refine the mind, elevate the character, and give dignity and value to the social intercourse of men is so highly appreciated, will it not be acknowledged that, amid all the institutions existing in the world, the Church stands preëminently glorious?

But there are other respects besides these mentioned in which the church is glorious. It is the visible witness for God in the world.—“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.” When its members were few in number and surrounded by enemies, He watched over and protected them. He brought them up out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, preserved them in their journey through the wilderness by a succession of miracles, and drove out from before them nations greater and mightier than they. When attacked by the combined powers of surrounding nations, He interposed for their deliverance. When, on account of their sins, they were carried away captive by their enemies; He suffered them not to

be destroyed, but gathered them together, and established them again in the land of their inheritance. And the special object of all these interpositions in their behalf was that "all the earth might know that there was a God in Israel." After the privileges formerly confined to the Jews were extended to others, and the church was established among various nations, He continued to manifest His watchful care for her preservation. Though attacked by the most powerful empire that ever existed in the world, she, protected by her Almighty King, has seen that empire destroyed. Though exposed to all that the malice of men and devils could devise against her, standing on the Rock of Ages, she has securely defied their efforts. While the mightiest and most durable of human institutions have fallen to the ground, while the noblest projects of man's device have come to nought, the Church has continued to exist, and stands at this day an indubitable proof that there is a God who reigneth in the earth, and that she is the object of his peculiar care.

In considering the glorious prospects which are yet before the church, we must turn from experience and history, which can no longer guide us, and look to the pages of prophecy. In the 2d chapter of Isaiah we find this remarkable prediction: "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." That this passage refers not to the Jews as a nation, but to the Church at large, is evident from the fact that all nations are represented as engaged in the worship of God, which is inconsistent with the Jewish

economy. The "mountain of the Lord's house" must therefore represent the visible church, which shall be exalted above everything else in the world, and the flowing of all nations to it, the ingress of innumerable multitudes within its pale. The whole passage evidently refers to a period yet future, when the church will be so exalted that it shall be universally seen to excel all human institutions,—when the benign influence of the gospel shall put an end to tumult and contention,—when instead of the voice of war and the shouting for battle, shall be heard the voice of many nations calling each other to worship the God of the whole earth. Again, in the 11th verse of the same chapter it is said, "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." And in the 49th chapter, 22d and 23d verses, it is said, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers, and they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Passages like these might be multiplied without number, but these already quoted are sufficient for the present purpose. From these we learn that the time will yet come when the Lord will enter into judgment with those nations which obstinately refuse submission to King Messiah, and persecute His people, when the Church will be extended throughout the whole world, and all nations shall be subject to it, when the gospel shall be spread to every part of the globe, and "no man need say to his neighbour, know the Lord, for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest;"—when "the Lord Himself shall build up Zion, and establish and make Jerusalem," the City of God, "a praise in the earth."

II. It is necessary to consider in the 2d place, the glory of the *invisible* Church. This is a theme on which the sacred

writers always dwell with lively ardor. All that is beautiful and sublime in nature, all that is splendid in the conception of men is employed to describe the church, and language seems to fail to express the variety and excellence of her glory. "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" The Saviour, the Son of God Himself, is represented as breaking forth with rapture at the contemplation of her beauty: "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes." "Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee." And well is she worthy of such glowing descriptions, on account of her relation to Him who is infinite excellence, and because in her is displayed the chief glory of the Godhead. Among all the works of creation those are to be esteemed the most glorious which most eminently display the glory of the Creator. And in this respect the Church stands preëminent. For her recovery from ruin was devised that wonderful plan of salvation, into which angels desire to look. By the work of her redemption was made known to the universe how God could be just, and the Justifier of the ungodly. In it "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." There all the attributes of the Deity shine with transcendent lustre. It was for this that the church was chosen by God from among sinful men, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, that by her "might be made known unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God."

The glory of the Church farther appears from the dignity to which God hath exalted her, and the astonishing love which He has shown to her. She is the bride of the king of heaven. "Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of hosts is His name." And this, her glorious Husband, hath given her assurances of a love passing the love of woman. When Zion complained that she was forsaken of the Lord, she was comforted by His own gracious declaration, "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the fruit of

her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." And abundantly has He proved His surpassing love, in all that He has done for her. He, the Son of God the Creator of the world, took upon Him human nature, that He might marry her to Himself, and exalt her above all the works of his hands; that by His own blood He might redeem her from the curse and pollution of sin, and "present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; that she might be holy and without blemish."

That these glorious things which are spoken of the Church cannot be applied to anything else: that Christ did not, (as some have maintained,) assume any other than human nature: that He has never displayed the riches of redeeming grace to other creatures, as he has displayed it to the Church, is, I think, abundantly evident from scripture testimony. He is said to have been made "Head over all things to the Church;" that is, as Head of the Church, He is placed over all things, which plainly implies that all things else are rendered subservient to that display of glory made in the Church. Again, it is called "His body, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all," which evidently means that in it, and in it alone, is concentrated and exhibited in one view, all these glories of the Deity which are displayed in the various works of creation. It would seem that language like this could not have been used, had God in any other of His works, in any creature, or collection of creatures, throughout the universe, made the same, or an equal manifestation of His glory, as He has made in the Church. Since, then, He hath conferred on her such distinguished honor, hath chosen her for the display of the greatest glory, is she not worthy indeed of our highest admiration?

Let Zion rejoice in the God of her salvation, who hath so highly exalted her. Let her be assured that He who hath thus loved her, will never leave nor forsake her; that, though her deliverance is yet in progress, it shall be completed; though she is yet but partially recovered from the effects of sin, He who hath begun, will carry on the work, until the day of her complete redemption; that the time will come

when all contemplated in the covenant of grace, shall be joined to the mystical body of Christ; when the last stone shall be placed in the temple of the Lord, with shoutings of "grace, grace unto it." Then this glorious Church, rescued by infinite mercy from the pollution of sin, purified in her progress through this world of trial, and in her passage through the valley of the shadow of death, having Jesus for her Husband, His spotless righteousness for her wedding garment, the angels of God her bridal attendants, and immortal glory her dower, shall be ushered into the palace of the Almighty King, there to abide forever.

Rejoice, Oh Christians, in the glory of the Church to which you belong, and let your hearts be filled with gratitude, and your mouths with praise for the wonderful goodness of God. And you who have never yet joined yourselves to the visible Church, or who, having been born members, are yet willfully foregoing its benefits, consider the privilege from which you are voluntarily excluding yourselves. The way in which you may become interested in them you have often heard. Be entreated by the tender mercies of God, no longer to delay securing an interest in that glorious inheritance which is prepared for His people. Come, cast in your lot with the Israel of God. For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Zion.

SERMON VIII.

CALLING A MINISTER.

BY REV. D. G. PHILLIPS,

Of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South.

"Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?"

Acts 10: 20.

WE are here, my christian friends, introduced to that period of the Church's history, which, as much as any other, is of deep and thrilling interest and importance, both to the individual Christian and the Christian Church. The period when her dispensation was materially changed — when she first left the precincts of Judea and the little favored family of the Jews, and went forth among men of other nations. The period when she commenced that levelling march which has already made her strong and powerful — the pride and glory of every land, and which can only end when the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. Hitherto God had seemed to delight only in Zion's gate, and to dwell in the symbols of his presence only on Zion's hill: whilst darkness still covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.

*A sermon preached at Bethel, Burke County, Georgia, on the third Sabbath of March, 1850, when the "edict" of Presbytery in reference to his ordination was published. Published by request of the congregation.

But he had in reserve a rich blessing for the Gentile world, to make their hearts leap with joy. And at this period of his Church's history he commenced the distribution of that blessing, and so changed her original form as to adapt her, not to Palestine alone, but to the world—not to the Jews only, but to *man*. "The morning star had arisen." The seed of the woman had been born, and his heel was bruised. Moses' prophet had been raised up. Jacob's Shiloh had come. The Branch had grown up out of the stem of Jesse. The threescore and two weeks had passed. Messiah had confirmed the covenant, and in the midst of the week caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease. He had been cut off; and as he expired he exclaimed "it is finished:" for he had redeemed his eternal pledge, and man was redeemed. But he was only redeemed from the curse of the law; his mind was not yet enlightened—his nature changed and his soul converted, and sanctified, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

But the way to that grand issue was opened up, and the means provided. The Saviour had promised the sealing influence and power of the Holy Spirit, to apply to the Gentile world the benefits of his purchase when his gospel should be preached to them. And the wisdom of God only awaited the Saviour's ascension to his mediatorial throne, before that Spirit should make his advent to our world. Hence the Saviour said in his last interview with his little band of disciples, whom he had commissioned to carry his gospel to the ends of the world, "tarry at Jerusalem until ye receive the promise of the Father." But at this period of which we now speak, the Saviour had ascended to his mediatorial throne in the heavens; the Holy Spirit had come as a rushing mighty wind on the day of Pentecost; and the commission of the disciples was fully filled up and sealed—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, and lo! I am with you." The field was white unto the harvest, and they were commissioned and ready to thrust in their sickles and gather their full part of the sheaves. Still it is seen that they hesitated. They preached boldly, loud and long at Jerusalem, but they hesitated to leave Judea. They

began at Jerusalem according to command — they were strangers to fear there — but they feared to leave the boundary of their “fatherland.” They were Jews, and zealous for the law of God and the faith of their fathers; and it forbade them to come into, or have any intercourse with men of other nations. That was a positive law of God, and they well knew, could be repealed only by his direct authority. And although it had been repealed in the commission which they then held, still they understood it not, but waited for clearer light — for a more distinct repeal. Before us we have that repeal by the direct authority of the Head of the Church. Cornelius was a Roman centurion, and a stranger of the Gentiles. But in a clear vision at noonday, God said to Simon Peter, go to Cornelius, stranger though he be, and carry out before him the very spirit of the commission which you hold, and lo! I am with you there, even as in Jewry. Simon had no choice left him, but was bound to go. And thus the spread of the gospel among those who were not Jews, but Gentiles, was commenced by the immediate authority of God; and it still goes on conquering and to conquer under the same authority; and can stop only when Jesus returns to judgment. My friends, our present condition and relation, both as speaker and hearer, being so very similar to the case before us, we may learn much from a prayerful examination of this call and visit of Simon. This hour’s action is to leave a deep impress on our condition in this life, and on our eternal destiny. And whilst I tremble, the sequel will show that your responsibility is as great as my own. May God’s Spirit be our guide.

1st. There is a singular and interesting fact here of which much has been spoken and written. Cornelius, the centurion, seems to have been already a pious and devout man. He had a knowledge of the true God, and worshipped him. He prayed in his house, and seems to have maintained a strict order and discipline in his family. And as far as we may judge from the circumstances of the case, he was traveling regularly on to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Such being the case, the question naturally arises where then was the necessity for him to send for a commissioned

minister of Jesus Christ—not to inform him for the first time of the true God, for he enjoyed that knowledge—not to put him in the way of eternal life, for he was already in that way—not to explain duty, for he already knew and performed it—not to make fine speeches before him, and tickle his ear with poetry or abstract theories, but to repeat plain truths before him, with which he seems already familiar? The only rational answer which ever has been given, or *can* be given, is, that God intended by it to make him more fully acquainted with the Messiah, to put honor upon his own ordinances and organized church, and to show that she embraces in her bosom his earthly family, and is the *one* and the *only* ordinary way of life which he has opened up. Hence a man who was not an outlaw and openly wicked and profane, but so pious as to be in favor with heaven and receive the signal honor of a visiting messenger from the court of heaven, was required before he was prepared for, or could enter the saints' eternal rest, to put himself "within the pale of the visible church," and enjoy her ordinances, administered by a lawful officer in Christ's house. He was required to be a church member. There were then many hundreds in every part of Judea who could have spoken the same words spoken by Peter, and perhaps with much more eloquence and power. And we have reason to believe there were such even in Cæsarea, where Cornelius was. Why not call in some one of them? Not because they were less able than Simon, but because they had not taken the vows of office in the church—did not hold her commission—had not been set apart to her work, and could not lawfully set her seals. But Simon, however humble and unlettered in comparison with them; though a babe in science, and though of lisping, stammering tongue, was set apart to office in Christ's house; its vows were upon him; he could legally set her seal; and therefore he was the means chosen and blessed of God, when all the eloquence of Athens, or the Roman Forum, would have been but as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal.

And here at the very dawn of the Christian Church in her new form, the runner may read the fact that she is of higher than human appointment and authority—that she is divinely

organized not only in substance but in form—that she has her calls and commissions, appointments, offices and officers—that God is her only head and granter of commissions. In a word, that she is a great and well built ark, which the God of grace has set up in our world as a place of safety for dying man—that she holds in her all the ordinary means of the salvation of God—while out of her is nothing but his wrath—that she ever embraces the called of God in her bosom, and is his earthly family, not with vague, but with well-defined laws and ordinances.

2d. But notice the beautiful and perfectly Presbyterian steps which were taken. It was made the duty of the centurion to send to Joppa, and *call* to himself this means of grace. (Peter's extraordinary authority and the voice of the angel speaking to him, was the voice of Presbytery.) It came not to him unasked, unsought. At the persecution which rose about the time of Stephen, the disciples were scattered from Jerusalem and went everywhere preaching. And as the Roman laws protected the Christians at that time, no doubt some of them had taken shelter in the Roman garrison at Cæsarea. Philip the evangelist we know was there.—(Chap. 8: 40.) Some one of them, or Philip, who was there, and who had authority to preach and baptize, (chap. 8,) might have been called in. Fortuitous circumstances had thrown the means of grace all around Cornelius; but not the means appointed of God. He is instructed to send his call away to Joppa. It was not allowed by the wisdom of God that a church be built up at Cæsarea without the lawful means, and the lawful steps in the case. And on Cornelius devolved the duty of using the means in order to secure to himself the blessings of Church privileges, which he desired. The wisdom of God had made choice, and showed that among all in the land of Israel, Simon alone, was the one whom he had appointed to work at Cæsarea. But the centurion had a course of preparation to make, before, in the providence of God, he was directed to the proper personage to call. If in the exercise of his own wisdom, without preparation and direction from God, he had called in

even John, who was of a much more amiable and lovely natural disposition than Simon; or if Paul had then been in the field, and, being a greater scholar and orator than either of the others, had been called, the end might have been quite different from what it was, and eternally fatal to Cornelius. He might have proved, as congregations often do, that Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone can give increase: for without the calling and blessing of God the relation is not beneficial.

But it is said that he prayed in his house, and at the time the angel appeared to him he was fasting and praying with his family—the little congregation there. And with prayer and the proper preparation, he was directed to call in Simon, who, under God, became the means of his salvation. Not because he was the choice of the wisdom of Cornelius, but because he was the choice of God; who in answer to the prayer of Cornelius, had chosen for him. Not because Simon was more able and efficient than his compeers, for he was not, but because the far-seeing wisdom of God saw in him a laborer who was peculiarly adapted to that field. In a word, he was the appointed of God for reasons he has seen fit to conceal.

And if it be indeed true, as we have seen, that God has regularly organized the Christian Church, and has given to her a class of pastors and teachers appointed by himself, then it must follow that none are efficient and useful but those who are first called to the work; and secondly, called to the *particular place* by him. And how many congregations have mourned over their errors, because they did not fast and pray humbly as did Cornelius; but have trusted to their own wisdom to choose wisely; and thus have called in among them able laborers, it may be, like Paul or John; but who were not selected by the wisdom of God for that particular field?

Every congregation should pray earnestly, in every one of its members, for light and spiritual direction, before it makes any selection or sends any call, that it may be guided by the wisdom of God, who alone knows all its necessities and the personage who will best suit its peculiar condition. And again, before the last link has yet bound them in a pastoral

relation to any man, they should by fasting and prayer earnestly seek of God that he would form, establish, and bless the relation; or else that he would interpose by his mighty power and prevent its being at all formed. Need it be said much depends upon that relation? The history of the Church proves it to be an important relation—the history of the world shows that it is an important relation—eternity will show that it is a relation full of soul-thrilling importance. Nothing short of the salvation of the immortal souls of Cornelius and the little congregation in his house depended, not on his calling alone, or his calling a minister, but upon his calling the proper one. “He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” And if he had discovered that he had failed to make the proper and necessary preparation—or in any way had committed an error or an oversight in his calling, or if dissatisfied in any way with his action or choice, he had a fair opportunity of correcting his error and avoiding evil, when Simon stood before him. When the question was fairly put—“I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?” he could have given a quick, candid, generous, manly, and christian reply—“Sir, I have erred, I discover, in my choice, and only ask that you now return in peace to your master with my prayers for your peace.” And Simon would not have murmured at him; but would have rejoiced that he was preserved from an unlawful connection, and would have followed the indications of Providence to some other field. They were transacting business which affected souls for whom Jesus died, and false ideas of modesty should not have kept them silent at a moment when it is fair to suppose that the angels of God, and the Saviour looked on with interest. But Cornelius, as an immortal being should, had made due preparation—he had referred the matter to his God. And the relation of teacher and taught was accepted, established, and blessed of him, and that was the dawn of a glorious day for Cæsarea.

3d. It becomes us now for a moment to turn to Simon. And mark you, there was far more necessary to prepare him to go, than the simple call of Cornelius.

He, too, needed due preparation and divine direction. And

the call which was sent to him, found him fasting and *praying* upon the house-top. As was his commission, so his call had to be, from the Head of the church, without which neither the call of Cornelius, the persecutions of Jerusalem, nor the legions of Rome could ever have driven him as a teacher to Cæsarea. But his call came from Heaven, saying, "go with them nothing doubting for I have sent them," and that prepared him for the journey, whatever its danger or end. He knew that by it he laid himself liable to the law of the Jews. He had nought to cling to but the power of his God, and cast himself loose upon the broad ocean of adventure. But it was not for him to stop and ponder the consequences and inquire what Cornelius, the Jews, or the world, might think or say; or what amount of labour and peril he might encounter, or whether he would be popular or not, or whether he should encounter those who should oppose and ridicule his doctrines. These were not points to be settled by him. His master said "go, nothing doubting," and he had no choice left him. When he followed the Saviour as a peculiar disciple, or an apostle, he by that act pledged himself beyond the liberty or power of retraction. And now a crisis had come, and there was no alternative left, but to forsake his post or obey. *He dared not to refuse.* And as it was then, so is it yet. True, the Apostles have no successors in the full proper sense of the word, and the call of God is not now audible. He sends forth no angel's voice saying, "go." But it is because he has completely organized his Church in her new form, and given her his word with precedents and all necessary directions and explanations. And when in obedience to that word, Presbytery—God's lawfully constituted court—has set apart an individual to the work of the Ministry, that Presbytery becomes to him what the speaking angel was to Simon. He is bound—he is *pledged* to regard it as his master and director under God. And when, in the well and clearly defined circumstances of the case, a congregation have sent a call, and it comes to him with the clear approbation and signature of the Presbytery (before any other call has reached him), the angel has spoken—he is bound to regard it as a call of God, and to act accordingly. He may

not set up his own judgment in the case as a standard, and inquire what the consequences may be—he may not ask how great is the work, or how dangerous the position; or in any way confer with flesh and blood. If so, Paul had never visited Macedonia, or Simon Cesarea, or Luther Worms. If so, this grove had never rung with the living voices of Bothwell and Lowery, who sleep their last sleep in its shade, having fallen like soldiers at their post, crying “men and brethren unto you is the word of this salvation sent.” And it is an error for any congregation to suppose that a call from them will, or can be accepted by a man who has received one before their’s came to hand. For if he believe the Bible origin of Presbyterial church government, he will accept, he *should* accept, the first one which comes to him with the clear approbation of the Presbytery, as a clear and distinct call of the providence of God, and obey it however trying to the flesh. For in that case his call is just as clear as his credentials, from the same source, and through the same channel. His field is opened and his work placed before him by the Head of the Church, through the court which he has appointed. He is not his own. Like Simon, he can only ask, is it a clear call of God? And is it a call to perform the work which I am pledged to perform? So was it with him. So is it with all. His call was clear, and he was solemnly bound to obey it, and go. Thus it is seen that when he appeared on the ground at Cæsarea he was ready for the inquiry which he raised—“I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?” If it were anything else than the great work to which he had been appointed by the Head of the Church—the furtherance and prosperity of the Redeemer’s Kingdom, it concerned him not; he had nothing to do with it; he was ready to return. But if it were in his measure, with all the ability God had given him, to further the Gospel of Christ, keeping as near as he could to the one great rallying point of the Gospel—“Christ crucified for sins,” and salvation by grace alone, then was he there to answer to their call with all the powers of his mind and body; and if necessary with his blood. And, let us be particular to catch and retain this idea—he had been already informed

by the messengers — the commissioners — in his call, of the general design of his visit and their calling him. He was not, as we might at first suppose, ignorant, that it was to dispense the word and sealing ordinances of the Church of Christ, in which he held office. But on his arrival there, before he commenced any part of his work, he publicly asks the question — “For what intent have ye sent for me?” in order that a fair, clear, and distinct understanding might be had between them. That they might inform him what they expected and wished; and that they might know what was the work to which he felt himself called, and the only course which he could, or would pursue. He wished the thing to be done understandingly by all concerned. And we may suppose an answer for them. If they had answered by telling him that the object in sending for him, was to confer with him concerning secular interests, the best way of gaining wealth and worldly substance, he had doubtless replied “Domestic economy is not a science of the Gospel, and I have never promised to teach it, it concerns me not. A Pagan can teach it, send therefore to Rome, whilst I return to Joppa.”

If they had told him their object was to see if, in some way, he could not soften down the unpleasant truths of the Bible, and point out some way more pleasing to the natural heart of man than the humbling terms of the Gospel, in which he might secure a title to eternal life; he had doubtless left them with the declaration “we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.” — “And there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” If they had told him that he would be expected to proclaim such doctrines and only such as were pleasing to all — such as do not condemn the practices of any — such as make it consistent for men habitually and openly to violate the laws of God, and yet retain membership in his house — such as in time past turned the temple of God at Jerusalem, in the emphatic language of the Saviour, into a den of thieves, he had doubtless replied, “Christ sent me not to make a Gospel,

but to publish his, as it is, in all its fullness and purity. And I am pledged and bound to that work, and will perform it wherever I go, on whomsoever it may bear hard, and whatever practice it may condemn." If they had told him that he would be expected to take an active part in every subject which excited the public attention, and to enter with strong, warm, and angry feelings into every difference of opinion around him, whether in church or state or society, and decide between all who differed, declaring both parties in every case to be right and praiseworthy, he had, no doubt, replied, I may not debate about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. For I am set for the defence of the Gospel in its purity, 't is all my aim—all my ambition—my solemn resolve. If they had told him that he would be expected to perform any act or preach any doctrine contrary to the practices of christianity and the doctrines he had received from Jesus Christ, he had, no doubt, replied, I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified, 't is the theme of my preaching—the hope of my heart—the life of my soul—and the center of my practice. It is my all in all. If they had told him that he was to be deterred by the fear of the face of any man from declaring the whole council of God in its plain truth, he had doubtless replied, what to me is mortal man whose breath is in his nostrils? Whether I ought to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye. For I cannot but speak the things which I have heard, let enmity or friendship, life or death, be the result.

If they had told him that the love, favors, or affection of any one, however much he might esteem them, was to be a thing powerful enough to lead him to known error, or to deter him from the whole of known duty, he would have replied, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"—"If any man love father or mother more than me he is not worthy of me, and cannot be my disciple." If they had told him that there were those around them of their friends who would not believe his peculiar doctrines, he must not, therefore, insist plainly upon their truth and importance, lest some might take exceptions, and scoff, or offer debate,

he had doubtless replied, I came not here to seek controversy, nor to cower, and quail, and shrink abashed before it. I ask it not—I court it not—I wish it not—I *fear* it not, from whatever source it may arise. I stand on the “platform” of the Bible, from which I will be neither led nor driven by mortal man. For well did he know that not only the souls of others, but his own immortal soul, was at stake. He well knew the declaration of the Prophet, “If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned, if the sword come and take any one from among the people, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand. Nevertheless if he warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto them, therefore, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me.” Such was Simon’s condition, and such we may suppose his determination when he raised this inquiry. But haply they were prepared for it, and at once entered into the spirit of his question. They gave him no such answer as we have supposed. But as soon as he said, “I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?”—they were ready, and rehearsed the whole matter from the beginning, expounding it to him in order. They said they had been divinely directed—*after praying and fasting*—not to send for *some one*, but to send for *Simon*, “who when he is come shall speak unto thee.” And they add, “now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” They do not specify what he shall speak, or how he shall speak, but simply, “he shall speak unto thee.” And notice again what we think their answer implied. It was as much as if they had said they called him there in order that, with the Word and Spirit of God, and his own conscience, as his only guides, free and untrammelled, constrained or restrained by no man, he might “be instant in season and out of season to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine,”—that he might boldly speak the things which become sound doctrine,

teaching publicly and from house to house — that he might study to divide the word of truth aright to each, and point the eye of all to Israel's exalted king, as the way, the truth, and the life — that he might handle wisely, cautiously, and prudently the keys of the Redeemer's Kingdom, neither presumptuously widening or narrowing the entrance way to eternal life, which had been opened up and consecrated by the blood of the chosen of God — that he might timely, prudently, firmly and gently use all the power and skill, of which God had made him master, to convince the gainsayer of the truth, to confirm the wavering in their faith, to present the plain truth of God to the careless, to weep with those that wept, to cheer the drooping soul with the well-studied, well-arranged and powerfully-cheering and consoling doctrines of the Gospel of the Son of God; to tread softly, as a dying man, between the people and that vast eternal ocean on whose verge they stand, and which they are all to pass so soon. And as the departing spirit of the dying saint lingers for its last moment on the shore of time, before it takes its flight — its mystic flight, to worlds by it untried — to strengthen it, cheer it, and wing it for a glorious flight to realms of eternal light and love; to stand as the mouth of God to the people, and reason rightly of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come; to gather softly, gently and kindly, with a father's yearning heart, the tender lambs of the fold of Jesus Christ, and fix upon them his mark — the seal of his eternal covenant, and consecrate before them for their use the emblems of his dying love, rising power, and returning glory; and thus lead them by the still waters in the green pastures of his grace, until they grow and become meet for the inheritance in light; to stand up with what of power God had given him between them and every prowling wolf; whether in native or in sheep's clothing; and with the sword of the Spirit skillfully wielded, to clear out a plain highway for their safe passage through the snares and temptations and trials of the world; so to live, to act, and speak, that he might be a living epistle, known and read of all men, that his language might describe, and his life point out clearly the

way leading up to the eternal rest of God. And though wars, famine and pestilence, sickness, sorrow and death reign around him, though enemies grow strong, and scowl, and oppose; though friends grow cold and forsake and leave him to stand alone; though kingdoms and empires rack and fall, and the world seem to sink in final ruin around him; to stand firmly and fearlessly at his post crying, "fear not little flock for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," until his physical nature sinks exhausted beneath its heavy load, and seeks the long rest and calm repose of the grave among them.

This, and not the former supposition, is what we think their answer to him implied — the work to which they understood he was set apart and pledged, and which is still binding upon the minister of Jesus Christ. And this they seemed to say was the work to which they had called Simon. And at once he gave a silent assent.—"This, and not the former is the work to which I am pledged, and bound in strength of God the Lord to perform." To ask that was not their privilege alone — but their duty. And to comply was his. And however difficult and trying to the flesh such compliance might be; and however weak, and unable Simon might feel himself to be to yield a full compliance with these high, but just requisitions; yet an effort to comply was his solemn duty, from which he might not—he could not, escape without proving traitorous to the high trust which had been reposed in him; recreant to the charge committed to him; and an enemy to God and to his own soul. For it was not at the moment when he went to Cæsarea that he pledged himself to their work; but when he first took upon himself an office in the house of Christ. And Cæsarea was only the little place where God called him to do a work which others of his brethren were doing at other places, and which he would have been bound to perform at some other place.

4th. But notice here, my friends, there seems to have been a great error in the minds of Cornelius and others with respect to the character of Simon, and the extent of his power and authority. They seem to have thought it all sufficient when

they secured his presence among them, and they acted as though they considered him omnipotent—abundantly able to do for them all they needed done. They evinced such a feeling. For as he was entering in, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him. There was not too much friendship, but a wrong kind, evinced. And that may possibly have helped to raise in his mind his question—"I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?" He saw at once they had wrong ideas of him and his office. They looked rather to him than to God for some brilliant effect. And at once he disabuses their minds of the error and false idea, in the remark, "stand up, I also am a man." As much as to say, there is nothing here but a weak body of sin and death like your own; of myself I have neither might or power. And if I had, "It is not by might nor by power, but my Spirit saith the Lord." The utmost of his might and power was in the use of the means of God's appointment. And your speaker could find it as perfectly easy to raise to life the dead bodies of your friends in yon graveyard, as for Simon Peter, or any dead or living minister of Christ, to convert and sanctify one soul. No! my friends, man cannot convert souls and build up churches—"It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

He wished them, therefore, to be fully aware that he came not to them as their Saviour, to convert and save their souls; but merely as their servant for Jesus' sake. For it was not yet claimed for "St. Peter" or his successor in office, that they had power on earth to cancel the guilt of sin; to save souls; or for a pittance of shining dust to rescue them from purgatorial torments. That claim was reserved for the "improvement" of more modern times, and the addled Roman brain. And here is at least one instance, where Peter actually refused that worship and homage which have since been claimed by some who say they are his successors in office. He assures them that he came there simply to use the means committed to him for the furtherance of their spiritual interests; as a helper of their faith, leaving the rest with them and their God. And immediately he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection, leaving them to infer that that was the

means committed to his care and dispensation—that that was the means he intended to use with all his skill—that that was the means which God had ordained and blessed to the salvation of others. And having used faithfully and perseveringly as he could that means, with a firm reliance upon the sealing Spirit and grace of God, he also leaves them to infer, that if souls are not converted, the faithful established, and the church built up and adorned with lively stones; it is because he has not enjoyed the coöperation, and moving power of their prayers as he should have done. And therefore although the blood of souls has been shed; yet it was not upon his, but upon their hands, and of them and not him it would be required. Because they, and not he, had failed to pray that Jerusalem might have peace and felicity. They, and not he, had neglected the powerful means of prayer. They, and not he, had eclipsed forever those who should have been for stars in his crown of rejoicing. And if they expected to pursue such a course, well might he inquire—“I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?” You could take that course without any minister. And even Paul may plant and Apollos water, yet none but God can give the increase. And he often gives in answer to prayer by the people. And it is not only the interest, but the solemn and imperative duty of the congregation to give efficiency to the public ministry of the church, by their prayers. And one apostle gives an instance where the elders—not only ruling elders—but the *old men* (οἱ πρεσβύτεροι) of the church are to engage as well as the public teacher in prayers.—“Is any sick among you let him call for the elders—the old men,—of the church and let *them* pray over him.” Thus Simon showed Cornelius that, although he was ready as far as able to do his duty as a man, and to spend and be spent in the proper work of his office; yet it was only as a man—a weak and sinful man—altogether unable to give any fruit or effect to his labor. And not to him, but to God, they were to look for those times of refreshing which come forth from his presence—to Him above they were to raise the cry, “Lord wilt thou not

revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?"—"O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy."

5. But notice again the singular and emphatic answer of Cornelius to Simon's inquiry. "*Now are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*" When he appeared on the ground they were there, ready and waiting to hear what God the Lord would say. When he lets them know that it is not his to give any radical effect to his work, but only to use the means, they declared themselves ready to attend to the means, and bring themselves in the proper manner within the reach of their influence. They were ready not only to enjoy and improve the means, but to hold up his hands and encourage him by their presence and respectful attention, to labor for them. He had not to wander up and down Cæsarea to search out and invite hearers, or hawk his message of grace through their streets to gain their attention to it. They had settled the preliminaries, and a congregation was formed and assembled. They seem to have talked about it among themselves—friend with friend—it was uppermost in their thoughts; and their hearts and minds were open and ready to hear and weigh all that was said. Then the falling word was as good seed cast into rich and well prepared soil. In such a case fruit may be expected. They did not call on him for learning and philosophy; for new theories and eloquence; for beauty of arrangement and fineness of style; for tropes and new figures and measured numbers; but they wanted to hear "all things that are commanded him of God." They wanted to see the cross, and hear of "Christ crucified." They wanted to hear the pure life-giving, and soul-cheering doctrine of salvation by grace, distilling like rain on mown grass, or showers that water the earth. To such an audience it is not a cheerless task, but a high privilege for the minister of Christ to "come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." And Peter's opening address, in such circumstances, is rich with meaning to us. He appeals directly to the law and the testimony.—"The

word of God" is the first accent from his lips to their ears. His first and last appeal is to *the Bible*, as a history of Jesus Christ, as Lord of all. And as he confined himself to it as the polar star of his direction, and as the one theme of his discourse, his own soul expanded with delight as the glowing, glorious theme came rushing upon his vision. And with clearness he points out to them Jesus Christ in his eternal appointment, and his covenant of old—in his birth, life, works, obedience, sufferings, and death—in his resurrection, ascension, and government—in his glorious return and judgment of the world—in his offices as Redeemer and Saviour—and in his now waiting to seal, bless and save men, and exalt them to his eternal rest. And whilst he preached Christ crucified, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, the subject did not grow stale and insipid; but his own soul was watered and nourished. And the mighty Spirit of God was there, and made that word as a fire and a hammer. Souls were converted, the company of the faithful was increased, and their graces invigorated, God was honored and glorified, and all was well.

And now my friends, we have seen what was the duty of the congregation at Cæsarea, and how they performed their duty—what was the duty of Simon whom they called in to them, and how he performed his duty. We have not tried to conceal the fact that he was an apostle, and a peculiar one, and as such, has now no successor. Nor have we tried to conceal the fact that we were trying to draw a parallel between this whole history, and our present condition, and show *our* duty from a view of *theirs*. It was not hard to do. We have not been guilty of handling the word of life deceitfully; or wresting it, and pressing it into our present service.

For although both they and he were peculiar in character, and in situation; enjoying peculiar gifts and authority, as the Church was then being reorganized, and they the agents; yet except that peculiarity, we do, (and justly,) claim to be their lawful and legitimate descendents in the Church of Christ, both as officers and people. In the form, at least,

which Christ has appointed, you have sent for me. I heard your commissioners in Presbytery, and have seen your call to "take charge of your souls." Now we are face to face. Allow me then in this great congregation to take up the language of Simon, and say—"Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for; I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?" If it be in my humble manner to endeavor to perform the duties which we have sketched as binding on the Christian minister, here am I to answer to that call, with what ability God has given me, until himself dissolve the relation by calling us to rest from our labors here, and meet again in the Church triumphant. But if the intent be anything else than to follow the course here laid down; in the language of Abraham's servant I beg, "Send me away, that I may go to my master." The course here sketched is the one I am solemnly pledged to pursue. *I will try to pursue none other.* If it be pleasing to you; such the man you wish; and such the work you wish him to perform; let our united prayers ascend to the Head of the Church, that he would bless and establish our relation; that as one after another of us falls into the grave, the survivors may have some good assurance that we shall all meet again, as a family circle, around the throne of God.

But if this course will not be pleasing to you; if you feel that you have erred even slightly in your call; then, I pray you, obey the summons of Presbytery, which her officer will now publish in your hearing; attend her meeting; come up like candid, christian men transacting business for God and for eternity; and tell them plainly that you have erred in your choice, and wish to make another selection. I shall not murmur. But as I travel to some different field, my prayer shall still be that *this part* of Jerusalem may have peace and felicity; that they who love her, and her peace, may have still prosperity—and that your children's children may worship here with gladness, and rightly call this place "*Bethel.*"

Amen.

SERMON IX.

THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT.

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“The love of the Spirit.”—*Rom. 15: 30.*

THE Bible not only reveals a Trinity, but teaches that this Triune God is LOVE. This love is predicated of each Person in the Godhead, severally, in His peculiar relations and work in the great plan of human redemption. It is predicated of the Father, as the Representative of the Godhead, maintaining its claims, prerogatives and honor, and originating all its purposes and operations;—“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Herein was love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Here, in all these passages, that free, sovereign, and unbought love, which originated the whole plan of mercy and provided and sent a Saviour into the world, is attributed to God in the person of the Father.

This love is also predicated of God the Son, and is displayed in His self-denying, self-sacrificing, obedience and death, which He rendered in accordance with the plan of mercy and in

fulfillment of the Father's will:—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." "He loved me," saith Paul, "and gave himself for me." And His love will be the grateful burden of the everlasting song of the redeemed;—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever; amen."

The love of God the Father in giving His Son, and the love of the Only Begotten in giving Himself, are familiar themes in every christian pulpit; but, less frequently do we hear, and less do we think, of *the love of the Spirit*. Yet it is often brought into view in the Scriptures. David was no stranger to it, when he prayed, "Uphold me with thy *free* [princely, liberal] spirit;"—and again, "Thy Spirit is *good*; lead me to the land of uprightness." Nor was Isaiah, who thus deploras the ungrateful obstinacy of Israel, "But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit." Nor Nehemiah, who recounting God's manifold mercies to his people, made this special acknowledgment: "Thou gavest also thy *good* spirit to instruct them."

The apostle in the text brings the love of the Spirit distinctly into view, and makes it the ground of a most tender and touching appeal;—"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and *for the love of the Spirit*, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." Now "the love of the Spirit" means much more than that mutual christian love which is a fruit of the Spirit. This is a mere effect of what is properly expressed by this phrase, which is that love which the Holy Spirit bears to chosen ransomed sinners, as He executes *His* part in accomplishing their salvation. The love of the Spirit is His tender compassion, evinced by His compassionate labors, for the salvation of sinful men. Be not startled, that I use the word *labors* to designate the operations of the Spirit; it is authorized by God's own declaration, "My Spirit shall not always *strive*

with man." There is no toil or fatigue with God, but there is a patient and persevering forth-putting of His gracious power; and this is peculiarly the work of the Spirit—a work which He executes in love.

My Friends, I would have you not only to consider the love of the Father and the love of the Son, but to lay to heart that there is another Person in the adorable Godhead, to whose love you are under the strongest obligations,—**THE HOLY SPIRIT**. He is united with the Father and the Son in the great scheme of mercy to our guilty race:—The Father purposes, the Son procures, and He applies—The Father works through the Son by Him;—the Son by Him from the Father; and He from the Father and the Son. His office is one emphatically of love; His official name is the **COMFORTER**. Our Saviour thus describes Him, "The Comforter whom the Father will send in my name,"—"the Comforter, whom I will send unto you from the Father." We are baptized in His name, as well as in that of the Father and of the Son, and if the blessing of a covenant-God rest upon us, it is not only "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God," but "the *communion* of the Holy Ghost." His office brings Him into more immediate connection and communication with us; in which, with infinite tenderness and loving-kindness, He enriches us with all the treasures of the Saviour's grace and the Father's love.

The love of the Father was manifested by the gift of His Son, and the love of the Son by the sacrifice of Himself: in like manner, the love of the Spirit is manifested by his gracious agency in our behalf. And in considering the love of the Spirit, let us endeavor to trace his agency,

I. In the general provisions of mercy for the redemption and salvation of fallen man: and

II. In His influences on the individual man.

I. THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT IS MANIFEST FROM HIS AGENCY IN THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF MERCY, MADE FOR OUR REDEMPTION AND SALVATION.

1. In the eternal counsel of peace He was present, and by no means an uninterested witness. Though the covenant of grace was between the Father and the Son as the proper parties to it, yet it contemplated a work to be performed by the Spirit, which was in most delightful accordance with His benevolent mind. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." This *drawing* is the peculiar work of the Spirit. His agency in it was contemplated in the covenant of grace, and it is a work which he performs under the promptings of an everlasting love.

2. The whole Old Testament revelation, with all that it predicted, or foreshadowed, or otherwise taught, of Christ, was given by the Spirit; and His agency was employed in all the arrangements that were made, and in all the preparatory work that was carried on during the former dispensation, for the appointed manifestation of the Son of God. All Scripture was given by His inspiration; every new development of the plan of salvation was made by him; prophets spake as He moved them to speak; under His influence upon them as the Spirit of Christ, they foretold far more than they comprehended of the sufferings and subsequent glory of the future Redeemer. He revealed to Moses that law which fenced in the Israelitish church from the corruptions of the Gentile world, gave him that "pattern in the mount" which was the shadow of good things to come, and even inspired Bezaleel and Aholiab with wisdom to execute the design. He dictated to David the temple service, and inspired him to be the sweet Psalmist of Israel; filled Solomon with all his wisdom; and testified in the latter, as well as in the former prophets. Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel and the prophets, David and his pious successors, Elijah and other reformers, Daniel, and even Cyrus, and all who were instrumental in delivering, restoring, preserving, reforming and guiding the church, and preparing the way for the manifestation of the promised Messiah, were raised up and endowed by Him for the special work which they were called to do.

From the fall of man to the coming of Christ, He, with a love commensurate with that which planned, and with that which undertook, our redemption, kept up a constant and untiring agency, the design of which was to have all things in readiness for that great manifestation of redeeming love which was to be made in the fullness of time. During this whole time and in this whole agency, the salvation of the world and the successful accomplishment of the plan of mercy, lay near His heart. His love was one with that of the Father and the Son; and with the energy of an infinite benevolence did He execute His part in carrying on the great design,—in forwarding this stupendous enterprise of mercy.

3. And when the fullness of time at length arrived, He had a great work to do, which He hastened to accomplish;—it was, to prepare a body for the Redeemer, to furnish it with a rational soul befitting the distinguished office and stupendous work of Mediator between God and men, to endow His whole humanity for, and sustain it under, the mighty labors of His great ministry. The man Christ Jesus was to speak as man never spake; to work miracles such as had never been seen in Israel—to open the eyes of the blind and unstop the ears of the deaf, to make the lame man leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb sing, to cleanse lepers, to cast out devils, to heal all manner of disease and sickness among the people, to raise the dead; he was to preach the gospel to the poor; to present a perfect example of truth, piety and virtue, in the midst of surrounding wickedness and despite the most violent onsets of temptation and the fiercest rage of opposition from both earth and hell; and, above all, to bear the infinite wrath of the Almighty, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness. For all this he needed no ordinary endowments, and the Holy Spirit furnished and sustained him with all the immeasurable fullness of His gifts. When the Saviour was to be brought into the world, the Holy Ghost came on the favored virgin and the power of the Highest overshadowed her, and the holy thing born of her was called the Son of God. And under the fostering influence of the

same Spirit, the child Jesus grew and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. As he approached the period of his public ministry, this Spirit was given not by measure unto him. The heavens opening, the Holy Ghost descended as a dove and abode upon him, while the Father with an audible voice from heaven owned him as His Beloved Son; and thence forward, the Spirit of the Lord rested upon him as the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and made him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. It was the Spirit, that anointed him to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. In all his movements the Saviour was actuated by the Spirit; he entered on his ministry "full of the Holy Ghost," went forth "led by the Spirit," returned "in the power of the Spirit," and, "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil."

4. And when the Saviour had finished his personal ministry and completed his sacrifice, there was another great and indispensable work for the Spirit to do—He who died for our offences must be raised again for our justification. Having obtained eternal redemption for us by his own blood, he must with that blood enter into the holy place in heaven, and appear as our everliving and all-prevalent Intercessor, and must take his seat, as a Priest on his throne, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, till his enemies become his footstool. He, who died to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light, must live again and take possession of the keys of Hell and Death. He who died under the curse of the broken law, must, now that the law is magnified and made honorable, be crowned with glory and honor, in order that men may be blessed in Him, and that all nations may call Him Blessed. The Man of sorrows must come up from that grave which completed his humiliation, and be exalted to the throne of the

universe, not only that his character may be vindicated from all the reproaches cast upon it, but that Heaven may give its seal of acceptance to his propitiatory work, and that he may effectually save his redeemed, and, in reward of his sufferings, receive the homage of every knee and every tongue.

Now, while this resurrection and exaltation of Jesus is sometimes ascribed to the Father, and sometimes to the Son Himself, yet it is also ascribed to the Spirit. The will and power of the Father to raise and exalt the accepted Surety, and the right and power of the Surety to rise from the dead, and mount his mediatorial throne, are carried into execution officially by the energy and efficiency of the Holy Spirit. Christ was "quicken'd by the Spirit;" and the apostle says, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you;"—from which it is plain, that, while Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, it was yet *by His Spirit that dwelt in him*. And the apostle speaks of it as a stupendous display of power;—he calls it "the working of His mighty power." The curse had prevailed with fearful energy; the body of the incarnate Son of God, the chosen Redeemer of men, lay a mangled and lifeless corpse; the hopes of the world seemed to be entombed in that grave; Death and Hell seemed to have triumphed, to have established their reign, and to have fastened on our world their adamant chains of darkness forever. But, no! Justice has been fully satisfied—God will raise His Son—He who has laid down His life, has power to take it again;—Death shall be robbed of his sting, and the Grave of his victory, and Hell of its triumph;—an opposing universe can hold that buried One under the bands of death no longer;—for the Holy Spirit, the agent to execute the Father's will, and enforce the Redeemer's claims, is entrusted with his resurrection; and, with infinite love to our ruined race, does He put forth the energy of His mighty power upon the body of Jesus Christ, in consequence of which he is raised from the dead, and set at God's own right hand

in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power; and constituted Head over all things to his Church. By this mighty and triumphant act of love performed by the Spirit, the hope of immortality dawns upon our doomed world: "We are begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us."

5. After the Redeemer's resurrection and ascension, a grand theatre is opened to the Spirit for the exercise of His love. Now is introduced that latter day — that gospel age — which is emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit. Now He comes as the great promise from the Father, so long and so oft predicted by the prophets, and is to operate with a fullness and power before unexampled. In the application of the redemption which has now been wrought out, He is to display Himself in the benign office of *Comforter*, in which His presence, as our Saviour intimates, is more desirable than His own personal presence could be. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when he is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." He acts as the agent of Him whose love exceeds all breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and passeth knowledge; — as His agent in applying the benefits of his finished redemption. Of His work in this capacity, I shall notice the following particulars:

First; By His influence the apostles and other primitive teachers of Christianity were furnished with all their peculiar endowments and miraculous gifts. The religion was new,

and had to encounter a powerful and combined opposition; it needed the evidence of many infallible and convincing proofs, and its propagators needed diversified and superhuman endowments. These the Holy Spirit most graciously and abundantly bestowed. Nothing was lacking in these respects, that could subserve the success of the Gospel, and the salvation of the ransomed Church. 1 Cor. 12: 4-11. Eph. 4: 7, 11, 12. Heb. 2: 4. Rom. 15: 19.

Second; As the Old Testament Scriptures had been given by His inspiration, so now He qualified evangelists and apostles to write the books of the New Testament, in which the things of God are set forth clearly and with infallible truth, and the whole plan of salvation is fully unfolded. Formerly, He had moved prophets and holy men to give such intimations of the coming Saviour, as were adapted to the existing state of the Church; but now, He receives of the fullness of a manifested and glorified Saviour, and shows us the unsearchable riches of God's mercy and grace, as if under the noonday splendor of the Sun of righteousness. "God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Third; His agency has been constantly employed in raising up, qualifying, directing, locating, and aiding the Gospel ministry. It was thus employed in apostolic times. In the Acts of the Apostles we read, that "as the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them;" and that "they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." Again, that the movements of Paul and his companions in the ministry were controlled by the Spirit, who forbade them to preach in different parts of Asia, where they were inclined to tarry, and shut them up, and induced them to cross the Hellespont and preach the gospel in Europe, an event to which the whole western world is most deeply indebted. Again, the apostle tells the elders of the church of Ephesus, that it was the Holy Ghost that had made them overseers of the church in

that place. This agency the Spirit has, with unwearied attention to the interests of Christianity, and the salvation of sinful men, kept up ever since, wherever Christ has been preached, or His Church obtained a footing. Ministers, elders, and deacons—eloquent preachers—able expositors and defenders of the truth—reformers, and men eminent for piety, wisdom, and Christian influence—have all, in all ages and countries, received their respective gifts from the Spirit, have been moved to their work by Him, and He has led them into their particular fields of labor, and allotted their influence. He raised up a Luther, a Calvin, a Knox. He endowed a Chalmers, a Mason, a Hall. He moved a Schwartz, and a Martyn. He animates every devoted minister, and every worthy member of the consecrated missionary host; and He will, until Jesus shall have fully spoken peace to the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Fourth; He is the author of all those subjective influences, by which the gospel becomes the power of God unto salvation. This special influence is denied by not a few; but, what will men, in their arrogance, not deny? The apostle felt that he planted, and that Apollos watered in vain, without the special influence of the Spirit. To God alone did he ascribe the increase. The natural man, he tells us, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;—the Holy Spirit must first make him a spiritual man, and give him the power of discerning spiritually; and at any time that the word comes in more than word only.—at any time that it comes “in power and in assurance;”—it is “by the Holy Ghost.”

II. Having attempted to trace the benevolent agency of the Spirit in the general provisions of Mercy for our redemption and salvation, let us endeavor to trace briefly His **GRACIOUS INFLUENCES ON THE INDIVIDUAL MAN—on ourselves.** For what, over and above all that He has done in providing the redemption of Jesus Christ, and in furnishing the means of grace—for what, over and above all this, are you and I

personally indebted to the love of the Holy Spirit? What are those subjective influences just referred to in the previous head of our discourse? From what has been said, it follows, that we are indebted to the kind agency of the Spirit, for the privilege of living in a gospel land, and under Christian influences, for the enjoyment of Bibles, and Sabbaths, and sanctuary ordinances; and, if the Gospel messenger has found his way to us, he has been directed to us by the Holy Spirit, and that with a benevolent regard to our moral condition: but more, if we have derived any real advantage from all these privileges, we are indebted for it all to the special grace of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is the author of all saving conviction and sound conversion. "He shall convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Men may get a speculative knowledge of religion by reading and hearing the word; but, without the special influences of the Spirit carrying the truth home with His own demonstration and power to the conscience and heart, they will obtain no realizing sense of the teachings of either law or gospel. The most persuasive eloquence will fall upon the ear powerless as infancy, till the Spirit gives it efficacy. You may be startled and horrified, or pleased and captivated; you may be held spell-bound; you may be aroused to make and entertain resolutions to amend; you may break off bad habits, and begin duties;—but you can never be truly converted, and made to feel your guilt and woful condition as a sinner; you can have no true sense of your sin and misery, nor of your need of a Saviour, nor of the suitableness, grace, and sufficiency of Christ; much less can you put forth one act, or cast one look, of faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, or feel one pang of generous sorrow for sin or one emotion of true love to God, or take one step in the way of loyal and affectionate obedience to Him as your God and Father, till you are renewed by the Holy Ghost. You are by nature dead in sin; and if there is spiritual life in you, or the power of spiritual action, it is because you have been quickened by the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Your understanding is darkened, and you are alienated from

the life of God, through the ignorance that is in you, because of the blindness of your heart; and if light has broken in, it is owing to this Spirit as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. You are proud and self-righteous until you obtain that faith, which is of the operation of God and the fruit of the Spirit. Your carnal mind is enmity against God and not subject to His law, and never will submit in love, till the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you.

Behold, then, here the love of the Spirit! He not only sends you the Gospel and the means of grace, but He comes along with them to you, even to you. He finds you blind, alienated from God, dead in sin, and wholly corrupt. Loathing your pollution, as He does, He still does not abandon you in disgust, but enters into you as the Spirit of life, and that, often, after long and bitter resistance on your part, and violent efforts to quench His benevolence and grieve Him away;—He enters in, quickens your dead soul, fills your understanding with light and your heart with love, makes you a willing subject of grace, leads you to Christ and enriches you with His merits, so that you obtain forgiveness and peace with God, are brought into His family, and made an heir according to the hope of eternal life.

2. But the love of the Spirit is further displayed in what He continues to do for us after our conversion. Having begun in us a good work, He carries it on till it is perfected. He takes up his abode in us, and makes our bodies his temples; and condescends to sustain to us various relations of grace. He continues to be our *Illuminator*;—still taking the things which are Christ's and showing them to us; removing our ignorance, correcting our errors, overcoming our prejudices, and turning our speculative views into living realizations of truth. He bears with our dullness and waywardness, and leaves us not, till we come, in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

He dwells in us also as our *Sanctifier*. By His influence

accompanying the truth, we grow not only in knowledge, but in grace and holiness; we increase in faith, love, and obedience; our principles are confirmed; holy habits are formed; the power of sin is weakened, the force of temptation and the influence of the world more easily and successfully resisted; our inner man is renewed day by day; we become adorned with the graces and enriched with the fruits of the Spirit; and amidst the trials and afflictions which beset us, are cheered and sustained by the brightening prospects and the assured hope of heaven. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and through the Spirit we do mortify the deeds of the body. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; and we are strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. We live in the Spirit, and we walk in the Spirit; and love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,—all that assimilates us to God, and fits us for heaven,—is the fruit of the Spirit. It is He, who dwelling in us as the God of peace, purity, and love, searches out the hidden depths of our depravity, and sanctifies us wholly, and preserves our whole soul, body, and spirit, till they are at last presented blameless in the day of Jesus Christ. How precious is this work of the Spirit! how important our sanctification! It is the very end for which the Saviour died;—He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. This is the will of God, even our sanctification. Sin debases and renders us wretched; its end—its wages—is death. Holiness exalts and renders blessed. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. We can never attain the blessedness of heaven, without its purity. And, then, with what long suffering does the Spirit ply this work! What corruptions, what infirmities, what backslidings, what perverseness and obstinacy, what waywardness and negligence is He called to bear with? How often when we rebel and vex Him, might He turn against us and become our enemy, and give us over to our own ways;

when, notwithstanding, He perseveres, and carries on His good work in us till the day of Jesus Christ.

