

ORIGINAL SERMONS;

BY

Presbyterian Ministers,

IN

THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY.

Now, I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

PAUL.

CINCINNATI.

PUBLISHED BY M'MILLAN & CLOPPER.

No. 1, Baker street.

1833.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1833, by M^cMILLAN & CLOPPER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Ohio.

Standard Press—Cincinnati.

the Lord Jesus, will account no *adoration*, however exalted, no *obedience*, however laborious, no *self-denial*, however painful, to be *too much*, when prompted by love to him who came down from heaven, and gave himself to the accursed death of the cross for his REDEMPTION.

SERMON XV.

BY THE REV. JOSHUA L. WILSON, D. D.

THE SANCTUARY POLLUTED.

Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.

ZEPH. iii. 4.

ZEPHANIAH was one of the Lord's prophets "in the days of Josiah, king of Judah." Zeph. i. 1. Josiah was placed on the throne of David, when a child; and before the years of manhood, gave decided evidence of true piety. In the twelfth year of his reign and eighteenth of his age, he began to "purge Jerusalem and Judah from idols," destroy the monuments of false worship among the ten tribes, and cause the temple to be repaired, which had been suffered greatly to decay. During the progress of the repairs, Hilkiah, the High Priest, found a copy of the law of the Lord, which had long lain in a state of disuetude. The contents of this sacred record was in a great measure unknown even

to the king. When the law was read to him, perceiving what a criminal and shameful neglect there had been of true religion—what gross idolatry and impiety had become prevalent—and the ruinous calamities which would most certainly befall the whole nation, unless timely repentance averted the righteous judgments of God, Josiah became deeply affected, rent his clothes for grief, and commenced a work of extensive reformation. A great revival of religion immediately ensued, and most of his subjects *professedly* turned to the Lord. Josiah, as long as he lived, was an eminent servant of God; but before his death a melancholy declension took place, and time disclosed the melancholy secret that most of the conversions during the revival, were the effects of temporary excitement or deliberate hypocrisy. Jeremiah and Zephaniah, contemporary prophets, have both told us this sad story. 2 Kings xxii. xxiii. 2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv. The dark picture of the Church, drawn by the prophets of the Lord at that period, presents to our view a semblance of her polluted condition in subsequent ages. Look at this picture—

“Wo to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. *Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have POLLUTED THE SANCTUARY, they have done violence to the law.*”

“*Her Prophets*” were by education and profession the instructors and guides of the people—but they were

light and treacherous—unstable, inconsistent, ready to comply with the vain desires of corrupt minds, and shape their instructions and predictions to promote their own popularity. How earnestly, on a certain occasion, was a true prophet solicited to be as *light and treacherous* as were the deceivers. “Let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them.” 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14.

“*Her Priests;*” appointed and ordained to minister in holy things, to offer sacrifices for remission of sins, and to stand with holy hands as intercessors with God in behalf of the people, “polluted the sanctuary,” by perverting the ordinances of the Lord’s appointment, and uniting with the Prophets in “doing violence to the law”—wresting it from its true meaning, to suit their own convenience and please corrupt minds. The people concurred in these abominations, and hence the servants of God were defamed, disregarded, abused, and some suffered violent deaths. “They were stoned, they were sawn asunder—they wandered—of whom the world was not worthy.” Compare the treatment of Jeremiah with the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter xi., verses 36, 37, 38. The recorded testimony during this great declension is truly discriminating and impressive. “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, but ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble.” “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land, the Prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people *love to have it so*; and what will ye do in the end thereof?” Mal. ii. 7, 8. Jer. v. 30, 31.

In taking a view of the subject before us, I shall—

I. Inquire, what is meant by the SANCTUARY? and attempt—

II. To prove, that the *Sanctuary* has been polluted in every age, by the professed ministers and professing people of God.