He is also *the Spirit of adoption*; working in us a temper and disposition of mind, such as becomes the children of God, producing in us a spirit of filial love and confidence, fashioning us to be obedient children, giving us a holy boldness and familiarity in our access to God as our Father, assuring us of His care and pity, leading us to delight and rejoice in His presence, and enabling us, in some measure, to anticipate that blessed state, when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Yes, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." What an idea! The Holy Spirit, then, serves as a kind conductor to lead the children of God to glory. Again, "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;" and doing this, He gives us "Pisgah views" of our celestial inheritance; for, "if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." While we suffer with Christ, this blessed Comforter assures us, that we shall also reign with Him; and enables us to realize, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us; and under his inspiriting power, the martyr-spirit hears a voice as if proceeding from the Throne, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Thus the Holy Spirit is the "first fruits" of our eternal harvest, and the "earnest" and "seal" of our heavenly inheritance; and becomes the author of peace, and hope, and joy in the hearts of the children of God—of a peace that passeth all understanding, a hope that maketh not ashamed, and a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Once more, the Spirit displays His love by His agency in *leading us to the throne of grace*. While our access to the Father is only through the merit and intercession of Christ, it is also only by the influence of the Spirit. "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." The

Holy Spirit is at once the Spirit of supplication and of grace. He inspires the filial cry, "Abba, Father." He causes us to feel our wants, temptations, and woes, excites in us spiritual desires, enables us to plead the promises, to use importunity, and to watch unto prayer. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." By His gracious aid, when temptations beset, and troubles surround, and dangers press—when floods draw near and threaten to overflow—when the heart is overwhelmed and in perplexity;—we are enabled to look unto the Rock that is higher than we, to trust in the Lord and not be afraid, to cast our cares and our burdens upon Him, to make our requests known to Him; and doing so, to find that perfect peace, which passeth all understanding, and which keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. Afflictions lose their bitterness, even death its sting, and the grave its gloom; the judgment comes to be anticipated with confidence, and eternity with hope and joy.

The Holy Spirit continues His kind agency till *death*; and in that solemn and trying hour, when all earthly supports fail, when even christian friends can no longer render service, but we must tread the dark valley solitary and alone; even then, He proves Himself the Great Comforter. By Him the Saviour vouchsafes His presence, and the believer is perfected in holiness, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, conducted to the New Jerusalem, and presented faultless before the throne of the heavenly glory with exceeding joy.

The same gracious Comforter will also *raise us from the dead*. While the body lies under the power of death and the grave, our salvation is incomplete. This corruption and dishonor must end; this vile body must be fashioned like unto that glorious body, which the spirits of the just made perfect continually behold with affection and hope, as it is seated on

the throne at God's right hand — the pattern and pledge of what their's shall be. This purchased possession must be redeemed. The Lord Jesus will accomplish this by the energy of His mighty power, but yet, that energy goes forth in the agency of this blessed Comforter. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Finally; This Spirit shall forever reign in the hearts of the saved, the efficient cause of all that light, and purity and glory and blessedness which they shall eternally enjoy in the presence of God and the Lamb: "The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." His influences, proceeding, as they do, from the fountain of the Divine perfections, through the atonement of Christ, are the waters of that "pure river of life which proceedeth out of the throne of God and the Lamb."

Sinner, this Spirit is striving with you. From His influence arises every conviction, every fear, every serious thought you experience, that is in accordance with truth. When conscience speaks in harmony with the law of God, it is under His power. Consider, in what character this Spirit is striving with you; — it is as the Great Agent in the world of Grace. By Him alone are sinners made partakers of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. Hence the danger of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Then, *quench not the Spirit*. Resist Him not. Do not rebel and vex Him, lest He turn to be your enemy, and fight against you. And remember, that it is by sinning against the knowledge of the truth, by trampling under foot the Son of God, by treating with contempt the blood of the covenant, by cherished sin, by obstinate unbelief, by pertinacious neglect of this great salvation, that you do despite to this Spirit of grace. Some of you have trodden this dangerous path already too long; but still there is hope, for Mercy still calls, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold,

I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you." But beware; this call is accompanied with a fearful warning; and, subject not yourselves to the doom of those who "hate knowledge and do not choose the fear of the Lord."

Christian, how greatly are you indebted for this provision of the Spirit! Be thankful; be confident; "abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Consider the kindness of your Comforter, and the abundance of His consolations; they are neither few nor small. Take Him as your Teacher, your Guide, your Sanctifier, your Spirit of adoption, the Helper of your infirmities in prayer, the Perfecter of your souls, the Quickener of your mortal bodies, the Communicator of life eternal. And if you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and fulfill not the lust of the flesh. Grieve Him not by a carnal and worldly conversation, by neglects of duty, or by secret sin, or by a prayerless life. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And ever remember the solemn word of warning and encouragement, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.

S E R M O N X.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH, IN THE WORK OF MISSIONS.*

BY REV. H. H. JOHNSON.

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“O Zion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. *Isaiah 40: 9, 10.*”

THAT the Church has been doing less, in past ages, than she should have done, for her divine Lord, and the souls of men, is a truth that calls for deep humiliation before God. That she may now be doing less than the times demand, and her resources warrant, is a thought that should fill her with alarm, and call her to reflection. She is, in one sense, a great moral cause, designed by her founder to produce a mighty moral effect. Her organization embraces a system of means, intended to accomplish a stupendous purpose. Her power, as a moral cause, may be so feebly exerted, and her efficiency, as a system of means, may be so rarely tested, that the cause will not produce the effect, nor will the means accomplish the end. God has not invested either moral or physical causes,

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with a measure of power greater than that which is demanded to produce their effect, so that a superfluity of power may remain unemployed, and yet, their efficiency remain unimpaired. A wiser adaptation of means to their end, than this, characterizes all God's works. Power, just adequate to secure the effect, is given to every cause, and nothing more; and that, too, a measure of power arising from the active employment of all the energies and resources of the cause.

Now, God has given to His Church, as a moral cause, a degree of power equal to the effect he designed her to produce, and nothing more. And hence the efficiency of the Church in accomplishing the stupendous purposes of God, depends upon the exercise of all her power, vested in all her available resources and energies. If she deems herself possessed of power above what is demanded, and actually permits some of her energies to remain dormant, and some of her resources to lie unemployed, she must of necessity fail in accomplishing the object of her mission, so long as she is under this delusion.

That the Church has, to a great extent, fallen into this error, and even yet labors under it, facts abundantly prove. But that she will not eventually fail of her object, is equally plain. Those influences will be brought to bear upon her, and those exhortations will be addressed to her, which will awaken her energies, call out her resources, and give her tenfold efficiency. This exhortation of the prophet Isaiah, is addressed to the Church in Gospel times. It is designed to impress her with a sense of her duty, in cultivating a proper spirit in her labors for God, and in making her ability the measure of her efforts for the extension of his cause.

We will confine our attention to such themes, bearing upon the missionary enterprize, as are suggested by these words of the prophet.

I. The fact is here plainly implied, that the Church is God's instrumentality for the evangelization of the world, and, as such, is held responsible by Him for the accomplishment of this work.

In proof of the position, that *the Church is God's appointed instrumentality for the conversion of all nations*, it might be sufficient to adduce the commission given by Christ to the apostles, authorizing them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them; and also, that petition in his intercessory prayer, in which he prays for those who shall believe on him through them, implying the process of the world's universal evangelization, through the instrumentality of those who are, from age to age, successively, brought under grace; and also, those expressions of Christ which represent the Gospel Kingdom as a little leaven hid in the meal until all was leavened, and as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, increasing until it filled the whole earth. And to these references we may add the fact, that no nation or community ever has been evangelized, except by the Church and her accredited ministry; and simply, because it is the Gospel only, as dispensed in God's appointed way, that the Holy Spirit will render efficacious in saving sinful men. It is an essential part of the only scheme of mercy ever granted to our sinful race.

In bringing forward proof to settle the question of the Church's instrumentality in the conversion of the world, we are but establishing *the magnitude of her work*. Were it her upbuilding as an earthly kingdom, in unrivaled supremacy above all other kingdoms, it would be less than it is. Were she required to familiarize every soul of the many millions of our world's population with the principles of natural science, and the details of human knowledge, her work would be less than it is. Were she commissioned to seek out every child of sorrow, and impart wealth to the needy, strength to the feeble, health to the diseased, liberty to the enslaved, succour to the oppressed; in short, to mitigate and annihilate all the physical evils of existence, her work would bear no proportion to its present greatness; for all these things are within the range of possibility, and might be accomplished by unaided human instrumentality. But the work which she is made the

instrument of performing, is the rescue of souls from perdition, and their training in the knowledge, love, and service of God; a work as far-reaching as eternity, as marvelous as the themes upon which angels meditate, and as vast as the mighty purposes of God.

But momentous as this work is, the Church *is held responsible by God for its accomplishment*. He has given her all the means necessary for the successful prosecution of her great work. He has enjoined the dissemination of Gospel truth upon her, as a solemn duty, for the faithful performance of which he will call her in question. He has committed the care of perishing souls to her, as a sacred trust, which he requires her to guard with sleepless vigilance. He has shown her the great field of her labor and conflict, and has said to her, *Occupy till I come*. Having brought her to sustain such honorable and ennobling relations to himself and his cause, it is impious in her to conclude that she may neglect them at pleasure, and not be answerable for her neglect.

It is only necessary to bring the fact, that the church is held responsible by God for the evangelization of the world, into proximity with those facts which exhibit the extent of her engagedness in her work, to prove *how great has been her apathy*. She has not felt, and does not yet feel as she should, what it is to be held accountable for every iota that has not been done, in giving a preached Gospel to the heathen, which she might have done, and which she had means and resources to do, if they had been properly developed.

II. A second theme, bearing upon the missionary work, which is suggested by the text, is, the position the Church must assume, that she may labor most advantageously for the success of her mission. She must "get up into the high mountain."

The Church must mount up to that moral elevation from which only she can *command a full view of her field of labor, and obtain a clear perception of the guiltiness of our race*. While she remains in the low grounds of selfishness, influenced by earthly interests, and shaping her course by the

maxims of worldly policy, she cannot perceive moral objects, except through a distorting medium. It is necessary, then, that the Church should occupy a position which will bring all men and things under the range of her vision, and which will enable her to perceive them in their true moral phases. This high moral eminence is none other than the spirit and principles of Christianity. The Church is, emphatically, on the high mountain, when she suffers this spirit to pervade her, and these principles to control her. This is her mount of vision, from which she cannot but see all the human family in its countless multitudes; for, influenced by that spirit which is love to God and love to man, her eye will seek out the objects of her love, in every nation, and of every name. This is her mount of vision, from which she cannot but perceive men and things in their true moral phases: because, actuated by the principles of Christianity, and having the Spirit of Christ, she tries them by an infallible standard. The nations of the world successively pass in review before her, and the measure of ignorance, depravity, and guilt that pertains to each, is correctly ascertained. From this survey of her field of labor, she is informed of its vast extent, and of its need of moral culture, and she is inspired with that spirit which will constrain her to enter upon her work.

If the Church would assume a position favorable to success, it is necessary that she should *make herself conspicuous*. She is not arrogating to herself any unlawful prerogatives, nor is she assuming any stations of honor which, of right, are not hers, when she boldly steps forward, and takes precedence of all other institutions, and claims for her principles, doctrines, and ceremonies, the universal respect and homage of men: God has designed her to be the moral lighthouse of the world, and she must place herself as a city on a hill, which cannot be hid. Among the many precious promises her Lord has given her, is one which assures her, that he will make her ride upon the high places of the earth. She must not, then, content herself with merely watching over her own members, and gathering the lambs of the flock into the fold, and quietly,

year, almost stealthily, seeking the conversion of sinners immediately around the places of her habitation, and then retire from public observation, and become almost lost and forgotten among other institutions; but she must publicly plant her standard, and keep her banner unfurled in every community on earth, and testify to men that if they rally round it they are safe: but if they turn away from it, its presence will be a witness against them.

The Church must place herself in an attitude which presupposes that she had *calmly premeditated, and was intent upon performing some great work*. If we behold an individual whose countenance indicates no particular animation, whose demeanor manifests no enthusiasm or energy, and who appears to be almost destitute of moral and physical sensibility, his very attitude testifies to the fact that he has no prominent object before him, as the aim of his life, toward which he is pressing forward with unwavering purpose. So also is it with the Church. If we behold her general aspect one of apathy, her energies feeble, her resources squandered upon objects foreign to her design, her plans and purposes for glorifying God in the extension of his kingdom few and irresolute; then may we conclude that she has lost sight of her duty, and is only careful to maintain a lingering, lifeless existence. But let us once discover the flame of a holy zeal burning in the hearts of her members, let us hear the wise councils of her devoted fathers and sons, let us discover bold plans, firm resolves, decided actions, then will men be constrained to acknowledge the might of her instrumentality, and give honor to her cause. And this very attitude which she assumes, will, of itself, do much to open up the way before her to ultimate success. Like Israel going up to possess Canaan, that noble, determined attitude will fix the eyes of nations upon her, and fill men's hearts with fear, and constrain them to court her favor.

In assuming the attitude to which we have referred, the church must *feel her own importance*. This will consist in nothing less than a deep conviction of the fact, that she is

organized on better principles than any other institution on earth; that her influence is the most salutary that sways the course of society, or shapes the destiny of man; that her work is the holiest and mightiest with which any of the creatures of God have ever been entrusted; yea, that her existence perpetuated till the end of time, is the only hope of a lost world.

In assuming this attitude, she must also *frame her plans on the largest scale*. They must correspond in magnitude with the labor to be performed, and the extent of the field in which she labors. A narrow, selfish policy, on the part of the church, can never be justified by her divine Lord. He has plainly told her, The field is the world; and he has as plainly given her the command, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He has also plainly given her to understand that the earth is to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and that this is her work. Her plans and purposes must not then be limited to one nation, or even to many nations; but they must aim at the disenthralment of every sin-laden soul. Her plans and efforts must go almost infinitely beyond what they have ever yet been.

Should the Church, for some reason, conclude that her present system of plans was sufficiently comprehensive; that her present amount of energy, expended in the cause of missions, was equal to the demand; that her present amount of contributions was as great as she was justified in asking from her members; and that the present number of missionaries in the field, need not be multiplied; what dire consequences would result to the Church herself, and to the world? Surely a measure of the curse of Meroz would fall upon God's heritage, and hope for the world's conversion, by human instrumentality, must immediately perish.

We may, perhaps, just here, come in contact with many conscientious members of the Church, who entertain the opinion that her extensive and extending plans and efforts for promoting the spread of Christianity, should be regarded as dangerous innovations in her established order of procedure,

because they are without precedent in her past history. This opinion has its origin in different motives and feelings, and exerts a powerful influence in constraining those who entertain it, to withhold all coöperation from many a praiseworthy enterprise. They seem to forget that when the Church awakes to a sense of her duty in bringing in the era of her millennial glory, new plans must be proposed, new resources must be opened up, that have not heretofore been tried. And we hold it to be an incontrovertible position, that wherein any opposition is made to any plan that is intended, either immediately or remotely, to hasten on this era—any plan that is not sinful in itself, or that is not necessarily followed by sinful consequences, or that is not carried out in a sinful manner—that opposition not only retards the progress of Christ's kingdom, but is sinful in those who make it.

In assuming her proper attitude, the Church must *rely upon the strength of God, and exercise faith in his promises*. While she should feel her own importance, it is only because she is an indispensable instrumentality in the work of the world's conversion; indispensable, because of God's purpose and appointment, not because he could not convert the world without her. Might of her own, she has none. Power, influence, wisdom, final success, are all of God.

Her faith, too, especially the faith of her ministry, should be a living principle, drawing nourishment for its growth, from the promises of Christ. They should believe that the power of God is in the Gospel which they preach; a power reaching unto the salvation of every one that believeth. They should believe that they, in these remote ages, are linked in with a system of means for the conversion of all nations; and that the words of Christ, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you," prove their work to be identical with his, as the continuation of that same great system.

As a perfecting act in the attitude which the Church must assume, *she must be importunate in prayer*. She must give God no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth. Is it so that the prayers of the

saints are put into the golden censor of the angel standing at the altar, and perfumed with the incense of his merits, are presented with acceptance to God? Then, upon prayer we rely for the success of the Church in the work of missions. Is it so that the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel depended upon the efficacy of prayer for their success, and enjoined it upon the Church as an indispensable help to their labors?—"Brethren pray for us that the word may have free course and be glorified." Then upon prayer we rely for the success of the Church in her work of missions. Has the God of missions incorporated a missionary petition in that form of prayer which he left his people? And lest they should omit to give his cause a prominent place in their fervent supplications, has he taught them to pray, Thy kingdom come? Then must the Church lift up her voice in prayer, and wrestle with God till she prevails.

III. Having assumed her proper attitude, the Church is next called to action. Lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.

The members of the Church are under the most imperative commands and solemn obligations to make her *active and efficient*. The Church was organized in order that believers might accomplish more through her organization, than they could have done if it had not been effected. If the spirit of faith and love constrains the saint to devote himself, as an individual, to the service of the Lord Jesus: that same spirit will gain an increase of power, and accomplish more by associated effort. It is evident, then, from the very spirit of Christianity, and from the advantages arising from the organization of the Church, that her members should make her active in her spirit, and efficient in her work. Since the world is to be aroused from its lethargy, and turned from its hatred of the Cross, the Church must first be aroused; cold and formal members must be filled with energy; and the whole body must be quickened into newness of life.

It is too true that the Church is often guilty of the charge that she has "settled on her lees." In her militant state, when the utmost vigilance is demanded, she may be likened to a great army taking its repose; whose tents are spread abroad, whose banners are furled, whose armor is laid aside, whose sentinels are called in, and whose officers and soldiery are buried in sleep, while the enemy is marshaling his forces, and laying his plans, and drawing near to surprise and destroy her.

In bringing her energies and resources into action, the Church must *lift up her voice with strength*. The voice of the Church is the voice of her living ministry, preaching the cross of Christ.

They must be sent *with all necessary qualifications to suit times and circumstances*. In no other way can they speak with strength, and be able to establish truth, and confound error. The intelligent friends of missions are now ready to endorse the sentiment, that the missionary service deserves the consecration of the greatest talent, and the most marked wisdom and piety that the churches can supply. It is an age of enterprize in all the avocations of life. It is an age of enquiry in all the ranges of human thought. And while these things favor the success of the active, determined missionary, they prove to a certainty, that the claims of the indolent and timid to a hearing, will be thrust aside. The pioneers of Christianity, like those of civilization, should be the choice spirits of the age, that the institutions which they plant, and the influences which they set at work, may take the deeper hold of the minds of untutored men, and produce a more lasting impression for good, upon the subsequent course of society. While an imbecile intellect, an untutored mind, indolent habits, poverty of thought and limited attainments, may do some good, through the forbearance of brethren, where the Church is firmly established; they can accomplish nothing in the missionary field, where every manner of opposition is to be encountered, and all kinds of obstacles are to be surmounted.

In lifting up her voice with strength, she *must send* the living ministry *in numbers sufficient to compass the earth*. It may be thought by some, that there is not a demand for many more laborers in the several branches of the Church, than she has at present in the field; for the reason, that she not the congregations over which to place them. But if we are faithful to the trust committed to the Church, we must furnish the great field of the world with as many laborers as, by our most strenuous efforts, we can sustain. If we pursue the slow policy of waiting for churches to spring up of themselves, and then furnish them with an adequate ministerial supply, we are not making aggressive movements upon the world. The Church should always have at command a ministerial force above what is demanded for the care of her members, and that force should be strong. The ministry must be sent, not only to water churches already planted, and to build up saints; but sent to lands where no church exists, and where no saints are found. It is not the voice of one living herald of the Cross, or of a few, crying from the heights of Zion, that can reach afar over the earth; but it is the strong voice of multitudes, going forth in numbers sufficient to take the kingdom; whose voices shall reach from one to another, until the Gospel sound, like the thunder's voice, shall reverberate from the east to the west; and the Gospel's power, like the lightning's flame, shall penetrate from the one part under heaven to the other part under heaven.

The onset of the Church *must be with courage*.—"Lift up thy voice, lift it up, be not afraid." It is as true of members of the Church in the work of missions, as it is of men in other associations, that because of an undue caution or timidity in venturing bold plans, they accomplish nothing. Under the plea of prudence, those who are the moving spirits in the work of missions, often hold back the cause, lest the Church should involve herself in liabilities which the benevolent offerings of her members will not meet. Under the same plea, they discountenance the occupancy of certain fields where

peculiar opposition may be expected. And under the same plea again, they hesitate to send the herald of the Cross where the customs of society, and the restrictions of civil government render it difficult to obtain access to the masses of men. Can it be, that this is a mistrust of God's providence that almost amounts to unbelief in disguise? Surely, since God has told her that the silver and the gold are his, and that he holds the hearts of men in his hand, he will call out these resources to meet the demands of the Church, unless she sanctions and encourages an avaricious spirit in her members, by framing her plans according to the restrictions of such a spirit. And surely, since he has told her that her Lord in the midst of her is mighty, he will vanquish all opposition that arrays itself against her, unless she hesitates to call down the arm of the Lord to her aid. And surely, since he has said that he will make crooked places straight, and rough places smooth, and will cause the great mountain of difficulty to become a plain, he will set before her an open door, and give her access to all people, unless she is utterly dismayed at the obstacles that seem to prevent her from giving them the Gospel. It is none of these things; it is not even Satan himself, with his malicious confederates, that she should fear; but her greatest fear should be, her own perfidy, and a mistrust of God's promises. Her onset upon the world, should be like that of an army, never dreaming of defeat. Defeated she may be, while she panders to her own selfishness, and does nothing more than it allows. Defeated she cannot be, while she has no Achan in her camp, and devotes not to her avarice, what she should dedicate to the Lord.

IV. When the Church assumes her proper attitude, and engages actively in her work, then God will work with her, and his cause will prosper. "Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him."

There is no principle by which God shapes his course of procedure in the administration of his moral government, that

is more plainly revealed than this, namely, that *he prospers his cause, just in proportion to the honest efforts, and holy energies of his people.* He has thrown out a gracious challenge to his Church, based upon this very principle, which she has never yet fully accepted. Having alluded to her active enlistment in his cause, he has said to her in reference to it, Prove me now herewith, if I will not open the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it! Do we sometimes marvel at the apparent want of success that attends the missionary labors of the Church in heathen lands? Do we call to remembrance the promise God has made to the Church, when speaking of the missionary conquests of the world, that one should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight? And do we then almost find fault with God because he does not realize our expectations? We are presumptuously expecting the blessing, without complying with the conditions of the challenge, upon which only, it can be given. We are wondering at God's slowness to help, and waiting to see the nations flock as clouds, and as doves to their windows, while we send but one laborer to the missionary field, for hundreds that we retain at home, and while we put into the treasury of the Lord, but an infinitesimal fraction of the sum that we squander upon our lusts.

But let the Church assume the proper attitude, and engage actively in her work, and the promise will be realized. It will, because *in the strength of Jesus the Omnipotent, the feebleness of the Church will be supported.* Her Lord in the midst of her is mighty; and he who is mighty, will gird his sword upon his thigh. In the day of his power, he will make the people willing to obey him, He will directly interpose his power and providence to make way for, and succeed his cause. Those political and social institutions that oppose his kingdom, he will remove out of the way.

The promise will be realized, because *in the Covenant of Grace, the Father has pledged to the Son, the universal*

triumph of the Church. This is his reward. It was that he might bring many sons to glory, from the hosts of Satan's captives, that his soul travailed in sorrow in Gethsemane, and on Calvary; and he *shall see* of the travail of his soul, when he receives the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession. The means necessary to secure the universal triumph of his cause, are under his own control; for he has been made head over all things to the Church, that he might make them subservient to the designs of his mediatorial Kingdom.

The promise will be realized, because *this work is so prominent and absorbing, that it fixes the attention, awakens the interest, and fills the desires of the divine mind.* His work is before him. It is not one of such subordinate importance, that it can, even for a time, give place to any other, in the favor of Jesus. We know that the more effulgent glory of the Godhead, that shines forth in the work of redemption, almost eclipses that measure of glory that is visible in the works of creation; and we are persuaded, that as it more illustriously magnifies the glory of Jesus on earth, so also it does among the celestial throng. If then, in addition to the love Jesus bears to his Church, a jealousy for his glory prompts him to prosper her interests, her extension must always be an object near and dear to Him, and it must be his delight to bless his people, who labor for her universal establishment on earth.

How forcibly, then, is the Church in our day, addressed in the language of the text? "O Zion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain. O Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him." Catching the spirit of the exhortation, we see the vision of the Church's coming glory, rise before our enraptured view. And while we feel our hearts burning

with a measure of our Master's zeal, and while we prepare ourselves for the mighty work before us, we hear a voice from the eternal throne addressing us,

The time of hope
And of probation, speeds on rapid wings
Swift and returnless. What thou hast to do,
Do with thy might. Haste, lift aloud thy voice,
And publish to the borders of the pit
The resurrection. Then, when the ransomed come
With gladness unto Zion, thou shalt joy
To hear the valleys and the hills break forth
Before them into singing; thou shalt join
The raptured strain, exulting that the Lord
Jehovah, God Omnipotent, doth reign
O'er all the earth.

PSALM LXVII. S. M.

- L**ORD, bless and pity us,
shine on us with thy face ;
- 2 That th' earth thy way, and nations all
may know thy saving grace.
- 3 Let people praise thee, Lord ;
let people all thee praise.
- 4 O let the nations all be glad,
in songs their voices raise :
- Thou 'lt justly people judge,
on earth rule nations all.
- 5 Let people praise thee, Lord ; let them
praise thee both great and small.
- 6 The earth her fruit shall yield ;
Our God shall blessing send.
- 7 God shall us bless ; men shall him fear,
unto earth's utmost end.

S E R M O N X I .

THE GLORIOUS CHANGE ON BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

BY REV. DAVID CURRIE,

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“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”
2 Cor. 3: 18.

THE glory of Christ, in his person, office, sufferings, and exaltation, is the vital principle in all the truths and duties of religion. The world was created in subordination to the work of redemption, that to the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God? In the counsel of peace the Son of God engaged to approach to God as our High Priest, and to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and in consequence of this engagement He was presented to man after the fall as an object of faith and hope; a Church was formed on the principles of the covenant, promises were given, ordinances appointed, messengers were sent to proclaim salvation, that sinners might believe, and that believers might behold, through types and shadows, his glory, who is the end of the law for righteousness. Prophets predicted the glory of the Messiah's reign in the most sublime strains of poetry and eloquence. All their predictions, either by direct application or distant

reference, terminate in the Redeemer, and all the rays of light converge upon his person as the center and glory of divine revelation. Many who enjoyed these means of instruction, did not discern the reference and ultimate design of the law as the shadow of good things to come, by a veil of ignorance upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. "The Lord is that Spirit." Jesus Christ gives life to the doctrines and promises of the gospel. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." The Holy Spirit enlightens, renews, sanctifies, bestows liberty from corrupt passions, from Satan, and from the bondage of the legal dispensation.

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image," &c.

I purpose to consider, the Object of Contemplation—The Medium—The Effect.

I. The object of contemplation. The glory of the Lord-God's nature is infinite, his greatness unsearchable. In reference to us, He holdeth back the face of his throne and spreadeth a cloud upon it, and retires into the deep recesses of his own nature. He has a height which we cannot reach, a depth which we cannot penetrate, recesses which shall never be explored, fountains of light and joy; while the darkness around his throne will excite in the redeemed, those emotions of wonder, astonishment, and praise, which infinite perfection only can inspire.

The visible creation manifests the eternal power and Godhead, but depravity prevents men, in dark places, from discerning the characters in which God has inscribed his name on his works. We are guilty and deserve punishment; and we need a knowledge of salvation, the assurance that God is just and the Saviour just, when He justifies the sinner that believeth. In Christ, all divine perfections meet and shine with collected effulgence. Some men speak with familiarity of the *character of God*. It would be well to remember that God's equal eternal Son is the brightness of his glory, the express image (*exact character*) of his person. The only begotten

Son, who is the bosom of the Father, hath declared him. He is worthy to loose the seals, and to unfold hidden mysteries, and to guide us to the fountain of light. Being in the form of God, he took upon him the form of a servant, employed the faculties and organs of humanity, that he might be visible to men while he revealed the glory of the invisible God, and while divine perfections filled the temple of his humanity, the habitation of Deity, he blessed the world with a perfect manifestation of God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." He thus accomplished what no words can describe, no abstractions of philosophy conceive, no image or picture represent, no angel reveal. Through Him we have access by one Spirit to the Father, and, in his person and work, we, by faith, behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus—His *revealed perfections*. Particularly,

1. The wisdom of God.

The design to be accomplished in redemption is the most excellent, and the means employed are the most fit. "We have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, wherein He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." All the perfections of God are displayed in harmonious and undiminished glory, the law is magnified and made honorable, sinners are pardoned, sanctified, and conducted to glory; the kingdom of Satan is destroyed, and the kingdom of God established. Mercy and truth harmonize in the way in which justice is satisfied, sin pardoned, and believers constrained to new obedience by the love of Christ. Sinful men are restored to life and honor, and raised to immortality in union with the Holy One, through the humiliation and death of the Lord of glory.

The Word was made flesh. He assumed true human nature into the unity of his divine person, with all its essential properties, and by that assumption became a real man, not by changing what He was, but by assuming what He was not. Two distinct natures, infinitely distant, were united in one

person, without mixture or confusion. That the eternal Son of God should become his servant, to do his will, his shepherd to gather his sheep into one fold, is an evidence of manifold wisdom. —

“Great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh.” As man He was born : as God He was worshiped by the wise men. As man He was hungry : as God He created food in the desert for thousands. As man He slept and was wakened : as God He rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm. As man He was crucified : as God He spoiled principalities and powers. All his physical and intellectual acts were the acts of his human nature, but all his moral acts and the moral qualities of all that He did and suffered, were impressed with the essential dignity and moral value of his Divine person. Morality is predicated only of a person, not of a nature ; and the human nature of Christ subsists in the person of the Son of the Highest, who according to the flesh was the son of David, but according to the spirit of holiness, or divine nature, the Son of God, who sanctified himself as a Priest and victim. The Lord of glory *was crucified*, the express image of the Father’s person purged our sins by *himself*, and God our Saviour purchased the Church with his *own blood* !

“O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !”

2. In Christ we see the power of God. The Redeemer is the Mighty God, and all his works display his power and Godhead. All things were made by Him and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. Creation proves omnipotence to all who can reason on the subject. He that built all things is God. In the days of his flesh He attested his divine power and mission by works without number. Inanimate nature heard his voice and yielded to his authority. Disease and death obeyed Him ; foul spirits fled at his rebuke. He spake and it was done. *I will ; be thou clean. Lazarus, come forth.* In the place of skulls, on

the cross, and in death, He destroyed him that had the power of death—spoiled principalities and powers.

Philosophers would have us attend to their computations of distances and solidity—millions and billions; we would invite them to the Redeemer mighty to save. He bore our sins in his own body—endured the chastisement which procured our peace, the wrath due to our sins, and rose to glory from a conflict which issued in death and victory. He destroyed sin, abolished death, vanquished Satan, was bruised by Jehovah, and ascended to heaven in triumph.

He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool, light his dwelling, the clouds his chariot, the thunder his voice, angels his ministers, the excellent ones of the earth his children and followers. He regulates all the revolutions in the starry world, and all these splendid light-bearers remind us of Him who dwells in light inaccessible. Things visible call us to adore Him who weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, who divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters, and a way for the lightning of thunder. He sits upon the floods, and restrains the tumult of the people, and will overrule the malignity of Satan, the ambition of men, the revolutions of empires, and the researches of science, for the diffusion of the Gospel. He will, as the Captain of salvation, bring many sons to glory, and therefore the way must be prepared, the waste places planted, the dark enlightened, the desolate made fruitful, and the oppressed set free. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. The king on Zion's hill will make all the resources of the material, intellectual, and moral universe combine for the consummation of the work entrusted to Him, for He is Lord of all, head over all things to the Church. "He shall put down all rule and all authority and power (in opposition to his own everlasting kingdom), for He shall sit and rule upon his throne, and He shall be a Priest upon his throne."

3. In Christ we behold divine justice. When God opened the windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep,

and swept away the world of the ungodly, he manifested himself as the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. The destruction of Sodom, Nineveh, Babylon, Jerusalem, the perdition of ungodly men, evince that God will vindicate his law and punish the guilty; but in redemption divine justice is more eminent than in all other instances. God spared not his own Son,—gave him without reluctance and without restraint, and when he sustained our cause, as surety he inflicted upon Him all that was necessary to satisfy his justice. As our surety He was charged before the throne of God with the guilt of all the sins of a great company which no man can number. He was personally innocent and infinitely holy, and therefore not *blameworthy* (*culpa*); yet he was a voluntary appointed and accepted substitute, and therefore he was *legally answerable* (*reatus*). Though personally innocent, he had assumed the obligation to suffer punishment, the chastisement which procured our peace, and was accounted under obligation to fulfill the righteousness of the law in its precept and penalty, that his people, though personally guilty, might be accounted and treated as if they had fulfilled the righteousness of the law. “He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

It pleased God to separate sin, not from *suffering*, from which it cannot be separated, but from the *person* of the *sinner*; and to dissolve the connection, not between *guilt* and *punishment*, which by eternal justice are inseparable, but between *guilt* and the destruction of the *sinner*, by a transfer of sin—not in the act and defilement, but in its *legal relation* and *obligation*—to the Redeemer, that his people might be saved. Men may in blindness frame arguments against vicarious sufferings, but our faith rests not on arguments, but on divine testimony. The doctrine of atonement is a matter of fact connected with every Scripture doctrine and duty, our only foundation of hope and source of joy. We “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” The sufferings of Christ were

manifestly vicarious and propitiatory. He was set forth (in God's purpose) to be a propitiation. Rom. 3: 25.

Redemption implies captivity, and deliverance by the payment of a price. Propitiation implies offence and enmity removed and restoration to peace and favor. Reconciliation and atonement mean agreement between parties at variance. Christ by his sufferings and death gave satisfaction to the law and the justice of God for elect sinners, on account of which they are delivered from sin and its penal consequences. This, in the Scripture sense of the term, is *atonement*. The redeemed are called a *peculiar people, brethren, children, friends, seed, jewels, sheep, church, portion*. Titus 2: 14. Heb. 2: 11. Rom. 8: 17. John 15: 14. Isa. 58: 10. Mal. 3: 17. John 10: 27. Ep. 5: 25. Deut. 32: 9. They were chosen that they might be holy, and in consequence of a covenant relation Christ was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, to subdue their iniquities, and to deliver them from the wrath to come, and to present them in heaven without spot.

We were children of wrath, exposed to destruction. Our Redeemer interposed, stayed the arm of Omnipotence, averted the thunder of heaven, dispelled the darkness of despair. The sword of justice was not bathed in our blood because its stroke fell upon our surety, and we hope to escape in the day of judgment. When we think of the dignity of the Redeemer, his relation to the Father, his willingness to lay down his life, his great love to sinners, and the consequences of his mediation, we conclude that the law was more honored, justice more eminently displayed, than if mercy had been excluded and all the guilty punished forever. It is granted that our Lord did not endure the torment of a guilty conscience, for he was personally innocent; nor the horrors of despair, for his triumph was secured by covenant and by the glory of his person; nor did his sufferings continue long, for his infinite excellences rendered his one offering at once and forever satisfactory. But he endured the contradiction of sinners, the malice of devils, the death of the cross, in the

place of skulls, the wrath of God due to sinners, and what He suffered from the hand of God no angel can conceive. He was stricken to death, smitten of God and afflicted. The sun was darkened, the rocks rent, the graves were opened in impressive homage to this pre-eminent triumph of eternal justice.

4. In the Lord we behold the glory of love divine. In Christ were blended light and love, majesty and condescension, hatred of sin and compassion for sinners. He was rich and became poor; was born in a stable at Bethlehem. How great his love and condescension! A star lighted up in heaven guided the wise men to the place, and the event was celebrated by the angels. He had not where to lay his head, yet he was Lord of all. He sat at Jacob's well like a weary man, told the Samaritan woman all that ever she did, and led her to light and liberty. He wept with the subjects of affliction at Bethany, and raised Lazarus from the dead. He silenced the proud Pharisees, and invited the humble and penitent to come to him for rest; rebuked legions of evil spirits from his presence, while he took little infants to his bosom; the angels worshiped him, and the children cried Hosanna—*save now, O Jehovah!* He bore our sins in his own body—yet provided for a mother's comfort, when he said to John, (who was so near the cross that he saw the blood and water issue from his side,) *behold thy mother!* He was crucified in weakness, yet assured the penitent thief of admission to heaven. The people derided him, he prayed "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

God commended his love toward us, in that while we were sinners Christ died for us, to deliver us from eternal destruction, reclaim us from rebellion, subdue our enmity, win our confidence, by love's constraining influence, render new obedience practicable, delightful, acceptable and necessary. When we consider the divine goodness, our unworthiness, the value of the blessings bestowed, and the price at which they were procured, we wonder that God should spare the guilty, find a

ransom, bestow such a Saviour for such sinners. God hath given to us, not only eternal life, but this life in *his* Son; not only redemption, but redemption through *his blood*. God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son. Other gifts deserve gratitude, but this unspeakable gift, this concentrated splendor of eternal mercy, demands affectionate fear, reverential love, intense and endless adoration. We love Him because He first loved us!

We now consider,

II. The medium of contemplation,—“But we all, with open face beholding *as in a glass*.”

The present dispensation exceeds the former in glory. That was a ministration of condemnation and of death; this, of the Spirit and of righteousness. The law was given by Moses, a faithful servant in the house; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, the Lord over his own house and the Lord of all. The law was written on tables of stone; the gospel is written on the heart of believers. The one was a temporary institution ready to vanish away, attended with bondage and fear; the other is permanent, the substance of prefigurations, attended with the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. The Israelites saw the glory of Moses' face through a veil; now the faithful behold, with *unveiled face*, the glory of God in the person of his Eternal Son, the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. Now the morning twilight has passed and the clear light shines. The Jewish ritual, like the veil of the temple, contained and concealed the glory now revealed to the true worshipers, who are temples of the Holy Ghost, whence arises the sacrifice of a broken heart, more acceptable than all that the material world can supply. The veil is removed, and the hidden glories are disclosed in rich profusion, and by means of the Gospel we now behold the wisdom, truth, righteousness and grace of God in union and harmony. “These things are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we may have life through his name.” Inspired writers have collected the most striking metaphors, and employed the most

sublime language, to convey to us just views of his excellence who is altogether lovely. Now the reproach of the cross is removed, and He is exalted above all heavens. That sacred head, once mangled with thorns, is now crowned with glory, surrounded with a rainbow, an emblem of the covenant of grace; and that visage, once marred with strokes and pale in death, is now more glorious than all created splendor. He is on the right hand of the Majesty on high, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, (an emblem of triumph,) having on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the keys of hell and of death, entire control over all departments of the world unseen. He is the foundation and corner-stone, the stability and the ornament of the building of mercy, the substance and glory of gospel truth. By the law we are condemned, but we look to Him who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. We can understand no doctrine of the gospel without reference to Christ, the way the truth and the life, nor can we discharge any duty of new obedience without union to his person, for without him we can do nothing. He is the foundation of saving knowledge, acceptable worship, real holiness, and permanent happiness.

All ordinances derive their influence from his appointment, presence and blessing. As King in Zion, he has a right to appoint ordinances, to commission and qualify officers to administer them, and to render them efficient in the salvation of men. He must increase in the extent of his gracious dominion, and in the number of his willing subjects, until his glory be revealed; and all flesh see it together. Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed.

III. The effect—"Are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

1. Changed into the same image. Mirrors were formerly made of polished metal, and those who looked on them were illuminated by the strong light reflected from them. A mirror placed against an object reflects its rays and returns its image. In allusion to this, Paul here teaches that believers with faces

unveiled, behold, in the person of Christ exhibited in the gospel, the glory of God, as we see our faces in a mirror, and while they behold they are enlightened by his splendor, and by the Spirit changed into that image of God which was lost by sin, and which is now restored through Jesus Christ. Sanctification is a change into the image of God through Jesus Christ, in which work knowledge, righteousness and holiness are bestowed. Old things pass away, and all things become new in respect to opinions, affections and conduct. This change is called a *new heart*, as it is affected by the almighty grace of God; the subject of the change is called a *new creature*, or creation, because the work is divine, invincible, internal, purifying and permanent; the effect and the evidence of the change is *newness of life*.

2. This change is progressive. From glory to glory, that is from one degree of grace to another and a higher degree. Grace and glory are the same in essence, and differ only in degree, like the acorn and the oak, the seed and the plant in maturity. All who are regenerated possess all the principles of new and permanent life, though they are imperfectly developed; but being made partakers of the divine nature or image, they shall grow till they arrive at the stature of perfect men, for they are born of incorruptible seed, and their life is hid with Christ in God. God will never extinguish his own image in the souls of his children, nor will he suffer any enemy to do it, for his gifts and callings are unchangeable, and his resources of power and grace infinite, so none can pluck the objects of his love out of his hand. Christ ever lives to make intercession for them, and the Holy Spirit dwells in them as the cause of progress and permanency in holiness, a well of water springing up to everlasting life. They have chosen the way of life, and they shall hold on their way, and become stronger and stronger, because Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, the glory of their strength, and because he lives they shall live also. They are weak and exposed to danger, but they dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

They wait upon God in the use of the means of grace, and they shall renew their strength—run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. “I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should bring forth much fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” Consequently they are like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither. Ps. 1: 3. Hos. 14: 5-7. I will be as the dew unto Israel. They have entered on a pilgrimage to heaven, and they shall advance till they mingle in triumph with those around the throne; because they go up leaning upon their beloved; and they shall come to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads; for the Redeemer is a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. They run the race set before them; and they shall continue till they obtain the prize, for they are guided, strengthened, and shall be crowned by the Lord of glory. His name is a strong tower: they run into it and are safe. They have commenced a warfare with their enemies, and they shall triumph and be crowned, for they are strengthened with strength in their soul, and supplied with armor mighty through God. The Captain of their salvation has gone before them as their advocate, and he has pledged all the glories of his throne that they also shall overcome. The day has dawned upon them, a prelude of that kingdom where there is no night, and they shall experience a gradual increase of light and vision until the splendor of meridian glory shall surround them. “The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” “Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?”

3. The author of this transformation is divine,—*the Spirit of the Lord*. That Spirit who at the first moved upon the face of the abyss, and reduced the formless mass to order and beauty; who garnished the heavens with that splendor and harmony which distinguish the starry host; who renews the face of the earth, in continually producing the various tribes of animals and vegetables. As an omnipotent, sovereign

agent, he renews, sanctifies and preserves the heirs of heaven, giving them light, life and liberty, leading them to Jesus, consecrating them as temples of God, and preparing them as vessels of mercy for the Master's use. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory." These first-fruits of the Spirit give security that the soul and body shall be delivered from sin and death, and from all penal evil; and that the whole person shall be perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. God gives us the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind, and thus seals us and assures us of his love.

Inferences.

1. The Priesthood of Christ is more excellent than that of Aaron and his successors. The ancient priests were men only, our High Priest is the Son of God. The mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in the flesh, is the pillar and ground of truth, and confessedly great; and we are sure that our Redeemer deserves the pre-eminence in all things and over all persons. The priests taken from among men were compassed with infirmity, and offered sacrifices for their own sins; but our Lord is all fair, there is no spot in Him, He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. The ancient sacrifices delivered only from ceremonial guilt and temporal punishment; the sacrifice of Christ frees us from moral guilt and pollution, and from eternal punishment, and secures to us eternal happiness.

2. God has provided for our weakness. We behold the glory of the Lord in a *mirror*, because at present we cannot obtain a more direct view of it. God dwells in light inaccessible, and we cannot order our speech to Him, or concerning Him, by reason of darkness. When we think or speak of Him, we employ the language of men, for we have no other. In Scripture, similitudes are derived from visible things and applied to the invisible God, as a mirror reflects the image of the person who looks into it. By means of sunlight a per-

son may see his likeness in the camera obscura; by means of divine light from the Sun of righteousness, we see the image of God in the person and office of his beloved Son, in whom the divine splendor is so softened and subdued by meekness and condescension that we can behold it without dismay. We cannot see objects very small or greatly distant, for our organs of vision are not adapted to them, and our weak minds are still more unable to comprehend divine things, as our faculties are not proportioned to their splendor. Christ is the image of the invisible God, the representation of his perfections—his *spirituality*, in calling men into his kingdom; his *infinity*, in giving us all the fullness of God; his *immutability*, in the purpose of grace revealed; his *sovereignty*, in saving the lost; his *eternity*, in the everlasting covenant; his *justice*, in the infliction of the penalty of the law; his *truth*, in all the promises; his *love*, in the gift of his Son for enemies, that they may be recovered and saved. In proportion as we behold the glory of God in his word or his ordinances, public or private, we are changed into the same image. As we grow in grace we grow in conformity to Jesus, and when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Now we know in part, then shall we know as we are known.

3. Christians should adorn the doctrine of the gospel by a holy life. If we are changed into God's image, we are raised to honor from which we must not descend to debasement by living in sin. Election is separation from others to eternal life in Christ our Head, that we may be conformed to his image and blessed forever. In justification we are delivered from the curse, taken into favor, and have a title to eternal life, through the righteousness of Christ, that we may glorify Him in our bodies and in our spirits. He left us an example of every perfection which can awaken our reverence, engage our love, and constrain us to obedience.

4. Natural men are blind.

Some employ extensive learning and unsanctified reason in attempts to obscure the glory of our great God and Saviour,

to subvert the foundation of our hope, and to extinguish the fountain of our light and joy, while they labor to banish from the Bible the doctrine of the supreme Godhead and vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer of men. Should they succeed in this work of desolation, the consequences would be more disastrous to our present and future happiness, than if they should pluck the sun from his sphere and leave the solar system in darkness and horror. Take from the gospel the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the light which blesses the Church on earth and in heaven would be left without a center of attraction and effulgence, to struggle through an ocean of darkness, where the glimmer of dubious light would augment the surrounding gloom. Jesus Christ is the light of the world and the light of heaven, the center to which every eye is directed and every heart drawn. Let this center of light and joy be removed, and the harps of saints and angels would languish, and their song of triumph would be changed into wailing, lamentation and woe.

Blessed be God for the assurance that He shall sit and rule upon his throne, and be a Priest upon his throne; and that we shall be with him to *behold his glory*.

“ But as for me, I thine own face
In righteousness will see;
And with thy likeness, when I wake,
I satisfied shall be.”

Psalm 17: 15.

S E R M O N X I I .

THE END OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED.

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“The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death.” *Proverbs 14: 32.*

THE Bible makes a very comprehensive division of the human family. Overlooking all those distinctions which birth, education, natural temperament, and other circumstances make among men, and viewing them chiefly as moral beings, and in relation to their eternal destiny, it arranges them all in two classes — the righteous, and the wicked. The difference which exists between these two classes ignorant and misjudging man may not be able to perceive. But in the view of the Omniscient, a clear line of distinction exists; nor can they possibly be blended together. That which is effected in the sinner's heart, in regeneration, forms the line of discrimination. Those who are born again and have received Christ Jesus the Lord, are in the Scriptures denominated the righteous: while those who abide in unbelief, and are consequently still in their natural state of rebellion against God, are called the wicked.

And of all the distinctions which exist among men, this one which the Bible makes is the most important. Other distinctions have little or no bearing on the great question of reconciliation with God; but it is precisely as men are righteous

or wicked, that they are his friends or his enemies. Other distinctions cease at the close of every man's earthly history; but death does not affect this one; it will be brought up prominently to view at the final judgment, and will exist throughout eternity.

When indeed we contemplate the mixed state of things which exists in our world — when we consider that the righteous are liable to the ills incident to human condition here as well as the wicked; not only so, but that the former are not unfrequently called to endure the greater amount of suffering, we may be ready to conclude that but little advantage can result from belonging to the one of these classes rather than to the other. But if we ascend the hill of Zion, and look abroad over the prospect, which revelation spreads out to our view, we shall behold these seeming anomalies in the divine government rectified, and the ways of God amply justified. For the Bible informs us that the wicked receive all their good things here, and have nothing in prospect for the life to come but indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; but that the righteous, on the contrary, receive all their evil things here, and have the prospect of obtaining glory, honor and immortality, beyond the grave. To the former, death is the portal of misery; to the latter, it is the gate of bliss. The heart of the one may well be filled with dismay, when in the hour of death he strives to penetrate the gloomy futurity before him; while the well-founded expectation of future good which the other entertains, is sufficient to cheer his spirits, as he enters the dark valley.

“The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death.”

It is proposed to spend a few moments in contemplating the very different ends of these opposite characters.

I. “The wicked is driven away in his wickedness.”

And how often has this been the case in the strictest sense of the words! How often have the wicked been hurried out of this world, and with manifest tokens of the divine displeasure! Thus it happened to the inhabitants of the old world. Except

Noah, who, according to the testimony of inspiration, was a just man and perfect in his generation, all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. It was therefore determined by the Most High, that the human race, with the exception of this righteous man and his family, should be destroyed from off the face of the earth. And when, notwithstanding all the warning of the impending calamity, which was vouchsafed to them, they persevered in their wickedness, in due time "the flood came and destroyed them all." The fate of the inhabitants of the polluted cities of the plain furnishes another example of the literal fulfillment of the text. Their sin was very grievous. And they persevered in their sinful course, until, on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven and destroyed them all. Many instances also of individuals, who experienced a similar fate, are on record in the word of God. The betrayer of our Lord, according to the prediction, "went down quick into hell." Ananias had just given utterance to a falsehood, when he fell down and gave up the ghost. And it was in the midst of his blasphemy, pride, and ungodly arrogance, that the angel of the Lord smote Herod, so that he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost. But whether their death is accompanied by any sensible token of the divine displeasure or not, it is true of all who die in impenitence, that they are "driven away in their wickedness." This language evidently implies,

1. That their death is, in some sense, violent in its nature. *They are driven away.* It is a matter of compulsion with them. As the enemy of our nature — as the severer of all its strong ties, death is abhorrent to all, but especially to the wicked. This world they have chosen for their portion; they are supremely attached to its pleasures, its riches, and its honors; and here they would ever remain. But when the summons is put into their hands they must go — must go, too, just when they have learned to live so as to promote their own enjoyment, and when, like the rich man spoken of in the Gospel, they are full of worldly plans and expectations. How

hard! With what reluctance do they obey the call! How gladly would they purchase even a short respite! But the grim messenger cannot be bribed. Go they must,—“there is no discharge in that war,”—and as the wind irresistibly impels the chaff, so death drives them away.

But their reluctance to leave this world is connected, not only with what is behind, but also with what is before them. And what is that?—“the deep, damp vault, the darkness and the worm,”—yes, these are before them; but more than these, the judgment-seat of Christ and the prison of despair are before them. And although these may have had little or no place in their thoughts before, yet how will they force themselves upon their attention. Instances there are, indeed, in which the wicked have no bands in their death. Ignorant of their relations to God, and of the nature and extent of his claims upon them, they die as do the brutes, or having persisted in a sinful course, in opposition to their own convictions of duty and the warnings of God’s word, their heart has been hardened and their conscience seared as with a hot iron. But generally speaking, where the dying sinner is capable of reflection, he is unwilling to leave this world, and his reluctance arises not so much from the consideration that he is leaving all the objects to which his heart is attached, as by the thought that he is going to the tribunal of that God, whose law he has transgressed, and from whose sentence there is no appeal. How distressing to the bystanders,—how absolutely frightful, sometimes, are the exercises of the dying sinner, in view of that rigid and impartial trial that awaits him! Nor is such the fact merely in the case of those whose whole life had been an uninterrupted course of daring impiety and gross immorality. The virtuous moralist—the man of unblemished reputation, who had been scrupulously attentive to his relative duties, has also his fearful apprehensions of judgment to come. And, my hearers, there are men in the world, who, in so far as mere moral virtue is concerned, are decidedly in the advance of many who are numbered among the followers of Christ, but who, if they retain their present character, shall eventually

be found among the enemies of his cross. But when summoned to appear before the Judge of all, are these moralists of whom I have spoken, ready to obey the call? Have they no misgivings in relation to their being able to stand the test, when their character and conduct shall be compared with the statute book of heaven? Ah! when conscience alarmed charges them with having neglected all their religious duties— with having robbed God of their love and service— with having trampled under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace,

“In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Runs round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to each avenue and shrieks for help:

• • • • •
A little longer, yet a little longer,
O! might she stay to wash away her crimes,
And fit her for the passage! Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood, and every groan
She heaves is big with horror.”