I. I shall enquire, what is meant by the *Sanctuary*.

SANCTUARY is a refuge, defence, and protection. Thus, the Lord, affording encouragement to the remnants of Israel, whom he cast far off among the Heathen, said, “I will be to them as a little *sanctuary* in the countries where they shall come.” Eze. xi. 16. Com. Is. viii. 14 with Prov. xviii. 10.

SANCTUARY was the most holy place of the Tabernacle, which was divided into two partitions. The first was the *holy place*, the second the *most holy place*, or *Sanctuary*. In and at this Tabernacle, the Israelites, in the wilderness, and until the building of the first temple, performed the chief of their religious services, offered their sacrifices, and worshipped God. Com. Exo. xxv. xxvi. xxvii. and Lev. first nine chapters with Heb. ix. 1—10. As the Jewish *tabernacle* was a type of Christ’s human nature, and all true worship is performed in and through him; and as, from the *most holy place* or *sanctuary* of the tabernacle and temple, God gave answers to his people, when they called upon his name; so the term *sanctuary* was used in an extended sense to mean the people of God, sanctified and set apart from all the nations of the world to be his peculiar possession, and also for the place appointed for the public worship of the Lord’s people. Lev. iv. 6. Heb. viii. 2. ix. 11. Ps. iv. 1. lxxiii. 17. cxiv. 2. Is. lxiii. 18.

SANCTUARY means Heaven—the true *holy of holies*, or MOST HOLY PLACE, where the worship of God is pure and perpetual. “When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generations to come: and the people that shall be *created*, shall praise the Lord. For he hath looked down from the height of his SANCTUARY; from *heaven* did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groanings of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the Lord in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together and the kingdoms to serve the Lord.” Ps. cii. 16—22.

When I find *Zion* and *Jerusalem* used to signify the visible kingdom of our Lord on earth; and *Israel*, to denote his worshipping people, chosen from among all nations—when I find the *tabernacle* and *temple*, each of which contained the *sanctuary*, denoting any place properly dedicated to God’s service—when I find *heaven*, the glorious *temple* of God above, called his *sanctuary*, where the divine Majesty dwelleth and the most perfect worship is celebrated with perfect and unceasing devotion—I cannot hesitate to say that *the sanctuary* in its prophetic and evangelical import, signifies *any place* in the Church of God, where his people are allowed to offer to him public and social worship.

To *pollute the sanctuary*, in any period of the Church, means to corrupt the word and ordinances of divine appointment—depart from the purity of God’s precepts and the rules and examples of practical piety. I shall now attempt—

II. To prove that the *Sanctuary* has been, and still is,

polluted by the professed ministers and professing people of God.

The assailants of the Church have been numerous, subtle, and powerful; but their assaults have been permitted as a scourge for delinquency, and like fire, have purified her from dross rather than corrupted her doctrines, order and worship. Attacks from without have operated on the Church like pressure upon an arch. The materials are more compressed, united, and firm, in proportion to the weight on the key-stone. It is the sapping and mining by internal foes, which causes the edifice to totter. It is when the Ministry corrupt the word and ordinances of God, and "the people love to have it so," that the *sanctuary is polluted*.

I. OUR PROPOSITION IS SUSTAINED BY FACTS.

After the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness, Moses and Aaron had soon to contend with Korah, the Levite, and his rebellious company. In this controversy none escaped from the earthquake and fire of God's wrath but those who decidedly listened to the warning voice of Moses and separated themselves from the corrupters of Israel. But the sympathies of the people were excited in favor of the *ruined rebels* and "the congregation murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, *Ye have killed the people of the Lord.*" And "wrath went out from the Lord," and "they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the matter of Korah." Num. xvi.

Passing, at present, the corruptions of Israel, by the devices of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, (1 Kings xii. xiii.) and the conflicts of Elijah with false prophets, under the patronage of Ahab and Jezebel, (1 Kings

xviii. xix.) I will here repeat the testimony of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Micah. "My heart within me is broken because of the prophets; both prophet and priest are profane. I am against them, saith the Lord, that cause the people to err by their lies." "From the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, *peace, peace*, when there is **NO PEACE.**" Jer. vi. xxiii.

"The priests have violated my law and profaned my holy things." Eze. xxii.

"The prophets, that make my people to err, that *bite* with their *teeth* and *cry* **PEACE**; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even declare *war* against him." Mic. iii.

"The prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and *my people love* to have it so." Jer. v.

When the Son of God made his visit to earth to seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to introduce a dispensation by which his *other sheep* which were not of that fold, might be gathered in, did he find the *sanctuary* in a better condition? Did he have to contend *only* with Pagans and Samaritans? Who was it, that greatly erred, "not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God?" Who was it, that made void the law through their traditions? Who were blind leaders of the blind? Who had corrupted prayer, and alms, and every divine institution? Who had turned the very house of prayer into a den of thieves? The teachers of religion! "The people loved to have it so!" And the Son of God, on his errand of mercy to a revolted world, was hissed as a

gluttonous man and a winebibber, reproached as a Sabbath-breaker, persecuted as a colleague of the Prince of devils, crucified as a blasphemer, and sealed up in the grave as an impostor!! And all this, by whom? Ministers of the sanctuary! Priests, Doctors of Divinity, Masters in Israel, and the professed worshippers of Jehovah! "*He came to his own, and his own received him not!*"

When the apostles and disciples commenced the great work of evangelizing the heathen, what classes of men gave *them* the most trouble? I answer not this question by a reference to the falsehood of Annanias and Sapphira, the hypocrisy of Simon Magus, nor the persecutions raised by the unbelieving Jews, who were rejected, broken off from the olive tree; but by asking, who were they who said to the Gentiles, "except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved?" Who taught that the resurrection was past and overthrew the faith of some? Who said there was no resurrection? Who agitated the churches with the false notion that the day of judgment would immediately come? Who had corrupted the Lord's supper till ministers and professors of religion ate and drank damnation to themselves? Who denied the divinity, who rejected the humanity of the Son of God? Who introduced "**DAMNABLE HERESIES,**" and denied the only Lord God? Whom did Paul accuse of preaching another gospel? The answer to all these questions is this: professed ministers of Christianity! O, could angels weep, tears would flow in heaven, at every recollection of this dark picture.

Passing the apostolic age, we come down to a period of the church, the history of which has not been writ-

ten by the pen of inspiration. Yet such facts are attested as to confirm the proposition I am attempting to sustain. If so many errors were zealously propagated in the days of the apostles, might we not expect a great increase after their death? A little more than a century after the disciples of Paul and John and Peter had gone to their graves, the whole Christian world, which was then more extensive than the Roman empire, was agitated from its centre to its circumference, by the heresies of one man. Arius, a Presbyter of the church of Alexandria, denied the *eternal sonship* of Jesus Christ, taught that the Son of God was a created being, the instrument by which God formed the universe, and that the Holy Spirit was not God, but created by the power of the Son. Arius was first condemned as heretical at Alexandria, and afterwards by a general council of 380 Fathers. After long struggles and many vicissitudes, Arius died a sudden and unnatural death, "his bowels gushing out," at the very time when he expected a triumph over truth! But his doctrines did not die. They became the prevailing religion of the East, and spread through Italy, France, and Spain; and also became triumphant in many parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe. But they sunk, almost at once, and were not again revived till the beginning of the sixteenth century; and ever since they have, in some form or other, disturbed the church of Christ and impeded the progress of truth.