Nor is this agony without sufficient cause. It is no more than proportioned to the circumstances of the case. For the language of the text implies also,

2. That to the wicked, death is but the beginning of sorrows. They are driven away *in their wickedness*— they die in unbelief and impenitence. And of course, they can never, by any possibility, be admitted into heaven. “Into the holy city, New Jerusalem,” we are assured, “there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie.” Nor is there any revealed way of deliverance from sin after death. There is no time of merciful visitation in the world to come. He that is unjust when death overtakes him, shall be unjust still, and he that is filthy shall be filthy still. Then being driven away in their wickedness, the wicked shall lose all the blessedness and glory of heaven, and still more, they shall sink down into that pit of destruction, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not

quenched. This corresponds with the express testimony of Scripture. "Whatsoever," it is said, "a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And again, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." How important then for thee, fellow-sinner, to forsake thy sins immediately, before death overtake thee.

Let us proceed now,

II. To the more pleasing part of the subject—the contemplation of the end of the opposite character. "The righteous hath hope in his death." Hope is the expectation of future good, and it belongs to all the righteous. It is not indeed possessed by them all in the same degree. The hope of some is faint as their faith is weak; but in many instances, blessed be God, the hope of the righteous is bright and animating, and triumphant. But whether the hope of the righteous man is faint or bright, it terminates on the same objects. And,

I. In his dying moments he can entertain the expectation that when his body returns to the earth as it was, his spirit shall return unto God who gave, sanctified, and fitted it for his holy presence and fellowship. The whole revelation of God proceeds upon the principle that the soul of man is immortal. What all men instinctively feel—what philosophy had long labored to prove, the Bible clearly teaches. By the Gospel, life and immortality are brought to light. From its discovering it is plain that the soul is imperishable, and shall survive the dissolution of the body. The wicked indeed are destined to an immortal existence as well as the righteous. But as the former are driven away in their wickedness, they shall be forever excluded God's blissful presence; whereas the latter, being conformed to his likeness, will ascend to heaven and bask forever in the light of his favor. So long as the righteous remain in this world, they are subjects of imperfection, and are called to struggle constantly against the power of remaining corruption. Nor have they any promise that this warfare shall cease until death. Then, however, the struggle with sin will end, and they will be made perfect in holiness. They shall then be perfectly and forever freed from the inclination

and all temptation to sin. The body of sin and death shall no longer adhere to them. The world with all its enticements will have passed away. Nor will Satan any longer torment them with his fiery darts. Presented spotless before the throne of their Heavenly Father, they will never more contract defilement; but will serve him forever in the beauty of holiness. And how much is such a prospect calculated to cheer and comfort the departing believer! To reflect that he is going to that world of light and purity, where he will never lament the existence of depravity in his heart—where iniquity shall no more prevail against him in the sense of its guilt and the feeling of its power; but where, a stranger to misconception or mistake, and blessed with entire conformity to the image of his God, he will know even as also he is known, and render a cheerful and perfect obedience to his will: surely this is sufficient to strip death of half its terrors.

2. In his death the righteous man has also the hope of being soon delivered from all his present sufferings. Many are the afflictions of the righteous in this life. And though they are brought under new covenant influences, and made by the divine blessing to promote their sanctification, they are nevertheless painful and distressing. But they are soon to terminate. In that world where sin shall be unknown and holiness perfected, such a purifying instrumentality will not be required. We are accordingly informed, that in that world of purity, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Death, which to the wicked is but the beginning of sorrows, puts an end to the sufferings of the righteous. After death they shall no more experience the pressure of poverty or the pain of disease. Nor will their purified spirits be any more agitated by sinful passions, nor their hearts torn with anguish, nor their consciences stung with remorse. In the language of inspiration, "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

3. Further, the dying believer can cherish the expectation

of a glorious resurrection. "Christ," it is said, "is risen, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." By his resurrection, Christians are furnished with the fullest assurance that their bodies shall ultimately be ransomed from the power of the grave. This fact establishes the truth and authority of the gospel. And of the gospel it is a leading doctrine, that all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth. And why should it be thought with any a thing incredible that *God* should raise the dead?

"Sure the same hand
That made the piece at first, and took it down,
Can re-assemble the loose, scattered parts,
And put them as they were."

God has sufficient power to raise the dead, and sufficient wisdom to direct that power. Already He has shown wonders in the grave — "Christ is risen," and we may rest assured that those who sleep in Jesus will God eventually bring with Him. At the last day the wicked will be raised as well as the righteous, but in very different circumstances, and with very different prospects. "They shall awake," saith the prophet, "to shame and everlasting contempt." And says the Saviour himself, "they shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation;" and hence the event is to them one poignant with terror. But as the resurrection of the righteous shall be to life and glory, it is to them an event of joyful expectation. In the prospect of death, then, every believer may adopt the language of the patriarch, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me."

4. Finally, the righteous man at death has the expectation of entering immediately upon a state of blessedness complete and eternal. Of the blessedness of the heavenly state, we can now form no adequate conception. "It doth not yet

appear what we shall be." Reasoning, however, from the principles of our nature, and guided by the light of revelation, we may be able to ascertain at least some of its ingredients. And from the nature of our mental constitution, and the intimations of Holy Scripture, we may safely say that the heavenly state will be,

(1.) A state of activity free from labor and fatigue. Man is an active being. And therefore a state of ecstatic indolence — which is all the idea many persons have of heaven — would be as little suited to the constitution of his nature as adapted to fulfill the end of his creation. It is a law of his nature — and it is a benign law — that to be happy he must be actively and usefully employed.

*"A want of occupation is not rest;
A mind quite vacant, is a mind distressed."*

Accordingly the Bible represents the saints of God in heaven, as serving Him with untiring assiduity. "They serve Him," it is said, "day and night in his temple." This language, evidently, teaches the uninterrupted as well as sacred nature of their employment. How they will be occupied we are not expressly informed. And on this subject it would be idle to speculate. A considerable part of their attention will doubtless be given to direct acts of religious worship. But there is no reason to suppose that this will be their sole exercise. The contemplation and study of the divine works will also, no doubt, occupy a portion of their time. And they will be in no danger of ever experiencing a dearth of subjects. The glories of creation, the mysteries of providence, and the wonders of redemption, will furnish subjects for constant and delightful contemplation. And by such contemplation, they will continually advance in the knowledge of the divine character, and ever find fresh matter for praise.

(2.) Another ingredient of celestial blessedness is, the enjoyment that will spring from the most interesting associations. Man was formed for society as well as for action. Nor would all that has been mentioned as embraced in the Christian's

hope, in death, render him completely happy, without the fellowship of congenial spirits. But this will not be wanting. From the Scriptures it is manifest, that in heaven, the pleasures of enlightened and pure society will be enjoyed. The figures of a city, and of a feast, which are employed to represent it, clearly imply this. There, the saint of the Lord will mingle with the great and good of all ages and all climes. There, all earthly distinctions will be done away, and on the single ground of his relationship to Jesus, the humblest believer may have free access to, and delightful intercourse with, the father of the faithful, the evangelical prophet, or the great apostle of the gentiles,—aye, and He will be a meet associate for those exalted beings, who were never stained with sin, but who have been advancing in knowledge and holiness for six thousand years.

(3.) The blessedness of heaven includes the beatific vision and full fruition of the triune Jehovah. The redeemed shall there be blessed with the perfect communion of their Heavenly Father, and shall have the light of his countenance constantly beaming upon them: The Spirit of grace will continue to fan the flame of divine love in their hearts, and they will enjoy a more strong and uninterrupted sense of his presence than they ever had on earth. And they will see Jesus as He is—will walk with Him in white—will sit with Him on his throne, and will enjoy the unclouded and uninterrupted vision of his matchless glory. But,

(4.) To crown all, the blessedness of heaven will be eternal. The saved sinner will not only be satisfied, but he will never experience pain arising from the apprehension of the withdrawal of his joys. He will know that he is saved for ever—that the life, which he enjoys, is life eternal—that the crown, which he wears, will never, never fade away.

“O, ye blessed scenes of permanent delight!
Full above measure, lasting beyond bound,
A perpetuity of bliss, is bliss.”

Such then is the hope, which the righteous hath in his death

— a hope of a glorious resurrection, and of exaltation to a state of perfect and everlasting purity and blessedness. Nor will his hope ever make him ashamed. It is built on a stable foundation. Jesus Christ, the rock of ages — the tried cornerstone — is the foundation on which his hope is built. He has purchased for him all the blessings of which he has the expectation. He has also promised to bestow these blessings upon him. He may, therefore, confidently expect the full realization of his expectations. For “the Strength of Israel is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent; hath He said it, and shall He not do it? hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” And such, in its nature and foundation, being the hope, which the righteous hath in his death, who is not ready to say with the prophet of Pethor, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” To him, death will prove the messenger of good, for it will come to dismiss him from this world of conflict and suffering, and introduce him into the paradise of God. Let us then, believing brethren, accustom ourselves to contemplate death in this light, and let us cherish our peculiar hopes; and then, in the hour of our departure, we will be enabled to adopt the triumphant language, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But if the hope of the righteous man be thus sufficient to sustain him in the trying hour of dissolution, may it not well console and cheer him when called to pass through the valley of the shadow of death? Affliction is not inconsistent with an interest in the covenant favor of God. It is, in truth, a part of the discipline of his gracious covenant, and is intended to promote the spiritual benefit of his people. In the present life, his children are in their minority. In the Church on earth, they are being disciplined and trained for the realms of light into which it is the sovereign pleasure of their Heavenly Father ere long to introduce them. And in order to bear properly the trials which are appointed them,

and derive from them the benefit they are designed to convey, they must labor to obtain satisfactory evidence that they are the children of God, cherish the hopes that are peculiar to such as sustain to him the relation of children, and keep their eye fixed on the glorious and eternal reward that awaits them. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

It is, under any circumstances, a serious thing to die. But to die without hope, how awful! To close the eyes in night—"a night which has no morn beyond it, and no star," how unspeakably awful! But would you, fellow-sinner, possess the hope, which the righteous has in his death? You must live his life—you must strive to attain his character—Jesus Christ, the object of his trust, you must receive. In his saving character, he is the only foundation on which you can build with safety for eternity. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus." Then believe on his name, and live the life which you now live in the flesh a life of faith upon Him, and being justified through the redemption that is in his blood, you will have peace with God and a joyful hope of future glory. And why should you hesitate to take his yoke upon you? Your doing so will not retard you in any lawful pursuit, nor exclude you from any rational pleasure. Having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come, religion, if you embrace it, will give you comfort in life, and in death, hope. Attend, therefore, now to one thing that is needful. Guard carefully against a disposition to procrastinate in the concerns of the soul. "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation." Put ye on therefore the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

Amen.

SERMON XIII.

THE HOLINESS WHICH BECOMETH GOD'S HOUSE.

BY REV. WILLIAM DAVIDSON,

Pastor of the Associate Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ohio.

“Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever.”—*Psalm 93: 5.*

CERTAIN words are so transparent, that attempts at explanation do more harm than good. If any one does not understand them, it is difficult to make him do so, because there are no plainer ones to substitute. Thus, for example, with the words day-light, day-time, sunrise, sunset. As it is with certain words, so with certain propositions, they carry the evidence of their sense and truth in their very statement. No illustration can make their meaning plainer, and no argument can make their affirmations surer. Thus with self-evident propositions. If any one refuse to receive them as true, simply upon the evidence contained in the very statement of them, we do not think it worth while to converse any longer with him. If, for example, any one should deny that the whole is greater than a part, you would instantly, turning on your heel, break off the conversation.

Now, we think these remarks applicable to the terms and to the proposition of our text. For although the word “holiness” has more acceptations than one in the Holy Scriptures, still its sense in this place is so transparent, that nothing, we think,

but willful perverseness, or hopeless obtuseness, can fail to perceive it. And were we called upon for definition, it is confessed that we would be at a loss how to proceed. I know of no other which could be substituted with likelihood of success. You may say, "it means sanctity, or purity, or integrity, in heart, speech, and behavior;" but after all, have you made the thing plainer than it was before. You may say it includes all those virtues, purities, charities, and sanctities, which constitute the elements of character that obtains amongst the ransomed in heaven; but are you sure that you are any the better understood for your pains? Does not the mind that has any ideas of religion at all—does not the moral sense within us, darkened as it is, intuitively lay hold of the term as including all these ideas?

The same remarks which we make concerning the terms and the meaning of our proposition, are also true concerning the truth of the proposition. We no sooner hear that holiness becomes the house of the Lord, than we assent to it as true. And no form nor amount of augmentation can add to the firmness of our convictions. When we say that boyish behavior becomes not the man of gray hairs, or when we affirm that grave and dignified behavior becomes the venerable magistrate, or the sacred pastor, we suppose that we utter propositions universally understood, and accorded to; and if asked for explanation, or for argument, of course we would think it unnecessary to say another word. So do we hold it of our text. We cannot understand the terms of it, without assenting to the truth of it. And to reason with one who doubts it, is just to reason with one who is unable to perceive the accordancy or disagreement of ideas; that is, it is to reason with one who is incapable of understanding any thing at all.

But perhaps some of you are ready to ask, "if there be nothing obscure in the terms of the text, and if there be nothing dubious in the proposition which these words bring forward; why then make such a text the subject of a sermon? Would it not be more for edification, to choose such a text as requires the bringing forth of new ideas, and of new explanations?"

And of what use is the Christian minister who presents to us only such things as we know already as perfectly, and believe as firmly, as we can?" Waiving other answers, we reply, that the objection overlooks the wide difference there is between knowledge and consideration—a distinction which it were always well to bear in mind. For it is very possible, and indeed, in religious things, quite too common, to have the one without the other. You cannot doubt the text may, in language which you all understand, express a truth which you all believe; while yet it may be highly important that the too much neglected truth be pressed home upon your attention and your conscience.

You know, Christians, that holiness becomes the house of the Lord; that every one who names the name of Christ should depart from all iniquity. But are you adequately impressed with the solemn and mighty import of that truth to which you so readily yield your assent? What then means it, that you give so little attention to the preparation of your soul when about to visit that house? Why so little prayer? Why so little wrestling of soul in your closets? Why so formal and lifeless in your devotions? Why such negligence concerning the frame of your souls, and the emotions of your hearts? Nay! you have never yet adequately appreciated the holiness which becometh the house of the Lord. Could we display it to you in all its sanctity, could you perceive it in all its extent, there would assuredly be more care in preparing your hearts for drawing near to God; more fervency in prayer; a more resolute struggle with the earthly affections and undevout emotions which follow you to the house of God, and which oppress you there. And instead of that habitual listlessness and indifference, which from week to week I see depicted upon so many faces around me; there would be seen in every act, and heard in every word, and found in every thought, and felt in every emotion, the fruits meet for a soul that, conscious of an awful Presence, exclaims, "How terrible is this place? Surely God is in this place—This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven"—and you

would join the cherubim upon the mercy-seat, in crying, "Holy, holy, holy." Most of my hearers, I fear, do not properly consider what they do, or where they go, when they go up to his temple with the tribes of God, else their feelings and their demeanor would be vastly different from what they are.

Recollect, then, that holiness becomes the house of God, *because a holy God is there.*

God is in his house, as He is nowhere else. There is a sense in which God is everywhere. He fills heaven and earth, yea, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Him. He is omnipresent. We cannot go from his presence, we cannot flee from his Spirit. Ascend we heaven, behold! He is there: dig we into hell, lo! He is there: take we the wings of the morning, and flee to the utmost parts of the sea, there his hand leads us, and his right hand upholds us. It is, my hearers, to the wicked a tremendous, but to the righteous a consoling, truth, that God is everywhere. He is here; and He is on the mountain's top. In the red coral caves of ocean's bed, and in the volcano's burning home, God is. Above the clouds, and storms, and feathered snows; beyond the moon, and sun, and swarming universe, God is. His voice is heard in the whispering winds that sigh among the rose-beds; and it roars in the tornado that uproots the forest, and shakes the wilderness, and brings the steepled cities crashing to the ground. God is everywhere. In heaven He radiates wave after wave of beatification over a population that bathes in tides of everlasting bliss; and bolt after bolt, as fast and furious they fly through all her dark resounding caverns, attest that He is vengefully present in hell. But He is *here*, as He is nowhere else. True, we cannot see Him; nor is He palpable to any of our bodily senses; but He is here. True, no unutterable epiphany attests his presence to us, as it is attested to heaven's swarming glorified: and no streams of burning wrath reveal Him, as He is revealed in the regions of unavailing tears and lamentations: still that great God is present here — emphatically, mysteriously, *peculiarly* present. Not merely present as He is everywhere, a Creator, Preserver, and Governor. In

these senses, too, He is here. But He is also here in a peculiar sense; here, as He is nowhere else. Although imperceptible to all our physical senses, still that mighty, terrible One, whom the heavens, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, takes, with us to day, his station in his temple. God hath made choice of Zion; He hath desired it for his habitation. This, says He, is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it. Himself hath promised that He will be with his disciples *always*; that where even two of them meet in his name, He will not only be *with* them, but be in the *midst* of them; that in every institution ratified by the record of his name, He will meet with his chosen. To the spiritual temple *eminently*, and to the services there, was the promise through Solomon made, "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there *forever*; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." These, Christians, are the faithful sayings of God, full of grace and truth. Call them into your memory when ye go into his temple; and be assured that you are come, this day, unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

It is, thus himself assures us of a *special* presence of the Godhead, in the assemblies of the saints. And the experience of every real Christian attests it. If there be one Christian amongst us all, and you ask him, whether he knows and feels that God is here, if he were to die for it, he would answer, "God is here as He is nowhere else." Or if you ask a child of God, who is exiled from his home and country and Church to a land of Romish superstition, or of pagan idolatry, what he most desires, he will answer — "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the

Lord and to inquire in his temple. But if you think the living have some motive for deceiving you, or that they themselves are deceived; then ask the dead. Ask the glorified, and with one voice they asseverate that it was ever good for them, while on earth, to spend a day in the courts of their King—that in his house, they ever found the forth-goings of a peculiar influence, and the manifestation of a peculiar loveliness; that they found such light, and love, and joy, and strength, and courage there, as they found not elsewhere; that when they went there with the requisite preparation, they ever found the King on his mercy-seat, and between the cherubim; and ever ready with a kinder smile, and a more precious welcome, than could be witnessed elsewhere.

If you are not yet satisfied; ask those who, while they lived, visited the sanctuary only to profane it; who came here from time to time, with the deliberate intention of counting the proffered blood of Jesus an unholy thing, and of doing despite to the Spirit of grace,—ask them if they now find and know that God was present in his holy house on earth—ask them if they have found, at last, that his jealousy burns hot round about his altar; and with breast, and mouth, and tongue, and breath of fire, they will tell you that He was there, as He was nowhere else. That He was present, seeing to it that every slighted sermon, and every act of desecration should do their work in hardening them, and in sealing them up to the great damnation—that He, even himself, in retributive justice on their contempt of holy things, and their disregard of his holy presence, was there, giving forth a judicial sentence against him, whereby every slighted sentence of the uttered gospel, and every stifled accent of a striving conscience, should do their work in hardening the heart, and blinding the mind, and searing the conscience; thus preparing them, more and more, for the everlasting burnings.

How, my hearers, does this solemn truth reprove us for our careless conversation, thoughts, and behavior on the Sabbath! Is God, the great, the terrible, the jealous, the holy, and the wonder-working God, here—peculiarly, graciously, jealously

here? Do we meet Him every time we come here, either in mercy or in wrath? Would to God I could make this idea to sink down into your hearts, and live there! would to God I could make it live, as it should, in my own! Could I rightly realize that God has given me a message to deliver to a company of immortals, all of whom must shortly be saved or lost, and that there is, by divine appointment, an intimate connection between my fidelity and their salvation; and could I rightly enter into the solemn reality that, having given me a message to you, He himself has come to be present at its delivery, that He is one of my auditors, that his searching eyes are upon me, that they are piercing into my soul and my reins: then, methinks, that awed by such a scrutiny, I should be in less danger of seeking the applause, rather than the souls of my people; that the redemption, and its author; and your souls, and mine; and the judgment-seat, and hell and heaven, would, without my seeking it, give me an eloquence, which not all the arts and learning of the schools can ever equal, or approach, or imitate.

And could I only make this idea live in your minds, that *God is here*; that you are now in his presence; that his eyes, which are like a flame of fire, are piercing into the darkest recesses of your hearts; and that every fleeting wish, and every passing thought, and every transient emotion, are scrutinized with all that jealousy which burns around the altar; and that God's recording angel, with his inkhorn and his pen, is jotting it all down and treasuring it all up against you — I say, if I could give this idea a proper hold on your heart, and on my own; what a preacher! and what a people! for the attendant angels to look upon, and mingle with.

God is here. And did He give a sensible manifestation of his presence; did He command that in every church a seat should be set apart for himself; could our bodily senses take cognizance of his revealed perfections; could these eyes behold the ineffable benignity of those regards which He is even now casting upon the devout, and the spiritual worshipers amongst you; could these ears hear, as they entered these doors, those

words of encouragement which in fact He did utter, and which a lively faith did hear—"Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely;" O! could the saints see Him as He sits amongst them, and as He rejoices over them, saying, "Thy lips are as a thread of scarlet, thy speech is excellent and comely, and thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks;" could your senses, Christians, take cognizance of his presence from Sabbath to Sabbath; then, tell me, what holy anxiety, what fervent prayer, what deep and earnest wrestlings of soul against all unholiness, would Sabbath after Sabbath witness in your dwellings on your way hither, and while you mingle in the assemblies of the saints. Would there be seen such levity as is witnessed in your deportment? Would there be heard such levity, as is uttered in your conversation?

But, careless, thoughtless unbelievers! you, too, must remember that God is here, and that therefore holiness becomes this place. Could you see Him, as He is, at this very moment, looking upon the undevout, and the unbelieving, part of my auditory; could you see the mustering wrath that lowers on his brow, at finding how carelessly and shamelessly you behave in his presence; could you behold Him as from these walls He looks at me to witness the fidelity with which I deliver my embassy, and as He looks at you to witness how you receive it. And when with a heartless, hypocritical spirit, you go carelessly through the solemn ceremonials of our sacred liturgy, could you hear Him utter the sentence, which, in fact, He does even now pronounce upon you—"What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?"—then, O then! would you feel, as you have never yet felt it, that it is a solemn thing to wait in the house of God. Tell me, ye who Sabbath after Sabbath reject the proffered salvation; who come here, not to worship God, not to see Jesus, but for recreation, for amusement, for intellectual and emotional gratification; and who come

with all your irreverence, and habitual indifference, to the God and the grace that are here.—Tell me, if you did every day see this manifested presence, if you every day saw the wrath gathering blacker and blacker on his brow; and the indignation blazing fiercer and brighter in his eye; and every day felt his hand as it stretched itself forth upon your spirits, in judicial influence, making them harder and more hell-like than before; I say, if such a presence manifested itself to you from day to day, could you spend your Sabbath hours in listlessness, in indevotion, in giving all your thoughts to the style of the service, to the utter neglect of the substance of it. Nay, either you would fall down and cry out for mercy, or uttering such shrieks of horror, as are heard only on the verge of hell, would return no more.

And now I ask in all seriousness, what difference it makes whether we can see God here, and hear Him, or not? He is as certainly here, as surely looking on, as solemnly charging me to be faithful, and as solemnly charging you to receive his offered Son, and salvation, as if we saw Him with our bodily senses. Tell me, then, if holiness becomes not the house of God; if we ought not to keep our feet when we go there; and if we ought not to fear, lest ours be the doom of those who draw near with the mouth, and do honor with the tongue, whilst the heart is far from Him. Who amongst you all would think of going to a party where were congregated the talent and the taste of the town, and of going in the garb of a scullion or a scavenger? Would you not prepare? Would you not wish to appear respectable? What holy pains then ought to be expended — not upon the outer man, but upon the soul — when you are about to come into the presence of God, the Judge of all, and to mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and with the general assembly of the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven.

I have known men, and I presume there is more than one such in this community, who would like very much to go to the house of God, if they could only go in respectable habiliments; but they are poor and ragged, and there are not want-

ing fashionable boors in every congregation, who would stare and curl the nose at their coarse and tattered clothing. It is on this account, as much as any other, that so many are so habitually absent from our sanctuaries. They see the man of the gold ring and the goodly apparel politely attended to, while they are neglected; and they are too proud to go where they will be impertinently stared at, or contemptuously left to find a seat as best they can. Now I do not justify them in all this. They are wrong. The gospel is for the poor as well as for the rich; and, I am not ashamed to avow it, I never see one such man enter these doors, but my heart yearns to embrace him, to bid him welcome, and to assure him that God hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and to be heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him.

But whilst we lament that so many poor allow such false pride to keep them from where they might find the true riches, still there is a lesson in it which I would be glad could we all be brought to profit by: we should prepare our souls for coming into the presence of the great Most High—we should keep our feet when we go to the house of the Lord. Are you so keenly sensitive in regard to your appearance before men? Remember that the eyes of Him with whom you have to do are upon you, that this is his house, that this is the place where He hath chosen to put his name, the place where His honor dwelleth. Then let it be our care, when we come here, to bring upon our spirits a holy awe and reverence of Him. And encouraged by the proclamations of a gracious gospel, “let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Let us worship Him in the beauty of holiness; let us come into his courts, bringing an offering with us. With harp and the voice of a psalm, let us sing loudly before the Lord the King.

S E R M O N X I V .

SPIRITUAL LIFE.

BY REV. J. B. SCOULLER,

Of the Associate Reformed Synod of New York.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 3: 18.

IN reference to the sinner's conversion to God, no theory precise and definite can be laid down; for independent of the Spirit's sovereignty, there are many circumstances to modify the experience of different individuals. Sometimes God sees fit so to bless pious training and godly example, that they issue in the gradual and progressive deepening of piety in the heart of the child, so that he glides imperceptibly into union and communion with Jesus, bearing in his soul no traces of past conflicts. He is conscious that he loves God, and sincerely endeavors to keep his commandments because of that love; and yet his memory supplies him with no data by which to judge when or how this constraining love was enthroned in his affections. It was doubtless thus with Timothy, “whose unfeigned faith dwelt first in” his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice; for God had promised in the covenant of grace, “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.”

More generally, however, the Spirit acts with such marked effects, that the sinner's conscience can distinctly trace the successive steps of his return to God. He is roused from his spiritual lethargy by a strong conviction of his unworthiness, and the odiousness of his sins. His soul is troubled with a sickening apprehension that the rejected love, and despised mercy, of God will not, cannot, forget past transgressions, and bestow pardon upon such a prince of sinners. Events long since forgotten are now brought back to the mind with painful freshness; and the past of life weighs upon the conscience night and day with crushing power. These sorrows and convictions continue with various degrees of intensity, and for a greater or less length of time; when gradually, or, more generally, suddenly light from on high breaks upon the benighted soul, and fills the heart with joy ecstatic. The convert now enjoys a calm and comforting peace, which leads him to entertain high hopes, or revel in the full assurance that God has pardoned, and that Jesus will save him.

The experience of different individuals in reference to conversion, is so modified by different degrees of previous knowledge, variety of temperaments, and combinations of present circumstances, that no Christian is warranted in measuring a brother by his own experience. God would thus seem to teach us that the work was his, and that the glory should be given to Him.

After the convulsive throes of conversion are past, a new state of spiritual existence commences; and however much it may be diversified with sun and shade, mountain and valley, there is a great degree of uniformity in the experience of different individuals. In entering upon this new state, all are destined to experience sooner or later a bitter disappointment; for the peace of mind enjoyed at this time leads the inexperienced convert to flatter himself, that as Satan has been dislodged from his strong hold in the heart, the victory has been won, and that henceforth a life of sweet and uninterrupted communion with God awaits him. But he is soon waked from his dream of peace by the workings of sin within,

and the assaults of Satan without; and henceforth he is destined to suffer all the annoyance of a guerrilla warfare waged against him by the world; the flesh, and the devil. And he is astonished to find that it is by communications of grace under these very trials and sorrows, that his spiritual strength is increased, and he enabled to walk more closely with his God.

The *nature*, the *cultivation*, and the *difficulties* of this new spiritual life, in working out the sanctification of the soul, will constitute the themes of discourse upon the present occasion

I. The *nature* of spiritual life.

It may be well here briefly to premise that spiritual life does not consist in a mere external service. However commendable it may be in a moral view, to attend regularly upon the public services of religion; go through all the external forms of public and private devotion; liberally support Christianity in all the different departments of its operations; take an interest in religious things; and even live honestly and morally; yet the existence of all these does not necessarily imply that there is spiritual life. The latter it is true cannot exist without the former; but the former can and often do exist without the latter. For Satan, feeling his inability to quench the operations of the Holy Spirit, loves to lull the thoughtless into a false and often fatal security, by counterfeiting the Spirit's work.

Of the *essence* of this new life we know nothing. Jesus has himself declared, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It is one of those mysteries, the understanding of which God has reserved to himself: and where the Spirit is silent, it would be presumptuous for us to speculate. Our ignorance upon this subject is however no argument against the existence of such a life; for its nature and manifestations are distinctly and strongly marked in the believer's experience: showing that the essence of religion is neither mere sentiment or emotion, but an active, progressive, and controlling principle

of life. A similar mystery is to be found in the natural world. No philosopher, however learned, can tell what life is; and yet we all know that it does not consist in the mere actions of the body, or the exercises of the mind. Just so with spiritual life. New views and altered feelings assure the Christian that an essential change has occurred, and that he is animated by a new principle of life; however ignorant he may be of the essence of that life, having been brought by a way he knew not.

The *exercises* of this life are spontaneous. Every manifestation of life has some peculiar functions, the exercise of which is an essential part of that life. Thus the action of the lungs and the operations of the heart are not dependent upon the will; they are involuntary and spontaneous. So the mind in receiving impressions, comparing, and deducing, never feels the weight of force or necessity. These exercises are essential to the very being of mind. Even sleep, which binds up the senses in forgetfulness, has no bands with which to fetter the exercises of the mind. The affections are governed by the same law. They cluster around an object, because they perceive something lovely in that object; and scorn the interference of physical or mental force. The same general law of life causes the believer to offer to God a homage which springs unbidden from the heart. The child of God delights in the things of God, receives the word with gladness, and rejoices when they say to him, let us go into the house of the Lord; for his soul thirsteth after God, yea his heart and his flesh crieth out for the living God; and he would rather be a door-keeper in the house of his God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Hence those public, social, and private devotions of the formal professor, which are called forth by a mere sense of duty, or the convictions of conscience, are not pleasing to God, or profitable to the soul of the offerer; because they spring not from that love to God which manifests itself in spontaneous and joyful devotions.

This life is *progressive* in its nature. Faint and feeble at first, but constantly gathering strength, it gradually matures.

The character of this progression is distinctly marked out in the text. We are not only exhorted to "grow in grace," but also to grow "in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And our growth in grace will always correspond with the increase of our practical knowledge of our Lord and Saviour; for it is by this knowledge that we grow in grace. This progress must not be measured, as it too often is, by joy; for that exuberance of joy which springs from the sportive gambols of childhood, is rarely felt amid the richer pleasures of manhood; so that exquisite joy often felt at regeneration gradually declines, and yet the growth of grace continues. A decline in joyful feelings is so different from what the young convert expects, that he fears that religion is declining in his heart, when in reality his religion, which commenced as little more than an emotion, is maturing into a strong and fixed principle of life. The progress, therefore, which characterizes spiritual life, is not an increase, or even continuance, of joy; but "an increase of strength; strength of faith; strength of purpose; strength of principle; strength to do right, and to resist evil."

The manner in which progress is made in the divine life often staggers the faith of the young convert, and fills his heart with sadness. As his knowledge of his Lord and Saviour increases, he gains a clearer insight into the evils of his heart and the corruptions of his nature; and his first conclusion is that he is constantly growing worse and worse, for he sees more and more over which to sorrow: whereas these new insights into the evils which have *always* existed in his heart, only mark the growth of grace. Job understood well this operation of grace, for when he sought higher attainments in the divine life, his prayer was "make me to know my transgression and my sin." And for the same object did David pray—"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

In this new life there is a *harmonious growth of all the graces of the Spirit*. If some of the members of the body were

to acquire the maturity of manhood, while others remained as in infancy, the result would be weakness and deformity. If some of the faculties of the mind were to gain strength and power, while others remained undeveloped, it would produce derangement which would render its possessor unfit for the active duties of life. A well-formed body, and a finely balanced mind require all their parts to be equally and harmoniously developed. The same is true of the soul. The image of God which is impressed upon it at the new birth, is equally impressed upon each of its faculties. Hence the good man must be kind as well as just, charitable as well as honest. All the graces of the Spirit must be equally vigorous, and equally ready to manifest themselves when suitable opportunities present themselves. Here is one of the surest tests of regeneration. The formalist may imitate some of the more common and manifest graces of the divine life; as honesty and benevolence: but he will fail in exhibiting the rarer gifts; as humility and reverence. And this lack of harmonious development is a strong evidence that there has been no spiritual birth, and that consequently there can be no spiritual life.

This spiritual life must *pervade the whole man*, soul, body, and mind; all must be sanctified, and consecrated to the service of God. "Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The influence of the body over the soul is such, that as long as lust and passion remain unrestrained and unmortified, the soul cannot grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The mind and body must be crucified to the world, before the soul can experience, and much less exhibit the spontaneous, progressive, and harmonious exercises of the divine life.

The *nature* of this spiritual life may still farther be explained, by the manifestations it makes of its own existence; for the tree is ever known by its fruits.

This new life manifests itself in *love to God*. Just so soon as the heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit, it instinctively turns to God, and rests with delight in the contemplation of his perfections; for its new desires can be gratified in no other way. But mark, this is not merely a love for the goodness and excellency which are associated with God, but a *personal* love for himself, fully recognizing his relations to us, and deeply feeling our dependence upon Him, and our obligations to Him. There are millions who love that goodness of the divine government which ministers to their wants and pleasures, and yet love not the Author of these bounties, and refuse to recognize his just relations to them.

The love to God of which I am speaking will produce submission to Him, in all the ways of his providence and of his grace. Clouds and darkness may gather around the Christian's pathway, sorrow and sadness may oppress his heart, disappointment and bereavement may meet him at every step in life, yet there is no murmur or complaint against the goodness and justice of God. The enmity and rebellion of the natural man have been crucified, so that with whatever bitters the cup of life may be drugged, when God presses it to the believer's lips, he freely drinks, and with his Saviour exclaims, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." This love will not only produce submission to the will of God, but also *obedience* to all his commands. It is of the very nature of love to produce congeniality of mind; and if we love God, we must love what He loves, and hate what He hates. This oneness of affection must necessarily lead us to desire the accomplishment of his will; and if we desire, we will also labor and obey.

This spiritual life will manifest itself in *habitual self-denial*. Jesus has himself set us an example upon this subject, "for although He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich." And his whole life showed how willingly He denied himself, and sacrificed all for the accomplishment of that glorious work He came to perform. Paul tells us that "the grace of God that bringeth

salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." If we consider the circumstances with which we are surrounded, we will see the absolute necessity of thus denying ourselves, if we would be friends of God. The world is at enmity with heaven, and has "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator," and is thus calculated to draw us from our Lord and Saviour. If we would live the divine life, we must lay a strong and controlling hand upon the tyranny of fashion, the allurements of pleasure, and the lusts of passion. This self-denial must not be occasional and capricious in its exercise, but habitual and uncompromising.

This spiritual life will also manifest itself in a *growing conscientiousness* in regard to what are sometimes called *minor duties*. It is an old and true remark, that "little things are no trifles," for these are always the true indices of character. The great and important duties of life occupy our thoughts and attention so much, that in their performance we are careful and guarded, and thus enabled to conceal our true motives. But in regard to the minor duties, there is less attention and watchfulness, and consequently less concealment of motive and character. Such actions spring unbidden from the heart, and thus reveal its true condition. Spiritual life, which equally pervades the whole man, will be particularly manifested in a growing conscientiousness in reference to these minor duties: not because there is more grace connected with their performance, but because the world practices less deceit in regard to them. Thus setting forth in an unquestionable way the gracious state of that soul which regards and practices all duties, whether great or small, in the same spirit, and from the same motive. Satan, however, sometimes counterfeits this evidence of grace by a *scrupulous* conscience which haggles at the most innocent gratifications, and would banish from our enjoyment certain meats and pleasures which God has provided for his people. Of this counterfeit, beware.

II. The *cultivation* of this spiritual life. Or, the *means* of growth in grace.

Errors are taught upon this subject against which we should carefully guard. The natural man knows not the Spirit of God, and consequently seeks not his aid in striving after higher attainments in virtue. Many of the most popular works on moral philosophy have done much to poison the minds of men upon this subject, by treating of mere morality as something closely allied to religion, if not religion itself. Thus all distinction between mere morality without religion, and religion as the source of a moral and holy life, has become lost to a great extent. Hence the natural man builds his religion upon reason, enforces it by natural conscience and the fear of consequences, and trusts to the mere morality thus acquired as a passport to heaven, and a preparation for the full enjoyment of its pleasures. The church of Rome supplies us with an example of an effort to acquire holiness in this way. Claiming the right to legislate upon subjects of faith, and taking reason as her guide, she has decreed pilgrimages, fasts, penances, and a large round of rites and ceremonies, as the means of acquiring sanctity. The result, however, has been to debauch the morals of her members, and cause them to worship the creature more than the Creator. This same error of attempting to improve what Jesus and his apostles left perfect, is to be found more or less in every church. Exercising their judgment about matters of policy and mere expediency, they have all endeavored to bind the consciences of their people by rites and observances unknown to apostolic Christianity, and for which they cannot claim the authority, "Thus saith the Lord."

Reason, in these revolutionary times, has attempted a still bolder feat. To acquire supremacy of power, she has professed to be able to cure all the diseases of human depravity, without the assistance of the Church. At her bidding a thousand schemes of moral reform have started into being, as panaceas for all the ills of soul and body. And what has been the result? The streams of appetite and passion have,

in some instances, been forced into other and more secret channels; but the depraved heart remains untouched, and continues to bubble on, and sends forth its bitter and pestilential waters. . Instead of growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, we find much positive injury accomplished, by turning away the hearts of men from Jesus, and pointing their hopes to human devices. While their souls remain aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise; and the ways of Zion are left to mourn, because few come to the solemn feasts.

The only true means of growth in grace is *union with Jesus, and the indwelling of his Spirit*. If we be united to Christ in his death, we will be made partakers of his life; and the Spirit of Him that raised him from the dead shall dwell in us, and cause us to bring forth fruit to the glory of God. Paul, in writing to the Romans, explains the consequences of this union thus: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh, for if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Of the nature of this union nothing has been revealed. Christ in his intercessory prayer asks that believers may be united to Him, in the same mysterious manner, in which He was united to the Father. Paul tells the Ephesians that "we are members of his (Christ's) body, of his flesh, and of his bones." But he adds, "this is a great mystery."

However mysterious this union may be, the manner in which it is to be sought and cultivated, is abundantly plain; for while God has kept the counsels of his wisdom, and the

operations of his Spirit as secrets of his own, He has made very clear the duties required of us. The universal law of God's moral government, is that every blessing must be sought through the proper use of divinely appointed means. . If therefore, we would be united to Jesus, and be the possessors of his Spirit, and cultivate that union when attained, so that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, we must commence with a careful and diligent study of the word of God, for it is only thus that we can hope to know his will. In the performance of this duty we must not rest satisfied with a mere intellectual knowledge of the contents of the Bible; we must labor to have its truths impressed upon our hearts. It is to be feared that many become expert in biblical criticism and polemic theology, who remain strangers to the spirit and power of the Holy Scriptures. And we must not wonder at this, if we only consider the motives from which the Scriptures are too often perused. Some read the Scriptures frequently from the force of habit, or a sense of duty; because they were thus trained in youth. But they read with such listlessness that they fail to receive any impression whatever, unless it be a growing feeling that the Bible is of all books the most insipid and uninteresting. Others study the Scriptures that they may gather from them everything which may appear to confirm their favorite theory of theology, and thus be prepared to meet in argument any opponent. But by thus concentrating their entire attention upon but one subject, they fail to receive a proper impression of the whole. If we would study the Scriptures that we may thereby grow in grace, we must throw aside all other motives, and study them for the sole end of increasing our knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Another means to be used in seeking this end is constant and fervent prayer to God, for the illumination and guidance of his Holy Spirit. But the nature and necessity of prayer, and its omnipotence in moving the God of heaven to bless, are so clearly revealed in the Scriptures, and have been so recently the theme of seven discourses from this pulpit, that

I shall pass this subject by at the present, merely reminding you that prayer is an essential means of growth in grace.

Again, if we would grow in grace and in union with Jesus, we must frequently and carefully examine our own hearts in the light of the Scriptures, and by the searching power of the Holy Spirit. It is only by ascertaining our past attainments that we can know present and future duties. If we neglect self-examination we will become lost and bewildered in our spiritual journey, and like Paul upon the Adriatic, when "exceedingly tossed with a tempest," we will be without sun by day, or stars by night, to tell us where to steer, that we may gain the haven of rest and safety. And although this examination may bring to light many painful things over which we may mourn, yet faithfulness to our own souls requires that we should be inexorable in this work, and shrink from no revelations; but bring the light of truth to shine upon the inmost recesses of the heart. For as long as sin lies concealed in any dark chamber of the soul it will fester and pollute, and thus effectually prevent any advance in the divine life.

There are other important means of growth in grace, to some of which time will only permit me to allude. We must attend diligently upon all the externals of religion in as proper a frame of spirit as we can command, and with a sincere and prayerful desire that they may be blessed by God to the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom in our hearts. We must exercise brotherly love and Christian charity towards others, without stopping to inquire whether they belong to our class, or business, or party, or denomination. We must do more and give more, recognizing that in all things we are the mere stewards of God's bounty, and should hold all we are, and have, as subject to his will. We should practice self-denial every day as the providence of God may give us opportunity, in such things as dress, pleasures, &c.

II. The *hinderances* or *difficulties* with which the Christian must contend in his spiritual life.

The chief hinderance is a practical disbelief of the doctrine of free grace, and a constant effort to build our hopes of

heaven upon the merit of something we have done. There is nothing which strikes the believer with so much wonderment and astonishment as the absolute freeness of the offer of pardon and salvation in the covenant of grace. It is so utterly inconsistent with what he anticipated, that he is unable to realize its truth; and it is only after he has been driven from every refuge of self-righteousness that he is able fully to understand the doctrine of free grace, and with recumbency of soul, cry, "Not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord." Many true converts, in the first part of their Christian experience, are so deeply humbled under a sense of their extreme sinfulness, and liability to God's wrath, that judging of rewards and punishments after the manner of men, they cannot understand how God can pardon everything without some atonement from their hands; and their constant labor is to do something meritorious in return. Others whose humility and gratitude are less, but whose pride is greater, feel it to be their duty, not only as a matter of justice, but also as a matter of honor, to render to God some compensation for his kindness to them; and they vainly suppose that in their obedience and good works there is a merit by which they discharge to a certain extent their obligations to God. If we carefully examine our own hearts, we will find that from one or the other of these two principles, we are disposed to take to ourselves some credit for the occasional extra warmth of our devotions, or munificence of our charities. When we have made any particular sacrifice of labor or money in the cause of Christ, have we not detected a feeling rising within us, which, if permitted, would tell us that we have done even more than duty, and have a little whereof we might justly boast? When God has given to us more than usual freedom and power in prayer, is it not often followed by a peculiar feeling of self-satisfaction and self-glorying? All such practical disbelief of the absolute freedom of grace, and every effort to do something for ourselves, are injurious to our growth in grace. And yet, on the other hand, we must guard with equal care against all Antinomian errors, which would tell us that obedience and a holy life are not required because of the richness of gospel grace. The

truth upon this subject has been briefly taught by an old writer, who urges us to "use the means as vigorously as if we were to be saved by our own efforts, and yet trust as entirely to the grace of God, as if we made use of no means whatever."

Another, and a very serious hinderance to growth in grace is a *want of consistency in Christian character*. There is a growing feeling in the community which would restrict the themes of the pulpit to the mere abstractions of theology, enlivened by fancy and poetry. Hence an uneasiness is manifested in most audiences when the minister speaks with plainness about the infidel theories in science, the dishonest practices which custom has sanctioned in trade, and the constant sacrifices of principle which politics require of the partisan. The result of all this is a want of consistency in Christian character, a constant effort to confine religion to the Sabbath and the services of the sanctuary, and perchance a cold and formal prayer at the family altar; forgetful altogether that it is a pervading and controlling principle which shows itself in the workshop and at the polls in all the truthfulness and fidelity of its character.

Things being thus, we must not be astonished at those contradictory scenes which we are pained to witness every day; that of professors of the religion of Jesus weeping bitterly in the house of God, and then on the morrow go forth to their places of business, and overreach an ignorant and confiding neighbor in a bargain; or go to the polls, and forgetting their allegiance to Jesus, submit to all the rigors of party drill, and shout the loudest and labor the hardest in elevating to place and power some heaven-daring, Sabbath-breaking infidel; and then dare to hope that God would bless that wicked ruler, and make him a terror to evil-doers, and a blessing to his country. As long as we shift our religion thus to suit circumstances, as we shift our outer garment to suit the weather, we must not expect to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Passing by many other hinderances which will readily suggest themselves to any reflective mind, I shall notice but one more; a difficulty with which ministers and Sabbath school

teachers have to contend,—*an un sanctified familiarity with the Bible.* A careful study of the Scriptures, that the truth may make an impression upon the heart, is one of the principal means of grace, and this the biblical instructor is in danger of losing, unless he be exceedingly careful and guarded. Forced by his profession to study the Scriptures every day, that he may be enabled to expound them to others, he becomes familiar with the Bible as a text-book, and is in danger of regarding it in the light of a mere text-book, and thus fail to feel upon his own heart those impressions of its truth, which he labors to impress upon the hearts of others. This is doubtless the painful experience of many a minister and Sabbath school teacher; and yet while we study the Bible thus, we cannot grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, with that rapidity which our privileges require us to do.

As the subject has been practical throughout, I shall only briefly add in *conclusion*, that by thus growing in grace we secure to ourselves the greatest earthly happiness, for the peace which springs from union with Jesus passeth all understanding; and the pleasures which are excited by the indwelling Spirit possess a richness and permanence which are unknown to the purest joys of earthly origin. We are also encouraged in our efforts after higher attainments in the divine life by the fact that our labor shall not be in vain. Although the soul is made perfect in holiness when it passes from earth to heaven, yet its capacity for higher and higher attainments will constantly and rapidly increase, as the ceaseless ages of eternity circle away. There will be different grades of perfect happiness in heaven, as there are different capacities and attainments on earth; so that the more we grow in grace in this life, the greater will be our capital with which we shall commence the joys and glories of the eternal world. Whatever our other attainments and possessions in life may be, let us, therefore, make it the great and constant object of our earthly mission to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Amen.

SERMON XV.

THE STRAIT GATE, AND THE NECESSITY OF BEING EARNEST TO GAIN ADMISSION.

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“Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

Luke 13: 24.

AFTER the Lord Jesus had entered upon his public ministry He sojourned much in Capernaum, and the adjacent country. Thence annually He went up to Jerusalem for the purpose of observing the feast of the Passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles. At these three festivals the law required that every male in Israel should annually appear before the Lord, in Mount Zion. Jesus, in this particular, as in all others, magnified the law and made it honorable, by fully complying with all its requirements. It may be that at the period to which my text refers, He was on his way, for the last time, to the city of Israel's solemnities. His route was more circuitous than usual, in order, doubtless, that He might urge the claims of the gospel in places which He had seldom, if ever before, visited. Being well aware of the perilous condition of mankind by nature, the awful curse under which they are, and the undoubted reality of that horrible destruction to which they are tending, He preached the gospel of the kingdom in the several cities and villages through which He passed. Whilst thus engaged in the discharge of

his merciful mission, one said unto Him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" The individual may have heard Him, on a previous occasion, making such statements as these:—"Many are called, but few chosen"—"No man can come unto me except it were given him of my Father." Unable to reconcile with these the description Jesus gave of his kingdom now, he put this question for the purpose of obtaining a more correct knowledge of the doctrines of Christ. His curiosity, however, was such as the Saviour did not see proper to gratify by a direct answer; but urged him instead thereof to attend to his own personal salvation, as being infinitely more important; because many, for want of proper attention, would come short of it—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

In my subsequent remarks, I will show—

- I. The import of the phrase—"The strait gate."
- II. The meaning of the exhortation—"Strive to enter in."
- III. The reason why we should be earnest to gain admission—"For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

I. I am to show first the import of the phrase—"The strait gate."

We read in Scripture of the gates of cities, as of Jerusalem; its fish gate, its sheep gate, its valley gate, its water gate, and the gate of Benjamin; of the gates of royal palaces, and the temple of God. The temple Ezekiel saw, when rapt in holy vision, had two gates, one toward the east, which was always shut; another toward the north, which was always open. The camp of Israel, in the wilderness, was furnished with gates, and their prisons also in the land of Canaan. The sacred writers frequently use the term gate, where we would employ the term door. What is worthy of special notice here, however, is—A gate, according to Scripture, is that which gives admission into a house, or city, or temple, or into any inclosure whatsoever. The gate, or entrance, referred to in the text, gives admission into that city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is

God"—into that temple of God "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Jesus says, in the parallel place in Matthew—"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Some suppose that by the phrase, "The strait gate," we should understand repentance, faith, and holiness, inasmuch as without them no one can enter into the kingdom of God in heaven. Others think that it refers to the duty of doing to others as we would have them do unto us—a duty exceedingly difficult to man in his present state, and which calls for much of self-denial.

It is true that repentance, faith, and holiness are indispensable prerequisites to our entering into the upper sanctuary, and that to man, in his fallen state, these are duties of a very painful and difficult character. But I can perceive a vast difference between that which is requisite to qualify us for being admitted, through the gate, into the city, and the gate itself, which gives us admission. It is true, also, that to do to others as we would have others to do unto us, is infinitely more than man in his carnal state can perform; it is even more than man in his renewed state can accomplish perfectly. Let it be discharged as perfectly as you will, it is clear that it can never be the gate, or door, through which we must pass into the mansions of everlasting rest. Indeed, I do not find that the term gate or door is ever predicated, in Scripture, of any or all, of these things.

I understand, by the term "gate," here, Jesus Christ himself. He is the only possible way of admission into the abodes of bliss; the only door through which we can obtain access into the presence of his Father, and our Father—"I," says the Saviour, "am the door of the sheep"—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; but he who entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep, to him the porter openeth, and the

sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." This is the only gate of admission into the kingdom of heaven. There is but "one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus"—"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Through this glorious personage whosoever will go to the Father, shall find a welcome; whereas he who may attempt an approach through any other way shall encounter only indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. The impressive announcement of Jesus in relation to this matter is—"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." This way, the apostle tells us, was not made manifest, while the first tabernacle was standing, but now, Christ being come, we have boldness of access through Him, as the gate or door, to the tree of life, and the paradise of God.

This gate or entrance is strait. So it is called in my text, and also in the corresponding place in Matthew. But why strait? It is strait, because whosoever would enter in through it into the city and sanctuary of God, in the heavens, must leave *self*, with all its appendages, behind him. It is capacious enough to admit the soul to pass through with ease, provided the riches, and honors, and pleasures of this world are cast aside. But the man who will attempt to foist in his own honesty, or morality, or gentlemanly deportment, or, in a word, his own righteousness, will find that it is too strait to afford him admission. Nor will he find it otherwise who desires to take with him his charity, his fastings, and prayers, his repentance, and faith, and obedience, as a *part* of that righteousness, on account of which he expects to receive the welcome plaudit—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Everything of this kind must be cast from us if we would enter in at "the strait gate." We must submit to the terms proposed by God; we must consent to be saved by grace, *wholly by grace*, and pass in by the only way we can.

A man in justification may be said to enter in at "the strait gate." This is effected without works of law, in view of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ being imputed unto him, and received by faith alone. "We conclude," says the apostle, upon having discussed the whole question of the sinner's justification before God—"we conclude that a man is justified by (through) faith, without works of law." Nor is this faith of ourselves—"it is the gift of God." "What maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?"—"By grace are ye saved, and not by works, lest any man should boast."

Having, in justification, entered in at "the strait gate," he shall be saved—"For whom he justified them he also glorified." Henceforth he shall go in and out, and find pasture; all things shall work together for his good; his path will be that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Having put on the Lord Jesus, it only remains that he walk in him—the only, and the narrow, way up to heaven and to God. By habitually walking in Jesus, imitating his example, and cultivating the same mind which was in Him, he grows in grace, in holiness, and in conformity to God; he becomes more and more sanctified, until the soul, stripped of everything earthly, selfish and devilish, passes unencumbered, through the rent vail of the Redeemer's flesh, into the paradise above.

"The strait gate," then, is Jesus. He is emphatically called so, and it is through that gate or door only, that we can pass in—to the companionship of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect. He is a "strait gate," inasmuch as no individual can pass through it with sinful, selfish, earthly, encumbrances. If we would enter it we must deny ourselves, become crucified to the world, forsake all and follow the Saviour. All who, with an honest and good heart, do this, shall obtain abundant entrance, as, says the apostle—"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

II. I am to show, in the second place, the meaning of the exhortation—"strive to enter in at the strait gate."

You are greatly in error if you believe that Christ will save you without any exertion on your part. That man is ruinously deceived who fancies that folding his arms in placid composure, he may await, with stoic indifference, the movements of the Almighty. Know assuredly, that if you would secure a name and place among them who are sanctified, it behooves you not to trifle with eternal things; but to be in earnest. If you would obtain the crown of immortal glory you have a race to run, and it will not do to loiter by the way: you have a warfare in which to engage, and if you would be successful you must meet the enemy boldly, and fight manfully the battles of faith. He who will not follow Jesus through good report, and through bad report, cannot be his disciple.