Arius prepared the way for the grosser errors of Pelagius. These disturbed and distracted the whole Christian world about the close of the fourth century; but the orthodox African Bishops, with the famous Augustin, Bishop of Hippo, at their head, put an *extin-*

guisher on Pelagianism, and it remained for the churches in subsequent ages to be corrupted and disturbed by the same heretical system, modified and rendered plausible by the art of Cassian, a deacon of Constantinople. This heresiarch taught, that "No one is charged with Adam's sin—that Christ died for all men—that grace necessary to salvation is offered to all men—that God does not dispense his grace to one more than another, in consequence of predestination; but is willing to save all men, if they comply with the terms of the gospel; and that man, being born *free*, was *able* to resist the influences of grace, or comply with its suggestions."

These are the leading features of Semi-Pelagianism; a delusive scheme, which, down to the present hour, continues to perplex the church and destroy the souls of men.

The sect, called Unitarians, took their rise in the sixteenth century, and greatly flourished under the name of Socinians. But there is some difference between ancient and modern Socinians, the moderns being more erroneous. Ancient Socinians believed in the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ and admitted that he ought to be worshipped; both of which tenets are rejected by Unitarians. They teach that the Father is *alone* God—that Jesus Christ was a *mere* man—that the Holy Ghost is not a person of the Godhead, but an influence, that is, as I understand them, the directing and modifying power of God. They deny the doctrines of original sin, vicarious suffering, and imputed righteousness. They say that Jesus preached the truth, and set us an example of heroic virtue, by sealing his doctrines with his blood, that our acceptance with God depends on our return to him, by

repentance, like the prodigal, without any atonement or satisfaction being offered or made by the elder brother; and for this return we have competent powers or capabilities. Towards the close of the 15th and in the beginning of the 17th centuries, Arminius introduced a more specious and popular system of error, rendered acceptable to all, who love to establish a righteousness of their own, by extolling the *free grace* of God. Arminianism contains a mixture of wholesome truth and deadly poison. "A general atonement for all mankind, for one man as much as another, a conditional election of grace, natural corruption but not original sin, *imparted* but not *imputed* righteousness, regenerating but not persevering grace," are *potions* of the poison to which I allude.

There are perhaps a thousand modifications of these erroneous systems, which have afflicted and agitated, distracted and divided the church ever since the days of the apostles. I detain not even to name them here; but proceed to ask, who corrupted the visible church, till she became the mother of harlots, holding the *golden cup* full of abominations? The ministers of religion! Who was the disturber of Peace when 380 Fathers were called from their homes and their ministerial work to the general council of Nice? Arius, Presbyter of Alexandria! Who disturbed the whole Christian world with a system so absurd, that nothing saved it from oblivion but the modifications of Cassian, a Constantinople Deacon? Pelagius, the Abbot of Banchor! Who commenced the heresy which has degenerated into Unitarianism? The indefatigable Socinus, father of the Raronian Catechism, and founder of the *Polones Fratres*! Who succeeded in corrupting the Church

with the most specious and popular system ever yet invented, by extolling *free grace*, and proclaiming salvation by works? Arminius, the Pastor at Amsterdam and professor of Divinity at Leyden! And after the reformation in Scotland, who *polluted the Sanctuary*, by the “MYSTERY OF MODERATION,” when the fellow feeling for heresy was so kind and strong, and the Presbyterian Confession of Faith so dishonored, that Ministers accused or suspected of departing from “the form of sound words,” or deviating from sound morals, were extolled to the skies as men of “great genius, vast learning, and uncommon worth,” who must be “supported and protected” at all hazards, while the orthodox were reviled as “*implacable heresy hunters*” and stigmatized as sons of Belial? Ministers, Theological Professors, and Doctors of Divinity!* Who corrupted the Episcopal Church of England, by mutilating her Liturgy, and preaching against her doctrines, while they subscribed her articles of faith and enjoyed their ecclesiastical immunities? The Deacons, Priests, Presbyters, and Bishops!†

Who introduced Arminianism, Arianism, Semipelagianism, and Unitarianism into the Presbyterian Church, by which she has been rent and mangled, and bleeding, in this *great valley*, for the last thirty years? Ordained Presbyterian Ministers, four of whom joined the Shakers, and one continues to this day the apostle of the Western New Lights. Who have denied the *eternal sonship* of Jesus Christ—*original sin*—*vicarious suffering*—and imputed righteousness?—who have asserted conditional election, human ability,

* Witherspoon’s Characteristics.