To express the intensity of that ardor, with which it behooves you to enter upon, and pursue this great business, a very significant term is here used. It answers to our word, *agonize*. This—exert yourself to the very uttermost, and be in pain to enter in at the strait gate—expresses well the meaning of the exhortation. Then, lay aside every encumbrance, and run with patience the race that is set before you. Abandon the inordinate cares, the riches, and the honors of the world, and fight, with determined seriousness, the battles to which you are called,—“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” There is a certain amount of carefulness about our present state, and the things connected therewith, which is lawful and proper, and is strictly necessary; but whenever this life, and the things of this life, engross the heart—occupy all, or the greater part, of our attention—they become pernicious: nay, ruinous.

“Be in pain to enter in at the strait gate,” by faith. This is essentially necessary. No person can desire or act without motives. “Whosoever cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.” There must be a fixed and settled belief in the reality of an eternal heaven, and an eternal hell; something to be

hated and shunned; something to be loved and obtained. No man can make the required exertion to enter in who has not, in some sort, a scriptural view of his own character. You must view yourselves in the light of God's law. You must see sin as that abominable thing which Jehovah hates; and on account of which, you, in your native state, are the subjects of his wrath, and cursed to hell. You must rest, with unwavering confidence, in the testimony God has given of his Son; and this is the testimony — "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;" and "whosoever believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death unto life;" whereas, "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." You must rest immovably in the belief that God is willing and able, and will save to the very uttermost, all who come unto him through Christ, "the strait gate," when that glorious personage "shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe;" and that he is able and determined, and will punish, with an everlasting destruction from his peaceful presence and the glory of his power, "all who know not God and obey not the gospel of his Son," when Jesus shall come the second time without sin unto salvation.

"Be in pain to enter in at the strait gate," by repentance. I mean not that kind of repentance which the gibbet forces from the abandoned wretch; not that kind of repentance which the eternally lost will manifest when they exclaim — "Mountains, fall on us! hills, cover us from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb!" I mean not the sorrow of the world which worketh death; but I do mean that godly sorrow which worketh repentance, not to be repented of again. I would have you to be sorry for sin, because it *is* sin, and because it is *offensive* to God, your maker and benefactor; and because it subjects you to Jehovah's wrath and curse forever. I would have you mourn for your sins, as one mourneth for a first-born, and to be in bitterness for them, as he that is in bitterness for an only son. I would have you experience such a pungent grief for all your iniquities, and for

all the evil of your doings, as well of heart as of life, as will impel to a radical reformation of both. Without such a change of mind, as will lead to a change of conduct, accompanied with a grief and hatred of sin, there can be no such thing as evangelical repentance: and without such repentance you can in no wise enter in at the strait gate. It is entirely too strait to afford you admittance, while you are in love with your sins. You must cast them away, with a feeling of loathing abhorrence, before you can enter. As well might a camel go through the eye of a needle, as that you should pass through this gate, with your iniquities adhering to you, in any sense. They must be abandoned, heartily abandoned. "There shall in no wise enter into it," the New Jerusalem, "anything that defleth, or worketh abomination, or loveth or maketh a lie." Be in pain therefore to enter in by the abandonment of every evil thing, and by a heart-felt sorrow for having offended, in any respect, the God of faithfulness and truth.

"Be in pain to enter in at the strait gate," by prayer. A feeling sense of the turpitude of sin, and of yourself as a sinner, in conjunction with the mercy of God, in Christ, will enforce you to agonize with God, in prayer. Such a view of these things is necessary to your engaging properly in this essential, and pleasing duty. Without it, you cannot be justly sincere in your petitions, but will trifle with heaven, and your own souls. It is true you may pray; but unless you feel, in some sort, as Peter did on the waters of Galilee, it will be but little short of formality. Only, however, let your true state before God, and his Christ, be realized, and you will be constrained to pray as did the poor publican in the porch of the temple; to wrestle as did Jacob; to plead as did Ruth with the pious Naomi; as did the woman of Canaan, who would take no denial, and whose importunities obtained for her the desire of her heart: Yes! you will be constrained, like David, to give Jehovah no rest, day or night, until you obtain that peace which the world can neither give nor take away—until an abundant entrance be administered unto you, at "the strait gate," into the eternal city.

“Be in pain to enter in at the strait gate,” by a perfect obedience. You have hitherto neglected to observe properly the Sabbath; perhaps, you have not observed it at all. You have spent it in visiting your friends, and receiving visits from them; in social worldly intercourse and recreation. In one word, you have spent your Sabbaths hitherto in thinking your own thoughts, in speaking your own words, and in seeking your own pleasures. You have not regarded it a holy day, sanctified to God and godliness. It seems paradoxical that a man should rob God, yet you have robbed him; you have, time and again, appropriated that portion of holy time which he challenges as his own, and squandered precious hours which should have been improved in making your calling and election sure. Cease, then, to profane his holy day. From this hour, and onward, regard it as the holy of the Lord, and honorable, and spend it in his service, and in seeking your own present and future good. Priceless is the reward promised to those who thus do, from love to God. “Even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.”

Put away, therefore, from you “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life;” and “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world.” Walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless. Study, and labor assiduously, to bring soul and body into agreeableness with the pattern which Jesus has left you in his word, and life; and to be found in Him not having your own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; so shall you pass triumphantly through the gate into the city. But in all these things be *earnest*. Exert yourself as one contending for his life, feeling the while, that his eternal all is at stake. Behold the man who battles with the watery element, whose merciless waves seem to close above him for ever! See with what intensity of earnestness he grasps at every passing reed, in hopes to find deliverance! Consider in what pain he is to seize upon every means within his reach, and how he

bleses with a grateful heart the hand that aids him to the shore. Just so will the man exert himself, who has obtained a scriptural view of his native state; who feels that he stands upon the borders of destruction, and that the advancing moment may plunge him into hell's devouring depths; and who understands something of the inconceivable value of the prize at stake—because heirship to a crown and kingdom, with Jesus, that shall never be moved, is ever to be kept in view whilst “being in pain to enter in at the strait gate.” Thus did Paul, who “counted all things but loss that he might win Christ and be found in Him”—that he might “press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus his Lord.” This view of the danger, in conjunction with the recompense of the reward, will constrain you to bear every loss, to encounter every difficulty, to watch, to pray, to battle and to toil, in order “to enter in at the strait gate.”

III. I am to show, in the third place, the reason why you should be in in pain to enter in at the strait gate—“For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

The reason, you perceive, is that many shall be finally and eternally lost; or, as the Saviour expressed it, “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” They cannot enter in; because the door of the heavenly kingdom shall be shut against them forever.

A difference between the meaning of the term rendered “strive,” and that of the term translated “seek,” obtains here, which it becomes us not to pass without noting.

The primary meaning of the former is to combat, to combat for a prize, and to be in pain, or intense anxiety of mind, for its obtainment. The radical import of the latter is to look for, to expect, to desire. The force of the exhortation, therefore, seems to be this—Be in pain or deep anxiety of mind to enter, at the strait gate, into eternal life; for be assured, many are looking, expecting to enter in, many shall continue to look, and to expect to enter in, without using the means, or

exerting themselves to do so; but they shall not be able. Such an inheritance as eternal life is never obtained without an effort. Use, therefore, every possible, lawful endeavor, and be intensely earnest and devoted in all your efforts.

The gross error, of those who believe and teach that all men, without exception, shall enter, through the gate, into unalloyed and unending felicity, is here palpable. If mankind shall be saved by simply looking for, or expecting salvation; where will you find a motive sufficiently potent to constrain them to combat, or be in the smallest degree anxious, to secure deliverance? I cannot conceive of a reason for putting forth a single effort, or of being, in any sense, concerned about my eternal good, if it were true that Jesus would save me without them. Why should I be careful as to what I believe? Why should I repent, and afflict my soul, and go mourning, all the day, for my transgressions? Why should I not live according to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life?" In short, why should I not "cast off all restraint and restrain prayer before God," saying, "who is the Almighty that I should serve Him? and what profit shall there be if I pray unto Him?" if it were true, that, live as I list, God will not cast me off forever, but will in due time receive me into everlasting habitations? No man can be induced to act, if you take from him all motives to action. No man will labor and toil for that which, he conscientiously believes, he will obtain without labor. It very much resembles trifling, to exhort a man to fight, and agonize for the crown of immortal glory, and then teach him to believe that he will get it, even should he remain at his ease. It would very much resemble trifling, for Jesus to entreat us to "be in pain to enter in at the strait gate," and at the same time assure us that many would simply look, expect to enter in, and be abundantly able. It very much resembles changing the truth of God into a lie, to tell us that Jesus has gone to prepare mansions in heaven for all men, whether they love Him, or not. It very much resembles changing the truth of God into a lie, to tell us that, whatever be the character of individuals here, after they have

fulfilled the number of their months, and accomplished as an hireling their days, Jehovah will, beyond a doubt, receive their departing souls into joys unspeakable, and full of glory. I beseech you, my hearers, let no man deceive you. Christ's reply to the question, "Are there few that be saved?" refutes at once all such trifling—"Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." With this accords the uniform teaching of the word of God—"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt"—"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"—"This is the second death"—"And the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever"—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life"—"Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"—"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Seeing, then, that these things are so, "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness," and how does it behoove you to "agonize to enter in at the strait gate," when the Saviour himself adds—"many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

May we each, and all, be so intensely earnest in our strivings to obtain admission at the strait gate, that our efforts shall, in due time, be crowned with abundant success: And to God, in Christ, shall be all the glory. Amen.

S E R M O N . X V I .

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

BY REV. N. M. GORDON,

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“That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” See Luke 24: 47.

THE conduct of our Lord's disciples at this period affords an instructive example of human frailty in judging of the ways of God. They had been confounded by the hurrying scenes of the last few days, and felt such an overthrow in their Master's death, that they were quite unprepared for his resurrection. And it was only by his instruction and illumination that they were enabled to see the order and consistency with which the Divine purpose was advancing to its accomplishment in the great work of grace, and bringing forward each event in its proper connection with that which went before and that which followed after. “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.” And it followed, in like consistency and order, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” The Saviour had achieved his work, and now took possession of his mediatorial power. A people out of the world is to be gathered into his kingdom. And for this end the gospel issues forth to men the good news, the tidings of salvation for sinners—calling them to the hope that is in Him—bearing

abroad the mercy, and extending even unto us. The servants of Christ were to become the ministers of this grace. And the text presents to us—

- I. The basis upon which they were to preach the gospel.
- II. The subject matter of their preaching.
- III. The scope of their ministry.

I. They were to preach *in his name*. The idea is, that the proclamation calling men to repentance, and making promise of pardon, is *grounded upon his name*. *The name of Christ is the basis of the gospel*. This is a phrase expressive of sovereignty, and it applies to the Saviour as made Head over all things to his church. In the scriptures we read of the Saviour, first, in his original glory, “the glory which he had with the Father before the world was;” secondly, in his voluntary abasement, when he was “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law;” and lastly, in his mediatorial power as King in Zion. These all are strikingly referred to by the apostle, when he says—“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

It is in this last character that we are now called to contemplate him. Yet does his present glory carry with it a mournful reference to his former humiliation. It is out of his subjection to the broken law of God that he has raised his power and authority as the Saviour of men. But he has been made perfect through sufferings, and is the Captain of salvation. We shall find in him every qualification to be our

Saviour. And it is the great business of our lives to study his character, to learn him and know him, and to receive of his fullness according to all our emptiness and necessity. The most prominent points in the Saviour's character, as he is now set before us, are—

1. *His justifying righteousness.* The doctrine of the scripture is, that all men are guilty before God. They are "by nature children of wrath"—"they go astray as soon as they are born"—"there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Their guilt excludes them from the favor of God: it subjects them to his wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come. They cannot, therefore, be accepted in their own persons. And he that shall be their Saviour must be able to satisfy the law for them, by supplying a righteousness, on the ground of which their sins may be pardoned, and they may be rendered legally acceptable to God.

We may learn the righteousness of Christ as a Redeemer, from the simple declarations of God concerning him; as when it is said—"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And we may further learn his righteousness as a Redeemer, from what he has done. For when we see him who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, put on our nature, come under the law, and render it full honor, both by obeying its precepts and suffering its penalty incurred by our transgression, we are enabled to understand the process of satisfaction, and to know how it is that God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. We, therefore, find in the scriptures this righteousness which has been provided in Christ, and which is ministered to us in the gospel, constantly commended to our faith. It is the righteousness of God brought down to meet the guilt of man. It is presented as a sole and sufficient substitute, in the merit of which a sinner shall be accepted with God. We are told, that in the gospel, "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." And again: "But now, without the law, the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed by the

law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe. And this is that justifying righteousness of which we have spoken.

2. *His sanctifying grace.* Or I may call it, his spiritual life—his life as the risen Saviour, which he imparts unto all his people, and by which they who are spiritually dead live unto him. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” We know this, but not fully. Our feeble minds cannot conceive the burning purity of God. “Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.” He is “of purer eyes than to behold evil:” he “cannot look upon iniquity.”

But man is a sinful being. He is born in sin, and possesses a fallen and depraved nature. “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh.” He is “dead in trespasses and sins”—“sold under sin:” his “carnal mind is enmity against God.” Such is man, according to the word of Him who seeth the heart. And our knowledge of the world, and our experience of the workings of our own hearts, supply us daily with sad testimony to the fact. We are set upon sin. We are turned away from God. It is a law of our nature to sin against him. And I may ask, could any one of us divest himself of his evil propensities? Do we not feel them to be a part of ourselves? This anger, pride, selfishness—after our most earnest efforts to break their power, do we not find them still strong within us? while our hearts are absolutely incapable of that holy fear and love which we know to be due to God. What evidence of the wide ruin of the fall! And can there be any hope for such creatures in themselves? How expressive the language of scripture—“Alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

But in Jesus Christ there is life. It belongs to him in his mediatorial character to quicken his people unto holiness, to impart unto them sanctifying grace, and to form them anew into the image of God. The immediate agent in this work is

the Holy Spirit. And in the economy of redemption, the Spirit dwells in Christ as the Saviour, and is only obtained from him. It would be vain to hope for the Spirit apart from Christ, and all who come to Christ shall obtain him. We lay dead in sin. The Saviour came down to us. For our sakes he cast his life away, and sunk into Joseph's tomb. Having wrought redemption for us, he rose from the dead. God raised him. He rose in the power of the Spirit; and as the Mediator he lives in the power of the Spirit, and has power to communicate life to his people. All who receive him receive of his Spirit; they live the life which is in Christ Jesus—the new life in which he rose from the dead, and which pervades the whole circle of his spiritual kingdom. Their former selves, the dead body of sin, they leave in the Redeemer's grave, and come forth new creatures in him, walking in newness of life, "created in him unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." "I," says the Saviour, "am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

This great change, this new life, comes from Christ alone, and is wrought by his Spirit; as it is said, "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." Scripture and experience alike teach us that it is not perfect in degree in this life; but it is perfect in its nature, perfect in its operation, and perfect in its issue. The agency of the Spirit is precisely adapted to the economy of grace, of which it forms a part. He gives power to the preached gospel and to every means of grace. The blind see, the deaf hear, the dead live. The Redeemer, on his mediatorial throne, gathers a willing people unto himself, and by his sanctifying grace clothes them in the beauty of the Lord. This power is given unto him. And it is to the honor of his name, and should greatly establish our faith in him, that as he is able to redeem us from all iniquity, so he has power to purify us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

3. In considering the Saviour's character, we notice, lastly, *his mediatorial authority*. The sovereignty of this world, and

of all things, belongs to God as the Creator. He hath made all things for himself; he puts forth his power upon them; and through them he manifests his glory. His law is over all, and justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Man incurred his displeasure by transgression, and fell under the sentence of his violated law, which denounced a curse upon our race, and upon the earth for our sakes. This fair province of his empire was turned to desolation. And man, alienated from God, and walking in his own ways, passed the dreary years of his course on earth amidst scenes of woe, and sin, and sorrow, and only looked forward to death and perdition under the just judgment of God. "Sin reigned unto death."

But it was not the will of God to have no mercy. As sin had reigned unto death, even so it was ordained that "grace should reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." It was to this end that he obtained the powers to which we have already referred. And being able to justify his people, and to sanctify them unto himself, it is his prerogative to erect them into a kingdom, to order their condition, to provide for their wants, and to hold the supremacy of all things for their sakes. Accordingly, when he rose from the dead and openly assumed his authority, he said—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

This power extends to his church; to appoint its constitution, its laws, its ordinances, its officers, and its privileges; to sustain it in the midst of all its enemies; and to gather it around his throne in glory. It extends to the whole range of created being, in its relation to the church, and particularly to men and nations, with all their complicated movements and designs. The winds and the seas obey him. Angels are his ministers. The devils are subject unto him. And the progress of time unfolds the great system of mediation under which he is executing the purpose of grace. Under his eye the history of the world, from the beginning to the end, with all its anxieties and labors, passes onward to its consummation. And though his enemies seem to triumph, and though his people

faint and fail, still he sits upon his throne, and wields his scepter over all, King of kings and Lord of lords. The Psalmist sung in his praise—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter." And the apostle, in the same strain, declares his exaltation, when he tells us that God "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

In a word, the Lord Jesus Christ is every way qualified to save his people from their sins. It was in mercy that he was given. And He against whom we have sinned has set him before us as the accepted Saviour, and bidden us repose our confidence in him.

His present glory is the legitimate fruit of his humiliation. It was in obedience to a stern law, it was by the endurance of sorrows untold, that he achieved our redemption. And he is now raised to no empty state. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And in his name is the gospel to be preached.

II. We come, in the second place, to consider the *subject matter* of the gospel, as it is presented to us in the text. It behooved that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name."

To preach is to publish by authority. The idea is that of a herald making proclamation in the name of a king. The minister of the gospel speaks not by his own authority. He is only a herald, and makes proclamation in the name of God, the great King.

The gospel, in the simple idea of it, is a message of grace, an exhibition of Christ and his salvation to sinners. But the gospel, as actually ministered, carries along with the proclamation of mercy, those instructions, precepts and exhorta-

tions, which are appropriate to the condition of lost men. And in this broad sense the gospel is presented to us in the text. Men are lost sinners. Christ is a Saviour. And grounded upon the merit which is in him, the gospel is preached to them. God calls them to repentance, and promises unto them the remission of sins. We notice—

1. *The preaching of repentance, as grounded upon the name of Christ.* Repentance may be defined to be, sorrow for sin. And as a Christian grace, it is that sorrow which a man will feel upon a due consideration of the evil and guilt of sin, in the light of the law and the gospel. There may be the remorse of a convicted conscience, and yet no repentance. There may be regret for sin on account of its fearful consequences, and yet no repentance. Repentance is a cordial sorrow, a hearty hatred of sin, growing out of a proper sense of the holiness, and justice, and grace of God, and issuing in a change of life. It has a filial respect to God himself, and to the excellence of his law; and stops not short, as false repentance does, with regard to God in his sovereignty alone, and to the law only in its binding force and penal sanctions.

Repentance is in itself a duty on the part of all who have sinned. Sin is an evil always to be repented of. And even apart from the hope of pardon, it would be our duty to repent. If we were passed under our doom according to the demands of vindictive justice—if we were entered upon our eternity—if we were as the lost shall be beyond the judgment-day, still under the burden of our woe and despair we ought to repent of our sins. While our pains would show that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God, it would be our duty to glorify that pure Majesty and that just Sovereignty which we have insulted by our transgressions.

But if God had not provided mercy, a call to repentance could never have issued from his throne. Law takes no cognizance of repentance. Its course is direct and positive, and its judgments final. It would have dealt with man according to his desert; and finding him a sinner, it would have condemned him and consigned him to punishment. Thus it has

been with the angels that sinned. God has not provided for them a Saviour, nor has he ever called them to repentance. And so, but for the mediation of Christ, had it been with man. He would have found "no place of repentance." And so, when the Saviour is preached, those who turn away from him are thrown upon law, and out of Christ find no place of repentance. But God has provided mercy. Our Redeemer has died and risen from the dead: He is the exalted and accepted Saviour; and in him the grace of God has way, and is flooding upon the world. The gospel brings tidings of hope from God, and calls men to repent and turn unto him. And thus the call to repentance is based upon the mediation of Christ.

From this also springs the grace of repentance. Without a Saviour, the man stands alone in his sin. There is no power to change his heart, already at enmity with God. The terrors of guilt possess his soul. God judges him in justice. No voice of compassion greets his ears. His glazed eye sees no signification of favor, no smile of love, no ray of hope. We may imagine the harrowings of guilt, the tossings of remorse, in such a soul—a sorrow such as Judas felt—"the sorrow of the world, which worketh death." But the heart, under the dominion of its lusts, and petrified by despair, could never feel that sense of the evil of sin, or put forth those yearnings toward God, which enter into the nature of true repentance. And here see the grace of the gospel. The Spirit of Christ is able to fulfill the promise—"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." And as by divine grace the people are thus prepared, so does the gospel carry with it a body of facts and truths of most effective power; and there is gathered around the heart, on the one hand, the requirements and threatenings of God's law, and on the other, whatsoever there is in the mercy of God, in the sufferings of Christ, in the thoughts of pardon, and reconciliation, and salvation with eternal glory—whatsoever there is, in one word, in the story of the cross, with all its holy recollections and thrilling hopes, to melt, and subdue, and cheer, and charm away the soul, and to turn away the man from

sin unto God. The gospel of Christ, in the force of this appeal, comes down to sinful men. The power is in his name: the action of the people turns upon what he has done. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Their sorrow springs from a knowledge of Christ; and it works in them that "repentance which is unto salvation, not to be repented of."

2. Upon the same ground is preached to men *the remission of sins*. We can only be placed in one of two states—under law, or under grace. We are by nature under law. The terms of this state are declared by the apostle: "The man that doeth them shall live in them. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And clearly in this state there is no room for pardon. The transgressor of the law falls under the curse: nor can any subsequent change in his character or conduct retrieve his condition. These facts show that, as sinners, we are lost, and there is no hope for us in ourselves. We have transgressed the law, and we shall not live but die. Nor can anything which we can do serve to deliver us. We are guilty, and the curse rests upon us. And we see at once how vain is any hope founded upon our own good works, religious experiences, or even our Christian graces, as a ground of forgiveness. As fallen sinners, we have in ourselves none of these things, however our blinded hearts may flatter us. But under law, there can be no question on such a point; for already the curse rests upon us, and we are lost.

We are brought under grace by Christ. "God hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." We have already seen that he is the Head of the kingdom of grace. And now the gospel comes with an offer of pardon, grounded upon his righteousness. It is a gift from God. We are called to receive it: and receiving it, we shall pass into a new state; we shall pass from under law into grace; we shall come into a

state where there is mercy for sinners, which could never be obtained under law. The sinner is called to look, not to himself, but to another, even to the Lord Jesus Christ; and independent of all consideration of his own character, except as a lost sinner sweeping onward to eternity, he is called to cast himself upon the Saviour. Coming from God, this call is the warrant upon which every man is authorized to act. And if you will hear it, and give your attention to it, you will find that it gathers around itself, and carries with it to you, the most mighty assurances, the most touching impulses of quickening power, to establish your confidence in Christ as a Saviour, and to cause you to arise at once and take hold of him. For there you see the mercy of God hanging over sinners; you see him rise in the majesty of his strength to save them; you follow with your eye the course of the Redeemer through the world, as he bore our sins, until he went down to death; and you see him rise, and hear the Father hail him King, and behold him take the scepter of his power, wherewith he rules among the nations and marshals his saints to glory: and you doubt no more, but hasten unto him, and enter into his grace, and receive the remission of sins. You receive the remission of sins, the acceptance of a son; your Father's face turns upon you in love—he opens before you the riches of your inheritance: and what is there for the guilty outcast to do but to resign himself into his Maker's arms, in the muteness of astonished joy, till he can get a voice to speak of love beyond all height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and without end?

3. *Thus a perfect salvation is preached to you in the gospel.* My brethren, strive to grasp the idea of a free pardon. That is the message which is sent unto you. It is only for Christ's sake, and is preached in his name, unclogged by conditions or reservations,—free in the providing, free in the offer,—having only, on the one hand, guilty sinners, and on the other, a gracious God. Repentance is necessary in its place. So is love, so is every Christian grace and duty. But they are none of them the ground of pardon. Remission of

sins is preached to you, not because you repent, but because Christ has died and risen from the dead. If it were not so, you would be required to save yourself, which is another gospel. Yes, my friends, in Christ we preach to you the remission of sins,—in him we preach repentance,—in him every duty and hope. If there is virtue in his name, then it is for you to assure your hearts in him, and take hold of the hope that is set before you. And the same faith in Christ which assures your hearts in his salvation, will be mighty to work in you that repentance which is unto life, and to move you unto all holy affection and right obedience. Grace will have its perfect work. What God gave his Son to be to men, that will he be to you. He will be “made of God unto you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” He will guide you with his counsel, and afterward receive you to glory.

This, then, is briefly the message of grace. Sin has ruined men. The Lord Jesus has come to save his people from their sins. The call to repentance, the promise of pardon, issue upon the ground of his perfect work. The grace of God is able in this way to take away sin, its power and its curse, and to repair the ruin it hath made. We shall find no more sin in man, no more vengeance in God, but the perfect reign of holiness and love, and heaven rejoicing over that which was lost. This is the message which is sent. This is the gospel preached by the heralds of the cross. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.”

III. Having seen the work committed to Christ's servants, we come now to consider *the scope of their ministry*. Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name “among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” The text presents to us the extent of the work, and the order of it.

1. *The extent of the work: Among all nations.* Here was a marked difference between the dispensation which was

going out and that which was coming in. Under the old dispensation, an alien might be received among God's people by conforming to the faith and order of the Mosaic economy. But that economy had immediate respect to the children of Israel, and there was no direct provision for extending its influence and carrying its hopes abroad in the world. Such was the sovereign will of God. But now, in the progress of the work of grace, a time had come when glad tidings were to be proclaimed to all people. And accordingly the Saviour, just before his ascension, issues to his apostles the broad commission—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And then was fulfilled that which the prophet had spoken of the widening glories of the Redeemer's kingdom—"Thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." This commission embraced the world. It is true, that even here God did not divest himself of his sovereignty. It was with him alone to give the increase. And even in the outward work he would continue to exercise a sovereign and disposing power,—by his providence, and by special directions, turning away his messengers from one place, and sending them to another. This authority was with God. But the gospel, as now set forth, looked to all nations; and the apostles understood it so. They spent their days publishing it from place to place, and "testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

The gospel, then, with its privileges and hopes, was to be preached to all nations—all people—all then living—all who should afterwards live; presenting to them a full Saviour, freely offered; presenting him to every one, whatever might be his character, or condition, or feelings; and carrying the assurance that whosoever accepted him should be saved. Amidst all the varieties of human character, and the changes which should take place in society, the one Saviour was to be held forth to men, and on the ground of his salvation they were to be called to repent and receive the remission of sins.

And whosoever learned the grace was bidden to go forth and bear the news. Every man in his place was to be a witness for Christ. The church was instituted and charged with the sacred duty. And thus in every land, and along the line of the generations, the gospel call would sound, and dying sinners hear of Jesus' name. That name should be an offense to many. Against it should be pointed the malice of Satan, the hatred of men. But it should give comfort to the weary heart, peace to the anxious bosom, solace in the midst of life's labors, and hope in the hour of death. On the broad plains of Asia, in Europe's cultivated fields, amidst the wilds of America, into the gloom of Africa, and unto every island of the sea, it should go, with the same tidings in every dwelling of men,—in the huts of slaves and the palaces of kings,—meeting that great want of man, that he is a sinner, and so revealing the grace of God, that a people should be gathered unto him, to follow him on earth and to encircle his throne in heaven. May we be of that people! may we be enabled to look unto that Saviour, as he is certainly offered unto us!

2. The *order of the work: Beginning at Jerusalem.* Although the work involved such mighty interests, and although it had a respect to all the nations of the world, still the Lord's servants were not to abandon themselves to the impulses of an irregular enthusiasm, or to inquire of their own judgments in what way best to fulfill their mission. They were to preach the gospel to the nations, "beginning at Jerusalem." And we see the wisdom and the grace of our sovereign Lord in so appointing it. Jerusalem had been for many ages the theatre of his most wonderful manifestations and most mighty operations. It was the metropolis of the Holy Land, the capital of his chosen people. There was the temple, and thither the tribes had gone up. There he himself had died and risen. And it had been written in the Prophets—"Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Nor was it any difficulty that this was the stronghold of his enemies. In their faces it should be done, and out of them should be raised the witnesses to his Messiahship. It was his

will that from the same point which had witnessed through so long a time the services of the Mosaic ritual, the new dispensation, in which that ritual was completed, and which brought the grace of God before all nations, should be ushered forth upon the world.

It was done in sovereignty; but this ordinance makes a most touching and attractive revelation. "Beginning at Jerusalem:" beginning what? Was it the publication of vengeance—Woe, woe, to the devoted city? Was it the work of destruction to begin there, as the Lord rained fire and brimstone out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain? Was it to deal with Jerusalem according to all her long continued transgressions, and that last bitter imprecation, "His blood be on us and on our children?" No, my friends, not so. But it was to preach the gospel to them. It was to make known there first the glad tidings of salvation which were to go the rounds of the world, and carry hope to ruined men. It was to proclaim in Jerusalem a Saviour, and in the power of his name to call them to repentance and the remission of sins; to present the Saviour from God to them, to be their Saviour. Yes, even to them. They had enjoyed his teachings, and rejected them; they had contradicted him, and blasphemed his holy name, while he labored among them; they had apprehended him as a malefactor, and falsely accused him; they had mocked him, and smitten him, and spit upon him; it was they that had cried, "Crucify him, crucify him;" it was they that hovered round his cross, wagging their heads and taunting his agonies; it was they who with their malice followed him into the grave, and would have made his name a curse in the earth; and even now they were hatching falsehoods against him, and ready for every work of hate;—and yet the Saviour says, Go to them, begin with them. Was ever love like this? Can any limit be set to such unbounded, unconquerable love? Such is the grace of Christ. And you should attend to it, my friends. Some of you may need the assurance which it brings. You may be saying, I am too great a sinner; I have sinned too long;

I have sinned against too much light, against too many mercies; against too many promises which I have made to God, to my own soul, and it may be to anxious friends; I have resisted too many convictions while I was reading the Bible, or hearing preaching, or looking at the communion table: nay, the sad thought may appall you, that since you came here you secretly resolved not to consent to Christ, and you may be ready to conclude, There is no mercy for me! But, I ask, might not the Jews also have thought so? And yet the Saviour says to his apostles, "Begin at Jerusalem." And see what the consequences were. They went. In the midst of the multitudes of Jerusalem they preached in his name repentance and the remission of sins; and three thousand were born in a day. The Saviour gathered in the first harvest of his grace from the midst of his betrayers and murderers. It is certain, then, that no sinner will be rejected who comes to Christ. He will be made welcome, and our blessed Redeemer will rejoice over him with joy.

And now, my friends, if we will collect before our minds the leading ideas of the text, we will see that the Lord Jesus Christ is a *Saviour*, and that resting upon his name the gospel comes to us with a call, and promise, and grace, to turn us unto God, and to bestow upon us everlasting life.

What, then, is due unto him? Is he not worthy that we should love him and serve him? that we and all his people, in our places in life, should labor to make known the gospel? That is indeed our calling, with which he is well pleased, and which will bring grace to our fellow-men. In devoting ourselves to this work we join in one with all the people of God—with apostles and martyrs, with ministers and missionaries of ancient and modern times, with Brainard and Martyn, with the beloved Barnet and Paulding, with those humble men who under the deep shades of Africa are laboring in hope that "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." We shall stand in our lot as his witnesses; and in the end we shall be received unto him, with all believers, to the honor of his name. Amen.

S E R M O N X V I I .

THE TRIUMPHANT CHRISTIAN.

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“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” *2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.*

THESE are among the last words of the great apostle of the gentiles. He was a prisoner at Rome for the gospel of Christ, and about to suffer martyrdom for the religion of Jesus, when he wrote this epistle. As the solemn and interesting moment of his departure was drawing near, his intellect was illumined by the Holy Spirit; his memory was awake and active, recalling the vivid images of the past and the distant; and his heart, alive to truth and the highest interests of men, was gushing with emotions of deep and tender concern for the spiritual welfare of the living. While thus lingering for a few moments on the verge of time, near the borders of eternity, he writes to his dearly beloved son Timothy, and charges him in the most solemn manner to be faithful; and to encourage him and all ministers and Christians to run with patience the race set before us, gives his own experience of the grace which had enabled him to exemplify the virtues which so eminently adorn the Christian, and especially the Christian ministry. Eternity!—eternity!—eternity! How solemn! Grace!—grace!—grace alone can fit any mortal to live as a Christian, and prepare for the solemnities of death and judg-

ment. "By the grace of God," says our apostle, "I am what I am:" and in this he triumphed. Notice—

I. The solemn circumstances under which our text was written.

II. The Christian life, under the similitudes of the text.

III. The happy end and triumph of faith.

I. The solemn circumstances under which our text was written.

It was penned at Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time, and there a prisoner in danger of his life. It appears that his removal out of this world, in his own apprehension, was not far off, especially considering the rage and malice of his persecutors, and perhaps he was now under sentence of death. He had been brought before Nero on a previous occasion, which he calls his first answer, when no man stood with him, but all men forsook him. He had been confined, at the mercy of a cruel and capricious tyrant, had been deserted by his friends in his greatest extremity, and had nothing before him but martyrdom for the cause to which he had devoted his life. In this situation, how does he behave? There is a sacred solemnity that marks the hour of death. It is then that a seriousness fixes on the mind of mortals that forbids all levity, and the language of that hour is as a voice from the eternal world. What is uttered under such circumstances is most likely to be real: it is then that all hypocrisy will be detected, and the man will appear in his true colors. The wicked sometimes have no bands in their death, but generally death is to the wicked emphatically the *king of terrors*. Faith in Jesus disarms that foe of his sting and terrors, and gives a triumph that induces one to say—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." The period that closes our mortal career is the most interesting one in time. What ever attracts the attention or impresses the heart like the words of a dying friend? It is the hour which divests of all that is earthly and vain. The realities of eternity rise up to view, and the world recedes. If ever a man is sincere, it is when his pale cheek turns cold, and his heart is beating its last, and life hangs on the trembling lip

ready to depart. Then all listen with profound attention and regard, and with sacred memory, to the dying farewell. But to none is the solemnity so important as to the individual who is about to enter the eternal world. He may have all the support and comforts the world can afford: but, alas! these are miserable comforters to such as have no refuge in God. The solemn voice from the scaffold and the dying-couch of the guilty warns of the awful event, and of the wrath to come; while the death of God's saints is dear in his sight, and invites to the desire to die like the righteous. The text expresses the good man's feelings, his joy, his faith and hope, in the near approach of death.—it may be when under sentence, and about to seal his testimony with his blood. Does he seem to look back with pain or concern on his past conduct? Does he regret the sacrifices he had made of worldly interests for Christ? Can you discover anything that betrays a consciousness of guilt, or even a suspicion of the weakness of his cause? He betrays no symptom of fear, nor discomposure of mind, in the apprehension of those gloomy scenes before him. No, no! In the prospect of martyrdom he sees his crown, His faith disarms the king of terrors, and inspires a confidence that triumphs over the violence of death, and his mind is prepared for the trial. Surely if he had been an impostor, or had entertained the least doubt of the doctrines he taught, some inkling of this kind would have appeared when writing to a friend with whom he could entrust every secret of his heart. On the contrary, upon the most calm review, he deliberately expresses his entire satisfaction with the course he had run and the part he had acted, and earnestly recommends his beloved son Timothy to follow his example in maintaining the glorious cause even at the hazard of his life. His clear views, his vigorous faith, his composure and joy in the full prospect of a violent death, sustained him. Throughout this epistle, he appears to have felt the conviction of the truth of the gospel, and he glories in the sufferings he had endured in support of them, triumphing in the full assurance of being approved by his great Lord and Master, and of receiving at his hand a crown of righteousness.

The infidel may scoff, and the worldling cry, Enthusiasm ! But the Christian will be excited by the bright example to give glory to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. The apostle reviews the past and looks to the future, and in these solemn circumstances charges Timothy, and with him all the ministers of the gospel to the end of the world. It was worthy of one who had not counted his life dear, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received.—Acts 20 : 24. He gives full proof of his sincerity, in his readiness to be offered to seal his testimony with his blood. With the utmost propriety and consistency, he points out the importance of the work, the temptations incident, and the sad effects of unfaithfulness in the sacred office. The gospel minister is charged as the son of man.—Ezek. 3: 17. Paul introduces and enforces the charge here, as in the presence of the omniscient Judge, and by the awful solemnities of the judgment-day. The best of men need to be awed into the faithful discharge of their duty. The work of a minister is not an indifferent thing, but absolutely necessary. “Woe be to me if I preach not the gospel.”—1 Cor. 9: 16. The sinner unwarned will die in his sins, but his blood will God require at the hand of the watchman.

Diligence in the work of the Lord, especially in the ministry, is urged, because of the abounding wickedness that opposeth the gospel. Many will not endure sound doctrine : they are, and will in all ages be, offended at the undisguised exhibition of God’s truth and the strict observance of the simple forms of gospel worship. The greater the simplicity and purity, the more the world will hate and oppose. Especially will carnal-minded men be offended with the plain, pointed truth that touches home, and exposes some favorite sin. They seek for smooth things on this or that *delicate point*. Such may be fierce against sin in the abstract, but to preach against the besetting sin of any man is a mortal offense to him, and he will cry out, Away with such a preacher, he is not fit to live. They hate the light as a man with sore eyes, neither come they to the light, lest their deeds should be reprovèd.—John 3: 20. Every man and every class of men

have their besetting sin ; and to preach against it is, in their estimation, personal preaching. Hence every class must have a ministry which may deal perhaps with severity against all sin but their cherished iniquity ; and thus sectarian pride and wickedness will abound, the love of many wax cold, and “ they will heap to themselves teachers *having itching ears*, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables.”

The greatest vigilance, self-denial and perseverance are requisite in order to the discharge of the duties of the sacred office so as to be clear from the blood of all men. “ Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” To be a successful ambassador of Christ in winning souls to God is no ordinary attainment, and requires the utmost diligence and persevering efforts. The charge is urged, for time is short, the laborers are few and soon pass away, the time of usefulness will soon expire. Let us work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work. The example of the faithful, as we ponder their end, is calculated to excite us to manly activity.

The text affords a splendid example of Christian virtue, and the sweetest motives to constrain us to live as he lived, that we may die possessed of his peace. The apostle spoke to Timothy in the most tender and affecting language, under the most solemn circumstances, as a dying father to his dear son, and charges him in the most impressive manner and by the most serious and weighty considerations to be faithful unto death. The diligent Christian and faithful minister, having acted in some good degree consistently, may meet death with the same joy and peace, being comforted with the same consolations as was Paul. Oh, it is worth ten thousand worlds to have the experience of grace persevered in to the end ! to be able to say with the devoted apostle— “ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give

me, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." It was grace carried him to this, and grace opened to him the bright prospect. This triumphant expression is only consistent with a life of holiness persevered in to the end. Nero might condemn and cruelly execute, but the righteous Judge would give him a crown of glory. In proportion as religion is neglected, the evidence of our safety is obscured, and fearful uncertainty will cloud the setting sun and darken the path through the valley of death. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. We shall now notice—

II. The Christian life, as exhibited in the text under the similitudes of a warfare, a contest, and a trust.

1. The Christian life is presented under the similitude of a warfare. This was Paul's experience of it, both as a Christian man and a Christian minister. He exhorts Timothy to endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,—to fight the good fight of faith,—and in the context, to watch, to endure afflictions, suffer patiently, and labor diligently, for the promotion of God's glory and the interests of his kingdom,—believing his word and employing it, for light and comfort and warfare, to guide his feet in the way of peace.

Christianity is a system of peace and good will to men. Christ is the Prince of peace. But the perfection of his kingdom is in heaven. The Christian here on earth is in the church militant, and his life is a warfare. The man of God is called to a holy conflict, to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. The enemies which he has to contend with are numerous and powerful. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The man of God who would meet the hosts of darkness and spiritual wickedness, must needs be well armed: he must put on the whole armor of God.—Eph. 6: 11. He must be vigilant and prayerful, lest the enemy gain some advantage. Watch ye, therefore, and pray—resist Satan, the world and the flesh—"stand fast in the faith"—"quit ye like men, be strong."—1 Cor. 16: 13.

The life of a soldier is one of privation, hardship and danger, and in proportion to the nearness and strength of the enemy will be the exposure, and the call to activity. The Christian is set to keep the heart with all diligence,—to keep it in the love of God and the patient waiting for Christ.

(1.) The flesh, or carnality, is an enemy. The sinful propensities and passions must be subdued. This can only be done by a constant exercise of faith; for the heart will be occupied either with good or evil, either for God or the devil. The love of the world roots out the love of the Father. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh."—Rom. 8: 5—8. Christ is our peace, having slain the enmity by his cross, and reconciled us to God, so making peace.—Eph. 2: 14, 15. Faith triumphs in Christ, and glories in the cross of Christ, by whom we are crucified to all that is carnal.

(2.) The world is an enemy.—John 15: 18—20. It smiles and snares, or frowns and persecutes. Now the pernicious smile gains the heart which should be given to God. The fashions and pleasures of time attract, alas, too often, and draw men off from God and duty. Now it frowns and persecutes, and many are offended and walk no more with Christ. The world is an enemy on the right hand and on the left. Friends may engross, and the things of earth allure to idolatry. The world is full of enemies to ensnare the soul, to subvert our faith, and to lead the evil heart of unbelief from the living God. The wicked hate and persecute the righteous. Cain, that wicked fratricide, hated his brother, and slew him, because Abel's works were good and his own were evil.—1 John 3: 12.

Let no mortal think that he is out of danger. Even in Paradise innocent man was snared: there was the forbidden fruit and the tempter. How much more are we exposed in the world of sin! Yea, in the church too, and among our best friends, their flatteries and kind caresses may injure our souls more than the fire and the sword of the persecutor.

(3.) The devil is the arch-enemy of God and man, (1 Pet. 5:) and he goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The devil is the monster-spirit of evil, the old serpent,

the captain-general of the enemies of God. Against these allied hosts—the world, the flesh, and the devil—we oppose Christ, the Captain of salvation. If we would be successful, we must follow this Captain with strictness and fidelity, and we shall conquer and be more than conquerors through him.—Rom. 8: 37. Christ hath already conquered death and him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil. He overcame the world,—spoiled principalities and powers,—made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.—Col. 1: 15. He hath provided arms and armor (Eph. 6: 14—18) offensive and defensive, not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, and to the having in readiness to avenge all disobedience.—2 Cor. 10: 4—6. Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds, let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand to execute vengeance on the foes of God, to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints.—Ps. 149: 5.

Christ sends no man a warfaring at his own charges. If it were so, who would dare to go forth to battle against the combined hosts of Satan, the world and the flesh? But we may draw from the armory of God all that is needful for this holy warfare. What a graphic description does David give of his triumphs through God and *his* armor. He ascribes his strength and skill, his success and safety, all to Jehovah. These all concentrate in Jesus Christ for the Christian, who becomes a conqueror, and more, through him. If left to ourselves, we might faint in despair; but thanks be to God, we have more than a match in Christ against all opposition. "It is God that girdeth me with strength and maketh my way perfect: he teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation." The redeemed in glory have all overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony. Lo, what a glorious army of victors stand on the sea of glass, who

have thrown down their battered arms, and taken up their palms and their harps to celebrate the triumphs of grace! We enter the ranks in the strength of promised grace, and through grace believers triumph. When told to shut out the world from the heart, this were impossible to the man who has nothing with which to replace it; but it is easy to him that has found God to be a sure portion—a better and infinitely more satisfying portion. Tell a man to be holy, and he finds that to be impossible, and his guilty soul sinks in despair. It is the atonement of the cross that reconciles the holiness of God with the safety of the offender. This pours a sacred influence on the soul, God's image is enstamped on the heart reconciled to God and holiness, and the believer contends not alone nor in his own strength. God gives what he requires; and then he may require what he will, and faith answers to his demands. If you separate the demand from the promise, the work were impossible: bring them together, and "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Take the shield of faith wherewith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked; and for an helmet the hope of salvation; the word of God the sword of the Spirit; the girdle of truth; the breastplate of righteousness: these are the weapons of our warfare. With these we fight the battles of salvation, under the mighty Captain who goes forth with his sword upon his thigh, in glory and majesty, riding prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness. Thus the saints, marshaled and panoplied, go forth to battle and to victory. There is no cessation of arms. The gospel armor must never be laid aside till the last enemy is conquered, and death itself is swallowed up in victory. The enemies are powerful, but the victory is certain, and the reward sure.—Heb. 11: 34. Rev. 2: 10. We need courage in this fearful conflict. We must add to our faith virtue, or courage. This grace comes from God in the use of means.

In the gospel God is revealed as the object of the sinner's confidence: he is beheld and loved, and this love is supreme and casteth out fear. By this we are delivered from the spirit of bondage, and the heart is brought under the influence of

this permanent affection, and delivered from the tyranny of its former desires. True and saving faith receives and rests on Christ alone, as he is offered in the gospel: it works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. Let us put on the whole armor of God, as directed (Eph. 6: 11.) and use it to the last, and never put it off till we triumph with God's elect. The victory is certain and the reward is sure. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

This Christian conflict is called a good fight. The term imports a struggle, and signifies to agonize or wrestle. There is a mighty struggle between grace and corruption, the spirit and the flesh. This good fight is that of truth and righteousness against sin and error, falsehood and wrong. It is holiness against wickedness. Oh, it is a glorious cause! The church militant goes forth in the best cause, with more than Alexander's ambition, who wept because there was no more for him to conquer, but without his alloy of corruption in a bad cause. The church is ambitious to lead captivity captive, and restore a lost world to God and happiness. This heavenly ambition makes believers "swifter than eagles and stronger than lions." They become bold and daring, turning to fight the armies of the aliens: one chases a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. "The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits."—Dan. 11: 32. It is emphatically a good fight, a holy crusade in the best cause, to rescue the temple of God from the wicked who have made it a den of thieves and robbers,—a good fight, a glorious warfare, in all its aspects and bearings. What a company of worthies battling with sin and the powers of darkness, and led on by the most illustrious Commander, in holiness and righteousness, to victory and to glory, and to life everlasting! Therefore fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

2. The Christian life is illustrated by the race. The allusion is to the Olympic games, as in 1 Cor. 9: 24. There are some points similar and some dissimilar in the figure.

(1.) In running the race, the contestors were required to enter with due preparation, and observe the course by law,

and were not left to their own discretion. So in Christian life, if any man will come after Christ, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow him. The Christian must run the race set before him. Mere activity is not enough: one may run swiftly in a circle or in a wrong direction, and gain nothing in the way to heaven. The Christian course is the way of God's truth—faith in Christ and obedience to the whole of his revealed will. He is not left to turn to the right or the left from the way of God's commands, lest he be met with the challenge, "Who hath required this at your hand?" "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;" and nothing is left for human discretion in this race. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee: ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established: turn not to the right hand nor to the left."—Prov. 4: 25. It is in this as in the charge to Moses—"See thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount." "Let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

(2.) In the race, there was swift and constant progression. So with the Christian: he has a race to run, he must press onward and upward,—not slothful, but diligent and persevering to the end. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. We must wrestle and agonize, and use holy violence for the kingdom of God,—press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The prize is not had if we stop one ace from the goal. "So run that ye may obtain." Holy David turned his feet to God's testimonies, and declined not from the way of God's law; and Paul pressed toward the mark; he so run as to finish his course and obtain the crown. Let us imitate these holy men of old, who are now in glory, and be not as those who began in the spirit and ended in the flesh.

He that stopped short in the race fell short of the prize. So in the Christian life, it is not the beginning well, but the

ending, that determines the honor. The religion of some is temporary; like the morning cloud or the early dew, it passeth away, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. He that overcometh shall inherit all things and sit down with Christ on his throne.—Rev. 3: 21.

There are some points of dissimilarity, but these are all in favor of the Christian. In the race, only one could be crowned; though many might run and did run, but one was crowned.—1 Cor. 9: 24. But in the Christian race, all and every one who strives lawfully may obtain. The doctrine of election militates nothing against this. And if but one could be saved, let each person strive to be that one, as did the Grecian youths when only one could win.

In the game, the fall of one was the gain of another. Not so in the Christian race. Here are no jealousies of each others' success. They who run in the heavenly race rejoice in each others' gifts and graces, and mourn over the falls and short-comings of their fellows, and weep with them that weep.

Again, the crown is different. The racer obtained a corruptible crown of vegetables—laurels, and parsely, and other greens and flowers, that fade; but the Christian's crown fadeth not away. It is composed of greens and flowers plucked from the paradise of God. O, it is a crown of life, of distinguished lustre and beauty!

3. The third item in Paul's experience, relates to the trust committed to him—"I have kept the faith."

This may refer either to the system of faith set forth in the gospel, or to the grace of faith in the heart.

(1.) The system of faith,—the doctrines of faith,—the truths to be received and believed, especially the doctrines of justification and holiness by Christ crucified. He had professed and preached the gospel of Christ as one who was not ashamed of it, for therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith.—Rom. 1: 16, 17. He had gloried in the cross of Christ, and abhorred the very appearance of another gospel.—Gal. 1: 8.—"Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed." Any and every doctrine or sentiment which did not center in Christ

crucified he discarded, and would give no countenance to Judaizing teachers; reproves Peter to his face, for he was to be blamed in trimming to please the Jews.—Gal. 2: 11, 12. The Christian system of faith, built on the foundation of Christ's mediation, he cordially embraced, sincerely professed, and faithfully vindicated; he showed the danger of corrupting it, (1 Cor. 3: 12—15.) and of rejecting it, (Heb. 2: 3.) For there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary.—Heb. 10: 26.

(2.) "I have kept the faith," refers to the divine principle in the soul by the effectual working of the Spirit.—Eph. 2: 8. This is of God's operation.—2 Thess. 1: 11. Zech. 10: 12. He deals out the measure of faith to each of his people according to his good pleasure.—Rom. 12: 3. It is also a habit: Paul lived by faith.—Gal. 3: 2. Christ lives in the believer, and the life is a life of faith on the Son of God, he in us and we in him. He exhorted his disciples thus—"Abide in me and I in you." It contains a present reality of future good things, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It unites us to Christ, and he dwells in our hearts by faith.—Eph. 3: 17. We are commanded to build ourselves up in our holy faith, and that we strive together for the faith of the gospel. They who possess this precious faith are enabled to do wonders, as the elders, who obtained a good report, wrought righteousness, and received the promises. It is accompanied with its own evidence; the inward witness. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.—1 John 5: 10. The apostle kept the word of faith and the grace of faith;—had earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints, and had stirred up the gift of faith that was in him.

III. The happy end and final triumph of faith.

1. The apostle has a triumph, that raises him above the fears of death: his life of faith ends in joy unspeakable and full of glory. Through faith he wrought righteousness, subdued kingdoms, obtained promises, escaped the edge of the sword, stopped the mouths of gainsayers, and obtained the

victory; he is raised far above the hopes and the fears of the world; he had a peace which the world could not give nor take away; and he is ready to be offered in martyrdom. He was ready, yea, he longed to depart and be with Christ, which was far better—for him “to live was Christ, and to die was gain.”

2. He had a blessed prospect of a crown of distinguishing lustre. It is called a crown of life, (James 1: 12,)—“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him,”—a crown of glory,—a crown of righteousness.—1 Pet. 5: 4. It is promised to them that love him, and also to the faithful,—Rev. 2: 10. Christ, the King of kings, hath on his head many crowns.—Rev. 19: 12. He hath these crowns to bestow.—Matt. 13: 43. Then the righteous, when crowned, shall sing and shine in the kingdom of God the Father forever. Christ makes his people kings and priests to God and his Father.—Rev. 1: 6.

This crown in the text is styled—

1. A crown of righteousness. It is a righteous crown and a crown of righteousness. It is composed of the righteousness of Christ, wrought for us and wrought in and by us, and the reward of that righteousness meeting in the salvation of the believer. It is a crown purchased by the righteousness of the Surety who obeyed the law perfectly, and satisfied the claims of justice. By his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, he has acquired these crowns to bestow on the righteous.

2. It will be given only to those who are justified by faith and made righteous by sanctifying grace—called, justified, sanctified and glorified—are golden links in the chain of grace. Christ, that he might justify and sanctify his people, suffered, the just for the unjust; was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He works in his people to will and to do, and then rewards them for the good they do.—Matt. 10: 41. The Christian shall not miss his reward.—Mark 9: 41, it is a great reward in heaven. Christ works the righteousness of the law in us, (Rom. 8: 3.)—gives

grace and strength, and calls to labor and suffering. And commensurate with this is the exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

3. It is laid up for the Christian as an inheritance.—Rom. 8: 17. Christians are children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. The full enjoyment is in heaven, but there are foretastes on earth. He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit. Believers are sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory—Eph. 1: 14.

4. This crown is expected from Christ the righteous Judge. He is Lord of all, the Judge of the quick and dead at his appearing and kingdom. He is appointed to this honor to judge the world in righteousness. The apostle looked forward to a meeting with the righteous Judge with exultating expectation, as being worthy, in the gospel sense. "Remember how thou hast received, and hold fast," was the privilege and duty of primitive Christians. Paul had received grace, and had held it fast, so that no man might take his crown: his assurance of faith and hope made him glad to meet his righteous judge, who would not disappoint him, nor any who loved the glorious appearing of Christ.

5. He expected the crown at that day. The day of execution or of death is the crowning day of Christians. The soul enters paradise as it leaves the body,—is made perfect in holiness, and passes immediately into glory. The day of judgment is the crowning day. Then soul and body, reunited, will enter upon the kingdom of glory.—Matt. 25: 34. Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile bodies and make them like unto his glorious body.—Phil. 3: 21. The resurrection of the body is clearly taught in scripture, especially—1 Cor. 15: 42, 44.

6. In fine, the apostle exults in the assurance that others shall in like manner obtain their crowns. The Christian is not selfish, but rejoices in the prospects and prosperity of others; having tasted that the Lord is gracious, he feels a

liberality of soul like that of Christ, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross. The joyful prospect of saving sinners sustained the Redeemer in his suffering. The benevolent heart takes pleasure in the happiness of others. The happiness of heaven is augmented by the innumerable multitudes who share in it. There is a fullness in God to make all happy forever. Giving does not impoverish him, nor withholding enrich. He gives liberally, and the Christian's joy is in the abundance and diffusion of Heaven's benefits—not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing."

When told of Christ upon his throne, with all power in heaven and earth, and up to this hour with what unfaltering hand he hath wielded the scepter and dispensed the blessings of his kingdom, we may rejoice. We may come with all the assurance of children, and confidence in the faith of all that he hath done and said, to the assurance of a blessed immortality. The higher your hopes of glory hereafter, the holier will you be in all manner of life and conversation on earth, in your feelings, affections, habits and intercourse in society. The character even now will receive a tinge from the prospect that is before you. The gloomy forebodings from guilt on the conscience depress the spirits, and the whole man is more and more assimilated to the society of the lost: while the habitual anticipation of heaven, according to the gospel, will bring down both its charity and sacredness upon your heart. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." And the more you are like Christ, the stronger your assurance that you shall live with him forever. This excludes all terror and dread of meeting the Judge, and causes you to love his appearing, and rejoice in the salvation of the Lord which crowns you, and all who love him. There is a unity—a *oneness*—between Christ and all believers. They are all one in him:—a oneness of heart and soul, sympathy and interest. Paul was doubly blessed by the assurance that not only to himself, "but unto all them also that love his appearing," the Judge would give the crown of righteousness.

In conclusion, observe—

1. How awful the state of those who have no part nor lot in the Christian life and the Christian's crown. They who are not careful to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, must perish without remedy. They who are destitute of faith in Christ and repentance toward God, must die without hope. Their damnation is just, who despise their own mercies. All who hate God love death, and are their own worst enemies; they fight not the good fight on the side of God, but on the contrary they fight against God and all that is good and great. They run, not in the heavenly race, but in the broad road to death; their feet are swift in the way to hell. Instead of a crown of righteousness, they receive the reward of iniquity, and are covered with confusion and everlasting shame. The apostle Jude exhorts to constancy in the faith—to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints—warns against the course of those who oppose, whether in or out of the church. “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”—Jude 19. Paul in his writings describes the woe-begone course of all who oppose or neglect the gospel. Thus saith the Lord—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” To which class do you belong? Whither are you going post-haste? to heaven or to hell? There is no alternative, no middle course; he that is not for Christ is against him. “Turn ye, turn ye, *why will ye die?*”

2. The life of the Christian, but especially of the Christian ministry, is a warfare and a race. We, my Christian brethren, have professed a good profession before many witnesses, and are charged in the sight of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, to keep this command,—to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness,—to fight the good fight, and never give it over till crowned at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a great comfort to a dying saint to be able to enter into the spirit and adopt the language of our apostle, who looked back with pleasure on his Christian course now

finished, and forward with triumph in the cheering prospect of his reward in heaven ; and in the near approach of his Lord, he welcomes the martyr's death for the martyr's crown. Let this encourage Timothy and all who believe, that there is a crown of life before us, the glory and joy of which will abundantly recompense all the hardships and toil of our present warfare, and Christian course.

3. While these lessons are common to all Christians, there is something special to every gospel minister, charged as in the context to preach the word ; to "be instant in season and out of season," at all times, all hazards, to few or many, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with forbearance and perseverance, with plain instruction and close application. In the practical language of Scott—"This is the more indispensable as the time is indeed now come when a large majority of even professed Christians will not endure sound doctrine ; they are offended by the humbling truths of the gospel, or by the heart-searching, distinguishing, practical truths of scripture, which detect their sins and show the necessity of mortifying their peculiar lusts: and they desire to be soothed and flattered in the indulgence of them, and to have teachers according to them. This should teach those who love souls to watch in all things, to venture and endure all painful effects of faithfulness, to take every opportunity of preaching the pure gospel, and to make full proof of their ministry. In doing this they should be quickened by the consideration that their brethren one after another are taken away or laid aside, and that their own term of usefulness will soon expire. In proportion as the duties of a man's place and station are neglected, his evidence of an interest in Christ must be obscured, and uncertainty and discouragement may probably distress his closing scene."

Let us, my brethren, in our respective places and stations, imitate the apostle, even as he followed Christ. Quit you like men of God ; strive together for the faith of the gospel ; so fight the good fight—so run the Christian race—so watch and hold fast what you have attained, that no man take your crown. So help me, my covenant God, through Christ ; to whom be glory forever. Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

THE SELF-EVIDENCING POWER OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.*

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“Never man spake like this man.”—*John 7: 46.*

THE impress of mind is seen in its productions. There is always that in an individual's history which indicates his intellectual and moral character. Mind left free to act, and to develop itself, is certain to find its place and level; and to manifest not only its general powers, but also its specific idiosyncracies. Thus, we have, in the orations of gifted orators—of Demosthenes, Cicero, Chatham, Fox, Lactantius, Chrysostom, &c.—not only the picture of their mental and moral constitution in general; but also an exact daguerreotype of what was peculiar to each. Although there be many points of general similarity, yet a history of their lives points out much of individual character, in the lives of a Belisarius, a Prince Eugene, a Marlborough, a Gustavus and a Frederick. And although they were all tyrants and wholesale butchers, the same holds true of an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Gengis-Khan, a Timour and a Bonaparte. Vastly different again, are a Dante, a Tasso, a Milton; or in another department, a Newton,

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a Boyle and a Bacon ; or in still another, an Origen, an Athanasius, an Augustin and a Luther. Each of these several minds had something peculiar—something which distinguished it from all other minds ; insomuch that when we read the orations of eloquent patriots, the conflicts of virtuous commanders, the poems of ethereal poets, the carnage of selfish destroyers, or the books of grave theologians ; a very distinct and different impression is made on each separate perusal.

If we carry these illustrations along a descending scale, we will find in all history, we will see in everything that man is superior to all other organic substances, and the organic world to the inorganic. It is among our intuitional perceptions, that a man is a higher order of being than a horse, a horse than a rose, and a rose than a stone. Or if you turn back and take the ascending scale, you will find the traces of higher orders of being than man ; and the universe attests the power and the greatness of the Godhead.

It were easy to multiply proof of the proposition that where there is no constraint from without, no foreign interference, the superiority of one order over another, and the superiority of one individual over another of the same order, *will manifest itself*. Insomuch that we are continually meeting with results both in the world of matter and in the world of mind, which although we may be ignorant of their author, we intuitively refer to a human agency. It never entered the head of any human being, when looking at St. Peter's at Rome, or St. Paul's at London, or when reading the "Principia," or the "Wealth of Nations," to attribute them to any other than a human agency. We instinctively feel that man must have been here, man alone could do this.

But while on the one hand we are continually meeting with results which we know could never have been achieved by less than man ; so on the other hand, there is in our world many a manifestation, many a footstep visible, of a power and greatness superior to that of man himself—even of Him who formeth the mountains and createth the winds and telleth to man what is his thought ; who measureth the waters in the

hollow of his hand, and meteth out the heavens with a span, and comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure, and weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing. At every step we are compelled to ascribe the results around us to the power and the providence of God. Just as man leaves his own impress—his own *peculiar* impress, upon the works of his hands; so, only in an infinitely transcending degree, with him whose kingdom ruleth over all; and as we look at his doings, the utterance springs spontaneous from the heart to the lips—*God must have been here; God alone could do this.*

Now it was this manifestation of something supernatural and celestial on the one side, and the instinctive appreciation of it on the other, that led the officers who went forth to take Jesus, to return, overwhelmed with amazement, to those who sent them, crying out—“Never man spake like this man!” There was something above the human in his whole person and contour and utterance—a stateliness and a purity and a majesty and a might upon him, which awed and subdued the inferior intelligences around him—the shining forth of an ineffable something which they could not describe, but which infallibly assured them that here was something more than man. Just as the spectators who witnessed the supernatural events which attended and followed the crucifixion—the rending of the vail, the riving of the rocks, the quakings of the earth, the supernatural darkness—smote their breasts under the irresistible conviction that here was no common execution, and cried out with the centurion, “truly this was the Son of God;” so also, with the officers who came to take Jesus and who heard his words.

We are apt to think, that the power of working miracles is an essential element in the vouchers of him who comes, Heaven’s ambassador, to earth. And however this may hold of a merely human ambassador, we judge it not applicable to the case in hand. For aside from the control which he exercised over nature, and which showed him to be nature’s God, there was that in his person and in his words which carried

the air and the majesty of divinity. True, when by a word he stayed the wheels of revolving nature; when at his bidding the winds ceased to rave and the waves to roar; when at his will the grinding, iron jaws of death fell powerless asunder and the greedy grave gave up its prey, men had evidence that he who did these things, in his own name and by his own power, was not a man. And it is also true, that had these wonder-works been wanting to him whose name is "Wonderful," we should have felt that something was wanting to complete the symmetry of his history. Still we needed not these vouchers to attest the God manifest in the flesh. That was attested most convincingly, in the power by which he spake. In all his teachings there was the bright beaming forth of an intelligence above the human—there was the brightness of the Father's glory exhibited. Even in childhood, and before he had received that unction above measure which descended upon him at the Jordan, the Jewish rabbis, the wisest of their race, were astonished at his questions and answers; and after his anointing from on high God was ever manifest in his person and his speech. His hearers "were astonished at his doctrine, and bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth," and exclaimed, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?" If they saw in his "mighty works" an emanation from on high, so also did they in the wisdom by which he spake. It was this divine epiphany, this unutterable shining forth of Divinity through the flimsy gossamer of his humanity, that sent back the astonished officers with the breathless exclamation "Never man spake like this man." It was this that made those who went forth to Gethsemane, with swords and staves and boiling rage—as with severe majesty he answered "I am He"—in spite of themselves own an awful presence, and "go backward and fall to the ground."

Such, my friends, were the words and the doctrines as delivered by himself; *they contained the evidence of their own inspiration.* And it is an interesting subject of inquiry, whether, and how far, those same words and doctrines as

written and read are sustained by the same evidence ; and whether there is not, or may not be, an intuitional perception, in every right-minded reader, that they are divine.

It would seem, from most of the apologetic literature of Christianity, as if its authors thought that the arguments drawn from miracles and prophecy, were the chief, and almost only reliance, in manifesting the inspiration of the Holy Scripture. And most of preachers too, whom it has been my lot to hear, stop short in their investigations, and rest satisfied just where Lyttleton, and Leland, and Lardner, and Leslie, and West, and Watson, and Paley, stopped, and push the argument no farther. Now we have not a word to say against the arguments derived from these sources ; but we must protest against giving them that prominence and precedence which has been assigned them. We think Christians are entitled to take higher, and if that be possible, much stronger ground. We think the word of Jesus as written (the whole Bible) bears just as unmistakable evidence of its heavenly origin, as when he spake it. We feel assured that just as the listening officers felt the presence of a more than human power in the words which he spake ; so, in the same manner, will every attentive and right-minded reader of that word find a spirit, a purity, a sustained grandeur, an all-pervading holiness, and a God-becoming might and majesty in it, which will make them feel that their minds have indeed come into contact and communion with the mind of God. We are assured that the " Light which has come into our world," is as much superior to the coruscations of the most brilliant human intellect, as is the blinding sun in his zenith glory, to the sickly glare of the passing meteor. And we are assured that every right-minded man will be just as intuitively conscious of the difference in the former case, as in the latter ; and that just as he must have an incurable perversity who would affirm there was no difference between the meteor and the sun, so he must have a perversity equally as incurable, who would confound the light from the Sun of righteousness with the radiated brilliancy of a human intellect. Such is the self-evidencing power of

the light from heaven, that if any receive it not, the reason is to be found in their own depravity. They reject it because their deeds are evil; and hate it because it reproves their crimes; and “look scowlingly at the Christian religion, because it looks scowlingly at them.”

Valuable as have been the toils of those who have elaborated the argument from prophecy, and the argument from miracles, still we have but little use for them. The argument from miracles was more efficient for *establishing* the church than for *perpetuating* it; and prophecy in *enlightening and comforting* the church, than for *convincing* the unbeliever. Were they blotted out of existence, the best argument of all would still be left—one with which every Christian and honest mind would rest entirely satisfied. And no wonder, for God has left the lineaments of his own moral likeness upon every page of his word. Just as really as Xenophon, or Shakspeare, or Plato, have stamped the impress of their minds on the pages they have left us, just so really has the holy God stamped the likeness of his divine moral excellencies on the pages he has left us. Just as there is that in the works of Byron, or Coleridge, or Bunyan, or any other transcendent genius, by which they may be known—and which feeble admirers can not imitate, so does the attentive reader of the inspired writings find that there, by which God their author may be known; for the very soul and glory of the Godhead is suffused upon all its chapters. He has left just as bright and unquestionable traces of himself in the field of revelation, as in the field of creation. Not more plainly are infinite power and wisdom, and omniscience and immensity written over the earth and the heavens, than are infinite holiness, and justice, and goodness, and truth, written over the writings of the apostles and prophets. Just as eternal might and majesty are seen, in their stately forthgoings, deeply engraved on all the landscapes of our world; just as divinity beams upon us from every star, blooms around us in all our gardens, and waves afar over all our fields;—just so, only in a degree more transcendent, are the unmistakable lineaments of his moral

perfections engraven upon his word. And if all we have to do in order to be convinced of the being, immensity, omnipotence and omniscience of our God, is to look into the volume of creation; even thus also, is it true that all we have to do in order to be persuaded of the being and perfection of God's moral excellencies, is to look into the volume of inspiration. And not more strongly and distinctly—(nor as much so) does the voice within us cry "God, God made it," when we look upon the material universe; than it cries "God, God wrote it!" when we look upon the Bible. When we read the statements of the Bible in reference to man's creation and fall, and his present sinful and miserable condition; and God's plans and purposes in reference to sin and to sinners; and the way of salvation opened up to us through the obedience and death of a God-man Mediator; and of the necessity, the agent and the means of sanctification; and of the royal law, and the sanctions which enforce it; and of the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment; we feel as we read, that this is the word of God—of a holy, just and good God. And then there is such a power in that word to awe and subdue and transform us!—a power that is very distinctly felt even by the wicked when they read it. But the regenerate especially are made to feel, as they reverently progress through its pages, very much as if they were in the presence chamber of him whose eye searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, and they ever and anon exclaim, "God wrote it; for none else could have known our deep deceitful hearts so well, nor our wants and our weariness so well, nor met and satisfied them so well. None else could have adapted his gifts to our needs, his grace to our miseries, as it is done here—eternal truth and eternal righteousness, is in all thy testimonies."

The Bible not only evidences itself to be the word of God, from the moral lineaments of Godhead that are upon its pages, and from the perfect account it gives of man's origin and fall, present condition and way of recovery—the only way in which recovery is possible, and yet the only way that man would have never thought of; but also *from the power there is*

in that word over the spirit of man. As that word had a power in it when spoken by its author, which made the unbelieving officers feel that it came from God, made the blaspheming crucifiers go backward and fall to the ground, made the proud spirit of Pilate tremble and labor until noon-day for his acquittal, made the very devils cry out, "I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God;" so there is a power in it, as written, which we feel, as we read, to be the mighty power of God—a power felt by the most hell-hardened sinner who ever perused its pages—a power to awe him, and "to torment him before the time;" and which makes him shut the book and cast it away from him, as if he were shaking the burning marl of hell from out his bosom. And there is a power in it, felt by every devout disciple, to enlighten his eyes, and to lead him in the path of holiness, and to lift him from the degradation to which sin has reduced him, and revolutionize his whole spirit, soul and substance, and to fire his heart and nerve his arm for the toil and trial of every conflict, and to cheer him in adversity, to console him in sorrow, to transform him more and more into the image of God, and pour the incipient joys of the beatific vision around his heart. Yea, God's law is perfect, converting the soul; the testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clear, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. They are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. That word is the mighty power of God unto salvation. And he who instead of spending day after day in fruitlessly reasoning about miracles, does ply the sinner from sabbath to sabbath, with this two-edged sword of the Spirit will find, the more he tries his trusty weapon, that it is mighty through God, breaking the heart like a hammer, and melting it like a fire, and piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.

I repeat it, my brethren, it does seem to me, that the Christian apologists of the last two hundred years, have greatly too much laid the stress of the argument upon the miracles and the prophecies, and upon what are called the external evidences. It does seem to me that in spending so much time and strength in elaborating arguments to prove the Bible true, we treat its *self-evidencing power* with too little deference, and the evils invented by human depravity with too much respect. And the result is, wicked men, encouraged by the pains we are at to refute them, begin to think (what they did not think at first) that really after all, there is something in their quibbles and their diatribes. It is true, and we should act upon it, that God is seen as intuitively in his word as in his works. And as we convince a doubter of the existence of God, not by debating with him, or by refuting his objections, but by bidding him examine the works of God; so should we convince the doubter of inspiration, that the Bible is a revelation from above. The man in looking at the universe feels in all his heart and in all his soul, that God made it; and so, in reading the Bible he feels that God wrote it. The theopneustic intuition is just as vivid and complete as the theistic one. And if a man have not the former, it is because he willfully stifles it; so also in relation to the latter, and therefore it is useless to spend more time upon him. He hates the light and refuses it, because his deeds are evil; and it is not your reasonings that will reform him.

Do not mistake me. I do not utterly repudiate the external evidences, nor miracle, nor prophecy: but they are not our main reliance. Taken apart and by themselves, and the instances are rare indeed, in which they have availed, I do not say to convince the infidel, but even to satisfy the believer. Who amongst us all when we had finished reading these (so called) "Evidences of Christianity," did not close the book with painful feelings. Instead of directing us to the word of God itself, and to the power of that word exhibited in, and around us; our authors trying (most absurdly) to give us demonstrations after the manner of the exact sciences, have

left us full of perplexities and inquietudes. And there is probably, not one amongst you all, who has not, at the conclusion of such a reading, asked himself in anguish of spirit—"And is this all? have I no other and more satisfying reason to give to him who asketh me a reason of the hope that is in me?" The truth is, that though these arguments be objectively sufficient, yet subjectively they carry not that fullness and power of conviction with them which is contained in "the self-evidencing power of the Bible itself; and I will frankly confess to you all, that when filled with anguish by those "books of evidences" that placed the whole, or at least the great stress upon them, I have found the peace and joy of a full assurance, only in throwing away my authors, and turning to my Bible. And if you will chase away anguish from the soul of the believer who has been brought into doubt, (perhaps by reading the argument of some apologetic champion,) just bid him open his Bible, and in it look upon the stately steppings of his King and his God, and your point is gained. Or, instead of looking upon that word nakedly and absolutely, tell him to attend for a moment to its efficacy on his conscience and soul. Tell him to reflect how by its mighty power, his whole spirit and being have been changed—how by a resistless stroke, a gracious energy, the polarity of his whole nature has been reversed, so that the spirit is now the positive pole, whereas before the reverse of all this was true—how, through the instrumentality of that word, old things have passed away, and all things become new—how through it, he is transformed more and more every day into the image of Christ, and made continually a better, and still better man, and the stone broken in his heart, and the unclean and the base in his nature purging away like dross before the fire. Bid him, I say, turn his attention to these things, and you will find every lingering doubt dispelled; and instead of the stare of perplexity, and the low moan of inward anguish, your eyes shall see a radiant countenance, and your ears shall hear the joyful exclamation of a disburdened and a blest bosom, "Never book spake like this book." But, perhaps it may be objected that though this

be the best of all arguments for him whose eyes have been opened to perceive it—for the real Christian; yet it cannot be of avail in convincing the man who is not so; and that in point of fact, many a man has read his Bible through and remained an unbeliever. But it may be replied, that the objection is of no more force against this argument, than against the theistic argument; and if it is not allowed to hold against the latter, no more should it against the former. In point of fact, many a man has looked at the universe and remained an atheist; yet we do not feel that he remains so from lack of evidence; but because, in his desperate depravity, he has stifled down the loud outcry of the intuitions within, attesting that these things are the work of a God. And so do we hold it of the theopneustic argument. If any look through the Bible and remain an infidel, it is not because the soul and glory of the Godhead glow not along every line and letter of the heavenly holograph, but because that *he* also in his depravity, stifles the voice within, and closes the eye of his understanding.

It is true, to be sure, (and the same thing obtains in the argument of natural theology,) that while there is a sufficient light in the Bible, which the natural man can see, to carry all before it, and utterly dispel every shadow of unbelief; still there is a light, and glory, and power, which he cannot see, and which is reserved only for him that believes. There is a light in it which was only “sown for the righteous,” and “a gladness which is reserved for the upright in heart.” There is a secret there, which is only for them that fear the Lord, and a spiritual discernment and relish, which is only given to those who do the Saviour’s will. And all this is given to the good, not by giving them a new, or an enlarged Bible, but by giving them new powers of perception. The natural man cannot see these things of which we now speak, in his Bible, for the same reason that a blind man cannot see the light. A man without sight, is dead to all the visible beauties and glories of the landscape, not because the sun is darkened or extinguished, but because he is destitute of the power of vision; and the measure of that deficiency is the measure of the darkness

that envelops him. Let the visual nerve be deadened, or let thick incrustations rest upon the iris, and it is in vain that the beams of day spread a tide of glory all around him; it is to him as though light were extinguished in its fountain, and a mantle of rayless darkness enveloped all. Nor is his misery to be mitigated by a multiplication of the light which is around and without him. A thousand thousand suns may light up their blaze in the heavens; and a thousand thousand tides of glory may pour themselves upon his sightless balls; and still the darkness, as of a stormy midnight, will pall him. You must break off the incrustations that have settled upon the iris, you must vivify the optic nerve, before the unhappy sufferer can be restored to the beauties and the blessings of vision.

So, my friends, it is with our race, while unrenewed, in reference to that peculiar light, and power, and glory of the word of God, which is reserved for them that love, and obey him. As to *this*, they are blinded through the deceitfulness of sin, and their understandings darkened. It matters not, that the sun of righteousness has arisen with healing in his wings—it matters not that revelation has diffused its beamy glories all around them; because of a spiritual impotence of vision, they are dead, if not to *all*, to all at least of its innermost and peculiar glories. Jesus Christ is to them a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness in him. God shines, the end of all perfection out of Zion, but their eyes are insensible to the full splendor of the mighty manifestation. A glorious, high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary, but a veil of imperveable opacity hides its glorious peculiar majesty from their vision. This veil must be lifted, these scales must be removed, (and that not by an array of “evidences” either) and then, in God’s light, shall they see light clearly. And this is all we need. We need, as Christians, to have no new revelation beyond what is contained in the self-same Bible that is given to all. We need not ascend to heaven and bring a torch lit at the altar above, with the light of which to read the moral character of God, which is entablatured upon the sacred

page; nor yet do we need to descend to hell, to kindle a taper there, to do it. Only let spiritual vision be restored, and then the radiations of Divinity streaming in light, as if the curtains were drawn from around the great white throne, will attest that this is indeed the word of God—that never book spake like this book.

But to return to the objection. It is with the theopneustic, just as it is with the theistic argument. Although the man who is unrenewed, has never fully felt the power and seen the glory there is in the sacred writings; precisely the same thing is true of him in regard to the revelation of a Divinity in the affairs of creation and providence; and yet in this latter case, he is convinced. Or if not, we hold that his unbelief springs from his love of darkness, and his hatred of the light; and that his case is beyond the reach of reason, and so we give him up.

But if it be true (and we hold it for a most certain truth,) that God has left his communicable attributes just as distinctly impressed on his Bible, as he has his incommunicable on his works; then it is true in this case also, if the man is not convinced by intuitional perception, that his want of conviction is owing to his love of darkness, and his utter hatred and horror of the infinitely holy, just, and terrible Being, who thus reveals himself; and that *his* case also, is beyond the reach of argument. And so have I always found it. Never have I known a confirmed infidel converted to an acknowledgment of the truth of the Christian scriptures, in any other way than by the self-evidencing power of the scriptures themselves. If a West and a Lyttleton give their disbelief to the winds, and come and sit down as little children at the feet of the Messiah, you shall hear them attest that the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, and it was this law that converted their souls. And if the word of God fail in winning a way for itself into the soul, everything else will also fail; and fail just because the man loving the darkness and hating the light, is morally incapacitated for the reception of the truth. And all we can do is to set before him the alluring example of a Chris-

tian life, and pray God, that the righteous, but terrible sentence of judicial infatuation be removed.

This objection disposed of, return we now to speak again of the power there is in the word. And it deserves to be noticed here, that though the unbeliever cannot have in his own history an adequate experience of this power, still he can see its effect all over the world. If miracles must needs be insisted on (and we have not altogether refused them,) then I submit whether the miracles wrought daily in the world, through the power of the Christian scriptures, are not the best, and most convincing argument for the truth of those scriptures. If you wish a sign from heaven, behold it—the miracles of conversion and sanctification—the standing, overwhelming miracle of a living and a growing church, the bush burning these six thousand years, and yet unconsumed—millions upon millions of souls transformed from the vile to the virtuous; from the carnal to the spiritual; from the earthly to the heavenly; from the base, and the mean, and the sordid, and the selfish, to the lovely image of the man Christ Jesus. Yea! behold the world turned upside down, and transformed and renovated—every human institution purified and beautified, every human relation sanctified and beatified, every science and every art revived and nourished into a great and goodly growth, and every interest of men guarded, and cherished, and built up like as they never were in any part of the world where the Sun of righteousness shed not forth his life-giving, glory-bearing beams. These be a sign from heaven. These be the die wherewith the glorious and mighty Lord does stamp his word, and give it the currency of heaven. True! the man may never have felt in his own soul the mighty saving power of that word; but he has eyes, and must see the daily forth-puttings of its tireless energy in the world. And much as it is resisted in the world, and even in the church, many and mighty as are the opposing influences with which it has to contend, and unplastic and intractable as are the materials on which it has to operate; still all this serves the more completely, to exhibit the wondrous power by which such transformations are

effected. And there is not an institution, or an interest, or a relation of human beings, which does not bear witness to this power. The impress of its all-reaching energy is manifest in all our associations, for comity, and for commerce, and in all our halls of legislation, and judgment, and administration; and in the family; and in the redemption of woman. Every science, and every art, and every legitimate institution, and relation in the wide world, do come forward voluntarily, and with hand uplifted testify that they were ever hampered and stunted, and kept down—that they never could grow and prosper, and become great, only in connection with the Bible—that through all times and lands, they had groaned under a sore bondage of corruption, until this Bible made them free. It is thus, that even the “natural man” may come to know of the Bible, that it is divine. The power that is in it, and the work that God has given it to do, bear witness of it. The many glories of the church, dim and feeble though they be, when compared with what they might and should be, bear witness of her, that God dwells in the midst of her, and that she is his. And it is in vain to reason (so I, at least, have ever observed) with him who rejects such considerations as these. It is of no use to talk to him of miracles wrought eighteen hundred years ago, when he will not believe those that are wrought before his eyes. Direct his attention to Moses, and the prophets, and the apostles—to the majesty, and power, and work of the Bible, “to the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consistency of all the parts, the scope of the whole, the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, and the many other incomparable excellencies and the entire perfection thereof;” and if he is not convinced, we have the very highest authority for saying that he would not be, though one were sent from the dead to testify to him, or though all miracles were wrought before his eyes. If he had no reply at hand, he would wait until he could fabricate one. If a voice from heaven attested the Son of God, he would affirm that *it only thundered!* If devils were cast out in his presence, he would affirm even in

the teeth of Jesus himself, that it was only a trick of legerdemain; or that it was done by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. As I said before; such a man is beyond the reach of argument, and if anything can be done for him, it must be done at a throne of grace.

Some of the conclusions to which I seem, to myself, to have arrived are—

1. That the Bible should be daily and devoutly read.
2. That the Bible Society is worthy of all support, as the Church's mightiest instrumentality for the extirpation of infidelity, *and all false religion*.
3. That to "creeds and confessions" is sometimes attributed a magical power which they do not possess. Evangelical truth has a vitality of its own, and a healthful hold upon the mind and heart of the godly, which they cannot augment or abate by even a jot. They are very useful, however, in the *present* condition of the Church, as a mean of discipline; and they have sometimes been useful in vindicating the Church's reputation.

S E R M O N X I X .

T H E F I N A L J U D G M E N T .

BY REV. JOSEPH OSBORN,

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“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” *Rev. 20: 11—15.*

THE writer of these words was employed by the Spirit of prophecy to give to the church a view, beforehand, of many of the principal events that were to take place in the world, and that were to be connected with her future history. Her struggles, her progress, and her final triumph, were made to pass in review before his mind. In the chapter which contains these words, he is carried down the course of time to the last ages of the world. From the mount of vision he sees the nations of the earth introduced into the kingdom of the Redeemer, and subjected to his sway. He beholds “Satan bound for a thousand years, and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, and a seal set upon him, that he should deceive

the nations no more, until this period should be fulfilled." The Christian religion universally prevails. The Spirit from on high is everywhere poured out. The beast and the false prophet are overcome—every false system of religion disappears—iniquity is restrained, and purity and peace reign throughout the world.

The scene changes. "Satan is loosed out of his prison, to go out to deceive the nations, and to gather them to battle. They go up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city." The earth, it would seem, becomes again the theatre of enormous wickedness—true religion decays and almost expires—infidelity and crime overrun the seats of former piety, and of the worship of the true God. While the prophet thus beholds the world converted into a moral wilderness, and human passions, rioting, lawless and unrestrained, the closing scenes of time are enacted before his view. Time completes its revolutions, and the period arrives when the human race must pass the scrutiny of the final judgment.

"I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it," &c.

The language of the text is too plain to admit of a doubt, that the subject of which the apostle speaks is the general judgment at the end of the world. Like many other passages of scripture, it describes, in terms suited to their grandeur and their awful solemnity, the closing scenes of this world's drama—when the Judge shall appear with a glory corresponding with his character, and when, after an impartial examination, the destinies of the human race shall be unalterably determined.

In the sequel, we shall attempt a brief notice of the several parts of the final judgment of the world, as they are here represented. And may the Divine Spirit, who has revealed them, inspire us with feelings of corresponding solemnity, and impress us with the belief, that we, too, shall be there, to meet the awards of an impartial judgment, and the consequences of a life well, or ill spent.

I. The first thing presented to the apostle, in this vision, is the Judge seated upon his throne. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it." He who shall sit upon the throne of final judgment, is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the honors to which he is exalted, on account of his work of redeeming sinners. "God has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

The manner in which he shall appear is next described. He shall be seated upon "a great white throne." Several circumstances are mentioned in the scripture which shall attend the coming of Christ to judge the world. It is said that "he shall come in the clouds of heaven." At the time of his ascension, while his disciples still gazed after his receding form, "a cloud received him out of their sight. The two angels who appeared, in human form, announced that he should return "in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven." As his coming is to be, not figurative, but real, there appears to be no reason why these representations should not be understood in a literal sense. And there is the same reason to believe that he will appear upon a throne visible to the eye, and similar to that which John saw in prophetic vision. Being represented sitting upon "a great white throne," intimated his character of Judge—a throne being the seat, or place from which kings and those having authority are accustomed to dispense justice. And as white is an emblem of purity, it may have been designed to signify the justice and the integrity of the judgment that shall be passed upon the countless millions assembled before his throne.

It is evident from the language of this passage, as well as that of many others, that the Judge shall appear in a manner inexpressibly glorious. Circumstances will attend his arrival

corresponding with the dignity of his person, and the grandeur and importance of his work. The clouds of heaven are often amongst the most glorious objects in nature. As they gather blackness, and, driven by the spirit of the storm, dash in fury along the sky, they fill us with emotions of terror. As they move slowly in mid-heaven, reflecting the various hues of light, and exhibiting a thousand various forms, they give to the beholder sensations of the pleasing and the beautiful. And as the Judge shall come in these, may they not then present a spectacle of the most imposing grandeur? In the midst of these may he erect his throne, surpassing the most gorgeous thrones of earth, outrivaling even the throne of king Solomon, of which, it is said, "there was not the like made in any kingdom." To add to the magnificence of the scene, innumerable companies of angels shall attend him, as the ministers of his will. "The son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." The church is commanded to "look for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and her Saviour Jesus Christ." In person he may appear equally glorious, as he did when John saw him in the midst of he seven candlesticks, and when, overwhelmed by the sight, "he fell at his feet as dead."

But great as may be the external glory attending him at his coming, it will be far outshone by the moral grandeur surrounding his character as the omniscient Judge of an assembled world. In the view of an intelligent universe, the latter will surpass the former, as the light of the sun unobscured by a cloud, does that of the distant star that lies far off in the depths of heaven.

II. Such shall be the splendor of his appearing, that "the earth and heaven," it is said, "shall flee away from his face, and no place shall be found for them." This part of the vision refers to the dissolution of the material earth and heaven at the period of the final judgment. That the present frame of these shall be dissolved, appears to be clearly revealed: and fire, it seems, shall be the agent employed by

Almighty power, in effecting this stupendous change. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." It is not necessary to suppose that they will be utterly destroyed, or annihilated. That the Almighty could destroy them, no one can deny. But as we have no evidence that matter, though passing through innumerable changes, is really destroyed, it may be that the language of the scripture, in reference to this subject, means nothing more than the vast change that shall then take place. Science seems to have demonstrated, that through the various processes of nature, and in which there is an apparent destruction of matter, not an atom is really lost. It is only decomposed, and resolved into its original elements, and passes into new combinations regulated by different laws. May not, then, the earth and heaven, after being purified by fire, exist under a new organization? The language of the text, in which it is said, "there was found no place for them," may seem to countenance the idea of their annihilation. But may it not mean only that they shall no more be found existing under their present organization? This view seems to be favored by the apostle Peter, when he says, after having spoken of their dissolution by fire, "nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

But as we have not decisive evidence on this subject, we may not push conjecture too far. One thing we know, that the last act in the drama of time shall close with the scene of a dissolving heaven and a burning world. The judgment over—the fiat of the Almighty shall go forth and wrap this globe in flames. Its forests—its mountains—its oceans—its most solid parts must yield to the devouring element. Its towns—its cities—the proudest monuments of human power—the most splendid works of art—every habitation of man shall be burned up. Nor is this all. The heavens around us shall catch the blaze, and become a

universe of fire. Imagination becomes lost, when it attempts to grasp the magnitude and terror of the scene. Our minds are overpowered as we stand and gaze upon the burning city, or the volcano upheaving its volumes of smoke and flame. But if these are objects of sublimity and terror, what shall be the spectacle, when this earth and surrounding nature shall be lighted by the torch of final dissolution !

III. The next thing claiming our attention is the judgment itself. Though in the text the judgment is spoken of subsequently to the fleeing away of the earth and heaven, we must not suppose that these will be first destroyed. The judgment will precede that event. What is here said respecting it, embraces two things: its universality, and the principles on which it shall be conducted. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life."

The judgment pre-supposes the Resurrection. The generations of mankind that have been slumbering in their graves shall be summoned into the presence of "Him who sits upon the throne." Not only the dry land, but the sea is represented as giving up its dead. "Death and hell" are said to give up the dead that are in them. The word here rendered "hell" signifies usually *the state of separate spirits*: and, together with the other terms here used, intimates that every repository of the dead shall deliver up those that are in it. All the dead shall be summoned before the Great Judge. "Small and great" shall be there—those of every age—of every generation—of every country—of every character, and of every condition. The poor—the humble—those whom the world despises shall be there—those, whose deeds have shone upon the page of history, and whose names have filled the measure of earthly glory—the proud conqueror, who has made his way to empire over the ruins of plundered cities and depopulated countries; and, amid the cries and tears of countless widows and orphans, has seized upon a throne, only that he might trample upon the rights and the happiness of his fellow-men. All, from Adam down to his last descendant,

shall be there, to make up that vast throng that is to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

The dead raised, and the innumerable multitude assembled, the next thing in the solemn procedure shall be "the opening of the books," when all shall be judged out of the things written in them, "according to their works." By these books many understand merely the Divine omniscience. This may, indeed, be compared to a book, in which are described the characters, and in which are recorded all the actions of men. Running back over the past, the omniscience of the Judge can, in an instant, recall every action, and even every thought of every human being. But we incline to the opinion of those who understand by these books the different laws, or standards of conduct under which men have been placed, and by which justice requires they should be tried. This view seems to be favored by the statement that "they shall be judged out of the books according to their works." This implies that their actions will be compared with a standard; and that standard must be the law under which they have been placed. All can not be judged by the same law, as all have not lived under the same.

According to this view, the heathen, who have not been favored with a revelation, shall be judged by the law of nature, or that law which was at first impressed upon man's nature by the Creator. Though dreadfully effaced by sin, enough remains to render them without excuse, on the grounds of total ignorance. The apostle, in referring to this subject, says "The gentiles which have not the law," that is, the written law, as the Jews had, "do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." However far their ignorance may excuse them, it is evident, from this language, that it will not excuse altogether. And in reference to them this same writer adds, "As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law."

The Jews will be judged by the law of the written revelation which they possessed. This placed them under circumstances vastly superior to those of the heathen. Their knowledge of the divine will was much greater than that of those who had no revelation. And as much more severe will be their punishment, if, in the end, they shall be found guilty. "As many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law."

In the next place, those who lived under the light of the gospel shall be judged upon the principle of their superior advantages: and, if found guilty, their condemnation will be greater than that of heathen, or of Jew. Their punishment must be the severest, because their privileges have been the highest. In accordance with this principle it is said, "This is their condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

But it is said, "another book was opened, which is the book of life." Out of this the saints shall be judged. Some understand by this the book of the divine decrees, and that it is meant, by the passage, that those whose names are written in it, shall be adjudged unto life. This interpretation overlooks the statement of the text, that men shall be judged "according to their works." We incline to the opinion of those who understand by this book the gospel, or the law of faith, in which it is declared, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." In this book will be found written their works, and according to which they shall be judged, not considered as the foundation of their acquittal, but as the evidence of their faith to which life is promised.

The principle, then, on which the judgment will proceed, is that of men's works viewed in connection with the law, or standard of duty under which they have been placed. According to these they shall be acquitted, or condemned. The fact, that the saints shall be judged according to their works, may appear to some to favor the idea that they shall be justified on the ground of their works being meritorious. This conclusion does not follow. Their works will be the evidence of

their faith. They will prove their character as believers to whom life is promised. The question will not be, whether they have fulfilled or transgressed the law, but whether they have faith in the Redeemer; which is the only means of obtaining salvation. Their works will prove that they have faith, just as the works of the wicked will prove that they have not faith. Hence the Judge is represented as saying to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

IV. It remains for us to notice the end of the wicked at the final judgment. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." "Death and hell" we have already considered as meaning death literally, and the state of separate spirits. These shall no longer exist. The wicked being raised to life and judged, shall enter upon that future state of misery which is styled "the second death." The language here used conveys the idea of the dreadful punishment of the wicked. "A lake of fire" is an emblem of horror. Other figures are employed, which equally denote the terrible sufferings of the lost. "The smoke of their torment," is said, "to ascend up forever and ever." They are said to be gnawed by "the worm that never dies." Their future state being called "the second death," denotes the anguish they must endure. The literal death of a human being gives us awful conceptions of pain. With what emotions do we look upon the emaciated form, the sunken eye, the pallid countenance, the heaving bosom, and the final struggle! And what must be the death of both soul and body in that place of torment to which, in righteous retribution, the wicked shall be consigned forever!

It is added, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." All whose works shall not evidence their faith in a Redeemer. This is a start-

ling truth to every unbeliever. He may be resting in imagined security. He may be indulging the delusive hope of happiness in a future life. He may be ready to offer a thousand excuses for his unbelief. He may be attempting to calm his conscience, and to persuade himself that God will not punish him eternally for his sins. But the language excepts none. Not one of all the unbelievers that crowd the world, nor of the hypocrites that infest the church. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

Let this doctrine of a Final Judgment be used—

1. To encourage and excite the hopes of all God's saints. Their reward awaits them. In this world they may have tribulation. One calamity may tread upon the footsteps of another, and they may go sorrowing to the grave; but "when Christ who is their life shall appear, then shall they appear with him in glory." The thought of that day, when he shall appear in glory, is, indeed, too overwhelming. Our minds sink in the mighty effort to conceive of "that great white throne"—of the majesty of "him that sits upon it"—of "the heavens and the earth flying from his presence"—of the countless hosts of angelic beings—of "the dead, small and great," raised to life, and the stupendous issues of the final judgment. But faith assures the saint, and recalls to him the promise that "the righteous shall shine forth, as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."

2. Let it be used to persuade the sinner to repent before it is too late. If he die in his sins, where is his hope of escape? The grave cannot hide him from his judge. His iniquities will not be forgotten. He will be judged according to his works, and these must prove him an enemy to God, and designate him an heir of hell. Think, then, O sinner! of that day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

S E R M O N X X .

THE BELIEVER'S FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

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“ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” *Rom. 6: 3, 4.*

PAUL'S epistle to the Romans exhibits the scheme of redemption in all its length and breadth. In the fifth chapter he presents to view the doctrine of sin and death having come upon all mankind by the imputed guilt of Adam's first sin, and the doctrine of the sinner's justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ. “ Therefore, as by the offense of one, the judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” The apostle then states the principal design of the publication of the moral law from Mount Sinai, viz: that by its exciting the moral corruption of men, they might be necessitated to flee to Christ for deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and to obtain eternal life. “ Moreover, the law entered, that the

offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." In the next chapter, Paul takes up and refutes an objection to what he had just advanced. "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Do not these doctrines of the free gift of righteousness for the justification of believers, and of free grace abounding for the pardon of their subsequent sins, lead to licentious living? Do they not necessarily encourage sin, that grace may abound? "God forbid; how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" Ignorance of the scriptures is the cause of innumerable errors in religion. "Ye do err," said our Saviour to the Saducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, "ye do err, *not knowing the scriptures*, nor the power of God." "The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned, from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain janglings, desiring to be teachers of the law, *not understanding what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*" Persons who disbelieve certain doctrines which they hear preached, because they tend to encourage sin, should first search the scriptures whether these things be so. By doing this, and by laboring to understand the subject, they will find that the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith in the Redeemer's imputed righteousness, necessarily frees believers from the dominion of sin and Satan, and constitutes them servants of God, so that they "have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Moreover, persons who are pleased with no preaching that is not directed mainly to their feelings, should consider that in order that the heart may be properly influenced, it must be addressed through the understanding and conscience, which should always control and regulate the affections. This truth is taught by mental philosophy, by the passage under consideration, and by the

invariable practice of the inspired preachers of righteousness. And it is plainly indicated in the promise of God concerning the New Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their *minds*, and write them in their *hearts*, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." "*Know ye not* that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

In farther discoursing on this subject, I purpose examining into the meaning of being "buried with Christ by baptism into death," and considering the effects of that process as they are indicated in the text.

Before entering on the discussion, it is proper to remark, that the death of Christ, being the most conspicuous and difficult part, and also the termination of his work upon earth, comprises in the text, and in many other passages of scripture, his whole obedience unto death.

I. Let us examine into the meaning of being "buried with Christ by baptism into death."

The first head of discourse embraces the following connected propositions:

1. Christ's obedience unto death as the surety of his people.
2. Faith by the sinner apprehending Christ's obedience unto death.
3. The believer's fellowship with Christ in his obedience unto death.

1. *Christ's obedience unto death as the surety of his people.* "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his *death*." Therefore we are buried with Christ by baptism, unto *death*. The Lord Jesus Christ lived and died as the surety of his people. In the fullness of time he deigned to leave the bosom of his Father,

be made of a woman, be made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The object of this mission from heaven to earth, was to repair the breach of the covenant of works, by rendering the perfect obedience which that covenant demanded, but Adam withheld, and paying its penalty of death. And gloriously he accomplished his design. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The child brought forth by the highly honored virgin was called "Immanuel, God with us." As an infant member of the Jewish church, he was circumcised. From reason's earliest dawn to the moment when he uttered the piercing cry which immediately preceded his death, he "set his face like a flint" against every sin. From early childhood he was obedient to his earthly parents. And only when doing their will would have prevented him performing his Heavenly Father's work, did he ever cross their commands. Then he obeyed God, rather than man. To "fulfill all righteousness," he was baptized by John with water. He was publicly anointed from on high with the Holy Ghost, without measure, to qualify him fully for the office of Mediator between God and man. The angels' song, celebrating his birth, set forth the lofty spirit of his life, and the design of his death, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." But as our legal surety and representative, Jesus was made sin, a curse, devoted to destruction. Therefore he *suffered* from the cradle to the cross. Herod's fierce persecution of the Infant of days, fitly introduced the miseries of the only begotten Son. Laden with the vindictive wrath of God, he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He was "despised and rejected of men," "a worm and no man," the reproach of the people. A perfect living illustration of that holy, just, and good law, which emanated from the Godhead, complete conformity to which is the happiness of heaven, and opposition to it the misery

of earth. His depraved people saw in him "no form, nor comeliness, nor beauty, for which they should desire him." Going about doing good, "he endured the contradiction of sinners." Yea, his multiplied deeds of benevolence by which he manifested the goodness of his heart, and set an example for our imitation, provoked spite and ingratitude. His miracles which attested his Divinity, the blind seeing, the lame walking, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hearing, and the dead restored to life, these almighty and gracious acts were requited by his enemies with blasphemy and persecution. His preaching was despised by the great ones of the land, and little blessed of God for the conversion of souls. Yet supported by divine power, and cheered by the joy set before him of ultimately saving an elect world, he pursued the even tenor of his way, despite every obstacle. From his birth to his death, Satan or his emissaries could not make him decline one step from the path of duty. He did always the things which pleased his Father. His meat and drink was to do his Father's will, and to finish the work which he gave him to do. But, oh! his agonies in Gethsemane, and on Calvary's cross! Then was the "hour, and power of darkness." Then "sank he in deep mire where there was no standing, and came into deep waters where the floods overflowed him." Arrows dipped in gall were shot into him, by the living God. The sword of divine justice awoke from comparative slumber, and with relentless fury penetrated the inmost recesses of his soul. From indignant heavens, enraged earth, and infuriated hell, God gathered his heaviest curse upon Immanuel's devoted head, crowned with thorns! But cease my puny efforts to describe this "death of death." No sorrow was like unto Christ's sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger. But blessed be God, "it is finished," for he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. And well will it be for us if in a happy eternity, we be able to comprehend the length, and breadth, the depth and hight of the sufferings of Christ upon the cross.

First principles are the foundations of all knowledge. With these, therefore, the mind should be stored. A familiar acquaintance with them, enables their possessors easily to detect error, and discover truth, which are respectively the bone and beauty of the human understanding. The great principle which lies at the bottom of the text, is the legal identity of Jesus Christ, and his believing people. Without applying that principle, it is impossible to understand the passage. The same may be said respecting many other passages of scripture, and the spirit of the whole Bible. But that principle is the divine key which discloses to our view some of the most glorious treasures of the kingdom of heaven.

As has been already remarked, throughout his earthly career Christ acted as the legal representative of his people. He was the surety of the new covenant, to which office he had been appointed in eternity. As the antitype of Adam, he was the federal head of all his spiritual posterity by supernatural regeneration. Accordingly, by his active obedience rendered to the precepts of the divine law during his life, he wrought out for them a justifying righteousness. By his awful sufferings and death, he paid its penalty which they had incurred. When forsaken by his Father, and smitten by the sword of divine justice upon the cross, he endured the very penalty of the law. He suffered physical death, in one of its severest forms, and experienced in his soul the unutterable anguish arising from the bereavement of his Father's favor, and the actual infliction in it of his righteous indignation. The necessity for the eternal duration of these miseries, was obviated by the union of his divine and human natures. This wonderful union gave to the sufferings of his human nature, infinite merit. Thus by his obedience unto death, Christ purchased for his seed deliverance from sin and all its penal effects, and a title to, and meetness for, eternal life. In the language of prophecy, Messiah "finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness." "In him shall all the seed of

Israel be justified, and shall glory." "Thi sis the name by which he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness." The vicarious nature of his work is thus plainly expressed by the prophet Isaiah—"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people, was he stricken." In the language of the New Testament, "he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we should be made the righteousness of God in him." "The free gift" of his righteousness, "is of many offenses unto justification." They which receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. "The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." And finally, the glorious design of the work of Christ is thus graphically and fully declared by the apostle Peter—"Christ hath also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should walk in his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye are healed."

2. *Faith by the sinner apprehending Christ's obedience unto death.*

The Lord Jesus having poured out his soul an offering for sin, secured by *price* the redemption of his people. But in order to adults obtaining salvation one thing is necessary in which they personally act. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *belicveth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved." "Know ye not

that so many of us as were *baptized* into Jesus Christ, were *baptized* into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by *baptism* into death." Baptism being the rite which introduces Christians into the New Testament church, that rite is here put for faith, a public profession of which, in the judgment of charity, implies regeneration, and entitles to the administration of the ordinance. It is as if the apostle had said, "Know ye not that so many of us as believed in Jesus Christ and were baptized, were baptized into his death." It does not follow from these passages that any unregenerate sinner possesses native ability to believe. Think ye that yonder dead man could arise into life, although urged by the most powerful motives, and his body be complete in all its parts? No more could a soul possessing all its faculties, but "*dead in trespasses and sins,*" start into spiritual life, though entreated or commanded by God or man, unless the quickening energies of his almighty Spirit accompany the voice. It is an error to say that sinners are active in regeneration. They are active in conviction. They are active in conversion. But until they have been supernaturally endued with spiritual life from on high, they are as incapable of spiritual action as the ground on which they tread. Christ having purchased the complete salvation of his people, purchased the faith by which they avail themselves of it. Accordingly, when Christ purposes to save a sinner by power, he sends the Holy Ghost to convince him of sin, of righteousness, and of the judgment to come. He regenerates, takes possession of, and seals up the soul unto the day of complete redemption. He works faith in the sinner, in the exercise of which he believes the scriptures on the authority of God speaking in them. The sinner believes their representations of his ruined condition by nature and practice, the free offer made to him in the gospel of an all-sufficient Saviour—that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," and so believing he cordially appropriates Christ in all his fullness. "You hath God quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of

yourselves, it is the gift of God." "He who wrought you for the self-same thing is God, who also hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

3. *The believer's fellowship with Christ in his obedience unto death.*

So soon as the sinner is thus united to Christ by the Spirit and faith, a prodigious change occurs in his legal relation to God. The entire work of his covenant head is placed to his credit in the records of heaven. God henceforth views him as having done what was actually performed by Immanuel in his stead. It is his distinguished privilege to enjoy fellowship, or a common interest with Christ in his active and passive obedience. He "knows Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death." In Christ he is complete as respects every demand of God's law and justice against him. The law claims perfect obedience to its precepts as an indispensable condition of his admission into heaven. The believer answers, "Thou hast it in Christ, my divine surety, by whose obedience I am made righteous. In the Lord have I righteousness." The law claims death, as the penalty incurred by transgression. In Adam "all have sinned," and "the wages of sin is death." "True," cries the believer, "but thou hast it in Christ, who died for my offenses. He is the propitiation for my sins." It will be distinctly borne in mind, that in this federal transaction between Christ and his people, there is no transfer on either side of moral or personal qualities or acts, but only of their legal connection. The following note by the celebrated, the late Dr. Mason, explains my meaning: "If my personal sin could be taken from me, and made the personal sin of another, he must then suffer for himself, and not for me, as I would be personally innocent. He would not be under the imputation of my sin, because I would have none to impute; and I could not enjoy the benefit of his righteousness, because on the one hand, I would need none, and on the other hand, he, as suffering for himself, would have none to offer. So that here would be no representation, neither the substance nor the shadow of a vicarious

atonement. Therefore while my personal demerit must forever remain my own, the legal consequences of it were borne by my glorious surety. It is this which renders the imputation of sin to the Lord Jesus, a doctrine so acceptable to the conscience, and consoling to the heart of a convinced sinner. And this simple distinction between a transfer of personal acts, and the transfer of their legal connection, which is properly imputation, relieves the friends of truth from the embarrassment into which an incautious manner of speaking has sometimes involved them, and blows into the air the quibbles and cavils of its enemies."