† Dr. Scott’s account of Unitarianism in the English Church.

and indefinite atonement? Let Cumberland and New School Presbyterians and Professors of Theology from Andover to Lane Seminary answer!

Who have solemnly adopted Standards of Faith, which they have mutilated, impugned, denied? Let the Western Reserve, and Troy, and Oneida, and Philadelphia, and New Orleans, and Carlisle, and Cincinnati respond!

2. *Our proposition is sustained by PROPHECIES, WARNINGS, COMMANDS and COUNSELS, all mingled on the sacred pages.*

Our blessed Lord, in his sermon on the mount, after guarding his disciples against partial, selfish, and rash judgments, speaks in the following impressive manner about false teachers. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." Mat. vii. And on another occasion, "Take heed that no man deceive you—for many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many—behold I have told you before." Mat. xxiv.

Paul said to the Elders of Ephesus, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of YOUR OWN SELVES shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. *Therefore watch——.*" Acts xx.

Peter also sounded the alarm. "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in

damnable heresies—and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom *the way of TRUTH* shall be *evil spoken of.*” 2 Pet. ii. Paul’s heart was deeply affected, and hence we find him often touching this subject.

“I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and in the same judgment.” “Keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” “There is *one Lord, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one head, one body, one faith, one baptism, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL.*” “Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.” Why? “They serve not the Lord Jesus Christ—and by good words, and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” “I hear that there are divisions among you and I partly believe it.” Why? Because “there must be heresies among you that they which are approved may be made manifest.”

Our blessed Lord, in his intercessory prayer, shows the importance, unity in the faith, and order of the Church.

“Father, I have manifested thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the world—and they have kept thy word—I pray for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they *all* may be ONE.” And how kindly but impressively does the loving and beloved John speak on this subject.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. “For many false prophets are gone out into the world.” And to the elect Lady

he writes, "If there come any unto you, and bring not *this doctrine*, [the doctrine of Christ,] receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Why this injunction to a benevolent female? Because "Many deceivers are entered into the world," who went out from us, and he that biddeth a deceiver God speed "is partaker of his evil deeds." Jude also speaks kindly but impressively.

"Beloved, contend earnestly for *the faith* once delivered to the saints." Why? Because "there are certain men crept in unawares, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

I have omitted the predictions and warnings respecting that tyrannical, idolatrous, and intolerant *power Antichrist*, as it is a matter yet in debate between Papists and Protestants, whether that domination is to be looked for *in* or *out* of the Church. But the following passages will show how the head of the Church, abhors false doctrine. "Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan." "I have a few things against thee, thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam—so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants."

Thus it is evident that false doctrine, misdeeds, false profession; professing one thing when you are another, and lax discipline, are highly offensive to Jesus Christ.

I feel now prepared to say, that, if *facts*, numerous, well attested, palpable, and undeniable—if predictions and *warnings*, unequivocal—if injunctions, clear, defi-

nite, solemn, and pointed—if counsels, kind, authoritative and persuasive, be sufficient to prove any point in debate, then it is clearly shown that ministers in the church of God and God's professing people, have, from age to age, *polluted* the SANCTUARY, corrupted the word, institutions, discipline, and worship of God's house!

It seems proper here to say, that all the sentiments, systems, and practices, which I have condemned, are thus sentenced *only* on the *supposition* that the *system* which I have embraced is *true*; and that I am earnest in my profession of that system. For if the doctrines, ordinances, government, and discipline of the Presbyterian church be unscriptural, repugnant to the doctrine and order of the church of Jesus Christ, then the tables are turned against me, and I am heretical. In this discourse I have assumed, and not attempted to prove, the truth of the Presbyterian system, as expressed in the standards of the church. At the same time, the conduct of men can never be justified, who profess to believe this system and preach another gospel.

I trust I shall not exhaust your patience, by asking your attention to some closing remarks.

1. Our Lord, and his prophets and apostles considered every part of God's revelation as important and of solemn obligation.

On this subject, the Old and New Testaments speak the same language. "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him—*add* thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Prov. xxx.

"I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall *add* unto these things, God shall *add* unto him the plagues that

are written in this book: and if any man shall *take away* from the words of the book of this prophecy; God shall *take away* his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book." Rev. xxii. If it be true that "man shall not live by bread alone but by *every word* of God;" if "things revealed belong to us and our children that we may do all the words of this law; if "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul"—"the testimony of the Lord sure, making wise the simple"—"the statutes of the Lord right, rejoicing the heart"—"the commandments of the Lord pure, enlightening the eyes"—and "the judgments of the Lord true and righteous altogether;" then it may be *confidently* said, that the popular notion, which we often hear from the pulpit, that some *revealed* and *inspired* TRUTHS are *unimportant* and *non-essential* articles of faith, **MUST BE FALSE.** If there be any thing clearly a matter of *indifference*, let "the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please themselves;" but our Lord will undoubtedly frown on that man who shall "break *one* of the *least* of his commandments, and teach men so to do."

2. Our Lord and the inspired writers never *grant* nor *intimate* that the church of God cannot be of "one mind and one judgment." They always assume the fact that God has spoken nothing in vain, and that his revealed will cannot be mutilated nor enlarged, nor wrested nor denied, nor misinterpreted with impunity. They never tell us about "the facts of religion being one thing and the philosophy of these facts another." They never talk about the "large space of debateable ground lying between the borders of orthodoxy and the undefined limits of heresy." But they evidently teach that the

smallest departure from truth is error. They warn us against *worldly wisdom, vain philosophy, heresy and divisions*, and they tell us of *deceitful works*. They tell us that “all Christ’s people are taught of God,” and “if any man shall do his will he shall know of the doctrine,” and they beseech and command “all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus, to be of the same mind—to speak the same things, and to be perfectly joined together in the same judgment.” They urge the church to unanimity as one body, and fix an indelible mark of disgrace on the man who causes divisions and offences contrary to the doctrines they had taught. Nay, they would not spare even an angel from Heaven, if he preached another Gospel.

Every Christian, and especially every minister ought to say to the Head of the Church as David did to Jehovah, “Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto *all thy commandments*.” Let no one mistake me. I mean not to affirm that a person must know “all that has been written by inspiration of God” before he can be saved, or before he is fit to teach others, as far as he has learned himself; but what I affirm is, that whether a person be a babe, a youth, or a father in Christ—whether he be weak or strong in the faith—such is his simple reliance on God’s word, such his humility, such his teachable, childlike disposition, if he be united to Christ and led by the Holy Spirit of grace and truth, that so far as he *does know*, he speaks and acts in conformity with God’s revealed will, and where he *does not know* he has sufficient humility and candor to confess his ignorance; waiting at wisdom’s door, in the use of appointed means, that he may grow in knowledge and grace more and more to a perfect stature,

3. I beg your attention to the responsibility of those who are set apart for the express purpose of conducting others to Heaven.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” “But how can they hear without a preacher?”

A large majority of the human family are in such circumstances that if ever they arrive at Heaven, they must be guided there by a living ministry on earth. Multitudes cannot read, and multitudes more, from their abject circumstances and servile employments, have no time allowed them to search the Scriptures; while many, very many, who can read and might have time, are so little cultivated, possess so little mental discipline, they *cannot* distinguish between sophistry and argument, nor discern the wolf in sheep’s clothing. All these multitudes must and do place themselves under some man or set of men as their scriptural guides, and they who lead them are responsible for their souls. “If a man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work;” but, if he assume this office, or others invest him with it, while he is destitute of the qualifications belonging to the office, his own soul, and all who receive him as a spiritual guide, are put in jeopardy. “If the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch.” The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

No wonder Moses, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah shrunk from the responsible stations assigned them. No wonder Paul cried out in view of responsibility, “who is sufficient for these things?” and so often said, “brethren, pray for us.”