II. Let us now consider the *effect* of being buried by baptism into Christ's death. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death, *that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of God the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*"

Great mistakes prevail concerning salvation. Many persons think that it consists in deliverance merely from the liability to punishment for sin. Myriads wish that this were the fact, in which case they would heartily embrace the gospel. But while it is true that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," and that "in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin," it is no less true that all who have been baptized into Christ's death, are freed from the reigning love, power, and practice of sin. That professed faith in Christ, unaccompanied by good works, in other words, by holiness of heart and life, is dreadful delusion, the scriptures repeatedly show. "Except your righteousness," said Christ to his immediate disciples, "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Saviour pronounced the Pharisees hypocrites, "like unto whited sepulchres which appear beautiful outward, but were within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? then

will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Simon Magus professed to believe, and was baptized, when he saw Peter work miracles. But his subsequent wickedness led Peter to declare that he was still "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity." Paul speaks of persons who professed to "know God, but in works denied him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." And James condemns, in unqualified terms, that professed faith which is unattended by good works. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can such faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed, be ye filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone." On the other hand, the scriptures represent freedom from the dominion of sin, and the possession of personal holiness, as essential parts of salvation. The Messiah's meet New Testament name teaches this truth: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people *from their sins*." "Verily, verily, I say unto you," was Christ's language to Nicodemus, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not see the kingdom of God." This new birth consists of an entire and supernatural change upon man's moral nature, a conversion from sin to holiness, complete in kind, but imperfect in degree. Its subject is "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that he should walk in them." "In Christ Jesus," *i. e.* in the Christian religion, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, but faith which worketh by love, but keeping the commandments of God." "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour

Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," "and every one that hath true hope in Christ, purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure."

More particularly, this is the precise point of the argument in the latter half of the text. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that *like as* Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of God the Father, *even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" Under the first head of discourse, I considered the believer's fellowship with Christ in his obedience unto death. I have now to show how they have fellowship with him in his resurrection from the dead.

A parallel is here drawn between Christ and believers, a clear view of which will admit us into this part of the argument:—"that *like as* Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, *even so we also* should walk in newness of life."

When Jesus Christ, the divine surety of his people, died, was buried, according to the scriptures, divine justice was satisfied, so that the reeking sword was restored to its scabbard. The law thus magnified and made honorable, had not one jot or tittle of further claim upon him. A change must, therefore, take place in his personal state. The grave must open her gates, and let his body go free. Accordingly, shortly after his interment, Christ was raised from the dead by the glory, or power of the Father, tarried forty days with his disciples, and then ascended into heaven, thence to apply by power the redemption which he had achieved. In like manner, the sinner who is united to Christ, undergoes a change in his personal state. The law having no penal claim upon him, the judicial bond of punishment having been canceled, and an act of pardon passed, the curse of spiritual death is removed from his soul, which is now inspired with a principle

of spiritual life. As the *body* of Christ, over which death had dominion in the grave, was delivered from that dominion by its resurrection, and being reunited to the soul, from that time, Christ lived free from the curse to which his soul and body had been subjected; so the *soul* of the believer, over which chiefly the curse had dominion, is delivered therefrom by its resurrection from the death of sin; and his body being also set apart, the believer thenceforward lives in soul and body unto God. He presents his body, or person, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so 'the believer' also walks in newness of life," animated by a new principle of spiritual life.

In this way believers have fellowship with Christ in his resurrection from the dead. They enjoy a common interest with him in the benefits of his resurrection, suitably to their several stations. Christ having burst the bonds of death, and ascended up on high leading captivity captive, and received gifts for men, as Mediator of the new covenant, he officiates *in heaven* as the Son of God in dispensing these blessings. Believers, by receiving these ascension gifts, show the benefits of his resurrection, and having been raised from the death of sin, they become *upon earth* servants of God. Adopted into the divine family, and constituted sons and daughters of the Almighty, they are workers together with Christ, their elder brother, in advancing his kingdom in the world. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin," *i. e.* he who has satisfied the penalty of death by his legal representative, is freed from the dominion of sin. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise

reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Before applying this subject, it will be proper to correct a false interpretation of part of the text. A highly respectable sect of Christians quote part of the latter verse as a triumphant demonstration of their doctrine, that immersion is necessary to constitute baptism. "Therefore we are *buried* with him *by baptism* into death." But the passage proves no such thing. It proves that Christ died and was buried according to the scriptures. It proves the necessity of faith by a sinner to appropriate the benefits of Christ's death. But farther it does not prove. The burial here mentioned refers not to "baptism," but to "death." Buried into death, is a phrase synonymous with dead and buried. The point being of the highest importance, the apostle expresses, in strong language, the believer's fellowship in the obedience unto death of his surety. Christ lay nearly three days in the grave, that his enemies should have no ground for quibble, that he did not die, but merely swooned on the cross. His burial was a fact of such moment as to be matter of prophecy: "My flesh also shall rest in hope, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." And in this death, and this burial, which was so important a proof of his death, we become interested by faith succeeded by baptism. Had circumcision continued to be the introductory rite into the visible church, the apostle might with propriety have used the same language: "Therefore we are buried with him by *circumcision* unto death." It is worthy of observation that in the next verse, Paul expresses the same idea in strictly figurative language: "For if we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death." Since the respected sect referred to view the word "buried" as indicating baptism by immersion, what do they make of the word "planted?" Why do they not consistently pursue the apostle's train of thought, and explain how "planted" means the same thing with "buried," *i. e.* immersed? What right have they to extort immersion out of the first term, rather than the second? It will not do to say that

“planted” is like “buried,” because the root of the plant is *covered over* with earth. For planting to resemble either immersion or burial (as the sect view the latter rite) the *whole plant* would need to be imbedded in the earth, not the root only. Further, to maintain that “buried” indicates immersion, betrays culpable ignorance. The fancy is doubtless derived from the notion that in the apostle’s time, the Jewish dead were interred as the dead are now with us, *i. e.* the corpse was let down into, and covered over with earth—which kind of burial alone suggests the idea of immersion. But such is not the truth. In Palestine the common mode of interment was to deposit the corpse in a sepulchre erected upon the ground, or in a cavity hewn out of the rock. In particular, this was the fact in the case of the adorable Redeemer. His sacred body was shrouded by Joseph of Arimathea, and laid in a sepulchre hewn out of a rock, and a great stone was rolled to the door. In all probability, the floor of the sepulchre was level with the adjoining grounds. At most, it would be depressed but a very little.

The subject that we have endeavored to unfold to you is of vast importance. Therefore in your private retirements, imitate the noble Bereans, by “searching the scriptures whether these things are so.” We covet not to be lords over your faith, but helpers of your joy. If things be as we have represented them, it is clear as the sun shining in his strength that it is impossible that any true believer can live in the willful habit of sin. “How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,” *i. e.* habitually, deliberately, willfully, “for his seed remaineth in him, and he can not (so) sin, because he is born of God.” What! Shall any person profess to be baptized into Christ, be made partaker of his righteousness, and raised from spiritual death, and not give evidence of being sanctified? That would be putting asunder what God hath joined together. “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” “Christ is made of God unto us righteousness, sanctification.” “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” No person was ever

the nations no more, until this period should be fulfilled." The Christian religion universally prevails. The Spirit from on high is everywhere poured out. The beast and the false prophet are overcome—every false system of religion disappears—iniquity is restrained, and purity and peace reign throughout the world.

The scene changes. "Satan is loosed out of his prison, to go out to deceive the nations, and to gather them to battle. They go up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city." The earth, it would seem, becomes again the theatre of enormous wickedness—true religion decays and almost expires—infidelity and crime overrun the seats of former piety, and of the worship of the true God. While the prophet thus beholds the world converted into a moral wilderness, and human passions, rioting, lawless and unrestrained, the closing scenes of time are enacted before his view. Time completes its revolutions, and the period arrives when the human race must pass the scrutiny of the final judgment.

"I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it," &c.

The language of the text is too plain to admit of a doubt, that the subject of which the apostle speaks is the general judgment at the end of the world. Like many other passages of scripture, it describes, in terms suited to their grandeur and their awful solemnity, the closing scenes of this world's drama—when the Judge shall appear with a glory corresponding with his character, and when, after an impartial examination, the destinies of the human race shall be unalterably determined.

In the sequel, we shall attempt a brief notice of the several parts of the final judgment of the world, as they are here represented. And may the Divine Spirit, who has revealed them, inspire us with feelings of corresponding solemnity, and impress us with the belief, that we, too, shall be there, to meet the awards of an impartial judgment, and the consequences of a life well, or ill spent.

I. The first thing presented to the apostle, in this vision, is the Judge seated upon his throne. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it." He who shall sit upon the throne of final judgment, is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the honors to which he is exalted, on account of his work of redeeming sinners. "God has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

The manner in which he shall appear is next described. He shall be seated upon "a great white throne." Several circumstances are mentioned in the scripture which shall attend the coming of Christ to judge the world. It is said that "he shall come in the clouds of heaven." At the time of his ascension, while his disciples still gazed after his receding form, "a cloud received him out of their sight. The two angels who appeared, in human form, announced that he should return "in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven." As his coming is to be, not figurative, but real, there appears to be no reason why these representations should not be understood in a literal sense. And there is the same reason to believe that he will appear upon a throne visible to the eye, and similar to that which John saw in prophetic vision. Being represented sitting upon "a great white throne," intimated his character of Judge—a throne being the seat, or place from which kings and those having authority are accustomed to dispense justice. And as white is an emblem of purity, it may have been designed to signify the justice and the integrity of the judgment that shall be passed upon the countless millions assembled before his throne.

It is evident from the language of this passage, as well as that of many others, that the Judge shall appear in a manner inexpressibly glorious. Circumstances will attend his arrival

corresponding with the dignity of his person, and the grandeur and importance of his work. The clouds of heaven are often amongst the most glorious objects in nature. As they gather blackness, and, driven by the spirit of the storm, dash in fury along the sky, they fill us with emotions of terror. As they move slowly in mid-heaven, reflecting the various hues of light, and exhibiting a thousand various forms, they give to the beholder sensations of the pleasing and the beautiful. And as the Judge shall come in these, may they not then present a spectacle of the most imposing grandeur? In the midst of these may he erect his throne, surpassing the most gorgeous thrones of earth, outrivaling even the throne of king Solomon, of which, it is said, "there was not the like made in any kingdom." To add to the magnificence of the scene, innumerable companies of angels shall attend him, as the ministers of his will. "The son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." The church is commanded to "look for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and her Saviour Jesus Christ." In person he may appear equally glorious, as he did when John saw him in the midst of he seven candlesticks, and when, overwhelmed by the sight, "he fell at his feet as dead."

But great as may be the external glory attending him at his coming, it will be far outshone by the moral grandeur surrounding his character as the omniscient Judge of an assembled world. In the view of an intelligent universe, the latter will surpass the former, as the light of the sun unobscured by a cloud, does that of the distant star that lies far off in the depths of heaven.

II. Such shall be the splendor of his appearing, that "the earth and heaven," it is said, "shall flee away from his face, and no place shall be found for them." This part of the vision refers to the dissolution of the material earth and heaven at the period of the final judgment. That the present frame of these shall be dissolved, appears to be clearly revealed: and fire, it seems, shall be the agent employed by

Almighty power, in effecting this stupendous change. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." It is not necessary to suppose that they will be utterly destroyed, or annihilated. That the Almighty could destroy them, no one can deny. But as we have no evidence that matter, though passing through innumerable changes, is really destroyed, it may be that the language of the scripture, in reference to this subject, means nothing more than the vast change that shall then take place. Science seems to have demonstrated, that through the various processes of nature, and in which there is an apparent destruction of matter, not an atom is really lost. It is only decomposed, and resolved into its original elements, and passes into new combinations regulated by different laws. May not, then, the earth and heaven, after being purified by fire, exist under a new organization? The language of the text, in which it is said, "there was found no place for them," may seem to countenance the idea of their annihilation. But may it not mean only that they shall no more be found existing under their present organization? This view seems to be favored by the apostle Peter, when he says, after having spoken of their dissolution by fire, "nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

But as we have not decisive evidence on this subject, we may not push conjecture too far. One thing we know, that the last act in the drama of time shall close with the scene of a dissolving heaven and a burning world. The judgment over—the fiat of the Almighty shall go forth and wrap this globe in flames. Its forests—its mountains—its oceans—its most solid parts must yield to the devouring element. Its towns—its cities—the proudest monuments of human power—the most splendid works of art—every habitation of man shall be burned up. Nor is this all. The heavens around us shall catch the blaze, and become a

universe of fire. Imagination becomes lost, when it attempts to grasp the magnitude and terror of the scene. Our minds are overpowered as we stand and gaze upon the burning city, or the volcano upheaving its volumes of smoke and flame. But if these are objects of sublimity and terror, what shall be the spectacle, when this earth and surrounding nature shall be lighted by the torch of final dissolution!

III. The next thing claiming our attention is the judgment itself. Though in the text the judgment is spoken of subsequently to the fleeing away of the earth and heaven, we must not suppose that these will be first destroyed. The judgment will precede that event. What is here said respecting it, embraces two things: its universality, and the principles on which it shall be conducted. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life."

The judgment pre-supposes the Resurrection. The generations of mankind that have been slumbering in their graves shall be summoned into the presence of "Him who sits upon the throne." Not only the dry land, but the sea is represented as giving up its dead. "Death and hell" are said to give up the dead that are in them. The word here rendered "hell" signifies usually *the state of separate spirits*: and, together with the other terms here used, intimates that every repository of the dead shall deliver up those that are in it. All the dead shall be summoned before the Great Judge. "Small and great" shall be there—those of every age—of every generation—of every country—of every character, and of every condition. The poor—the humble—those whom the world despises shall be there—those, whose deeds have shone upon the page of history, and whose names have filled the measure of earthly glory—the proud conqueror, who has made his way to empire over the ruins of plundered cities and depopulated countries; and, amid the cries and tears of countless widows and orphans, has seized upon a throne, only that he might trample upon the rights and the happiness of his fellow-men. All, from Adam down to his last descendant,

shall be there, to make up that vast throng that is to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

The dead raised, and the innumerable multitude assembled, the next thing in the solemn procedure shall be "the opening of the books," when all shall be judged out of the things written in them, "according to their works." By these books many understand merely the Divine omniscience. This may, indeed, be compared to a book, in which are described the characters, and in which are recorded all the actions of men. Running back over the past, the omniscience of the Judge can, in an instant, recall every action, and even every thought of every human being. But we incline to the opinion of those who understand by these books the different laws, or standards of conduct under which men have been placed, and by which justice requires they should be tried. This view seems to be favored by the statement that "they shall be judged out of the books according to their works." This implies that their actions will be compared with a standard; and that standard must be the law under which they have been placed. All can not be judged by the same law, as all have not lived under the same.

According to this view, the heathen, who have not been favored with a revelation, shall be judged by the law of nature, or that law which was at first impressed upon man's nature by the Creator. Though dreadfully effaced by sin, enough remains to render them without excuse, on the grounds of total ignorance. The apostle, in referring to this subject, says "The gentiles which have not the law," that is, the written law, as the Jews had, "do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." However far their ignorance may excuse them, it is evident, from this language, that it will not excuse altogether. And in reference to them this same writer adds, "As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law."

The Jews will be judged by the law of the written revelation which they possessed. This placed them under circumstances vastly superior to those of the heathen. Their knowledge of the divine will was much greater than that of those who had no revelation. And as much more severe will be their punishment, if, in the end, they shall be found guilty. "As many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law."

In the next place, those who lived under the light of the gospel shall be judged upon the principle of their superior advantages: and, if found guilty, their condemnation will be greater than that of heathen, or of Jew. Their punishment must be the severest, because their privileges have been the highest. In accordance with this principle it is said, "This is their condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

But it is said, "another book was opened, which is the book of life." Out of this the saints shall be judged. Some understand by this the book of the divine decrees, and that it is meant, by the passage, that those whose names are written in it, shall be adjudged unto life. This interpretation overlooks the statement of the text, that men shall be judged "according to their works." We incline to the opinion of those who understand by this book the gospel, or the law of faith, in which it is declared, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." In this book will be found written their works, and according to which they shall be judged, not considered as the foundation of their acquittal, but as the evidence of their faith to which life is promised.

The principle, then, on which the judgment will proceed, is that of men's works viewed in connection with the law, or standard of duty under which they have been placed. According to these they shall be acquitted, or condemned. The fact, that the saints shall be judged according to their works, may appear to some to favor the idea that they shall be justified on the ground of their works being meritorious. This conclusion does not follow. Their works will be the evidence of

their faith. They will prove their character as believers to whom life is promised. The question will not be, whether they have fulfilled or transgressed the law, but whether they have faith in the Redeemer; which is the only means of obtaining salvation. Their works will prove that they have faith, just as the works of the wicked will prove that they have not faith. Hence the Judge is represented as saying to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

IV. It remains for us to notice the end of the wicked at the final judgment. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." "Death and hell" we have already considered as meaning death literally, and the state of separate spirits. These shall no longer exist. The wicked being raised to life and judged, shall enter upon that future state of misery which is styled "the second death." The language here used conveys the idea of the dreadful punishment of the wicked. "A lake of fire" is an emblem of horror. Other figures are employed, which equally denote the terrible sufferings of the lost. "The smoke of their torment," is said, "to ascend up forever and ever." They are said to be gnawed by "the worm that never dies." Their future state being called "the second death," denotes the anguish they must endure. The literal death of a human being gives us awful conceptions of pain. With what emotions do we look upon the emaciated form, the sunken eye, the pallid countenance, the heaving bosom, and the final struggle! And what must be the death of both soul and body in that place of torment to which, in righteous retribution, the wicked shall be consigned forever!

It is added, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." All whose works shall not evidence their faith in a Redeemer. This is a start-

ling truth to every unbeliever. He may be resting in imagined security. He may be indulging the delusive hope of happiness in a future life. He may be ready to offer a thousand excuses for his unbelief. He may be attempting to calm his conscience, and to persuade himself that God will not punish him eternally for his sins. But the language excepts none. Not one of all the unbelievers that crowd the world, nor of the hypocrites that infest the church. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

Let this doctrine of a Final Judgment be used—

1. To encourage and excite the hopes of all God's saints. Their reward awaits them. In this world they may have tribulation. One calamity may tread upon the footsteps of another, and they may go sorrowing to the grave; but "when Christ who is their life shall appear, then shall they appear with him in glory." The thought of that day, when he shall appear in glory, is, indeed, too overwhelming. Our minds sink in the mighty effort to conceive of "that great white throne"—of the majesty of "him that sits upon it"—of "the heavens and the earth flying from his presence"—of the countless hosts of angelic beings—of "the dead, small and great," raised to life, and the stupendous issues of the final judgment. But faith assures the saint, and recalls to him the promise that "the righteous shall shine forth, as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."

2. Let it be used to persuade the sinner to repent before it is too late. If he die in his sins, where is his hope of escape? The grave cannot hide him from his judge. His iniquities will not be forgotten. He will be judged according to his works, and these must prove him an enemy to God, and designate him an heir of hell. Think, then, O sinner! of that day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

S E R M O N X X .

THE BELIEVER'S FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

BY REV. ANDREW JOHNSTON,

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“ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” *Rom. 6: 3, 4.*

PAUL'S epistle to the Romans exhibits the scheme of redemption in all its length and breadth. In the fifth chapter he presents to view the doctrine of sin and death having come upon all mankind by the imputed guilt of Adam's first sin, and the doctrine of the sinner's justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ. “ Therefore, as by the offense of one, the judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” The apostle then states the principal design of the publication of the moral law from Mount Sinai, viz: that by its exciting the moral corruption of men, they might be necessitated to flee to Christ for deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and to obtain eternal life. “ Moreover, the law entered, that the

offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." In the next chapter, Paul takes up and refutes an objection to what he had just advanced. "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Do not these doctrines of the free gift of righteousness for the justification of believers, and of free grace abounding for the pardon of their subsequent sins, lead to licentious living? Do they not necessarily encourage sin, that grace may abound? "God forbid; how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" Ignorance of the scriptures is the cause of innumerable errors in religion. "Ye do err," said our Saviour to the Saducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, "ye do err, *not knowing the scriptures*, nor the power of God." "The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned, from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain janglings, desiring to be teachers of the law, *not understanding what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*" Persons who disbelieve certain doctrines which they hear preached, because they tend to encourage sin, should first search the scriptures whether these things be so. By doing this, and by laboring to understand the subject, they will find that the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith in the Redeemer's imputed righteousness, necessarily frees believers from the dominion of sin and Satan, and constitutes them servants of God, so that they "have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Moreover, persons who are pleased with no preaching that is not directed mainly to their feelings, should consider that in order that the heart may be properly influenced, it must be addressed through the understanding and conscience, which should always control and regulate the affections. This truth is taught by mental philosophy, by the passage under consideration, and by the

invariable practice of the inspired preachers of righteousness. And it is plainly indicated in the promise of God concerning the New Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their *minds*, and write them in their *hearts*, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." "*Know ye not* that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

In farther discoursing on this subject, I purpose examining into the meaning of being "buried with Christ by baptism into death," and considering the effects of that process as they are indicated in the text.

Before entering on the discussion, it is proper to remark, that the death of Christ, being the most conspicuous and difficult part, and also the termination of his work upon earth, comprises in the text, and in many other passages of scripture, his whole obedience unto death.

I. Let us examine into the meaning of being "buried with Christ by baptism into death."

The first head of discourse embraces the following connected propositions:

1. Christ's obedience unto death as the surety of his people.

2. Faith by the sinner apprehending Christ's obedience unto death.

3. The believer's fellowship with Christ in his obedience unto death.

1. *Christ's obedience unto death as the surety of his people.*

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his *death*." Therefore we are buried with Christ by baptism, unto *death*. The Lord Jesus Christ lived and died as the surety of his people. In the fullness of time he deigned to leave the bosom of his Father,

be made of a woman, be made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The object of this mission from heaven to earth, was to repair the breach of the covenant of works, by rendering the perfect obedience which that covenant demanded, but Adam withheld, and paying its penalty of death. And gloriously he accomplished his design. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The child brought forth by the highly honored virgin was called "Immanuel, God with us." As an infant member of the Jewish church, he was circumcised. From reason's earliest dawn to the moment when he uttered the piercing cry which immediately preceded his death, he "set his face like a flint" against every sin. From early childhood he was obedient to his earthly parents. And only when doing their will would have prevented him performing his Heavenly Father's work, did he ever cross their commands. Then he obeyed God, rather than man. To "fulfill all righteousness," he was baptized by John with water. He was publicly anointed from on high with the Holy Ghost, without measure, to qualify him fully for the office of Mediator between God and man. The angels' song, celebrating his birth, set forth the lofty spirit of his life, and the design of his death, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." But as our legal surety and representative, Jesus was made sin, a curse, devoted to destruction. Therefore he *suffered* from the cradle to the cross. Herod's fierce persecution of the Infant of days, fitly introduced the miseries of the only begotten Son. Laden with the vindictive wrath of God, he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He was "despised and rejected of men," "a worm and no man," the reproach of the people. A perfect living illustration of that holy, just, and good law, which emanated from the Godhead, complete conformity to which is the happiness of heaven, and opposition to it the misery

of earth. His depraved people saw in him "no form, nor comeliness, nor beauty, for which they should desire him." Going about doing good, "he endured the contradiction of sinners." Yea, his multiplied deeds of benevolence by which he manifested the goodness of his heart, and set an example for our imitation, provoked spite and ingratitude. His miracles which attested his Divinity, the blind seeing, the lame walking, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hearing, and the dead restored to life, these almighty and gracious acts were requited by his enemies with blasphemy and persecution. His preaching was despised by the great ones of the land, and little blessed of God for the conversion of souls. Yet supported by divine power, and cheered by the joy set before him of ultimately saving an elect world, he pursued the even tenor of his way, despite every obstacle. From his birth to his death, Satan or his emissaries could not make him decline one step from the path of duty. He did always the things which pleased his Father. His meat and drink was to do his Father's will, and to finish the work which he gave him to do. But, oh! his agonies in Gethsemane, and on Calvary's cross! Then was the "hour, and power of darkness." Then "sank he in deep mire where there was no standing, and came into deep waters where the floods overflowed him." Arrows dipped in gall were shot into him, by the living God. The sword of divine justice awoke from comparative slumber, and with relentless fury penetrated the inmost recesses of his soul. From indignant heavens, enraged earth, and infuriated hell, God gathered his heaviest curse upon Immanuel's devoted head, crowned with thorns! But cease my puny efforts to describe this "death of death." No sorrow was like unto Christ's sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger. But blessed be God, "it is finished," for he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. And well will it be for us if in a happy eternity, we be able to comprehend the length, and breadth, the depth and hight of the sufferings of Christ upon the cross.

First principles are the foundations of all knowledge. With these, therefore, the mind should be stored. A familiar acquaintance with them, enables their possessors easily to detect error, and discover truth, which are respectively the bone and beauty of the human understanding. The great principle which lies at the bottom of the text, is the legal identity of Jesus Christ, and his believing people. Without applying that principle, it is impossible to understand the passage. The same may be said respecting many other passages of scripture, and the spirit of the whole Bible. But that principle is the divine key which discloses to our view some of the most glorious treasures of the kingdom of heaven.

As has been already remarked, throughout his earthly career Christ acted as the legal representative of his people. He was the surety of the new covenant, to which office he had been appointed in eternity. As the antitype of Adam, he was the federal head of all his spiritual posterity by supernatural regeneration. Accordingly, by his active obedience rendered to the precepts of the divine law during his life, he wrought out for them a justifying righteousness. By his awful sufferings and death, he paid its penalty which they had incurred. When forsaken by his Father, and smitten by the sword of divine justice upon the cross, he endured the very penalty of the law. He suffered physical death, in one of its severest forms, and experienced in his soul the unutterable anguish arising from the bereavement of his Father's favor, and the actual infliction in it of his righteous indignation. The necessity for the eternal duration of these miseries, was obviated by the union of his divine and human natures. This wonderful union gave to the sufferings of his human nature, infinite merit. Thus by his obedience unto death, Christ purchased for his seed deliverance from sin and all its penal effects, and a title to, and meetness for, eternal life. In the language of prophecy, Messiah "finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness." "In him shall all the seed of

Israel be justified, and shall glory." "Thi sis the name by which he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness." The vicarious nature of his work is thus plainly expressed by the prophet Isaiah—"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people, was he stricken." In the language of the New Testament, "he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we should be made the righteousness of God in him." "The free gift" of his righteousness, "is of many offenses unto justification." They which receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. "The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." And finally, the glorious design of the work of Christ is thus graphically and fully declared by the apostle Peter—"Christ hath also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should walk in his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye are healed."

2. *Faith by the sinner apprehending Christ's obedience unto death.*

The Lord Jesus having poured out his soul an offering for sin, secured by *price* the redemption of his people. But in order to adults obtaining salvation one thing is necessary in which they personally act. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved." "Know ye not

that so many of us as were *baptized* into Jesus Christ, were *baptized* into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by *baptism* into death." Baptism being the rite which introduces Christians into the New Testament church, that rite is here put for faith, a public profession of which, in the judgment of charity, implies regeneration, and entitles to the administration of the ordinance. It is as if the apostle had said, "Know ye not that so many of us as believed in Jesus Christ and were baptized, were baptized into his death." It does not follow from these passages that any unregenerate sinner possesses native ability to believe. Think ye that yonder dead man could arise into life, although urged by the most powerful motives, and his body be complete in all its parts? No more could a soul possessing all its faculties, but "*dead in trespasses and sins,*" start into spiritual life, though entreated or commanded by God or man, unless the quickening energies of his almighty Spirit accompany the voice. It is an error to say that sinners are active in regeneration. They are active in conviction. They are active in conversion. But until they have been supernaturally endued with spiritual life from on high, they are as incapable of spiritual action as the ground on which they tread. Christ having purchased the complete salvation of his people, purchased the faith by which they avail themselves of it. Accordingly, when Christ purposes to save a sinner by power, he sends the Holy Ghost to convince him of sin, of righteousness, and of the judgment to come. He regenerates, takes possession of, and seals up the soul unto the day of complete redemption. He works faith in the sinner, in the exercise of which he believes the scriptures on the authority of God speaking in them. The sinner believes their representations of his ruined condition by nature and practice, the free offer made to him in the gospel of an all-sufficient Saviour—that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," and so believing he cordially appropriates Christ in all his fullness. "You hath God quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of

yourselves, it is the gift of God." "He who wrought you for the self-same thing is God, who also hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

3. *The believer's fellowship with Christ in his obedience unto death.*

So soon as the sinner is thus united to Christ by the Spirit and faith, a prodigious change occurs in his legal relation to God. The entire work of his covenant head is placed to his credit in the records of heaven. God henceforth views him as having done what was actually performed by Immanuel in his stead. It is his distinguished privilege to enjoy fellowship, or a common interest with Christ in his active and passive obedience. He "knows Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death." In Christ he is complete as respects every demand of God's law and justice against him. The law claims perfect obedience to its precepts as an indispensable condition of his admission into heaven. The believer answers, "Thou hast it in Christ, my divine surety, by whose obedience I am made righteous. In the Lord have I righteousness." The law claims death, as the penalty incurred by transgression. In Adam "all have sinned," and "the wages of sin is death." "True," cries the believer, "but thou hast it in Christ, who died for my offenses. He is the propitiation for my sins." It will be distinctly borne in mind, that in this federal transaction between Christ and his people, there is no transfer on either side of moral or personal qualities or acts, but only of their legal connection. The following note by the celebrated, the late Dr. Mason, explains my meaning: "If my personal sin could be taken from me, and made the personal sin of another, he must then suffer for himself, and not for me, as I would be personally innocent. He would not be under the imputation of my sin, because I would have none to impute; and I could not enjoy the benefit of his righteousness, because on the one hand, I would need none, and on the other hand, he, as suffering for himself, would have none to offer. So that here would be no representation, neither the substance nor the shadow of a vicarious

atonement. Therefore while my personal demerit must forever remain my own, the legal consequences of it were borne by my glorious surety. It is this which renders the imputation of sin to the Lord Jesus, a doctrine so acceptable to the conscience, and consoling to the heart of a convinced sinner. And this simple distinction between a transfer of personal acts, and the transfer of their legal connection, which is properly imputation, relieves the friends of truth from the embarrassment into which an incautious manner of speaking has sometimes involved them, and blows into the air the quibbles and cavils of its enemies."

II. Let us now consider the *effect* of being buried by baptism into Christ's death. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death, *that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of God the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*"

Great mistakes prevail concerning salvation. Many persons think that it consists in deliverance merely from the liability to punishment for sin. Myriads wish that this were the fact, in which case they would heartily embrace the gospel. But while it is true that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," and that "in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin," it is no less true that all who have been baptized into Christ's death, are freed from the reigning love, power, and practice of sin. That professed faith in Christ, unaccompanied by good works, in other words, by holiness of heart and life, is dreadful delusion, the scriptures repeatedly show. "Except your righteousness," said Christ to his immediate disciples, "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Saviour pronounced the Pharisees hypocrites, "like unto whited sepulchres which appear beautiful outward, but were within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? then

will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Simon Magus professed to believe, and was baptized, when he saw Peter work miracles. But his subsequent wickedness led Peter to declare that he was still "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity." Paul speaks of persons who professed to "know God, but in works denied him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." And James condemns, in unqualified terms, that professed faith which is unattended by good works. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can such faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed, be ye filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone." On the other hand, the scriptures represent freedom from the dominion of sin, and the possession of personal holiness, as essential parts of salvation. The Messiah's meet New Testament name teaches this truth: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people *from their sins*." "Verily, verily, I say unto you," was Christ's language to Nicodemus, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not see the kingdom of God." This new birth consists of an entire and supernatural change upon man's moral nature, a conversion from sin to holiness, complete in kind, but imperfect in degree. Its subject is "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that he should walk in them." "In Christ Jesus," *i. e.* in the Christian religion, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, but faith which worketh by love, but keeping the commandments of God." "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour

Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," "and every one that hath true hope in Christ, purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure."

More particularly, this is the precise point of the argument in the latter half of the text. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that *like as* Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of God the Father, *even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" Under the first head of discourse, I considered the believer's fellowship with Christ in his obedience unto death. I have now to show how they have fellowship with him in his resurrection from the dead.

A parallel is here drawn between Christ and believers, a clear view of which will admit us into this part of the argument:—"that *like as* Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, *even so we also* should walk in newness of life."

When Jesus Christ, the divine surety of his people, died, was buried, according to the scriptures, divine justice was satisfied, so that the reeking sword was restored to its scabbard. The law thus magnified and made honorable, had not one jot or tittle of further claim upon him. A change must, therefore, take place in his personal state. The grave must open her gates, and let his body go free. Accordingly, shortly after his interment, Christ was raised from the dead by the glory, or power of the Father, tarried forty days with his disciples, and then ascended into heaven, thence to apply by power the redemption which he had achieved. In like manner, the sinner who is united to Christ, undergoes a change in his personal state. The law having no penal claim upon him, the judicial bond of punishment having been canceled, and an act of pardon passed, the curse of spiritual death is removed from his soul, which is now inspired with a principle

of spiritual life. As the *body* of Christ, over which death had dominion in the grave, was delivered from that dominion by its resurrection, and being reunited to the soul, from that time, Christ lived free from the curse to which his soul and body had been subjected; so the *soul* of the believer, over which chiefly the curse had dominion, is delivered therefrom by its resurrection from the death of sin; and his body being also set apart, the believer thenceforward lives in soul and body unto God. He presents his body, or person, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so 'the believer' also walks in newness of life," animated by a new principle of spiritual life.

In this way believers have fellowship with Christ in his resurrection from the dead. They enjoy a common interest with him in the benefits of his resurrection, suitably to their several stations. Christ having burst the bonds of death, and ascended up on high leading captivity captive, and received gifts for men, as Mediator of the new covenant, he officiates *in heaven* as the Son of God in dispensing these blessings. Believers, by receiving these ascension gifts, show the benefits of his resurrection, and having been raised from the death of sin, they become *upon earth* servants of God. Adopted into the divine family, and constituted sons and daughters of the Almighty, they are workers together with Christ, their elder brother, in advancing his kingdom in the world. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin," *i. e.* he who has satisfied the penalty of death by his legal representative, is freed from the dominion of sin. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise

reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Before applying this subject, it will be proper to correct a false interpretation of part of the text. A highly respectable sect of Christians quote part of the latter verse as a triumphant demonstration of their doctrine, that immersion is necessary to constitute baptism. "Therefore we are *buried* with him *by baptism* into death." But the passage proves no such thing. It proves that Christ died and was buried according to the scriptures. It proves the necessity of faith by a sinner to appropriate the benefits of Christ's death. But farther it does not prove. The burial here mentioned refers not to "baptism," but to "death." Buried into death, is a phrase synonymous with dead and buried. The point being of the highest importance, the apostle expresses, in strong language, the believer's fellowship in the obedience unto death of his surety. Christ lay nearly three days in the grave, that his enemies should have no ground for quibble, that he did not die, but merely swooned on the cross. His burial was a fact of such moment as to be matter of prophecy: "My flesh also shall rest in hope, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." And in this death, and this burial, which was so important a proof of his death, we become interested by faith succeeded by baptism. Had circumcision continued to be the introductory rite into the visible church, the apostle might with propriety have used the same language: "Therefore we are buried with him by *circumcision* unto death." It is worthy of observation that in the next verse, Paul expresses the same idea in strictly figurative language: "For if we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death." Since the respected sect referred to view the word "buried" as indicating baptism by immersion, what do they make of the word "planted?" Why do they not consistently pursue the apostle's train of thought, and explain how "planted" means the same thing with "buried," *i. e.* immersed? What right have they to extort immersion out of the first term, rather than the second? It will not do to say that

“planted” is like “buried,” because the root of the plant is *covered over* with earth. For planting to resemble either immersion or burial (as the sect view the latter rite) the *whole plant* would need to be imbedded in the earth, not the root only. Further, to maintain that “buried” indicates immersion, betrays culpable ignorance. The fancy is doubtless derived from the notion that in the apostle’s time, the Jewish dead were interred as the dead are now with us, *i. e.* the corpse was let down into, and covered over with earth—which kind of burial alone suggests the idea of immersion. But such is not the truth. In Palestine the common mode of interment was to deposit the corpse in a sepulchre erected upon the ground, or in a cavity hewn out of the rock. In particular, this was the fact in the case of the adorable Redeemer. His sacred body was shrouded by Joseph of Arimathea, and laid in a sepulchre hewn out of a rock, and a great stone was rolled to the door. In all probability, the floor of the sepulchre was level with the adjoining grounds. At most, it would be depressed but a very little.

The subject that we have endeavored to unfold to you is of vast importance. Therefore in your private retirements, imitate the noble Bereans, by “searching the scriptures whether these things are so.” We covet not to be lords over your faith, but helpers of your joy. If things be as we have represented them, it is clear as the sun shining in his strength that it is impossible that any true believer can live in the willful habit of sin. “How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,” *i. e.* habitually, deliberately, willfully, “for his seed remaineth in him, and he can not (so) sin, because he is born of God.” What! Shall any person profess to be baptized into Christ, be made partaker of his righteousness, and raised from spiritual death, and not give evidence of being sanctified? That would be putting asunder what God hath joined together. “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” “Christ is made of God unto us righteousness, sanctification.” “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” No person was ever

justified, without being partially sanctified. And no wonder, when the Holy Ghost, the efficient author of faith, dwells in the believer as his temple—is “in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” “Wherefore, brethren, examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Prove your own selves. Know ye not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” Do you hate sin, and love holiness? Do you find a law in your members warring against the law of your minds? Do you dread to offend the great God by sinning in thought, word, or deed? Are you sensibly cumbered by a wretched body of sin and death? Are you conscious of loving the Saviour, and the saints, the excellent of the earth, in which you delight? Do you ply the celestial throne for mercy, and grace to help you in time of need? Do you love to ponder the Bible’s sacred pages, examine, not with impertinent, but laudable curiosity into its precious stores—believe its doctrines, feed on its promises, fear its threatenings, obey its commands, seek to be wholly swayed by its divine authority? If ye do these things, then judging of the tree by its fruits, may I not say, happy are ye. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon you, that ye should be called the sons of God, the daughters of the Lord Almighty. Blessed saints! Go on your way rejoicing, trusting in Christ. As beggars, live daily by faith on the infinite fullness of Christ. “Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” “Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” And when the divine purposes have been served with you here, and ye are fully sanctified, and made meet for the Master’s use above, then shall God transfer you from earth to heaven, that Christ and you may be GLORIFIED together. “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my

glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

I can not close this discourse without a few words of affectionate plain dealing with my impenttent hearers. Notwithstanding an earnest endeavor to unfold to your comprehension some of the great fundamental truths of the Christian religion, the text must still be to you in great measure a sealed book. Why? You are in your natural state, and "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." You have no fellowship with the Redeemer's righteousness. You know neither its use, nor its value. You have no actual interest in the covenant of grace. You neither know, nor care about its inestimable treasures. In sober truth, you are disobedience all over, personified rebellion against God. *Your* covenant is with hell, and *your* agreement with death. You are led by Satan, captive at his will. Sinners! know ye not that it were better that you never had been born, than so to die? Know ye not that there is but a step between you and death, and that infallible truth has declared that "the wicked shall be cast into hell, and all the nations that forget God?" Tremble, sinners, tremble. But these wounds by the law I would seek to cure by the gospel. There is healing ointment for you. "By this man, (Christ Jesus,) is preached unto you forgiveness of sins, so that by him, whosoever believeth in him, is justified from all things." Apply it by faith. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Only believe. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Laying hold of God's strength, break your covenant with hell, and your agreement with death. Renounce Satan's ignoble, ruinous bondage, and embrace the Saviour who is freely tendered to your acceptance. Make with him a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten. Then shall you partake of like precious blessings with the saints. "Buried with Christ by baptism into death, like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so ye also shall walk in newness of life."

S E R M O N X X I .

T H E S O N S O F G O D .

BY REV. SAMUEL P. BERRY,

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“ But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.” *John 1: 12.*

THE creature is necessarily dependent and subordinate. The great God uncreated is the only being in the universe that is entirely independent, all others hold their existence by gift from him. His will is supreme law, and the existence, and condition, and destiny of all creatures are meted out according to his good pleasure. And that such is the fact, is one of the most consolatory truths of revelation. For if we were left to the control of a fellow-creature, however high his rank, or great his wisdom, we could have no confident assurance of future good. An hour might change all his purposes, and we his luckless subjects might become the plaything of his caprice. But while we are under the control and protection of the unchanging God, we can rest with as much confidence on the future as on the present. If we were left even to our own control our condition would be little better—for our desires are often inconsistent with our own welfare. Perhaps the gratification of the majority of our desires would be detrimental to our happiness. Who amongst us, in looking back upon our lives, cannot point to some of our most warmly cherished desires which if gratified, would have ruined our peace? And while such is the fact, who does not rejoice that it is God who directeth his steps. The kingdom of grace is as fully under the divine control as the kingdom of nature. God is sovereign in each—the exer-

cises a control as constant, and a supporting power as absolute among the children of grace, as among the children of nature. He "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Spiritual life, and all the means of spiritual subsistence are as truly his gifts, as the life of the body, and the food which nourishes it. "Of him, and to him, and through him, are all things." We are called at present to consider one of the primary blessings of God's grace. We call it a primary blessing because it is of chief importance, and also because it precedes the enjoyment of most others. In fact, all others are consequent upon it. This blessing is sonship with God—adoption into his family. "But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." This language was uttered with reference to those who received Christ, when he first appeared on earth, yet it expresses a permanent truth, it is true of all who receive Christ in every age.

I. We will endeavor first to ascertain what is meant by receiving Christ.

II. We will consider the gift here mentioned, as a consequence of receiving him—"Power to become the sons of God." We inquire, then,

I. What it is to receive Christ? And our inquiry is satisfactorily answered in the latter part of the verse, "even to them that believe on his name." This expression is obviously thrown in to explain the former part of the verse. And from it, it is obvious, that to receive Christ, is simply to believe on his name. Those who did not believe rejected him, but those who believed received him as the true Messiah. But that belief which here defines the reception of Christ, is something more than a belief that he was the Messiah. There are comparatively few who deny his Messiahship, and there are perhaps still fewer who receive him in the sense here intended—who believe on him with faith which constitutes them sons of God. It is difficult to speak intelligibly to all of true faith. The child of God will readily understand you, but to those who have never exercised it, your words are as sounding brass, they can not understand it, for it is spiritually discerned. You might as well

attempt to give a landsman a correct conception of an ocean storm by describing it, as a carnal man a correct conception of faith by discoursing upon it. He must feel it in his own heart and soul, and learn its nature from its operation, before he can understand it. There are a few plain characteristics of that faith which receives Christ and entitles to sonship with God, which the spiritual mind will readily discern.

It is of an appropriative character—it receives him as a gift offered for our individual benefit; and in the exercise of it we make him our own, for we receive him into our heart. And hence the expression of Paul—“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” And again—“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

2. It also identifies with Christ, constituting the believer one with him. Paul recognizes this identification where he says, “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” And being thus made one with Christ, because he is the son of God we also in him have sonship. There is a kind of faith, however, which is more common, and is doubtless often mistaken for that faith which we have been endeavoring to describe. It lacks those essential characteristics which we have mentioned, and fails to secure the blessings of grace. True faith is the channel of communication between God and the believer. But this counterfeit faith conveys nothing to the soul, and cannot secure sonship with God, because it does not receive Christ.

II. We will now consider the gift consequent upon receiving Christ—“power to become the sons of God.” The word that is here translated “power,” may be translated with equal propriety, *right*, or *privilege*. This translation, while it is equally consistent with the rules of interpretation, develops the idea intended more clearly, and is therefore preferable. But as many as received him, to them gave he power—the right to become the sons of God—gave he the privilege of sonship with God. Now, in order to appreciate the value of this grant, we must ascertain what sonship with God

includes, the blessing which it confers, and the privileges to which it entitles.

1. In becoming the sons of God, we undergo a change of nature—we undergo a new birth. For of those who receive Christ, believing on his name, he says in the succeeding verse, “which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” This change of nature is essentially necessary. Our nature until born again would not harmonize with God; and hence we must become assimilated with him, before we can dwell comfortably in his family. An unregenerated man introduced into the family of God, if we can suppose such an occurrence, would be like a wolf in a sheepfold. He would be offensive to all around him, and at the same time would feel annoyed and uncomfortable himself. We are told that two cannot walk together, except they be agreed. And how could a carnal man dwell with God, while his mind is at enmity against him? There is not the smallest agreement between God and man, until man’s nature is brought into harmony with God, by the regenerating influence of the Spirit. And hence the first of the gifts of God’s grace to the objects of his redeeming love, is a new heart—a new nature—a nature in harmony with his own. And hence the promises made to Israel by the prophet Ezekiel—“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Every son of God experiences the fulfillment of this promise, when he is adopted into God’s family. He receives a new heart, is animated with a new and divine spirit, his whole nature is changed—“old things pass away, behold, all things become new.”

2. We receive his name. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God;

and I will write upon him my new name." And by this new name, which shall be written on our foreheads, we will be recognized and honored by all the host of heaven as the children of the most high God. But this is not a privilege which we shall enjoy only in heaven. We enjoy it as soon as we are adopted into the family of God. So soon as we become his sons we receive his name, and enjoy all the honors and immunities of it through life, in death, and forever. And what a distinguishing honor it confers. We account it honorable to bear the name and enjoy relationship with the great ones of earth. But here is a far greater honor, an honor which transcendeth all earthly honor as far as the heavens are above the earth. We are fond of tracing our pedigree back to noble ancestors. If a distinguished individual is to be found in all the line that has gone before us, we mark him, and account ourselves privileged by descent from him. But here we have a higher descent; we are descended from the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and bear the name that is honored above every name by all the pure intelligences of the universe.

3. But in virtue of sonship, we receive also the spirit of children—that spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Sonship of God would be of comparatively little advantage without the feelings of children. But when introduced into the family of God, we are endued with all the feelings of the child to the parent, with the same warm affection, the same confidence and humble trust. And God regards us in return with the feelings of a parent, and we enjoy from him all that the child enjoys from the parent, but in a far higher degree. The kindest parent's resources are limited: he may desire much for his child which it is not in his power to obtain. But while the feelings of God to his children are more tender, his resources are inexhaustible. All things in heaven and earth are at his command, and if necessary are employed, for their sustenance and comfort. We enjoy his sympathy—"like as a father, pitieth his children, so the Lord

pitieth them that fear him." And we need it; for in our low estate we are constantly suffering. Although he is God, and we but the creatures of his footstool, inhabitants of a remote province of his universal empire, and rebels too, yet there is not a sigh heaved which he does not hear, not a tear wept which he does not see. In every throe of pain which racks the body, and every bitter thought which crosses the mind, he sympathizes with more tenderness than human bosom ever felt. He strengthens the old as they go bowed beneath the weight of years, and fills their hearts with peace. The young he guides amidst the snares of youth, and fills with hope and joy. He goes with the bereaved mother to the grave, as she lays her child among the dead, supporting her by his grace, and whispering to her yearning heart sweet assurances of a glorious resurrection and a joyful re-union in heaven. He saves the poor, and when brought low affords them help. He strengthens the hands of the weak, and fills the mouth of the hungry with bread. And to all he says—"I will never leave you, I will never forsake you." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee, he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." We also enjoy his fatherly protection. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge," says Solomon—"the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." In our passage through this world we are constantly beset with enemies; and enemies of the most formidable character. Ungodly men, and Satan their prince, are ever watching if possible to obtain an advantage over us. We are threatened with dangers on every hand, dangers which no human power could avert. But the protecting power of our Heavenly Father is still greater; he is able to shield us from all harm, and does shield us, embracing us in the arms of his covenant love—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." "If God be for us, who can be against us." "He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven; there shall no evil touch thee." "In famine he shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword."

“Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue, neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.” “At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth, for thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.” “And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace, and thou shalt visit thy habitation and not sin.” Who then would not desire above all things the fatherly protection of God?

But again: Because we are the Sons of God, he provides for us. It is properly the province of the parent to provide for the child until it is able to provide for itself. Our wants are manifold, we are composed of wants; yet God knows them all, and is bound by his covenant promises to supply them. The father is bound to provide for his children by an obligation imposed on him by nature. But God is, by a still stronger obligation; for in addition to this he has promised to supply. His promises are numerous and absolute; he has promised to supply not merely some, but all our wants.” The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” “The Lord is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

Fatherly chastisement is another blessing, which we enjoy in virtue of sonship. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” It may seem strange to some of us to regard chastisement, affliction, and suffering, as blessings secured to us by affiliation with God. Yet when we look at the important object which they are designed to effect for us, we will readily grant that they are blessings of great value. By means of chastisement God effects our sanctification. It is one of the most effectual means which he employs in purging us from dead works, in weaning us from this world, and in preparing us for glory. When therefore we are afflicted, we should diligently endeavor to derive from it the benefits which God designs to communicate to us by it, that he may not be compelled to add affliction to affliction, to add stroke to stroke. God does

not afflict willingly; but by indulgence in sin we sometimes force him to afflict us, just as the wayward child compels its father in the needful exercise of parental discipline to chastise it. The interest of God, as our Father, the vindication of his honor and authority, and our own interest as children, demand chastisement when we become wayward and recreant. He has promised to visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes; and he is not slack concerning his promises. But although he is often displeased with our conduct, yet he can never be provoked to forsake us and cast us from him—"the Lord will not cast off forever." His fatherly endurance and mercy are infinite; and neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from his love.

And, my friends, this is one of the most valuable privileges which sonship with God confers—the privilege of access to God in prayer. And while we improve, we may rest assured that he will smile upon us and bless us with continual blessings. It is because we fail to improve it that so many are spiritually weak and sickly among us. We are oppressed with doubts, and distracted with fears, because we neglect to ask our Father for his Spirit. He is more willing to give his Spirit to them that ask him, than the father is to give good gifts to his children. And while such is the fact, is it not obvious that those who have not his Spirit do not ask it?

But by our sonship, we are constituted heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, heirs of his grace, and heirs also of his glory. We are made heirs of all the promises of the new covenant. We have the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. And what more could we desire, unless it be the possession of our reserved inheritance. We inherit all necessary good, in time, and in eternity will inherit an eternal weight of glory. "All things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." From our own experience, and from what those have experienced who have gone before us to glory, we may form an adequate conception

of what we inherit in virtue of sonship in this world: but what we shall inherit in glory transcends our present capacity. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." All these things we enjoy because we are the sons of God. And we have given only an abstract of the blessings and privileges which sonship confers. But we have seen enough to satisfy those of us who have received the adoption of sons, that we enjoy a priceless gift. And we have seen what should inspire us all with a desire to be received into his family.

Now, in conclusion, I put the question to you personally, are you sons of God? or are you still a child of wrath and an heir of hell? You are best able to answer this question for yourselves. Some of you are doubtless assured of your sonship because you enjoy many of the blessings and privileges of children. Some of you give satisfactory evidence in your actions and words that you have received the spirit of adoption. But there are others before me, I am confident, that have not yet tasted of the good word of life, and of the powers of the world to come—who are strangers to God and to the power of his grace. To such I would only say, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, and call ye upon him while he is near." "Choose you this day, whom you will serve: if the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him." When you reflect upon my responsibility, you will pardon my plainness and importunity. I am not placed here to prophesy smooth things, and cater to the feelings of flesh and blood. "O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die. If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand." To the wicked then I say, in God's stead, Break off your sins by righteousness, receive Christ by faith, and with him you shall receive power to become the sons of God.

S E R M O N X X I I .

THE VALUE OF THE WORLD, WHEN THE SOUL IS LOST.

BY REV. C. T. M^CCAUGHAN,

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“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—*Matt. 16: 26.*”

In the brief discourse of the Saviour, of which the text is a part, his disciples are taught not to seek worldly ease and honor. Many of the Jews attached themselves to him in the expectation of its being the means of a present aggrandizement. They expected soon to be delivered from subjection to the Roman government, that the power of the gentiles would be quite destroyed, and the Jews become more distinguished among the nations of the earth than they had ever before been. But in place of all this, he informs them, “If any man”—any here or elsewhere, any at the present time or in future—“if any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” He declares that self-denial is one great lesson, his true followers must learn. They must conscientiously discharge the duties he requires of them, though in doing so, they should be compelled to lose all ease and comfort in this world, and even life itself.

But he did not then, nor does he now, make this severe requisition, without showing that it is the interest of mankind

to comply. "For," he continues, "whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it." Whosoever neglects duty in order to procure present comfort, or preserve natural life, shall lose eternal life; but whosoever performs his duty, though it leads him to death, shall obtain everlasting life beyond the grave. This is a sufficient reason why we should adhere to Christ, in preference to the world; and all doubt on the subject should be excluded when we hear him pursuing the subject, and asking with emphasis, "*What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

These inquiries suggest three things to which we propose giving some attention.

I. It is a serious truth, that if an individual should gain the whole world, and yet lose his soul, it will profit him nothing.

II. It is also a solemn truth, that in his efforts to gain the world, he may lose his soul.

III. It is an awful truth, that when the soul is once lost in hell, there is no salvation for it.

I. Let us attend to the inquiry, "what is a man *profited*, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

To gain the whole world would be, to acquire a right to all the wealth, and pleasure, and honor which it can afford. To gain it, in the most extensive sense, would be to have all its inhabitants obey our will, and all its resources minister to our comfort.

Now, an attentive consideration of the subject will show, that all the profit, which the whole world, or a large portion of it, thus gained, can be to any individual, under the most favorable circumstances, will consist in affording him a limited amount of happiness, and exempting him from a limited amount of evil.