4. The true ministers of Christ must not be discouraged when false teachers are numerous and popular.

When the magicians with their enchantments were

numerous and popular at the court of Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron stood firm, and left the time and manner of "truth's triumph" to the God of Israel. When the false prophets were more than eight hundred to one, Elijah put them to a test which proved their overthrow. And when Paul had perils among false brethren; when those turned against him who once would have plucked out their own eyes for his sake; when all Asia forsook him; and no man stood with him at his first answer before Nero; none of these things moved him. He could say, "the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever."

Let no man who is *sound in the faith* and *apt to teach* be discouraged when false teachers are multiplied, nor when they are surrounded and applauded by gaping crowds of men of corrupt minds. But let them watch and pray, and teach, and warn, night and day, with tears.

6. Seeing there is but *ONE true religion*, but *ONE right way*, but *one Lord*, *one faith*, *one baptism*; and as it is true that there are *many deceivers*, who shall *deceive MANY*; you are ready to ask me with deep emotion and solemn interest, what shall we do? One answer is given to all. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart and *lean not to thine own understanding*. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." "Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil"—it shall be the life, and health, and strength of thy soul. Prov. iii.

In addition to this general answer, I say, to you who cannot investigate for yourselves, you must either neglect religion and perish, or you must put yourselves under the direction and become the companions of those whom you believe to be the ministers and people of the Most High God.

Look! O earnestly look to God for direction; for if you are taught, like the centurion, by a Peter, who will tell you words by which you and your house may be saved; or, like the eunuch, by a Philip, who will preach Jesus; or, like Lydia, by a Paul, who will glory in nothing but the cross of Christ; you are safe. Go on your way rejoicing; but if you misplace your confidence, if you choose blind guides, you are ruined, lost forever.

To them who can examine for themselves I say, "Search the Scriptures," in prayer, in simple dependence on heavenly wisdom. Interpret scripture by scripture, and not by art and man's device. "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, false teachers, should not a people seek unto their God? To the *law* and to the *testimony*: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. viii.

To such as bear rule in God's house I say, "Try the spirits, whether they be of God." If any profess not to walk with us, not to belong to our denomination, "Let them alone." If they do good, hinder them not; but rejoice. If they do evil, be not partakers. To their own Master they stand or fall. They have made their election; so have you. Your choice is made for eternity; and the judgment day will disclose the right and the wrong. Every sect must abide by their own choice.

If any profess to walk with us, if they say they are Presbyterians, belonging to or under the care of the Gen. Assembly, and cause divisions and contentions by departing from our standards, forsaking our institutions, and deceiving and unsettling the hearts of the simple and unwary; I beseech you, brethren, mark them as false brethren, and avoid them. This you can do. This is the least you ought to do when you have not official strength to inflict upon them deserved rebuke or merited suspension.

I feel that I stand before you in solemn and trying circumstances. If I am true and faithful, and you neglect the great salvation, I shall save my own soul; but you must perish. If I am a blind guide, and you are led by my false counsel, we must perish together. Such is the state of the Presbyterian church *now*, that no man can be indifferent, no tongue can be silent, no hand idle. It remains yet to be seen whether we, as the *polluted sanctuary* of God, shall be *cleansed*, or whether, when the *sanctuary* is cleansed, we shall be swept away with "the besom of destruction." *Solemn thought!*

In our context Jehovah says, "My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn the people to a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, and serve him with ONE CONSENT." Happy unanimity. But who can bear the "fire of his jealousy?" "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will *burn up the chaff* with UNQUENCHABLE FIRE."