1. He has the happiness of being able to supply all the ordinary wants of the body. This matter occupies a large portion of the attention of mankind. Our happiness in this world, is greatly promoted, by having the numerous and oft

returning wants of the body duly supplied. And the individual who is in possession of the world, can always have a sufficiency of wholesome food and drink, suitable raiment, and a comfortable habitation.

2. He has the means of much intellectual enjoyment. All who have given due attention to the cultivation of the superior part of their nature, and have attended to their own experience, know that one of the most fruitful sources of our present happiness, is found in the power of acquiring knowledge. Now the individual who commands the world, and all its resources, or a considerable portion of them, has some most desirable opportunities for gratifying his desire of knowledge. If he chooses, he can bring to his own habitation the recorded wisdom and experience of the great and good in all ages, he can travel round the globe at pleasure, viewing the common and strange, the beautiful, sublime, and terrific works of the Creator, observing the manners of mankind, and conversing with the wise and good in every nation. He has access to all sources of knowledge, if he is disposed to improve them.

3. He may have much enjoyment in consequence of his ability to accomplish any enterprise, within the range of human power, in which he may choose to engage. If it is his pleasure, he can perform the most expensive experiments, either on sea or land, in order to advance the arts and sciences; he can concentrate the force of nations at a given point, and modify, to an astonishing extent, the existing forms of things. All that the united energies of men could effect with the various materials which the world affords, he could have performed.

Such is our estimate of the real profit which any man could possibly derive by gaining the whole world. It is all comprehended in the means of supplying his bodily wants, of acquiring knowledge, and of performing such works as are possible to man. We can make no more of it.

We ought, however, to add his exemption from the opposite class of evils. He experiences none of the miseries

attendant upon a state of extreme poverty; he is not compelled to remain in ignorance, from a want of means, to acquire knowledge; nor is he frustrated in his ordinary plans of operation, from inability to execute them.

We have now taken the most favorable view of the subject. Before we can ascertain the intrinsic worth of the whole world, or even a large portion of it, to any individual, we must take into consideration the extensive losses in the way of happiness, which are connected with such possessions. These, we presume, are such as to render possessions extended vastly beyond the necessities of life, unfavorable to true happiness. This conclusion is founded upon the actual experience of a large majority of those who have had immense fortunes. It is almost proverbial, that the trouble and anxiety attending the care of large estates, far exceeds all the advantage resulting from them. Many a rich man realizes that his enjoyment in life, is far less than it was when he was in moderate circumstances. But without entering into a detailed illustration on this point, we will refer you to the experience and testimony of one, who, on a most magnificent scale, had made a full and fair trial of the value of the riches and pleasures, and honors of this world. He was a man who surpassed all others in knowledge and wisdom, and who resolved to ascertain what it was, that would be good for the sons of men to do all the days of their life. His wealth was immense; he lived in splendor and luxury, indulging in all the pleasures and amusements which could be devised. He withheld not his eyes from any object they desired, nor his heart from any joy. And after experimenting to an unparalleled extent with the world, and reviewing his whole course, he declared, as with disgust, that "all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was *no profit* under the sun." This man's history is presented, by the highest authority, for our instruction. Read, therefore, at your leisure, some of the first chapters of the book of Ecclesiastes. It will certainly then be apparent, that the profits of great worldly possessions, are at best very small.

But we are not yet prepared to answer the inquiry before us. The question is not simply, "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world?" But, "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and *lose his own soul*?" Let us, therefore, prepare to give a more definite answer to this question, by considering, in the next place, the loss of the soul.

To lose the soul will be, to be excluded from heaven, and sent to hell. It does not signify that the soul will be remanded to non-existence, or enter into a state of unconsciousness. It implies the deprivation of all that enters into the idea of happiness, and the suffering forever of all that enters into that of misery.

In the present life, there is a mixture of good and evil. God causes the sun to shine, and the rain to descend, upon the just and the unjust. There is no individual in the world, whose condition is so miserable, that he does not enjoy much happiness; nor is there any, whose happiness is not frequently interrupted by some kind of trouble. But in the future world, this mixture will be entirely unknown. Good and evil will not, there, be found in the lot of the same individual. Now take from your condition all that is comfortable and desirable—all that enters into your notion of happiness—and supply its place with that which experience may have taught you is most miserable, and then imagine, if you can, how great is the loss of the soul. To illustrate this subject we remark—

1. The lost soul experiences nothing of the mercy of God. God's mercies to the wicked, in the present life, are very great. They receive from him the blessings of life and health, of honor and influence. In unspeakable compassion, he offers them salvation through his Son, confers upon them the common operations of his Spirit, and warns, invites, and entreats them to repent. They are permitted here to bask in the sunshine of a beneficent Providence. But in hell his mercy is unknown. His smiling providence does not surround the inhabitants of that place. They are favored with no more

offers of the Saviour, nor any more influences of the Spirit, nor any more calls to repentance.

2. The lost soul experiences the positive infliction of the most excruciating misery. Its turbulent passions are unrestrained, and devils are its companions, while it endures incessant peltings from the storms of God's wrath. The wretchedness of lost souls is greater than we can conceive. To them the Judge will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone—and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever."

Now remember that this misery has no termination, that the lost soul is sent into everlasting fire, the smoke of the torment of which ascendeth up forever and ever, and then say, "what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" In his efforts to acquire the world, he gained for himself disappointment and trouble here, and lost his soul. And will it profit him in hell to remember, that while in this world he had vast riches, or pleasures, or honors? Ah! he will well remember these things; but the very recollection of them will be a constituent part of the torments of hell. His spirit will writhe under the deepest remorse, while he remembers that in laboring to gain the world, which he could enjoy but so short a time, he lost his soul, which loss he feels but can not fully describe.

Surely then a man is profited *nothing*, though he should gain the whole world, if he loses his soul. He is infinitely the *loser* by the operation.

II. This leads us to consider the solemn truth, that the individual who is so intently engaged in the pursuit of the world, that he can not and will not give it up for the sake of religion, will lose his soul. None go to heaven but the disciples of Christ; and if any man will be his disciple, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow him, loving not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Here we remark,

1. That those who are so engrossed with worldly pursuits, that they can not, and will not, attend to the concerns of

religion, will lose their souls, appears from the fact that they neglect the only means by which the soul can be saved. We are aware that some persons, who are never disposed to think seriously on the most serious subjects, are always ready to object, when the use of means for the salvation of the soul is named. They will say, "If we are dead in trespasses and in sins, as your Bible teaches, we can not save ourselves, and consequently, need not try." Well, they tell some truth, though in a very bad spirit. It is true, that being spiritually dead, unless God himself in infinite mercy saves them, they are absolutely certain to go to hell. But it would still be well to examine the subject with a little more reverence. It would certainly be a prudent course to inquire, whether God saves sinners according to any fixed plan? Now the Bible informs us, if it gives correct notions of anything, that it is the will of God to save sinners by the use of means. To expect salvation then, without using the appointed means, is just as contrary to all common sense, as it is to expect to gain any other object without using the appointed means. No man has power to make the seed which he plants spring up and produce more of its kind; but he does not, on this account, suppose it less necessary to plant, and cultivate his lands, in order that he may have a harvest. There is an analogy to this in spiritual things; and we repeat that the individual who is so absorbed in the concerns of the world, that he will not attend to the subject of religion, must lose his soul, because he neglects the only means by which it can be saved. The command of Christ is, "search the scriptures." But the man entirely engrossed with the world, has no time to search the word of God, and meditate upon its contents. His reading moments must be occupied with a newspaper, or some book that treats of worldly things. It is also commanded, "pray without ceasing." But for the same reason, this duty is neglected; and a mind so occupied with the world has no inclination to pray. Again, it is commanded, "remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy." But his pressing business must receive some attention on that day. His mind,

at least, must be occupied in laying plans for carrying on his extensive operations. And if the sabbath is not actually employed in attending to business, he is so fatigued with the incessant labors of the week, that he can not attend to the duties of religion. In the same manner, all the means of grace are neglected, and he journeys through life without once making a sober movement in the way of salvation.

2. It is evident that the man who will not give up the world for the sake of religion, will lose his soul, because he is, and will continue to be, destitute of all those principles which especially characterize a saved sinner. The governing principle of the true Christian, is supreme love to God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The Lord has promised eternal life, only to such as so love him that they are willing to forsake houses, and brethren, and lands for his name's sake. But the man who habitually disobeys the commands of God—who neglects any of the duties he owes either to God or man, in order to acquire the world, or enjoy its pleasures, evidently loves the world more than he loves God. This fact is conclusive proof that his affections are not supremely placed upon him to whom alone they are due. And so of every other principle peculiar to those who are the subjects of saving grace. He is destitute of them all. He has no religious joy; peace, long-suffering; gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, nor temperance; and being without the characteristics of the saved, he will not be found among their number. We will not detain for further illustration on this point.

III. When the soul is once lost in hell, there is no redemption for it. It is gone! forever gone!! "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

We know there are a class of persons who affect to believe that hell is a place of mere disciplinary punishment—an immense prison-house, where souls that could not be reclaimed in this world, are sent to be purified, as by fire, and so prepared to go to heaven. But such an opinion is as much opposed to good sense as it is to the word of God. It is

certain that hell is a place of unmingled punishment; and it was never known, that a moral being, who had wandered from the path of duty, was ever reclaimed by punishment alone. Such a course invariably makes them worse. Parents can never recover a disobedient and unpromising child by mere punishment. Unless your erring child discovers that your heart is filled with kindness and affection for him, at the same time that he finds you to be firm in the exercise of discipline, he will never reverence, love, and obey you. And sinners in this world, would never repent and love God, if his Spirit did not operate upon their minds, by means of the display of infinite mercy toward them, which he has made in the gift of his Son to die in their behalf. And if they continue refractory, and go to hell, while the terrors of the law, and the charms of the gospel, and all God's offers of mercy are presented to their minds, is it reasonable to suppose that they will repent in that place where they will experience the outpourings of the wrath of God, without any mixture of mercy? Ah, my dear friends, if there are any of you who will not be induced to love God, by the exhibition of the cross of Christ, be assured that no such emotion will ever be excited in your bosoms by the fire of hell. We farther remark on this point,

1. That the lost soul is lost forever; because nothing can be given as a proper exchange for it. The created universe would not be an equivalent for the soul. We might expatiate at length upon the worth of the soul, by considering the vastness of its powers, the spirituality of its nature, and the eternity of its existence, but we shall not at present. Let it suffice to know, that it is of such importance, as having sinned against God, and gone to that place where repentance is impossible, it can never be saved. No man, nor any creature, good or bad, in all the universe, can possibly deliver it from that punishment which God in righteousness inflicts upon it. None is able to redeem it.

2. God has determined that he will never save sinners in hell. This life is the time of preparation for the whole of the future. God saves sinners here at an immense expense, but

he does not, and never will, save them in hell. In reference to those who do not repent in this life, the decree has gone forth, "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Oh, then, let none presume that they can spend a life of rebellion against God in this world, and finally be saved in hell. It is a fearful delusion, the author of which is that wicked one, who "goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

We have now considered the value of the world, and the loss of the soul; and we have seen that if a man should gain the world, and still lose his soul, it will profit him nothing, but be his eternal ruin. And we have seen the importance of considering this question, as to what he would be profited in such a case, because in his efforts to gain the world he may lose his soul. We have also seen that this is a most fearful event, because when the soul is once lost in hell, it can never be saved. We remark in conclusion,

1. This subject warns us against an undue attachment to worldly things. Every man should seriously propose to himself the inquiries in the text. And it is to be remembered, that in order to lose the soul, it is by no means necessary to gain the whole world, or even a considerable portion of it. The unsuccessful efforts, and the unlawful desires of any man, to acquire the world, may be the means of losing his soul. "They that *will* be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

2. The subject admonishes us of the supreme importance of seeking the salvation of our souls. The inquiries are in such a form as should wake up the soul to the necessity of efforts to save itself, rather than to gather and save the perishing things of this world. If we busy ourselves in calculating the profits of the world, we should also calculate the value of what we may be deprived of by that terrible catastrophe, *the loss of the soul*. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

SERMON XXIII.

A LEARNED MINISTRY.*

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“The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.” *Mal. 2: 7.*

It is unnecessary on this occasion, and before this audience, to give a minute account of the origin, orders and duties of priests under the Old Testament dispensation. Those who are familiar with the word of God, and acknowledge its authority, will grant, at once, that there was such an order of men among the Jews of old; that the order was established by the God of heaven; and that it was the duty of the men thus ordained, to instruct the people—to distinguish between the several sorts of leprosy, the uncleannesses that were contracted in different ways—to attend to the causes of divorce, the waters of jealousy—to vows, and to offer sacrifices for their own sins and the sins of the whole congregation.

When the “fullness of time” arrived, Jesus appeared—the great high priest,—and abolished the ceremonial law. He offered himself a sacrifice, once for all—he blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was

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contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. He instituted new ceremonies and sacraments,—he appointed a new order of men to act in the room of the priests, whose order and whose principal duties were dispensed with, when the new order was appointed. When he was about to ascend to his Father's throne, he called this new order of ministers and said to them—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway even to the end of the world."

Here we have the commission of the apostles to go and preach, given from the lips of the Lord of glory himself, and here we have too the promise that he would be with the successors of the apostles until the great drama shall be closed—until time shall end, and the affairs of this world be wound up forever.

It is our happy lot, my friends, to live in a land to which the messengers of God have been sent;—the church or kingdom of Christ has long been established here—"the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places: yea, we have a goodly heritage." We have too "line upon line, line upon line; precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." As the Lord of the harvest has removed one, and then another of his servants from the field of labor on earth to their reward in heaven, he has called fresh laborers into the field, and this course will be pursued to the end of time, notwithstanding all the opposition of wicked men and devils, for the Saviour himself has declared that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

We have met on this occasion to locate another laborer in the great harvest field—the world, and it is customary for the person who delivers what is called the ordination sermon, to point out some of the duties and qualifications of a gospel priest or minister. For this purpose the text from Malachi

has been selected, from which text it will be seen at once that the object now in view is the support of a *learned ministry*, in opposition to the absurd but prevailing notion in certain quarters that ignorance should instruct, and the blind lead the blind.

It would be impossible, in one discourse, to consider fully all the qualifications of a preacher of the gospel. The text points out one duty or qualification of a gospel minister, and likewise directs attention to a certain duty which devolves on the people.

The text contains a direction or command indicating what kind of a man the priest of *old*, or the messenger of the Lord *now*, ought to be.

In the Latin vulgate, and in the old English Bible it is said that the rendering is, "the priest's lips *shall keep* knowledge," and some of the Roman Catholics in former times, (and doubtless at the present time too) employed this text to establish the Pope's infallibility!

Their argument was that the priest's lips *shall keep knowledge* as God has promised:—he should never err, or act unwisely, and they maintained that God keeps his promises, therefore the priest, especially the Pope is *infallible!* If it was even a correct translation that the priest's lips *shall keep* knowledge, it is altogether an improper construction to say that he is infallible. If the text contains a promise that God's priests shall not err, then surely the priests to whom this language was specially addressed ought to have been infallible; but instead of that, the prophet says to them in the verse following the text, "Ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts."

The language of the text then is not a *promise* of God that his messenger should be infallible, but it is a direction or command showing that a preacher ought not to be an ignorant man, but a man of intelligence. That he should keep knowledge, and keep it *for* the people, who are to wait on his ministrations, and not *from* them, as the priests of Rome do.

He should keep knowledge in his *lips*, and not merely in his head, or in his library—he should be ready to give a word of exhortation, of reproof, of encouragement on any fit occasion; his knowledge should be such as would enable him to expound the law, or the whole word of God, for it is this word, and not politics or science that the people are to seek at his mouth.

It may seem strange, but it is not more strange than true, that there are many people in the world who are opposed to a learned ministry. They would have the preacher as ignorant as many of his hearers. They would set up a man to *teach* who ought himself to be taught what are the first principles of the oracles of God. They would have men appointed to feed their fellow-men with strong meat, while many appointed thus to feed others, require to be fed themselves, not with *meat* but with *milk*, and milk too with the cream removed! Instead of calling one whose lips keep knowledge, and who is capable of teaching both law and gospel, they prefer a man who has made little or no proficiency in obtaining a knowledge of divine truth, and who is utterly incapable of unfolding, presenting or defending the doctrines of the Bible.

Your attention is directed to a few arguments in favor of a learned ministry.

1. First, a minister of the gospel should be learned because he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. This is the reason assigned in the text. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge—for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." The Lord of hosts is a being of infinite perfections—"glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." He is infinite in wisdom, and wonderful in counsel, and we might reasonably expect that as a general thing he would employ those in the administration of his affairs who were in some degree fitted by their intelligence for the discharge of their official duties. What a feeling of indignation would arise in every heart in the land, should it be announced that the President of the United States had sent an ignorant, unlettered man as minister to the court of Great Britain, France, or Russia! Every

intelligent citizen would feel himself insulted, and feel that the nation was degraded by such a move on the part of the chief magistrate. We can submit to be represented at home even in Congress, by a man of ordinary abilities, but we are not satisfied with a representative to a foreign court unless he is well fitted for his station. He must not only have the interest of his country at heart, but he should *know* what her interests are, and he should be qualified to advance and maintain them.

Now, if it is natural to expect that the most intelligent men would be sent to represent us abroad, should we not conclude that the Lord of hosts would employ men of wisdom to represent the court of Heaven? True, God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. He can work with the best means or the worst, or without means at all, but generally, when he has a great work to accomplish either in church or state, he employs intelligent and stable men to fulfill his purposes. Who led the children of Israel from Egypt to the borders of Canaan? Moses—a man, says Stephen, “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”

Who was appointed to build a temple at Jerusalem and consecrate it to the worship of Almighty God? Solomon—“the wisest man,” as the mere child can affirm. Who was appointed to war with Jewish prejudices and unbelief on the one hand, and with gentile superstition and idolatry on the other? Paul—“brought up at the feet of Gamaliel,” and possessing such a fund of rich and varied knowledge that all the enemies of truth could not gainsay or resist him successfully. Who was ordained by the Lord of hosts to deliver the Church and the world from the thralldom of Popery, and prepare the way for that civil and religious liberty which we now enjoy? Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Knox, and a host of worthies whose lips kept knowledge,—trained, educated men. They were men of learning, capable of tearing off from the mother of harlots her scarlet robes, and her meretricious ornaments, and exposing her deformities.

We see then that God employs men of learning to represent the court of Heaven. Especially should such men be learned in the *law* or word of God: because the word of God is the message of peace and pardon which he sends to the rebellious sons of men.

If the messenger who bears this treaty of peace does not understand its terms, or his duty in the matter, how is he to bring about a reconciliation between offending man and his offended Maker? If he is destitute of the proper fund of knowledge, he may bring disgrace on the cause which he is attempting to advocate, and ruin on the souls he is seeking to save.

2. In the second place, a priest, or rather a preacher's lips should keep knowledge that he might establish truth and confute error.

A minister is set for the defense of the truth, and as a matter of course he should know what truth is and should be able to defend it, and to detect and expose every shade of error.

There have been, and are now in the Christian church men whose opinions *appear* to be correct, but when their principles are fully developed they are found to lead to the most unhappy consequences. But who shall, or can refute these evil principles and expose their bad tendency? Not the man of mean capacity, but the scholar and the divine,—the man whose talents are equal to those of the false teachers whom he opposes.

It may be affirmed that it is generally *learned* men who broach and disseminate erroneous notions. The doctrines of the Bible must accord with their metaphysical and philosophical opinions, however heterodox these may be, and thus, under the sanction of their great names, they send abroad the most corrupt principles. If this be true, what does it prove? Nothing, save that wherever there is *one* learned man engaged in perverting the truth, there ought to be *another* capable of counteracting an influence so baleful. Arius and Pelagius, who lived near the beginning of the Christian era, were learned men, men of address and influence, and at the same

time men of the most corrupt principles: and what would have been the consequences had they been the *only* learned men in the church in their day?

Why, had there been no one raised to resist them and pour confusion on their principles, truth would have become almost extinct. But in God's good providence men were raised up to detect and expose their false notions, and establish many weak and wavering souls in the true faith of the gospel.

We have been pleading for a *learned ministry* in order that they might oppose those *within* the pale of the church who hold erroneous doctrines—those whom charity constrains us to admit may still be the friends of Christ, notwithstanding their erroneous opinions; now it is just as necessary that the ministry should be learned, that they might be able to contend earnestly for the faith against those who are out of the church—the declared and decided enemies of the cross of Christ.

The country is full of learned infidels, universalists, unitarians, of learned scoffers and seducers preaching up the doctrine of devils; and how could a preacher of truth and righteousness meet such men in the field of controversy unless he possessed a considerable store of biblical, classical and scientific learning? When such false interpreters place a wrong construction on a portion of scripture, as their custom is, and refer the unlearned preacher to the original language, or to history or geology for the correctness of their opinions, he would be struck dumb at once. He might however keep up the contest with some degree of success if he could refer to the opinions of learned men on the subject under debate. But here he is deficient also; for the preachers against whom I am now speaking, (and they are numerous in this country) have very little knowledge of any kind. They have dropped the plough, or left the anvil for the pulpit, without any suitable preparation, and consequently they are utterly unprepared to defend the very first principles of the Christian religion against anything of a learned antagonist. Had preachers of the gospel always been ignorant men, we

would this day be without the gospel; for who would have translated the scriptures for us?

Learned infidels and scoffers would have been very far from furnishing the world with a full and correct version of the Bible in the English, or in any other language. The duty of translating the scriptures has generally, if not always, fallen to the lot of the ministers of Christ.

If the missionaries to the heathen were not or had not been men of intelligence, the heathen never would have obtained the Bible in their mother tongue; the light of divine truth never would break in upon them as it is now doing, and the coming millenium, glorious on account of the universal spread of knowledge, would never come, but moral darkness would cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. And moreover, if ministers of the gospel were all ignorant men, as some contend they should be, we would not only be destitute of the scriptures, but who would have furnished us with those excellent systems of divinity which we now possess? Who would have provided for us those excellent volumes of sermons, essays and comments by which we are so much delighted and profited, by which the truth is so clearly unfolded, and the sons of error so completely confounded?

3. In the third place, ministers of the gospel should be learned, to enable them to instruct the ignorant, strengthen the weak, and exhort and excite the slow and cold.

To perform these duties aright they should be acquainted with the Bible—its great and leading principles should be familiar to their minds. The Bible is the text-book; in it the preacher should be versed, while at the same time he should not be ignorant, or at least he should not glory in being ignorant, of whatever would assist or enable him to illustrate and enforce the doctrines and precepts of the gospel.

The person who has received a thorough collegiate and seminary training is certainly far better prepared to think and communicate his thoughts, than he would have been without such training. Sometimes individuals of very limited knowledge are greatly blessed in building up Zion, and in encour-

aging and strengthening the people of God; but it is much more frequently the case that *learned* men are more successful in extending the church of Christ and in advancing the welfare of God's peculiar people.

Who are to instruct the multitudes of *ignorant* persons in the world, in the great doctrines and duties of religion? Surely, not the ignorant,—for, says Christ, “if the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch.” Many are *weak* and *wavering*,—who shall strengthen and establish such souls? Certainly not those who are as weak and feeble as themselves. There are many who are *slow* and *cold*, and who shall undertake to excite, to urge on, and animate such to the discharge of Christian duty? Who, but those who are able clearly to define what duty is, and to show the consequences of neglecting it? Some appear to think that *exhortation* is a part of ministerial duty which any one can perform whose lungs are sufficiently strong to endure long and loud vociferation. But it would seem from Paul's exhortation to Timothy, that *exhortation* does not consist in the furious utterance of a few simple truths. No; “Reprove, rebuke, exhort,” says the apostle, “with all long suffering and *doctrine*.” Doctrine then must be presented by the exhorter—truth must be set forth, and the saint or sinner exhorted to embrace, or conform to it. But many of our modern exhorters are utterly incapable of joining exhortation and doctrine together,—and they are consequently unable to enlighten the ignorant, or strengthen the weak, although they are often successful in exciting the *cold*, or stirring up the “stony ground” hearers.

We may notice, in the sequel, some *objections* to a learned ministry.

It is objected that learned men in the ministry are disposed to trust in their own abilities—in their learning, and not on the Spirit of God. This is doubtless true to a certain extent. But are learned preachers more disposed to rely on themselves than the ignorant?

As a general thing, a clergyman, or any other man of profound learning, is a man of *humility*—his great learning ena-

bles him to see that he knows but little comparatively, and he is humble while individuals of scanty information are oftentimes stubborn, self-willed, and presumptuous. They verify the saying; that,

“A little learning is a dangerous thing.”

Another common objection to learned preachers is, that common minds cannot comprehend their language—their expressions are too learned to be understood by unlettered persons. This objection lies with equal or greater weight against very unlearned preachers. Such preachers frequently indulge in high sounding language, and while they are ranting against learned preachers, as they often do, they endeavor to show their own small stock of knowledge, and by their half-fledged arguments, and their *sesquipedalian* words, (in the wrong place,) they are more difficult to be understood than those who are truly learned, who know the meaning of words, and their proper place in the sentence.

It may be remarked here that no speaker should be required to employ only such words as the ignorant part of his audience understand, or can explain. It is enough if his hearers obtain his *idea*; when that is the case, they can clothe it in language to suit themselves. No doubt many of the Greek words in Paul's Epistles, as well as some of his doctrines, were “hard to be understood,” by many to whom they were addressed, who were little skilled in language.

But we are told that Christ chose twelve *ignorant* men to be his apostles, and therefore the same kind of men should now be selected and sent forth to preach the gospel. It is admitted that Peter, and John, and James were not the most learned men in the Jewish nation. They, with the other disciples, appear to have been of the middle class of society, neither the most learned, nor the most ignorant. They did not leave their nets, however, and go directly to the pulpit to instruct the people; they remained three years with the Great Teacher, studying divinity and preparing for the great work before them. And when they were commissioned and sent

forth, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, and sat on them in the form of cloven tongues, so that the Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, &c., heard them speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God.

So, then, these *ignorant* men, as they are called, could speak fluently in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and were masters of various other dialects; while those in our day who pretend to be like them, as to ignorance, instead of being able to speak in French, Spanish and Italian, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, can scarcely *read* plain English! There is a world of difference between our ignorant preachers and the inspired apostles. Indeed, the most learned men who emanate from our colleges are far behind the apostles in the use of tongues, endued, as they were, by the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit.

Every one who professes to preach the gospel should be so well informed that he could "bring forth out of his treasure things new and old;" and could say with Paul to the Colossians, "We preach (Christ,) warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

It is then the doctrine of the Bible, and the dictate of common sense, that those who pretend to instruct others should be instructed themselves. If they would, like a wise householder, draw from their treasure things new and old, they must, as a matter of course, have a treasure to draw upon—if they would present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, they must be in some degree prepared like Paul, to warn and teach every man, "in all wisdom." Amen.

S E R M O N X X I V .

THE PRESENT SUFFERINGS AND FUTURE GLORY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

BY REV. JAMES CASKEY,

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“ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” *Rom. 8: 18.*

THE present life, with the people of God, is one of trial and preparation for happiness, rather than of actual enjoyment. Sin has rendered man, in his natural state, incapable of genuine happiness. And it has so extended its baleful influence over everything with which he is connected here below, that they almost all become to him sources of sorrow and suffering. Those very relations which we sustain to each other, and which exist between us and temporal things, and from which we derive so much of our earthly enjoyment, become, not unfrequently, the occasion of untold anxiety and pain. And were there nothing to alleviate these sufferings, or at least, to support the mind and cheer the heart while actually subjected to them, dreary indeed would be our pathway through time, and indescribably dreadful our prospects through a coming eternity. But Christianity, with its divine light, and divine grace, and its glorious prospects, comes to our aid. Genuine religion, by its influence upon the mind

imbued by it, serves to temper many of the ills to which we are exposed; and it inspires with fortitude to bear up under others. It teaches the people of God to recognize his hand in all the afflictions of time; and under the conviction that they are the chastisements of a father, to resign themselves to them with filial submission. They are taught to see the reasonableness of that principle which is presented by the apostle, when he says, "We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they, verily, for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure: but he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Those of us who have arrived at mature years, can appreciate the motives which prompted to the chastisements which in early life, we received at the hands of earthly parents. And grievous as they then appeared, and difficult to be borne, we can now see that they were designed for our good, and were really followed with happy results. And though we may have repined under them then, the remembrance of them now, instead of diminishing, tends to augment the tenderness of that affection with which we regard those who are our parents according to the flesh. And this language of inspiration addressed to the children of God, by the most venerable of all fathers, not only commands their reverence, but inspires their hearts with filial confidence.

But more than this: Genuine religion inspires the bosom of the Christian with a hope, reaching into the future, which sustains him under the trials of the present time. He looks forward far beyond the boundaries of this present state. He fixes his eye upon that world where is peace celestial, where are joys eternal, where are pleasures evermore; and the hope that he shall live and act, yea, reign amid the transcendent glories of that immortal state, sustains him under the pressure of all temporal sufferings. The trials and sorrows of the present sink into insignificance when contrasted with the enjoyments of the future. And in the light which divine

revelation sheds upon these things, he may adopt the language of the apostle in the text, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." And the conviction of this truth produces patience, and resignation, and fortitude in the minds of the people of God.

Let us contemplate some of the sufferings to which they are subject in this life, in contrast with the future glory, to which they are heirs.

I. The people of God, in common with other men, are subject to numerous and complicated corporeal sufferings. As a part of that curse pronounced upon man for sin, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," his material constitution is subjected to pain and decay, and finally to total dissolution. Many with their earliest breath inhale the seeds of mortal disease, which speedily grow up and produce their bitter fruit. At any period of life disease may seize upon the body, and rack with pain its every member, and paralyze its vital organs, and reduce it to the dust. Or for months and years it may prey upon the system, and by a slow and painful process, consign it to the grave. So numerous and deadly are the ills to which we are exposed, and so thickly do they beset the whole pathway of life, that few, very few, terminate their earthly career by the gradual decay of years. And though shielded by a kind Providence from the ravages of disease, old age, with its attendant infirmities and frailties, soon draws on. It bends the noble form of man: it whitens the locks: it dims the eye: it furrows the comely visage: it palsies the limbs: and it stops, it may be calmly, but effectually, the current of life. These are ills with which we are woefully familiar—ills entailed upon our race by the prevalence of sin. And this prolific source of suffering has set almost everything around us at war with human happiness. The beasts of the field, the plants which spring from the earth, the air which we breathe, the water and the food which support the material organization, the fire which tempers the atmosphere around us, all, under some circumstances, prove

hostile, yea, fatal to the life of man. By the operation of a law of our fallen nature, this present life is often filled up by a series of corporeal sufferings. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble."

But from the corporeal sufferings which are incident to the present state, let us turn to the contemplation of the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in us. In the world to come, the people of God shall possess a bodily constitution wholly exempt from disease, and pain, and death. "For, we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." A day will come when all that is mortal with man shall pass away, and the bodies of believers shall be endowed with immortality. They are now natural bodies; and as such, they will be consigned to the grave in corruption, in weakness, in dishonor. But they shall be raised again from their lowly resting places; and raised too in incorruption, in power, in glory. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." A glorious resurrection morning awaits the saints of the Most High. The voice of the archangel and the trump of God will enter the silent grave, and break the sleep of ages. The dead shall arise; the living shall be transformed into the likeness of Jesus the Saviour. He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." That, believers in Jesus, that will be a grand consummation of which the apostle speaks, when he says: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be

raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Then the body will be delivered from everything included in the curse of a broken law. Then death shall give place to life, pain to pleasure, deformity to beauty, disease to perpetual health, and the decrepitude and weakness of age, to the bloom and vigor of immortal youth.

II. But it is the spiritual part of man which chiefly experiences suffering here, and which will chiefly partake of glory hereafter. The soul is by far the more important part of man. This distinguishes him from the inferior creatures, and brings him into close alliance with the angelic nature. It capacitates him for filling a higher sphere than the brutes that perish; for rendering a far higher kind of service to the great Creator of all; and for participating in far more exalted enjoyments. And as this is the nobler part of man's nature, it is susceptible both of deeper misery, and of higher happiness than the body can possibly experience. And upon this part of human nature sin has committed its direst ravages. It has broken up that correspondence which once happily existed between all the powers of the soul, and the divine law. The mind is beclouded by ignorance, and warped by error: the affections are depraved: the will is in open and utter opposition to the divine will: and the whole man is estranged from God. And consequently the human bosom, instead of being, as once it was, a scene of peace and happiness, has become the theatre of strife and misery. And though with the people of God old things have passed away, and all things become new, the change is yet but partial. During the present life their emancipation from the bondage of error and of corruption is incomplete. And, therefore, their bosoms became the seat, not indeed of a doubtful, but of a protracted and harassing warfare. Spiritual light and spiritual darkness, yea, the Prince of light himself, and the Ruler of the darkness of this world contend for entire dominion over

them. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." And though this contest be spiritual, it is not the less real. And though little or nothing may be known of the solicitude and alarm which it produces beyond the bosom in which it actually exists, it yet renders the present life of the Christian a period of anxiety, and sometimes of deep distress. All this may seem strange enough to the impenitent sinner, and to the merely nominal Christian; but the child of God has experience of its truth. He knows something of the power of indwelling corruption. He is deeply sensible of the strong bias to sin which still exists within him. And he has a lively consciousness of his own frequent shortcoming in duty. This state of the believer in Jesus, and the anxiety and distress attendant upon it, are strikingly portrayed by Paul the apostle. "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do, I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me: For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The Christian has placed before him a pattern, a perfect pattern of excellence, of moral purity, of holiness. He would rise up, and up, and up to a level with that high exemplar; but sin—his own corruptions, like a mighty incubus, press him down to earth, so that he is unable to look up. In the contrast between that which he ought to be, and that to which he actually attains, he sees ground of deep humiliation before God. Duty calls, and the principle of holiness within prompts him to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly. But, there still exist contrary tendencies in his bosom, which some-

times gain a temporary ascendancy; and he yields to temptation and falls into sin. And the rod of chastisement, though in the hand of a divinely compassionate Father, falls heavily upon him. And this conflict between sin and holiness, and the sorrow and suffering attendant upon it, are protracted to the close of life. And sometimes the contest becomes warmer and more deadly as the Christian progresses toward the close of his earthly sojourn; and like the Master whom he serves, he gains his complete and final triumph, only at the hour of his death.

But then these sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. A brighter day is to dawn and shine forever upon the pathway of an endless life. In that future world for which we are now undergoing the process of preparation, all will be light and peace and joy. The soul in all its powers will be emancipated from the bondage of sin. No error will then obscure the intellect. There "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days." And the mind, unimpeded by weakness, and untrammelled by error, will employ its vast and deathless energies in exploring the works in nature and in grace, of that Infinite Being, whose "way is in the sea, whose path is in the great waters, and whose footsteps are not known." There are many things in the dealings of Divine Providence toward his people, which are now inexplicable to the most observant and devout amongst them. The progress of time, as it gradually unfolds our own history and that of others, may throw some light upon the ends of that wise and benevolent Ruler who ordered them; but our mental vision is so circumscribed that one can not see the full bearing of many of the most remarkable events of our own lives. As we examine them more thoroughly, and obtain a deeper insight into the purposes which may have prompted them, we are led gratefully to recognize the wisdom and grace of our God. Enough may now be known to lead us to adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and

thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep." But when the glory of that brighter day, which awaits the saints of the Most High, shall be revealed in us, no doubt many of the deepest mysteries which now hang around our earthly career, will vanish under the investigation of our more acute and comprehensive powers of intellect; and the wisdom and grace of God our Saviour stand forth so conspicuously as to elicit our profoundest gratitude, and our loftiest notes of praise. Then we may be able to see that love, sovereign love—grace, sovereign grace dictated and controlled the most deeply afflictive events which we have ever experienced. And while we find pleasure and profit in investigating the dealings of God with us in our earthly pilgrimage, with what high delight will we give scope to our immortal powers in expatiating upon the unspeakably grand and endlessly diversified scenes upon which we shall then have entered? Fields of boundless extent in the natural, the intellectual, and moral universe, will invite our investigation, where new truths will forever illumine the mind, and new beauties forever charm the heart.

But the moral powers of the saved sinner will then all harmonize with the divine will and the divine law. While the understanding will be all light, the will will be all obedient, and the affections all holy. The whole man will then be transformed into the likeness of Jesus the Saviour, and shine in the beauty of perfect holiness. Having, by grace, become the sons of God here, we shall bear in glory there, the image of our elder brother and glorious King. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Purified then from all sin, no longer exposed to temptation, and no longer disposed to transgress, the redeemed will no longer suffer inward conflicts, nor outward chastisements. None but the pure, the holy, the sanctified of the Spirit, shall enter that realm of glory. Speaking of the abode pre-

pared for the people of God, John, the beloved apostle, declares, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." And as all sin will be excluded from that happy world, there will be no pain, no suffering, no sorrow. The curse which has spread desolation and woe here on earth, shall never reach that happy abode. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Here you see the people of God often subjected to many afflictions. Sometimes it is their lot to experience hunger, and thirst, and nakedness; and to taste deeply of poverty and neglect, and persecution itself. But believer in Jesus, behold the divine beauty, the high honors, the happy state of those composing that mighty throng which appears before the throne on high. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Here they may be bowed down under a load of troubles, and go mourning all the day. But when they come to stand, in that fair and happy world, upon the mount of God, they shall lift up their heads with everlasting joy. "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: and they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. They shall be abundantly

satisfied with the fatness of thy house ; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."

III. Christians suffer in the present state in consequence of their connection in society with those, who, like themselves, are imperfect and sinful. "Woe is me!" said the prophet, "for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." And, "In the world," said the Saviour, "ye shall have tribulation." Owing to their own imperfections and sins, and to their connection in society with those who are yet wholly depraved, or but partially sanctified, ten thousand evil influences, inimical to their peace, are brought to bear upon them. Too readily do the remaining corruptions of their own bosoms fall in with the allurements to sin, which are presented by the evil dispositions and the evil example of those around them. And they become involved, in a greater or less degree, in the emulations, and wrath, and strife, and envy, and deep iniquity of a world which lieth in wickedness. Many watch for their halting, and would rejoice in their fall. Even the society of those who are laboring to keep themselves unspotted from the world does not afford that advantage and pleasure which they had fondly hoped to realize. Offenses arise between beloved associates. The most tender and endearing relations which are known in life, often fail to afford that high degree of enjoyment which they ought, owing to the sinful imperfections of those who sustain them. And however intimate, and tender, and happy our connections in society here may be, they must all be dissolved at last. Death does not respect the tenderest affection, the strongest, the dearest ties. He enters the circle of the purest earthly happiness, and removes the venerable father, the tender mother, or the child of their prayers and of their future hopes ; and opens a fountain of grief in every bosom. And pitiable indeed would be our condition, had we no hope for ourselves and our friends beyond the boundaries of time. But the hope which the Christian is permitted to indulge, and sometimes joyfully to indulge, tempers the grief which nature forbids him to repress.

But contemplate, in contrast with these sufferings, believer in Jesus, the glory to which the people of God will hereafter attain. Those social ills, to which we are now subject, will find no place in that coming world. Introduced there to a state of sinless perfection, we will find all around us elevated to the same exalted station. And freed from all sin, and confirmed in holiness, and connected only with holy beings, there will be nothing to hurt, nothing to offend. Envy, and wrath, and malice, and evil speaking, will be forever excluded from that blessed abode. All will be united to each other, and to God by the ties of the strongest affection. Love unfeigned will glow in every bosom; and that Saviour, who loved us and gave himself for us, will reign in love over that ransomed throng. There will be gathered the redeemed of every age, and of every land—"the called and chosen and faithful"—the great and wise and good of all generations of men. There too we will be reunited with those Christian friends who have been dear to us in this vale of tears—the father, the mother, the husband, the wife, the brother, the sister, the son, the daughter, from whom we had been separated by the cruel hand of death—we shall join them there. The parting here, how sad and sorrowful! It wrung the heart with grief. But the meeting there, how welcome and happy! It will fill the soul with joy. An innumerable company of angels too, those unfallen spirits who shine in the beauty of holiness, shall be united in society with the just made perfect. But above all, we shall be brought into more immediate fellowship with Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. He will occupy the throne, as the visible manifestation of the Invisible God. In that world where all is glorious, he, infinitely more glorious still, will constitute to all the center of attraction; and the source of light and joy. And over all the nations of the saved, as the objects of his love, and the purchased of his blood, and the sanctified of his Spirit, he shall reign in light and glory.

And then to crown the blessedness of that happy state, it is to be permanent as the throne of God. No possible contin-

gency, no revolutions which the ages of a coming eternity may witness, shall terminate or even impair the glory of the redeemed. The children of immortality—the heirs of an incorruptible and unfailing inheritance, they will be ever with the Lord.

And now, believer in Jesus, with what patience, and fortitude, and filial submission should we endure the sufferings which for wise and holy purposes God lays upon us, on this side of death, in view of the happiness which awaits us beyond. No afflictions should be deemed too severe, which our Heavenly Father sees necessary to prepare us for future glory. And would we but keep that glory in view, how mightily would the joyful anticipation of it, sustain the soul in seasons of distress, and lighten the burden of all temporal sorrow. Many indeed are the afflictions of the righteous; but in a little time they will all be numbered with the things which are past. And then we shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and unite with all the ardor of our immortal powers, in celebrating the praises of him “that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

S E R M O N X X V .

THE VICTORY OF THE CHILD OF GOD BY FAITH.

BY REV. JOHN EKIN,

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“For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

1 John 5: 4.

THAT law, by which everything reproductive begets its like, is as uniform in the moral and spiritual, as it is in the physical world. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

In the moral and spiritual world, there are but two classes or families—one known as the children of God, the children of light, the children of the kingdom; the other denominated the children of the wicked one, the children of the world, the children of wrath. The latter are represented as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world—slaves of Satan, the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, by whom they are led captive at his will, and with him are destined to shame and everlasting contempt.

Among these *all* have had their conversation in times past, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others. "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Such are the children of God, the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, the Lord's freedmen, destined always to triumph as soldiers under the Captain of salvation, and of whom it is declared in the text—"Whatsoever [or whosoever] is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Our attention may here be directed appropriately to—

I. The import of the phrase, "born of God."

II. What it is they who are born of God overcome—"the world."

III. The instrumentality by which this victory is obtained—"even our faith."

"Born of God,"—"born from above,"—"born of the Spirit,"—"created anew in Christ Jesus,"—"quickened from a state of trespasses and sins," are expressions used by different writers of the New Testament, evidently to convey to the mind of the reader the same idea. They certainly indicate something different from the relation existing between God as the Creator, and man or angel as his creature. As such Adam is called the "son of God;" and higher orders of holy intelligences are so denominated—"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." But man, originally created in the image of God and after his likeness, being in honor did not abide. The gold has become dim, and the most fine gold is changed, and woe is to him, for he has sinned. The same infallible judgment which pronounced on him, in common with all the other works of God, the sentence, "very good," soon pronounced the reverse on the changed and fallen character of man—"Every imagination of the thought of his heart is evil, only evil, and that

continually." As in this changed and fallen character Adam begat a son in his own likeness and after his image, according to that law by which everything begets its like, all the descendants of Adam are born sinners, wanting conformity to the law of God, and developing, from the first dawnings of intellect in infancy, a carnal mind, enmity against God, not subject to his law—a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Hence the sweeping universal sentence—"There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

To arrest man in this career of rebellion and crime, to bring him back to God, to re-estamp his image on his soul, and qualify him for enjoyment in communion and friendship with God, is the work here described. It is a work to which nothing short of almighty power and infinite wisdom is adequate; and a work which both reason and revelation point out as all-important to man. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God."

This work has its incipient stage—perhaps I may say, its essential existence—in a change of the will, from the choice of that which is evil, only evil, and that continually, to the choice of that which is good; more especially to the choice of that good part offered in the gospel, which shall not be taken away. This good part embraces atonement for sin, and the attainment of holiness: the former is immediately and exclusively the object of faith; the latter calls all the powers of the soul into correspondent operation with the will. These never can be separated from each other, while they are so distinct that even the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err by attempting to blend or confound them.

Thus there is always in connection with this choice of that good part, a correspondent love to God by whom it has been

procured and offered; a correspondent effort to render obedience to all his commands; a correspondent desire to honor him by the service of our bodies and spirits which are his; a correspondent attachment to his cause, and a correspondent enjoyment in the observance of all the secret, social, public, and sealing ordinances of his grace.

In this way the individual who has been the subject of this change is enabled to realize what it is; and though he may be utterly incapable of explaining how or why it is, yet, in the language of one to whom Jesus gave sight, he can say—"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see; whereas I once hated God, I now love him; whereas I once loved and indulged in sin, now I hate it, and regarding it as my most grievous and intolerable burden, desire above all things complete freedom from it; whereas I once set my affections on things beneath, now I desire to have my conversation in heaven where Christ is, whence also I look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus, who shall change this vile body and fashion it like to his own glorious body."

This change is the work of the Holy Spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy he saveth us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." In relation to this Spirit, Christ declares—"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." "I," says he, "will pray the Father, and he shall send you the Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

The instrumentality employed is the word. "Being born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." Whosoever is thus born of God, having his Spirit dwelling in him, given to abide

with him forever, according to this word of God which liveth and abideth forever, overcometh the world. We inquire—

II. What it is they who are born of, God overcome—"the world."

By the world here we understand, whatever, in the present state of existence, stands in the way of, or opposes the final salvation of the soul. Here we find a formidable array, of which we are reminded by this same apostle. "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

By the lust of the flesh we understand, those vitiated appetites and ungovernable passions which constitute so prominent a feature in human character. These war against the soul, and beyond all peradventure have proved the most powerful adversaries and cruel oppressors that have ever tyrannized over the human race. They have by a uniform law sapped the foundations of man's physical constitution, strengthening disease, and inducing premature decay, old age, and death. They have squandered the lawful patrimony and the hard-earned estate, and left the mother worse than widowed, and the children worse than fatherless. They have invaded the sacred precincts of the domestic circle, they have blasted the character and stained the fame of innocence, and rolled the deep and dark and damning tide of infamy over the desolation they have wrought. They have chained, and subdued, and crushed earth's mightiest sons—earth's mightiest potentates—earth's mightiest intellects, and flung the mantle of shame over human character and human glory.

By the lust of the eyes we understand, those unhallowed principles which constitute the secret springs of action in individual character, and exert such wide-spread and irresistible influence throughout society at large; such as avarice, envy, ambition, revenge, and malignity. These may well be denominated the lust of the eyes; as they are usually excited in the mind through the medium of the natural organs of vision.

Each of these is in itself a host. Let either of them obtain the ascendancy in any mind, and the worst enemy need wish no more excruciating torture than it is capable of inflicting. With such a power singly, no wonder that their combined influence has heaved up and rolled on the wild and desolating tides of misery and woe around the habitations and the hearts of the human family. This lust of the eyes nerved the arm of the first murderer against the life of a brother; and in every age, and in every instance, from that hour down to the present, it has performed the same office. It has forged, and furbished, and unsheathed the murderous sword of war, and multiplied implements for the destruction of the human race. It has gathered nations to the field of battle as to a common slaughter house, and amid the loathsome and horrifying scenes of blood and carnage there exhibited, has thrown around war the pomp and ceremony which give it all its interest to the human mind. It has dignified war as a science, and arms as a profession; and to sustain them as such, it has imposed pecuniary burdens on the civilized world, more than sufficient to have given the highest degree of internal improvement attained by any, to every nation; and in addition to this, to have sent the gospel of the grace of God into every palace and hovel throughout the habitable globe.

By the pride of life we understand, whatever in life tends to nourish pride. It finds its aliment, not in that which is useful and convenient, nor even in what is elegant and refined, but in that which outstrips a neighbor in pomp and show, or goes beyond his means. It glories in the distinctions of high and low, of rich and poor, of master and servant, and more especially of master and slave. Often, often does this pride of life infuse gall and wormwood into the cup of domestic enjoyment, and poison the very fountain of domestic bliss. For four thousand years it has stood as the most insuperable barrier to the progress of society, to the enjoyment of civil liberty, and the inalienable rights of man. It has bound the yoke of oppression on the necks of nations. It has riveted the chains of slavery on millions of the human race; and

even now, grasping them with more than mortal energy, refuses to let them go.

These unhallowed principles have their origin and their seat in the heart, and operating thence, have marred the peace and order of society, and filled the world with the cry of violence. By nature they are as strong in the mind of him who is born of God, as they are in the carnal man; and even after the change described, in which he is born again, these still continue to be active powerful principles, to be resisted, controlled, and subdued. Hence the language and experience of Paul—"I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin that is in my members."

To lay aside all these, to subdue and crucify them, is the work, the imperative, indispensable duty of every one that is born of God. To do this, requires more mental energy than is required to scale the loftiest steeps of science, and more moral courage and heroism than has ever nerved the commander or his legions in marching to the bayonet's point or to the cannon's mouth. In addition to these, are the cares—the necessary cares of this world in poverty, and the deceitfulness of riches in prosperity, persecution for righteousness, sake, and the wiles of Satan, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. All these must be encountered and overcome by the child of God. And who is sufficient for these things? or by what potent instrumentality is the victory to be obtained? We direct, under the third head, to—

III. The instrumentality by which this victory is obtained—
"even our faith."

Faith, as a natural principle, belongs essentially to the constitution of man. It is that operation of the mind, by which we receive and rely upon approved testimony. This operation is as perfect and satisfactory in receiving the testimony of approved witnesses, as in receiving the testimony of

our own senses. For instance, I am as firmly convinced of the existence of such a place as London, or Paris, as I am of the existence of the paper or book now before me. Though the former conviction rests entirely on the testimony of others, and the latter on the testimony of my own senses; yet it would be as utterly useless to attempt to reason me out of the belief that such a place as London, or Paris, has existed, as it would be to reason me out of the belief that this book or paper before me ever had an existence. This reliance on testimony is in some way connected with all the business of life, and constitutes the basis of a large proportion of the knowledge acquired in the present state of existence. It is this that gives so much importance to truth between man and man, and also to the uniformity of the laws of nature. Why do I see one man engaged in labor for another? It is because he has faith in his promise that he shall in the end be adequately rewarded. Why do I see one man enter into a contract with another, and bind himself to stipulations which he can not now fulfill? It is because he has faith in the promises of another, that in due time he shall be furnished with the means for fulfilling these stipulations. Why do I see the husbandman bearing forth the precious seed, and committing it to the bosom of the soil—seed which perhaps he can but ill spare from the support of a numerous and helpless family? It is because he has faith in the uniformity of nature's laws, by which this seed shall spring up and furnish a rich return in a golden harvest. Why do I see hundreds and thousands rising from our midst, cutting loose the ties that bind them to society, and abandoning the sweets and refinements of domestic and civilized life, pushing their way—through the wilderness, and over parched and barren plains—to a far distant country? It is because they have faith in the testimony of others, that there is treasure there, and that it is easily obtained. Why do I see the merchant commit his earthly all, and more perhaps, to a vessel, and give it direction over the boisterous deep to a far distant port? It is because he has faith in the skill of him who commands the vessel, and faith

in the report that this adventure will yield him a rich return. Why do I see thousands crowding to the western shores of Europe, and with provisions only sufficient for a few days or weeks, commit themselves to a vessel on the watery waste, to which the eye can descry no bounds, no shore, no country, or resting place beyond? It is because they have faith in the testimony of others, which reaches far beyond the range of their vision, that there is a shore and a country beyond, where they may find a home, and secure and transmit an inheritance to their children and their children's children. Let the skeptic and the scoffer cavil and sneer as they may; it is the privilege of the fool to laugh; but the true philosopher, in common with the humble Christian, will always award to faith all the importance attached to it in the word of God.

Faith receives and rests upon the testimony of God just in the same way in which it receives and rests upon the testimony of man. The testimony of God is contained in his word, which comes to us with an accumulation of evidence that it is from God, and that it is true, which, when weighed in accordance with the laws of belief which regulate the mind, can no more be resisted than the mind can shake itself from its very existence. True, indeed, there have been and are still thousands who boldly and positively deny that the Bible is of God; who condemn and treat it as an imposture. And so, a petty African prince once boldly and positively denied that ever there was, or that there ever could be such a thing as ice. And why? Because he had never seen it. Thus the infidel, who perhaps has never spent a day nor an hour in examining or weighing the evidences of the truth and divine origin of the Bible, occupies the same ground of ignorance, and shares in the same confident folly with the African prince. Ignorance, sheer and inexcusable ignorance, as it has been the origin of all the objections brought against any true science, so it is the origin of all the cavils and objections urged against Christianity and the Bible. There may have been, and no doubt are those, who in the course of controversy

have had these evidences presented clearly to their minds, who still from a pride of consistency obstinately persist in denying and blaspheming. And what may not the carnal mind attempt in its enmity against God? If a Hume can attempt to reason us out of a belief in the reality of a material universe, and persuade us that matter itself is but a bundle of ideas, what may not the carnal mind attempt? But there is a power there silently operating, that will one day assert its authority, and speak out in language that can not be mistaken: it is the power of conscience, that must be roused on the bed of death or at the judgment-bar.

This faith, however, as a natural principle, can be of no avail: it always has been and always will be too weak to control the corrupt principles of the human mind. Hence the discrepancy between faith and practice. This is often witnessed in the every-day observations of life. Take, for instance, the drunkard, the man who has come under the control of a vitiated appetite for strong drink. Portray to him the ruinous consequences of his course, in the premature destruction of his physical constitution, in the dethroning of reason, in the derangement of his business, in the squandering of his estate, in the disgrace and beggary of his family, in a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's hell. Of all this he is thoroughly convinced; but his faith is too weak to control his appetite, and even while the tears of bitter regret are scalding his cheeks he will turn again to the intoxicating bowl. Just so the sinner. He may be thoroughly convinced of the truth of God's word; he may be able and ready not only to weigh the evidences of its truth, but also to present them in a clear, and logical, and powerful manner to the minds of others; while, after all, these truths exert no influence over his own conduct. This is faith without works—the faith of devils—and as to all practical results, as James describes it, *dead*. In order that faith may be efficient, it must participate in the change already described as taking place in the will, by which the individual is born of God. The same Spirit which quickens the soul in the change of the will,

must energize faith, giving it a controlling influence, constituting it a saving grace; so that the individual henceforth walks by faith and not by sight, and lives the life which he now lives in the flesh by faith on the Son of God.

The primary and more immediate subject of this faith, is the same with that of the will, as already noticed—*atonement for sin, and the attainment of holiness*. Laying hold of Christ as the propitiation for sin, as the only hope, as with the grasp of death, and appropriating him as the Lord his righteousness, the believer rises triumphant over the world that lieth in wickedness—triumphant over the world condemned, and the wrath of God abiding on it. He that believeth is not condemned. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” And being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?” Faith moreover lays hold of all those unspeakably great and precious promises made over to us in the word of God; the design of which is that we might be partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Fixing the desires on the attainment of holiness as the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, in the diligent use of all the means of grace, wrestling for, and cultivating, and cherishing the influences of the Holy Spirit of promise, faith becomes the instrument of purifying to the heart, by which the believer is enabled to lay aside all envy, wrath, malice, filthy communication—to put away all lying and evil speaking—to put off the old man with his deeds which are corrupt—to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Thus again faith becomes the instrument by which the believer overcomes all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which are not of the Father, but of the world.

This same faith also lays a permanent foundation for hope, and regulates the feelings, and desires, and conduct of the believer in all the relations, in the pursuits, and in all the enjoyments of life. “Faith,” says Paul, as he defines and

exemplifies it to the Hebrews, "is the substance [basis or foundation] of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out to a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him that is invisible. By faith they passed through the Red sea, which the Egyptians essaying to do, were drowned. And what shall we say more, of those who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turning to flight the armies of the aliens: women received their dead restored to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." Faith thus rested on the word of God who cannot lie, freeing from condemnation, purifying the heart, and regulating the conduct in all the relations and circumstances of life, gives the believer an advantage and elevation over the world nowhere else to be enjoyed. From the Pisgah height on which he stands, faith pushes its vision backward into the depths of eternity past. It gives him to understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were made not of things which do appear. It affords a view of the rising beauty, and grandeur, and glory of creation's morn, and permits him to listen and enjoy the universal anthem, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." On the other hand, it

enables him to push his vision forward to the closing scenes of time, and into the depths of eternity beyond. It spreads out to his vision the majestic grandeur and overpowering glory of the second advent of the Son of God. It enables him in spirit to mingle in the scenes of a resurrection morn, and of a judgment day. When the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, and with the archangel's voice, and trump of God, shall break the long sleep of death, and call to life the slumbering myriads of the human race. When the Lord Jesus "shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." When "he shall gather his elect from the four winds of heaven," and welcoming them to his kingdom, they shall return with singing—"Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

And now, in conclusion, let each of us put the inquiry to his own mind, Have I been born of God? Has my choice been fixed on that good part which shall not be taken away? Do I hate sin? Do I love and desire holiness? Is God himself the supreme object of my affections? If so, faith in me can not be dead; but is a living active principle, working by love, purifying my heart, and overcoming the world. But if there be a consciousness in the breast of any, that such is not the case, allow me to remind such, of the positive declaration of him whom God hath appointed to judge the world in righteousness, and before whose judgment-seat we must all appear—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." Do you desire to see and enter this kingdom? do you desire that holiness by which alone you can be fitted for this kingdom, and its enjoyments, and exercises? Ask, that you may receive; seek, that you may find this Spirit, of which Christ has declared—"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts—much more will your Heavenly Father grant the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

S E R M O N X X V I .

A GREAT SAVIOUR, AND A GREAT SALVATION.

BY REV. R. E. STEWART,

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“They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.” *Isa. 19: 20.*

“TROUBLE springs not from the dust.” All that happens to us in this world is by the appointment or permission of the infinitely wise God. “In him we live, and move, and have our being.” “How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” “Who hath known the mind of the Lord?” Marks of wisdom are stamped upon every part of his works. They are seen in the least as well as in the greatest. “The heavens declare his glory;” and so does the humblest flower of the field. And we may feel assured that all God’s plans and purposes are characterized by infinite wisdom, although our limited capacities may be, at present, unable to comprehend them. We can not penetrate the hidden events of futurity, and analyze the properties of every action and every motive; we can not extend our researches beyond the confines of earth and the boundaries of time, and ascertain perfectly what will be the influence of present actions on eternal prospects; and we can not soar away to the realms of glory, and learn how the afflictions of the people of God on earth prepare them for the joys and the realities of that happy

abode. But we know, both from nature and revelation, that God is good, and that his creatures suffer. And although in our present imperfect state we may be unable to reconcile these things in every particular, still we know that to the eye of the omniscient God all are "naked and open;" that he can reconcile every apparent difference; that he can remove every difficulty; and that when we shall arrive in the realms of everlasting light, then all will be plain, perfect, and satisfactory.

God brings afflictions on his creatures on account of their sins, and sin is the cause, and the only cause of all the suffering which we see, or feel, or fear. This is presented in the clearest light in the context, in the case of Egypt. Egypt had of old been the house of bondage to the people of God. She stood in the highest rank among the nations of the earth. Her power and resources were great, her influence controlling, and her authority almost supreme. But in the power of her might, and the pride of her spirit, she turned her back upon God, contemned his laws, oppressed and persecuted his chosen people, and worshiped the lowest and most contemptible objects, "changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." For their pride and idolatry, their cruelty and oppression, God pronounces against them the most fearful judgments. Look at the frightful picture drawn in this chapter. Every glory, every idol, every defense, every stronghold, convenience, and foundation, in which they trusted, would be removed. Famine, pestilence and death would reign triumphant. Shame, reproach and contempt would be their only companions. Invaded, conquered, and carried captive, they would become a hissing and a byword in the land of their oppressors.

But amidst the thick and threatening clouds of judgment that hung over prostrate Egypt, the rays of hope and encouragement burst forth from the Sun of righteousness. God has mercy in store for Egypt, and through her for the whole gentile world. This God would manifest, not so much by reviving her trade, replenishing her river, and crowning her

with fruitful seasons, but by leading her to a knowledge of the true religion, and the worship of the living God. Jehovah would send them a *Saviour*, and a *great one*, even the "Lord of glory," and he should deliver them. All these deliverances are but figures of gospel salvation; and doubtless Jesus Christ is the Saviour, and the great one, referred to in the text. None other could deliver from the service of dumb idols, and both purchase and preach liberty to the oppressed, and salvation to the lost.

The Lord Jesus Christ being the Saviour presented in the text, consider—

I. In what respect he is a *great Saviour*.

II. For the deliverance of *whom* is he sent—"the oppressed."

I. *In what respect is Christ a "Saviour, and a great one."*

In Psalm 145: 3. his "greatness" is declared to be "unsearchable." "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, his greatness is unsearchable." He is unsearchable in all his powers and perfections. "He is higher than heaven, what can we know?" Our knowledge is limited and defective; "we are but of yesterday, and know nothing;" our wisdom, but folly; our strength, but weakness; our life, but a passing vapor. Yet God has been pleased to reveal to us some glimpses of the greatness and the glory of his Son. His greatness is incomprehensible; his wisdom unfathomable; his fullness inexhaustible, and his power infinite. "No one knoweth the Son but the Father."

1. *View his greatness when considered in his own person.*

He is the "only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." He is the First Cause and Last End, "the Almighty." He is "God over all, blessed forever." He is the Creator, Upholder, Possessor, and Ruler of all things. He is the "brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" "the Light of the world;" the Propitiation for sin; the Saviour of guilty man, and the great object of worship to men and angels. He gives life, raises the dead, and bestows immortal glory. He is the light, the glory, and the temple of heaven. He combines in himself all the graces of

time, and all the perfections of eternity—all the virtues of humanity, and all the unspeakable glories of Deity. He is the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God." He is "exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named," in this world or the world to come. Him all the angels worship; him all the redeemed praise, him all the hosts of earth, and hell, and heaven obey. The voice of Inspiration calls him "the great God and our Saviour." Nor can anything be more grand than the description given of him by the prophet—"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace."—Isa. 6: 9. He is "the Mighty God," who "spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast;" for "by him were created all things, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." Only "the Mighty God," in the "form of a servant," could render a satisfaction answerable to the demands of God's violated law. Only "the Mighty God" could be a *Saviour* suitable to lead millions of weak and guilty mortals through the many dangers, snares and difficulties of life, to a world of glory and blessedness. Only Jesus, as "the Mighty God," could burst asunder the bars of death—could triumph over the grave, and "lead captivity captive," receiving gifts for men, even the rebellious.

Combine all these powers and perfections together, and add a thousand other descriptions presented in the word of God, and then behold the *person* of our incarnate Saviour. Is he not "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely?" Should not he be the supreme object of our worship, love and trust? And since he exercises a sovereignty over all nature—since he unveils the secrets of the human heart, penetrates the dark events of futurity, grants admission to a happy immortality, and holds the keys of life and death—since he possesses all power and authority in heaven and in earth—since he has "on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of

kings and Lord of lords"—since he sways a scepter of universal and uncontrolled dominion, ruling in a kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom—and since the highest archangel that dwells before the throne of the eternal God veils his face from his glory, and prostrates himself at his footstool—oh, how should our hearts exult for joy, that God in infinite love has provided this "great Saviour" for us, and that through his merit and intercession we can approach the throne of God, and live in holy, happy communion with him forever!

2. *View the greatness of Christ, in the salvation which he has wrought out and perfected for sinners.*

Salvation is deliverance from pain and danger; and the salvation which Christ has wrought out and perfected for us, is a complete deliverance from the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, and the torments of eternal despair. And so important is an interest in this salvation, that an inspired apostle exclaims—"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" It is a great deliverance; a salvation which Christ has purchased with his own precious blood; which comprehends the greatest blessings that God bestows, and a deliverance from the most awful sufferings which man can endure. It is a salvation which man could never have obtained for himself. The combined merit of all the saints, from righteous Abel down to the present moment, could never atone for one offense against the law of God. Sin is the transgression of the law of the eternal Jehovah; and since God is infinite in all his perfections, his law, which is a transcript of his image, must be infinite in all its requirements. Every sin is therefore an infinite offense. But can weak, perishing man satisfy the demands of infinity? Can he even form an adequate conception of such demands? Man, with all his boasted powers, can no more atone for one violation of an infinitely perfect and holy law, than he can form a perfect conception of that great and holy Being "who fills immensity with his presence, and doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." Hence man must forever despair of being able to

atone for one sin of his whole life: nay, if all the angels of glory were offered up on the altar as one sacrifice, it could not, for the same reason, atone for one single offense of guilty man. Feeling therefore our own inability, yea, the inability of the highest archangel to expiate our sins, with what joy and gratitude should we contemplate Jesus Christ, our "great Deliverer!"

And who can calculate the blessings of that "great salvation?" They are beyond the reach of the strongest powers of intellect; for, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." It is a salvation complete in all its parts, without defect, excluding all compromise, and including all pardon, peace, justification, adoption, sanctification, glory. But how could all these be secured to guilty man? He could not obtain them himself; Gabriel could not bestow them on him. Man had sinned, and deserved to die; sin must be punished, and the honor of God's broken law vindicated. How then could this be done, and the righteousness of God made to harmonize with our peace? Here we see the *greatness* of the Saviour. He willingly engaged to become the sinner's surety. When in all earth, and hell, and heaven, no mediator between offending man and his offended God could be found, Jesus, with the power and fortitude of "God equal with the Father," came forward and interposed in our behalf. His expressive language is—"I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God." He could obey all the precepts and fulfill all the demands of God's holy law. He, by the sacrifice of himself, could render forgiveness consistent with justice, and secure pardon to millions of our guilty race, without doing violence to any of the principles of God's moral government. He could robe himself in humanity, and take upon himself the "form of a servant." He could patiently "endure the cross, despising the shame," that he might rescue captive souls from the tyrants of hell, and bring them into the glorious liberty of the children of God. He could bear the whole weight of Jehovah's infinite displeasure against the sins

of his people; and he could meet and endure the fellest blasts of persecution, the ingratitude of men, the attacks of devils, and the hidings of his own Father's face, that we might be saved from "sin and wrath, and reign in life by Jesus Christ." When our souls were sinful, condemned and lost, when we stood on the very brink of perdition, and infinitely needed the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, then it was that this "Great One" placed himself in the gap between us and eternal ruin, and willingly became the substitute for sinners; then it was "he obtained eternal redemption for us;" and then it was "he gave his life a ransom for many."

Who can tell the countless number of sins from which he has delivered us? They are more than the stars of heaven; they have gone up as a thick cloud to veil from us the presence and glory of God. And who can estimate the awful misery from which he has redeemed us? Who can tell what it is to be banished from the presence and favor of God; to be shut up in the prison-house of God's eternal justice, under his wrath and curse forever; to be cut off from all communion with his people; to have no friend but the devil, and no companions but his angels and lost souls; and to writhe, and suffer, and die forever in that lake of torment where the "worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Oh, is not ours a great Saviour, and a great salvation? We must know all the unspeakable glories of heaven, and all the horrors and wailings of an eternal hell, before we can fully appreciate the greatness of this salvation. Eternity will be spent in making the grand discovery.

To the Christian how precious this Saviour! how invaluable his salvation! He commits all his interests to him, believing that he will be saved from sin and wrath, through all the trials and difficulties of this world, and when life is ended, be saved in a state of eternal felicity, never more to suffer and die, never more to know pain and sickness, sorrow and vexation, but to live in bliss unspeakable, and enjoy all possible good forever and ever. It will be to enjoy the friendship of God, the love of the Saviour, the society of angels, and to

dwell forever in the city of the great King, the heavenly Jerusalem, where the glory of the Lord fills the place with perpetual light and bliss; and it will be to spend eternity in the most noble and hallowed employments, in admiring the wisdom of Providence, in adoring boundless love, in beholding displays of glory, in bowing before the throne, in listening to the music of the rolling spheres, and in singing anthems of praise to God and the Lamb. Consider—

II. *For whose deliverance is Christ sent—“the oppressed.”*

Great as is the mercy of God in Christ, it does not extend indiscriminately to all. This is an awful, but a solemn truth. If it did extend to all, then all would be saved, and reign with Christ in glory. But do not scripture, facts, and observation lead us to a different conclusion? When we look around, what scenes meet our view? Do we not see thousands who are careless and indifferent about their salvation? Do we not see thousands who are madly and determinedly rushing upon the precipice of eternal despair? Do we not see thousands who vainly hope they can take away their sins, who value not the blood of Christ, who do despite to the Spirit of grace, and who say in their heart and by their life, that they will not have the Lord to reign over us? Do we not see thousands who hate God, and Christ, and his salvation; who curse his people, his law, and his ordinances; and who despise and reject all his overtures of mercy, peace, and pardon. And if “the righteous scarcely be saved,” where—oh, where shall such persons appear but with “the wicked and ungodly.”

But they for whom Christ comes as a great Saviour, are those “oppressed” with the burden of sin, those who “cry earnestly to the Lord” for deliverance. They feel that they are sinners; they feel that a world of guilt is resting on them; that by nature they are corrupt, and their hearts at enmity against God; that they have broken covenant with him; that they are guilty of countless violations of his holy law; and that they stand condemned at the bar of Him “who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and before whom the very heavens are unclean.” When these are the feelings of the

soul; when the heart is broken and contrite for sin, and despairs of saving itself; when the mountain of sin rises up before the mind, and blocks up with its lofty peak the very portals of heaven; when the soul is pierced through with many sorrows, and weighed down with the crushing burden of woe unutterable, and is almost ready to curse God and die; then it is that Jesus, the "great One," comes to our relief, and speaks peace to the weary, heavy-laden soul. Then it is that he unveils his glory, and rides forth in the chariot of salvation. Then it is that "we who are afar off are brought nigh to God by the blood of Jesus;" and then it is that Christ comes to us in all the fullness of his grace, and proffers to us all the rich, invaluable blessings of his mediation.

When the sinner is once convinced of sin—of its awful load and guilt, he will also feel a godly sorrow for sin. The Psalmist says—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Men despise broken things. Thus the proud Pharisee in the temple despised the broken-hearted publican, but God did not despise him: so far from it, that he counts the sorrow and shame of a penitent sinner more valuable than most costly sacrifices of rams and bullocks. A heart that trembles at the word of God, a heart breaking in humiliation and self-abasement, a heart breaking for sin and from sin, God will not despise, but love, cherish, and redeem. The sorrow of the true penitent will be for sin. Ahab repented, but cherished his darling sins. Herod "heard John gladly," but retained his Herodias, and was eaten of worms. Felix trembled under the influence of Paul's eloquence and the power of truth, but mocked God by saying—"Go thy way for this time." And Judas was sorry that he had incurred such awful guilt in "betraying innocent blood," but not after "a godly manner." But the true penitent comes with the language of the prodigal—"I will arise and go to my Father, and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." His heart was deeply affected with his sin, his folly, his madness. Thus the repenting and returning

sinner feels. He considers the majesty and loveliness of that Being whom he has offended; he reflects on the reasonableness of his commands, the obligations which he has violated, and especially the base ingratitude of his conduct. Then he feels the force of that affecting declaration—"Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth! for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider!"

Let the penitent sinner but view the amazing love of God to our rebel world, and it will cause him to feel humble, while at the same time it will fill his heart with "joy unspeakable." It was love "beyond degree, beyond example, beyond expression"—"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Let the penitent also behold Jesus, the innocent, the amiable Saviour—Jesus, who left his throne of glory, and became oppressed and afflicted. Why was he a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief? Why was he scorned and rejected of men? Why did he bear the contradiction of sinners? Although infinitely and eternally rich, why did he become so poor that he had no place to lay his head? And why did he submit to the ignominious and painful death of the cross? To all this the penitent can say—"It was for me that he suffered and died; it was my sins that nailed him to the tree; "surely he has borne my grief and carried my sorrows; he was wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities."

The man who feels that he is a heavy-laden sinner, who knows that the wrath and curse of God are resting on him, and must sink him to eternal woe unless removed, will not fold his hands in security, and sit unmoved and unconcerned. His daily, his hourly prayer will be—"God be merciful to me a sinner;" "Lord, save or I perish." But why this carelessness and indifference which we everywhere behold about spiritual and eternal things? Has the soul lost its immortality?

Has it no eternal interests at stake? Is there no heaven, no hell, no hereafter? Is there no God and Saviour, no celestial bliss, no eternal despair, no judgment-bar, no omniscient Judge? Yes, all these exist. And is there one in this assembly who will deny the fact? All will admit it. Since, then, these awful realities are true, shall the mark of the grossest inconsistency be stamped on any of your foreheads?—since these things are so, can it be possible that there is a man in this assembly who never prays, who never confesses his sins, and who never implores mercy and pardon from God through Jesus Christ? Can there be one here who daily blasphemes God's holy name, who scoffs at the Saviour, who despises his blood, who derides his people and his institutions, who delights in heaping reproach and contempt on the followers of the Lamb, and who tells God in his heart and by his conduct—“I love thee not, I hate thee? Is there one such here in the temple of God? Oh, what an object must he be to the holy angels, now worshiping around the throne of God, now joining in accents of praise to the Lamb! And what thundering tones of triumph would echo along the gloomy chambers of hell's great prison-house, at the thought of one such heaven-daring sinner approaching into the immediate presence of God!

Fellow-sinner, if such be your situation, it is a most perilous one. You are not lying to man, but to God. And remember the fate of Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to God. You say that God in infinite love has provided a Saviour, and a “great One,” and yet you despise and reject him. Do you mean what you say, or do you contemn the goodness and mercy of God? Your rejection of this great Saviour which God's boundless love has provided for the oppressed and weary sinner, is the most aggravated sin of your whole life, and it is that which God will most fearfully punish; for his offer of mercy is despised, and his authority disregarded. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

But you, my friends, who are oppressed with sin, who are mourning over sin, who are “crying earnestly to God” for

deliverance from it, let me invite you to come to this "great Saviour, and he will deliver you." Come with your whole heart, resolving in the strength of divine grace to forsake every sin. Come with all your load of guilt; cast your burden upon him, for "he is mighty to save." It was for such sinners, "even the chief," that he visited earth, suffered, and died. While you come as humble and believing supplicants, you will never be rejected by him. His encouraging promises are—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And—"Come unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." You will find him a great, compassionate Saviour, able and willing to save to the uttermost. Although you may be surrounded with the greatest difficulties and dangers, although called to endure the scorn and malice of the world, and although assailed by all the principalities and powers of hell, still never fear: you shall stand unmoved and unhurt; for yours is a "great Saviour," even the "mighty God." Trust him, and trust him forever; for his word, his love, his power, are all engaged to save you freely, fully, and forever—to save you through all the conflicts of life, in the dark hour of death, and till he shall place you beyond the reach of all evil, and put you in the possession of heaven, and in the full enjoyment of unclouded, everlasting communion with God and the holy angels.

In conclusion, what think you, my hearers, of Christ? What think you of his person, his character, his work, his salvation? Is he not incomparably the "great One?" Is he not fairer than the children of men, nobler than the sons of God? Is not every grace that shines in the Godhead, and every virtue that can adorn humanity, so admirably blended in him that they can not fail to excite our admiration and engage our love? But do we all thus contemplate him? Do we all yield to him an unreserved and universal obedience? Is he the uppermost in all our thoughts, feelings, and actions?

Are there not some here who clearly demonstrate by their life that he is not at all in their thoughts? Are there not many here who are unconcerned about their sins and their salvation? Consider, then; these two questions—First, Would God have sent you “a Saviour, and a great one,” if your sins had not demanded it? And second, Will you take occasion from this very fact to reject that Saviour, and to live more securely in your sins? What is your answer? Eternity waits for your response! Will you spurn heaven, and embrace hell? Is there not a Deliverer, “mighty to conquer,” prepared? And are not his invitations the most cordial, and his promises the most encouraging? Why slight your greatest and best Friend? He alone can deliver from sin, from Satan, and from wrath to come. Be careful that you trust in nothing else. Make not your faith and love, your repentance and good works, your dependence. Virtue and morality are excellent in their place; but they are not, nor can they ever become saviours. He that trusts in them leans on a broken reed, builds on the quicksand; and when the tempest of trouble and death assail him, and the waves of wrath lash furiously against him, he will sink to rise no more. The moralist is really in more danger than the openly profane, because he rejects Christ, and trusts in his morality; while the sinner who is awakened to a sense of his guilt, feeling he has no morality on which to depend, casts himself into the arms of Jesus, and finds peace to his troubled soul. Christ must be your wisdom, your righteousness, your sanctification, and redemption—your all in all. Fly then to him without delay; and if you would not sink down to eternal despair, “call on him while he is near.” It is his delight to save; he waits to be gracious; his arms are ever open to receive the trembling sinner. “Turn ye then to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.” Believe in Christ with all your heart, and you are safe in time and to all eternity.

And those of you who are *conflicting with sin and Satan*, lift up your heads with joy, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh. Christ, who conquered sin and Satan on the

cross, will conquer them in your heart. When a few more pains, and trials, and conflicts are over, then, purified from every sin and every imperfection, Christ will receive you to dwell in his own glorious presence "where is fullness of joy, and at God's right hand where are pleasures forever more." Let this bright hope, full of immortality, sustain and encourage you. Let your eye of faith be immovably fixed on your mighty Saviour, and go forward fearlessly and unhesitatingly in the discharge of every duty, "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." And when death shall be swallowed up in victory, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall you join the angels and the redeemed in eternal hallelujah's to God and the Lamb, and then peace and happiness, unalloyed and unending, will be your portion forever and ever; while you will unceasingly tune your harps to celebrate the praises of that "great One," who "has washed you from your sins in his own blood, and has made you kings and priests unto God and his Father; to whom be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen."

SERMON XXVII.

THE CHRISTIAN COMPLETE IN CHRIST.*

BY MR. JOHN MILLIGAN,

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of the West.*

“Ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power.”—*Col. 11: 10.*

HUMAN judgment, however capable and trustworthy it may be within a certain sphere, is yet found to be singularly faithless and incompetent when employed about subjects of a spiritual nature. In the departments of physical investigation, principles are subjected to the severest scrutiny, and a doctrine is only then received into the standards of science when its truth has been ascertained by such a variety of fact and demonstration, as renders it impossible for a candid mind to doubt or disbelieve. Here all is assiduity and precision.

But how strangely different is the procedure, as we pass from the domain of nature and enter the sacred precincts of religion. Here we might expect human judgment to perform its noblest functions. Matters of the utmost importance await its decision. No evidence should be disregarded; no unwise counsel should be heeded. Yet in the very face of evidence, we commonly see it proceed according to the suggestions of fancy, caprice, or perverted inclination. A pro-

* Published by request.

position, such as that of our text, though admitted in general terms to be true as forming a part of the divine testimony, nevertheless, but seldom acquires the force of a practical truth in directing the judgment and conduct of men.

By being *complete*, we understand, being in such a condition as that nothing more can be desired, nothing better expected, nothing higher enjoyed.

Now if you put the inquiry round, what is this blissful state? Where is this perfection to be found?—many with despairing look will point you to the seats of royal magnificence: many to the car of military renown: some will refer you to the man famed for letters and science: others will produce the person that is master of the elegancies of life. Wealth and power, beauty and fashion, luxury and ease, in their turn will come under review; and we might proceed almost indefinitely with this enumeration. The diversity of judgment on this point is very great. Opinion varies very much, according to the temper and circumstances of the individual. And in this case, the adage is almost verified—“Truth is one, while error is infinite.” The true position is given in the text; every other is false; and hence the endless variations of judgment to which we have adverted.

Let me not be understood, however, to disparage anything that is really useful or elegant in life. It would be rank dishonesty to represent religion as frowning upon whatever is thought to refine and embellish human society. She does not deprive men of their rank, their wealth, or their endowments, if held by a proper tenure, and employed for purposes of beneficence. She does not court the society of barbarism, nor impede the progress of mankind in the path of elevation and improvement. She is not a solitary wanderer of the desert, nor a melancholy tenant of the gloomy cell. Nor does she frequent the abodes of men, to cast a scowling glance upon whatever they deem reputable and lovely. No; such is not her character; and if her friends by weakness, or her foes by malice, have placed her in a false position, it is much to be regretted. Do not, I entreat you, form a judgment of

her character and pretensions from the misrepresentations of either friends or foes. This would not be candid in you. Rather, come and see for yourselves. Hear her own inimitable language—"Whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are of *good report*, if there be any *virtue*, and if there be any *praise*, think on *these things*." It is doing religion a poor service, to exalt her claims by decrying those things which she herself warmly recommends and authoritatively enjoins; and in censuring the opinion of the world which places human happiness and perfection in the possession of certain privileges and endowments, we mean not to cast reproach on these, so far as they are really valuable and good. We would honor excellence wherever it is to be found; but this can only be done by giving to each thing its due weight and importance in the system of things. Flattery and panegyric are as really injurious as obloquy and detraction. Those who overrate the world and its advantages, are no better than those who disparage them: both are deviating from the line of truth; but the former are on the more common and dangerous road.

If we would listen to the voice of our own experience, it would teach us the folly of expecting to become *complete*, in the sense before stated, by any provision or appliance that the present world can furnish. Our circumstances may vary. We may have dealt out to us a greater or less measure of enjoyment; but in any condition, our happiness is very far from being perfect, while the chances of diminution greatly outnumber their opposite.

And if we have recourse to the experience of others, we shall be taught the same lesson. The recorded testimony of many is open for our inspection, both of those who have trod the humbler walks of life, whose experience accords with our own, and of those who have mounted high on the scale of grandeur, taking a position far above the ordinary level of human existence. It is among the latter that we naturally

look for the highest examples of earthly felicity, and from them we would expect the strongest assurances in regard to the efficacy of temporal things in elevating man to a condition in which there is nothing more to be desired. But what do we find? Let us hear the testimony of one who, from a wide and splendid experience illuminated throughout by the rays of an extraordinary intelligence, has a right to take the precedence of all others. "I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, (yet acquainting my heart with wisdom,) and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees. I got me servants and maidens and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered me also silver and gold, and peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments and that of all sorts. So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me: and whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was the portion of all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."—Eccl. 2: 2—11.

Such is the testimony of Solomon: and if others have scaled a lower summit of earthly prosperity, does not their experience fully accord with his? Have they not invariably left us a startling account of their adventure? The lightnings played in fearful frolic around them; the thunders shook the ground on which they trod; while an elemental strife was

raging beneath, threatening each moment to involve them in total ruin. Though it was the summit of their hopes and aspirations, they found it only a place of insecurity and alarm.

But farther; Take an individual—endow him with all the superior qualities of human nature—let him possess the towering intellect, the sublime fancy, the ardent enthusiasm, the quick penetration—give him the high soul of integrity, and the warm heart of sympathy—let his eye flash with honor, and his countenance beam with conscious virtue—inspire him with courage, and nerve his arm with resolution—let the currents of health course his veins, and the rose of beauty bloom on his cheek—let there be lettered elegance and scientific attainment, native dignity and acquired accomplishment—over all diffuse the charm of gentler virtues, the varied shades of milder loveliness—surround him with wealth, and invest him with royalty—furnish him a theatre for the display of all his talents and virtues—let the affections and sympathies of his nature have ample scope for their pleasing and varied exercise—let his imagination be constantly regaled amid the profusion of nature's beauties and the elegant productions of human genius—in short, having gifted him with a high capacity and a keen relish for earthly pleasures, let every thing that can contribute to his enjoyment be furnished in profusion. You will then have a nearer approach to perfection than any example the actual world can furnish. We may find the elements of this description sparsely strewn here and there over the surface of society, but never have the pleasure of witnessing the whole in one pleasing combination. In this discussion, however, we are willing, not only that human nature be fairly represented, but that it be decked out in the charms of ideal excellence, and appear to view under the most generous and imposing form. Suppose, then, a person thus happily situated and thus highly endowed. Can anything be supplied to render his condition more perfect? Is any ingredient wanting in the cup of his enjoyment? Is there any alloy in his happiness?

The following considerations may serve in reply. However fortunate a man may be in his outward circumstances, it is certain, death will sooner or later put a period to his prosperity. His reputation may be fair and flourishing in the world, but if he be merely a man of the world, he occupies a solemn and fearful position with respect to God: "whosoever will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God." However fine and well balanced may be his faculties—however well adapted by their harmonious exercise to produce the highest degree of rational enjoyment, there is still a master-principle, the conscience, which refuses to join the concert—which is ever ready to turn the cup of pleasure into bitterness, and to employ every faculty as an instrument of exquisite torture. In short; after all the resources of this world have been expended in the endeavor to render a man complete, his moral faculties, which are his noblest, are still left prostrate; his moral obligations remain unfulfilled; and his moral responsibility is in no way relieved. He remains still "dead in trespasses and sins," "a child of wrath, even as others," "having no hope, and without God in the world."

But "ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power."

If we turn from the world which is incapable of meeting our wants, which can only repay our fond expectations with disappointment, and have recourse to divine revelation, a brighter prospect is unfolded to our view. Here is presented a method by which we may become complete—may be placed in a condition that cannot be improved, and acquire a character that is without defect. It is a glorious scheme, one every way worthy of its divine original. We are told, the angels desire to look into it. Yes; it forms a subject of absorbing interest and delightful wonder to celestial minds. What then should it be to us?

We learn that one who is nearly related to us, who possesses all the essential attributes of our nature, is raised to the highest station in the universe, "angels, authorities and powers being made subject unto him." God hath set him at

his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. This, undoubtedly, is a state which may be called complete. Here imagination falters on her pinion, unable to reach the sublime reality.

Now if it should farther appear, that we, having been emancipated from the evils of our present condition, may be associated with this exalted being in all the grandeur of his estate, and exult forever in the pleasing exercise of our renovated and progressive faculties, amid the transporting scenes and the sanctified society of the heavenly world: if this be our destiny, shall we not then be complete? Can man or angel conceive a more desirable condition? Oh, it is too much for sinful, mortal creatures to expect. But, praise to the grace of God, such a prospect is revealed in the scriptures of truth. This high elevation is attainable. All this perfection, and happiness, and glory, is freely offered to each one of you, and urged upon your acceptance by every consideration that is suited to engage the desires, and incline the will of man.

It is, however, important to understand the character and to know the history of that personage with whom our destinies stand thus connected. But it is in the word of God alone that you will find his character justly delineated, and his history faithfully recorded. No human pen or tongue is equal to the subject. Allow me, however, on the authority of this word to state that, notwithstanding he is our kinsman and a perfect representation of human nature, he is also the Son of God, the well beloved of the Father. From eternity he was with God and "was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." "He was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly

exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. This presents a few touches of his character, and a brief epitome of his history.

In order to become complete, we must, according to the statement of the text be *in him*; that is, we must be so joined and identified with him as to participate in the fullness of his merit and his glory. Upon this connection, the whole fabric of the Christian's perfection is raised; and until it is formed, we cannot advance a step toward our high destiny.

This union takes place when we first believe on Christ; that is, when we first cordially accept him, and trust in him as our Saviour. After this we lose, as it were, our moral individuality, and henceforth shine in the moral splendor of our glorious representative.

We come now to trace more particularly the results of this blessed alliance; and in doing so, we shall but describe the completeness to which those attain who are in him, who is the head of all principality and power.

We are informed, that he "being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became *obedient unto death*, even the death of the cross." By which is meant, that he voluntarily subjected himself to the law of God under which man is placed, and obeyed it even to suffering the penalty which it denounces upon the transgressor. The person, then, who is *in him* holds the same position with respect to the law. By virtue of his union with Christ, he too is regarded as having fully complied with its requisitions, both preceptive and penal; so that he appears as a perfect man in the eye of the law, and stands fully acquitted in the presence of the supreme judge.

This of itself is a glorious immunity—it is a felicity of position which all the wealth and power and wisdom of this world are unable to confer. But every particular situation, you are aware, requires peculiar qualifications in the person

who occupies it: and if you place a man in any position, however good and desirable in itself, without securing in some way his qualification for it, you are more likely to do him harm than good. Do not then for a moment suppose that you can occupy this privileged position with respect to God and his law without, at the same time, possessing a nature, disposition and faculties adapted to your new situation. And here may I be permitted to say, that if you are accustomed to regard the plan of salvation as a mere contrivance for avoiding the punishment of sin, you labor under a dangerous delusion. Your views are infinitely wide of the truth. Indeed you can have no evidence of being in a justified state, except by observing in yourself the qualities which fit you for that state. You will not find in the universe of God such an incongruity as a moral being who is even with the claims of justice, while yet he is an enemy to God in heart, and under the control of a vicious disposition.

We have then to state as another result of union with Christ, that the Holy Spirit is given to qualify us for living and acting suitably to the new relations in which we are placed. The Spirit, in the system of divine operations, appears to be the proper author of life and living energies in the spiritual as well as in the natural world. To describe minutely the varied influence which he exerts upon the soul of man and the changes which he produces there, would be a very intricate and extensive undertaking. We can notice the subject but briefly. The whole effect which he produces is expressed by the term *sanctification*. His work here is analogous to what we observe in the natural world—it is progressive. In vegetable life, for instance, there is the germ, the plant, the shrub, and at length the tall and stately tree. In man, likewise, we witness a similar progression, the infant, the child, the youth, and the mature man. In each instance creative power is manifested: something is brought into existence which existed not before. Each is frail at first, and insignificant in appearance; yet, in this state, possessing all those qualities which at length appear so beautiful, and imposing

in their perfect development. So it is in sanctification: a new principle is brought into operation in the soul, variously designated in scripture, as the "new man," the "inward man," &c. It is that which man lost at the fall, the absence of which chiefly distinguishes his present character from that which he originally possessed. This principle is usually feeble at first, but it is a master principle in its nature, and from its first introduction among the human faculties asserts its title to superiority. We can not here describe, or even enumerate the various forms under which this new principle manifests itself, as faith, humility, love, meekness, patience, &c. Let it suffice to say that, as soon as introduced, it fits a man for the high position he is to occupy: though feeble, it is characteristic. The person, though an infant in spirituality, is nevertheless a true child of God. He will manifest the temper and disposition of a child. He will submit to the regimen and discipline of a child. The law of God becomes his manual; the Holy Spirit, his instructor. All things work together for his good. Prosperity strengthens and nourishes the feeling of gratitude; adversity serves to correct his disposition and teach him submission.

This new principle of spiritual life, moreover, while it marks the individual as a child of God, qualifies him for living and acting conformably to such a relation, and forms the basis of a perfect and immutable character, at the same time becomes a source of the purest and most exalted pleasures; and in proportion as it strengthens, and expands, and brings under subordination all the other powers and propensities of man's nature, in the same proportion is his real enjoyment augmented; till finally, when the process is complete, when every evil principle is eradicated, and the sanctified powers are matured, he will know nothing but bliss.

All this describes but imperfectly the completeness which those who are in Christ may attain during the present state. The present state, however, is only the threshold of perfection. It is as the faint gleams of early dawn to the light and splendor of the perfect day. Death, which to all others, shuts

out the light of hope forever, to the Christian brings the joyous day-spring of eternal fruition. True, the painful issue must be met. The material and immaterial parts of his nature must be sundered. The spirit must quit its fond hold of this organic frame on which it leans, and through which it holds sweet intercourse with the external world. The ties of friendship must be broken, and hearts blended in love must be severed. All the interests of time must be abandoned; and thus the dismantled spirit launches into the ocean of eternity. But it has an anchor of hope, both sure and steadfast. That which it is forced to leave, is trivial compared with what it is destined to enjoy. Its separation from the body, however, is not to continue always. Our Saviour died, but he rose again. He triumphed over death and him that had the power of death; and a triumph is also secured to all who are in him. Yes; when the cycle of time is complete, and the Son of man shall appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, they shall then reappear in forms fashioned like unto his glorious body: this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Then shall they be complete: they shall be ever with the Lord. Being united to him, they shall reign together with him. They shall wear crowns of glory and sway celestial scepters. Throughout the realms of the heavenly world shall they be honored as the friends and allies of him who is the head of all principality and power. They shall have their seats by the pure river of the water of life. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. They shall dwell in a place where there is no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads; and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXVIII.

THE RICH HARDLY SAVED.

BY REV. J. OLIVER LINDSAY,

Editor of the Erskine Miscellany.

“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.”

Mark 10: 23.

EVERY situation in life has its peculiar temptations, just as the various climates have diseases peculiar to themselves. It is necessary that these temptations should be fully understood, in order that they that live for the purifying of the flesh, may, as far as they can control outward circumstances, place themselves in situations where they will be least exposed to sin, or at any rate know the point at which the adversary will most likely assail them.

The possession of wealth is not sinful. The scriptures nowhere teach that a man will be condemned for his wealth. They uniformly regard it as a blessing which, when properly used, will be the means of benefiting those around us, and increasing our reward in heaven: like every other privilege, when improved it brings blessings; when abused, curses.

The desire to possess wealth is sinful. Men may hedge about this desire with many restrictions, they may deceive themselves with the hope that when secured the money will be employed in blessing others, and promoting the glory of God; but it is written in the Bible—“They that will be rich

(surely this includes every form of the desire) fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." It is just because this desire exists, and exists often in an unrestricted form in the majority of professing Christians, that we apprehend danger to the church—it is because the thirst for gain is so prevalent and deeply rooted in their moral nature, that we fear it will ever grow and smother up their piety—it is because in efforts to get rich, we see little or no distinction between the impenitent and unbelieving, and the great mass of those who have subscribed themselves to the Lord—it is because the latter engage in worldly pursuits, with all the zeal, energy, and avidity which characterizes the professed worldling. But aside from the criminality of cherishing the desire, there are dangers and temptations induced by its gratification; these we wish now to expose; from this point we would utter the warning; show you the breakers on which many have been shipwrecked, and the quicksands on which many have been stranded.

The Saviour teaches us in the text that the possession of wealth is unfavorable to the cultivation of piety: though it does not necessarily exclude a man from the kingdom of heaven, it does throw barriers and obstructions in the way of his progress which are hard to get over; and all this is not because of any inherent evil, but because of the abuse we are likely to make of it. He means that the graces of the Christian are plants which flourish in the plain and lowlands, which would wither when transplanted to the mountains of affluence. "How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" What are those obstructions, and what is there in wealth which tends to hold back its possessor from attainments in the divine life?

It is a fact, that pure and undefiled religion has prevailed most extensively among the poor, the peasantry of every

Christian land has exhibited the best examples of practical piety. Whenever we find a man remarkable both for his religion and riches, we look upon him as a kind of moral phenomenon, for which we cannot account by the ordinary laws which govern humanity. The Founder of Christianity plainly avowed that his religion was especially intended and peculiarly adapted to the poor. It is not only said, that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called;" but also "to the poor the gospel is preached." This was a part of the answer which Jesus gave to John's disciples, when they questioned him in reference to his pretensions to the Messiahship. This was one of the great peculiarities of his teachings, it distinguished him from false Christs and prophets, and it marked him out to John and his disciples as the one in whom would meet all the prophecies of the Old Testament. By departing in a particular so important from the practices of all previous teachers—by paying no court to the noble and the rich, but launching against them his warnings and reproofs with all the authority of one who felt himself commissioned from above, he gave proof that he was sent from God, and that he was the **ONE** which was for to come. Now, if religion was intended especially for the poor, if among them we find it practised with more uniformity and frequency, it will at least afford presumptive proof that the opposite condition is not favorable to its culture.

Wealth tends to sour the tempers and dispositions of its possessor; it makes him morose and melancholy, unfits him for acting well his part in the social relation, as a father, husband, or master. That amiableness of character and equanimity of disposition which do so much to fit a man for usefulness, are uprooted by the multiplied cares which attend the possession of wealth. All the amiability which can be conferred upon a man, would be worn away by constant contact with the envy and selfishness of the world. You often find him in an ill humour, peevish, and fretful, because another is acquiring more rapidly, or because some scheme on which he

calculated largely has failed, or some speculation has been driven without success. We do not intimate that the poor are released from worldly anxiety, that they are not careful and troubled about many things, we mean only that they are not so much exposed to this sin, and that it is not likely to gain so strong a hold upon the mind as in the other case.

The rich man is thrown into bad company. Wealth centered in any individual, is a magnet which attracts to it certain materials which afford no nourishment to piety. Wherever there is a rich man, there are some base enough to be worshipers at his shrine—to act the part of sycophants—to court his favor for the crumbs which fall from his table. They follow in his train, and are ever ready with the most obsequious attentions. Now men who are mean enough to do this, can never be helps to him in his spiritual advancement—will never provoke him to love and good works. And if you reflect in connection with this, that evil communications corrupt good manners, that a man's moral character is much influenced by the society in which he mingles, you will see that the good seed is in such soil surrounded by thorns and briars which will be likely to choke it, and that there was much appropriateness in the warning of the Saviour: "How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

The possession of wealth is unfavorable to implicit confidence in God. It is required of the Christian that he have faith in God, walk by faith, be governed by the realities of eternity, and rely upon God for the supply of his wants. It is by realizing our dependence on God, and trusting in him that we maintain peace in our bosoms and make progress in the divine life. Now the possession of wealth makes for an individual a worldly confidence from which he cannot easily rid himself; there is a strong propensity to expect from his money, that for which he should depend only on God. The man who knows not from whence his next meal will come, has more room for the exercise of faith, and can present in a different spirit the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread;"

from another who, instead of being in want, has his chief care about how he shall dispose of his overflowing abundance. There is, in the latter case, a temptation to pursue his business as if there was no Providence to care for him, and no God to superintend his affairs—to become distrustful in the divine government, and dissatisfied with the divine allotments, except when they happen to accord with his calculations. He is not the man to acquiesce heartily in the divine arrangements—to say with Eli, “It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;” or with Job, “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” This worldly confidence, besides displacing or hindering the faith required of us, debases the mind by constant contact with groveling objects. There is nothing in wealth to purify or exalt our moral natures, while they seldom fail to receive its corrupting impress. And thus it was a wholesome warning which the Saviour uttered when he said—“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.”

Wealth fosters pride. Pride goeth before destruction. The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. This is a prominent property in the character of every natural man; it may develop itself in a thousand different ways, still it exists in every unconverted heart, and the whole machinery of the gospel is framed in such a way as to level it to the dust; dig it up by the roots and plant in its stead, humility, that loveliest of the sisterhood of graces. He is a healthy Christian who grows in self-abasement, who entertains lowly views of himself and strives to obey the exhortation—“Be not high minded.” It is known to every one who has opened his eyes upon society how generally wealth and pride are associated. Have you never marked his stately stepplings, with what an air of conscious worth does he move among his fellows, how much of dignity and importance is stamped upon his every movement? He happens to know that the influence of men in this world is in proportion to their dollars, and his account books tell him with the utmost exactness how much he is worth as a member of society.

For this reason he associates with others, not with the bent form and downcast look of the poor man, but with all the air and the mien of a felt superiority; and it is written in every feature of his character that if he does not consider himself belonging to a different order of creation, he at least feels himself occupying a far higher grade than the common mass of humanity around him. Such a one could not easily adopt the language—"I abhor myself;" he is subject to a mountain weight of influence in the opposite direction; he has abundance of food for the nourishment, and abundance of fuel for the burnings of pride. The tenderest of the vegetable kingdom would not sooner die before the frosts and chilling blasts of winter, than humility in such a heart. Well then did the Saviour say: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

Wealth occupies the time, thought, and energies which should be devoted to God's service. Whoever engages in the pursuit of wealth, with any prospect of success, must be characterized by more than ordinary diligence, energy, and foresight. He must be gifted with more than common endowments, who succeeds in amassing immense wealth. Suppose these mental and physical powers, this intense thought, and this activity and calculation were employed in the service of God, what a deal of good under God's blessing would be produced. All this is required of the individual, and is but a meagre return for what God has done for him. If he is what he professes to be, God is not only his Creator and Preserver, but Redeemer; has absolved him from the penal consequences of sin, released him from hell, and given him a title to heaven. Is it a proper return for this goodness to employ his powers in heaping up earthly treasure? Indeed can this be done and his spiritual interests properly cared for? As rapidly as his mind can work, it can scarcely keep pace with his multiplied business; and where is the time for prayer, the sabbath, and the Bible? The time and attention which God requires us to employ on the means of grace and religious duties, cannot be spared from worldly engagements. Here is

a point from which you may clearly see the utter irreconcilableness of making haste to be rich with the service of God. If you intend to live for the former purpose, it will be necessary for you to muster into service all the energies over which you have any command; you devote yourself to a master as rigorous in his exactments as the taskmasters of Pharaoh; and along with this, you profess to be a servant of God—his authority is the standard, and his glory the end of your every action. Is there not here something clearly wrong? Are you not attempting to harmonize in your conduct two things which from the very nature of the case cannot exist together? Is it not written in the Bible and written in the experience of sixty centuries, "*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon?*" Those of you, then, my brethren, who are bold enough to attempt an achievement which God has pronounced impossible, would do well to heed the Saviour's warning: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

Wealth strengthens our ties to earth. The world is the enemy of the Christian; the affairs with which he is here surrounded are hostile to his spiritual interests, and he must exercise a vigilance which never slumbers to escape their entanglements. The Christian must be governed by the realities of eternity; he is to have no strong hold on earthly things. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Be not conformed to this world." Here he is a stranger and pilgrim, has no abiding place, and is required to set his affections on things above. Now, can he sustain this character who enlists with the world in the foolish competition to grow rich? Can he be ripening for the upper glories who is thus adding on to the load and strengthening the ties which bind him down to earth? As a general rule, every addition made to his wealth, not only weds him more closely to his possessions, but actually enlarges his desire for more; it but adds fuel to the fire; it is one of the most obvious facts, that the more we get, the more we want. Every man sees this exemplified in others, but the misfortune is, he cannot see it in himself; the rule will measure every one of his acquaint-

ances, but somehow he happens to be an exception, and he firmly believes that when his possessions rise to a certain height, his utmost desire will be gratified, and he will never cherish another longing for wealth. Now, if the former has been realized, is there a single instance among the progeny of Adam where the latter has been realized? Was it ever known that the acquisition of wealth gratified the desire for wealth? It is an established fact, that the increase of the one has been accompanied with an increase of the other, and the desire has kept pace and often exceeded the most rapid accumulations. These facts have come to us confirmed by the experience of the millions which have gone before, and yet men continue to deceive themselves with the hope that they will call off their efforts when their possessions reach an imaginary point, which they are very careful to keep at a great distance from them. It would seem that experience ought effectually to dissipate this delusion. If men do at first regard it as a sufficient portion of the soul, experiment proves its inadequacy, shows conclusively that it cannot bring happiness—that they who seek it are spending money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which satisfieth not—that along with the multiplication of wealth, there comes the multiplication of cares and anxieties. All this fails to convince him of his mistake; additional splendor is thrown around that which is yet to be attained, and he is strengthened to renewed efforts in its pursuit. Wealth deceives its votaries by holding its prizes in the distance, like the mirage of the African desert which excites the hopes of the thirsty traveler for refreshing streams, but forever disappoints them. It may be said of this as of natural scenery—

“’T is distance lends enchantment to the view.”

That is an advanced stage of the Christian's experience, at which he can say with Job, “I would not live always;” or with Simeon, “Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.” Yet it is the duty of the Christian to prepare himself for death, and live as far as possible in constant readiness for it. He

cannot be on the road to this preparation who has his hands and heart engaged in heaping up worldly treasure; this does not look like setting his house in order and being ready for the last summons; it looks more like desiring an inheritance on this side Jordan—more like pulling down his barns and building greater, and saying to his soul: “Soul, take thine ease.” You will not find in riches that tuition which will school you for death; they do much to counteract the wholesome lessons derived from considering your latter end—much to bind you down to earth, and make you loth to leave it. When his confessor pointed the dying Medici to the glories of heaven, he replied: “Dear friend, I am content with the Pitti Palace.” When Garrick showed Johnson the splendors of his mansion on which he had lavished immense sums, the latter remarked: “Ah, David, it is this that makes us afraid to die.” There was much truth in this remark. He who pursues wealth is binding ties around his heart, which, when severed, as they will be, by the ruthless hand of death, will be as the crashing of the forest before the fury of the hurricane. The poet has truly said—

“How awful must thy summons be, O death!
To him who is at ease in his possessions.”

In this respect, Lazarus has the advantage over the rich man; he has nothing to lose, no purple and fine linen and sumptuous feasting to leave behind, only his rags and sores, and with these he can gladly part.

We have made frequent allusion to the poor man, in order that we might set in a clearer light the temptations of the opposite class; but we are not to be understood as teaching that poverty is destitute of temptation. The scriptures clearly teach us that that condition which is the medium between these extremes, is the most favorable to the culture of piety. Agur prayed for a competence, and his example is worthy of imitation.

The remarks we have made are not applicable exclusively to the rich, we intend them for those who are living for the sole purpose of amassing wealth, whatever may be their

present attainments; and especially for that large class of professing Christians, and their name is legion, who, while their conduct is characterized by all the decencies and excellencies of a pure morality, are in this particular not distinguished an iota from the world around them; who, if you leave out of view their professions, and follow them in their week-day pursuits, and see the avidity with which they grasp every prospect of gain, and with how much of whole-souled enthusiasm they pursue their speculations, you would never conclude that they were hirelings in God's vineyard, that they were stewards in his household, and fitting themselves for the glories and activities of the heavenly state. It becomes us every one to examine ourselves in this particular, and see the inferences which may be drawn from our conduct. We all have to do with the world and the money of the world, and how much do we by this intercourse to recommend religion? Is there anything in the prosecution of our daily business to show that we are the disciples of Christ, or do we rely for this evidence on our professions, and a few acts of morality which the heathen can perform? If this is our case, we are deceiving ourselves and dishonoring the Saviour; we are of no service to the Church; we do not enter in, and hinder those who would; we are a burden to the chariot-wheels of the gospel, and it will make the circuit of this earth with more rapidity without us.

We verily believe that the Devil, through the agency of worldly professors, has done as much to obstruct the progress of the gospel, as by all the other machinery he has put in operation. They have secularized the gospel, sought to obliterate the distinctions the Saviour has set up between the world and the Church, polluted the sanctuary with offerings lame and blemished, and converted the temple of God into a den of thieves. Brethren, keep yourselves from idols, do not thus fight against God and wound Christ in the house of his friends. Let it be graven on your hearts, that if you are for God, you cannot be for another. Let this utterance have a lodgment in your hearts: "*Ye cannot serve God and*

Mammon." Let it ring in your ears, that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Make this an article of your creed, a part of the standard by which your conduct is regulated, carry it with you in your daily pursuits, let it haunt you when you count up your dollars, let it stand as a flaming sword over every article of property to keep you back from unhallowed desire. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." "Labor not to be rich." "They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." "*How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*"

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